Engl 112

Essay First Draft

Due: Week 7

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Deductive Reasoning: The Most Successful Type of Detective Stories

In the world of detective stories, there are three distinct types: Armchair Detective, Deductive Reasoning, and Hard-Boiled. These three types have their unique features, Armchair Detective takes a simple situation in that readers can only analyze the case but do not need to participation, Hard-Boiled can build a more complicated story and attract readers to explore the book, and Deductive Reasoning combines inference and investigation. "Miss Marple Tells a Story" (Christie), The Big Sleep (Chandler), and "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (Doyle) are the most classic works of these three types. These three are successful detective stories: all of them have been published to the whole world and have been adapted for film. Every detective story lover has his favorite type, but Deductive Reasoning is the most successful.

As the name of Armchair Detective, it creates a relaxed atmosphere. Distinct from the two other types, the detectives in Armchair Detective don't participate in the case. Detectives don't do field surveys by themselves but hear from their clients. In *"Miss Marple Tells a Story"* (Christie), all the facts are told by Mr. Petherick and Mr. Rhodes. Miss Marple judges the case during their conversation, using the information they give her, raising her doubt, making an assumption, and excluding the impossible. The rest of it must be the truth. It lets readers use their intelligence to follow the development of the plot. Readers marveling at the enlightening thinking brought by Armchair Detective. For instance, Miss Marple asks two sirs a question, if they can remember the appearance of the chambermaid. It seems an insignificant question, but it shows the different characters of Mr. Petherick and Mr. Rhodes. One small detail can distinguish the different attitudes of how these two people treat the case. However, sometimes this is boring because it discards the connection between the detective and the case. When reading detective stories, readers usually imagine them as the detective, not the client or the victim. Readers will lose the fun of solving the mystery themself.

*The Big Sleep*, written by Chandler, is the masterpiece of a Hard-Boiled deductive story. As a hard-boiled deductive story, *The Big Sleep* contains a complex storyline. The book has thirty chapters, more than fifteen characters in the scenario, and six characters murdered. In the other two types, Deductive Reasoning, and Armchair Detective, the scenario will be shorter, usually only one case in one scenario. In *The Big Sleep*, not all the cases have a clear result: police find Taylor drawn in his car (Chandler, chapter 9), but the book doesn't uncover the truth of his death. In the other two types, this situation can hardly happen. These two types probably give a reason to every victim. Taylor is to promote the development of the plot in *the big sleep*, while in other distinct types, the death of Taylor can be one complete story. Another example occurs when Canino kidnaps Marlowe (Chandler, chapter 28). Canino is the gunman of Eddie Mars, the opponent of Marlowe. It signals that Marlowe is not an outsider. He is equal to the event itself. He is in the matter and even changed it. He persuades Eddie's Wife to release him and fights back against Canino and becomes one of the murderers.

Without a doubt, Hard-Boiled detective stories are exciting novels. However, the over-complicated plot is also confusing at times. To readers not good at understanding the grand story, Hard-Boiled detective stories are not a good choice. Instead, Deductive Reasoning is the choice. Sherlock Holmes is the most famous detective written by Doyle. A series of stories are in the book, and "*The Adventure of the Speckled Band"* is one of these stories. The detective in Deductive Reasoning joins the case, as Holmes goes into the room of Helen, to check the possibility the case happened (Doyle, page 7). At the end of the story, Holmes threatens the stepfather's snake, which causes the stepfather to die. It seems a signal that the detective influences the scenario, but distinct from the Hard-Boiled detective stories, the story ends here, and the case that Holmes focuses on not changes him (Doyle, page 11). The most conspicuous one is during the stepfather breaks into the house that Holmes lives in and asks him not to take over the case (Doyle, page 6). The snap of Marlowe in *The Big Sleep* is to advance the plot and to make some tension; while in *"The Adventure of the Speckled Band"*, this plot stands out the overbearing character of the stepfather. Deductive Reasoning contains all the elements of a deductive story: rigorous reasoning process, proper plot development, necessary characterization, and not much.

All these three types, Hard-Boiled, Deductive Reasoning, and Armchair Detective have their features. Hard-Boiled is full of theatricality, which can tell a story with twists and surprises. But as a detective story, it covers too much, hardly letting readers focus on the case itself, the motivation, the method, and the process. On the contrary, a Hard-Boiled detective story is more likely a novel that includes love, relationship, and life. Armchair Detective is ingenious in the thought while losing some excitement. Deductive Reasoning is the most balanced one, keeping the logic and combining the theatricality of a detective story, so it succeeds.

Works Cited

Chandler, Raymond. *The Big Sleep.* Wildside Press, 2014.

Christie, Agatha. *"Miss Marple Tells a Story", Miss Marple's Final Cases*. HarperCollins e-books.

Doyle, Conan. *"The Adventure of the Speckled Band".*