

Rex Stout Does Not Belong in Russia:
Exporting the Detective Novel

by

Molly Jane Levine Zuckerman
Class of 2016

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies
Program

Foreword

While browsing through a stack of Russian and American novels in translation on a table on Arbat Street in Moscow in 2013, I came across a Russian copy of one of my favorite books, *And Be a Villain*, by one of my favorite authors, Rex Stout. I only knew about this author because my father had lent me a copy of *And Be a Villain* when I was in middle school, and I was so entranced by the novel that I went out to Barnes & Noble to buy as many as they had in stock. I quickly ran out of Stout books to read, because at the time, his books were out of print in America. I managed to get hold of most copies by high school, courtesy of a family friend's mother who had died and passed on her collection of Stout novels to our family. Due to the relative difficulty I had had in acquiring these books in America, I was surprised to find one lying on a book stand in Moscow, so I bought it for less than 30 cents (which was probably around the original price of its first printing in America).

When I went back to Russia in 2015, I noticed that every bookstore had at least five Stout novels in translation on its shelves. At this time in America, I had been to several bookstores that had zero Stout books on their shelves. This phenomenon was curious, but I did not fully see the extent of Stout's popularity in Russia until a Russian friend, taking a literature in translation course at our Russian university, had me help him with his homework and I recognized in the exercises a passage from one of Stout's novels. I then asked around the university, and while most of my professors had heard of him, that was nothing unusual, as most people my parents' age in America had also heard of Rex Stout. What piqued my interest beyond all else was when I discovered that Rex Stout was the second most printed author in

all of Russia in 2014—Dostoevsky ranked twelfth on this list. This is when I sat down and decided that I would dedicate my senior thesis to my favorite author and his two favorite detectives, Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, and why the heck Russians liked them so much.

Abstract and Methods

In my research, I seek to answer the following questions: Based on the inherent contradictions between a Western detective novel and Communist Russian society, why were Rex Stout's detective novels popular in the Soviet Union? What was the political appeal of the novels' plots during different periods in Russian history, from the Soviet Union to the present? What influence has Stout's Nero Wolfe series had on Soviet and Russian culture?

I will begin answering these questions by detailing a brief history of the detective genre in Russia. I will then explain the role that Stout as the author played in the most important political themes of his books in the American detective corpus, including all pertinent references to Communism and Russia. The next section will introduce the role of his books in Russia, with the context for their content already discussed, and then will analyze some general theories on how Western detective novels in translation affected Russian culture and the literary scene. I will intersperse quotations from people that read Stout during the Soviet period and how they felt about him in reference to his most political novels. Many will be taken from the Russian online Nero Wolfe fan site, which I discovered during my initial research.

On the site, I found many members willing to talk with me through their discussion forum about Stout's influence on their lives. The makeup of the forum is such that anyone can become a member and start a new topic or add comments to a previously discussed topic. This forum consisted of all Russian speakers, but not all necessarily from Russia itself. My initial query on the forum about Stout in Russia led to an explanation that members came from Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Kazakhstan,

Armenia, Estonia, and more, and that limiting my topic to Russia was too narrow in several users' opinions. I took this into account in my research, but did not have the time or space to delve into Stout in every country mentioned, and made up for this by including some information on his Russian language publications in the wider Soviet bloc in more general terms in Chapter Four.

In my thesis, I will be referencing the forum discussion generated by my initial questions posted to the discussion, "Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and all that is connected with them," as well as draw on other comments made in various discussion threads pertinent to my writing.¹ I will use the users' comments to provide a contemporary reaction to Stout's books from the perspectives of those who either read his books in Russian during the Soviet Union or after 1990, but who still read his books today in Russian translation.

The thesis will continue with an explanation of how Stout's books influenced specific Russian writers in terms of plots and characters, and then how his books manifested themselves in different formats, like the online fan clubs, the cookbook, and the television show. I will conclude by discussing the overall implications of the impression that Stout left on Russian culture through his almost forty years of popularity in Russia.

1. Comments will be attributed to the author with their username or full name as they

Table of Contents

Foreword	i
Abstract and Methods	iii
Table of Contents	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Chapter One: Rex Stout and the Hard-boiled Detective Novel	
<i>What is the Detective Genre</i>	1
<i>Stout's Beginnings in America</i>	6
<i>The Detective Novel's Beginnings in Russia</i>	8
<i>Stout's Use of the Capitalist Model in his Nero Wolfe Series</i>	12
<i>The Creation of Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin</i>	17
Chapter Two: Stout Critiques American Politics and Society	
<i>Anti-German Attitudes and a Change of Habit in Writing</i>	23
<i>Stout and World Federalism</i>	27
<i>Stout and Racism</i>	29
Chapter Three: Stout and His Characters Hate the “Commiss”	
<i>Battling Stereotypes and Promoting Democratic Liberties</i>	32
<i>Stout's Anti-Communism Enters His Novels</i>	36
<i>The Rosenberg Trial</i>	55
<i>Wolfe and Archie Enter Yugoslavia</i>	57
Chapter Four: Wolfe and Stout Enter Soviet Russia	
<i>How Stout the Anti-Communist was Published in the USSR</i>	66
<i>Stout Critiques Yugoslavia from America</i>	68
<i>Soviet Critics take Offense at Stout's Plots</i>	73
Chapter Five: Why Russians Love that Stout Hates the FBI	
<i>The Doorbell Rang</i>	88
Chapter Six: How Stout's Popularity Continues after the Fall of Communism	
<i>Stout's Detective Novels in Post-Soviet Russia</i>	107
<i>The Russian Begin Writing Their Own Detective Novels</i>	115
<i>Russian Intellectual Backlash Against the Rise of Mass Culture and the Detective Novel</i>	120
Chapter Seven: Stout's Novels Influence New Russian Detective Novelists	
<i>Aleksandra Marinina Critiques Russian Politics and Society</i>	128
<i>A Confluence of Circumstances: The Non-Coincidental Similarities Between Anastasia Kamenskaia and Nero Wolfe</i>	133

<i>Darya Donstova and the Unnamed Others</i>	156
Chapter Eight: Stout’s Influence in Contemporary Russia Goes Beyond the Literary	
<i>How Food and Translation Fit Together</i>	162
<i>Stout’s Fan Base Goes Online and Eastward</i>	170
<i>The Russian Nero Wolfe Television Series</i>	173
Conclusion	179
Appendix	
<i>Statistical Records of Printed Materials in Russia in 2014</i>	188
<i>Stout Collections 2000s by Russian Publishing Houses</i>	190
<i>Stout’s Novels Mentioned in the Thesis</i>	194
<i>Darya Dontsova’s Ivan Podushkin Series</i>	196
Bibliography	198

Acknowledgments

I would first and foremost like to thank Professor Susanne Fusso for her work as my advisor throughout this year. Without her, my research would not have gone as smoothly and my mental state would not have remained as calm. Her willingness to meet with me as many times a week as needed (which, towards the end, meant more than once a day), and answer all of my late night emails with lengthy and thoughtful replies meant that I was not nearly as overwhelmed as I could have been. Her assistance with translations and analyses of Russian texts saved readers from having to wade through my well intentioned, though often incomprehensible, passages and quotations. Thank you.

I would also like to thank both the American Wolfe Pack and the Russian online Nero Wolfe fan club for their help with my research. Special thanks to Ira Matetsky for his kindness and help with the American side of my research on Stout's work. And a particular thanks goes to Stanislav Zavgorodnii, a Ukrainian Stout fan who reached out to me and was indispensable in the portion of my research on Stout in Russian translation. I would also like to mention Natalia Rymko, who welcomed me into her home in Moscow, stuffed me full of Russian blini and caviar, and provided valuable insight into Stout's popularity in Soviet Russia. User BleWotan, User Fox, Sergey Chervotkin, Sergey Panichev, and all members of the Russian online forum also deserve recognition for their willingness to interact with me online and answer my many questions about Stout and Nero Wolfe in Russia.

I also need to thank my invaluable translator, Gleb Vinokurov, who provided the English translations for the Russian online forum members' answers, as well as

provided moral support throughout the whole year with his willingness to watch Downton Abbey with me until five in the morning and send me countless Ellen DeGeneres videos when I needed inspiration.

And finally, I thank my parents, Liza Levine and Edward Zuckerman, who instilled in me a love of books from a very young age, an outcome of their race against other relatives to see whose toddler would learn to read first. I won.

My father also deserves recognition for introducing me to the world of Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin. He allowed me to acquire every Wolfe novel throughout my childhood, and when we moved to New York, brought every single Nero Wolfe novel with him so that I could have them at Wesleyan. Because of him, Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin will live on in my generation's mind a little bit longer.

1 | Rex Stout and the Hard-boiled Detective Novel

You are headstrong and I am magisterial. Our tolerance of each other is a constantly recurring miracle.
-Nero Wolfe to Archie Goodwin
Champagne for One

What is the Detective Genre?

Stout's Nero Wolfe books are more than just detective novels; they exhibit one man's opinion of America and all of its flaws throughout the historical period (1940s-1970s) in which they were written. His detective stories offer a glimpse into everyday life in America; foreigners who read his books are able to glean information about the US through the backdrop of the novels, as well as receive Stout's scathing commentary on certain aspects of life in America. The plot of each novel reveals the reasons crimes are committed, who is responsible for catching the criminals, and what happens to them once they have been caught. In this sense, Stout's books offer Russians a distinctive look into crime in America through the lens of Stout's own political views and depiction of the capitalist society within which he resides.

Ammie Cannon makes the argument that the popularity of Stout's novels stems from both good writing and an ability to mute political messages in the stories, which are "not forced by an author seeking to infuse his novel with statements that confirm his own political agenda."² She argues that Stout used the interplay of his two main detectives and the conventions of the genre in order to advance his political messages without "threaten[ing] the sanctity of storytelling."³ I do not necessarily

2. Ammie Cannon, "Controversial Politics, Conservative Genre: Rex Stout's Archie-Wolfe Duo and Detective Fiction's Conventional Form" (Brigham Young University, 2006), 80.

3. Ibid., 26.

agree with Cannon's point that Stout never threatens the sanctity of storytelling with his political inclusions. Rather, his politics and his plots are purposefully intertwined, usually subtly and occasionally repetitively, in such a manner that can push the murder investigation to the background through the political aspect of the motives and suspects. However, even with this caveat to Cannon's argument, I still see Stout as successfully portraying the capitalist model in his texts through the vehicle of the detective genre, without sacrificing almost any literary value.

Before the Russian Communist revolution, crime did have a place in Russian literature, most famously in Dostoevsky's murder mystery *The Brothers Karamazov*. In answer to the question of the social purpose of novels depicting crime and punishment, Dostoevsky wrote:

It is clear and intelligible to the point of obviousness that evil in mankind is concealed deeper than the physician-socialists suppose; that in no organization of society can evil be eliminated; that the human soul will remain identical; that abnormality and sin emanate from the soul itself; and finally, that the laws of the human spirit are so unknown to science, so obscure, so indeterminate and mysterious, that, as yet, there can neither be physicians nor *final* judges, but that there is only He who saith: 'Vengeance belongeth unto me; for I will recompense.'⁴

Dostoevsky's musings on the literary morality of the depiction of crime and criminals highlights the different role that detective fiction will be forced to play in the Soviet

4. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Diary of a Writer*, vol. 2 (New York: Scribners, 1949), 788. Quoted in Anthony Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 150.

period, as opposed to his actions in writing about crime and detection in a high literature manner. He writes, “in no organization of society can evil be eliminated,” which is exactly what the Soviet Communists want to do; their belief in a socialist utopia presupposes that the elimination of evil is possible. The discrepancy between Dostoevsky’s writing and the lack of acceptance in the Soviet Russian society of the detective novel show the significant differences in the valuation of literature that occurred during the Soviet period in Russia.

East German writer Ernst Kaemmel sees the detective novel as a “child of capitalism.”⁵ Although his premise that all private detective stories involve crimes solely based on economic motives can be attributed to his political background at the time of writing, he makes the point that the idea of an individual private detective righting the wrongs of “a society based on exploitation” in an isolated manner “shows how strongly the defects of its [a capitalist world’s] social order are felt.”⁶ Kaemmel believes that the individuality inherent in hard-boiled detective fiction does not have a place in a socialist state, and again, although he incorrectly predicts that the impending fall of capitalism will wipe out the detective novel, his analysis of how fictional private detectives do not fit the socialist model is apt.⁷

Stout’s books support this analysis; the cases his detective solve often expose the defects of a capitalist world’s social order, and his detectives sometimes defend the democratic freedoms of that social order in a lone vigilante manner that violates

5. Ernst Kaemmel, "Literature under the Table: The Detective Novel and Its Social Mission," in *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, ed. Glenn W. Most and William W. Stowe (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, June 1983), 13.

6. *Ibid.*, 58.

7. *Ibid.*, 61.

socialist norms. With the rise of Communism came the creation of the ideal of the New Soviet man and the Soviet family, and Stout's detective novels did not fit into any of these ideals in any way. Stout's detectives can even break the laws of society if it means protecting overall democratic freedom, and Kaemmel sees the allowance of this positive portrayal of a lone man against society as subversive to the socialist cause. From Kaemmel's point of view, the Soviet Union, as a society that built socialism into a relatively strong political entity that lasted for decades, had no place for the detective novel in its ideology.

Stout's biographer McAleer quotes Stout as agreeing indirectly with this analysis of the democratic values inherent in the Western model of detective fiction:

I think the detective story is by far the best upholder of the democratic doctrine in literature [...] there couldn't have been detective stories until there were democracies, because the very foundation of the detective story is the thesis that if you're guilty you'll get it in the neck and if you're innocent you can't possibly be harmed.⁸

Kaemmel's analysis of the detective novel as showing the defects of society is turned upside down by Stout, who sees the implicit democratic values in detective fiction as representative of a positive, universal political model. While Stout doesn't mention capitalism in this quotation, only democracy, his later views on the danger of Communism show that he himself conflates democracy with the necessity of residing under capitalism (as the opposite of communism), in order to fully experience democratic freedoms.

8. John J. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, Millenium ed. (James A Rock & Co. Publishers, 2002), 286.

Although Kaemmel offers a pointed and politically oriented viewpoint, his overall points about the intrinsic connection between a detective novel and the values of a capitalist society are correct. Detective fiction stands out in the ideologically based Communist society, which is built on the concept of communalism and a desire to move towards a society with full employment, no class boundaries, no homelessness, a controlled economy, and ultimately the disappearance of a monetary system and any form of government. Communism contains the belief that its citizens can become enlightened if they follow the right path, and that crime will be eliminated as generations of enlightened people are born into society, and therefore the crime written about in detective novels cannot exist in this socialist or communist utopia. The Western detective novel contradicts this viewpoint; it presupposes the eternal existence of crime in society.

In the universal detective story, there must be a crime committed, an investigation, and usually a reveal of the criminal. The detective stories involving a murder and private detectives, which will be the specific type of detective story referred to in the thesis, fit even less into a socialist utopia. There should be no crime in a perfect socialist world, because everyone will have as much as they need, according to their ability, and therefore will have no reason to commit a gruesome act like murder. Murder for gain has no place in a society where no one is supposed to be in want of anything, particularly money, which is a common motive to commit murder in the detective stories discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Family ties are different under Communism as well, with the ideal possibility being for the state to

raise children and leave the parents to fully commit to the workforce, an ideal that would eliminate family intrigue as a motive for murder.

The essence of my argument is that socialist and Communist society eliminates the motives for murder in detective novels, and therefore detective novels that have these motives as the basis of their plots would be seen as subversive texts by default in any Communist society. Detective novels have the potential to show citizens under Communism another way of life, albeit one with murder and crime, but there is always the danger that showing a new way to live to those who are completely unfamiliar with it has the potential to lead them away from the life that they are living, peacefully or inadvertently or not. The choice of the detective genre for Stout to promote a capitalist, democratic society is not an unusual one: more than its inherent support of democracy under capitalism is its fundamental contradiction with socialism or Communism in any form.

Stout's Beginnings in America

Rex Stout was born in Noblesville, Indiana, on December 1, 1886, and raised in a Quaker household. His whole family eventually moved to Wakarusa, Kansas, for his father's work. Stout joined the Navy in 1905 and moved to New York four years later. He began his non-military career with the 1916 invention of a school banking system (where students would open accounts at their school for their saved money) that was widely used across America.⁹ Having become financially secure from the invention of the banking system, Stout pursued his literary interests by becoming the

9. Ibid., 150.

president of Vanguard Press from 1926 to 1928 and then vice president until 1931.

The small publishing company was created with a \$100,000 grant from the American Fund for Public Service (the Garland Fund), and existed in order to publish books that larger commercial publishing houses wouldn't take on for political reasons. Examples of the "un-publishable material" included seven books by Scott Nearing, a member of the American Communist Party, along with three of Stout's novels (pre-Nero Wolfe): *How Like a God* (1929), *Seed on the Wind* (1930), and *Golden Remedy* (1931).

The same year he became the president of Vanguard Press, 1926, Stout helped start the radical Marxist magazine *The New Masses* by donating \$4000 for its publication, and he then served on the executive board with his sister, Ruth Stout, as office manager.¹⁰ After Michael Gold, a Jewish Communist, took over as editor and started publishing articles directly supporting the Soviet Union, Stout and his sister discontinued their association with the magazine, for Stout realized "that it was Communist and intended to stay Communist."¹¹ This early, inadvertent brush with Communist publications may have helped the future FBI case against him after his more incendiary literary publications. Ironically, *The New Masses* was similar to the form of political and literary journals that would be the first to translate and publish Stout's novels during the Soviet Union.¹²

Already having begun a writing career with pulp fiction stories for magazines several years before, Stout then turned to writing full time after he ended his work at

10. Ibid., 183; John Simkin, "New Masses," <http://spartacus-educational.com/JmassesN.htm>.

11. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 184.

12. Elena V. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s" (The University of British Columbia, 2003), 161.

both the Vanguard Press and *The New Masses*. He published his first Nero Wolfe novel, *Fer-de-Lance*, in 1934, beginning his habit of turning out exactly one Wolfe novel a year. He also began to build High Meadow, a country house on the border of New York and Connecticut.

The Detective Novel's Beginnings in Russia

As Stout was growing up and beginning his career writing detective fiction in the US, the political changes simultaneously occurring in Russia began affecting their detective genre. Russia did historically have a tradition of detective fiction, but it would be incorrect to put Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* in the same category as Rex Stout's *Too Many Detectives*. Therefore, it made sense that Russians fed their desire for detective stories by borrowing from the already established Western canon, which contained a plethora of lowbrow detective fiction that simply did not exist on the same scale in pre-Soviet society. Before the 1917 Russian revolution, there was an influx of "quaint Russian knockoffs" of American detective fiction in Russia, referred to by Boris Dralyuk as "Pinkertonovshchina." He describes the popularity, especially among the youth, of Nat Pinkerton novels, whose hero was an American detective who was the "scourge of the American criminal world [...] and sent more than one villain to the electric chair of New York's Sing Sing prison."¹³ Jeffrey Brooks cites statistics of 6.2 million copies of Pinkerton novels published in Russia

13. Boris Dralyuk, *Western Crime Fiction Goes East: The Russian Pinkerton Craze, 1907-1934* (Brill Academic Pub, 2012) 1, 8, 10.

from 1907 to 1915, all at 15 kopecks a book (as well as 3.1 million copies of American detective Nick Carter and 3.9 million of Sherlock Holmes in novel form).¹⁴

After the revolution of 1917, the continuing popularity of Pinkerton novels (as opposed to the teachings of Karl Marx) read by Russian youth were seen as a symptom of the failure of the Communist Party to inspire the youth towards socialism, and so the desire to write Communist “Red Pinkertons” was born. In the 1920s, Nikolai Bukharin, a Bolshevik revolutionary, full member of the Politburo, and author, wanted to create a type of socialist realist literature that would both entertain the youth and motivate them to support the Communist cause.¹⁵ He came up with the idea of drawing on Marx to both explain away the problematic youth interest in Western detective novels and to create the foundation for a new type of more revolution-friendly literature. In 1922, Bukharin is quoted as saying, “Marx, as is generally known, read crime novels with great enthusiasm. What’s the point here? [...] if we give one specific description of one of our revolutionary fighters’ lives—that will be a thousand times more interesting than anything.”¹⁶

The demand for detective stories, even socialist realist ones, can be attributed to what Dralyuk describes as a “psychological motivation [to] devour popular genres in times of flux” and Brooks sees as conjoining of an interest in foreign detectives

14. Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russians Learned to Read, Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917* (Northwestern University Press, 2003), 147.

15. Ernst Kaemmel, "Literature under the Table: The Detective Novel and Its Social Mission," 61. Kaemmel would call for a return to this type of literature almost fifty years later, for if detective novels portrayed crimes as against society and social order, then the genre would have finally have “attained the function of transmitting knowledge” in his version of a successful manner.

16. Dralyuk, *Western Crime Fiction Goes East: The Russian Pinkerton Craze, 1907-1934*, 5, 23, 26.

with an interest in foreign places.¹⁷ Michael Holquist posits the idea that people are drawn to detective novels at times when “enormous destruction is in the hands of faceless committees,” for the novels demonstrate to readers that “a single man [...] exploiting the gifts of courage and resourcefulness [...] can offset the ineffectiveness of government.”¹⁸ Catharine Nepomnyashchy, who wrote about the rise of the new Russian *detektiv* in the 1990s, connects the rise in popularity of the Western detective genre with the many cultural and political transitions in the Russian state, claiming that social instability allowed a chance for Russians to freely read fiction.¹⁹ For example, she uses the NEP transitional period as a microcosm to be studied in the Russian history of detective novels, calling it “an unstable and inevitably temporary meeting of literary theory, highbrow parody, a more or less competitive market, and a politically motivated desire to simultaneously encourage literacy and to indoctrinate.”²⁰ This connection between the political environment and the desire to both read and write detective stories describes the same confluence of circumstances that led to the inspiration for many of Stout’s plots as well as the spike in his popularity in Russia in the 1970s, 1990s and the mid 2000s.

17. Ibid. 7; Brooks, *When Russians Learned to Read, Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917*, 142.

18. Michael Holquist, "Whodunit and Other Questions: Metaphysical Detective Stories in Postwar Fiction," in *The Poetics of Murder, Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, ed. Glenn W. Most and William W. Stow (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, June 1983), 153.

19. Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*, ed. Adele Marie Barker (Duke University Press, 1999), 162. I will be referring to the detective stories written in the Soviet period and later as the distinctive *detektiv*, based on the exclusive use of the term for this time period by authors Nepomnyashchy and Olcott.

20. Ibid., 163.

With the rise of Stalin's power in the 1920s came the fall of the mystery novel, for the Russian political leaders began to forcibly direct the population's focus away from escapist novels in order to protect them from what was considered the harmful values of fiction. Western detective literature had either a passion-based crime or a private-property based crime; they were inherently based on the capitalist values that the Soviet system blamed for crimes in the first place. Since the Western motives in detective stories did not fit the Soviet model for crime being a socially fueled, curable happenstance, they held no place in Soviet society. Stalin neither allowed for the publication of detective novels, nor allowed the genre to be left in libraries.²¹ There were no more calls for "Red Pinkertons"; everything to do with the detective genre was simply banned.

The popular Soviet detective writers who were able to write detective stories to the censors' liking were Arkadii Adamov, Yulian Semyonov, Lev Ovalov, the brothers Arkadii and Grigorii Vainer, and Nikolai Leonov; however, in order to be published, they were forced to portray their heroes as "squeaky clean."²² Stephen Wilkinson, a scholar of the detective genre in Socialist Cuba, references Adamov and the constrained style of Soviet detective writers in comparison with similar trends in Cuban detective novels. As Wilkinson sees it, the use of the detective genre as a "tool of education" lessens the artistic value of the work and casts doubt on the psychological credibility of the detectives. He quotes Adamov scholar Barbara Göbler and her analysis of Adamov's use of "'pathetic' and 'socially directed'"

21. Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*, 4.

22. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 166.

lectures directed at the criminals his detectives apprehend; these detectives are so socially conscious that the novels “invariably end with the criminal being captured alive and offered a chance to reintegrate into society.”²³ It seemed as if the whole Russian population was holding its breath until it could dive back into a detective genre separate from the pedagogical and didactic nature of the books it was forced to read by the nature of the selection available under Stalin.

Stout’s Use of the Capitalist Model in his Nero Wolfe Series

Stout, with his politically critical plots, his unabashedly eccentric and individual character, and his “failure” to push the value of reintegrating a murderer back into the socialist fold, would be an attractive option for a Soviet Russian looking for an entertaining story. Stout’s most famous characters, Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, adored both by Americans and Russians alike, were born with the publication of *Fer-de-lance*. Although Stout would go on to create other characters for a few odd novels of their own, Tecumseh Fox and Dol Bonner, the creation of the Wolfe-and-Archie duo would be Stout’s legacy. Wolfe, a three-hundred-pound Montenegrin detective with a love for orchids, a hatred of women, and a fear of leaving his house, employs the young and dashing Archie Goodwin to traverse New York, doing his errands for him and bringing him suspects and witnesses that help him solve every case. Wolfe charges exorbitant fees, Archie drinks only milk, and together they became one of the detective genre’s most famous crime-solving duos. Although the pair has been compared to Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, as well as

23. Stephen Wilkinson, *Detective Fiction in Cuban Society and Culture* (Peter Lang, 2006), 20.

Hercule Poirot and Captain Hastings, they remain separate and unique to their combination of the puzzle detective, Wolfe, and the hardboiled detective, Archie.²⁴

Stout's use of not one but two private detectives in his Wolfe series emphasizes his novels' adherence to plotlines that would only exist in capitalist society, as opposed to the trend in Soviet and Russian detective fiction of using police or military men as the heroes. For instance, although Wolfe does have a working relationship with several policemen, he often metes out justice on an individual basis, arranging for either the suicide or, more rarely, the murder of the guilty parties.²⁵ His ability to both personally deliver justice and the positive role that his working outside of the system plays in the plots highlight the values of the capitalist society wherein he resides. In *Fer-de-Lance*, Wolfe allows a homicidal son to kill his homicidal father in a plane crash, an instance of sidestepping the judicial system that critic Bruce Beiderwell describes as Wolfe

suggest[ing] that contractual theories of society can minimize his own obligations. A citizen accepts burdens as well as benefits in living in a civil society; Wolfe communicated the burdens to the criminal while saving what benefits he can for himself and (by implication) those who take pleasure in reading of his exploits.²⁶

This description of how Wolfe works is the opposite of anything that could occur under Communism; a private detective self-profiting in terms of both fees from

24. Sean McCann, "The Hard-Boiled Novel," in *Gumshoe America: Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction and the Rise and Fall of New Deal Liberalism*, ed. Donald E. Pease, New Americanists (Duke University Press, 2000), 47, 48.

25. Bruce Beiderwell, "State Power and Self-Destruction: Rex Stout and the Romance of Justice," *Journal of Popular Culture* (1993), 16.

26. Ibid.

solving a crime and income from selling the story of his solving of the crime didn't make sense in a Communist society.

Nero Wolfe's extravagant lifestyle is also indicative of a capitalist world. Ammie Cannon writes that Wolfe embodies the economic structure of American society due to his wealth and social status, implicitly accepting the following:

the right to protect personal property and liberty, the responsibility to work within the socioeconomic framework, the right to make money through whatever legal means present themselves, and the justness of acquiring wealth through the current system of economic distribution, which favors already educated, employed, and generally socially integrated members of society.²⁷

The success of Wolfe and his lifestyle proves how capitalistic individuals are free to take their own path and succeed. Wolfe's actions and lifestyle could never exist in "Red Pinkertons," for Wolfe does not fit the description of Bukharin's hypothetical "revolutionary fighter."

Russian speakers on the online forum also were affected by Stout's portrayal of capitalism in American society.²⁸ New York, the main location of Stout's novels, is an important facet of the plot for Russian readers; the city as a foreign, Western space is received in a variety of ways. Sergey Panichev, a member of an online Wolfe fan club on the Russian site VKontakte, writes that his familiarity with New York remains at a surface level even after reading Stout, for he thinks that Stout's descriptions of the city are almost excessively sparse. However, Panichev writes that

27. Cannon, "Controversial Politics, Conservative Genre: Rex Stout's Archie-Wolfe Duo and Detective Fiction's Conventional Form," 43.

28. The Russian forum members' views on racism, Communism, and the FBI in Stout's novels will be discussed in detail in Chapters Three, Five, and Seven.

reading the Wolfe novels, specifically with their New York setting, “sparked interest of household diversity, the multiculturalism of the city, [and] its multinational nature.” Sergey Chervotkin (username Avis) looks upon the portrayal of New York and America in general “ironically, yet favorably,” and User BleWotan agrees, making the distinction that “States are States, New York is New York :D.”²⁹

Stanislav Zavgorodnii (username Chuchundrovich), the webmaster of the main Russian Nero Wolfe online fan club and an equally intense fan of Stout and America, thinks that Stout’s depiction of the US is “realistic enough.” However, he does point out the class inequality inherent in Stout’s work: “the majority of his characters are people of middle and higher classes of the society. The poor are practically not represented in his books about Nero Wolfe. Besides, most of the stories take place in a huge city—in New York, which also affects our impression of the country.” Zavgorodnii is constantly emphatic in his admiration and interest in America (he even created a website called prousa.info), yet in reference to his “overall experience reading Rex Stout,” one of the things he mentions is economic

29. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015 (11:32am), comment on Molly Zuckerman, “Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii,” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), trans. Gleb Vinokurov, October 18, 2015 (8:38pm), <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015 (4:40pm), comment on Molly Zuckerman, “Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii,” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), trans. Gleb Vinokurov, October 18, 2015 (8:38pm), <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>; User BleWotan, December 14, 2015 (2:26pm), comment on Molly Zuckerman, “Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii,” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), trans. Gleb Vinokurov, October 18, 2015 (8:38pm), <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&start=10>.

class differences, which unconsciously underlines the fact that he grew up in Soviet Ukraine in a culture where class difference was considered a literary trope necessitating analysis.³⁰

Russian readers especially noticed even something as seemingly inconsequential as the brief descriptions of the countryside in Stout's plots. Zavgorodnii writes that the descriptions of the countryside (or rural areas) in America are described in a "quite unusual" manner. Considering that the American countryside detailed in Stout's books, like *Death of a Dude*, and *Some Buried Caesar* (the first Wolfe book that Zavgorodnii read) is a countryside filled with wealthy landowners and their ranches, it is not surprising an ex-Soviet citizen, reading Stout's books in Ukraine in the 1990s, would be surprised by the details of Stout's vision of the American countryside. In *Some Buried Caesar*, a bull is one of the murder victims, and the animal alone is worth tens of thousands of dollars. In the 1990s, a wealthy landowner who owned acres of land and a forty-five thousand dollar bull in the Russian or Ukrainian countryside would have been an impossibility.³¹

The Creation of Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin

Stout's main literary characters, Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, were not only unusual to Russian readers due to the descriptions of their capitalist lifestyle in a democratic society—they were unique to the detective genre as a whole in that their detective partnership was a pairing of two people of relatively equal intelligence.

30. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich) is the creator and head of the Russian Nero Wolfe online forum and website.

31. Rex Stout, *Some Buried Caesar* (Farrar & Rinehart, 1939).

Unlike Watson and Hastings, who hang around Holmes and Poirot in the roles of dim-witted sidekicks who help out their brilliant detective friend with inane comments that often inadvertently point the detective to the murderer, Archie is a useful and essential partner involved intimately in the success of Wolfe's cases.

Nero Wolfe as a fictional character has a more complicated and checkered past than other famous fictional detectives. According to several books in the corpus, Wolfe was born in Montenegro and grew up in a small house on the side of a mountain. Stout scholar Bernard DeVoto traces out a solid timeline of Wolfe's life, beginning with his entering the Austrian secret service in 1913, when Wolfe was between 19 and 21 years of age. He travelled from Egypt to Arabia at this time, and was in Albania in 1915, jailed in Bulgaria in 1916, and joined the Montenegrin army that same year. Wolfe then adopted Carla, a Montenegrin child, having taken pity on her as a starving orphan in 1921, but left her behind when he went to America and from then on did not return to Montenegro until the adventure depicted in *The Black Mountain*.³²

Wolfe never directly gives his life story to Archie or to the readers, but instead lets it slip out, bit by bit, in various stories. In *Over My Dead Body*, he is most candid, for he must deal with the inquisition of a meddling FBI agent. It is during this farcical interrogation that the reader learns about Wolfe's political activities in Europe. In the same book, Wolfe tells Archie that the reason he has so much fat is to protect himself from his feelings after they got too strong for him on one occasion as a boy in Montenegro. Archie guesses that this could have to do with a Montenegrin woman

32. Bernard DeVoto, "The Easy Chair- Alias Nero Wolfe," *Harpers Magazine*, July 1954, 9, 12.

due to his negative reaction upon hearing Carla speak Serbo-Croat when Wolfe is in the office.³³

McAleer speculates that Stout received inspiration for Nero Wolfe from his grandmother, who is described as sitting “much of the time, but always in her special straight backed chair [...] there was always a book in her hands. On a stand beside her a mammoth dictionary lay, perpetually open [...] with houseplants she was a sorceress.”³⁴ As well, Stout scholar William Baring-Gould writes that Wolfe is based on Stout himself:

The case for Stout’s resemblance to Nero improves, however, when their intellectual attributes are considered: both are formidable antagonists in verbal battle: both often stoop to irregular means to prove a point. Then, too, Nero’s hobbies resemble Stout’s. Nero is obsessed by orchids; Stout has won blue ribbons at country fairs for his mammoth pumpkins and strawberries.³⁵

In an interview, Stout refutes any speculation about Wolfe being either the son of Sherlock Holmes or his brother Mycroft, denouncing the ideas as nonsense.³⁶ Stout then delves into his specific notions about the creation of good characters for novels; he claims he created Wolfe, but he has no idea where he came from:

Listen, you know damn well in all fiction writing, dramatic, narrative—no matter what level of literature—all characters are of two kinds. They’re either

33. Rex Stout, *Over My Dead Body* (Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1940), 119.

34. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 49.

35. William S. Baring-Gould, *Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-Fifth Street* (Penguin Books, 1982), ix.

36. Beiderwell, "State Power and Self-Destruction: Rex Stout and the Romance of Justice," 15. Bobby Ray Miller and Ronald G. Burns, "It's Time Again for a New Nero Wolfe Detective Novel," Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

created or contrived. In the created ones, the writer really has no idea where he came from or anything else. And the others, they're made up. And, boy, how you can tell 'em apart.

In another article by Shenker, written several years later, Stout uses Russian book characters as examples of “first degree” writing, even though his characters of Wolfe and Archie did not embody any of the mentioned historically Russian character psychologies: “It was obvious in a paragraph the way Dostoevsky felt about Raskolnikov, or the way Tolstoy felt about Natasha, and their feeling was of a degree that I wouldn't get.”³⁷

There is also the case to be made for Wolfe's heritage owing its creation to Stout's friend Louis Adamic, a Slovenian author, whose description of a Montenegrin seems to have inspired some of Wolfe's more unique characteristics: “Adamic describes the Montenegrin male as tall, commanding, dignified, courteous, hospitable. He is reluctant to work, accustomed to isolation from women [...] he is stubborn, fearless, unsubduable, [and] capable of great self-denial to uphold his ideals.”³⁸

Archie Goodwin does not have as complicated a personal history as Wolfe. He grew up in Ohio and moved to New York at an unknown date and started working for Wolfe soon after, fictionally writing and publishing their cases in the form of the books that readers know Stout really wrote. Wolfe depends on Archie for everything—reading his mail, categorizing his orchid hybrids, and bringing in (sometimes forcibly) murder suspects to the brownstone that Wolfe almost never

37. Israel Shenker, "Rex Stout, 85, Gives Clues on Good Writing," *The New York Times*, December 1, 1971.

38. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 546.

leaves. Even when Wolfe leaves his brownstone for a case in Yugoslavia, a country where he speaks the language and Archie doesn't, he can't leave Archie behind. Wolfe says, "If I hadn't let you grow into a habit I could have done this without you."³⁹

While Wolfe's style of detection is akin to that of classic literary detectives like Poirot, who depend on their intelligence alone to solve complex murder mysteries, Archie's personality is linked to the Sam Spade, hard-boiled model of detective. Archie, while often acknowledging that he does not have the same level of genius as Wolfe, is remarkable in his own intellectual capacity in that he can commit to memory long conversations between multiple people and then repeat them back to Wolfe verbatim whenever Wolfe asks. In his role as the dashing hard-boiled detective, Archie is consistently described as a handsome, well-dressed man, and in many of the stories he takes the female suspects on dates, which fall under the umbrella of his job description of "running errands" for Wolfe. While he is out on these errands, which can range from the aforementioned dates, the illegal searching of a suspect's apartment, to the procurement of a certain type of gourmet food, Wolfe often reminds Archie to always "act in the light of experience as guided by intelligence."⁴⁰

Sean McCann writes that the hard-boiled detective story is central to American culture, and Archie definitely embraces the all-American, gangster-like attitude of classic hard-boiled detectives like Dashiell Hammett's Spade and Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe. Stout's success with his novels can thus be

39. Rex Stout, *The Black Mountain* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1954), Location 684.

40. *In the Best Families* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1950).

attributed to his combination of Wolfe as the eccentric intellectual and Archie as the hard-boiled detective who struggled with the “tension between bureaucratic organization and personal autonomy.”⁴¹ Wolfe has his own personal set of morals and sometimes allowed his eccentricities to halt the democratic processes of justice in favor of the easier way out, but Archie, as the hard-boiled partner of the eccentric, lives his life looking for “the chance to seize his heroic mission and remake his world.”⁴² The characterization of Archie as an archetypal hard-boiled American detective from the 1950s allows his character, when juxtaposed with Wolfe’s intellectual capabilities and foreign background, to participate in the types of international and ideologically subversive intrigues that Stout includes in his plots. Wolfe as a stand-alone character, a Montenegrin refugee in America, could easily be written into commonplace plots of international conspiracies, just as Archie could easily fit into simple plots involving American gangsters: Stout’s genius in pairing these two unique figures together creates the opportunity for more innovative plots and imaginative murders that are realistic due to each detective’s background and personality.

41. McCann, "The Hard-Boiled Novel," 44.

42. *Ibid.*, 45.

2 | Stout Critiques American Politics

As I understand it, the Commies think that they get too little and capitalists get too much of the good things in life. They sure played hell with that theory that Tuesday evening
-Archie Goodwin
Champagne for One

Anti-German Attitudes and a Change of Habit in Writing

The psychology of Wolfe as a character, with his predilection for luxury and his strong views on democratic freedoms, allowed Stout to use Wolfe to promote his own political views without it seeming out of character. Stout took a very strong stance against Nazism during World War II, a stance that manifested itself through both political action and the plots of his detective novels. In 1941, Stout helped establish arguably the most important foundation of his career, Freedom House.⁴³ The organization was created through the merger of political groups that wanted America to enter the war, and devoted itself to the promotion of concrete actions taken towards universal international freedom.

The many organizations to which Stout belonged throughout his life (Friends of Democracy, the War Writers' Board, the Society for the Prevention of World War III, and more) reveals the fact that he considered himself a man of both actions and words; although he was a prolific letter writer and novelist, he also placed importance on making real changes in both American foreign and domestic war-time policies. Stout is quoted as saying in an October 1941 interview with *Cue* magazine, "Everything else of importance must be set aside—work, pleasure, family life, everything, until that man [Hitler] and machine [Nazi Germany] are destroyed.

43. Martin J. Manning and Herbert Romerstein, *Historical Dictionary of American Propaganda* (Greenwood, 2004), 269.

Apathy in the face of the world situation is unthinkable. Shout. Write your Congressman. Write the President. Nag. Coerce. Ridicule. Make yourself felt.”⁴⁴

In his later novels, Stout would combine political messages with the murder mysteries solved by Wolfe and Archie, but it seemed that during the peak of war everything “must be set aside.” Throughout the war years of 1939 to 1945, Stout wrote only five Wolfe novels, two fewer than he normally would have with his one book a year system: *Some Buried Caesar* (1939), *Over My Dead Body* (1940), *Where There’s a Will* (1940), *Black Orchids* (1942), and the two-novella collection *Not Quite Dead Enough* (1944). Of those five novels, only two of them (including both novellas making three) touch on political themes.⁴⁵ In the first story in the two-novella series, Wolfe follows Stout’s directives in *Cue* magazine and gives up his gourmand lifestyle and even begins exercising to prepare to shoot more Germans, because he didn’t shoot enough last time (as he puts it).⁴⁶ The second novella, *Booby Trap*, involves Archie working for the US Army. *Over My Dead Body*, on the other hand, concerns the situation with both Nazis and with Yugoslav refugees, and will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Five.

In a 1943 book review in *The New York Times*, Stout discusses his views on the way that literature can help to change the public’s mind about the German people: “A large majority of us still believe that the Germans are on the whole people of good-will, temporarily misled by the Nazi gangsters. It does no good for me to say

44. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 282.

45. The only other Wolfe story that places Archie and Wolfe in roles helping during wartime is the novella *Help Wanted, Male*, published after the war in 1949.

46. Rex Stout, *Not Quite Dead Enough*, in *Not Quite Dead Enough* (Farrar & Rinehart, 1944), 14.

that that opinion of the Germans is utterly false. Who believes me? But a book could do it.”⁴⁷ Stout’s multiple negative portrayals of Germans (and later Communists and the FBI) in his novels and articles are a reflection of this idea; he uses books to make sure that no one out there could think that any German is a person of good will.

Stout’s pro-war, anti-German attitude continued with a series of radio shows that he hosted on CBS through 1943, a task that he prioritized over writing, for he did not write his annual Wolfe novel in 1943. The first program was called *Speaking of Liberty* in 1941, then *Voice of Freedom* in 1942, with the most well known being *Our Secret Weapon* from 1942 to 1943. All programs analyzed Axis radio transmissions and offered succinct commentary from a counterpropaganda stance. Stout’s neat responses picking apart these propagandizing messages would later be reflected in his novels, where he gives a voice to both the American Communist left and the anti-Communist Nero Wolfe; one can connect both of their ideals with wording used by Stout during his broadcasts and the scripts of the actual Axis broadcasts.⁴⁸

Although Stout had begged the American public to give up all work and pleasure for the war effort, his manner of speaking during the program revealed that his mind never quite stopped thinking of Wolfe and Archie. McAleer describes Stout’s role on *Our Secret Weapon* as a lie detective:

Rex used the logic of Nero Wolfe and the idiom of Archie—with due allowances for “Pfui” [Wolfe’s favorite], which turn up in the broadcasts

47. "Books and the Tiger," *The New York Times Book Review Spring Book Supplement* March 21, 1943.

48. *The Truth*, Podcast audio, *Our Secret Weapon*, 14:36 August 30, 1942, <https://archive.org/details/1942RadioNews>. See the deleted excerpt from the manuscript of *Home to Roost*, referenced in Chapter Three, as an example of this reflection.

every now and again. Indeed, the World Wide interviewer, watching Rex examine “with patient curiosity” the scripts of the monitored broadcasts, found him quite Neronian [...] On 20 September, he spoke in pure Goodwinese: “The Germans have no good bets left. They’ve raked in all the easy pots and from here they’re drawing to inside straights.”⁴⁹

Stout’s antipathy against the German people was well recorded throughout the war in his non-fiction articles as well. His anti-Germany essay entitled, “We Shall Hate or We Shall Fail,” published in 1943 in *The New York Times*, reaffirms Stout’s harsh position against Germany and Germans as a whole. Stout writes in a mockery of Hitler’s words, “You can be a German, or you can accept a code of morality. You cannot do both,” referencing a quotation of Hitler’s, “You can be a German, or you can be Christian. You cannot be both.”⁵⁰ In 1945, Stout even briefly went to Germany as a war correspondent, and while on a tour he “took a shot at a distant German soldier but ‘apparently missed.’”⁵¹ Stout’s unequivocal hatred of Germans, and his conflation of all Germans with the Nazi Party, might seem narrow-minded when one looks at his later protests against McCarthyism and his strong stance against censorship. A man who was able to preach for hatred and strong government intervention against international US enemies did not seem compatible with a man who would later go on to be a loud protestor against McCarthy’s and the FBI’s intervention against internal US enemies. But Stout was a man of strong opinions,

49. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 294-95.

50. Rex Stout, "We Shall Hate, or We Shall Fail," *The New York Times*, January 17 1943, 6.

51. O.E. McBride, *Stout Fellow: A Guide through Nero Wolfe's World*, (iUniverse, 2003).

and although they made have seemed in conflict with each other to an outside observer, he followed his personal code of morality and therefore was never bothered by any apparent contradictions.

Stout and World Federalism

Besides his crusade against the Germans, Stout spent a significant amount of time from before the war until much later in life dealing with the idea of world federalism. Stout had chaired the Writers' War Board, established in January 1942, an organization supporting World Federalism that he remained a member of until 1970.⁵² His feelings about WWII led him to the belief that the best way to avoid another war was to create one global government that would be in charge of every country. After the war, Stout continued his support for world federalism by joining the United World Federalists, a 50,000-member organization founded in 1947 that claimed such celebrity writers as Kurt Vonnegut and E. B. White as members. Stout, along with two other members, giant of musical comedy Oscar Hammerstein II and radio and television personality Clifton Fadiman, all wrote and acted in a play called, "The Myth that Threatens the World" that toured America in the early 1950s, sponsored and promoted by the United World Federalists.⁵³ When interviewed about the controversy of the play, which centered on the United Nations becoming the basis for a global government, Stout was quoted as saying,

52. Benjamin F. Shearer, *Home Front Heroes: A Biographical Dictionary of Americans During Wartime* vol. 3 (Greenwood, 2006), 788.

53. "The Myth That Threatened the World," in *Rex Stout: Activist* (The Wolfe Pack: The Nero Wolfe Literary Society).

We were a small island of liberty in a despotic world 173 years ago when our Declaration of Independence was issued [...] But this July 4th, after nearly ninety score years of great change, including two world wars in our own lifetime, we have become the leaders in a fight for a free and peaceful world. Necessarily, this means our own freedom at home has become dependent on the progress of liberty everywhere.⁵⁴

Stout went as far as personally inviting J. Edgar Hoover, then head of the FBI, to the play, writing that Hoover would be “glad [he] came,” but Hoover responded that he was “unable to accept [his] gracious invitation as previous commitments preclude [his] attendance at the event.”⁵⁵ Stout also personally wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt in 1951, quoting part of an article she had written and imploring her to publically support the movement for world government. Stout ended the letter with an appeal: “Your support of that great cause would be one of the most encouraging pieces of news that could possibly be proclaimed. May it not be that you are now ready to proclaim it?”⁵⁶

Stout’s activities with world federalism would not have been welcome ideas in the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 50s. In 1934, Stalin had declared that Communism was a success at the 17th Congress of the Communist Party, better known as the Congress of Victors. Stalin did desire a world government, but in his terms that would involve an international proletarian revolt that would lead to

54. "17 Writers Frame a World Law Plan," *The New York Times* July 4, 1949.

55. Unknown to J. Edgar Hoover, undated correspondence, FBI Redacted File, Wolfe Pack online archives, 3.

56. Rex Stout to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Writers Board for World Government,” January 15, 1951, Wolfe Pack online archives.

Communism in every country. Stalin had resolved himself to building “socialism in one country,” and wanted as little Western interference in the Soviet population as was possible. On the other hand, Stout was constantly dreaming of a universal capitalist order that would inevitably include Russia in its jurisdiction.

Stout and Racism

World federalism and the hope for every society to be governed by the same rules necessitated an idea of what these rules should be, and therefore Stout’s ideas of morality and human rights took on a great significance in his life. His strong stances against Nazis and Germans can be explained by his overarching desire for a world government according to his moral values, and this included taking a stance on the societal problems he saw within America, especially the plight of African Americans. Stout had always had what McAleer referred to as a “lifelong respect and admiration for blacks,” and this respect led to the inclusion of the theme of race relations in providing motives for murder in two Wolfe stories, *Too Many Cooks* (1938) and *A Right to Die* (1964), thus highlighting the senselessness of racism and its consequences in America.⁵⁷

The first Wolfe novel to touch on racism is *Too Many Cooks*, a novel that is described as Stout’s way of “clearly strik[ing] a blow for human freedom so subtly the reader never realizes he is being enlisted for a point of view in the process of enjoying a detective story.”⁵⁸ The plot is an unusual one, for it takes Wolfe out of his brownstone and places him in Kanawha Spa, West Virginia, where he attends a

57. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 53.

58. *Ibid.*, 263.

sauce-tasting and one of the chefs involved is murdered in front of Wolfe. The spa employed a black service staff, and therefore the murderer wore blackface to commit the crime undetected, which brings race into the mix. While Archie casually uses racial slurs throughout the book, Wolfe does not, and during a long speech to the black service staff, he convinces one of them, Paul Whipple, to divulge a secret and therefore catch the murderer.⁵⁹

Skipping ahead in years to continue along this same race theme, the Wolfe novel, *A Right to Die*, was published almost thirty years later in 1964. It is also unusual in that a character from a previous novel returns (who is not Wolfe's nemesis Arnold Zeck or one of the recurring policemen or freelance detectives) in the form of Paul Whipple, who helped Wolfe catch the murderer in Kanawha Spa. Whipple's son, Dunbar, is going to marry a white woman, Susan, who also works for the Rights of Citizens Committee (ROCC), and Whipple wants the interracial marriage stopped. Wolfe only agrees to take the case due to his owing Whipple a favor, but when Susan gets murdered and Dunbar ends up behind bars, Wolfe sets about finding the real murderer. After a second murder takes place, Wolfe manages to pin the crimes on a white woman whose son had killed himself years before after Susan had refused his romantic advances. The mother had traced Susan down and taken a job at the ROCC to be near her for months, but had only decided to kill her after she became engaged to a black man, which was an "insult" that she couldn't stand; her reason for murder was solely racially-motivated.⁶⁰ The racially charged plot of *A Right to Die* called

59. Rex Stout, *Too Many Cooks* (Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1938).

60. *A Right to Die* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1964).

attention to Stout as a positive race relations advocate: after the novel's publication, Stout was elected to the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing.⁶¹

61. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 440.

3 | Stout and His Characters Hate the “Commies”

But the Communist angle comes first until and unless it's ruled out. So you can see why we're in on it. The public interest is involved, not only of this city and state but the whole country. You see that?
-Nero Wolfe and the Communist Killer

Battling Stereotypes and Promoting Democratic Liberties

Stout's main crusades, fighting what he saw as the immorality of both McCarthyism and Communism, directly put him in the public spotlight in America in a way that his past political projects, anti-Nazism, world federalism, and anti-racism, had not. He was first and foremost a strong anti-communist, being against both American Communism and Communism abroad. Stout believed in the importance of democracy, and used the Nero Wolfe series in order to express those beliefs, indicated previously by his placing Wolfe and Archie in the middle of the war effort. Due to the ferocity of Stout's anti-Communist plots detailed in this chapter, it is surprising that some of his books were allowed to be printed in the USSR before the fall of Communism.

Stout's personal battle against McCarthyism was complicated by his past and present association with several organizations that allegedly had Communist connections, such as *The New Masses*: some people mistook his far-left leanings for more “sinister” Communist ones. His FBI file in 1942 contained a memo that branded Stout as “a Communist fellow traveler and one of the prize exhibits of the [Martin] Dies House Committee on Un-American Activities.”⁶² When Stout met Dies, the *Amarillo Globe* reported, Stout told him "I hate Communists as much as you do,

62. Michael Newton, *The FBI Encyclopedia* (McFarland, 2003), 325. Martin Dies was the creator of the House Committee Investigating Un-American Activities, which later became HUAC.

Martin, but there's one difference between us. I know what a Communist is and you don't."⁶³ Herbert Mitgang references a column in the *Washington Times-Herald* that also attacked Stout in reference to his alleged Communism:

Rex Stout [is a] goat-bearded writer of mystery stories [...] his long gray chin whiskers bristled against a scarlet shirt, and there was a fanatical gleam in his small brown eyes. He was like a grotesque caricature of a man.⁶⁴

In 1944, when Stout attended a Republican political rally for New York representative Hamilton Fish and publically heckled him with accusations of spreading Nazi propaganda, Fish's response was to attack Stout's political views: "You are a Communist and are more dangerous to America than Earl Browder!"⁶⁵ Stout is quoted as saying that he built his house, High Meadow, "all in Connecticut because I didn't want Hamilton Fish—so what did I get? Clare Boothe Luce!"⁶⁶ Stout's treatment at the Fish rally (and subsequently by Hoover and the FBI after the publication of his novel *The Doorbell Rang*), was the stimulus for Stout's questioning the necessity of unsubstantiated accusations of Communism.

63. "Some Quips That Flew in from the Air Front," *The Amarillo Globe* April 26, 1945.

64. Chesly Manly quoted in Herbet Mitgang, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America's Greatest Authors* (Open Road Distribution, 2015), Location 3037.

65. Earl Browder was the leader of the Communist Party USA from 1930 to 1945.

66. "Stout Nearly Causes a Riot at Fish Rally," *The New York Times*, November 3 1944; John T. Winterich and Frankel Haskel, "Private Eye on the FBI," *Saturday Review of Literature*, (October 9 1965): 54-55. Luce won the Republican seat House of Representatives representing Fairfield Country, Connecticut, in 1942. Stout's animosity towards her in this quotation is presumed to stem from her popularity with isolationists, while Stout was a staunch advocate for entering the war. Luce was also the wife of Henry Luce, the former right-wing editor of *Time* magazine. Wikipedia contributors, "Clare Boothe Luce," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Clare_Boothe_Luce&oldid=707265564.

Stout saw the fight against Communism and the fight against the rising influence of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s as linked causes. Although McCarthy was allegedly fighting Communism in his own particular way, with public denunciations, Stout believed that McCarthy's style actually worked against those truly fighting Communism. McCarthy's loud ways and calls for more censorship of suspected Communists led to a decline in democratic freedoms in America, and Stout considered the worth of democratic freedom to be higher than any effort to quell alleged Communist sentiment. McAleer writes that "Rex saw that the methods of McCarthyism discredited democracy itself. Freedom House [where Stout worked during the height of McCarthyism] did not wish to bundle with strange bedfellows."⁶⁷ In 1952, Freedom House released a statement, drafted with help from Stout, concerning the danger of McCarthyism: "Wild exaggerations and inexcusable inaccuracies serve to divide and confuse the country when we should be united in the task of resisting Communist aggression abroad and Communist subversion at home."⁶⁸

Stout's dismissal of the legitimacy of McCarthyism also meant that he aligned himself against what he saw as the excessive censorship of writers spurred on by McCarthy's overzealous attitude. Stout was part of the Committee of 1,000 that signed a document, written by Harvard astronomer Dr. Harlow Sharpley and published in 1948 in *The New York Sun*, that referred to the HUAC trials as a "trial by

67. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 370.

68. *Ibid.*, 376.

headlines [that] encouraged publicity seekers and sympathizers.”⁶⁹ In 1952, Stout became president of the Authors’ League of America (also known as the Authors’ Guild), which was part of the movement against the blacklisting of writers for purported Communist connections (the specialty of magazines like *Red Channels*.)⁷⁰

Stout was against all intrusion from above into the mind of the writer, even if the writer might be a Communist. McAleer describes a situation where an FBI man came to High Meadow to ask Stout about a friend, and once the FBI agent asked if this friend had read *The New Republic*, Stout remembered, “I wouldn’t talk to him anymore. I will not cooperate with a subversive organization, and to censor or restrict what a man reads is subversive. I got so damned mad, I put him out.”⁷¹ Interestingly, Stout refers to the FBI as the subversive organization, even while the FBI was hinting of his friend’s connection with Communism, an ideology that Stout also sees as subversive. Stout’s activities with the rights of writers against censorship accentuate how his commitment to democratic values in America could outweigh his personal feelings about Communism.

69. Mitgang, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America’s Greatest Authors*, Location 2056. Later seen as the American version of “show trials,” the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) led highly publicized hearings on the purported subversive behavior of Americans linked to the Communist Party. Wikipedia contributors, “House Un-American Activities Committee,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=House_Un-American_Activities_Committee&oldid=708565501. Novelist Philip Quarles notes in an address that Stout actually ignored a subpoena from HUAC in the 1950s. Philip Quarles, *Rex Stout Writes Detective Stories, Makes Enemies of the FBI*, text of podcast audio, WNYC.org, 1:00p, 2013, 2.

70. Mitgang, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America’s Greatest Authors*, Location 3004. Although the FBI claimed in their file on Stout that there were “numerous Communists” in the Authors’ Guild membership, that claim was never supported with any names or other evidence.

71. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty’s Life*, 447.

Stout's Anti-Communism Enters His Novels

Stout's aversion to groundless Communist accusations becomes the baseline for the characters, murder, and motive in *The Second Confession* (1949).⁷² The plot revolves around James U. Sperling and his family. Sperling wishes to hire Wolfe to rid his daughter of her boyfriend, Louis Rony, because he suspects that Rony is a Communist. However, there is no hard evidence of his Communist sympathies, and therefore Sperling wants Wolfe to find the proof and present it to his daughter. For according to Sperling, proof of his Communist leanings would be valid reason to end the relationship, which is referred to as "a fate worse than death."⁷³ Archie and Wolfe don't question this logic, for severing ties with a person simply due to a discovery of their Communist leanings makes sense to them as well.

This plot contains a possible contradiction between Wolfe and Archie's views on Communism with those of Stout. Stout is against McCarthyism, for he feels that it unfairly affects innocent men, and yet he writes a novella in which Wolfe does not question the breakup of a relationship due to a man being a Communist. The distinction should be made here that Wolfe does not fabricate any evidence, and that suspicion alone does not make Wolfe condemn Rony, as McCarthy most likely would have done. Instead, Wolfe agrees to the case only so far as sending Archie to the Sperling home to have a look at both Rony and Sperling's smitten daughter. However, his acceptance of the case in the first place implies that it is not morally wrong to try to figure out if a man is a Communist, albeit if it is done in the subtler

72. Ibid., 364. In response to the publication of *The Second Confession*, a *Daily Worker* review lauded Stout's plotline for its discovery of "the possibilities in fusing the current anticommunist drive with the mystery formula."

73. Rex Stout, *The Second Confession* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1949), 8.

way of private detection, rather than McCarthy's public denunciations and the showiness of the HUAC trials.

Stout gives anti-Communist sentiments to all of his characters in this story, including both Wolfe and Archie. Sperling says that his daughter tried out Communism in college, but then decided that it was "intellectually contemptible and morally unsound." Archie responds to this with a familiarly toned quip, "I like the way she put it. The best I can do is 'a Commie is a louse' or something like that."⁷⁴ The plot becomes complicated when Archie goes to stay at the Sperling house for the weekend, and in a series of events, tries to drug Rony's drink, finds it already drugged and then arranges for Rony to get hit on the head so he can steal his wallet. The wallet turns out to contain the damning evidence of a card certifying that a William Reynolds is a member of the American Communist Party, and, shortly after this discovery, Rony's body is found run over by a car in the bushes outside of the Sperling home. Wolfe and Archie must then figure out if Rony and Reynolds are the same person, or if the card belongs to another member of the household.

During these events, it comes out that Rony worked for Arnold Zeck, the longtime nemesis of Wolfe and the only traditional evil villain in the Stout novels. This discovery is made when Zeck orders a machine-gun attack on Wolfe's beloved orchid plants. In order to expose the murderer of Rony without further incurring Zeck's wrath (although Wolfe is prepared to take him on if necessary), he arranges a complicated trick wherein he writes several anonymous exposés of Communist Party

74. *Ibid.*, 6.

meetings in order to have leverage to make the top members of the American Communist party tell him William Reynolds's real identity.

Archie's language and repertoire with secondary characters concerning Communists doesn't improve from his initial "louse" comment. He and one of the Sperling daughters verbally spar, with her calling him a "comrade" as an insult (a device that Stout used in *Home to Roost*). Archie later says that he "wouldn't put anything beneath a Commie." He cracks jokes about Wolfe's Communist informant behind the exposés being a member of the "Union Square Politburo," refers again to this man as "telling the Commies' family secrets," and references "commissars" reading the documents of the American Communist party. When Wolfe has Archie call the Communist Party headquarters, Archie is connected with a female secretary:

In a moment a pleasant feminine voice was in my ear. Its being pleasant was a shock, and also I was a little self-conscious, conversing for the first time with a female Commie, so I said, "My name's Goodwin, comrade."⁷⁵

His surprise and shock is the most offensive attitude against Communism taken thus far in the book. Archie jokes in every situation, never taking things seriously, so to have him be self-conscious emphasizes that something about speaking with a real Communist has jarred him in a way that only the discovery of a dead body had done before.

The plot of *The Second Confession* contains another reference to Stout's own personal political inclination besides anti-Communism: world federalism. One of the guests at the Sperling house when Rony is murdered is Paul Emerson, a radio

75. Ibid., 37, 220, 41, 08, 13, 12.

personality who represents Sperling's Continental Mines Corporation. Wolfe dislikes Emerson due to his attitude concerning the World Federalists:

Minutes later Emerson was taking a crack at another of his pet targets: ... they call themselves World Federalists, this bunch of amateur statesmen, and they want us to give up the one thing we've got left—the right to make our own decisions about our own affairs. They think it would be fine if we had to ask permission of all the world's runts and funny-looking dimwits every time we wanted to move our furniture around a little, or even to leave it where it is...⁷⁶

As mentioned earlier, Stout was an active member of the United World Federalists, and this small aside getting revenge on one of their opponents is cleverly written into the book's finale. Once Wolfe catches the murderer, Sperling calls to say that “the Continental Mines Corporation was grateful to him for removing a Communist tumor from its internal organs and would be glad to pay a bill if he sent one,” but Wolfe turns down the money and asks instead for the removal of Emerson from the radio as payment. When Sperling objects, citing that Emerson had popularity, Wolfe retorts harshly: ““So had Goebbels [...] and Mussolini.””⁷⁷ Wolfe compares a dislike of world federalism with Nazism and Fascism, overstating his comparison to make a point while mirroring Stout's own views on the matter.⁷⁸

Returning to the Communist theme in the plot of *The Second Confession*, Wolfe writes several articles for *The Gazette*, the fictional New York newspaper in

76. *Ibid.*, 159, 60.

77. *Ibid.*, 238, 39.

78. *The Second Confession* was published in 1949, and it was the early 1950s when Stout would tour the country as a stage actor extolling the virtues of a single world government.

the Wolfe series, in order to scare the Communist Party into helping him identify the murderer. It is never clearly explained who Wolfe's informant is; that part of the plot is purposefully left vague. The preface to Wolfe's first article reads as follows:

HOW THE AMERICAN COMMUNISTS PLAY IT/ THE RED ARMY IN THE COLD WAR/THEIR GHQ IN THE USA [...] *The Gazette presents herewith the first of a series of articles showing how American Communists help Russia fight the cold war and get ready for the hot one if and when it comes. This is the real thing. For obvious reasons the name of the author of the articles cannot be given, but the Gazette has a satisfactory guaranty of their authenticity. We hope to continue the series up to the most recent activities of the Reds, including their secret meetings before, during, and after the famous trial in New York. The second article will appear tomorrow. Don't miss it!*⁷⁹

The articles succeed in their purpose of scaring the American Communist Party into a willingness to do anything to stop them. Wolfe assembles a meeting of two of the leaders of the American Communist Party in his office so that they can identify one of their members from several photographs of all suspects from the Sperling house party, for Wolfe doesn't know which one goes by "William Reynolds," as an alias for his membership to the American Communist party. Consequently, the American Communist members would indirectly name the murderer by identifying which Sperling house party guest went by the name William Reynolds (which they do).

79. Stout, *The Second Confession*, 207, 08. "The famous trial" referenced is the Rosenberg spy trial.

Archie's description of the Party members is on par with his usual vocabulary concerning Communists; his continual surprise over the normal appearance of Communists is always insulting: "Having seen one or two high-ranking Commies in the flesh, and many published pictures of more than a dozen of them, I didn't expect our callers to look like wart hogs or puff adders, but even so they surprised me a little."⁸⁰ Wolfe manages to persuade the two men to identify the photo, which turns out to be the image of a man named Webster Kane, an associate of Sperling's. The dialogue between Stevens, one of the Communist Party leaders, and Wolfe, serves to underline the idea that merely linking a man with Communism does not make him a murderer. Stevens says, "It hasn't quite got to where you can prove a man committed murder just by proving he's a Communist." [...] 'No,' Wolfe conceded. 'Rather the contrary. Communists are well advised to disapprove of private murders for private motives.'⁸¹

The last twenty or so pages of the novel have more slurs against Communism than the rest of the book combined. Archie pokes fun at the supposed gluttony of the Communist Party leaders:

As I understand it, the Commies think that they get too little and capitalists get too much of the good things in life. They sure played hell with that theory that Tuesday evening. A table in the office was loaded with liquids, cheese, nuts, homemade pâté, and crackers, and not a drop or a crumb was taken by any of the thirteen people there [non-Communists], including Wolfe and me. On a

80. *Ibid.*, 214.

81. *Ibid.*, 216. Wolfe's sentiment reflects the differences between Western crime fiction and Soviet crime fiction, for the latter tended to avoid motives for murder involving private or individual gain, wants, or intrigue.

table in the front room there was a similar assortment in smaller quantities, and Harvey and Stevens [Communists], just two of them, practically cleaned it up. If I had noticed it before the Commies left I would have called it to their attention.⁸²

When Wolfe goes through his final deduction, he does not mention Kane by name directly, and so Sperling gets the wrong idea that Rony was the one who belonged to the Communist Party. Wolfe corrects this misperception and adds, “You were as wrong [...] as a man can get. You may be a good businessman, Mr. Sperling, but you had better leave the exposure of disguised Communists to competent persons.”⁸³ Wolfe is casting another stone at McCarthy with his reprimand of Sperling; McCarthy is not a competent person to weed out Communists, but Wolfe considers that he himself is.

Once the name Kane is revealed, Sperling’s attitude is one of horror “after the terrific jolt of learning that he had nurtured a Commie in his bosom for years.” Wolfe, who does not mince words in his accusation, takes the harshest tone: “You’re done as Kane [the murderer’s real identity], with the Communist brand showing at last. You’re done as Reynolds, with your comrades spitting you out as only they can spit. You’re done even as a two-legged animal, with a murder to answer for.”⁸⁴ Wolfe has the evidence that Kane ran over Rony with a car, and that is why he can call him a murderer; his guilt on murder charges is separate from his Communism. And again,

82. Ibid., 225.

83. Ibid., 230.

84. Ibid., 237, 35, 36.

the motive for Rony's murder was to protect Kane's undisclosed identity as a Communist.

Chervotkin, on the Russian forum, did not like the plot of *The Second Confession* due to his opinion of both Stout's ignorance concerning the reality of Communism, and the validity of Stout's depictions and source material: "There is too much exaggeration, too much bile, without any proper knowledge of the subject. What Stout is describing was characteristic of the end of the 19th century. I believe he collected the information from Marx's works and Bolshevik newspapers of the beginning of the 20th century."⁸⁵ Vk user Panichev's concise summation of Stout's views on Communism in regards to *The Second Confession* is humorous in its accurate simplicity: "apparently he was not impressed."⁸⁶

Stout's presentation of anti-Communist sentiment in his plots continues with two novellas published in the trilogy *Triple Jeopardy* in 1952. The first is *Home to Roost* (originally entitled *Nero Wolfe and the Communist Killer*), which is mainly concerned with Wolfe's beliefs about both the threat of Communism in America as well as the threat of the threat to Communism, McCarthyism. The murdered man is purportedly a Communist, and the same kind of harsh language surrounding the Communist Party that appears in *The Second Confession* develops with greater prevalence in this story line. The story begins with Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Rackell coming to Wolfe with a problem: their nephew has been murdered, and before his death had admitted to being a FBI spy posing as a Communist.⁸⁷ At first glance, it

85. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015.

86. Sergey Panichev, Vkontakte message to author, March 15, 2016.

87. Rex Stout, *Home to Roost*, in *Triple Jeopardy* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1952), 1.

seems to be a locked-room mystery: Arthur Rackell attends a dinner with five guests, swallows a vitamin capsule, and is dead within ten minutes.

However, after Archie gathers the guests together in Wolfe's office for a discussion, it becomes clear that the murder plot is hopelessly tangled in political intrigue, with FBI agents pretending to be Communists and Communists getting spooked by FBI agents. Wolfe sends Archie out on a willing fool's errand to provoke the murderer into revealing herself. He purposefully tries to convince one of the guests to falsely confess for money, leading to her telling the story to another murder suspect, undercover FBI agent Carol Berk. The story resolves itself with the admission that Arthur Rackell had been a true Communist and had lied to his aunt about his FBI cover in order to continue following his divisive political ideology. Unfortunately for him, his aunt was secretly a member of the American Communist Party too, and, overcome with fear at the threat of exposure by actually living with an FBI agent, put poison in her nephew's vitamins to save her reputation.

Although both Wolfe and Archie express strong anti-Communist views through their harsh language to the suspects, the novella's main political purpose is to take subtle jabs at the logic behind McCarthyism. McCarthyism was in its heyday in 1951 when the story was first published, for in 1950 McCarthy had given his famous speech on Lincoln Day (a Republican party fundraising event) during which he brandished a list of the names of supposedly known Communists that were working in the State Department (a claim that he had trouble proving in the following years). Wolfe's speech to the five potential murderers in his office is where he pokes McCarthyism most directly: "I deplore the current tendency to accuse people of pro-

communism irresponsibly and unjustly.”⁸⁸ Wolfe’s statement is in line with Stout’s thoughts, for McAleer writes that Stout believed “that McCarthy helped Communism by making anti-Communism seem reactionary.”⁸⁹ The complexity of the plot, with the basis for murder turning out to be false and unfounded in the conclusion, proves Stout’s point that McCarthyism was the wrong approach to eliminating Communism within the United States. A man is murdered because of the heightened fear of exposure during the Red Scare—a family member kills her orphaned nephew just to avoid being labeled a Communist. This worst-case consequence of the Red Scare could be seen as a warning of the dangers of McCarthy’s methods of fighting Communism.

Stout walks a fine line between his disgust for Communism and his disgust for McCarthyism, for while *Home to Roost* loudly denounces McCarthyism, Stout has no qualms about denouncing Communism in even stronger terms. Once the term “Communist” has been introduced to the plot by the Rackells in their first meeting with Wolfe, it is then most often shortened to the pejorative, “Commie,” its pejorative nature further accentuated by the prevalence of its proximity to the word “murder” and other negative phrases. Mrs. Rackell is described as being, “convinced not that one of them was a Commie and a murderer, but that they all were.” Wolfe brings it home by comparing Communist leanings to a terminal illness: “Anyone might be a Communist, just as anyone might have a hidden carcinoma.” The plot contains several more insulting references to and jokes about Communism: there is an “odium

88. Ibid., 49, 50.

89. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 378. See Heda Kovaly’s thoughts on McCarthyism in Chapter Six.

attached” to the ideology, and Archie is described as eyeing up the attractive Carol Berk “with an expression of comradely interest.” The comedic jests also include Wolfe accusing the five suspects of walking out of his office in order “to call a meeting of your Politburo,” and again with Carol Berk telling Archie that she will be wearing “a hammer and sickle in [her] buttonhole” on their first date.⁹⁰

In an earlier manuscript for *Home to Roost*, Stout wrote an ending in which Mrs. Rackell and Wolfe had a harsh ideological showdown in Wolfe’s office, as opposed to the published ending, in which Archie simply calls the police to turn over the murderer. The deleted section includes Mrs. Rackell shouting at her Communist companion, who had given away her guilt in the murder of her nephew:

“You worm,” she said with cold contempt. “He was a danger to us—I thought he was—and he had to die. And I served the cause! There is nothing but the cause—nothing, nothing. If you tell the police—are you mad, you fool?” He stared at her, at her white lipless face only inches from his, as she held him. He spoke. Staring at her, he said calmly, “I must do my duty as a citizen, Mrs. Rackell.”

Wolfe responds fiercely to both Mrs. Rackell and her companion, becoming enraged at the idea that a Communist would use his American citizenship as any sort of reason to act morally:

“A citizen?” he roared. “In heaven’s name, a citizen of what? You owe allegiance to this country, but you give it to another. You are intellectual robots and moral imbeciles. You scorn and betray the duties and

90. Stout, *Home to Roost*, 14, 18, 22, 51, 52, 28, 52, 54.

responsibilities of citizenship, but you claim the protection of its rights and privileges.” His leveled finger waggled. “Very well, madam, you’ll get that protection. In the service of your preposterous cause you have killed a man, and in this country whose interests you have infamously betrayed you will be tried fairly and truly. Ingrates!”

While we don’t know why Stout left this argument out of the final published version, he obviously wrestled with its inclusion, for the passages quoted from above were attached to the manuscript with the note to “delete lines 7 to 13 and replace with this,” meaning that he added it in and then took it out again.⁹¹ The name change of the novella as well, from *Nero Wolfe and the Communist Killer* to the more innocuous *Home to Roost*, demonstrates Stout’s indecisiveness over how overt he wanted his own political beliefs to be represented in his works of fiction.⁹² Wolfe’s speech also mimics the way that Stout reconciled his hatred for McCarthyism with his hatred for Communism; no matter what, democratic values came first, and Wolfe embodies that idea by including that Mrs. Rackell would still receive the “rights and privileges” of an American citizen. This inclusion underlines the core of Stout’s problems with Senator McCarthy’s treatment of alleged Communists; even with their subversive ideology, Stout did not approve of McCarthy taking away their democratic rights.

Although two users from the Russian forum, Zavgorodnii and user BleWotan, did not like the plot, it is significant that they both referenced *Home to Roost* as the

91. Undated manuscript by Rex Stout, *Home to Roost*, Box 15, Folder 5, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

92. Wolfe’s deleted speech condemning Mrs. Rackell and her Communist friend is important to keep in mind when reading Stout’s 1966 article on the outcome of the Rosenberg spy trial of 1951.

novella that showed them the proof of Stout's anti-Communist attitudes in Wolfe's actions. Zavgorodnii actively sees Wolfe as an outlet for Stout's politics, for the ardent anti-Communist plot causes Zavgorodnii to write: "No wonder that Wolfe does not like communists either."⁹³ User BleWotan, describing this novella as "mediocre," calls the Communism depicted in the plot as "somewhat unserious, unlike Stout's hatred for it."⁹⁴ Their connection of Wolfe and Stout's anti-Communist sentiments as reflections of one another supports the previous argument that Stout used Wolfe as a vehicle for his personal political views.

In the second novella from the trilogy *Triple Jeopardy*, *The Cop Killer*, two citizens from a country implied to be run by Communist leaders come to Wolfe for a case, making a change from the American Communists Wolfe had previously dealt with. The story begins with Carl and Tina, a couple who work at the barber shop that Archie and Wolfe frequent, coming to Wolfe's office to ask him to get them out of a fix. At first, they won't tell Archie the real reason they have come (Wolfe is out of the picture here, for he leaves the front room immediately after seeing them trembling in his yellow chairs—he can't deal with emotional clients). Carl explains that he met his wife

"three years ago in a concentration camp in Russia. If you want me to I will tell you why it was that they would never have let us get out of there alive, not in one hundred years, but I would rather not talk so much about it. It makes me start to tremble, and I am trying to learn to act and talk of a manner so I can quit trembling."

93. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

94. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015.

Carl and Tina's descriptions of life in Communist Russia are always characterized in this manner: vague terms of horror and accompanied by Carl's trembling. Their life abroad before working at the barber shop has no positive memories associated with it, for Archie comments on them as having "run out of despair long ago" and Carl utters the heavy phrase, "we have learned so long ago to stay away from windows."⁹⁵

After paying a visit to the barbershop, Archie finds out that a policeman on a solo investigation of a hit-and-run had been murdered there that morning, and that Carl and Tina are the main suspects due to their fleeing the crime scene. Although they proclaim their innocence, Wolfe takes umbrage at their absconding from the site of a murder, so Carl explains that

a policeman asking questions [...] has a different effect on different people. If you have a country like this one and you are innocent of crime, all the people of your country are saying it with you when you answer the questions. That is true even when you are away from home— especially when you are away from home. But Tina and I have no country at all. The country we had once, it is no longer a country, it is just a place to wait to die, only if we are sent back there we will not have to wait. Two people alone cannot answer a policeman's questions anywhere in the world. It takes a whole country to speak to a policeman, and Tina and I— we do not have one.⁹⁶

Before the identity of the murderer is discovered, Archie spends time interrogating the couple in his front room, leading them into admitting they don't know how to

95. Rex Stout, *The Cop-Killer*, in *Triple Jeopardy*: (The Viking Press, Inc., 1952), 58, 84, 93.

96. *Ibid.*, 62.

drive a car, and therefore cannot have been responsible for the original hit-and-run with no motive to kill the policeman. However, they still greatly fear any sort of confrontation with police, and at one point Carl even attacks Archie physically. Carl and Tina's fear of policemen and of Archie's own interrogation is contrasted with the treatment they receive from policemen when they are eventually found; although the police are exasperated with Wolfe, they do not harm or hassle the couple in the way that they had feared, a learned fear from their time in a Russian concentration camp.

While Archie has the couple hidden in the front room, Inspector Cramer, a recurring friend and foe, comes by to demand knowledge on Carl and Tina's whereabouts. Archie uses candor as a disguise, joking openly that he has them hidden in the front room right under the Inspector's nose, and Cramer leaves in a huff. In reference to his trick, Archie says, "It's the Hitler-Stalin technique in reverse. They tell barefaced lies to have them taken for the truth, and we told the barefaced truth to have it taken for a lie," paralleling the backwardness of life under both of those regimes.⁹⁷ Archie eventually discovers that the murderer is another barber at the shop, Jimmie, who drunkenly killed two women with a stolen car the night before and had then killed the cop who discovered his identity. The book ends with the insinuation that Wolfe will call in favors to Washington in order to get the proper legal papers for Carl and Tina to stay in the United States, an unusually kind move for Wolfe. Wolfe's final action to help them avoid a return to their home country reveals that he will go uncharacteristically out of his way to help people avoid Communism.⁹⁸

97. *Ibid.*, 93

98. Stout does not mention Communism by name, but he clearly states that Carl and Tina were in a Russian concentration camp in the English publication, and Russia was

The Cop Killer's representation of Soviet refugees was widely seen as inaccurate on the Russian online forum. Scholar Elena Baraban introduces the idea that the disconnect between an American's [Stout's] portrayal of a Russian person, and the reality of a Russian person, has a historical significance:

Representations of Russia in detective fiction may be far from reality. Yet, they constitute a separate reality themselves. On the one hand, they reflect history and express certain individual and collective values in response to a concrete ideological and political situation. On the other hand, they, in turn, may have an impact on public opinion and politics.⁹⁹

Chervotkin supports Baraban's analysis of a separate reality with the somewhat humorous disbelief that characters like Carl and Tina could have existed as Soviet refugees: "It is caricature and distorted. Such downtrodden people would never make it out of the USSR." User BleWotan, who read *The Cop Killer* in English, agrees with Chervotkin's comments: "Refugees as an archetype are described realistically enough. Yet there is a nuance: in our reality with such a set of mind they would never escape from the USSR of that time. They are too spineless." These responses show that Stout may have exaggerated the browbeaten nature of Soviet citizens beyond recognition, for former Soviet citizens do not see them as accurately portrayed. Stout's overzealous characterization of Soviet refugees perhaps came about in response to the prevalence of anti-Soviet stereotypes in America in the 1950s.

a Communist regime in the 1950s when the story was written. Stout does not clarify Carl and Tina's nationality.

99. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 11.

Only Zavgorodnii doesn't take offense to the description, perhaps through a misremembering of the plot: ““As far as I recall (I read it quite a long time ago), the characters in this book were refugees not from the USSR but from some (perhaps, even unnamed) Eastern-European country. I have not had the chance to meet any emigrants from the countries of Soviet bloc who went to the West back then; I believe, however, that Stout described them accurately enough.”¹⁰⁰

The alleged misremembering of the nationality of Carl and Tina, from the vague ideas of their non-USSR heritage to the inability to believe that they were indeed Soviet refugees, can be explained by reading the 1994 Russian version of *The Cop Killer* published by KUBKa and translated by T. Danikova. The line in the original English version says that Carl met Tina in a “concentration camp in Russia”; in the Russian version, he met her in a “concentration camp in Poland.” There is a footnote attached to the end of this sentence which reads, “In the original it was: In a Soviet concentration camp. Actually, the main heroes were Soviet political prisoners, apparently—Baltic.”¹⁰¹ Zavgorodnii writes in the forum that this translation change was only to be expected:

It is not surprising that the translator has replaced “Soviet” concentration camp with “Polish.” In the late eighties, when Stout began to be translated into Russian, it would be somewhat imprudent to write about Soviet

100. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015; User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

101. Sergey Panichev, Vkontakte message to author, March 15, 2016; Reks Staut (Rex Stout), *Ubiistvo Politseiskogo (the Cop Killer)* (KUBKa, 1994).

concentration camps. *The Gulag Archipelago* was published in the USSR only in the 1990s.¹⁰²

VK user Panichev had written that he “personally thought that they [Carl and Tina] are from Germany” and this can be attributed to the purposeful location change in translation. German nationals were held in concentration camps in Poland during WWII, which had ended less than a decade before the original publication, so Panichev’s answer makes sense in this historical context. Even four years after the end of Communist rule in Russia, it was still not acceptable to have accurate translations of Western detective novels that besmirched the Soviet period. It wasn’t until a 2014 translation that the Russian translation allows Carl to have met his wife Tina in “a concentration camp in Russia.”¹⁰³

Remarkably, none of the Russian forum members’ reactions to Stout’s anti-Communist plots mention any of his political organizations or affiliations; they think his portrayal of Soviet refugees as a caricature, but they don’t seem affected by his political activities. In fact, it is the books themselves, rather than his name on any Freedom House documents, which apparently were unknown in Russia, which

102. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

103. Reks Staut (Rex Stout), "Ubiistvo Politseiskogo (the Cop Killer)," in *Igra V Piatnashki (Prisoner's Base)* (Amfora, 2014). This is the earliest translation that I could find online that places the concentration camp in Russia, but I don’t want to say definitely that it was the earliest published, for I was limited in my search by what copies were online. Forum member Natalia Rymko (username Rymarnica) supports this statement, for her 2008 Eksmo edition of the novel says “Poland.” Natalia Rymko (user Rymarnica), April 1, 2016 (9:56am), comment on Molly Zuckerman, “Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii,” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), trans. Gleb Vinokurov, October 18, 2015 (8:38pm), <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>.

showed them that he had anti-Communist sentiments. Zavgorodnii learned about his anti-Communism in this manner of interpretation through plot: “Before I read Stout’s books, I had not known anything about him. Having read several of his books, I realized he was a confirmed anticommunist. Later, after I learnt more about Rex Stout’s biography, I was convinced that my first impression was true.”¹⁰⁴

Most members of the Russian online forum do not see Stout’s anti-Communist sympathies as an impediment to enjoying his writing, both in the 1990s and today; if they have any reaction to it at all, it is that his plots with politics sometimes bore them. Chervotkin did not learn of Stout’s dislike of Communism until after reading Stout’s book, but feels “in no particular way” about it, and user BleWotan does not care at all that Stout was an anti-Communist: “I did not know; I did not care. I figured that out upon having read some of the books.” Although Chervotkin thinks that Stout’s anti-Communism “does not affect the quality of his writing,” he does write that “sometimes, however, there is too much bile, and those parts get boring. But this does not affect the general impression all that much.”¹⁰⁵

In America, some reviewers also saw his political messages as too overt, although they didn’t take offense to the inaccuracy of the “spineless” portrayal of Soviet refugees like Russians did. Cannon writes in reference to *Home to Roost* and *The Cop Killer*, “Occasionally, Stout’s adoring public, eager for more Nero Wolfe stories, complained about the political agendas of some of the stories [...] one reader wrote a letter to Stout objecting to ‘those two little stinker anti-Communist

104. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

105. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015.

stories.”¹⁰⁶ Even Stout’s “long-time” friend Anthony Boucher “admitted he wished Wolfe would focus on an opponent other than Communism.”¹⁰⁷

The Rosenberg Trial

Stout’s personal attitude towards Communism and McCarthyism could not be clearer in these novels discussed above; negative imagery juxtaposition and mockery is the backbone of the plotlines. When Communism came closer to home in America during the 1951 trial, conviction, and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Stout’s convictions concerning the failure of McCarthy’s accusatory methods to find Communists led him to take a strong position on the side of the innocence of the Rosenberg’s, and this position manifested itself in a literary manner, as was Stout’s way.¹⁰⁸

Stout vents his opinion about the Rosenberg conviction most clearly in his fiction when Wolfe says in *Home to Roost* (published the year after the trial) “it is true that all five of those people [the murder suspects in *Home to Roost*] may be Communists and therefore enemies of this country, but that does not justify framing one of them for murder.”¹⁰⁹ According to Wolfe, being a Communist is directly equated with being an enemy of America, but framing American Communists for murder denies them basic American freedoms and therefore is wrong, even though they are “Commies.” Thus, the connection between McCarthyism and the Rosenberg

106. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 378.

107. Ibid. 378. Anthony Boucher was an American mystery and science fiction writer.

108. Although Stout had been fine before conflating all Germans with Nazis, he was not fine conflating all Communists with lawbreakers.

109. Stout, *Home to Roost*, 25.

trial helped fuel Stout's campaign against what he saw as the incorrect conflation of all Communists with lawbreakers and the illegal framing of Communists for crimes they didn't commit.

Stout stepped outside of the constraints of a Wolfe novel in order to further defend the Rosenbergs more than ten years after the trial. In 1966, Stout wrote a 3000-word book review of *Invitation to an Inquest* by Walter and Miriam Schneir for *Ramparts* magazine entitled, "The Case of the Spies Who Weren't."¹¹⁰ However, this was not an ordinary review as the editor of the magazine had requested, but a critique couched in the language of a Nero Wolfe mystery, complete with an illustrated cover and a first-person narration by Archie Goodwin. The article begins with a short, italicized dialogue between Wolfe, Archie and, surprisingly, Stout. Archie is purportedly writing down a discussion between Stout and Wolfe concerning the Rosenberg case and the publication of *Invitation to an Inquest*, with Stout as Wolfe's literary agent. The most telling part of this peculiar introduction is Archie's final sentence: "So this cramping [editing] job on their [Stout's and Wolfe's] verdict on the book is mine."¹¹¹ This is the only case where Stout and Wolfe's political opinions are actually stated as being directly in line with each other by none other than Archie Goodwin. Although Stout is obviously using Wolfe and Archie in this article superficially as a literary device to get across his opinion of the innocence of the Rosenbergs, the key phrase, "their verdict," conjoining Stout and Wolfe into one

110. This book was a supposedly impartial study of the trial, although it had a definite stance that the Rosenbergs had only received a modicum of justice.

111. Rex Stout, "The Case of the Spies Who Weren't," *Ramparts*, January 1966.

mind, must not be forgotten when reading Stout's less subtle political plotlines.¹¹²

McAleer writes that "for readers of the saga, here was important evidence placing it in the mainstream of Rex Stout's commitment to universal order realized through the expression of democratic ideals."¹¹³

The article continues by giving a step-by-step summary of the reasons why each defendant in the case against the Rosenbergs had either lied or misrepresented evidence, ending with a strong indictment of the FBI's role in the trial and subsequent sentencing. Stout writes that "in this extraordinary pageant of mendacity and perversion, the palm must be awarded to the FBI. So many instances of their ingenuity and versatility are documented in the book that exposition here would take too much space." The article ends with a notice that Stout's most recently published book is *The Doorbell Rang*, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.¹¹⁴

Wolfe and Archie Enter Yugoslavia

Stout's 1954 novel, *The Black Mountain*, could be considered the fictional postscript to what went wrong when American citizens and Communists interacted in the McCarthy era (as in the 1951 Rosenberg trial), as well as a fictional precursor to the ideas that Stout would support in Freedom House's activities in the 1960s.

Wolfe's psychology as a character in regards to murderers, even Communist murderers, ties into Freedom House's support for the democratic judicial process, for Wolfe believes that every man should be fairly tried in a US court of law (except in

112. Ibid., 31.

113. Ibid.

114. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 453.

the infrequent cases where his laziness overpowers his morality and he allows suicides to occur). Wolfe's belief in democratic freedoms is tested to the limit in *The Black Mountain*, where Wolfe's quest for vengeance against the man who killed his best friend Marko Vukcic involves him forcibly bringing the murderer from Montenegro to New York by boat, rather than leaving him in Titograd [the name given by General Secretary Tito to Podgorica] to be killed by rebel forces.

The book begins with the murder of Marko, owner of Rusterman's restaurant and one of the few men that Wolfe is on a first-name basis with. Marko is down by an unknown assailant in the street outside of his restaurant, and Archie is the one who gets the phone call to identify the body at the morgue. After Archie's positive identification, Wolfe breaks one of his cardinal rules and leaves his house to go to the scene of the crime, shocking Inspector Cramer (a recurring character) with his presence. Wolfe's desire to bring Marko's murderer to justice takes him to Montenegro, his birthplace, after Wolfe's adopted daughter Carla tells him that Marko was probably killed due to his involvement with the Spirit of the Black Mountain, an anti-Communist rebel force in Yugoslavia.

The book most clearly sets up Wolfe's personal political inclinations in regards to his Montenegrin status, because instead of dealing with American Communists or Soviet refugees, Wolfe is in the thick of things with Communists in Eastern Europe. Wolfe makes faces at the mention of the Spirit of the Black Mountain, according to Carla, who erupts at him shortly after Marko's death: "What do you care if the people of the land you came from are groaning under the heel of the oppressor, with the light of their liberty smothered and the fruits of their labor

snatched from them and their children at the point of the sword? Stop making faces!”¹¹⁵ Wolfe responds with a diatribe:

“Apparently,” he said dryly, “I must give you a lecture. I grimaced neither at your impudence nor at your sentiment, but at your diction and style. I condemn clichés, especially those that have been corrupted by fascists and communists. Such phrases as ‘great and noble cause’ and ‘fruits of their labor’ have been given an ineradicable stink by Hitler and Stalin and all their vermin brood. Besides, in this century of the overwhelming triumph of science, the appeal of the cause of human freedom is no longer that it is great and noble; it is more or less than that; it is essential. It is no greater or nobler than the cause of edible food or the cause of effective shelter. Man must have freedom or he will cease to exist as man. The despot, whether fascist or communist, is no longer restricted to such puny tools as the heel or the sword or even the machine gun; science has provided weapons that can give him the planet; and only men who are willing to die for freedom have any chance of living for it.”¹¹⁶

Shortly after meeting with Wolfe, Carla disappears, and word gets back to Wolfe that her dead body was found at the bottom of a mountain in Montenegro. It is only then that Wolfe resigns himself to the necessity of travelling to Montenegro to find the murderer of both his best friend and his adopted daughter. Wolfe and Archie trek around Yugoslavia, climbing illegally across borders through the mountainous terrain, under the aliases of Toné and Alex Stara, father and son on a phony mission

115. Stout, "The Case of the Spies Who Weren't," 33-34.

116. *The Black Mountain*, Location 324-30.

to donate money to either the Communists or the rebels, supposedly depending on their impressions of both parties.

Once abroad, Archie still uses the same joking banter with which he treats all Communists in America. When getting off a plane, Archie writes that he “stood guard over the bags and watched the communist boys. I assumed they were communists because they were throwing things at a cat on Palm Sunday.”¹¹⁷ Wolfe and Archie then sneak across the Albanian border into Montenegro, where they take refuge in a haystack for the night. Upon awakening, they find the farmhouse and ask the farmer to exchange food for money, and he refuses at first and tries to lock them outside of his house. Wolfe sees this man’s attitude towards them in political terms:

Six feet tall, a jaw like a rock, an eagle’s beak for a nose, a brow to take any storm. In ten centuries the Turks could never make him whine. Even under the despotism of Black George he kept his head up as a man.¹¹⁸ But Communist despotism has done for him. Twenty years ago two strangers who had damaged his haystack would have been called to account; today, having espied us in trespass on his property, he tells his wife to stay indoors and shuts himself in the barn with his goats and chickens.¹¹⁹

117. Ibid., Location 331-38.

118. Ibid., Location 803-05. Black George was the founder of modern Serbia in the early 1800s, and nicknamed thus due to his often violent nature. Wikipedia contributors, "Karadorde," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kara%C4%91or%C4%91e&oldid=707060032>.

119. Stout, *The Black Mountain*, Location 1201-05.

Wolfe attributes the destruction of the psyche of the common man and farmer to Communism, which reduces strong men to weaklings who succumb to the fearful environment created by their despotic, Communist leaders.

Wolfe and Archie are then brought to government headquarters in Titograd (which Wolfe only refers to as Podgorica) against their will to present their proper documentation (which they don't have) to Gospo Stritar, the boss of Titograd political headquarters. The car that they travel in is a 1953 Ford sedan, much to Archie's surprise, until he recalls the 58 million dollars lent to Yugoslavia by the World Bank. He decides not to bother questioning the car's owner as to the specifics of its acquisition; to Archie, the car is the manifestation of corruption in the form of his income tax dollars.¹²⁰

Once at headquarters, Wolfe and Archie manage to talk their way out of imprisonment and find Marko's cousin who lives nearby in order to have him direct them to both Marko and Carla's killer. The cousin is hesitant to help them, but is convinced by Wolfe's almost unbelievably persuasive language, and Wolfe and Archie enter the secret mountain lair of the Spirit of the Black Mountain. Members of the Spirit direct Wolfe and Archie to an outpost of Albanians (the enemy) where Carla was last seen alive, and so Wolfe and Archie set off on foot with the idea: "just to walk in and introduce ourselves, announcing, I suppose, that we had about decided to hook up with the Kremlin and wanted to discuss matters," says Archie a mocking tone.¹²¹

120. Ibid., Location 1329.

121. Ibid., Location 2042.

Inside the Albanian enclave they find a man, Peter Zov, hung by his arms from the ceiling and being tortured in this manner. They pause long enough to hear a conversation that proves that Zov was the man who murdered Marko, and that his Albanian torturers are the ones who murdered Carla. Archie and Wolfe burst in, and Archie kills all of the Albanians in self-defense while Zov recuperates on the floor. While Zov is still unconscious, Archie and Wolfe discuss what to do with him, with Archie being in favor of ending the ordeal with a quick shot right then, and Wolfe strenuously objecting:

“If personal vengeance were the only factor I could, as you suggested, go and stick a knife in him and finish it, but that would be accepting the intolerable doctrine that man’s sole responsibility is to his ego. That was the doctrine of Hitler, as it is now of Malenkov and Tito and Franco and Senator McCarthy; masquerading as a basis of freedom, it is the oldest and toughest of the enemies of freedom. I reject it and condemn it.”¹²²

Wolfe is taking the moral upper hand by not killing a defenseless man, even though he has evidence that this man is a murderer—this is Stout giving an example of how to treat even a Communist murderer with the proper democratic freedom of the right to a trial. He also manages to get in a reference to McCarthy, comparing him to several bloodthirsty dictators, including Hitler.

Wolfe, Archie, and Zov then set off on foot back to Titograd in order to report to headquarters, for Wolfe has convinced Zov that he is on the side of Tito and wants

122. Ibid., Location 2182, 87. *Too Many Cooks* (1938) is another instance when Wolfe mentions McCarthy directly: “a garbageman collects table refuse, while a senator collects evidence of the corruption of highly placed men—might one not prefer the garbage as less unsavory?” *Too Many Cooks*, 11.

to donate money to the cause. Once at headquarters, a plan is formed for Wolfe and Archie to head back to America, with Zov coming along as a liaison in their guise of a plan to stimulate support for Tito from New York. In line with this plan, Wolfe asks, ““Would you advise us to join the Communist Party of the United States and try to influence them in your favor?” ‘Good God, no,’ Stritar was contemptuous. ‘They belong to Moscow, body and soul, and they’re a nest of slimy vermin.’”¹²³ Stout’s pitting of the politically separate versions of Communism against each other shows his negative opinion of Communism and its inability to promote people working together, even though communalism is one of its main tenets.

Russian speakers reading about Wolfe’s foray into the mountains of Montenegro did not employ the same type of strong adjectives as Stritar, even though most of them did not like the plot. Chervotkin did not like *The Black Mountain* due to its “unrealistic representation of Soviet special agencies,” but thought that the choice of a Montenegrin as a detective was a positive one, for it was “not a typical move for an American author. :D But Yugoslavia is a very interesting country with very peculiar people.”¹²⁴ BleWotan also did not like the plot of the novel: “The caricature of Albanians as devils incarnate – no, thanks,” although he did enjoy the image of “the angry Nero as a fighter with a knife.” He also cared not at all about Wolfe’s heritage: “A Montenegrin; so what.” Zavgorodnii called the plot “far-fetched” and not among his favorites, but had a more in-depth analysis of this character choice: “I think that Montenegro was (and still is now) a sort of ‘exotic’ place for most of

123. *The Black Mountain*, Location 2427-29.

124. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015. Interestingly, Chervotkin read this after 2012, so the offense taken at the portrayal of Soviet special agencies takes on a different kind of significance.

Stout's American readers back then, which inevitably added to Wolfe's mysteriousness."¹²⁵

Importantly, both Zavgorodnii and user BleWotan saw a historical connection between the anti-Communism in the plot and the political scene in America when it was written, writing respectively that "it fits well into the general tendencies of American anticommunism of the 50s" and that "it correlates with the general spirit of the American 50s pretty well."¹²⁶ The common theme of the contemporary Russian reaction to this novel is that Stout was successful in inserting his political, anti-Communist position into the novel, but unsuccessful in having Russian readers relate to his "caricature"-like depictions of Eastern European refugees.

Although the members of the Nero Wolfe forum mentioned politics unfavorably in regards to Wolfe's journey to Montenegro, not all Western reviewers saw the political aspect of the plot as negative. One reviewer is "unsurprised[d] by Stout's political views on Yugoslavia" and he considers the novel "enormously readable," and another interprets the onus of the murder exactly where Stout would want them to, a murder created by a place "where Reds rule and a police system tries to hinder the cause of American justice."¹²⁷ However, these positive reviews were matched with negative ones. One American reviewer wrote that Archie's "usual

125. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

126. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

127. Stout, *The Black Mountain*, Location 2427-29; "Nero Wolfe," *Dublin Evening Herald*, August 22 1955.

bright outlook takes on a jaundiced hue,”¹²⁸ and another Canadian review wrote that Stout: “sends his massive detective halfway around the world to match wits with some evil iron-curtain specimens [...] the story suffers by it.”¹²⁹

128. “Wild Places,” *Daily Dispatch*, September 5, Manchester, International Press-Cutting Bureau, Box 39, Folder 8, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

129. “The Black Mountain by Rex Stout,” *Battle Creek Enquirer*, December 26, 1954, Michigan, Box 39, Folder 8, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

4 | Wolfe and Stout Enter Soviet Russia

I decided that if and when I became a dictator I would damn well clean a town up and widen some of its streets and have a little painting done before I changed its name to Goodwingrad.
-Archie Goodwin
The Black Mountain

How Stout the Anti-Communist was Published in the USSR

While Stout was dealing with Communist sentiment in America as well as judging Communist sentiment in Yugoslavia, Russia was beginning to have access to more and more detective novels from the West. Various Stout novels were translated and published in both journals and trilogies during the Soviet era, and although it is difficult to identify precisely either the first book translated or the precise date of publication, Stout's books definitively existed in the Soviet Union, for McAleer cites a *London Sunday Times* article that says that in March of 1971, "in the Soviet Union more of Rex Stout's works were in print than of any other American writer."¹³⁰

The online catalog of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg lists seven instances of Stout's books in translation before 1990, eight including Rex Stout's biography, by John McAleer, which was available in 1977 (although only in English; there is still no Russian translation available. *The Doorbell Rang* was published in trilogies in the years 1967, 1969, 1973, 1981, 1986, and 1989, and *Might as Well Be Dead*, or in the Russian translation *Vse nachalos v Omakhe (It All Started in Omaha)*, was published in 1989.¹³¹ There is a reference to more of Stout's books published in serial form in journals, (that wouldn't be in the National Library of

130. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 491. Stout wrote the previously discussed *The Second Confession*, *Home to Roost*, *The Cop Killer*, and *The Black Mountain* all before 1971, but they were not his first books to be translated in the Soviet Union.

131. See "Stout Collections in the 2000s by Russian Publishing House" on page 192.

Russia's online catalog), in a 1971 article in the Russian *Literaturnaia gazeta*.¹³² Specifically, the article mentions the novel *Vse nachalos v Omakhe*, published in the journal *Nash sovremennik* in 1970. A dissertation on the Russian *detektiv* genre by Baraban says more generally that translations of Western hard-boiled detective fiction, including Stout's novels, were used by the following journals in the 1960s and 1970s to attract subscribers: *Neman*, *Iunost'*, *Ural*, *Inostrannaia literatura*, *Don*, *Literaturnyi Azerbaidzhan*, *Nash sovremennik*, *Prostor*, *Podiem*, and *Zvezda vostoka*.¹³³ The fact the many of the journals that published Stout in the Soviet period were from the Far East (*Zvezda vostoka*) or Soviet Socialist Republics like Azerbaijan (*Literaturnaia Azerbaidzhan*) does speak to the fact that his books were too potentially subversive to get away with being published in Moscow or St. Petersburg journals.

Outside of Russia, but still within Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe, several of Stout's books were published in Russian before 1990. McAleer writes generally that "Russians, Poles, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, and Yugoslavs" all had access to Stout's books behind the Iron Curtain. According to the Russian State Library in Moscow's database, *The Doorbell Rang* was published by Molod in Kiev in 1983 in a collection with Agatha Christie's *The Moving Finger*. Another Stout novel, *The Broken Vase*, was published by Esti Ramat in Tallinn in 1989; however, the hero of this novel was not Nero Wolfe but Tecumseh

132. Georgi Andzhaparidze, "Bogachi-filantropy i belye 'Mersedesy': chto i kak my perevodim (Wealthy Philanthropists and White Mercedes: What and How We Translate)," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, (January 20, 1971).

133. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 161.

Fox, making this the first instance found of a non-Wolfe Stout novel in Russian. In a handwritten list, Stout notes that two of his books were published in the former Czechoslovakia before 1990: *A Right to Die* was published in 1967 in both Prague and Bratislava in Czech and Slovak, by Mladá fronta and Tatran respectively.¹³⁴ He also notes two books published in the former Yugoslavia: *The Golden Spiders* was published by Privreda in 1963 in Croatian translation in Zagreb, and *Prisoner's Base* was published by Državna založba in Ljubljana in Slovenian translation in 1964.

Stout Critiques Yugoslavia from America

While Stout's books were beginning to be disseminated in Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, he also was actively judging the state of Communism abroad and its effect on those peoples' freedoms. Specifically, Stout's connection to Freedom House in the 1960s aligned him with the organization's stance on the Soviet Union, Bolshevism and the satellite countries, even as his books began to be translated and published in Soviet journals. In another instance in 1965, Stout and Freedom House became involved with the creation of an oppositionist magazine in Tito's Yugoslavia, (where at least two of his novels had been published in translation), an idea sponsored by the previously jailed Yugoslav dissident Mihajlo Mihajlov.¹³⁵ Stout personally wrote to Mihajlov that "the news of [his] proposal to

134. McAleer specifically mentions in Stout's biography *The Doorbell Rang* and *A Right to Die* as novels the Russians chose to publish first due to their politically critical plot lines, a statement supported by the findings in the national library databases and the journal publications.

135. Agence France-Presse, "Mihajlo Mihajlov, a Yugoslavian Dissident, Dies at 76," *The New York Times* March 7, 2010. Mihajlov was arrested in 1975 for "disseminating hostile propaganda" against Tito and sentenced to seven years,

publish in Yugoslavia a magazine devoted to freedom of thought and expression has aroused great interest among American writers, editors, educators, and publicists—indeed, in the whole American community.”¹³⁶ Stout’s connection to Mihajlov and his fight for political freedom of expression in Tito’s Yugoslavia ten years after the publication of *The Black Mountain* demonstrate how Stout’s writing and politics were continuously intermingled. Stout inserted himself into the political turmoil of a country that his fictional detective had done something similar in years before, while Stout’s books were simultaneously being read by citizens of that same country.

While involved with Mihajlov, Stout took a step outside his fiction and wrote a letter directly to President Tito of Yugoslavia, a man that he had so negatively portrayed in *The Black Mountain* when Stout’s fictional detective had refused to accept the name change of Podgorica to Titograd due to his strong distaste for the man who had renamed it. The letter, addressed to “His Excellency Josip Broz Tito,” and signed by Stout on behalf of twenty-two others, proclaims the great value of an independent editorial publication and is attached to Mihajlov’s letter to “Comrade Tito,” in which Mihajlov stresses the importance of a magazine that would defend the principles of democratic socialism. Mihajlov’s letter speaks of the “horrible practices of Stalinism” and his desire to create space for a different kind of socialism to

although he only served three before being pardoned and allowed to leave Yugoslavia.

136. Rex Stout to Mihajlo Mihajlov, undated correspondence, Box 21, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

emerge, for “opposition to the monopoly of the Communist Party over the social and political life of a nation, does in no way mean opposition to socialism as such.”¹³⁷

Stout’s and Mihajlov’s actions led to a fiery *Philadelphia National Inquirer* article supporting Mihajlov’s future magazine enterprise. The article poses several rhetorical questions in such a way that reveals the author’s political stance quite nakedly: “President Tito and his associates face these horrendous questions: Can they accept the consequences of a free press and expect to survive? Do they dare [illegible] a degree of freedom which would almost inevitably lead to free elections and end the political monopoly of the Communist Party?”¹³⁸ Interestingly, Stout’s opposition to Tito and his aligning himself and Freedom House on Mihajlov’s side also indirectly aligns him with socialism, albeit in a very different form from socialism in Soviet Russia.

While working with Mihajlov, Stout continued his other duties at Freedom House in his roles as either secretary or treasurer. In 1967, Leonard Sussman, executive director of Freedom House, wrote a memorandum to the creative committee with a special “attention to: Stout,” concerning the recognition of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. The subsequent statement was called “The Fiftieth Anniversary of a Universal Tragedy” and detailed how things had gone downhill in Russia since the revolution, mentioning the terror of a police state and the

137. Mihajlo Mihajlov to President Tito of Yugoslavia, undated correspondence, Box 21, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College; Rex Stout to His Excellency Josip Broz Tito, from the Ad Hoc Committee for Mihajlo Mihajlov, August 1, 1966, Box 21, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

138. Roscoe Drummond, “Freedom Seeks Foothold Behind Iron Curtain,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 17, 1966, Box 21, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

world ramifications of socialism (Stout played a role in the creation of the statement as the treasurer).¹³⁹ In 1971, a report entitled “The New Shape of U.S. Soviet Relations” further expressed the necessity of “contacts and exchanges” with the East, and also the growing importance of presenting a Western “example which refutes Communist expectations, and options for either imitation or active East-West cooperation.”¹⁴⁰ This ideologically anti-Communist statement was released the same year that Stout became, in McAleer’s words, the American writer most in print in the Soviet Union.

One undated Freedom House report, although the content places it after 1972, says that the President Richard Nixon’s visits to Peking and Moscow, although “causes for hope,” were prompted by an overall rise in fear of a global holocaust. The situation in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is described as “not encouraging” due to what is referred to as “the Brezhnev regime’s ‘crackdown on dissident intellectual[s]’”; Czechoslovakia “remained repressive in the extreme” as well.¹⁴¹ Again, Stout’s name was attached to these statements while his novels were being disseminated both in Moscow, where Brezhnev ruled, and in Czechoslovakia.

There were several other Freedom House documents that concerned the freedom status of the Soviet Union and its relations with America, especially in

139. Leonard Sussman to Executive Committee of Freedom House, October 18, 1967, Box 21, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

140. "The New Shape of U.S.-Soviet Relations," In *The Report of a Conference of Foreign Affairs Scholars*: Public Affairs Institute of Freedom House, undated, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College, 8.

141. "U.S. Bids to China and Soviet, Though Hopeful, Inspire Concern for Freedom in Europe and Asia; American Gains Continued, Though Slower Paced," Freedom House, undated, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

regards to the nuclear weapons problem. In an undated letter signed by Stout, he writes that the Helsinki accords “heighten the urgency” of coming to an agreement with the Soviet Union for reducing their nuclear program, and he also insists “that both communists and non-communists implement the pledges to expand freedoms through scores of new programs.”¹⁴² Stout was also affiliated with the 1975 document “‘Not Good’ Is Not Enough,” which discusses the need for Americans to have compassion for Soviet Jews, and again brings up the danger of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Another unsigned and undated Freedom House document affiliated with Stout says that “in the truest sense, all Soviet residents are prisoners of conscience.”¹⁴³

Stout’s harsh judgments passed on the Communist governments abroad in his later Freedom House years were direct reflections of his novels that contained a strong anti-Communist message. Books such as *The Second Confession*, *Home to Roost*, *The Cop Killer*, and *The Black Mountain* could be seen as just as strong and public indictments as the Freedom House documents, albeit in literary forms. Wolfe sums up his and Stout’s overall anti-Communist feeling when, in *Home to Roost*, Wolfe admonishes an American Communist Party member sitting in his office: “in the countries they [Communists] rule the jails are full— let alone the graves— of former comrades who were indiscreet. In America, [...] you don’t rule and I hope you never will.”¹⁴⁴ The references in his novels to Communists are overwhelmingly

142. Rex Stout to unknown, undated correspondence, Freedom House, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

143. Freedom House notes on Solzhenitsyn’s exile, undated, Rex Stout Papers, MS1986-096, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

144. Rex Stout, *Home to Roost*, in *Triple Jeopardy* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1952), 52.

negative, and yet the Communist countries that were so heavily lambasted by both Wolfe in the books and Stout in real life were the ones that were reading and actively disseminating Stout's literature around the time of their publication, even while, simultaneously, Stout was actively disseminating anti-Communist documents.

Soviet Critics take Offense at Stout's Plots

Stout's literature in translation in the Soviet Union, in conjunction with the increasing number of Western detective novels in translation being published, began to worry Soviet literary critics. Western detective novels were rarely published as stand-alone books, but rather in either series meant for libraries or "provincial or specialist journals such as *Vokrug sveta*, *Nauka i religii*, *Chelovek i zakon* and *Khimiia i zhizn*."¹⁴⁵ In the Eastern European Soviet bloc, translations of popular fiction like detective stories were also closely monitored by the state. Andrew Wachtel writes that "Western popular literature, which [...] propagate[s] values that neither communists nor dissidents would have approved of, simply had no space in the mental universe of Eastern European elites [...] Official state publishers could not accept popular literature for [...] ideological reasons."¹⁴⁶

Although their inclusion in journals and libraries was allegedly to promote a critique of capitalism and the Western countries they represented, Baraban acknowledges that this inclusion sparked debate among editors over whether the stories did truly expose "the corrupt bourgeois society" the way that they were

145. Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (Macmillan, 2000), 52.

146. Andrew Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 191.

intended to do.¹⁴⁷ Party resolutions were passed that condemned the numerous publications of foreign detective stories in the Soviet Union, an example being the 1958 resolution, “On serious defects in the content of the magazine *Ogonek*,” that “criticized the weekly *Ogonek* for devoting too much space to travel writing and detective stories.”¹⁴⁸

One of the most outspoken critics of the trend of translating Western detective novels was Georgi Andzhaparidze, Soviet literary critic and former editor-in-chief and editor of foreign fiction at Raduga publishing house.¹⁴⁹ Andzhaparidze mentions Stout several times in his 1971 article (the same year Stout helped write “The New Shape of U.S. Soviet Relations”), critiquing the rising number of Western detective novels being translated and distributed in the Soviet Union. He describes the number of translated Western detective novels in various journals as the “detective epidemic,” and questions whether it is worth it to publish “this type of book.” Andzhaparidze references the 1970 *Nash sovremennik* publication of Stout’s *Vse nachalos v Omakhe* (*It All Started in Omaha*) as an example of the type of Western detective novel that

147. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 161.

148. Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* 46. *Ogonek* has issued since 1899, but its reestablishment as a Soviet journal in 1923 is its better known form. However, before the Soviet period, *Ogonek* was known for its Sherlock Holmes hoax in 1908, when the journal published a Russian version of Holmes’ stories that portrayed Holmes as a real person writing the tales. Many Russians ended up believing that Sherlock Holmes was a living detective. Brooks, *When Russians Learned to Read, Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917*, 116, 17.

149. Raduga Publishing House was a state owned publishing house in the Soviet Union created in 1982 when Progress was divided into two parts, with the main Progress publishing science and political literature and Raduga publishing fiction. Raduga published much of Stout’s fiction after the 1990s. Wikipedia contributors, "Progress (Publishing)," Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, <http://ru.wikipedia.org/?oldid=75511036>.

would be harmful to Soviet readers. His specific reference to Wolfe's "all consuming passion for orchids," is evidence that he had a real familiarity with the Wolfe texts. Soviet critic A. Kuznetsov agrees with Andzhaparidze's negative analysis, calling the translation "epidemic" a "cunning process" whereby journals fall "prey to the chase for success."¹⁵⁰

Andzhaparidze's main argument is that the mass publication of these translated detective stories does not actually "unmask the essence of the bourgeois way of life, the vices of capitalist society" in a successful manner, as the journals intended. Instead, he writes that "one must note that the tendency expressed in the majority of Western detective novels is conservative, in particular defending the fundamental basis of capitalist society—the 'sacred' right of private property." Andzhaparidze thinks that the overall positive description of living what he sees as a bourgeois lifestyle as a private detective is more harmful than any benefit received by the Soviet public reading authors like Stout, who do include criticisms of American society in their plots.

To call attention to these bourgeois vices of capitalism, Andzhaparidze discusses the use of millionaires as characters in James Hadley Chase's detective novels, and although he doesn't mention Wolfe directly, Wolfe's wealth and upper-class status would be classic examples of vices that Andzhaparidze did not want described to the Soviets. Kuznetsov agreed with Andzhaparidze in his opinion that this type of Western novel "was ideologically unsuitable in Soviet society."¹⁵¹ The

150. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 161.

151. Ibid.

ideologically unsuitable idea of crime being “insurmountable and unconquerable” and occurring because of the “human personality” turning out to be a “plaything of its own passions and instincts” is antithetical to Soviet society, where crime is supposed to be capable of being eradicated once the Soviet citizen has become fully conscious (to borrow a socialist realism term), and Andzhaparidze applies this framework of analysis to Stout’s literature.¹⁵²

Cannon writes that “the constant emphasis on rationality by logical patterns within detective fiction speaks as loudly as any explicit message,”¹⁵³ an idea which indirectly supports these Soviet critics’ fears; Stout’s plots that neatly sum up mysteries and catch murderers with logic and rationality would only serve to draw attention to any inefficiencies or corruption within the Communist judicial system. Andzhaparidze’s problems with the Western detective “epidemic” range from a fear of exposing Soviet citizens to fictional characters that are motivated by the desire to preserve wealth and position in society, and to the haste with which these translations were done and their subsequently poor outcomes. He ends the article by shaming the journals’ publishers for their fluctuating moral choices in picking authors to translate, as well as suggesting that journals in the far Eastern parts of Russia should focus more on publishing local literature. This last point about local literature shows that Andzhaparidze is not so focused on Party ideology that he wants all fiction writing to

152. Andzhaparidze, “Bogachi-filantropy i belye ‘Mersedesy’: chto i kak my perezvodim (Wealthy Philanthropists and White Mercedes: What and How We Translate).”

153. Cannon, “Controversial Politics, Conservative Genre: Rex Stout’s Archie-Wolfe Duo and Detective Fiction’s Conventional Form,” 72.

stop (although he does refer to pop culture as “the protruding ass’s ears”), but that he just wants the right kind of fiction to be published.¹⁵⁴

A blurb from Moscow in a 1981 edition of *Encounter* magazine specifically references the role of Stout’s writing in Andzhaparidze’s 1971 article.¹⁵⁵ The write-up on Stout and crime fiction is signed “D.W.,” and extensively quotes Andzhaparidze (although he is not quoted by name, and he is only named here because of the quotations obviously taken from the previously mentioned article). D.W. appears to both quote Andzhaparidze directly as well as offer his own commentary on Andzhaparidze’s article, a commentary that may be a heavy-handed interpretation of Andzhaparidze’s views on Stout. The piece begins with a description of murder as a “class phenomenon of bourgeois society” with crime being “part and parcel of capitalism” However, D.W. continues, “Nero Wolfe, continue[s] to fascinate, even under Bolshevism.” D.W. then both quotes and analyzes the *Literaturnaia gazeta* diatribe against Stout of Andzhaparidze, who D.W. refers to as a “Party-line ideologue.”

The whole piece is written in this same judgmental vein, although the switch between italics and bold makes it hard to tell if D.W. is still quoting Andzhaparidze or expressing his own opinion (if he is quoting Andzhaparidze, the text is either not

154. Andzhaparidze, “Bogachi-filantropy i belye ‘Mersedesy’: chto i kak my perezodim (Wealthy Philanthropists and White Mercedes: What and How We Translate).”

155. *Encounter* was a London-based Anglo-American literary magazine that was associated with the anti-Stalinist left, much as Stout was. Its mission was to try to influence culture within the USSR. The magazine is most known for its controversial secret funding from the CIA, which, when the knowledge was made public, caused a rift in the editorial section. In the 1980s, when the blurb about Stout was published at the end of the Paris correspondent’s “M” column, the magazine had been supported without CIA money for more than a decade.

from the 1971 article or else is paraphrased with D.W.'s overly negative interpretation of Andzhaparidze's views). D.W. writes: "Everything about Nero Wolfe is darkly suspicious: from his corpulence, his passion for cultivating orchids, to his fat fees for uncovering dastardly acts," (the reference to the passion for orchids assumes that this is a paraphrased section of Andzhaparidze's 1971 article.)¹⁵⁶ D.W. next brings up the role of Archie, a character that Andzhaparidze does not mention. D.W. sees the role of Archie as Wolfe's assistant as one where Goodwin is "miserably exploited, and serves only to reinforce the illusion that one can be happy in America even when one is subject to exploitation."¹⁵⁷ The write-up ends with a warning towards editors of journals in the Soviet Union that parallels, as well as deviates from, Andzhaparidze's warning with its advice for readers and editors: "Soviet readers and especially editors will just have to be more vigilant. Errors of every ideological stripe keep cropping up."¹⁵⁸

D.W. then consciously breaks from an analysis of both the Andzhaparidze article and Stout by citing the case of another Western writer, Graham Greene. Although Greene was once officially approved by the Kremlin as a "progressive" writer, D.W. writes that he has now become ideologically subversive due to his role in protesting human rights abuses against Soviet dissidents. The Greene example mirrors both Andzhaparidze and D.W.'s views on Stout; he was published at first

156. This is an example of D.W. possibly misinterpreting the original Russian article, for although Andzhaparidze mentions Wolfe liking orchids, he doesn't phrase it as a criticism of bourgeois tendencies as D.W. claims.

157. Stout, *The Black Mountain*, Location 327. This thought mimics a line from *The Black Mountain* (1954), when Carla (a Montenegrin and active participant in Yugoslav politics) cries out, "and this Archie Goodwin for a slave to do all the work and take all the danger!"

158. D.W., "Crime Fiction," *Encounter*, August 1981, 26.

because his books exposed flaws in American society, but the tide had turned and now his characters' use of the capitalist model was becoming seen as too subversive for publication. D.W.'s final words quote Mao Tse-tung: "Mao Tse-tung once achieved a short-lived fame with a theory of 'reconciling contradictions', and we all remember where that ended...." D.W. is saying that it is impossible to reconcile Stout's good plotlines with his bad ones; his negative Western influence outweighs any potential positive one for the Soviets.¹⁵⁹

Andzhaparidze's second article (from the same year Stout helped write "Not Good" Is Not Enough"), critiquing the continuing rise in popularity of Western detective novels in translation, was published four years later, also in *Literaturnaia gazeta*. He again bemoans the device of including large amounts of Western detective stories in journals as a way of attracting subscribers. Andzhaparidze cites a Soviet critic's point that it is a shame the way that journals cannot find the "fullness of material, contemporary life with current social issues" in Russian authors, but instead look for this in the Western literary detective canon. While Andzhaparidze still considers the detective genre the product of a capitalist ideology, he has softened his views on detective literature in translation at this point. He seems to have accepted the detective genre's existence in Russia, and writes in reference to Progress's Modern American Detective series and Molodaia gvardiia's one-volume tome of detective fiction that it is "commendable that the national publishing companies publish such well-known and interesting foreign detective novels," a far cry from his harsh reproof of the "detective epidemic" four years before.

159. Ibid.

However, even if Andzhaparidze does think that the choices of what to publish have somewhat improved, he cannot let go of the mentality that Western detective novels will lead to the moral corruption of the Soviet people. He equates the problems in Western society with the violence and robbery shown on television and described in detective literature, connecting this “greed and avarice” with the “bourgeois morality” in the detective genre. Andzhaparidze quotes a critic’s assessment of the recently translated novels: “detective work of this kind does not criticize capitalism [...]” for it instead tries to “smooth over the social contradictions.”¹⁶⁰

Andzhaparidze’s arguments against Western detective translations focus on the motivation for crime in these novels, which attributes to the criminal the desire to snatch at anything to make him richer. He does not believe that Western authors are capable of accurately critiquing this societal problem, for they write about it in a manner that makes it seem natural; in Andzhaparidze’s point of view, it is not natural to write about a society where people desire wealth and high social standing. With this argument, Andzhaparidze is implying that only Russian or Soviet authors have the ability to write a detective story that shows criminals committing crimes for Communist-acceptable reasons.

The article ends with a more fleshed-out critique of the problem of poorly translated detective novels. He cites several examples where the syntax of the sentence becomes nonsensical in Russian translations, including a line from Stout’s

160. Andzhaparidze, “Bogachi-filantropiy i belye ‘Mersedesy’: chto i kak my perevodim (Wealthy Philanthropists and White Mercedes: What and How We Translate).”

The Silent Speaker (Umolknuvshii orator): “Obviously, he had a philosophy of keeping himself in a constant degree of intoxication.”¹⁶¹ The sentence in English is: “It was obvious that he had been applying the theory of acquired immunity to his hangover.”¹⁶²

Andzhaparidze’s two articles show the contradiction that prevailed during this time of popularity for Western translations of detective fiction. On one hand, he believes from an ideological standpoint that detective novels from the West will corrupt the Soviet people by exposing them to a particular kind of capitalist corruption in the descriptions of the criminals and the crimes. On the other hand, he does write that “the best novels of Rex Stout are full of social content,” this slightly positive remark presumably due to Stout’s willingness to let his political gripes about America come through in his work, as detailed in Chapters Two and Three.¹⁶³ Andzhaparidze’s focus on the technical problems of translation implies that he does not want the Western detective novels to stop coming in—he just needs them to have the right political message and the proper time taken to be translated well.

Literary critic Natalia Ilyina was known for her strong opinions on literary theory and its role in society, and she often mentioned Stout in her work in the 1970s. Ilyina spent time in Harbin and Shanghai as well as in the Soviet Union, and is known for her book *The Return*, which is about the role of nostalgia in the life of Russian

161. Georgi Andzhaparidze, “Zigzagi belykh limuzinov (The Zigzags of White Limousines),” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, (March 26, 1975).

162. Rex Stout, *The Silent Speaker* (Viking Penguin, 1946), 34.

163. Andzhaparidze, “Zigzagi belykh limuzinov (The Zigzags of White Limousines).”

émigrés in China, as well as for her satirical sketches and literary criticism.¹⁶⁴ She was a friend of poet Anna Akhmatova, having met her in 1954 at the Writers' Retreat in Golitsyno when Akhmatova's companion, Nina Olshevskaya, had stopped her because

[Olshevskaya] had heard that I had some English detective stories. Could I give one of them to Akhmatova to read? Akhmatova herself remained silent. Only a gentle nod of her head led me to understand that she endorsed this request. I immediately ran to my room and brought back two or three books. "My thanks," she answered slowly.¹⁶⁵

In her article on Akhmatova entitled "The Last Days of Her Life," Ilyina writes that as early as 1954, she herself had already read hundreds of English detective stories.¹⁶⁶ When meeting with Akhmatova in her room, Ilyina describes their first conversation as probably beginning with a discussion on these English detective stories, for Ilyina had recently graduated from the Literary Institute, a school she had been accepted to with the help of "writer Simonov" (most likely Soviet author and poet Konstantin Simonov).¹⁶⁷

Ilyina wrote in *Ogonek* that art should always take priority over any social message, supporting this argument with a quotation from Dostoevsky in which he "declared that, however noble an author's intentions might be, if he does not succeed in expressing them in an artistic manner, then his work will never achieve its

164. Natalia Ilyina, "The Last Days of Her Life," *Soviet Literature* 6 (January 1, 1989), 119.

165. *Ibid.*, 120.

166. *Ibid.*, 121.

167. *Ibid.*

objective.”¹⁶⁸ She was also an outspoken critic of corruption in the literary world, often writing articles for *Ogonek* and *Literaturnaia gazeta* calling out greed among Writers’ Union secretaries, as well as “blame[ing] Socialist Realism (by implication) and the conservatives (explicitly)” for what she saw as the low standard of literary criticism in the Soviet period.¹⁶⁹

A discussion between Ilyina and Russian *detektiv* writer Arkadii Adamov in 1975 addresses some of Andzhaparidze’s concerns about the sociological and political nature of the detective novel. Ilyina considers the detective story a “game plus literature,” analysis refuted by both Andzhaparidze and Adamov. Adamov thinks that her analysis ignores the importance of the social world of the detective story, “the moral authenticity of the behavior and tempers of the personages, as well as the demand that the conflict itself should be of some social significance.”¹⁷⁰ He does not like the Western novels in translations in Russia, referring to them as: “empty, hollow, contrived plots ‘sucked from one’s thumbs.’”¹⁷¹ Ilyina, on the other hand, enjoys reading Western detective novels, mentioning Stout by name, due to their ability to allow her to forget time: “sometimes it’s so important [...] to forget time! And I don’t think you should demand anything more of a detective novel.”¹⁷² She dismisses the idea of detective novels needing to have a strong, reality-based morality, calling it an impossible goal, for “to demand of the detective novel writer

168. John Gordon Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 212.

169. *Ibid.* This framework of analysis is almost contradictory when compared to her praise for Stout’s book deriding the FBI in Chapter Five.

170. Natalia Ilyina, "Detective Novels: A Game and Life," *Soviet Literature* 3 (1975), 144.

171. *Ibid.* This idiom in English would be “invented out of whole cloth.”

172. *Ibid.*, 147.

that he reveal the social roots of crime is to demand that he wrote *Crime and Punishment*.”¹⁷³

Adamov’s analysis of the difference between Western and Soviet detective stories accentuates the dichotomy between the types of crimes being investigated. He writes that in Western novels it is not necessary to address crimes against the injustices of society, and therefore he only likes the few Western translations that do “give a genuine picture of the life of society and have a keenly social, denunciatory character.” He talks about rising the popularity of detective writing in the Soviet Union as drawing the dividing line between Soviet and Western detective novels: “in ours we seek something more, we are beginning to handle social problems which excite the reader.”¹⁷⁴

Adamov’s concerns about the lack of social accountability in detective novels echo those same fears in Andzhaparidze. At the heart of Andzhaparidze’s argument against the spread of Western translations is his knowledge of their popularity and demand by the Russian public, and he originally responds to this demand with a blanket command to halt their publication. Adamov, on the other hand, harkens back to Bukharin’s calls for “Red Pinkertons” by stressing the importance of social issues in detective stories, thus inherently acknowledging that Russian readers will always have a desire to read detective stories. Adamov sees the detective story as universally enjoyed, and this universality can be taken advantage of:

But the detective novel has one special feature. Everything an author can put into a detective novel, it can take to the widest, to an inconceivably wide

173. Ibid., 149.

174. Ibid., 145, 47.

reading public. That is why the form attracts me. For that reason our detective novels should raise the most important questions of the life of society.¹⁷⁵

A decade after these critiques were published, an interview with Andzhaparidze showed that he had adapted his views on Western novels in translation in Russia. Although he doesn't specifically mention detective literature, he talks about the importance of publishing houses translating all types of literature from the West to Russia and vice-versa as part of what he refers to as the "friendship movement" and the "aim of helping peoples to understand each other better." His change in attitude as a microcosm of the changing opinions of all formerly strong critics of Western detective novels is categorized by Menhert, who writes that

among those who have the last word about what will and what will not be published there must be some who think that reading such books is a terrible waste of time and that people should do some socially significant work instead. But so far they have been steadily retreating before the avalanche of detective novels.¹⁷⁶

Further in the interview, Andzhaparidze discusses a US-USSR agreement that had been in place to present a 45-volume library of Soviet works in English and US works in Russian. Although he says that the US isn't going through with the translations, the Russians will, because of what he sees as the value of showing a Western audience the Soviet perspective: "'Despite all the tension in the world today, we believe our efforts are valuable' he said, 'because literature reveals the state of the mind—the

175. Ibid., 150.

176. Klaus Menhert, *The Russians and Their Favorite Books* (Hoover Institution Press, 1983), 252.

spiritual state—of peoples.”¹⁷⁷ Andzhaparidze’s views on the translations of foreign literature into Russian follow the same line of thought, with the goal being to “show the Soviet public an objective map of world literature” by choosing books that are representative of epochs or authors.¹⁷⁸

That fact that the controversy over publishing Western writers includes Stout is curious in its contradictions. His books do lay bare what he saw as flaws in capitalist society, and this explains why he was published in Russia in the first place. McAleer describes Soviet readers as

ponder[ing] the motivations of the affluent Nero Wolfe, who relinquishes his comfort, suffers the rebukes and harassments of others, and endangers his life to uphold ethical standards, remedy social abuses, and see that the ends of justice are served, even when men of power and means must be humbled to bring about that result.¹⁷⁹

However, at a certain point, the inclusion of Stout’s books in translated detective serials began to worry Soviet literary critics like Andzhaparidze. It is important that Andzhaparidze neither mentions the politics of the author nor the strong anti-Communist messages as problems in the plots of Stout’s novels; he only discusses the problems with Stout’s character Nero Wolfe as a capitalist figure. As mentioned in

177. Marilyn Bechtel, "The Soviet Peace Movement: From the Grass Roots " (The National Council of American-Soviet Friendship 1984), 38-39.

178. Ibid., 39; Elizabeth Roberts to Russia: Lessons and Legacy- The Alexander Men Conference 2012, January 30, 2012, <http://www.alexandermenconference.com/blog.html>. There were widely believed rumors that Andzhaparidze was an undercover officer in the KGB, rumors that only increased after his strange death falling from “the stage at the Moscow premiere of *The Russia House*, the Hollywood movie starring Michelle Pfeiffer based on the novel by John le Carré, in which George [Georgi] appeared playing himself.”

179. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 491.

Chapter Three, Stout was a staunch opponent of Communism and participated in what could be viewed as incendiary political activity, with anti-Communism fictional murder plots, his open letter to Tito and his name attached to harshly worded condemnations of Bolshevism published by Freedom House that would have been disseminated in the 1970s when Andzhaparidze wrote the articles. Although Stout tended to be more vocal in his public protests of his blanket hatred of the Germans, rather than explicit public protests against Russians and Communism, his political background was already even more suspect than most Soviet writers whose work was banned (with Mikhail Bulgakov or Yevgeny Zamyatin as examples).

In terms of the plots of his novels, Stout uses his characters to get across his political messages (albeit in a manner intended to be subtle), and often pretty severely depicts the entire institution of Communism in a negative light. However, Stout tends to only mention the American Communist Party in his diatribes against Communism (through the guise of Wolfe's speeches and Archie's cutting remarks), as opposed to anything about Moscow and the Russian version of Communism.¹⁸⁰

The only way to understand Stout's literary existence in Soviet Russia is that Andzhaparidze did not have access to sources that would have given him the knowledge concerning Stout's anti-Bolshevik Freedom House activities. What he did have access to were the translations of Stout in Russian, and he appears to have fixated on Wolfe's rotund, well-fed figure and expensive flower tastes, rather than the politics of the author.

180. Stout only actually mentions Russian Communists directly in *The Black Mountain*, which ended up being one of the books most published in Russia in the 1990s.

5 | Why Russians Love that Stout Hates the FBI

I am neither a thaumaturge nor a dunce.
-Nero Wolfe
The Doorbell Rang

The Doorbell Rang

Stout depicts not only Communism in a negative light; influential American institutions also fell under his critical eye. Thus, Stout's popularity in Russia was due to more than the light pleasure of a detective story; it showed Russians the freedom that Americans had to criticize their own government. McAleer writes in reference to Stout's *The Doorbell Rang* (1965), "No Soviet writer could attack with impunity the head of the KGB. In America, Rex Stout could lay the director of the FBI under severe reprimand, and go unpunished."¹⁸¹ While *The Doorbell Rang* is Stout's most famously outspoken manifestation of his criticism of the FBI, his negative feelings towards the FBI began long before its 1965 publication and can be traced through several of his novels and novellas in the same way that one can trace his criticism of Communism. These FBI-mocking novels' popularity in Russia can also be explained through the Russian curiosity concerning Stout's ability to get away with the degree of public criticism of a government institution that he did in his plots. The inclusion of *The Doorbell Rang* in the previously mentioned journals that were purportedly trying to show the downside of capitalist society would have been one Western publication that did help them towards that goal.

Stout's opposition to the FBI as an organization also involved a personal hatred for its director J. Edgar Hoover, whom he called a man with a "self-made

181. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 491.

halo.”¹⁸² J. Edgar Hoover also developed what some would consider personal problems with Stout, and Stout’s FBI file grew to hundreds of pages, with over a hundred pages alone focusing solely on *The Doorbell Rang*. Mitgang wrote that

J. Edgar Hoover considered Stout anything but genial: as an enemy of the FBI, as a Communist or tool of Communist-dominated groups, someone whose novels and mail had to be watched, and whose involvement with professional writers’ organizations was not above suspicion. In the vague, bizarre phrase of one of the documents in his dossier, Stout was described as “an alleged radical.”¹⁸³

The FBI’s official documentation of Stout began as early as 1940, the year of the publication of *Over My Dead Body* and a Wolfe novella entitled *Sisters in Trouble*. Mitgang goes into the details of Stout’s FBI file, calling attention to the absurdities of some of the claims made by FBI scouts. *Sisters in Trouble* was analyzed as if it were a code involving political intrigue abroad, where the German nationality of characters is suspect, “Nero” refers to Rome, “Fritz” to the German Consul in San Francisco, and the three sisters’ names as a code pointing towards a July invasion of the Balkans or the Mediterranean.¹⁸⁴ The FBI wrote that Stout has been associated with various organizations and activities that had purported Communist influences, referencing Stout’s contributions to *New Masses* as well as his

182. "Nero Wolfe Vs. The F.B.I.," *Life*, December 10, 1965.

183. Mitgang, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America’s Greatest Authors*.

184 Ibid., Location 3017-22.

position as guest speaker at the annual dinner for the League for Mutual Aid.¹⁸⁵ This was a group that, among other things, operated an employment agency and bail fund for members of the Communist Party and allied organizations.¹⁸⁶

The paragraph describing these alleged subversive activities was attached to Hoover's letter informing Stout of his nonattendance at Stout's United World Federalists play, which Stout had personally invited him to, proving that the FBI had been keeping updated on what Stout had been doing in his personal life since 1949. Possibly in response to knowledge of this file, Stout himself is quoted as saying, "If I were President, I'd appoint a commission to go through all the FBI files carefully, and destroy every single bit of information that doesn't pertain to U.S. international interests *right now*."¹⁸⁷ Stout was put on "General Watch List No. 49" at Hoover's own instruction, and his NBC Today Show appearance in 1959 was monitored by Special Agent Jones of the FBI, six years before the publication of *The Doorbell Rang*.¹⁸⁸ In Stout's FBI file, there is a letter to J. Edgar Hoover, the writer's name censored, that states that while watching Stout's appearance on the Today Show, the author was "saddened and sickened at the effort put forth by Hugh Downs

185. J. Edgar Hoover to Rex Stout, November 15, 1949, FBI Redacted File, Wolfe Pack online archives. This letter contained a note with this excerpt: "In 1936, the *Western Worker* carried an article which stated that Stout, among others, would be a contributor of articles or stories appearing in the 25th Anniversary issue of *New Masses*."

186. J. Edgar Hoover, November 15, 1949. 3. Ironically, Stout lambasted this type of foundation in his description of the activities of the American Communist Henry Jameson Heath in *Home to Roost*.

187. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 449.

188. Mitgang, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America's Greatest Authors*, Location 3118.

[interviewer] and Rex Stout to discredit the FBI during this time [...] P.S. I am also writing the Hon. Strom Thurmond and telling of this incident.”¹⁸⁹

In 1940, Stout wrote *Over My Dead Body*, which contained subtler criticism of the FBI than *The Doorbell Rang*, while at the same time setting the stage for the later book. The story begins with a young foreign woman, Carla Lovchen, coming to ask Wolfe for help; her friend Neya Tormic has been wrongly accused of stealing diamonds from a member of the fencing club where they both work, and she appeals to Wolfe for help as a fellow Montenegrin. The plot becomes complicated when a man at the fencing club is found with an épée through his heart and the two Montenegrin girls are the main suspects. The murders multiply, and it is revealed that the murdered men have ties to foreign powers, for one corpse turns out to be a Nazi spy and the other a British spy. Wolfe’s knowledge of Yugoslav politics and the current struggle for control of the small country leads him to wire abroad for a photo of the Yugoslav royal family, and it is revealed that Neya Tormic is really the Princess Vladanka Donevitch. The princess had come to the United States, bringing her family’s poor ward, Carla, with her, in order to make a business deal allowing the Nazis political control of Yugoslavia in exchange for financial gain for herself. In a further twist, Carla turns out to be the daughter that Wolfe had adopted years before in Yugoslavia when she was very young.

189. Censored to J. Edgar Hoover, October 12, 1965, FBI Redacted File, Wolfe Pack online archives. Strom Thurmond was a segregationist, Democratic Senator of South Carolina (who later became a Republican). Wikipedia contributors, "Strom Thurmond," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Strom_Thurmond&oldid=708355684.

The opening scene involves Carla reading one of the books in Wolfe's library, *United Yugoslavia* by Henderson.¹⁹⁰ Shortly after she leaves, an FBI man named Stahl (who will be a recurring FBI agent throughout the Wolfe series) pays a call on Wolfe.¹⁹¹ Archie immediately describes Stahl in a derogatory manner, saying that the "G-man" "certainly had fine manner, something on the order of a high-class insurance salesman."¹⁹² The purpose of Stahl's visit is to inquire whether Wolfe is an "agent of a foreign principal," in Stahl's words, in which case Wolfe would have to officially register with the Department of State. Since Wolfe had just turned down Carla's plea to save her friend from the diamond debacle (he did not accept the case until after the first murder), Wolfe denies representing any foreign person and sends the man away.

After the first murder, Stahl returns to Wolfe's office a second time to ask if Wolfe is now an "agent of a foreign principal," which he defines as "the government of a foreign country, a person domiciled abroad, or any foreign business, partnership, association, corporation, or political organization." Wolfe replies that he is the agent of a Montenegrin woman, but she isn't domiciled abroad, she is sitting in front of both of them in the room, and then asks what that means in terms of registration. Stahl doesn't know how to take this, and says, "It's a situation I haven't met. I'll have to get an opinion from the attorney general. I'll let you know." Inspector Cramer is

190. Stout, *Over My Dead Body*, 2. Nothing I have found shows that *United Yugoslavia* is more than a title made up by Stout to complement the plot.

191. *Ibid.*, 9.

192. *Ibid.*, 10.

there for the whole conversation, and throws his hands up and “paw[s] the air” in frustration with the FBI.¹⁹³

The book ends dramatically, with the Princess Donevitch rushing into Wolfe’s study with a dagger in her hand, only for him to crack her skull and kill her with a beer bottle without leaving his seat. As the people in the room look at the recently deceased foreign woman lying on Wolfe’s carpet, Stahl returns with the news that he “may expect a ruling from the attorney general on that point in about a week,” in apparent reference to the now lifeless “foreign principal”: Archie looks up at him and “sat back on [his] heels and howled with laughter.”¹⁹⁴ This ending could be seen as a precursor to the less violent ending of *The Doorbell Rang*, which ends with less blood but with a similar embarrassment of a member of the FBI, albeit a much more dramatic one.

The next Wolfe story to contain slights against the FBI is the previously discussed novella, *Home to Roost* (1952), in which the FBI is presented as a closed-off, unresponsive organization on the very first page of the story. While it is neither criminal nor illogical that the FBI is a secretive organization, the manner in which Stout presents this fact has inherently negative connotations. During a description of the client’s confrontation with her nephew: “he told her he was secretly working for the FBI, spying on the Commies, but he wasn’t. He thought the FBI was practically the Gestapo.”¹⁹⁵ The FBI’s practices are compared to those of the Gestapo, and the organization is described as being “capable of sacrificing the rights of a private

193. Ibid., 114.

194. Ibid., 252.

195. Stout, *Home to Roost*, 18.

citizen to what they consider the public interest,” two statements which uses politically charged hyperbole to parallel Stout’s own complaints against the organization.¹⁹⁶ The only reason that Wolfe even takes on the client in the story is solely due to his intense dislike for the FBI, for he originally says, ““if you mean you want me to investigate the police and the FBI, that’s too big a bite.””¹⁹⁷ Wolfe hates to work, but he will work if it involves embarrassing the FBI, a situation that will also occur in *The Doorbell Rang* (although in that case, it also took \$100,000 as a retainer to finish the convincing).

The Doorbell Rang, Stout’s most “subversive” book according to the FBI, was published in Russian in 1973, eight years after its American publication, in a trilogy containing a novel by Ross MacDonal and one by John Ball. It was the most often published of all Stout’s books before the fall of the Soviet Union. The book is a combination of murder mystery and scathing critique of the FBI, and was of great interest to Russian readers who could not imagine the existence of the freedom from censorship that Stout enjoyed. There is no popular Russian detective novel that has so negatively examined the duties of the KGB or the FSB in the way that Stout had Wolfe poke at the FBI, and Russians may have been in awe of Stout’s ability to do so. Looking beyond the idea of the novel as a demonstration of freedom of speech, the plot paints a highly critical portrait of the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover, and would be considered the most unflattering of Stout’s novels in its portrayal of the Western political system. That this book is the one that the Russian state publishing companies published first is no surprise.

196. Ibid., 21.

197. Ibid., 2.

The plot of *The Doorbell Rang* is unlike those of most of Stout's other works, in that the client does not want or need a murder solved, because no murder has yet taken place. Instead, Mrs. Barry Rackham comes to Wolfe's office with an unusual request; she wants him to get the FBI to leave her alone after she sent out 10,000 copies of the book, *The FBI Nobody Knows*, to "the members of the cabinet, the Supreme Court justices, governors of all the states, all senators and representatives, members of state legislatures, publishers of newspapers and magazines, and editors, heads of corporations and banks, network executives and broadcasters, columnists, district attorneys, educators, and others— oh yes, chiefs of police."¹⁹⁸ Wolfe begins the job by looking into recent, small criminal cases involving the FBI, presuming that in at least one of them, due to the untrustworthy nature of the organization, there must have been some type of misconduct that Wolfe could expose and then use as blackmail to stop the surveillance of Mrs. Rackham. Inspector Cramer, deviating from his normal role as the cantankerous police officer who gives Wolfe a hard time, divulges information to Archie about a death by shooting where the bullet went missing before the body was found, and tells him that not only are there witnesses who saw FBI men leaving the apartment, but that he has been stopped on orders from above from investigating the case.

While Wolfe and Archie don't assume that FBI men committed the crime, they begin an investigation into the murder on the premise that the FBI was somehow

198. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 447; Rex Stout, *The Doorbell Rang* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1965), 3; Fred J. Cook, *The FBI Nobody Knows* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1964). McAleer writes that Stout was inspired to write the novel after reading Fred Cook's *The FBI Nobody Knows*, but that author of the book did not know of the plot of *The Doorbell Rang* until his daughter sent him a copy.

involved, and they turn out to be correct. The murder itself was committed by the murdered man's girlfriend, and in an unlucky coincidence, FBI men entered his apartment shortly after the crime in order to confiscate material that he had uncovered while writing an expose about the FBI. Spooked by the unexpected sight of a dead body and worried about the exposure of the illegality of their activities, the men had taken the bullet and left without reporting the murder.

In the process of their investigation, Archie and Wolfe become worried that their house is bugged and go to extreme lengths to avoid being overheard, only speaking when they are in the basement with both the television and radio on at top volume. Cramer brought on this suspicion by informing them that the FBI is looking for a way to take away their detective licenses. Wolfe then tricks the FBI into thinking that he and Archie are out of town, catches FBI men breaking into his apartment red-handed, and convinces an FBI higher-up, Wagg, to give the bullet over to the police and stop harassing Mrs. Rackham in exchange for his silence about both instances of breaking and entering that Wolfe now has evidence of.

The plot of the book is weaker than those of Stout's other novels from the viewpoint of the detective genre, since the search for a murderer is only secondary to the embarrassment of the FBI; the focus seems to be on having every character badmouth the FBI as many times as they can. Wolfe refers to Hoover as "a bully" without ever mentioning him by name, and to the FBI as a whole as "that goddamn outfit and that bunch of grabbers." In a drawn out joke, Archie explains to the cook Fritz that

“We’re going to push his [Hoover’s] nose in. Just a routine chore, but he’s touchy and will try to stop us. So futile.”

“But he— he’s a great man. Yes?”

“Sure. But I suppose you’ve seen pictures of him.”

“Yes.”

“What do you think of his nose?”

“Not good. Not exactly *épaté*, but broad. Not *bien fait*.”

“Then it should be pushed.”¹⁹⁹

At other points, Archie jokes about shooting Hoover and makes fun of a “G-man’s” appearance, describing him as having a “manly mug with a firm jaw.”²⁰⁰ Wolfe also makes many sweeping statements about the FBI in the grandiose vein reminiscent of Stout’s sweeping statements concerning the German people:

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is a formidable foe, entrenched in power and privilege. It is not *rodomontade* but merely a statement of fact to say that no individual or group in America would undertake the job I have assigned myself. If an agent of the FBI killed your son there is not the slightest chance that he will be brought to account unless I [Wolfe] do it.²⁰¹

The book ends with one of Stout’s most iconic scenes, which involves an obvious reference to J. Edgar Hoover himself having come from Washington to talk to Wolfe.

Archie writes:

199. *The Doorbell Rang*, 17, 57, 20.

200. *Ibid.*, 43, 69. Also a possible reference to the comic strip *Dick Tracy*.

201. *Ibid.*, 80.

The doorbell rang. I got up and went to the hall and saw a character on the stoop I had never seen before, but I had seen plenty of pictures of him. I stepped back in and said, "Well, well. The big fish." He frowned at me, then got it, and did something he never does. He left his chair and came. We stood side by side, looking. The caller put a finger to the button, and the doorbell rang. "No appointment," I said. "Shall I take him to the front room to wait a while?" "No. I have nothing for him. Let him get a sore finger." He turned and went back in to his desk. I stepped in. "He probably came all the way from Washington just to see you. Quite an honor." "Pfui. Come and finish this." I returned to my chair. "As I was saying, I may have to tell her privately ..."

The doorbell rang.²⁰²

After the publication of *The Doorbell Rang*, the FBI intensified their focus on Stout. In fact, the FBI did not have to wait until the publication date to read the novel. A page of Stout's FBI file contains a memorandum, declassified in 1980, that a Photostat of the manuscript was confidentially obtained by the FBI from a source at *The New York Times* and already perused in May of 1965, seven months before its official publication date. Excerpts from the FBI review of the book and subsequent recommendations read as follows:

This vicious book depicts the FBI in the worst possible light [...] Rex Stout concludes this book with a contemptuous reference to the Director [...] [it is recommended that] Stout be designated as a person not to be contacted without prior Bureau approval [...] any inquiries received concerning the

202. Ibid., 178.

book should be answered with a statement that the FBI has no comment other than that the book is a fictional work which presents a false and distorted picture of the FBI and that any Agents conducting themselves in the manner depicted in this book would be subject to immediate dismissal.²⁰³

The FBI's book review continues, "the plot of this book is weak and it will probably have only limited public acceptance despite Stout's use of the FBI in an apparent bid for sensationalism to improve sales."²⁰⁴ This did not end up being the case. While Mitgang references several examples of those who strongly disagreed with Stout and sent personal letters to Hoover in support, and John Wayne sent a letter to Stout saying "Goodbye," Viking Press ran a print run of 30,000 copies of *The Doorbell Rang*, double the previous Wolfe novels.²⁰⁵

Even with the growth of intense scrutiny, which Stout must have anticipated, McAleer writes that "Rex was more than ready to confront the implications of his book. He thought it childish that the FBI wrapped itself in the American flag and adopted the assumption of infallibility."²⁰⁶ A book review of *The Doorbell Rang* quotes Stout as connecting his distaste for Hoover to his already well-documented distaste for McCarthy:

I got my first idea from the newspapers years ago when I learned that he frequently went to the races with Senator McCarthy. I was astonished that a

203. M.A. Jones to Mr. DeLoach, May 20, 1965, "*The Doorbell Rang*" *New Mystery Novel by Rex Stout*, FBI Redacted File, Wolfe Pack online archives.

204. Ibid. This quotation is reminiscent of Andzhaparidze's anger at Soviet journals for using Western detective novels, including specifically Stout's *The Doorbell Rang*, to improve sales.

205. Mitgang, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America's Greatest Authors*, Location 3103.

206. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 451, 47.

man—Hoover—whose function it is to preserve and uphold the law would take as a social companion a man who was so obviously a threat to the very basis of democracy.²⁰⁷

Another interview quotes Stout as saying that the FBI are an “odious, overbearing and unprincipled” organization, but Stout says he is not afraid of them because they “can’t touch a writer and I’m not worrying about it. All I need is a typewriter.”²⁰⁸ The popularity and attention that Stout received from the public for this book was only distasteful to him in a certain way; Philip Quarles wrote that Stout was annoyed at “having achieved wealth and fame in a genre of writing not seriously regarded by most critics, that he is in the news not because he wrote a ‘good story’; but because he took on the FBI.”²⁰⁹

Although to the reader, the book is an obvious slam of the FBI and its practices, Stout was always vague in his interviews about the political message of the book. When asked about his intentions when writing the novel, Stout replies, “[in] *The Doorbell Rang*, I knew that the bullet wouldn’t be found in the room, but I didn’t know why. Later, when it turned out that the FBI took it, I was delighted.”²¹⁰ In a different interview, Stout is more explicit in his analysis of his own book:

I didn't think of *The Doorbell Rang* as an attack on the FBI while I was writing it. I hadn't the faintest idea of attacking. Have you ever read a Sherlock Holmes story? Did you consider it an attack on Scotland Yard? *Now* I'm beginning to think that the book may lead people to stand up and speak

207. Haskel and Winterich, "Private Eye on the FBI," *Saturday Review of Literature*.

208. "Nero Wolfe Vs. The F.B.I.," 128.

209. Quarles, *Rex Stout Writes Detective Stories, Makes Enemies of the FBI*.

210. "Nero Wolfe Vs. The F.B.I.."

out against the FBI [...] It is conceivable to me that the FBI might tail me or tap my phone because of this book. I think it is wonderful I've written so often about ditching tails. I'd like to try to do it.²¹¹

Stout's jokes about being tailed have the ring of truth to them. When Herbert Mitgang wrote the chapter of his book, *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War Against America's Greatest Authors*, dedicated to Stout, the FBI only gave him 183 pages of Stout's 301-page file, and most of them were censored. Mitgang writes that the hesitancy of the FBI to turn everything over to him stemmed from a reluctance to disclose the identity of a "confidential source," which implies that Stout was being actively watched. The Church Committee, a government organization that investigated illegal intelligence gathering within the government, found in its research that Stout's name was included in the 332 names on the FBI's "do not contact list," which was used as evidence in their search to prove misconduct by the FBI's intelligence gathering services, (perhaps supporting Stout's negative opinion of what he saw as the overreach of FBI power).²¹²

The aforementioned 1973 Russian trilogy, *Contemporary American Detective*, that contains *The Doorbell Rang* as well as two novels by Ross MacDonald and John Ball, includes an introduction by literary critic Natalia Ilyina.²¹³ With her strong

211. Haskel and Winterich, "Private Eye on the FBI," *Saturday Review of Literature*.

212. David Monroe to Seeking In The Zeitgeist, February 2, 2012, <http://seekinginthezeitgeist.blogspot.com/2012/02/doorbell-rang-by-rex-stout-my-rating-4.html>.

213. Ilyina and her views on the detective novel are discussed in Chapter Four.

background in English detective fiction, she would have been a natural choice as a writer to introduce a Russian trilogy entitled *Contemporary American Detective*.²¹⁴

The introduction begins the section on Stout by writing “Rex Stout—one of the oldest and the most popular representatives of the detective genre in modern America,” which supports the idea that Stout had been known as a representative of the modern American detective genre in Russia.²¹⁵ Ilyina brings up the British authors Agatha Christie, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Dorothy Sayers, rather than American ones, in her introduction to Stout, for she makes the assertion that Wolfe is closer in nature to his British counterparts than to his American ones. The introduction also addresses the ideological differences in the Western detective novels within the trilogy. Ilyina writes, “Nero Wolfe, in particular, did not hide the fact that he was working for money.” This idea was important, because in most, if not all, Russian detective fiction at the time, the characters were not private detectives working for fees, but instead were either policeman or some part of the state apparatus working for low salaries.²¹⁶ Wolfe’s desire to only work for a very high fee and to live a lavish lifestyle off of this money is something that needed to be specially noted in the Soviet Union in the 1970s; a lifestyle this incompatible with socialism should be remarked upon.

214. In the introduction to *The Doorbell Rang*, Ilyina’s long description of the characterization of Tibbs, a black policeman in a story from the collection other than Stout’s, shows the interest that the Soviet people had with race relations in America. See Chapter Two for more information on this.

215. Reks Staut, “Sovremennyi amerikanskii detektiv,” in *Zvonok v dver’* ed. Natalia Ilyina (Moscow: Progress, 1973), 2.

216. Aleksandra Marinina’s police lieutenant Anastasia Kamenskaia is an example of a popular Russian crime fiction series with a non-private detective working for the state.

The duplicitous role of the FBI is described in detail in the introduction, for Ilyina appears to have the same negative perception of the institution that Stout did. She writes that “the growing penetration of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the private lives of US citizens is reflected in the novel *The Doorbell Rang*. Not high position in society, not wealth—nothing can protect one from the FBI.” Ilyina writes that the FBI could be considered “an oppressive force, brazen because of its impunity, ‘a state within a state,’ which crushes everything in its path” and that only Nero Wolfe would be able to put the “mighty FBI” in a position of vulnerability.²¹⁷ Ilyina considers the FBI an institution that illegally uses its unlimited resources, which could reflect both her conscious mimicking of Stout’s dialogue as well as an unconscious coupling of the image of the FBI in her head with the reality of the KGB in Russia in the 1970s.

The Soviet people were taught to dislike capitalism in favor of Communism and to dislike organizations like the FBI for the infringements of privacy that they inflict on citizens. However, the Soviet inclination to dislike the FBI seems ironic and contradictory, because while the Soviet state was objecting to the capitalist society’s organization that entered every facet of peoples’ lives, their socialist organizations were doing the same thing. A valid insight into this contradiction comes from Hédá Kovaly, who wrote about her persecution under Russian Communism in the former Czechoslovakia. Her husband was a high-ranking Communist official at the beginning of the Czech purges in the 1950s, and she explains how both she and her

217. Staut, "Sovremennyyi amerikanskii detektiv," 5.

husband did not immediately see the government's actions against its citizens as threatening and illegal. She writes:

Every government had an obligation to defend itself against its enemies. Look at America and Joseph McCarthy's witch hunts! It was only when someone we knew well was arrested, someone we knew could not possibly be guilty of any crime, that we began to pull our heads out of the sand.²¹⁸

Kovaly's connection of the Stalinist-era influence on the Czech purges with the McCarthy Red Scare helps explain why the Soviet critic Natalia Ilyina could despise the FBI without ever seeing the connection between the FBI and the KGB; she could condemn the FBI's censorship without condemning her own political system's censorship of detective novels without any sense of an internal contradiction.²¹⁹

In the introduction to *The Doorbell Rang*, Ilyina writes, "Risking it all puts Nero Wolfe in the fight against the FBI in the role of David, battling Goliath. The strength is on Goliath's side, but the truth is on the side of little David. And the sympathies of all honest people are on that side..."²²⁰ Stout's writing strikes a

218. Heda Margolius Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague, 1941-1968* (Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc, 1997), 95, 166. In the height of her family's persecution in Prague, Kovaly also turned to the detective genre for comfort, describing her reaction to authors like Raymond Chandler as being "enthralled by the beauty of an exact word which blends flawlessly with a clearcut idea."

219. Viktor Marakhovskii to Kul'tpul't, June 14, 2015, <http://www.kultpult.ru/Niro-Vulf-pobeditel-gomofobov-Ob-evolyucii-cennostej-233>. Russian blogger Viktor Marakhovskii also addresses Stout's animosity against the FBI. He is able to make the connection between the FBI and the Soviet government, given that he is writing in 2015, long after the Soviet repression had ended. Marakhovskii believes that Stout had read Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* before writing *The Doorbell Rang*, and that Stout is therefore comparing what the FBI does with the repression of the Soviet government. It was plausible that Stout had read Solzhenitsyn, for in *Death of a Dude*, Wolfe is reading Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*.

220. Staut, "Sovremennyi amerikanskii detektiv," 6.

positive chord for the Soviet political system in its indirect promotion of socialism. Wolfe is (somewhat ironically) seen as the “little David” fighting the corruption of a governmental system, rather like the proletariat fighting against the exploitation of the upper classes. While Ilyina does not mention Stout’s politics in this introduction, and it is unclear if she knew the extent of Stout’s persecution by the FBI, Stout’s personal experiences with what he saw as FBI corruption would fit perfectly into Ilyina’s narrative of the perfidious organization of the FBI.

After the 1973 Russian publication of *The Doorbell Rang*, the novel was published many times in trilogies of Western detective writers in Russia. It was published in twenty-one different editions of trilogies before 1999, and six more editions after the year 2000. Russians who read *The Doorbell Rang* in the 1990s took away the same negative impression of the FBI as Ilyina did in 1971. These readers took what Stout wrote about the FBI as the gospel truth, because they wouldn’t yet have had any other reliable source of information about the FBI in the 1990s.

Members of the Russian Nero Wolfe online fan site and the Vk site support this argument by having only negative things to say about the FBI in reference to *The Doorbell Rang*. Rymko, Panichev, and Zavgorodnii all read *The Doorbell Rang* as their first Stout book. Rymko found the book accidentally, and Panichev, who refers to the 1973 trilogy as a “good translation,” read the book at the suggestion of his librarian. Chervotkin wrote that he saw through Wolfe’s hatred of the FBI to Stout’s real hatred of the FBI: “I suppose that Stout disliked Hoover personally and the FBI in general. The FBI is presented as the absolute evil. The FBI uses means of any

degree of impurity. Therefore, any measures against it are acceptable.”²²¹ User BleWotan agrees with Chervotkin’s opinion of the realism of the plot: “My vision of the FBI and their methods at that time was close enough to what Stout described in his books,” and Panichev writes that the FBI was “displayed as unattractive, like an organization violating the laws.”²²² Zavgorodnii more specifically addresses Hoover’s role in the novel, agreeing with Stout’s negative opinion of the man: “I think that for that period of American history Hoover’s FBI was shown realistically.”²²³

221. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015; Natalia Rymko (user Rymarnica), October 19, 2015.

222. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Sergey Panichev, Vkontakte message to author, March 15, 2016.

223. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

6 | How Stout's Popularity Continues after the Fall of Communism

It was about the idea that a novelist should just create his characters and let them go ahead and develop the action and the plot. This guy was dead against he. He claimed you should plot it yourself. I was thinking that a detective working on a case can't plot it himself. It has already been plotted.

*-Archie Goodwin
Plot it Yourself*

Stout's Detective Novels in Post-Soviet Russia

Jumping back in time from 1973 to just after Stalin's death in 1953 is a necessary transition in order to briefly explain the environment in Russia within which Stout's *The Doorbell Rang* was published, in order to place the publication of that first Stout novel in the context of the wider availability of all Western detective novels in translation after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Critics lost some of their moral ground when the blanket ban on the detective genre during the Stalin period ended in the 1950s. The "Red Pinkertons" did not return, but were instead replaced when middlebrow non-literary journals like *Iskatel'* and *Podvig* began publishing detective fiction (but still only certain authors). After Stalin's death, more than fifteen of Agatha Christie's novels were translated into Russian between 1966 and 1970, and 630,000 sets of "It's elementary, my dear Watson," were "insufficient to meet demands" in Russia.²²⁴ Lovell writes that Agatha

224. Nancy Gryspeerdt and Sam Kinchin-Smith, "Curious Incidents: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes in Russia," *The Calvert Journal*, 2014; "Sherlock Holmes Is Favorite in Russia," *The Washington Post*, April 15 1967. Humorously, there was also a Russian band in the 1980s called Agata Kristi (Agatha Christie) whose sound is described as a reflection of the name, a "mysterious, eccentric, and at times sadistically spooky mix of glam, goth rock, and techno-like electronics." Wikipedia contributors, "Agatha Christie (Band)," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.,

Christie (and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) were safe choices for Soviet publishers at this time, for they did not want to expose the Soviet population to multiple other authors' descriptions of Western society.²²⁵ In 1983, the foreign literary journal *Zarubezhnyi detektiv* (*Foreign Detective Stories*) had a print run of 200,000 copies, and between 1986 and 1993 more than 30 million pirated copies of Christie's novels were translated and published in Russia.²²⁶ All of these numbers serve to show that Nepomnyashchy, the *detektiv* scholar, was correct when she wrote that "well before glasnost Russians were reading a great deal of detective fiction, and were clamoring for more."²²⁷

Progress Publishers, publisher of the 1973 Western detective trilogy with *The Doorbell Rang*, was a Moscow-based publishing house founded in 1931. The publishing house was most well known for its English-language publication of books about Marxist-Leninism, which is interesting to note because of their decision to publish Stout. An article written in February of 1991, several months before the Soviet Union was dissolved, details the importance of American books in Russia at that time in relation to Progress Publishers. The article describes how the formerly politically-inclined, propaganda-producing company had switched to publishing Russian-language editions of popular American best-sellers such as "How to Win

[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Agatha_Christie_\(band\)&oldid=703557998](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Agatha_Christie_(band)&oldid=703557998).

225. Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* 51-52.

226. Menhert, *The Russians and Their Favorite Books*, 252. Lyndall Morgan, "Darya Dontsova's 'Sleuthettes': A Case of the Regendering of the Post-Soviet Russian Detektiv?," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 19 (2005), 95.

227. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 165.

Friends and Influence People” and George Bush’s autobiography, in order to be seen as a “modern publishing house.” The US government gave out 230,000 dollars in grants to buy rights to American books, (although if the book was printed before 1973, it could be legally published in the USSR for free, which meant that Stout’s books could be published without buying the rights).²²⁸ The article says that the Text Cooperative, a private publishing house, published Stout in a collection (with no date given) with Ed McBain and Raymond Chandler, and that the print run was 200,000 to 400,000 and each book cost from four to eight rubles, which was 2.50 to 5.00 American dollars. The author writes that “even anti-communist U.S. academics Richard Pipes and Robert Conquest will have works published in the Soviet Union this year,” although he doesn’t include Stout in this list, even though he would be considered an anti-communist U.S. literary writer, if not an academic one.²²⁹

Even with the plethora of new translations that had grown exponentially since the Russian translation of *The Doorbell Rang* (1973), there were very few copies of translated Western detective novels in bookstores, for demand was always greater than supply. And so a book exchange system became universal. A reader would bring in a book and request another book in exchange, but the book he traded had to be one of the ones “in demand” in order to receive a foreign *detektiv* from publishers like Progress and Molodaia gvardiia or the ‘Podvig’ series from ‘Zhizn’ zamechatel’nykh

228. McAleer writes that Stout did not receive any royalties for a single edition from “behind the Iron Curtain,” for they were all unauthorized. However, Stout did not care; the fact that his ideas were influencing people under the suppression of Communism was enough for him. McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*, 491.

229. Greg Gransden, "Yanks Write New Chapter in Soviet Publishing: Books: Onetime Propaganda Mills Still Carry the Works of Lenin. But American Favorites, Such as 'the Godfather,' Are the Top Sellers.," *Los Angeles Times* February 19, 1991.

liudei (Lives of Remarkable People).”²³⁰ In 1989-1990, the official ban on detective novels was lifted, (even though publication had existed before then, apparently Stalin’s official ban had still been on the books but held only slight importance), and Russian publishers began issuing Western novels in earnest. The growing need for publishing houses expanded their number from 230 in Soviet times to over 7,200 by 1995.²³¹ However, the book exchange system was still in use in the 1990s as the economy sorted itself out, and Western detective novels were still considered valuable currency in the book trade (even though the oversaturation of Western novels caused publishers to limit their selection).²³²

Baraban explains that in the 1990s, “crime fiction soon accounted for the greatest percentage of translated Western popular literature flooding the Russian book market [...] Rex Stout [...] and other authors covered *lotki*, stalls at makeshift outdoor book markets.”²³³ Scholar Lyndall Morgan lists Rex Stout as one of the most popular writers translated during this period of *lotki* (1990s), alongside Raymond Chandler and James Hadley Chase (who had been lambasted by Andzhaparidze for his millionaire cast).²³⁴ This influx of foreign fiction could be explained by the fact that Russian novels written in the Soviet version of the detective genre during the

230. Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* 61.

231. Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*, 3. Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* 133.

232. *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* 132.

233. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 162.

234. Morgan, "Darya Dontsova’s ‘Sleuthettes’: A Case of the Regendering of the Post-Soviet Russian Detektiv?," 99.

Soviet Union portrayed their heroes in a stereotypical socialist realist style, and with the collapse of the old social system, these characters now represented the corrupt political system of the past, and Western translations were easily able to edge them out.²³⁵ Wachtel writes that, “these books rapidly overwhelmed the local cultural production and, to the dismay of former communists and dissidents alike, became the reading matter for the masses.”²³⁶

Although Baraban writes that Stout’s books made up a large part of the *lotki* book markets, Chervotkin, Zavgorodnii and user BleWotan only rate Stout’s popularity in the 1990s at “3+”, “2”, and “4” respectively, and VK user Panichev does not give Stout a rating, although he does write that Stout was in the top two or three fictional detectives in the 1990s. BleWotan’s relatively high “4” is because of the subscription that delivered BleWotan’s Stout books, which meant that “the audience did exist and it was big enough for the edition to be profitable.”²³⁷ And Zavgorodnii, even with his 2 rating, has an important historical and political reason as to why he began reading Stout’s books in the 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR:

The attitude towards communism (my personal and generally in the country) had changed significantly. I had never been a confirmed communist, and the access to the information that appeared during the “Perestroika” (Solzhenitsyn’s books, etc.) changed my attitude for this ideology even more;

235. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 166.

236. Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe*, 192.

237. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015; User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Sergey Panichev, Vkontakte message to author, March 15, 2016.

therefore, I treated Stout's anticommunism calmly, as a conscious choice of a sensible man.²³⁸

Panichev agrees in opinion with Zavgorodnii's reading of Stout's anti-Communism taking on a new significance in the post-Soviet era, writing that "hostility to the Communist practice and ideology was opened for us after the translation of all of his [Stout's] books" in the 1990s.

Wolfe novels were not the only Stout writings published in the late 1990s. A collection of detective stories called *Detektivy Veka (Detective Novels of the Century)* was published in Moscow by Polifakt publishing in a series called Itogi Veka, *Vzglyad iz Rossii. Detective Novels of the Century* covered the past one hundred years of detective novels from all over the world through its selections of Russian translated works. The introduction refers to the books selected as ones that opened a new page in literature, and then goes on to discuss the rules and secrets learned from this century of detective novels.²³⁹ Intriguingly, Georgi Andzhaparidze, the same Soviet critic who in the 1970s so harshly criticized the increasing influence of Western detective translations in the Soviet Union, edited the series

Twenty years after his first condemnation of translating Western detective stories, and fifteen years after his interview with a softer view on the detective genre, Andzhaparidze wrote another article on the genre as an afterword to this collection. This article differs greatly from both his earlier condemnations in articles and even from his more positive interview in that he discusses in detail several detective

238. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

239. *Detektivy veka (Detective Novels of the Century)*, Itogi veka, *Vzglyad iz rossii (Total Century, Glance from Russian)*, (Polifakt. Itogi veka, 1999), 5.

characters, namely Poirot, Miss Marple, and Maigret, in terms that show both his breadth of knowledge of the detective genre as well as an admiration for the writing that created these detectives. Andzhaparidze mentions Soviet-era detective novels, like those of Leonov, the Vainer brothers, and Semenov, which he does not think are worse than their Western counterparts, but are just different in principal:

The problem with all of these obviously talented people was that they were working not only within the framework of a genre but were also in the grip of a brutal ideological oppression, and therefore they were forced not to enthrall and entertain but to educate readers in the spirit of socialist class morality, which has consistently been contrasted to “bourgeois” abstract humanism.²⁴⁰

Thus Andzhaparidze’s 1971 call for an increase in selectivity of Western authors published due to their bourgeois character is turned upside down when he writes disparagingly in this 1999 afterword about the “Soviet detective genre’s propagandist function of teaching class morals.”

Menhert’s previously quoted statement that the literary critics of the Soviet era had to “steadily retreat” from their previous Party-line positions of the detective genre before “the avalanche of detective novels” is an apt description of what Andzhaparidze has done.²⁴¹ Although Andzhaparidze refers to the impossibility for the genre of a novel about crime to flourish in a society without private property, seemingly ignoring the fact that the detective novel did in fact flourish (albeit in an

240. Georgi Andzhaparidze, “Zhestkost’ kanona i vechnaia novizna (The Rigidity of the Canon and Perpetual Novelty),” in *Detektivny veka (Detective Novels of the Century)*, Itogi veka, Vzgliad iz rossii (Total Century, Glance from Russian), (Polifakt. Itogi veka, 1999), 902, 910.

241. Menhert, *The Russians and Their Favorite Books*, 252.

underground manner) in Soviet society, he does not criticize it here as he had done in the previous *Literaturnaia gazeta* article. Andzhaparidze also briefly describes the current trend in *detektiv* to “reflect the current level of criminalization in our society,” which he writes in reference to Marinina, rather than the traditional detective genre’s dependence on the ten commandments for morality (in his opinion).²⁴² This comment about the traditional morality in conjunction with the new type of morality that Marinina observes in Soviet society through her writing, retains the style of some of Andzhaparidze’s older, more critical quips in the 1970s about the failure of society to deal with literature and morality in the way that he saw fit.

Stout’s writing is included in this *Detective Novels of the Century* collection, but it is not a Nero Wolfe novel—it is not even a detective story. Instead, editor Andzhaparidze chose to include Stout’s satirical article on Sherlock Holmes, an article that had caused a huge uproar when originally given as a speech by Stout to the Baker Street Society in 1941. The article, entitled “Watson was a Woman,” is based on the singular premise that since neither Holmes nor Watson are ever described as going to bed in the stories, therefore Watson must be a female lover or mistress of Holmes. Stout goes into elaborate detail about the ways that Conan Doyle literarily hid the truth of Watson’s gender; the speech ends with an acrostic of several titles of Holmes’s stories that spells out “Irene Watson.”²⁴³

242. Andzhaparidze, “Zhestkost’ kanona i vechnaia novizna (The Rigidity of the Canon and Perpetual Novelty),” in *Detektivy veka (Detective Novels of the Century)*, 909.

243. Rex Stout, “Watson Was a Woman,” *The Saturday Review of Literature* (March 1, 1941).

Since Stout quotes several passages from Conan Doyle's stories, the article highlights the fact that Sherlock Holmes had been translated in full by this point in Russia and that the translator, V. Voronina, had access to several different translations of Holmes's stories (for she cites varied translators for the Holmes passages). The Russian translation of Stout's own words was difficult for translator V. Voronina, because since English doesn't have gendered nouns and adjectives, the Russian masculine endings for Watson had to be replaced when it made more sense for feminine endings to describe Stout's "Irene Watson."²⁴⁴ The translation of Stout's speech in *Detective Novels of the Century* also leaves out (for unexplained reasons) the last three paragraphs about Holmes marrying Watson.

"Watson Was a Woman" is an unusual example of the problems that arose when translating Stout's work; the problems encountered in translating Stout in this instance are of a more technical, linguistic nature, as opposed to the problems that could arise from ideological circumstances of translation.²⁴⁵

The Russians Begin Writing Their Own Detective Novels

Once Russians were able to write detective stories without needing to conform to particular political ideals, the linguistic problems of literal translation turned into the trickier ideological problems of translating a genre. Wachtel writes that these new *detektiv* writers created "low- or middlebrow" novels that have a "layer of

244. Staut, "Uotson byl zhenszhinoi (Watson Was a Woman)," 703.

245. To be clear, although the retranslation process of Stout in the early 2000s was due to the poor quality of translation, the problems mainly stemmed from a lack of knowledge about the vocabulary surrounding Wolfe's food and meals, not necessarily linguistic problems separate from the kitchen.

metageneric commentary: postmodern pulp, in a word.”²⁴⁶ These writers were entering a time where everything that they had previously believed in had crumbled, and had to both restart their lives and reinvent their ways of approaching culture. Writer Arkadii Adamov had written in 1975 that Western detective novels would always be inherently different from their Soviet counterparts because, “due to the traditions of Russian literature—we are beginning to load the detective novel with much more moral, social and public weight than Western authors do” and this idea was reflected more strongly even after censorship was removed.²⁴⁷ Russian *detektiv* scholar Anthony Olcott writes that the main question of the Russian *detektiv* genre is “Who is guilty,” as opposed to the Western, “Whodunit.”²⁴⁸

The new concepts of individuality in a capitalist society introduced into Russian culture in the early 1990s did not immediately show themselves in the Russian *detektiv*, for it was a concept “to which the Bolsheviks were deeply hostile” and the Russians in the 1990s could not rid themselves of the influence of their upbringing overnight.²⁴⁹ Olcott continues by explaining that

in the *detektiv*, good guys lie, cheat, steal, and even kill, while bad guys do things like work two jobs, manufacture goods consumers want to buy, and

246. Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe*, 193.

247. Ilyina, "Detective Novels: A Game and Life," 148.

248. Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*, 7. In fact, one of the books written in the “Red Pinkerton” era, *Miss Mend: Yankees in Petrograd*, also turned the “Whodunit” formula into a Russian version of “How will vengeance be exacted?” The book was criticized for its bourgeois decadence, and the author, Marietta Shaginian, went on to win the Lenin award in 1972 for her novels about Lenin’s life. Boris Dralyuk, *Western Crime Fiction Goes East: The Russian Pinkerton Craze, 1907-1934* (Brill Academic Pub, 2012). 65.

249. Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*, 5.

wear nice clothes. The key to understanding such apparent contradictions, however, is to see the larger purpose for which the actions are committed. At least the *detektiv* genre, and presumably the Russian readership, will consider actions committed for an individual end or benefit to be bad, while actions committed for some larger communal purpose—even if these violate laws or have tragic consequences—are going to be seen as good.²⁵⁰

Since private property was a new concept to Russians in the early 1990s, their detective storylines reflect somewhat older, more Communist-oriented ideas concerning possession and acquisition of private property as a motive for crime, for the message seems to be that “possessions themselves are bad.” The very definition of crime differs between Western and Russian society. In a more theoretical description, what the West sees as illegal action the Russians may see as “simply human weakness, or an inescapable part of an imperfect world.”²⁵¹ Olcott writes that in some Russian *detektiv* novels, when the police must investigate the crime of theft of private property, “their sympathies clearly run against the victims.”²⁵²

Besides the ideological differences between the Western detective genre and the new Russian *detektiv* were the differences in literary depictions of the actual process of criminal courts and the judicial system. The idea of confession, and making the criminal confess, was very important in Russian courts and therefore plays a large role in capturing criminals in *detektiv* novels.²⁵³ A fictional senior

250. Ibid., 140. See Olcott’s Chapter Four on punishment and rehabilitation in the Russian *detektiv* for literary examples of these contradictions.

251. Ibid., 185.

252. Ibid., 68, 70.

253. Ibid., 118.

official in a 1990s Russian *detektiv* novel describes the changed role of confession in the police force in the post-Soviet period after he created a new detective team within his department, for he had to

adapt to "working under a legal government," as he expressed it. That is, to pursue and prosecute criminals without using such tried and true methods as physical coercion, extended periods of detention, threats, and so on. It was incredibly difficult to operate without the help of these tools, but on the other hand [his] team got on well with the detectives and prosecutors, who could find no fault with their work [...] He understood that he was like a donkey at a riding school whom nobody touches only because he always performs his work reliably and well.²⁵⁴

The types of heroes that appear in the Russian *detektiv* also vary from the Western stereotypical private eye; the *detektiv*'s heroes tend to be individuals working within a larger apparatus, like a police department or the military.²⁵⁵ A 2001 article in *The Moscow Times* says that the Russian *detektiv* emphasizes the "unshakeable faith of the Russian reader in the strength and impartiality of at least one state structure," the state policing apparatus, while in the Western genre, characters like Nero Wolfe, Hercule Poirot, and Miss Marple are traditional detectives who are private individuals solving crimes, not "confined to the narrow corridors of state service." Russians look for faith in their police system in their

254. Alexandra Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances, The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 29, no. 1, 2 (2002), 156.

255. Wilkinson, *Detective Fiction in Cuban Society and Culture*, 120. Göbler had written that in the Soviet *detektiv* genre, there was only one type of detective character allowed: "the diligent policeman who never questions the social order." The 1990s *detektiv* heroes appear to be a holdover from this time.

detektiv novels, where the main character being a lone private investigator is rare, while American detective fiction tends to favor the strong individual fighting the system, shown by the popularity of writers like James Patterson.

Even with the inherent differences in the perspective of police and private detective characters, Olcott details one type of Russian *detektiv* hero that does seem to reflect the creative structure of the character of Nero Wolfe. The *syshchik* detective, which he translates into English as “the searcher,” plays a role similar to that of the Western private investigator of first establishing the existence of a crime and then gathering the evidence needed to convict the criminals. Olcott explains that the *syshchik* role differs from the Western role in that the character must conform to the administrative process that he is placed in. Even so, he references Russian *detektiv* writer Yulian Semyonov’s

use of the senior *syshchik* who, like Nero Wolfe, never seems to go outside this office, but who is indispensable to coordinating the efforts of the investigators, making sure that they are observing Soviet laws in the course of their investigation, and, most important of all, that they are moving properly towards the solution, one that he seems almost to know in advance.²⁵⁶

As referenced in Chapter One, Wolfe’s individual meting out of justice in the novel *Fer-de-lance* by arranging a murder-suicide can also be seen as a reflection of the sedentary lifestyle of a *syshchik*, for the suicide-murder absolves Wolfe from having to take an hour-long drive to give testimony at a trial (an example of one of the

256. Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*, 28.

various times that Wolfe does depart from letting the democratic process take its course).

The *syshchik* model for a Russian *detektiv* hero only became possible in the late Soviet period, as more writers began experimenting with how independent their heroes could be.²⁵⁷ However, even though the Russian *detektiv* writers in the 1990s were no longer living under enforced Communism, they still were not able to fully embrace the idea of the individual as a positive character. Olcott sums it up concisely in the conclusion of his book on the Russian pulp fiction genre: “The unit of measurement that the western genre finds supreme—the individual—is to the Russian genre, at best, a solipsism, and, at worst, a criminal, actively working to destroy the Russian basic unit, an amorphously defined but acutely felt larger community.”²⁵⁸

Russian Intellectual Backlash Against the Rise of Mass Culture and the Detective Novel

Not all Russians were pleased with the new phenomenon of homegrown detective novels and their new type of relatively independent hero. Natalia Ivanova, the editor of the journal *Znamya*, which had been one of the journals that first published Stout in the Soviet era, worried about the increasing lack of emphasis on serious literature. She is quoted as saying:

We can all accept the idea that the only people reading now are the ones who read for non-political reasons [...] Now you see the rise of advice columns,

257. Ibid., 29. Russian *detektiv* writer Aleksandra Marinina is well known for having *syshchik* detectives working in conjunction with their senior officials.

258. Ibid., 185.

personal ads, Harlequin romances. Well, that's OK. What is unexpected is the general degradation of culture and of the intelligentsia itself.²⁵⁹

Boris Dubin, a Russian sociologist and literary translator, agrees with the idea that the rise of the *detektiv* has contributed to a decline in the role of the intellectual in Russian society.²⁶⁰ He refers to the years 1992-1998 as the time when the social role of the intelligentsia was up in the air, for the works of the greats that had served as a point of reference for understanding the intellectual's self-worth no longer held the same place of reverence in society. Names such as Solzhenitsyn, Bulgakov, and Tolstoy have been replaced by Christie, Conan Doyle, and Marinina. Dubin writes in 1998, "the loss of the social mission [...] of interest in contemporaneity with the exclusion of immediate tasks and concerns, and decline in the creative potential of the former leaders" were all forms of social deterioration that resulted in a copious amount of violence-ridden television shows and crime novels that were both "anti-intelligentsia and anti-'democratic.'"²⁶¹

A literary critique of the Russian *detektiv* genre, published in 1988 in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, the journal that had published Andzhaparidze's critiques more than two decades before, offers insight from a different perspective into how widespread the genre's popularity had become. The article discusses the creation of the new Association for Mass Literature (of which Dubin is a leader), whose existence came about from the urging of critics, sociologists, and philosophers. The

259. David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Random House, 1993).

260. Dubin had worked with both Progress and Raduga as a translator and is now the head of the sociopolitical research department at the Levada Center.

261. Boris Dubin, "Russian Intelligentsia between Classics and Mass Culture " (Moscow: VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center), 1998), 10, 12.

existence of an organization based around the categorization of mass literature would have been unthinkable in the time that Andzhaparidze wrote about the problems of translated detective stories; there wasn't enough mass literature to be accepted politically, let alone categorized in the 1970s. Quoting a declaration of the Association for Mass Literature, the author writes that 70 to 80% of domestic Russian writers belong to the *boevik* (adventure) and detective genres, as opposed to 20 to 30% in the first years of perestroika, with individual detective books being published in amounts of up to one million copies.²⁶² This is a large difference from the journals in the 1970s publishing ten detective stories a year, which at the time was a seemingly high number lamented by critics like Andzhaparidze.

A. Zueva, a sociologist, wrote that in the mid-1970s literary critics were still saddened by the popularity of the *detektiv* genre, basing her comments on a survey of what Russians liked to read in 1995.²⁶³ The results are in the form of a bar graph labeled "Scale of Preference (%)", with a marker going up to 37 along the bottom line of the graph. The line of the popularity of "*Detektiv/adventure*" is broken up by gender, 26.95% for women, and 31.82% for men. Zueva's analysis of these numbers breaks down the type of people that buy these *detektiv* novels in terms of financial situation. She writes that those who mainly buy *detektiv*, romance novels, and fantasy are less able to afford high prices; those that spend less than 200 dollars a year on

262. O. Vronskaiia, "Na podstupakh k 'zolotomu pistoletu'," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no.9 (1998).

263. A. Zueva, "Kto vy, pokupateli knig?," *Knizhnoe obozrenie* 33 (1996). The survey was produced by KOMON-2 and involved 14,000 families across 45 cities in the Russian socialist research Target Group index, with presumably each participant being asked to list more than one of their preferred literary genre.

books purchase the most *detektiv*.²⁶⁴ This shows that it was the lower class that read the most *detektiv*, which supports Dubin's point that "social deterioration" spread to all strata of Russian society. The creation of the Association for Mass Literature in conjunction with the evidence of the widespread popularity of the detective genre shows that this literature was now being openly integrated into life from all angles, the writer, the reader, and the critic.

Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist David Remnick details a very grim political and cultural situation in Russia during this 1990s boom of *detektiv*. He writes that the Russian public was trying to figure out how to transition out of Communism without creating another dictatorship, and the confusion led people to crave the safety of authoritarian rule and simultaneously the comfort of a detective story.²⁶⁵ This brings up the question of why, during times of national duress, people turn to detective stories for comfort. Dubin elaborates on the importance of the role that retribution played in the popularity of detective novels in the 1990s in Russia, using Marinina as an example. His argument is that the real emphasis of Russian *detektiv* lies in redemption from the "guilt and sin of the parents' generations, people of the 'Brezhnev era.'"²⁶⁶ The children in this scenario, the citizens now living without Soviet rule and with free access to the *detektiv* genre, don't want to be in the position of paying for their parents' crimes, and therefore savor the *detektiv* novel

264. After *detektiv*, recipe books are next in popularity, with the line indicating 19.26% for women and 9.94% for men, a statistic that will support the popularity of the Russian forms of Nero Wolfe cookbooks.

265. David Remnick, "Letter from Moscow: The Hangover," *The New Yorker*, November 22 1993, 53-54.

266. Dubin, "Russian Intelligentsia between Classics and Mass Culture," 15.

where the “the criminal who is trying to hide will be inevitably discovered and punished” and his retribution will be “painted in magic colors.”²⁶⁷

Edmund Wilson writes that the popularity of the detective novel can be linked to an “all pervasive feeling of guilt and [...] a fear of impending disaster which it seemed hopeless to avert because it never seemed conclusively possible to pin down the responsibility.” This analysis is easily applied to Russia after the fall of Communism; citizens experienced a similar fear of impending disaster and the inability to find someone responsible for the problems of their new society. Although the author of this article wrote disparagingly about Stout’s novels, he makes the important comparison of Wolfe catching the criminal in his office in every novel to the relief of the capture of the everyman villain in society. He writes that the reader feels relief at the exposure of the fallibility of seemingly uncatchable criminals who had previously blended into society:

he is not, after all, a person like you or me. He is a villain—known to the trade as George Gruesome—and he has been caught by an infallible Power, the supercilious and omniscient detective, who knows exactly how to fix the guilt.²⁶⁸

This would be a reassuring concept for Russians who the early 1990s watched their economy transition into the free market while simultaneously observing “with fury and envy” the people who took advantage of the transition in order to grow “gaudily rich.” Remnick, who was in Moscow in the 1990s, writes that “the economy hardly

267. Ibid., 1, 5.

268. Edmund Wilson, "Why Do People Read Detective Stories?," *The New Yorker*, October 14, 1994.

merits the name of capitalism at all, since it operates largely outside the framework of the law.”²⁶⁹ In one Marinina *detektiv* novel, a “syshchik” character directly addresses this shift in the role of the police force and these new-era criminals:

The type of criminality we grew up with, we became accustomed to, we adapted ourselves to: it's all passed. It had its own laws and its own rules of the game, but these are no more. The country is changing. Politics is changing, and economics, and with them crime is changing. There are completely different criminals now, and we don't know how to pursue and convict them.²⁷⁰

Corruption is not built into the American justice system in the same way that it was built in the 1990s in the Russian system, and Baraban sees this burgeoning “feeling of uncertainty about good and evil” in Russian society as partially fueling the interest in *detektiv*.²⁷¹

The popularity of Stout’s novels in this era can thus be attributed in part to the neat finales of his books, where every criminal breaking the law is caught and punished in some way. Taking it one step further, Stout’s plots do not only put the murderer in jail, but they often put the Communist in jail. Stout’s books that slander the institution of Communism the most and paint Communists in the most unfavorable terms, *The Black Mountain*, *Over My Dead Body*, and the several novellas already mentioned in Chapter Three, were some of the first to be published

269. David Remnick, "Letter from Moscow: The Hangover," *ibid.*, November 22 1993, 55.

270. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 181.

271. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 268.

in the 1990s by the state publishing companies. The country was transitioning out of Communism, the youth were disappointed in their parents, and Stout's books were a good way for people to view their past society from an opposing viewpoint.

Remnick's interview with Leonid Radzikhovsky, a political writer for the weekly magazine *Stolitsa*, specifically addresses the circumstance of why Stout's novel, *The Black Mountain*, in which a lot of Communists are slandered and then slaughtered, was popular during this era. Radzikhovsky says, "Many people in Russia think they admire Pinochet [Chilean dictator], but they have no idea why [...] all they know is that Pinochet shot a lot of Communists, and they would like to shoot Communists. But that's all they know."²⁷² This desire to revenge oneself on Communists everywhere for the pain caused by Soviet Communism explains both the reason behind the official publication of Stout's novels and the reason behind their increasing popularity.

The mystery novel blog, *The Thrilling Detective*, writes that the actions of Wolfe and Archie over five decades of America accurately depict the many changes that America went through, and therefore the novels serve as a model for how Wolfe lived the American dream.²⁷³ In this time of transition in Russia, when former literary idols detailed by Dubin were being thrown over for pop culture, a glimpse into the success of the American societal model would finally (supposedly) be welcomed by the Russian government. This analysis of the Stout novels and their historical value supports the point that their influence on Russian readers extends beyond the literary

272. Remnick, "Letter from Moscow: The Hangover," 54.

273. Marcia Kiser to *The Thrilling Detective*, February, 2003, http://www.thrillingdetective.com/non_fiction/e002.html.

to the political. Remnick adds to this explanation for Stout's popularity when he quotes an unnamed writer he spoke to about the rise of crime fiction's popularity, and why he wrote that "Rex Stout may now be the most popular novelist in the country": 'People want a little pleasure,' one writer told [Remnick]. 'If they have to read about one more concentration camp, they'll die.'"²⁷⁴ Stout gave them the light pleasure of a detective story along with the more complicated emotion of reading about the dangers of Communism and its consequences.

274. Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*, 539.

7 | Stout's Novels Influence New Russian Detective Novelists

Look at Kamenskaia, the blue-blood, she doesn't help carry out raids, doesn't participate in arrests, doesn't do any undercover work. She just sits in her warm office and sips coffee and tries to make herself out to be some brilliant Nero Wolfe.
A Confluence of Circumstances

Aleksandra Marinina Critiques Russian Politics and Society

Stout's popularity alongside the rise of the homegrown Russian detective novel led to his plots and characters exerting a direct influence on some Russian writers. Aleksandra Marinina, a pseudonym for Marina Anatolyevna Alekseyeva, is one of the most popular *detektiv* writers in contemporary Russia, as well as one of the few Russian *detektiv* writers who directly mentions Nero Wolfe's name in the text of a Russian novel.²⁷⁵ Marinina worked in the police force as a police lieutenant when she began writing and therefore uses her experience dealing with crime in real life to write her plots (unlike Stout, who had no real-life experience solving murders. Her novels have insight into the "day-to-day" activities of both the burgeoning criminal underworld and the police who fight it.²⁷⁶

Marinina was able to write in a time where she had a relatively large degree of control over what her characters did and said; she did not have to censor her plots, as she would have had to do only a few years before. In this sense, Marinina writes freely about corruption in the upper echelons of the police force in the same manner that Stout wrote about corruption in the FBI. He also had no one to fear in any real sense (for he claimed no fear for J. Edgar Hoover), but he was still persecuted in the

275. Since only one of Marinina's books has been translated into English, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, I will rely on other authors' descriptions of the plots of her novels and will not go into specifics in her Russian work.

276. Anatoly Vishevsky, "Answers to Eternal Questions in Soft Covers: Post-Soviet Detective Stories," *Slavic and Eastern European Journal* 45, no. 5 (2001), 734.

form of FBI surveillance. Marinina, on the other hand, was and is not persecuted for her writing. Nepomnyashchy writes that Marinina can “hardly be called a political writer” in comparison to the “Russian-Rambo” writers of her time, but that her novels still do contain motives for murder “implicitly traced to lapses in the Soviet past that are tied to the post-Soviet present by the thread of financial gain, charting a disturbing continuity between the systemic abuses, earlier political and later economic, of the two periods.”²⁷⁷ Her lack of persecution for her plotlines set in the 1990s that expose corruption in the Soviet government is because the Soviet government is gone and people are actively looking for ways to reject that part of their collective past when they read her books. This political situation is unlike that of Stout; when he wrote *The Doorbell Rang*, the US was divided on whether or not the FBI should have the power that it did; there were not the same universally polarizing opinions of the FBI as there were of the past Soviet regime.

Wachtel writes that Marinina’s popularity comes from her success in recognizing the trend in Russians towards nostalgia for the past and incorporating that nostalgia in her work set in the 1990s in order to form something new. The phenomenon of Marinina’s success shows something important about the Russian public; they like her because her books are not just Russian versions of Western

277. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 177. Another popular Russian *detektiv* writer is Boris Akunin, whose mystery novels are often set in Tsarist Russia, showing that a different use of Russian nostalgia also engenders popularity. Akunin falls outside the realm of this thesis’s research, but it is important to note that he, too, uses the classic detective prototype in his character of the brilliant Erast Fandorin (who shares many of Hercule Poirot’s eccentricities involving the importance of the “little grey cells”).

detective stories, but because they contain Russian-specific ideas and motivations.²⁷⁸ Nepomnyashchy supports this analysis of Marinina's work, writing that "the key to her works' popularity may lie at least partly in their overt confrontation with the anxieties and threats posed by the instability of life in Russia today, which are thereby rendered manageable and therefore less frightening."²⁷⁹ Remnick's interview with Vladimir Rushailo, the chief of the Moscow Police Department, backs up this description of the Russian public's opinion of criminals and the police force at the time Marinina began writing: "Even if we manage to jail an influential member of the Mafia, his fellow-bandits immediately unleash a campaign pressuring victims, witnesses, judges, public assessors. And they do this quite freely. Clearly, the criminals are much more inventive than the lawmakers."²⁸⁰ As a police lieutenant, Marinina saw this crime wave unfold firsthand and is therefore able to incorporate the right things into her novels that would reassure Russian citizens of the capability of the police department. Criminals getting rich off of the economic transition are often lambasted in Marinina's novels, for she often connects their acquisition of money with evil. The moral judgments that Marinina passes in her novel "provide hope" to the Russian public.²⁸¹

Marinina's Russian nostalgia does not come at the exclusion of all Western influences from her writing. She maintains the style of European mysteries by having

278. Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe*, 195.

279. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 182.

280. Remnick, "Letter from Moscow: The Hangover," 57.

281. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 230, 19.

her detective solve crimes with her intellect rather than physically going out and looking for clues: like Wolfe, Marinina's main detective, police lieutenant Anastasia Kamenskaia, rarely leaves her office. Marinina alludes to other American authors besides Stout. In the book, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, she directly references Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men* on two different occasions. Her characters quote one of Warren's characters, the Governor Willie Stark, who was famous for his one-liner on the prevalence of corruption in the world:

“Do you remember what Governor Stark replied to his assistant, Berden [Jack Burden in English], when Berden refused to dig up any compromising material on a crystal-clean judge?” Nastia answered without hesitation, almost without thought: “Man is conceived in sin and born into depravity. His path is from stinking diaper to shit-stained shroud. There is always something to find.”²⁸²

Marinina's use of Warren's book takes on a deeper significance when one looks again at Andzhaparidze's 1971 critique of Western literature in translation. He describes Warren as painting a broad and truthful picture of American society, for the plot of the book is all about the moral corruption inherent in American politics.²⁸³ Thus, Marinina's references to Warren allude to her underlying favoring of Russian society over Western society.

One phrase Marinina is cited as writing is, “it is not for nothing that Americans say that crime is the price that society pays for democracy,” which fits

282. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 87.

283. Andzhaparidze, “Bogachi-filantropy i belye ‘Mersedesy’: chto i kak my perevodim (Wealthy Philanthropists and White Mercedes: What and How We Translate).”

aply in with the crime situation in Russia in the 1990s when Marinina began writing. Russia was turning into a democracy, and they were paying for that transition with a crime wave that seemed unstoppable. A 1998 *New York Times* article analyzes Marinina's books in response to the fear of crime in Russia at the time. The author writes that in Marinina's books, "The detective actually solves the mystery, which doesn't happen very often in Russia anymore," and that when it appears that nothing is happening to the real criminals in the world, like the Russian oligarchs, "ordinary citizens seek satisfaction in a tidy, if fictional, resolution."²⁸⁴ The neat endings Stout writes for Wolfe and Marinina writes for Kamenskaia offer their Russian readers a chance to enter a world where the bad guy is caught and disaster is always averted, which would be a calming release for those living in Russia in the 1990s: there were twice as many murders in Moscow as in New York in 1997.²⁸⁵

Marinina addresses her use of satisfactory endings in an interview, while also explaining the reason behind her inclusion of the reality of crime in Russia in her stories: "My heroine always solves the crime, and sometimes, my villains do go to prison [...] But not always -- that would be too unbelievable."²⁸⁶ However, even if the murderer is not apprehended in time, Marinina's detective Kamenskaia will at least find out his identity by the end of the novel, and the reveal is "a particularly consoling

284. Alessandra Stanley, "The World: In Its Dreams; Russia Solves Its Crime Problem," *The New York Times* March 15, 1998.

285. Ibid.

286. Ibid.

message at a time when radically changing values have unsettled long-held assumptions about definitions of the self.”²⁸⁷

*A Confluence of Circumstance: The Non-Coincidental Similarities Between
Anastasia Kamenskaia and Nero Wolfe*

Marinina’s main hero, police lieutenant Anastasia Kamenskaia, shares many traits with Nero Wolfe: she is lazy, sedentary, and has an almost unbelievable aptitude for solving the puzzles of crime detection.²⁸⁸ Nepomnyashchy writes that “Kamenskaia certainly owes her image as a sedentary intellect safely ratiocinating within an interior space locked off from the outside world of crime and criminals in part [...] to Rex Stout’s Nero Wolfe, who also passed on to her his proverbial laziness, if not his bulk or refined palate.”²⁸⁹ Kamenskaia’s laziness paints her as the “ultimate armchair detective,” for she rarely leaves her office on business and prefers to send her subordinates out when needed.²⁹⁰ While part of the reason behind her sedentary lifestyle is her crippling back pain, for she sometimes must lie on the floor and wait for someone to help her up, her never leaving the office is more of a lifestyle choice

287. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 182.

288. Morgan, "Darya Dontsova’s ‘Sleuthettes’: A Case of the Regendering of the Post-Soviet Russian Detektiv?," 96. Marinina’s creative choice of a woman detective also added to her popularity, for the new Russian *detektiv* genre in the 1990s tended to favor female detectives (also seen in Donstova’s work with a non-Wolfean female detective).

289. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 171.

290. *The Greatest Russian Stories of Crime and Suspense*, Pegasus Crime (Pegasus Crime, 2012).

than a physical necessity. Baraban describes Kamenskaia's physical prowess as nonexistent:

Nastia [Russian nickname for Anastasia] neglects her body. She does not work out, does not allow her body to expect "any help from her" [...] She can hardly "drag herself up" in the morning [...] and never goes jogging, has backaches, and does not know how to shoot a pistol.²⁹¹

Wolfe's physical abilities are limited in a similar manner. Although he had been active in his youth in Montenegro, and does know how to use a gun, the Wolfe that readers see in the stories is a sedentary man (albeit not normally because of bodily pain). When he goes to Yugoslavia in *The Black Mountain* and spends the night hiking through mountains in order to surreptitiously enter Montenegro, his body physically fails him the next morning:

"My legs ache, of course, and my back; indeed, I ache all over; but that was to be expected and can be borne. What concerns me is my feet. They carry nearly a hundredweight more than yours; they have been pampered for years; and I may have abused them beyond tolerance. They must be rubbed, but I dare not take off my shoes. They are dead. My legs end at my knees. I doubt if I can stand, and I couldn't possibly walk. Do you know anything about gangrene?"²⁹²

Although Kamenskaia is a thin woman, and Wolfe is a large man, they both have similarly described abilities in terms of what their bodies can do—not much at all.

291. Elena Baraban, "A Little Nostalgia: The Detective Novels of Alexandra Marinina," *The International Fiction Review* 32, no. 1, 2 (2005), <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/article/view/7802/8859>.

292. Stout, *The Black Mountain*, Location 1158, 69.

In *A Confluence of Circumstances*, a colleague describes Kamenskaia's laziness in a joking manner that accentuates the ideological difference between her laziness and the laziness of Wolfe. This difference is emphasized when, talking to a colleague, Kamenskaia tells him "Don't be so lazy":

"Ah, who's that talking?" drawled Zakharov [a work colleague] with a smile, then leaned back and stretched out. "Take a good look at yourself, you Hero of Socialist Labor. Kettle, safe, typewriter, all within reaching distance so you don't have to get up. You're too lazy to even empty your ashtray." Nastia laughed. "True. My laziness is legend around here. But not when it comes to mental work."²⁹³

The joking description of Kamenskaia's laziness is a different kind of humor than Wolfe's joking description of his own laziness because of the political system in which Kamenskaia lives. In a socialist world, a good worker could never be someone that sat around and thought all day, they had to be constantly moving and building (often physically) the new socialist paradise. Kamenskaia's modus operandi of sitting in an office while everyone else ran around collecting evidence is humorous in the early 1990s because of the proximity in time to the era of socialism; Wolfe's is humorous through Archie's commentary, rather than because his lifestyle is inherently incompatible within the political and economic sphere within which he resides.

Kamenskaia the police lieutenant, while working within the policing apparatus, does have similar freedoms of a Western private investigator due to her

293. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 77.

boss's way of allowing her laziness in physical movements to be augmented by a staff willing to run all over town for her. Nepomnyashchy writes that while Kamenskaia sits in her office

drinking cup after cup of coffee and chain smoking [...] she then solves what are devilishly complex crimes by subjecting the material the men gather to cold, machinelike logic combined with an extraordinary imagination, which allows her to (re)construct multiple narratives based on the evidence and ultimately arrive at the "correct" story.²⁹⁴

Wolfe works in a similar manner when he is solving a crime; he remains in his brownstone, drinking beer after beer, and then uses the material that Archie brings him to solve complex cases, a lifestyle later mimicked by Kamenskaia.

Similar to the situation in Kamenskaia's office, in the larger Western detective canon, investigators like Poirot and Holmes had their assistants, Hastings and Watson respectively, to do some of their work or thinking with them. However, there is not much attention paid to the private lives of these assistants outside of the cases.²⁹⁵ On the other hand, Marinina also pays unusual attention to the background and private lives of Kamenskaia's colleagues and assistant. Baraban writes that Marinina ignores the tradition of a lack of depth in surrounding characters and

294. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 169.

295. For example, when Hastings marries "Cinderella," they immediately move to Argentina, putting their personal relationship as far away from Poirot as possible. In subsequent novels, the married Hastings can now leave his wife behind when he goes to England to see Poirot, for their move takes her entirely out of the picture. There is also much controversy about how many wives Watson had, showing inattention by Conan Doyle to the consistency in the specifics of Watson's private life.

on the contrary, introduces many passages on how much Nastia's colleague Kolia Seuinov suffers, or about the hard unhappy family life of her other colleague, Yura Korotkov; about the life of Volodya Lartsev after his wife's death, as well as about Nastia's family.²⁹⁶

In some Stout novels Archie's love affairs with women play a significant role, separate to the cases, in the plot, especially as Archie's main love interest Lily Rowan became a regular character. However, Marinina goes further than Stout in the depth of the background stories for the characters that are always running around bringing evidence to Kamenskaia in her office. Although Stout does give plenty of writing space to Archie's personal life, he avoids anything but generalities about Archie's past as well as the exact specifics of the present (when Lily Rowan gives Archie the key to her apartment, it is mentioned only in passing), while Marinina goes into explicit details about the lives and loves of almost every policeman in Kamenskaia's department.²⁹⁷

One way to explain the detail and time Marinina spends on the secondary characters in the plot could be traced again back to the Communist Russian model of *detektiv* fiction. D.W.'s previously mentioned article on Andzhaparidze and the critique of Western translations of detective literature included the idea of Archie being, to repeat the quotation, "miserably exploited, and serv[ing] only to reinforce the illusion that one can be happy in America even when one is subject to

296. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 226, 27.

297. Rex Stout, *The Father Hunt* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1968).

exploitation.”²⁹⁸ Marinina’s insistence on readers knowing every detail of Kamenskaia’s subordinates’ lives could be seen as her trying to prove that they weren’t exploited, but that they were working together for a greater cause. The detailed backgrounds of these characters is an example of Marinina using the nostalgia of the Soviet past in her books; she wants to reassure readers that the worker is not going to be exploited under the new capitalist system.

Although Kamenskaia depends on her colleagues to do the physical work, her machine-like mind is often compared to a computer; one of Marinina’s descriptions explains that Kamenskaia “had a phenomenal memory and the accompanying ability to instantly extract whatever she needed from it.”²⁹⁹ In *A Confluence of Circumstances*, Kamenskaia figures out the identity of a hit man based on a glance several days before at a photograph, when she noticed the slight displacement of figurines on a shelf in the murdered woman’s apartment; this intellectual capacity is just as ridiculous as Wolfe figuring out the murderer’s identity in *A Right to Die* based on the fact that her pseudonym and real name had the same diphthong.³⁰⁰

Both Kamenskaia and Wolfe are creatures of habit in their genius.

Kamenskaia’s inability to go for more than two hours without a cup of coffee or a cigarette also parallels Wolfe’s inability to go without his beer, of which he drinks five quarts, or twelve bottles a day.³⁰¹ In *A Confluence of Circumstances*, Kamenskaia

298. D.W., “Crime Fiction,” *Encounter*, August 1981, 26.

299. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 2.

300. Stout, *A Right to Die*.

301. *Fer-De-Lance* (Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1934), Location 2241. Fritz pours Wolfe’s beer for him into a separate glass, and he always watches the foam go down to the correct level before he will take a sip. On one occasion, Wolfe’s eyes are closed, deep in thought, when Fritz brings his beer, and Archie watched closely as

is also detailed as a person with a specific daily routine. She has to spend some days living in another person's apartment for safety reasons, and the change is almost unbearable to her: "The week dragged out to be perhaps the most difficult in Nastia Kamenskaia's life. Living in someone else's apartment with no opportunity to carry on her usual way of life, doubt and uncertainty ate away at her insides."³⁰² To Wolfe, living in another person's apartment would be almost impossible; his routine is rarely unbroken: 8:00am breakfast in his yellow silk pajamas, 9:00am-11:00am in the plant rooms where he cannot be disturbed, 11:00am-1:00pm office work, 1:15pm lunch, 2:00pm-4:00pm back in his office, 4:00pm-6:00pm in the plant rooms, 7:15pm dinner, then coffee, a book, and bed, and only his certain number of bottles of beer throughout it all.

While much of Wolfe's daily routine revolves around food, it is Kamenskaia's weekly routine that involves the groceries, for the most significant way that Kamenskaia lives a different lifestyle than Wolfe is in terms of her salary and the food that she buys with it. The description of Kamenskaia's shopping trip in *A Confluence of Circumstances* is a lesson in frugality:

When she received her monthly salary she divided it up into portions, and then subdivided the grocery portion by the number of days in the month. [...] so it worked out that the longer she delayed going shopping, the more delicious and expensive grocery items it was possible to buy. If she went to the shops every day, she could only really afford bread, milk, and omelettes with

Wolfe, without opening his eyes, takes the first sip of beer at exactly the right foam level.

302. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 146.

tomato. But if she put it off to one day in every five, —or better, once per week, —then she could permit herself smoked chicken, cheese, yogurt, or even some watermelon.”³⁰³

A description of Wolfe’s kitchen is absurd in comparison. Archie writes that in 1957 Wolfe’s kitchen and Fritz’s salary together “cost only slightly less than the plant rooms on the roof bulging with orchids”;³⁰⁴ which is no surprise when one examines how Wolfe shops for groceries with his

Olympian standards: the Georgia ham from pigs fed only on peanuts and acorns, the starlings shot by an upstate farmer and driven directly to Wolfe's kitchen within two hours, the custom sausage from Bill Darst at Hackettstown, and on, and on, and on, and on.³⁰⁵

However, even with their radically different accessibilities to food, both Kamenskaia and Wolfe enjoy a gourmet meal. The description of food in the Kamenskaia novels mimics the many references to Fritz’s recipes throughout the Wolfe corpus. Marinina does not only include the types of food Kamenskaia buys, but she also includes recommendations for how to eat the food correctly:

[she] often describes cooking and gives advice on appropriate drinks for particular dishes: one is advised that pizza should be consumed with red Chianti and never, God forbid, with beer—a sign of provincialism according

303. Ibid., 33-34.

304. Rex Stout, "Poison Á La Carte," *Three at Wolfe's Door* (Viking Penguin, 1960). Location 103.

305. Ed Zuckerman, "Toast to Fritz" (paper presented at the The Black Orchid Banquet, December 5, 2015), 1.

to a character-aesthete. [...] we discover the names of exotic dishes (spaghetti Bolognese and shrimp cocktail) and find a recipe for eggs Neapolitan.³⁰⁶

Food and drink pairings are also very important to Wolfe; he has similar rules for the specifics of what he will and will not cook. He won't fry eggs, potatoes, or chicken, advises a dinner guest to consume nice whiskey with Fritz's apple pie, and claims to be able to smell from his office if Fritz has added a spice he disapproves of to a pasta sauce.³⁰⁷ While both Wolfe's and Kamenskaia's relationship with food is mainly contained in their individual kitchens, in several novels Wolfe does travel to his friend Marko Vukcic's restaurant, Rusterman's. Kamenskaia does not often go to a restaurant, for the idea of going out to eat a gourmet restaurant meal was unusual in the Soviet era, the post-Soviet era, and even today in modern Russia. The inclusion of a dangerous villain keeping a restaurant just for gourmandizing in Marinina's *Small Fry Die First* can thus be seen as an allusion to Wolfe and Rusterman's as well.³⁰⁸

In *A Confluence of Circumstances* (1993), Kamenskaia's role as the sedentary detective is challenged when she must not only leave her office to solve a murder, but must also disguise herself to become bait for an assassin.³⁰⁹ The plot of the book is complex and political: a female PhD researcher named Irina Filatova has been

306. Vishevsky, "Answers to Eternal Questions in Soft Covers: Post-Soviet Detective Stories," 735.

307. Stout, *The Father Hunt*, 50; *And Be a Villain*, (The Viking Press, Inc., 1948). Examples of Wolfe's "exotic dishes" could be shad roe or corned beef hash with chitlins, both very American dishes that may have been unfamiliar to a Russian in the 1990s, or even today.

308. Olcott, *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*, 135.

309. With Stout, I discussed several of his books in detail, with Marinina I will be referring mainly to *A Confluence of Circumstances*, as this is not only her only book translated into English, but also the book where Kamenskaia is referred to as a Nero Wolfe-esque character. That this was the singular book of Marinina's translated into English is very lucky "confluence of circumstances."

murdered, and Kamenskaia and her team must not only figure out who murdered her and for what reason, but must circumvent most normal methods of communication for police officers because of the allegation that a high-ranking police official hired the assassin. The book is written in both first- and third-person style, which is different from Stout's exclusive use of Archie's first-person narration. However, Marinina's fluctuations between first and third person do allow the reader to notice clues at the same time as the detectives, just as Stout does in his choice of Archie instead of Wolfe as the narrator. It is in this Marinina mystery that Kamenskaia is directly referenced as Nero Wolfe:

"Look at Kamenskaia, the blue-blood, she doesn't help carry out raids, doesn't participate in arrests, doesn't do any undercover work. She just sits in her warm office and sips coffee and tries to make herself out to be some brilliant Nero Wolfe." Nastia knew that people didn't just think that about her; many also said it behind her back.³¹⁰

Kamenskaia's fear of leaving the safety of her office mirrors that same fear in Wolfe; he rarely leaves his office on business and only ventures out for non-business related trips to either flower shows or gourmandizing events. While Marinina writes that "outwardly, Nastia's work did very much resemble loafing around the office," she was actually highly respected by her boss as well as one of the most feared investigators by the criminal population.³¹¹ Marinina's allusion to Wolfe also demonstrates how she uses the dichotomy between the old Soviet and the new capitalist views of an individual investigator to poke fun at her Kamenskaia. Her

310. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 20.

311. *Ibid.*

reference to Kamenskaia as a “blue-blood” is significant in that it reveals the bias towards the West that Marinina exhibits in her work; she is willing to borrow from the Western canon for character inspiration, but that doesn’t mean that she presents what she borrows as the right way to live.

The book begins with a description of Kamenskaia doing mathematics and language games in the shower to wake herself up; she is described as knowing “about five hundred words from every European language.”³¹² Wolfe, too, is a polyglot; he does not speak every European language, but in various books he is described as knowing at least seven. Kamenskaia’s morning ritual involves icy cold orange juice—but only when she has the money to afford it, which can only happen if she drinks the juice solely in the mornings and takes on side work in translations for extra money.³¹³ Wolfe, on the other hand, drinks orange juice every morning in a leisurely manner with no thought as to cost: “He [Wolfe] never says a word if he can help it until his orange juice is down, and he will not gulp orange juice.”³¹⁴ This is one example of how the similarities between the two detectives become differences in their respective societies; Wolfe can afford juice in his capitalist country, Kamenskaia cannot in hers.

The murder of PhD researcher Filatova is not the only crime investigated in the story. While Kamenskaia’s department is working on the murder, they are simultaneously investigating a case of the rape of a twelve-year-old girl. The girl’s father had served on a jury that had convicted a drunk driver for crashing his car and injuring two people four years before, and every year since then, on the anniversary

312. Ibid., 2.

313. Ibid., 11.

314. Rex Stout, *Murder by the Book* (The Viking Press, Inc., 1951), 91.

of the accident, a relative of one of the jury members has been involved in some sort of attack by an unknown assailant. This most recent assault has been the most severe, and since the girl is too traumatized to speak, the rest of the story is spent figuring out how to prove that the convicted drunk driver is behind all of these revenge incidents.³¹⁵ This plotline becomes increasingly complicated and disturbing when the father of the rape victim, Kovalev, becomes aware that the police know who raped his daughter and then immediately arranges for the accused to be put away in a rehab center, safe from police intervention, because he owes the father of the rapist, Vinogradov, for some sort of unexplained business transaction.³¹⁶ Viktor Alekseevich Gordeev (nickname Kolobok), Kamenskaia's boss, comments on this phenomenon:

Let rapists go free, let them rape and kill others' children, just so long as his child is well [...] He doesn't care. But he'd rip out his own veins with his bare teeth to help Vinogradov, and Vinogradov doesn't owe him a thing. If Averin [another political character] becomes Premier then Kovalev will be riding high in the saddle, and Vinogradov will have Averin's eternal gratitude for helping him get there. If it doesn't come off, Vinogradov has already organised Kovalev a position in some Russian joint business venture. Yes, Kovalev is going nowhere without Vinogradov. He has to play along with everything to demonstrate his loyalty. It's a nightmare.³¹⁷

A father protecting the rapist of his twelve-year-old daughter is a dark concept to be introduced in a murder mystery, and it has a highly pointed message in its inclusion.

315. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 18.

316. *Ibid.*, 73.

317. *Ibid.*, 85-86.

Marinina, having lived through the crime wave of the early 1990s, saw in her job as a police lieutenant the ways that people broke all moral boundaries in order to get ahead. This storyline presents in a drastic way the immoral lengths that people were willing to go in order to protect their new wealth and standing in the nascent capitalist economy.

Stout comments on the political situation in America during McCarthyism in a similar manner. In the previously discussed *Home to Roost*, a woman murders the son of her deceased sister just to protect her reputation and prevent her Communist affiliations from becoming publically known. Stout's use of plot to highlight the problems he saw arising from the McCarthy era reflects Marinina's use of plot to highlight the problems she saw arising from the post-Soviet era. Nepomnyashchy writes that Marinina often uses the economic problems in the transitioning Russian society as fodder for her motives, which are "implicitly traced to lapses in the Soviet past that are tied to the post-Soviet present by the thread of financial gain, charting a disturbing continuity between the systemic abuses, earlier political and later economic, of the two periods."³¹⁸

Gordeev confronts Kovalev about his immoral actions protecting his daughter's rapist, and in response, Kovalev and his allies arrange for Gordeev's father-in-law to be denied the funding he would need for his dream job. In response to this devastating news, Gordeev said,

"Governor Willie Stark [reference to Warren's *All the King's Men*] was right: there is always something to dig up. I don't believe that a person who can spit

318. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 177.

on justice, on the lives of his own child and others' children, can also have lived an honest life. I don't believe it for a second. And this is why I hope to find a weapon we can use to stop him.”³¹⁹

His desire to avenge this abuse of power seems similar to Wolfe's desire to avenge what he sees as the overreach of power of the FBI in *The Doorbell Rang*. In Gordeev's case, he is furious because a politician has taken away his father-in-law's livelihood to protect a rapist; in Wolfe's case, he is working for a fee for Mrs. Rackell, who is furious because the FBI has taken away her right to privacy. The manner with which both of these detectives go about fighting the nebulous monster of bureaucracy and corruption is similar; both are looking for any way to poke holes in its shield.

Gordeev, the head of the Moscow Criminal Investigation department, plays an important role as mentor and friend to Kamenskaia, while alluding to another Stout character, Inspector Cramer. While Gordeev's personality is unlike that of Inspector Cramer, who more often than not threatens to arrest Wolfe and Archie for withholding evidence, the descriptions of both his high intelligence and physical body are similar to those of Cramer. Gordeev is “short with a sizeable paunch, and his round head was almost completely bald,” while Cramer is described as having a “round red face and burly figure,” and more specifically, “his middle, though it would never get into Wolfe's class, was beginning to make pretensions.”³²⁰ The similarity in physical descriptions of the two characters demonstrates a deeper similarity between

319. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 88.

320. *Ibid.*, 11; Stout, *The Doorbell Rang*, 43; *And Be a Villain*, Location 1503-04.

their personalities; Cramer may often threaten Archie with material witness warrants, but he invariably ends up assisting the investigation by the end of the book.

As the investigation into the murder of Filatova continues, Kamenskaia runs into the problem of whom to trust: it is increasingly obvious that a senior official is somehow involved in the murder and she doesn't know how to conduct an investigation without tipping anybody off. A talk with her stepfather, who also worked for the police, breaks down the problems of corruption in Moscow policing in the 1990s:

“The circle is so tight that it's impossible to ask anyone anything. Note that I don't even use the term ‘question,’ because what kind of serious questioning can be done with one of your own? You speak with someone you suspect of a crime, and he answers everything with the same reply: ‘It's okay, leave us alone, we're your people, remember that.’ And then he claps you on the back and invites you to have a drink with him. If this doesn't happen, you can be sure that he's putting a call through to your superior, Gordeev. They probably know one another from a holiday sanatorium, or they drank vodka together at a banquet, or are connected in some other way. ‘What's going on, Viktor Alekseevich? You've got to rein in your men, it just won't do. They're offending me, do you understand?’ You'll end up in tears.”³²¹

The motive for the murder turns out to be a straightforward case of greed and corruption. Aleksandr Evgenevich Pavlov, a police official, had wanted to get a doctorate in order to be eligible for more promotions, but he didn't want to do any of

321. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 47-48.

the work himself. Instead, as was usual at the time, he hired someone to write his dissertation for him, promising her 10,000 rubles upon completion—this person was Irina Filatova. But due to his greed, Pavlov did not pay Filatova the money after she sent him the manuscript, and since the arrangements had been conducted in anonymity, she had no way to find him or turn him in. Ten years later, while doing research, she came across the manuscript she had written and inadvertently discovered her cheater's name. Filatova, being a normally upright citizen, did not try to blackmail Pavlov in exchange for suppression of this knowledge; instead, she found him and told him that she would publish it for her own doctorate under her own name and allow the world to notice the plagiarism on its own, thus exposing him and the people that had arranged the transaction years before. Her fury caused her to disregard any possible consequence from her part in the plagiarism.

The reason behind Pavlov's extreme fear of this reveal happening is never fully explained, for it is of something greater than the embarrassment of plagiarism. Pavlov is afraid of a man behind the scenes that he never names, a man so powerful that he has Filatova killed in order to prevent the manuscript from being published in her name, and thus saving his own life. Ironically, the dissertation that Filatova died for was on the issue of corruption in Russian society. The idea of the dissertation itself being a commentary on the corruption inherent in a market economy, while the plot of the whole novel is also a commentary on the corruption inherent in a market economy, is a clever use of the detective story to express political messages.³²²

322. In the same subtle manner, Stout uses the books Wolfe reads in the novella, *Booby Trap*, previously mentioned as one of Stout's war-time novellas, to get in jabs at Communism. The plot of *Booby Trap* contains vague wartime secrets and treason,

Pavlov, who is introduced to a room of reporters as a scientific consultant on corruption, describes it thus: “Corruption is, in essence, a commercial transaction, in which there is a product, a vendor, and a buyer. Market forces, the forces of supply and demand, determine the intrinsic worth of the product, its asking and selling prices.”³²³ His analysis of corruption in an economic sense is repeated by Nepomnyashchy, who writes in her analysis of Marinina’s villains that “the political ills of the past continue to be visited on the present in the form of violent, economically motivated crime [...] in other words, while the old Soviet system turned people into political chattel, the new market chaos transforms individuals [...] into commodities, valued according to their salability.”³²⁴

The book ends without a specific elucidation of what or whom Pavlov fears; readers are left with the feeling that the larger bad guy may still be on the loose behind the scenes. This feeling is shown through Gordeev’s plan to capture the killer hired by Pavlov by delaying his arrest in such a manner that the inner workings of the

with both Archie and Wolfe working for the US government in some capacity, unrelated to Communism or Russia (except for when Wolfe is playing with field commanders on his battle map of Russia). The jab occurs when Wolfe is noted as reading the book *Under Cover* by John Roy Carlson, which contains the passage, “I agree somewhat with Rex Stout, chairman of the Writers’ War Board: ‘The political ethics of the American Communists still are about as low as anything ever observed in these parts, including the Ku Klux Klan.’” Wolfe also reads several books either about Russia or written by a Russian throughout the corpus: in *Method Three for Murder* he is reading John Gunther’s *Inside Russia Today*, in *Please Pass the Guilt* he is reading Turgenev poems and in *Death of a Dude* he reads Solzhenitsyn’s *The First Circle*. The inclusion of Solzhenitsyn is mentioned in Makharovskii’s blog. Rex Stout, *Booby Trap*, in *Not Quite Dead Enough* (Farrar & Rinehart, 1944), Location 722; McAleer, *Rex Stout: A Majesty’s Life*, 318; Marakhovskii to Kul’tpul’t, June 14, 2015.

323. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 79.

324. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 178.

killer-for-hire process are exposed. He has Kamenskaia, who is both famously plain-looking and secretly known for her ability to change her appearance at will, dress up as a sexy, alluring journalist who has a copy of Filatova's manuscript and wants to blackmail Pavlov with it. Gordeev's aim is for Pavlov to become so scared that he will hire the killer again to kill this false journalist, "Larisa Lebedeva", and then Gordeev will have a chance to apprehend the killer and expose the inner workings of the upper strata criminal society.

The previously mentioned arch villain Zeck in the Nero Wolfe novels is exactly the type of behind-the-scenes super villain that Gordeev wants to find out more about. Stout's novel, *In the Best Families* puts Wolfe in an unusual role, outside of his comfort zone, just as *A Confluence of Circumstances* does to Kamenskaia. Like Kamenskaia, Wolfe must put on a disguise in order to get close to the criminal Zeck without his knowledge so that he can figure out how the criminal organization works, and thus how it can be destroyed. However, Kamenskaia's disguise is hair dye and makeup, while Wolfe's is the loss of over one hundred pounds and the addition of a patchy beard.³²⁵ Gordeev clearly explains the importance of catching this type of universal criminal in a meeting:

"We've come across the rarest opportunity, the opportunity to capture a killer who works in the highest echelons. We've never encountered this before, because we've never been able to boast the skills and abilities to tackle such a

325. Stout, *In the Best Families*. Wolfe uses an alias to get close to a criminal only one other time, when he becomes Toné Stara in *The Black Mountain*, while Kamenskaia uses her ability to disguise herself often through the books.

task. The risk of making a mistake is huge, and the chance of succeeding is extremely small. I want us all to understand this.”³²⁶

The hired killer in *A Confluence of Circumstances* is not the only Zeck-like character in the book.³²⁷ Evsei Ivanovich Dorman, a semi-retired criminal, is mentioned as occasionally helping Gordeev out in cases from an unexplained sense of kindness (dissimilar to Wolfe, who refuses to ask Zeck for help even when it is obvious that Zeck’s men could identify a murderer for him).³²⁸ When Gordeev goes to visit him to ask for more information about hired killers in Moscow, Dorman asks him:

Do you want the truth, Gordeev? I'm afraid of you. Of all the cops I've met in my life, you're the only one who could ever handle me. Retire and I can breathe easy. Maybe I'll still manage to execute the crime of the century in my twilight years. Something big, beautiful, and elegant.³²⁹

His speech here is very similar to Zeck’s final showdown with Wolfe and Archie in *In the Best Families*. Wolfe has disguised himself to infiltrate Zeck’s criminal organization, tricking Zeck into thinking he had run away in fear months before. When Zeck talks to Archie about Wolfe, he says “There was one man who matched me in intellect—the man you worked for, Nero Wolfe [...] If you communicate with him give him my regards. I have great admiration for him.”³³⁰ Wolfe is the only man

326. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 129.

327. Baraban, "A Little Nostalgia: The Detective Novels of Alexandra Marinina". Baraban describes how the Russian Mafia and other behind-the-scenes villains, like Zeck, are often the perpetrators of the crimes that Kamenskaia must solve

328. Stout, *And Be a Villain*, Location 2381.

329. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 155.

330. Stout, *In the Best Families*, 82.

that can match Zeck in intellect, just as Gordeev is the only man Dorman is afraid of.³³¹

Funnily enough, Dorman also shares characteristics with Wolfe himself. As Gordeev enters Dorman's *dacha*, they must past through some "splendid flowerbeds":

Dorman didn't enjoy physical labor; he detested "grubbing in the dirt." He didn't grow fruit or vegetables at his *dacha* because he had more than enough money to buy them at the local market. He cultivated only flowers, which he had adored even in his childhood.³³²

The adoration of flowers in a book that mentions Nero Wolfe by name must be seen as an allusion to the great detective's passion for orchids, and Marinina ruthlessly plays with his allusion by attributing a love for flowers to the kind of villain that Wolfe would despise.

Dorman as a criminal is surprisingly open in his explanation of how criminality and corruption is built into the Russian system. The argument between Dorman and Gordeev over how the policing apparatus has changed since the fall of Communism is illuminating when it is compared to the real crime crisis in Russia at the time of writing. Dorman explains that under Communism, the police system was purposefully designed to keep the policeman always needing favors and money, in order to build a system where bribery and the owing of favors to your coworkers becomes essential to getting anything done. He ends this explanation by saying that

331. This pairing of villain and detective is also seen in the Moriarty and Holmes dichotomy.

332. Marinina, *A Confluence of Circumstances*, 152.

“the life that awaits you [policemen] is more terrible than ever.” Gordeev questions this in a fatalistic manner by replying that “there isn’t anything much more terrible that can happen,” and Dorman jumps back into a long explanation of what “terrible, terrible things [are] to come.”³³³

The main purpose of Dorman’s explanation is to break down the realities of the new freedom of market forces in the economy and the effect that they will have on corruption within the judicial system. He says: “Someone has come up with the brilliant idea to assemble a lawful government and introduce an open market at the same time. What an absurd thing to do [...] Your detectives are going to be crushed by market forces, by the weight of commerce and big money.” Dorman continues with a description of the way that policemen, who already were working inefficiently due to the old system of favors and comradeship, will be further hindered by the new system:

“Who's going to be left in the police? First, those who are stupid, inefficient, and lazy ... in short, the ballast. And secondly, those entrepreneurs who work for us now, the ones who have learnt how to take bribes; that is, those of you who are satiated and secure. The young guard, the students from the institutes, won't be able to do anything. The only thing they'll learn is how to fall in with the entrepreneurs and bribe-takers. [...] And, in tandem with this happy prospect, you're organizing the assembly of a legal government. A government where prosecutors oversee and observe, but don't permit arrests. Lawyers defend from the moment of arrest. Judges don't commit cases to trial,

333. Ibid., 154.

they simply dismiss them. A heavenly life! Well, for us at least. But for you, a succession of nightmares. Who of you will be able to get any work done, considering that any effort you muster will be counteracted by those above you? If someone wanted a criminal catastrophe to befall our country, they could hardly think up a better one than this.”³³⁴

Marinina’s use of political allegories in her books connects her with Stout beyond the similarities of their main detectives.³³⁵ The long speeches given by several of her characters throughout *A Confluence of Circumstances* are integral to understanding the plot, and the plot itself could not be understood without an understanding of the corruption within Russian society at this time. Her writing is specific to her era in the sense that the problems and motives the detectives deal with are unique to Russian society in the 1990s.

In the same way that it might be hard for Americans to fully understand the motives for the crimes in Marinina’s *detektiv* novels, Russians had a hard time understanding the racist motives in these Stout novels. In reference to the plot of *A Right to Die*, Chervotkin doesn’t believe that the racial motive for the crime was believable: “Personally, I think that the motive of the murder in *The Right to Die* is over-thought and insufficient for such hatred and murder.” Russians could not comprehend the idea of killing someone over their skin color. This lack of understanding of the history of racism and its implications in America led to some

334. Ibid., 155.

335. Marinina also expressed political commentary in the plots of *Death for the Sake of Death*, *Death and a Little Love*, and *Playing on Another’s Field*. See the Nepomnyashchy article for more detail of these plots. Nepomnyashchy, "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv," 177.

Russians seeing these plots as overly didactic. Chervotkin writes that the race storyline has “too many slogans and too much moralization for a book of fiction. There is too much of the idealization of some and demonization of others.”³³⁶

However, Zavgorodnii, with his strong interest in American history, appreciated Stout’s books for helping him to contextualize the civil rights movement: “Now, as I can imagine the status of Afro-Americans in the 30s (*Too Many Cooks*) and the 60s (*A Right to Die*), knowing about their fighting for civil rights, about Martin Luther King, the town of Selma, about the ‘Nine from Little Rock’, —now I see these books differently, more seriously. I think that Stout undoubtedly was not racist; on the contrary, he was supporting Afro-Americans and other minorities.”³³⁷

Chervotkin and Zavgorodnii’s reactions to these books are thought-provoking when placed next to the Soviet tradition of the 1960s, which was “to respond to any criticism from the United States with the ultimate: ‘And you beat the Blacks.’ Articles with such titles such as ‘Shame on America’ were typical of the 1960s when the anti-racist movement in the United States was at its peak (*Namedni 1963*).”³³⁸ These two Stout novels were distributed in Russia for a political purpose, in order to “reveal flaws in capitalist society.”³³⁹ The Russian publication of *Too Many Cooks* and *A Right to Die* could be seen as a substitute to an article called “Shame on America.”

336. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015.

337. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

338. Baraban, "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s," 31.

339. Cannon, "Controversial Politics, Conservative Genre: Rex Stout's Archie-Wolfe Duo and Detective Fiction's Conventional Form," 40.

This tendency to see America as a country that treats some of their citizens as less than human had long been promoted by the Soviet government and therefore it is significant to see how Stout's books were used to promote that aim.

Darya Dontsova and the Unnamed Others

On the Russian forum, users neither mentioned Marinina nor any other author that they had read that were obviously influenced by Stout's novels. Chervotkin sees the only similarities between Stout and Russian literature in terms of genre, for he does not believe that Stout's influence exists in "anything that can be considered literature – no. There are some very weak imitations of his style in all kinds of 'pulp' literature. The style is 'criminal novel'; in fact – 'pulp fiction.'" Zavgorodnii mentions what seems to be a typo in reference to Stout's characters, "a contemporary Russian author Oleg Divov has mentioned recently that one of his characters, a police inspector named Kruger was mistakenly called "Kremer" [apparently a typo-ed reference to Stout's Inspector Cramer] once somewhere in the text." User BleWotan has a vague idea of a reference as well, "I've got a feeling that I recall the characters of some sci-fi novel refer to Archie once, but I remember neither the author nor the title."³⁴⁰

However, there is another specific named Russian author that was highly influenced by Stout and Wolfe, even though the Russian online fans did not recognize it. Agrippina Arkadyevna Dontsova, known more commonly as Darya Dontsova, is a *detektiv* writer besides Marinina whose work directly references Stout and his

340. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015; User BleWotan, December 14, 2015.

characters. Dontsova began writing in 2000, nine years after Marinina, but has surpassed many writers in both her popularity and the number of published novels over the last sixteen years.³⁴¹ Dontsova's *detektiv* stories mostly fall into the category of the new female-based section of the genre, with the exception of her fourth series, which Morgan describes as featuring "a male detective in a reprise of Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe series." Dontsova's work has descriptions of material goods and brands in her novels that her readers would not have access to yet in the early 1990s, and therefore shows another side of life under capitalism, much as Stout did with Wolfe's capitalist lifestyle or what Marinina does with her descriptions of gourmet food.

Dontsova's books also contain self-referential material; one character shares a maiden name with her and speaks French as she does, and that character's children also have the same names as Dontsova's children.³⁴² Her use of her personal biography in her materials mirrors both Stout, who uses his political background (rather than his name) in his texts, and Marinina, who uses her personal police background (rather than her name as well) in her texts. Marinina and Dontsova share more similarities than their use of biography. Like Marinina, Dontsova includes references to the Soviet past in her works and uses the dichotomies inherent in the nascent non-Communist Russian society in her plotlines. Morgan writes that Dontsova's "narrative is built on the overlapping binary contrasts of Russian/Soviet,

341. "Darya Dontsova," <http://www.forbes.ru/profile/darya-dontsova>.

342. Birgit Beumers, *Pop Culture Russia!: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle*, (ABC-CLIO 2005), 304.

Russian/Western, real/unreal, truth/falsehood which provide a dynamic and ever changing backdrop for the action.”³⁴³

Dontsova’s fourth series has two main characters that are considered prototypes of Wolfe and Archie: in their places are an old woman named Eleanora (Nora) and Ivan Podushkin respectively.³⁴⁴ These characters are described in a series of eleven novels: *A Bouquet of Beautiful Ladies*, *The Apple of Monte-Cristo*, *A Fish Named Darling*, *Ali Baba and the Forty Female Thieves*, and others.³⁴⁵ Beumers writes that “as Nora has chosen for herself the role of Nero Wolfe, she casts Podushkin in the role of Archie for her ‘cases.’”³⁴⁶ However, Podushkin is similar to Archie only on a surface level, for Beumers also writes that “Podushkin is the most incompetent and dim of [Dontsova’s] ‘four investigators.’”³⁴⁷ He lives at his boss Nora’s home and works as her private secretary for the charity fund that she runs, checking the claims of people in need, and works as well as the secretary for the detective agency they created together called “Nero.” This scenario is similar to that of Archie and Wolfe, such that Archie also lives and works with his boss as a crime-solving duo, but the similarities end there, as Archie is neither an incompetent nor a dim character; his intelligence and quick thinking are often vital to solving cases.

343. Morgan, "Darya Dontsova's 'Sleuthettes': A Case of the Regendering of the Post-Soviet Russian Detektiv?," 112.

344. Sergey Panichev, Vkontakte message to author, March 18, 2016. VK user Panichev is the provider of most detailed information about this fourth series of Dontsova, due to the lack of any English translations. This lack has left me unable to discuss the specifics of Donstova’s work in the same manner that I did with Marinina.

345. See “Darya Dontsova’s Ivan Podushkin Series” on page 198.

346. Beumers, *Pop Culture Russia!: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle*. 305.

347. Ibid.

The references to Wolfe in the novels are not limited to the title of the agency and the superficial role of the personas of the characters. In an Ivan Podushkin novel, *Tushkanchik v bigudiakh [Jerboa in Curlers]*, an interrogation of a nurse turns into a discussion on the merits of Stout's Nero Wolfe series.³⁴⁸

"So you're from the cops!" the nurse [Iraida] spat out. "Why did you try to fool me?"

"I'm not connected to the official structures, look here: 'Private Detective Agency "Nero."'"

Iraida started to examine the document carefully.

"So you're something like that fat guy . . . uh . . . Wolfe! Right?"

I was extremely amazed: "You've read Rex Stout?"

"I've never seen such a book," the nurse shook her head, "I really like Nero. Up to the very end you can't figure out who did it, but you take some other book, and you immediately figure out who the criminal is."

"Nero Wolfe is just a literary character invented by a writer named Rex Stout."

"I don't care who wrote it," Iraida shrugged, "as long as it's interesting. So you're like him?"

"Well, not quite," I smiled, "I'm not such a genius, but our agency is named in honor of Nero Wolfe."³⁴⁹

348. A jerboa is a desert-dwelling rodent native to North Africa and Central Asia.

349. Darya Dontsova, *Tushkanchik v bigudiakh*, (Litres, 2015), unknown page number.

A different character also reads Stout later on in the text: “I went to the room, lay on the bed, took a book, but did not have time to delve into the adventures of Nero Wolfe and Archie.”

The cases that Podushkin and Nora solve can be both similar and different from those of Archie and Wolfe; in one, an unknown twin sister is involved, which harkens to the unknown or hidden identities of the murderer in *Over My Dead Body* and *A Right to Die*. In others, the importance of marriages and marriage betrayals of the main characters is a marked difference from Wolfe and his refusal to touch marriage cases. Even though Nora and Podushkin refer to themselves as Wolfe and Archie, and even name their detective agency “Nero,” it appears that they are primarily superficially similar to those characters, as opposed to the deeper, multiple similarities of Kamenskaia’s personality traits in common with those of Wolfe.

Through the mentions of Stout’s writing in her other series besides that with Podushkin, Dontsova again shows that she is familiar with Stout’s works. In the novel *Dobryi doctor Aibandit [The Good Doctor DooEvil]*, which is not part of the Ivan Podushkin series, Wolfe and Stout are mentioned directly, when one of the characters, Rose, to get the attention of her friend Vasil’ev, attended detective literature fan clubs with him, “pretending to be a fan of Rex Stout, who was adored by Vasil’ev. [She] had to read all of the books about Nero Wolfe.” There is a footnote attached to Stout’s name that describes him as “one of the great founders of the ironic detective genre.”³⁵⁰

350. Darya Dontsova, *Dobri doktor Aibandit*, (Litres, 2015), unknown page number.

It is obvious that Dontsova does not have to pretend to be a fan of Rex Stout; her numerous allusions to the author and his detectives prove that he has influenced most of her writing in some form or other.

8 | Stout's Influence in Contemporary Russia Goes Beyond the Literary

“You live in the wrong country.” Wolfe lifted his brows. “Yes? Wait till you taste terrapin Maryland. Or even, if I may say so, oyster pie à la Nero Wolfe, prepared by Fritz Brenner. In comparison with American oysters, those of Europe are mere blobs of coppery protoplasm.”
Too Many Cooks

How Food and Translation Fit Together

The rush to translate the Stout novels in the 1990s that had so influenced Marinina and Dontsova had yielded overall poor results in translation; the years of little to no contact with the West left translators unable to accurately convey the gourmand lifestyle of Wolfe and Archie. Stout was no longer a political writer in the 1990s, but a Western writer who both influenced the Russian *detektiv* genre and introduced gourmet meals to readers (much like Marinina). Terms for food were the most often mistranslated, for Fritz's kitchen was filled with ingredients that would have been foreign to a Russian translator. Olga Voronina writes that the translators of the 1990s were unable to “visualize or comprehend the ingredients Nero Wolfe and Fritz Brenner used in their cooking [...] Soviet ‘cuisine’ was devoid of any sophistication [...] they translated recipes incorrectly because they simply did not know better.”³⁵¹ Thus the desire to retranslate Stout emerging in the early 2000s was accompanied by a complementary desire for a retranslated Russian Stout cookbook;

351. Olga Voronina, e-mail message to author, October 30, 2015. By recipes, Voronina does not mean actual step-by-step instructions in the Stout novels, but rather the specificity of the ingredients in individual dishes in Wolfe's kitchen. BleWotan writes that “the names of the dishes are mentioned constantly,” so the lack of knowledge about what these constantly mentioned dishes are would be a glaring omission for Russian readers.

much like Kamenskaia's introduction of spaghetti Bolognese to readers, Russians wanted an opportunity to learn how to cook what Wolfe liked to eat.³⁵²

Accordingly Stout's 1973 cookbook, *The Nero Wolfe Cookbook*, was translated into Russian in 1995. The cookbook was broken up into recipe sections by meal type: for example, "Breakfast," "Lunch on a Hot Day," and "Lunch on a Cold Day," and each recipe had the book it was taken from listed with it. The cookbook was published in Russia in a collection with three other Stout novels: *Red Threads* (Nero Wolfe), *The Broken Vase* (Tecumseh Fox), and *Double for Death* (Tecumseh Fox). On an online forum, user Lorika wrote that food played a big role in her love of Stout novels: "I like it a lot how the process of their consuming all the delicious foods is described; back in 1992 I didn't even know what Parmesan cheese, cress-salad, Marsala, consommé and so forth were."³⁵³ For these reasons, many of the large collections of Stout's work contain either his own cookbook, *The Nero Wolfe Cookbook*, in Russian translation as part of the series, or the half-cookbook, half-translation commentary *Za stolom s Niro Vul'fom, ili sekrety kukhnii velikogo syshchika: kulinaryni detektiv (At the Table with Nero Wolfe or Secrets of the Kitchen of the Great Detective: A Culinary Mystery)*.

Three Russian publishing houses, Tsentrpoligraf, Eksmo, and Amfora, were responsible for the large series of retranslations of Stout's novels and various

352. Stout had written an American Wolfe cookbook in 1973.

353. User Lorika, December 22, 2009 (4:33pm), comment on "Niro Vul'f i Archi Gudvin Reksa Stauta (Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin of Rex Stout)," *Mir liubvi i romantiki (World of Love and Romantics)* (blog), trans. Gleb Vinokurov, <http://world-of-love.ru/forum/archive/index.php/t-16988.html>.

cookbooks.³⁵⁴ Tsentrpoligraf published a sixteen-volume series of Wolfe books in the early 2000s, and a twenty-five volume series of Stout books in 2002, with the twenty-sixth being the first edition of the cookbook, *At the Table with Nero Wolfe*. Eksmo released a series in 2006 called, “Ves’ Staut” (All Stout), made up of forty-three Wolfe novels as well as Rex Stout’s 1973 cookbook in translation, *Kulinarnaia kniga Niro Vul’fa (The Cookbook of Nero Wolfe)*.³⁵⁵ Amfora published a series called “Velikie syshchiki” (Great Detectives) in 2014 that included Stout novels and the second edition of *At the Table with Nero Wolfe*.³⁵⁶ In Sergey Sinelnikov’s words [co-author and co-editor of *At the Table with Nero Wolfe*], the demand for the books was high enough that “all copies were sold out very fast.” Amfora also published the third edition of this cookbook in 2015, which contains more edits by the authors and which Sinelnikov describes as “drier but more accurate.”³⁵⁷

At the Table with Nero Wolfe was written, translated, and arranged by Ilya Lezerson, a Moscow-based chef; Tatiana Solomonik, an encyclopaedist and translator; and her husband, Sinelnikov, who describes himself as “just a man who can write well in Russian and who’s been fond of cooking for a long time,” and who Wikipedia describes as “an author of many books and articles of culinary matters, tourism, a

354. See “Stout Translations in the 2000s by Publishing Houses” on page 192.

355. Reks Staut (Rex Stout), *Kulinarnaia kniga Niro Vul’fa (The Cookbook of Nero Wolfe)*, trans. by E. Zaitseva, Ves’ Stout, (Moscow: Eksmo, 2009).

356. The series included eleven non-Wolfe novels besides the cookbook, books with Tecumseh Fox, Dol Bonner, and Alphabet Hicks as detectives, as well as several pre-Wolfe, pulp fiction novels

357. Eksmo is also responsible for publishing Dontsova and Marinina.

journalist, a geologist-geophysicist, and bard.”³⁵⁸ The creation of this type of cookbook is described by Voronina, who writes that in the early 2000s, after almost a decade of European and cross-Atlantic travel, open contacts with the US, and unrestricted access to Western literary and culinary sources [Russians] were proud of their newly acquired culinary finesse and breadth of cultural and linguistic experiences. They wrote commentaries on mistranslated texts, recipes included, and translated [Stout’s] books much more closely to the original.³⁵⁹

At the Table with Nero Wolfe offers readers both a comprehensive list of recipes from forty-eight Wolfe novels and a commentary on the mistranslation of the ingredients in the Russian version of the novels. The cookbook begins with introductions, (taken from his 1973 American cookbook), by Stout as both himself and also as the voices of Archie, Wolfe, and Fritz. The Russian authors then explain that their recipes are based on the Russian translations of Stout’s books and the original English as well, addressing the fact that their task of compilation has been complicated by the many “omissions” and “distortions” of Wolfe’s meals in past translations, but promise not to be too hard on those translators.³⁶⁰

The recipes in *At the Table with Nero Wolfe* are divided chronologically by novel, with each section giving the date of the original US publication as well as the

358. Wikipedia Contributors, "Sergey Markovich Sinelnikov," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia . <http://ru.wikipedia.org/?oldid=76834152>.

359. Olga Voronina, e-mail message to author, October 30, 2015.

360. Ilya Lezerson, Tatiana Solomonik, and Sergey Sinelnikov. *Za stolom s Niro Vul’fom, ili sekrety kukhni velikogo syshchika: kulinaryni detektiv (At the Table with Nero Wolfe or Secrets of the Kitchen of the Great Detective: A Culinary Mystery)*. Velikie syshchiki (Great Detectives). 3 ed. St. Petersburg: Amfora, 2015, 12.

date and name of the Russian publishing house that published the Russian edition. The recipes are titled in both Russian and English, and each has a short summary of the plot of the book in Russian, with quotations from 1990s translations of the part in the book where Wolfe cooks that particular recipe. This is followed by a linguistic analysis of the problems in translation in the quotations, and then the details of the recipe are given. Sinelnikov writes that the cookbook has been the subject of several dissertations on translation, for its appeal spans beyond those who cook to those who translate.

Wolfe's breakfast in *Over My Dead Body* and its linguistic and culinary analysis will be used as an example of the structure of the cookbook. The section begins with a short quotation from the point of view of Archie, who walks into Wolfe's room in the morning and observes him breakfasting off of a tray in bed. The Russian-translated excerpt in *At the Table with Nero Wolfe* is taken from the 2000 Tsentrpoligraf edition, and reads in translation that Wolfe is breakfasting on, "Orange juice, eggs *au beurre noir*, two slices of smoked ham, finely chopped fried potatoes, hot golden *pyshki* [Russian donuts] with blueberry and a pot of steaming chocolate—not a bad start to the day, yes?"³⁶¹ In the English version, Wolfe is eating, "Orange juice, eggs *au beurre noir*, two slices of broiled Georgia ham, hashed brown potatoes, hot blueberry muffins, and a pot of steaming cocoa."³⁶² The differences in the two translations are then detailed by the authors, prefaced by a short explanation of the "juice boom" in 20th century America. However, the authors do not address the Russian addition of "not a bad start to the day, yes?" A hypothetical explanation for

361. Ibid.,142

362. Ibid.,159

this addition could be that the translator was impressed with Wolfe's breakfast, for it contained food unusual in a Russian breakfast, and wanted to highlight his impressed reaction as well as the foreignness of the food for the readers.

A description of American hash browns prefaces the recipe, with a list of other American names for the food, as well as the connection of the combination of the French "hacher" with the American "brown" as coupled verbs that are seen as the origin of the name. After the hash browned potatoes recipe is an explanation of how the Russian *pyshki* differ from the American muffin, with very specific details as to American muffin's average size, which, according to the cookbook, is about seven centimeters in diameter and three centimeters thick.³⁶³ Before the blueberry muffin recipe is given, the cookbook includes information on the trend in America to name foods after the company that makes them, citing the Gem Company and the tendency to call their blueberry muffins "blueberry gems."

Russian Stout fans from the online Russian Wolfe forum, and Vk site, have only positive things to say about the cookbook. Chervotkin writes, "I wouldn't have the patience for most of them" in reference to the Wolfe recipes in Stout's cookbook, and Panichev also writes that the professional nature of Fritz's cooking also hinders him from making any.³⁶⁴ Zavgorodnii calls the book *At the Table with Nero Wolfe* "excellent" and also agrees that the recipes seem difficult, but he writes that off to Fritz being "a professional cook of the highest level," mirroring Panichev's

363. Ibid., 144

364. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015; Sergey Panichev, V Kontakte message to author, March 15, 2016.

language.³⁶⁵ Zavgorodnii mentions the ingredients being strange at the time only in their specificity to America, like shad roe and clams, as well as squirrel stew.

The issue of how to translate “squirrel stew” is addressed in *At the Table with Nero Wolfe*. The reference appears in *The League of Frightened Men*, where Archie drinks rye to accompany the black sauce in Fritz’s squirrel stew in the original English version.³⁶⁶ In the 1993 Triller publishing house Russian translation, Archie is eating “hot lamb stew with onion” and drinks rye to accompany the “lamb milk.” The authors of *At the Table with Nero Wolfe* correct this translation and then go into detail about the history of eating squirrel in America.³⁶⁷

The large number of different translations and series with Stout’s cookbooks and novels led to his being the second most published author in 2014 (his first inclusion in the top ten printed authors of the year in Russia), with 72 books and 1,132,8000 copies in circulation. In this 2014 list, Dontsova was first and Marinina was fourth.³⁶⁸ A possible explanation for Stout’s inclusion for the first time on the 2014 list is that Amfora’s “Great Detectives” collection of Stout was published that year.

The opinions on his contemporary popularity by online Russian Wolfe fan club members reflect the phenomenon of the multiple retranslations and editions of

365. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

366. Lezerson, Solomonik, and Sinelnikov. *Za stolom s Niro Vul’fom, ili sekrety kukhni velikogos yshchika: kulinarnyi detektiv (At the Table with Nero Wolfe or Secrets of the Kitchen of the Great Detective: A Culinary Mystery)*, 34.

367. Ibid., 33-34.

368. See the appendix for Stout’s printings in Russia in 2014, the Russian Stout collections in the early 2000s, and a table of his books republished in the 2000s, on page 190. Sadly, E.L. James (author of the *Fifty Shades* series) was eleventh, one higher than Dostoevsky.

Stout's work, and also explain why Stout did not make the top ten authors list in 2012, 2013, or 2015. Chervotkin writes that Stout's popularity in 2015 would be ranked a five out of ten, because "his name has not been advertised enough, and people are not used to his style." He continues with the explanation that the preponderance of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie stories in the Soviet period were what people were used to, rather than Stout's more hard-boiled kind, but that "this is neither good nor bad. It just happened to be this way."³⁶⁹ Zavgorodnii gives an identical score and analysis: five out of ten and the mention of the inability of Stout to compete with Christie or Conan Doyle in terms of popularity.³⁷⁰ Vk user Panichev gives Stout the highest rating, an 8-10 on the ten-point scale.³⁷¹ User BleWotan is unable to give an answer to this question, citing "our digital age" to explain his lack of knowledge about Stout's popularity.³⁷² This answer accurately reflects the amount of unauthorized copies of Nero Wolfe books on the Russian language internet (Chervotkin writes that he downloaded his first Stout book in 2012). A quick Google search will find several websites that contain downloads in any format of every one of his books, both in Russian and English, including all cookbook editions.

However, even with the large number of Stout books in print today, none of the users on the Russian forum describe the translations as excellent; they are always called either "fair," "not very good," or "incomprehensible." Zavgorodnii explains the problem in translating Stout by equating it to a lack of knowledge of America: "Many

369. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015.

370. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

371. Sergey Panichev, Vkontakte message to author, March 15, 2016.

372. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015.

mistakes come from the translators' unawareness of American life (for example, baseball rules and terminology.) All the flaws have become especially apparent to me this year, as I am learning English and am trying to read Stout's books in the original." However, even the bad quality of the translations did not stop Russian readers, for Rymko writes that "even though those were not always good-quality editions and good translations, I became imbued with the characters of this author."³⁷³

Stout's Fan Base Goes Online and Eastward

The number of Stout's cookbooks and novels in translation in conjunction with the rise of the digital age led to a plethora of Stout and Wolfe-related online resources for Russian speakers, whose interest in Stout was sparked by the retranslation surge in the 2000s. There is a Russian Nero Wolfe fan club on both Facebook and VKontakte (a Russian Facebook-like website), but the main site for Russian-speaking Nero Wolfe fans is nerowolfe.info, which models itself on the site of the American fan club, the Wolfe Pack. The often-quoted (in this thesis) Zavgorodnii is the creator and webmaster for the whole website as well as the discussion forum attached to it. In the "About the Site" section, he writes how after reading *The Doorbell Rang* in the early 1990s, he began to specially seek out Stout's books in the library and from friends and acquaintances. Zavgorodnii describes himself as an admirer of Rex Stout and Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, and when he realized that there was nothing on the *RuNet* [Russian internet] that served as a

373. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015; Natalia Rymko (user Rymarnica), October 19, 2015.

“specialized resource dedicated to [his] heroes” (like the American Wolfe Pack’s site), he created nerowolfe.info in 2009.³⁷⁴

The website has pages of information about Stout and each one of his characters, from his two main detectives to Lily Rowan, Lieutenant Rowcliffe, Doctor Vollmer, and every single minor character that has ever recurred in the Wolfe stories. There are pages for Wolfe on the radio and in film, a table and graph charting Wolfe’s recorded weight in every novel, and a three-page series on what Wolfe and Archie drink in the novels, broken down by beverage and accompanied by photos of American ads for the particular brand of beverage discussed, as well as a brief linguistic study into “Stout” as an adjective and “stout” as a type of beer.³⁷⁵

The website includes a forum for posting topics and discussing the Wolfe novels in detail among members. There are 173 users registered to the forum, all of whom actively comment on forum titles such as “Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and everything that is connected with them” and “In the kitchen of Fritz Brenner.” The fans celebrate Stout’s birthday online, post photos of orchids in honor of Nero Wolfe, and ask each other minutiae about American slang Archie uses. For example, my posts in the forum as an American who had read every Stout novel in English drew questions from Russian readers about Archie’s specific vocabulary. User Avis questioned me about the rubber silencer that Archie uses in one Stout novel, asking me to clarify its definition and use by linking me to another discussion thread on the site about what an American silencer looked like, complete with pictures of different

374. Stanislav Zavgorodnii, “O saite,” *Niro Vul’fi Archi Gudvin*, <http://nerowolfe.info/about>.

375. Ibid, “Staut i staut,” *Niro Vul’fi Archi Gudvin*, <http://nerowolfe.info/beer>.

types of guns combined with various definitions of “rubber silencer,” which included descriptions of weaponry as well as biological terms.³⁷⁶

Some of the first posts on the forum in 2009 include a biography in Russian of J. Edgar Hoover, meant to be read with the Russian translation of *The Doorbell Rang*. The early posts also include a page of memes of Archie including a Soviet-era polling poster of a Soviet woman with the words “I will vote for Archie” superimposed over the background.³⁷⁷ More recent discussion threads from 2015 contain things like users posting sketches of horses, in reference to *And Be a Villain* where, in an aside, Wolfe sketches a horse because he had recently read a theory that the way person draws a horse shows something about his character.³⁷⁸

Users posted often on the site in the years from 2009 to 2016, but the posts have slowed down in the past few years. However, that does not mean that the site is defunct or no longer useful; it holds an important place in the life of Stout’s Russian-speaking fans. In 2013, one user wrote in the forum, “This site corresponds to my perception of the spirit of the novels about Nero Wolfe, I’m going to become a

376. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015.

377. User RAMZES, “Biografiia Edgara Guvera” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), April 27, 2009 (10:33am),

<http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=48>; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), “Kubok luchshego detektiva- u Archi Gudvina,” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), April 28, 2009 (9:55pm), <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=49>.

378. Natalia Rymko (user Rymarnica), “A kak vy risuete loshad’?,” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), March 28, 2013 (6:39pm), <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=14&t=459>.

frequent visitor [...] Thanks again.”³⁷⁹ The American Wolfe Pack has monthly meetings all over New England, excursions to Stout’s home and the archives of his biographer in Boston, and yearly banquets celebrating Stout’s birthday. None of this is available to Russian-speaking Wolfe fans, who live on the other side of the world and do not necessarily speak or read English. With the superfluity of Stout novels and cookbooks in Russian translation, and with the Russian-speaking population of the world spread out over and beyond the large country of Russia, this site is the only way for Russian speaking fans to have a platform to connect with one another.

The Russian Nero Wolfe Television Series

The cookbooks, retranslations, and fan club were not the limit of Stout’s influence in contemporary Russia, for he soon entered the Russian television sphere as well. There were two series of a Russian Nero Wolfe television show in 2001-2002 and 2005.³⁸⁰ The Russians in the Nero Wolfe online fan club had an overwhelmingly negative view of the series. Both User BleWotan and Chervotkin wrote that they “unfortunately” had seen it (in separate responses) and Chuchundrovich “did not like

379. User Ol’ga T., January 27, 2013 (2:49pm), comment on user MsBulavkapetek1855, “Blagodarnost’,” *O Niro Vul’fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), December 19, 2011 (2:48pm), <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=8&t=301>.

380. There have also been Russian television shows of Marinina’s Kamenskaia and Darya Dontsova’s Podushkin.

it.”³⁸¹ VK user Panichev wrote that the series “failed in translating Stout’s books. America in the serial looked very pale and superficial.”³⁸²

The first series was five episodes long: “Poka ia ne umer” (*Before I Die*), “Letayushchii pistolet” (*Gun with Wings*), “Golos s togo sveta” (*The Silent Speaker*), “Delo v shliape” (*Disguise for Murder*), and “Voskresnut’, shtoby umeret” (*Man Alive*). The second series in 2005 was four episodes long: “Podarok dlia Lili” (*Black Orchids*), “Posledniaia volia Marko” (*The Black Mountain*), “Ochen’ mnogo zhenshchin” (*Too Many Women*), and “Taina krasnoi shkatulki” (*The Red Box*).³⁸³

The cast had Donatas Banionis as Nero Wolfe, Sergey Zhugunov as Archie Goodwin, Sergey Parshin as Inspector Cramer, and Sergey Migitzko as Fritz Brenner. Both the writer of the series, Vladimir Valutskiy, and the scorer of the series, Vladimir Dashkevich, had worked on the 1980s Russian Sherlock Holmes show. Dashkevich’s take on the score for the opening music was to play the opening music of the Sherlock Holmes series backwards, an unexplained and humorous stylistic move that reflects the Russian Stout fan’s opinions of the large popularity of Holmes in Russia compared to Stout.³⁸⁴

The opening credits of the Russian Nero Wolfe television series are very America-centric, with the Statue of Liberty shown twice, once with a man literally

381. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015; Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

382. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015; Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015.

383. Stanislav Zavgorodnii, “Rossiia, 2001-2002, ‘Niro Vul’f i Archi Gudvin,’ 2005, ‘Novye prikliucheniiia Niro Vul’fa i Archi Gudvina,’” *Niro Vul’fi Archi Gudvin*, <http://nerowolfe.info/movies>.

384. “Poka ya ne umer (2001).” IMDb.com, Inc., <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0368157/>.

building her, alongside repeated views of the New York skyline. Although the plots of the episodes do mainly follow the plots of Stout's stories, the show gives the stories a much more comical slant than Stout does in the books. There are several simple factual inaccuracies in the Russian portrayal of Wolfe, Archie, and New York, which could either have been made from a mistaken ideological standpoint or from a lack of reliable information about America. In some episodes, Archie is seen driving up to Wolfe's brownstone, which is located next to a giant forest full of trees, and parking his car in a little driveway, an image which is not possible considering the architecture of West 35th Street and the nature of all brownstones in Manhattan.

The characters are also often depicted in different ways from their literary American written counterparts, with Fritz (Wolfe's chef) and Theodore (Wolfe's orchid man) placed in more subservient roles. In the American novels, Fritz and Theodore, while technically servants, are written as equals to Wolfe and Archie; just because Wolfe is their employer does not mean that his class status is markedly differentiated from theirs. However, in the Russian television series, both Fritz and Theodore are comically deferential to Wolfe, behaving in what one could imagine is a Soviet holdover of the stereotype of the exploited American servant. Archie and Wolfe have a more emotional relationship, with Archie as a more sexualized character that Wolfe has to rein in whenever he is interviewing a female suspect. This is shown by the titling of an episode *A Gift for Lily*, instead of the American *The Black Orchids* that the episode is based on. Archie's female relationships are pushed to the forefront in order to add more romance to a plot that previously had little.

Police also play a more important role in the show than they do in the books, for they have more control over murder scenes, and both murder suspects and Archie are more fearful in general of police authority. Archie, Wolfe, and Cramer also are depicted as good friends working together, as opposed to the back and forth, friend and foe relationship in Stout's novels. The artificially heightened role of police authority reflects the tendency for the Russian *detektiv* heroes to be members of the police or military, for the detective genre as a whole has a distinct lack of emphasis on private investigators.

Then there are the minor inconsistencies, like the lack of a desk for Archie, the lack of red or yellow chairs in Wolfe's office, and the addition of Wolfe having a mustache. In *A Gift for Lily*, the murderer does not die at the end, but comically becomes entangled in a gas mask contraption and then the whole cast of characters laughs into a fade out.³⁸⁵ This type of light comical ending does not exist in the American Wolfe novels, for while chapters sometimes end with Archie laughing at authority; the murderer is rarely depicted as a comedic object.

The Russian version of *The Black Mountain* is vastly different from the American Stout novel in tone, plot, setting, and characters.³⁸⁶ While solving the murder of Marko does still entail a trip to Yugoslavia for Wolfe and Archie, the motive for the murder is connected to both a past murder of Marko's brother and the

385. Sergey Zhigunov, "Podarok dlia lili (A Gift for Lily)." in *Novye prikliucheniia Niro Vul'fa i Archi Gudvina*, directed by Viktor Sergeev and Igor' Muzhzhukhin, 2005.

386. Sergey Zhigunov, "Posledniaia volia Marko (The Last Wish of Marko)," in *Novye prikliucheniia Niro Vul'fa i Archi Gudvina*, directed by Viktor Sergeev and Igor' Muzhzhukhin, 2005. I will only be discussing in detail the Russian episode of *The Black Mountain*, for it was the only episode based on the plot of a book fully detailed in this thesis.

knowledge of a secret hiding place of gold coins. The whole episode is virtually a comedy: Wolfe is jocularly referred to as Neron Wolfevich and spends most of the episode wearing a disguise of a tall black furry hat, fake goatee, and sheepskin coat, in which he is mainly depicted stumbling around and looking confused in a foreign countryside. Archie and Wolfe's time in Montenegro has almost no association with the political intrigue of the Stout book, for Black Mountain separatists are mentioned in connection with Marko, but are not central to the plot. They don't even encounter any of the difficulties involved illegally crossing borders or finding food—once off their boat from Italy, Wolfe and Archie casually walk up to a nice meal at an upscale restaurant. When they are taken to the political headquarters, it is so that they can work with the political boss to find the murderer together, rather than the close call with arrest and deportation in the original version.

The boss's secretary is a seemingly random choice for a love interest for Archie, and both are briefly shown on a horseback ride along a beach at sunset. This scene culminates in a dramatic reveal, for their alleged friend and fellow American they meet at the nice restaurant is seen behind a rock with a gun, waiting for Archie to get off his horse. However, when Archie goes to kiss his love interest, he inadvertently positions his horse between himself and his would-be assassin, which causes the assassin to shrug his shoulders, lower his gun, and leave, because apparently he considered it impossible to wait the minute or so it would take until Archie gave him a clear shot again.

Wolfe is arrested midway through the episode, and so Archie is portrayed as the real brains behind the operation in Yugoslavia, although they both receive

Yugoslav medals from the political boss before they leave the country. The plot culminates in Archie destroying a cement seal with a sledgehammer and gold coins falling from the sky, at which point the Yugoslav party boss says, “You really are an American”: money literally falls from the sky at the American’s feet. The episode ends with both Archie and Inspector Cramer shooting the murderer dead just after he shoots Wolfe in the leg, which is what happens in the Stout novel. However, the murderer in the television episode turns out to be a small-time thief from Cleveland, rather than an ideologically driven hit man from Yugoslavia, as Stout wrote him.

The lack of cohesion between the Stout books and the Russian Nero Wolfe television series, in conjunction with the overall negative reviews of the series by Russian-speaking Wolfe fans, does not diminish the fact of Stout’s popularity in Russia. It is just another case of the desire to make money in the new free market Russian economy leading some villain in the television industry to commit a crime (of bad taste).

Conclusion

The arc of the argument in my thesis starts off on a wide, ideological level and gradual narrows down to a more specific analysis over time. It is a merging of two distinct parts: Stout in America and Stout in Russia, and then how they are interconnected. The ideological problems with the detective genre in Russia are flipped on their head when the publication of detective novels becomes widely permissible after the fall of the Soviet Union, and now the big picture problem is the overall downgrading of culture, subversive in its simplicity, rather than in its “dangerous” ideas. The analysis of Stout’s influence in Russia becomes minute, with a close textual reading of Stout’s influences in Marinina, and other, specific problems in Stout’s translations no longer on an ideological level, but on a word-by-word level. The idea that Russians can even pick apart word choice and sentences in the manner that they do in the cookbook and on the online forum is a bringing down into a small focus the large-scale problems with Stout in translation that were introduced in the 1970s.

One main question of my research can be posed thus: with all of Stout’s politics and politically charged plotlines, why was he ever published in the Soviet Union? The Stout books discussed in Chapters Two and Three are described in so much detail in order for the reader to contrast these plots with the idea that these very books were actually disseminated in the late Soviet period and early 1990s. These introductory chapters are meant to drill into the reader’s head that Rex Stout hates Communists, and the reader is supposed to be surprised by the fact that his books were published in Soviet Russia (just as I was).

When I began the thesis, I had not thought that my research would include the Soviet period, but would begin with the 1990s, and I turned out to be incorrect. It is an unexpected occurrence that no Soviet censors or anybody in the Russian government noticed in the 1970s that Stout was such a strong political activist in America, particularly one whose politics were directed against the Communist ideology. The criticism of Stout by critics like Andzhaparidze was confined to the problems with his plots, and more generally with the translation of Western detective novels as a whole; his name on Freedom House documents passed by unnoticed. It's possible that censors and critics did not bother to check Stout's personal background because his books served a purpose in their Soviet publication, namely that his plots critiquing racism in America and the FBI's abuse of power showed Soviet citizens that the US had real societal problems.

It is also possible that since Stout was one among many minor (as opposed to the big names of Agatha Christie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle), yet still popular Western detective novelists published in Russian translation, he was merely overlooked in the crowd. Since not all of Stout's books had any politics in their plots, it was not a problem to find books of his to translate that would require no censorship. And when censorship was required, as in the 1994 publication of *The Cop Killer*, it was a relatively easy thing to do, just a country's name changed. Cannon's thesis explores how Stout managed to write politically charged novels without losing literary integrity, and it was that ability to weave political intrigue into murder mysteries in subtle ways that allowed for Stout's publication in the USSR.

The next question I sought to answer in my research was why, when the Soviet Union fell, was Stout so popular in Russia, arguably more so than in the United States in that same period? Stout's continuing popularity in Russia, after the 1990s, is puzzling as compared to his waning celebrity in America. Not a single one of my friends at Wesleyan had heard of Stout before I started my thesis, but almost every person my age in Russia had. Why is Stout so much better known among the younger generation in Russia in the 1990s and today?

Russian speakers on the Nero Wolfe forum (whose existence is important in and of itself) had varying answers to this question. Chervotkin writes:

I read them [Stout's novels] for the atmosphere that the author creates. For me, it is analogous to what George Simenon did in his books about Commissioner Maigret. Stout (as well as some of his translators) manages to create the sense of presence. Everyone and everything is almost palpable, as if you could touch them. There are jokes, epithets and short eloquent descriptions that sound very natural.³⁸⁷

User BleWotan also sees the books' literary value as the reason for Stout's popularity: "There is a kind of core in these books; the characters are outline with vivid features that I enjoy as a reader. The detective part is secondary for me; the characters and their interactions come first."³⁸⁸ Both of these answers support the idea that Stout's popularity simply rests in his literary talent. Zavgorodnii goes into more detail in relation to Stout and America:

387. Sergey Chervotkin (user Avis), November 20, 2015.

388. User BleWotan, December 14, 2015.

What I really like in Stout's books is not so much the plot but more the originality of the characters and the atmosphere created by the author. Now, as I am trying to read Stout in English, I begin to understand some of the nuances that were inaccessible to me when reading him in Russian. For example, I see that in everyday life Wolfe uses somewhat more sophisticated vocabulary than other characters, including some words that may be rarely used and unknown even to native speakers (his famous "flummery," for example.) Some time ago, when we (users of this forum) were making a list of the books that Wolfe read in Stout's books [...] I was astonished by how diverse the character's (and his creator's, of course) interests were. Definitely, Stout's books (along with some other factors) evoked the interest for the United States of America in me.³⁸⁹

Zavgorodnii was deeply affected by Stout's depictions of America, which points towards the setting of Stout's books as a reason for his popularity in Russia. Another Russian blogger, Dosh, writes that since Wolfe lives in a utopia where life is governed by sense and morality, one could contrast it to the world that Russian readers live in.³⁹⁰ Both of these ideas point towards the nature of Stout's settings as a curiosity for Russian readers; his location of New York is a draw for many Russians who read about America solely in books. The existence of the television show also supports the idea that Stout's popularity lies within his choice of the setting of New York. The time spent on the television's show opening on the detail of the skyline and

389. Stanislav Zavgorodnii (user Chuchundrovich), November 23, 2015.

390. Dobavil Dosh, "Klassicheskii detektiv protiv krutogo," in *Detektivnyi metod. Istoriiia detektiva v kino i literature (The Detective Method. A History of Detektiv in Movie and Literature)*, 2014.

the State of Liberty show that there was an interest in this kind of details by the Russian audience. The existence of the Stout cookbook in translation, and the Russian Stout cookbook and translation analysis, show that the American way of life beyond setting, but in terms of food, played an important role in Stout's popularity. Russian readers enjoyed reading about the types of delicacies enjoyed by Americans: the three editions in twelve years of *At the Table with Nero Wolfe* prove this point. Based on the information given by the Russian speakers on the Nero Wolfe forum and elsewhere online, it seems that it was a combination of Stout's literary prowess as a writer in conjunction with his descriptions of New York and America in a variety of ways that have contributed to his contemporary popularity.

However, I would argue that Stout's popularity can also be traced back to the Russian trend of nostalgia for their past, an explanation which answers the questions of why there is an uneven popularity between Stout in the US and Russia. Stout was wildly popular in the 1950s in America, the era of the Cold War, when anti-Communist sentiment was common and Senator McCarthy and HUAC were polarizing the American public. The love of Americans for Stout in the 1950s could therefore be seen as connected to his literary reflection of the political tensions at the time in his murder mysteries; Americans were entertained while reading about the tense situation in America in real life in the form of fictional characters solving murders with the satisfyingly neat endings previously referenced in Chapter Seven. The political situation at the time in America, and Stout's subsequent popularity in the US, parallels the Soviets' and the Russians' love for Stout based on the political situation in their country at the time that they read him.

The idea of Stout being somehow connected to the Russian feeling of nostalgia for the past, be that either the 1970s, or the 1990s, is an important reason why his popularity has lasted in Russia until the present day. In contrast, American nostalgia for the Cold War does not really exist, so it's not surprising that more young Americans today don't read Stout; he was too specific to his time for young American readers to feel an inclination to read the Wolfe series now. It appears Stout was not a classically timeless American writer; although his popularity in the 1950s and 1960s in America cannot be denied, his name and popularity did not continue after his death in a significant way in America.

But in Russia, Stout's connection to the 1970s censorship, the 1990s detective translation boom, and the 2000s retranslations and multiple Wolfe cookbook editions, all signify that Stout has been a part of every changing era in the Russian person's memory back through Soviet times. It is natural that Stout is still popular in Russia, as he has been woven into the overall Russian nostalgia for past (and often worse), periods of history: nostalgia for Soviet times is different than nostalgia for capitalist times. Marinina takes advantage of this nostalgic fondness: her use of Soviet nostalgia both explains her popularity in contemporary Russia as well as why her references to Stout's characters fit in so neatly with her distinctly Russian cast and plot.

This argument expands to include the dissatisfaction of Russians with their society, which is a longstanding concept that harkens back to the Soviet era in the 1970s. Stout's honest critiques of the American societal problems with race, the FBI, and McCarthyism are important and comforting for Russians to read because they too

felt and feel dissatisfaction with facets of their government, either in the past or the present. This is true in terms of the older generation and their Soviet nostalgia, as well as in the case of the children of the Brezhnev era that don't want to pay for their parents' mistakes and are dissatisfied with the corruption that their parents had built into society. Marinina shows this dissatisfaction of the younger generation (in opposition to or in conjunction with the older generation's nostalgia and that reason for Stout's popularity), which her 1990s based plots concerning economic corruption, which play the same role for Russians as Stout's plots do in their critique of US society.

The popularity that Stout has enjoyed from Soviet readers in the 1970s to Russian readers in the 2000s exists in each decade for a different reason: the reasons that Stout was popular in the Soviet period were different from the reasons he was popular after the fall of Communism. In the 1950s, Stout was popular in America due to his use of anti-Communist, Cold War rhetoric in his plots. His popularity expanded in 1965 when he went to new lengths to critique the FBI, and his overall political activism and clever ways of interspersing politics with literature (as with the Rosenberg trial) made him an eccentric success.

On the other side of the world, Stout became popular in Soviet Russia in the 1970s due to a desire by Russians to read the previously forbidden Western detective story and see what life was like in America. Then, in the 1990s, Stout's plots that critiqued the Communist model took on a new context and as well as a continuing popularity, but for a different reason: now Russians wanted to learn why their past system had been so bad. They also began to better appreciate the way that Stout's

characters locked up criminals and villains, for the turmoil of the 1990s created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that sent Russians running for comfort in literature. Most recently, in the 2000s, Stout's popularity can be seen as part of the Russian trend of appreciating and consuming more pop culture than ever before, both foreign and homegrown.

Although the historical implications are important in tracing the trajectory of this one American author's impact on Russian literary culture, it is necessary to remember that Stout was a novelist first and a political activist second. Most Russians did not read his books for political insight, but instead picked up a Wolfe novel because they wanted a good story. Stout's unique and unforgettable characters of Wolfe and Archie are the most important part of any analysis of Stout's popularity; when it comes down to it, the most basic explanation of Stout's popularity anywhere in the world is simply that he knew how to tell a really good story.

Why is what I did important? There is a fair amount of scholarship already written on Rex Stout as an American writer, there is scholarship about the portrayal of Russia and America from opposing countries, and vice versa, during the Cold War and the 1990s, there is scholarship about the influence of Western detective novelists like Conan Doyle and Christie in the USSR and present day Russia, and there is scholarship about the rise of the Russian *detektiv*. What I did was combine all of these different preexisting scholarships and ways of looking at American Cold War literature together, and by doing so, became the first to fully explore Stout's role in Soviet and Russian society.

In 2015, at the annual Black Orchid banquet hosted by the Wolfe Pack around Stout's December 1st birthday, I was fortunate enough to meet Rebecca Stout Bradbury, Rex Stout's daughter, and when I told her the topic of my thesis, she was very surprised. For a 76-year-old with a famous father, it is not often that people are able to tell you something new about your parent that you don't already know, but I did that with Rebecca Stout Bradbury. The influence of Rex Stout's legacy in America is an undisputed fact, but the extensiveness of his influence in both Soviet and present-day Russia had not even been a fact until this thesis. This scholarship on Rex Stout and the importance of his legacy in Soviet society that carries through Russia today adds another layer to the already complex history of the Cold War influences between Russia and the United States. With tensions between the two countries on the rise again in the first significant way since the fall of Communism, perhaps Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin will play yet another role in Russian society and culture in the coming years.

And with that Wolfe would most likely say, "Pfui."

Appendix

Statistical Records of Printed Materials in Russia in 2014³⁹¹

English-language books published:

1090 books, 2,389,400 copies in circulation, 27,297,400 printed pages

English-translations published:

6738 books, 39,492,900 copies in circulation, 638,452,700 printed pages

Top twenty authors published:

1. Darya Arkadyevna Dontsova
 - a. 95 books, 1,683,000 copies in circulation, 23,088,400 printed pages
2. Rex Stout
 - a. 72 books, 1,132,800 copies in circulation, 18,874,000 printed pages
3. Tatiana Viktorovna Polyakova
 - a. 58 books, 663,200 copies in circulation, 8,701,600 printed pages
4. Aleksandra Marinina
 - a. 50 books, 661,200 copies in circulation, 10,333,000 printed pages
5. Tatiana Vitalyevna Ustinova
 - a. 40 books, 593,500 copies in circulation, 7,891,900 printed pages
6. Oleg Yurievich Roi
 - a. 41 books, 542,000 copies in circulation, 8,243,900 printed pages
7. Vladimir Grigorievich Kolychev
 - a. 41 books, 511,200 copies in circulation, 6,878,600 printed pages
8. Yulia Vitalyevna Shilova
 - a. 38 books, 506,000 copies in circulation, 6,127,000 printed pages
9. Steven King
 - a. 61 books, 453,500 copies in circulation, 12,224,800 printed pages
10. Yekaterina Nikolaevna Vilmont
 - a. 42 books, 424,000 copies in circulation, 5,549,600 printed pages
11. E.L James (Джеймс Эл)
 - a. 3 books, 405,000 copies in circulation, 12,282,900 printed pages
12. Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevksy
 - a. 68 books, 394,800 copies in circulation, 11,740,100 printed pages
13. Boris Akunin
 - a. 43 books, 377,500 copies in circulation, 6,349,500 printed pages
14. A. and S. Litvinovy
 - a. 41 books, 373,000 copies in circulation, 5,014,700 printed pages
15. Erich Maria Remarque
 - a. 48 books, 353,400 copies in circulation, 640,900 printed pages
16. D.I. Rubina

391. Statisticheskie pokazateli po vypusku pechatnykh izdaniy (Statistical Indicators for the Production of Publications)," collected by Rossiiskaia knizhnaia palata: filial ITAR-TASS (Russian Book Chamber: ITAR-TASS Branch), 2014.

- a. 53 books, 344,400 copies in circulation, 7,215,600 printed pages
- 17. Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy
 - a. 49 books, 328,500 copies in circulation, 10,629,500 printed pages
- 18. N.N. Aleksandrova
 - a. 64 books, 324,000 copies in circulation, 4,072,700 printed pages
- 19. M.S. Serova
 - a. 38 books, 318,200 copies in circulation, 3,790,400 printed pages
- 20. Darya Aleksandrovna Kalinina
 - a. 43 books, 313000 copies in circulation, 3,928,700 printed pages

Stout Collections in the 2000s by Russian Publishing Houses³⁹²

Publishing House: Tsentrpoligraf

“Neizvestnyi Staut” (Unknown Stout)

2002

25 volume series, 26th is the cookbook

*rest of the titles cannot be found online

“Ves’ Niro Vulf” (All Nero Wolfe)

2002

1. *Igra v bary (Prisoner’s Base)*
2. *Nepriiatnosti vtroine*
3. *Zolotyie pauki (The Golden Spiders)*
4. *Tri svidetelia (Trouble in Triplicate)*
5. *Esli by smert' spala (If Death Ever Slept)*
6. *Sliskom mnogo klientov (Too Many Clients)*
7. *Pravo umeret' (A Right to Die)*
8. *Pokovaia troitsa (Homicide Trinity)*
9. *Smert' chuzhaka (Death of a Dude)*
10. *Smert' schitaet do trekh (Death Times Three)*
11. *Gde Tsezar' krov'iu istekal (Some Buried Caesar)*
12. *Zanavees dlia troikh (Curtains for Three)*
13. *Krasnaia korobka (The Red Box)*
14. *Ne pozdnee polnochi (Before Midnight)*
15. *Troinoi risk (Triple Jeopardy)*
16. *Chernye orxidei (Black Orchids)*

“Reks Staut, Klassika detektiva” (Rex Stout, Classic Detective)

2004

1. *Esli smert' navesegda usnet (If Death Ever Slept)*
2. *Krasnaia korobka (The Red Box)*
3. *Otvuki ibiistva (The Sound of Murder)* *Alphabet Hicks novel
4. *Troinoi risk (Triple Jeopardy)*
5. *Zanaves dlia troikh (Death Times Three)*
6. *Pravo umeret' (A Right to Die)*
7. *Priz dlia printsev (A Prize for Princes)* *non-Wolfe novel, non-mystery
8. *Ubit' zlo (How Like a God)* *non-Wolfe, non-mystery

Publishing House: Eksmo

392. This collection information was gathered on the following online catalogs: "The National Library of Russian Online Catalogue," (The National Library of Russia, 2014); "Russian State Library," (Federal Agency on the Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, 2012).

“Ves’ Staut” (All Stout)- put the ones that are two
2006, 2007, 2009

1. *Zolotyie pauki (The Golden Rings)*
2. *Ubei seichas- zaplatish’ pozzhe (Kill Now, Pay Later)*
3. *Okonchhatel’noe reshenie (The Final Deduction)*
4. *Ubiistvo- ne shutka (Murder is No Joke/Frame Up for Murder)*
5. *Chernye orkhidei (Black Orchids)*
6. *Krasnaia shkatulka (The Red Box)*
7. *Ne pozzhe polunochi (Before Midnight)*
8. *Vtoroe priznanie (The Second Confession)*
9. *Izcheznuvshii president (The President Vanishes)* *originally written anonymously, non-Wolfe novel
10. *Tol’ko cherez moi trup (Over My Dead Body)*
11. *Vmesto iliki (Instead of Evidence)*
12. *Rozhdestvenskaia vecherinka (Christmas Party)*
13. *Semeinoe delo (A Family Affair)*
14. *Dver’ k smerti (Door to Death)*
15. *Vyshel mesiats iz tumana (Eeny, Meeny, Murder, Mo)*
16. *Bokal shampanskogo (Champagne for One)*
17. *V luchshikh semeistvakh (In the Best Families)*
18. *Prouhitavshemu-smert’ (Murder by the Book)* *two different translated titles are included in the collection
19. *Igra v bary (Prisoner’s Base)*
20. *Zaveshchanie (Where There’s a Will/Sisters in Trouble)*
21. *Povod dlia ubiistva (Omit Flowers)*
22. *Poslednii svidetel’ (Murder by the Book)* *two different translated titles are included in the collection
23. *Vsekh, krome psa,- v politsiiu! (Die Like a Dog)*
24. *Slishkom mnogo zhenshchin (Too Many Women)*
25. *Chernaia gora (The Black Mountain)*
26. *Slishkom mnogo povarov (Too Many Cooks)*
27. *Eto vas ne ub’et (This Won’t Kill You)*
28. *Pogonia za mater’iu (The Mother Hunt)*
29. *Smertel’naia lovushka (Booby Trap)*
30. *Esli by smert’ spala (If Death Ever Slept)*
31. *Gambit (Gambit)*
32. *Smertel’nyi plagiats (Plot it Yourself)*
33. *Krov’ skazhet (Blood Will Tell)*
34. *Umolknuvshii orator (The Silent Speaker)*
35. *Priglasenie k ubiistvu (Invitation to Murder)*
36. *Fer-de-lans (Fer-de-lance)*
37. *Snova ubivat’ (The Rubber Band)*
38. *Znaiut otvet orkhidei (Might as Well Be Dead)*
39. *Pravo umeret’ (A Right to Die)*
40. *Plokho dlia biznesa (Bad for Business)* *Tecumseh Fox novel

41. *Liga perepugannyx muzhchin (The League of Frightened Men)*
42. *Sliskom mnogo klientov (Too Many Clients)*
43. *Immunitet k ubiistvy (Immune to Murder)*
44. *Kulinarnaia kniga Niro Vul'fa (The Nero Wolfe Cookbook) *cookbook*

Publishing House: Amfora

“Velikie syshchiki” (Great Detectives)

2014

1. *Poznakom'tes' s Niro Vul'fom (Fer-de-Lance)*new translation without abbreviations*
2. *Krasnaya shkatulka (The Red Box)*
3. *Liga ispugannyx muzhin and S priskorbiem izveshchaem (The League of Frightened Men and Cordially Invited to Meet Death) *new translation of The League of Frightened Men*
4. *Umolknuvvii orator and Prezhde chem ia umru (The Silent Speaker and Before I Die)*
5. *Snova ubivat' (The Rubber Band/To Kill Again) *new translation*
6. *Gde Tsezar' krov'iu istekal (Some Buried Caesar)*
7. *Tol'ko cherez moi trup (Over My Dead Body)*
8. *Zaveshchanie (Where There's a Will/Sisters in Trouble)*
9. *Chernye orkhidei (Black Orchids)*
10. *Sliskom mnogo zhenshchin (Too Many Women)*
11. *I byt podletsom (And Be A Villain)*
12. *Vtoroe priznanie (The Second Confession)*
13. *Dver' k smerti (Door to Death)*
14. *Ubiistvo iz-za knigi (Murder by the Book)*
15. *Igra v piatnashki (Prisoner's Base)*
16. *Zolotye pauki (The Golden Spiders)*
17. *Chernaya gora (The Black Mountain)*
18. *Ne pozdnee polnochi (Before Midnight)*
19. *Znaiut otvet orkhidei (Might As Well Be Dead)*
20. *Esli by smert' spala (If Death Ever Slept)*
21. *Prazdichnyi piknik (Fourth of July Picnic)*
22. *Bokal shampanskogo (Champagne for One)*
23. *Iad vkhodit v meniu (Poison a La Carte)*
24. *Sliskom mnogo klientov (Too Many Clients)*
25. *Okanchatel'noe reshenie (The Final Deduction)*
26. *Gambit (Gambit)*
27. *Pravo umeret' (A Right to Die)*
28. *Krov' skazhet (Blood Will Tell)*
29. *Smert' soderzhanki (Death of a Doxy)*
30. *Seminoe delo (A Family Affair)*
31. *Gor'kii konets (Bitter End)*
32. *Smertel'nyi dubl' (Double for Death) *Tecumseh Fox novel*

33. *Skverno dlia dela (Bad for Business)* *Tecumseh Fox novel
34. *Razbitaia vaza (The Broken Vase)* *Tecumseh Fox novel
35. *Otvuki ubiistva (The Sound of Murder)* *Alphabet Hicks novel
36. *Ruka v perchatke (The Hand in the Glove)* *Dol Bonner novel
37. *Gornaia koshka (Mountain Cat)* *non-Wolfe novel
38. *Prezident ischez (The President Vanishes)* *originally written anonymously, non-Wolfe novel
39. *Pravosudie konchaetsia dom (Justice Ends at Home)* *pre-Wolfe novel with two archetypes of Wolfe and Archie
40. *Ee zapretnyi rytsar' (Her Forbidden Knight)* *pre-Wolfe novel originally published in 1910, Stout's pulp fiction
41. *Ubit' zlo (How Like a God)* *non-Wolfe, non-mystery
42. *Za stolom s Niro Vul'fom (At the Table with Nero Wolfe)* *cookbook

Stout's Novels Mentioned in the Thesis³⁹³

<u>English Titles</u>	<u>US Publishing Company and Year of First Publication in the US</u>	<u>Russian Titles</u>	<u>Russian Publishing House and Year of First Publication in Russia</u>
<i>Fer-de-Lance</i>	Farrar & Rinehart 1934	<i>Ostrie kop'ia</i>	Unknown, 1993
<i>Too Many Cooks</i>	Farrar & Rinehart 1938	<i>Slishkom mnogo povarov</i>	Mysl', 1991
<i>Some Buried Caesar</i>	Farrar & Rinehart 1939	<i>Gde Tsezar' krov'iu istekal</i>	Petergrof, 1991
<i>Over My Dead Body</i>	Farrar & Rinehart 1940	<i>Cherez moi trup</i>	Pressa, 1994
"Watson was a Woman"	<i>The Sunday Review of Literature</i> 1941	"Uotson byl zhenshchinoi"	Unknown, 1998
<i>Not Quite Dead Enough</i>	Farrar & Rinehart 1944	<i>Smert' tam eshche ne pobyvala</i>	Unknown, 1994
<i>Booby Trap</i>	Farrar & Rinehart 1944	<i>Smertel'naia lovushka</i>	Tekst, 1992
<i>The Silent Speaker</i>	Viking Press 1946	<i>Umolknuvshii orator</i>	Intergraf Servis, 1990
<i>And Be A Villain</i>	Viking Press 1948	<i>I byt podletsom</i>	Ragua, 1991
<i>The Second Confession</i>	Viking Press 1949	<i>Vtoroe priznanie</i>	Tekst, 1992
<i>In the Best Families</i>	Viking Press 1950	<i>V luchshikh semeistvakh</i>	Intergraf Servis, 1992
<i>Murder by the Book</i>	Viking Press 1951	<i>Proghtiavshemu-smert'</i>	Petergrof, 1991
<i>Home to Roost</i>	Viking Press 1952	<i>Ne roi drugomu iamu</i>	KUBK-a, 1994
<i>The Cop Killer</i>	Viking Press 1952	<i>Ubiistvo politseiskogo</i>	Kometa, 1990
<i>The Black Mountain</i>	Viking Press 1954	<i>Chernaya gora</i>	Pressa, 1994
<i>Method Three for Murder</i>	Viking Press 1960	<i>Izbavlenie metodom nomer tri</i>	Amal'teia GMP, 1993
<i>Poison á la Carte</i>	Viking Press 1960	<i>Otpravlenie</i>	KUBK-a, 1994
<i>A Right to Die</i>	Viking Press 1964	<i>Pravo Umeret'</i>	Intergraf Servis, 1990

393. First year of translation in Russian and year of retranslation information is based on "The National Library of Russian Online Catalogue."

<i>The Doorbell Rang</i>	Viking Press 1965	<i>Zvonok v dver'</i>	Progress, 1973
<i>The Father Hunt</i>	Viking Press 1968	<i>Pogonia za ottsom</i>	Intergraf Servis, 1993
<i>Death of a Dude</i>	Viking Press 1969	<i>Smert' khlyshcha</i>	Olma-Press, 1993
<i>Please Pass the Guilt</i>	Viking Press 1973	<i>Pozhaluista, izbav'te ot grekha</i>	Venda, 1994
<i>The Nero Wolfe Cookbook</i>	Viking Press 1973	<i>Povarennaiia knigi Niro Vul'fa</i>	Venda, 1995

Darya Dontsova's Ivan Podushkin Series³⁹⁴

Publishing House Eksmo:

2002:

1. *Buket prekrasnykh dam (Bouquet of Beautiful Ladies)*
2. *Brilliant mutnoi vody (Diamond of Turbid Water)*

2003:

3. *Instinkt Baby-Iagi (The Instinct of Baba-Yaga)*
4. *13 neschastii Gerakla (13 Sorrows of Hercules)*
5. *Ali-Baba i sorok razboinits (Ali Baba and the Forty Female Thieves)*

2004:

6. *Naduvnaia zhenshchina dlia Kazanovy (An Inflatable Woman for Casanova)*
7. *Tushkanchik v bigudiakh (Jerboa in Curlers)*
8. *Rybka po imeni Zaika (A Fish Named Stutterer)*

2005:

9. *Dve nevesty na odno mesto (Two Brides in One Place)*
10. *Safari na cherepashku (Safari for a Beetle)*

2006:

11. *Iabloko Monte-Kristo (The Apple of Monte-Cristo)*
12. *Piknik na ostrove sokrovishch (Picnic on Treasure Island)*

2007:

13. *Macho chuzhoi mechty (A Macho Man of Someone Else's Dreams)*
14. *Verkhom na "Titanike" (Riding on the "Titanic")*
15. *Angel na metle (Angel on a Broomstick)*

2008:

16. *Prodiuser koz'ei mordy (Goat Face Producer)*

2012:

17. *Smekh i grekh Ivana-tsarevicha (The Laughter and Sin of Ivan Tsarevich)*

2014:

18. *Tainaia sviaz' ego velichestva (His Majesty's Secret Affair)*
19. *Sud'ba naidet na senovale (Fate Will Find in the Hayloft)*

2015:

20. *Avos'ka s Almaznym fondom (String Bag Full of Diamonds)*

394. "V gostiakh u Dar'i Dontsovoi." Darya Donstova, <http://www.dontsova.ru/hall/>.

2016:

21. *Koronnyi nomer mistera X (The Star Performance of Mister X)*

Bibliography

- "17 Writers Frame a World Law Plan." *The New York Times*, July 4, 1949, 2.
- "Books and the Tiger." *The New York Times Book Review Spring Book Supplement*, March 21, 1943.
- "Darya Dontsova." <http://www.forbes.ru/profile/darya-dontsova>.
- "Nero Wolfe Vs. The F.B.I." *Life*, December 10 1965, 127-34.
- "Nero Wolfe." *Dublin Evening Herald*, August 22 1955.
- "Niro Vul'f I Archi Gudvin." nerowolfe.info, <http://nerowolfe.info/>.
- "Poka ya ne umer (2001)." IMDb.com, Inc., <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0368157/>.
- "Reks Staut (Rex Stout)." RTComm, <http://lib.ru/DETEKTIWY/STAUT/>.
- "Russian State Library." Federal Agency on the Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, 2012.
- "Sherlock Holmes Is Favorite in Russia." *The Washington Post*, April 15 1967, A15.
- "Some Quips That Flew in from the Air Front." *The Amarillo Globe*, April 26, 1945, 4.
- "Statisticheskie pokazateli po vypusku pechatnykh izdaniy (Statistical Indicators for the Production of Publications)." edited by Rossiiskaia knizhnaia palata: filial ITAR-TASS (Russian Book Chamber: ITAR-TASS Branch), 2014.
- "Stout Nearly Causes a Riot at Fish Rally." *The New York Times*, November 3 1944.
- "The Myth That Threatened the World." In *Rex Stout: Activist: The Wolfe Pack: The Nero Wolfe Literary Society*.
- "The National Library of Russian Online Catalogue." The National Library of Russia, 2014.
- "The New Shape of U.S.- Soviet Relations." In *The Report of a Conference of Foreign Affairs Scholars: Public Affairs Institute of Freedom House*. Undated. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- "The Wolfe Pack: The Official Nero Wolfe Society." The Wolfe Pack, <http://www.nerowolfe.org/>.

- "U.S. Bids to China and Soviet, Though Hopeful, Inspire Concern for Freedom in Europe and Asia; American Gains Continued, Though Slower Paced." Freedom House. Undated. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- "V gostiakh u Dar'i Dontsovoi." Darya Donstova, <http://www.dontsova.ru/hall/>.
- "Vypusk Knig V Rossii V 2014 Godu Sokratilsia Na 10% (Book Production in Russian in 2014 Decreased by 10%)." (2015). Pro-books.ru.
- "The Black Mountain by Rex Stout." *Battle Creek Enquirer*. December 26, 1954. Michigan. Box 39, Folder 8. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- "Wild Places." *Daily Dispatch*. September 5. Manchester. International Press-Cutting Bureau. Box 39, Folder 8. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- 100 American Crime Writers, Crime Files*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Agence France-Presse. "Mihajlo Mihajlov, a Yugoslavian Dissident, Dies at 76." *The New York Times*, March 7, 2010.
- Andzhaparidze, Georgi. "Bogachi-filantropy i belye 'Mersedesy': chto i kak my perevodim (Wealthy Philanthropists and White Mercedes: What and How We Translate)." *Literaturnaia gazeta*. January 20, 1971.
- . "Zhestkost' kanona i vechnaia novizna (The Rigidity of the Canon and Perpetual Novelty)." In *Detektivny veka*. Itogi veka, Vzgliad iz rossii. Polifakt. Itogi veka, 1999.
- . "Zigzagi belykh limuzinov (The Zigzags of White Limousines)." *Literaturnaia gazeta*. March 26, 1975.
- Baraban, Elena V. "Russia in the Prism of Popular Culture: Russian and American Detective Fiction and Thrillers of the 1990s." The University of British Columbia, 2003.
- . "A Little Nostalgia: The Detective Novels of Alexandra Marinina." *The International Fiction Review* 32, no. 1, 2 (2005). <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/IFR/article/view/7802/8859>.
- Baring-Gould, William S. *Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-Fifth Street*. Penguin Books, 1982.

- Bechtel, Marilyn. "The Soviet Peace Movement: From the Grass Roots": The National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, 1984.
- Beiderwell, Bruce. "State Power and Self-Destruction: Rex Stout and the Romance of Justice." *Journal of Popular Culture* (January 1993): 13-22.
- Beumers, Birgit. *Pop Culture Russia!: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle*. ABC-CLIO 2005.
- BleWotan. December 14, 2015 (2:26pm). Comment on Molly Zuckerman, "Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). Translated by Gleb Vinokurov. October 18, 2015 (8:38pm). <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&start=10>.
- Brooks, Jeffrey. *When Russians Learned to Read, Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917*. Northwestern University Press, 2003.
- Burns, Bobby Ray Miller and Ronald G. "It's Time Again for a New Nero Wolfe Detective Novel." Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- Cannon, Ammie. "Controversial Politics, Conservative Genre: Rex Stout's Archie-Wolfe Duo and Detective Fiction's Conventional Form." Brigham Young University, 2006.
- Censored to J. Edgar Hoover. October 12, 1965. FBI Redacted File. Wolfe Pack online archives.
- Chervotkin, Sergey (user Avis). November 20, 2015 (11:32am). Comment on Molly Zuckerman, "Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). Translated by Gleb Vinokurov. October 18, 2015 (8:38pm). <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>.
- . November 20, 2015 (6:54pm). Comment on Molly Zuckerman, "Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog)/ Translated by Gleb Vinokurov. October 18, 2015 (8:38pm). <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>.
- Cook, Fred J., *The FBI Nobody Knows*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1964.
- D.W. "Crime Fiction." *Encounter*. August 1981, 26.

- Desh, Dobavil. "Klassicheskii detektiv protiv krutogo." In *Detektivnyi metod. Istoriia detektiva v kino i literature (The Detective Method. A History of Detektiv in Movie and Literature.)*. 2014. <http://detectivemethod.ru/laboratory/classic-detective-against-hardboiled/>
- Detektivny veka*. Itogi veka, Vzgliaid iz rossii. Polifakt. Itogi veka, 1999.
- Dontsova, Darya. *Dobri doktor Aibandit*. Litres, 2015.
- . *Tushkanchik v bigudiakh*. Litres, 2015.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Diary of a Writer*. Vol. 2, New York: Scribners, 1949.
- Dover, J. Kenneth Van. *At Wolfe's Door: The Nero Wolfe Novels of Rex Stout*. James A. Rock & Co, 1991.
- Dralyuk, Boris. *Western Crime Fiction Goes East: The Russian Pinkerton Craze, 1907-1934*, Brill Academic Pub, 2012.
- Drummond, Roscoe. "Freedom Seeks Foothold Behind Iron Curtain." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. June 17, 1966. Box 21. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- Dubin, Boris. "Russian Intelligentsia between Classics and Mass Culture." Moscow: VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center), 1998.
- Kaemmel, Ernst. "Literature under the Table: The Detective Novel and Its Social Mission." Translated by Glenn W. Most. In *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, edited by Glenn W. Most and William W. Stowe: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, June 1983.
- Foley, Barbara. *Radical Representations: Politics and Form in U.S. Proletarian Fiction, 1929-1941*. Post-Contemporary Interventions. Edited by Stanley Fish and Fredric Jameson Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Frascina, Francis. *Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America*. Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Freedom House notes on Solzhenitsyn's exile. Undated. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- Garrard, John Gordon Garrard and Carol. *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*. New York: Free Press, 1990.

- Gransden, Greg. "Yanks Write New Chapter in Soviet Publishing: Books: Onetime Propaganda Mills Still Carry the Works of Lenin. But American Favorites, Such as 'the Godfather,' Are the Top Sellers." *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1991.
- Gryspeerd, Sam Kinchin-Smith and Nancy. "Curious Incidents: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes in Russia." *The Calvert Journal*, 2014.
<http://calvertjournal.com/comment/show/2817/sherlock-holmes-in-russia>.
- Hartmann, Thom. "'The Doorbell Rang' -- Thom Hartmann's Independent Thinker Review." In *BuzzFlash*, 2010. <http://truth-out.org/buzzflash/commentary/the-doorbell-rang--thom-hartmanns-independent-thinker-review/8471-the-doorbell-rang--thom-hartmanns-independent-thinker-review>.
- Holquist, Michael. "Whodunit and Other Questions: Metaphysical Detective Stories in Postwar Fiction." In *The Poetics of Murder, Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, edited by Glenn W. Most and William W. Stow: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, June 1983.
- Hoover, J. Edgar to Rex Stout. November 15, 1949. FBI Redacted File. Wolfe Pack online archives.
- Ilyina, Natalia. "Detective Novels: A Game and Life." *Soviet Literature* 3 (1975).
 ———. "Palitra krasok." *Vopros literaturyi* 2 (1975).
 ———. "The Last Days of Her Life." *Soviet Literature* 6 (January 1, 1989): 119-37.
- Jones, M.A. to Mr. DeLoach. May 20, 1965. "The Doorbell Rang" *New Mystery Novel by Rex Stout*. FBI Redacted File. Wolfe Pack online archives.
- Kiser, Marcia. "Nero Wolfe: a Social Commentary on the U.S." In *The Thrilling Detective*, 2003. http://www.thrillingdetective.com/non_fiction/e002.html.
- Knight, Stephen. *Crime Fiction since 1800 : Detection, Death, Diversity*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Kovaly, Heda Margolius. *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague, 1941-1968*. Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc, 1997.
- Lezerson, Ilya, Tatiana Solomonik, and Sergey Sinelnikov. *Za stolom s Niro Vul'fom, ili sekrety kukhni velikogo syshchika: kulinaryni detektiv (At the Table with Nero Wolfe or Secrets of the Kitchen of the Great Detective: A Culinary Mystery)*. Velikie syshchiki (Great Detectives). 3 ed. St. Petersburg. Amfora, 2015.

- Lipovetsky, Mark and Lisa Ryoko Wakamiya. *Late and Post-Soviet Russian Literature. Perestroika and the Post-Soviet Period. Vol. 1: Academic Studies Press*, 2014.
- Lorika. December 22, 2009 (4:33pm). Comment on "Niro Vul'f i Archi Gudvin Reksa Stauta (Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin of Rex Stout)," *Mir liubvi i romantiki (World of Love and Romantics)* (blog). Translated by Gleb Vinokurov. <http://world-of-love.ru/forum/archive/index.php/t-16988.html>.
- Lovell, Stephen. *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* Macmillan, 2000.
- Lynds, Gayle. "Nero Wolfe, the Spy." In *Bouchercon 2010 Rex Stout Banquet*, 2010.
- Marakhovskii, Viktor. "Niro Vulf, pobeditel' gomofobov. Ob evolyutsii tsenostei." In *Kul'tpul't: Mediya Tsel'*, 2015.
- Marinina, Aleksandra. *Shesterki umiraiiut Pervymi*. Eksmo Press, 2000.
- . *A Confluence of Circumstances. The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 29, no. 1, 2 (2002): iv.-220.
- . *Stecheniie obstoiatel'stv*. Moscow: Eksmo Press, 1999.
- McAlear, John J. *Rex Stout: A Majesty's Life*. Millenium ed.: James A Rock & Co. Publishers, 2002.
- McBride, O.E. *Stout Fellow: A Guide through Nero Wolfe's World*. iUniverse, 2003.
- McCann, Sean. "The Hard-Boiled Novel." In *Gumshoe America: Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction and the Rise and Fall of New Deal Liberalism*, edited by Donald E. Pease. New Americanists: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Menhert, Klaus. *The Russians and Their Favorite Books*. Hoover Institution Press, 1983.
- Mihajlov, Mihajlo to President Tito of Yugoslavia. Undated Correspondence. Box 21.
- Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- Mitgang, Herbet. *Dangerous Dossiers: Exposing the Secret War against America's Greatest Authors* Open Road Distribution, 2015. Kindle Edition
- Monroe, David. "The Doorbell Rang by Rex Stout -- a Review." In *Seeking In The Zeitgeist: Awesome, Inc.*, 2012.

<http://seekinginthezeitgeist.blogspot.com/2012/02/doorbell-rang-by-rex-stout-my-rating-4.html>.

Morgan, Lyndall. "Darya Dontsova's 'Sleuthettes': A Case of the Regendering of the Post-Soviet Russian Detektiv?". *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 19 (2005): 95-116.

Morris, Marcia A. "'Canst Thou Draw out Leviathan with a Hook?': Akunin Colludes and Collides with Collins and Christie." *CLUES: A Journal of Detection* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 69-78.

Nepomnyashchy, Catharine Theimer. "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian Detektiv." In *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*, edited by Adele Marie Barker: Duke University Press, 1999.

Newton, Newton. *The FBI Encyclopedia*. McFarland, 2003.

Ol'ga T. January 27, 2013 (2:49pm). Comment on user MsBulavkapetek1855, "Blagodarnost." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). December 19, 2011 (2:48pm). <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=8&t=301>.

Olcott, Anthony. *Russian Pulp: The Detektiv and the Russian Way of Crime*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001.

Panichev, Sergey. Vkontakte message to author. March 15, 2016.

Polshikova, Lyudmila. "Bookworm-Sleuths." *The Moscow Times*, March 16 2001.

Quarles, Philip. *Rex Stout Writes Detective Stories, Makes Enemies of the FBI*. Text of podcast audio. WNYC.org. 1:00p, 2013.

RAMZES. "Biografiia Edgara Guvera." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). April 27, 2009 (10:33am). <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=48>.

Remnick, David. *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*. New York: Random House, 1993.

———. "Letter from Moscow: The Hangover." *The New Yorker*, November 22 1993.

Roberts, Elizabeth. "Dr. Ekaterina Genieva." In *Russia: Lessons and Legacy- The Alexander Men Conference 2012*: Moffat Book Events, January 30, 2012.

- Romerstein, Martin J. Manning and Herbert. *Historical Dictionary of American Propaganda*. Greenwood, 2004.
- Rymko, Natalia (user Rymarnica). "A kak vy risuete loshad'?" *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog), March 28, 2013 (6:39pm).
<http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=14&t=459>.
- . April 1, 2016 (9:56am). Comment on Molly Zuckerman, "Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). Translated by Gleb Vinokurov. October 18, 2015 (8:38pm).
<http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>.
- . October 19, 2015 (8:33pm). Comment on Molly Zuckerman, "Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). Translated by Gleb Vinokurov. October 18, 2015 (8:38pm).
<http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>.
- Shaginian, Marietta. *Mess-Mend: Yankees in Petrograd*. Translated by Samuel D. Cioran. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1991.
- Shearer, Benjamin F. *Home Front Heroes: A Biographical Dictionary of Americans During Wartime* Vol. 3: Greenwood, 2006.
- Shenker, Israel. "Rex Stout, 85, Gives Clues on Good Writing." *The New York Times*, December 1, 1971.
- Simkin, John. "New Masses." <http://spartacus-educational.com/JmassesN.htm>.
- Stanley, Alessandra. "The World: In Its Dreams; Russia Solves Its Crime Problem." *The New York Times*, March 15, 1998.
- Staut, Reks (Rex Stout). "Uotson byl zhenshzhinoi (Watson Was a Woman)." In *Detektivny veka. Itogi veka, Vzgljad iz rossii*. Polifakt. Itogi veka, 1999.
- . "Sovremennyi amerikanski detektiv." Translated by Yuriya Smirnova. In *Zvonok v dver'* edited by Natalia Ilyina, 8-207. Moscow: Progress, 1973.
- . *Kulinarnaia kniga Niro Vul'fa (The Cookbook of Nero Wolfe)*. Translated by E. Zaitseva. Ves' Stout. Moscow: Eksmo, 2009.
- . *Ubiistvo politseiskogo (the Cop Killer)*. KUBKa, 1994.

- . "Ubiistvo politseiskogo (The Cop Killer)." In *Igra v piatnashki (Prisoner's Base)*: Amfora, 2014.
- Stinnet, Caskie. "Rex Stout, Nero Wolfe and the Big Fish." *Herald Tribune*, October 10 1965, 10-11, 27.
- Stout, Rex to His Excellency Josip Broz Tito. From the Ad Hoc Committee for Mihajlo Mihajlov. August 1, 1966. Box 21. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- Stout, Rex to Mihajlo Mihajlov. Undated Correspondence. Box 21. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library. Boston College.
- Stout, Rex to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Writers Board for World Government." January 15, 1951. Wolfe Pack online archives.
- Stout, Rex. "The Case of the Spies Who Weren't." *Ramparts*, January 1966, 31-34.
- . "Watson Was a Woman." *The Saturday Review of Literature* (March 1, 1941): 3-4, 16.
- . "We Shall Hate, or We Shall Fail." *The New York Times*, January 17 1943.
- . *A Right to Die*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1964. Kindle Edition.
- . *And Be a Villain*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1948. Kindle Edition.
- . *Booby Trap*, in *Not Quite Dead Enough*. Farrar & Rinehart, 1944), Kindle Edition.
- . *Death of a Dude*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1969.
- . *Fer-De-Lance*. Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1934. Kindle Edition.
- . *Home to Roost*, in *Triple Jeopardy*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1952, Kindle Edition. Kindle Edition.
- . *In the Best Families*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1950. Kindle Edition.
- . *Murder by the Book*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1951.
- . *Not Quite Dead Enough*. In *Not Quite Dead Enough*: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944. Kindle Edition.
- . *Over My Dead Body*. Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1940.

- . *Poison Á La Carte*. In *Three at Wolfe's Door* Viking Penguin, 1960. Kindle Edition.
- . *Some Buried Caesar*. Farrar & Rinehart, 1939.
- . *The Black Mountain*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1954. Kindle Edition.
- . *The Cop-Killer*. In *Triple Jeopardy*: The Viking Press, Inc., 1952. Kindle Edition.
- . *The Doorbell Rang*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1965. Kindle Edition.
- . *The Father Hunt*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1968. Kindle Edition.
- . *The Second Confession*. The Viking Press, Inc., 1949. Kindle Edition.
- . *The Silent Speaker*. Viking Penguin, 1946. Kindle Edition.
- . *Too Many Cooks*. Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1938.
- . Undated Correspondence. Freedom House. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- . Undated manuscript. *Home to Roost*. Box 15, Folder 5. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- Sussman, Leonard. Note to Executive Committee of Freedom House. October 18, 1967 Box 21. Rex Stout Papers. MS1986-096. John J. Burns Library, Boston College.
- The Art of Detective Fiction*. St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000.
- The Greatest Russian Stories of Crime and Suspense*. Pegasus Crime. Pegasus Crime, 2012.
- The Nero Wolfe Files*. Wildside Press LLC, 2005.
- Townsend, Guy M. *Rex Stout, an Annotated Primary and Secondary Bibliography*. New York: Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1982.
- Unknown to J. Edgar Hoover. Undated Correspondence. FBI Redacted File. Wolfe Pack online archives.

- Vishevsky, Anatoly. "Answers to Eternal Questions in Soft Covers: Post-Soviet Detective Stories." *Slavic and Eastern European Journal* 45, no. 5 (2001): 735.
- Voronina, Olga, e-mail message to author, October 30, 2015.
- Vronskaia, O., "Na podstupakh k 'zlotomu pistoletu.'" *Literaturnaia gazeta*. No.9 (1998).
- Wachtel, Andrew. *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- Wikipedia Contributors. "Agatha Christie (Band)." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Agatha_Christie_\(band\)&oldid=703557998](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Agatha_Christie_(band)&oldid=703557998).
- . "Clare Boothe Luce." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Clare_Boothe_Luce&oldid=707265564.
- . "House Un-American Activities Committee." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=House_Un-American_Activities_Committee&oldid=708565501.
- . "Karadorde." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kara%C4%91or%C4%91e&oldid=707060032>.
- . "Progress (Publishing)." Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, <http://ru.wikipedia.org/?oldid=75511036>.
- . "Sergey Markovich Sinelnikov." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia . <http://ru.wikipedia.org/?oldid=76834152>.
- . "Strom Thurmond." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia., https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Strom_Thurmond&oldid=708355684.
- Wilkinson, Stephen. *Detective Fiction in Cuban Society and Culture*. Peter Lang, 2006.
- Wilson, Edmund. "Why Do People Read Detective Stories?" *The New Yorker*, October 14 1994.

- Winks, Robin W. *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1980.
- Winterich, John T. and Frankel Haskel. "Private Eye on the FBI." *Saturday Review of Literature*. October 9, 1965.
- Zavgorodnii, Stanislav (user Chuchundrovich). "Kubok luchshego detektiva- u Archi Gudvina." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). April 28, 2009 (9:55pm). <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=49>.
- . November 23, 2015 (4:40pm). Comment on Molly Zuckerman, "Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). Translated by Gleb Vinokurov. October 18, 2015 (8:38pm). <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>.
- . "O saite." *Niro Vul'f i Archi Gudvin*. <http://nerowolfe.info/about>.
- . "Rossiia, 2001-2002, 'Niro Vul'f i Archi Gudvin,' 2005, 'Novye priklucheniia Niro Vul'fa i Archi Gudvina.'" *Niro Vul'f i Archi Gudvin*. <http://nerowolfe.info/movies>.
- . "Staut i staut." *Niro Vul'f i Archi Gudvin*. <http://nerowolfe.info/beer>.
- Zuckerman, Ed. "Toast to Fritz." Paper presented at the The Black Orchid Banquet, December 5, 2015.
- Zuckerman, Molly. "Reks Staut iz Ameriki v Rossii." *O Niro Vul'fe, Archi Gudvine, i ikh avtore, Rekse Staute (About Nero Wolfe, Archie Goodwin, and their author, Rex Stout)* (blog). October 18, 2015 (8:38pm) <http://nerowolfe.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=522&sid=5578a875b87af57f1d929613a0f50979>.
- Zueva, A., "Kto vy, pokupateli knig?" *Knizhnoe obozrenie*. 1996.