



“Still harping on daughters”: Maddie in Michael Connelly’s Hieronymus Bosch Series

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Abstract. In Michael Connelly’s books about detective Hieronymus Bosch, Bosch’s daughter Maddie is closely connected to many preoccupations of the series even when a seemingly minor presence. Romance texts such as Arthurian narratives and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* are the best keys to interpreting Maddie’s roles in the series and larger questions about crime fiction.

An interview in which Michael Connelly alludes to the daughter of his detective, Hieronymus Bosch, might appear to be a trustworthy clue to her significance throughout the series: “I look at the discovery that he has a daughter as the most important change or moment in the series so far because it is the thing that has changed him the most” (*Overlook* 268). Alert to the unreliability of other clues, however, readers might justifiably point out that Maddie appears briefly or not at all in many of these novels (*Dark Sacred Night*, for example, mentions her only sporadically and generally in references to her absence from or minimal role in the life of her father).

How, then, should we interpret the emphasis on Maddie in that interview? She does, in fact, play a major role in the series as a whole, even in books where her presence is apparently minimal, let alone in ones that focus on her like *Nine Dragons*. Connelly’s thematic and generic preoccupations help us understand how and why that role develops far beyond the effects of Bosch’s initial discovery. Values and preoccupations closely associated with Maddie, such as the meanings of home, appear throughout the series. Her significance crystallizes and is crystallized by the impact of a genre that has received too little attention in studies of crime fiction, especially Connelly’s—romance (in the sense of texts including,

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