



While one view is that "the appeal of crime fiction is the teasing out of order from disorder", I would tend to disagree. In my opinion the appeal of crime fiction ~~is~~ and the grounds for its enduring popularity ~~is~~ is the role the viewing audience is asked to take in the investigation ~~of the~~ and eventual solution of the crime. However, another reason for the appeal of the genre is the way in which a crime fiction composition can also be a vehicle for other social, political and personal values of the time.

For instance, Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson ~~is~~ can be classified as crime fiction, it is also easily admissible into the romance genre, with the dual focuses of the novel being morality and racism, and the unrequited love that Ishmael Chambers bears for Hatsue Miyamoto, a Japanese girl he grew up with. While the setting of the novel is <sup>the</sup> trial ~~of~~ ~~of~~ of Kabuo Miyamoto over the murder of a local fisherman, this plotline indeed seems only a setting - a backdrop, if you will - for the other themes



of Gutterson's novel - love and morality. Ishmael Chambers struggles with both, taking on the role of the detective in the novel. He struggles to let go of the past, when he and Hatsue were together, unable to let go. He is faced with the full force of ~~the~~ having to let go when he comes across proof that Kabuo is not the killer. In fact, no-one is. In Gutterson's racially charged novel, there is no murderer. There is no crime. The "murder" of Karl turns out to be nothing more than a tragic accident. The real crime in the novel is the racism of the islands' population. Gutterson uses the crime fiction genre to convey his ideas about love, racism and morality.

Howard Hawks, too, uses the crime fiction genre as a vehicle for other issues. In this case, too, it is a love story. ~~The~~ Post-war England of 1945 wanted hardened detectives and sassy heroines - they wanted a love story, and that is what Hawks gave them.

The Big Sleep is a detective film about Phillip Marlowe, although we must wonder at the ~~the~~ level of his skill,

as we never ~~could~~ discover the murderer of Owen Taylor. Indeed, when, during production Humphrey Bogart enquired as to whom the killer was, production was halted for three days while the problem was discussed. The author was written to, but he merely replied 'I guess I don't know, either!'. With a confusing plot line, no killer to speak of and more scenes with Lauren Bacall constantly being added, The Big Sleep could be seen by many as a mere star vehicle for Humphrey Bogart and the fledgling actress Lauren Bacall, and a way to capitalize on their real-life romance. It was also a way for producers to show the public the kind of woman they wanted their daughters to grow up and be - sassy, well spoken, witty and classy. Intelligent and match enough for the man, but never lewd or criminal. Lauren Bacall was the perfect example, and the producers maximised her potential to it's full extent. The Big Sleep is a classic, like Snow Falling on Cedars, not because of it's basing order from disorder, but because of



the other messages and themes they both portray.

Another example is The Irony of Hate, a short story by Ruth Rendell. While it is most definitely a crime fiction composition, it is also a vehicle of the portrayal of jealousy and hate as dangerous forces. Following the story of a man who is tormented by a loud, loud, irritating woman next door. The man fears his wife Laura will be over-awed by his neighbour's "glitz and glamour", and will find him boring. When it becomes too much, he decides to do away with the woman, Brenda, and lulls her into a false sense of security by making peace. However, not taking into account Brenda's bragging ways and the fact that he's seriously ill the night of the murder, he accidentally frames his wife by slipping on her jacket instead of his own, and because of the rumours of an affair between he and his neighbour. In the end all comes undone for the man who is left on his



own, because of jealousy and mistrust. Like the two prescribed texts I have mentioned, The Irony of Hate is a composition which uses the crime fiction genre as a vehicle for other focuses which, I believe, is the appeal of the genre and the reason for its enduring popularity.