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Significant texts in any genre arise from specific social and cultural conditions and possess ~~an~~ an enduring relevance. This is quite true in a study of ~~the~~ ~~crime~~ genre of crime writing, as the surety or ambiguity of concepts such as justice, <sup>morality</sup> and truth change over time, as represented by texts over time. This is shown in a study of texts such as 'The Skull Beneath the Skin', by P.D. James, and Michael Ondaatje's 'Anil's Ghost' which directly reflect their contexts, as well as 'The Strawberry Patcher', by Morika Feth, and 'The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, which highlight the changes in context and values over time, though not necessarily a change in relevance.

'The Skull Beneath the Skin', by P.D. James, is a product of its ~~own~~ social and cultural conditions, - namely, the context of Britain under Margaret Thatcher. This is shown through the text's expressed values, ~~and~~ as well as its loss of faith in traditions of the crime genre, showed by its almost parody-esque nature. Though blackmail, threats and murder abound in James' novel, it is ~~the~~ crime of the times which is found most unsettling. Gorringer's tax evasion - a crime increasingly common due to the Thatcher government's high taxes - is left unpunished and unresolved. The purely selfish and greedy nature of the crime is the most appalling aspect of it.

"My life counted for less than your comfort, your possessions, your private world" - and though it is nothing compared to the criminality of murder, it is this which Cordelia despises. That Gorringe could go about deliberately "planning, scheming, perfecting his lies" in an attempt to forgo his responsibility and maintain his lavish lifestyle is more distressing than the sudden, passionate outburst or scared actions which caused the deaths of Munter and Clarissa, and it is this value which James is expressing - a ~~value~~ <sup>view</sup> of morality directly influenced by the book's context.

Similarly, 'The Skull Beneath the Skin' is an example of ~~the~~ modern turn toward a lack of faith in the traditional views of justice usually expressed in ~~the~~ crime writing. James' relentless parodying of the clichés of crime are a part of this, coupled with deliberate highlighting of the genre. The setting is an island - isolated, gothic and dramatic - containing a closed circle of suspects, ~~and~~ each with their own motivations for murder, and even ~~including~~ including a butler. Cordelia points out that "[the police's] legal powers were a great deal less extensive than a reading of detective fiction might suggest", and Gorringe says that "That's something I learnt from popular fiction. Never be the one to find the body." James deliberately points out the genre of crime

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writing, directing the reader's gaze to its flaws.\*

Ondaatje's 'Anil's Ghost' is also a product of ~~the~~ the author's social and cultural context. It expresses a similar loss of faith in truth as 'The Skull Beneath the Skin', showing it to be something ambiguous and unreliable, ~~th~~ "in character, and nuance and mood." Once more, the inevitable failure of truth is expressed - despite Anil's determination to solve Sailor's mystery, and the knowledge that "one victim can stand for many victims", she cannot win against the overwhelming forces against her. This resignation is, once more, a product of its modern context, of the social and cultural moves away from ~~substantive~~ ~~fact~~ a blind faith in justice.

'Anil's Ghost' ~~also~~ <sup>also</sup> is highly steeped in its context of the Sri Lankan political and social ~~the~~ conditions which Ondaatje experienced. The details of the conflicts, corruption and death - "war for the sake of war" - are a part of where 'Anil's Ghost' came from. On top of this,

\*The ~~inevitability~~ inevitability of the failure of justice ~~for~~ ~~on~~ Gorrings' crime is another aspect of the book's loss of faith. Though Cordelia swears that "She would tell the truth", it is ~~also~~ with an air of resignation, and the knowledge that truth cannot win in this instance.

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Anil is also highly based on Ondaatje's experiences as the native-born & who left and then returns to become a part of their home culture once more. The text is very much a product of its own context, both of Sri Lanka and Ondaatje's experience, reflecting the social and cultural conditions from which it rose.

'The Strawberry Pickers' by Monika Feth, ~~expresses a~~ once more expresses a modern lack of faith in the crime genre, through the deliberate ~~highlighting~~ highlighting of its failures, much like 'The Skull Beneath the Skin.' The mere presence of a character like Inke Thathem, a ~~crime~~ writer of crime novels, is enough for this, and the character repeatedly points out the distance between the genre and reality which becomes blurred in the book. She says that their situation feels 'as if the whole world were one big cinema, and we were all characters in a plot, thought up by someone with a sick mind,' seemingly oblivious to her own part (and, by extension, Feth's) in those 'sick minds'. The detective, Metzger, compares ~~to~~ himself to the traditional detectives of the genre - he is unhealthy, overweight, struggling with car problems and bored at his job which requires too much sitting around and not enough time for a proper lunch.

He says that "those were the times that he wished he ~~was~~ were more handsailed" the use of such a clichéd description of a specific type of detective highlighting his distance from the cliché. Finally, the inclusion of the newspaper article and the ridiculing of it by several characters once more points out the failings of the crime genre, ~~where~~ in this instance the book becomes real life and the article representative of the formulaic and generalised examples of the genre. It is said to be "full of commonplaces... [going] from cliché to cliché", and the reporter here meant to represent the typical detective ~~that~~ <sup>he had</sup> "asked the usual questions and drawn the usual conclusions." Feth is a part of the modern movement <sup>of genre</sup>, which is self-reflexively aware of itself, pointing out its <sup>own</sup> failings. ~~out~~

One of many of the Sherlock Holmes adventures, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "Charles Augustus Milverton" is once more a product of its context in its representation of a faith in justice and a steady set of values which later became lost in disillusionment. Holmes' 'Science of deduction' is a part of a Victorian faith in logic and science and its ability to be correct and pure, a part of a movement for a better world. Further than this, Charles Augustus Milverton expresses

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a certainty in justice and morality and its success even over legal punishment. Holmes and Watson are not caught in their burglary, and the unnamed noblewoman is not prosecuted for murder, because Milverton's blackmailing was by far the worse crime, steeped in selfishness and greed, as he "mechanically and at his leisure tortures the soul and wrings the nerves in order to add to his already swollen money-bags." Holmes' plan is accepted as it is "morally justifiable, though <sup>not only</sup> technically criminal," and Watson determines to go along in the pursuit of justice, but indeed to support his own moral values - his self-respect and reputation. His concern, as a faithful sidekick, is primarily for Holmes' well-being, his greatest fear being "the detection, the capture, the honored career ending in irreparable ~~disgrace~~ failure and disgrace, my friend himself lying at the mercy of the odious Milverton." Indeed, Watson's greatest qualm with Holmes' actions is not in legality - it is to the manipulation of the Howland's emotions that he cries "Surely you have gone too far!" The values of morality and justice are firm, enduring and successful, prevailing even ~~at~~ over legal justice - a far cry from the ambiguous truths and values of more modern texts.

~~At~~ Let Holmes has survived. The stories such as

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'Charles Augustus Milverton' have endured, <sup>not only is</sup> the steadfast certainty in the success of justice ~~is not only~~ <sup>relieving to</sup> a modern, disillusioned audience, but the enduring relationship between Holmes and Watson, detective and doctor, investigator and sidekick, have given the Holmes stories a relevance which has endured over a century, remaining popular despite the ~~high~~ vastly different context ~~from~~ <sup>in</sup> which they were born. This relevance is a part of what makes the <sup>Holmes</sup> stories so significant - not just the milestone of investigation - and it can only be hoped that some of the context of more modern texts can be overlooked or adapted to their own relevance to future generations.

Specific social and cultural conditions greatly lend to the significance of any text in a genre, as shown by the twists on crime expressed in texts such as 'The Skull Beneath the Skin', 'Ariel's Ghost' and 'The Strawberry Piker'. But the most significant texts, both despite and because of their context, possess ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> enduring relevance and, like 'The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton' and the other Holmes stories, remain <sup>an important</sup> part of the genre long after their social and cultural conditions have passed.