

Introduction to Crime Fiction

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 12–1 p.m. or by appointment

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review: Hammett

- ▶ empty protagonist, amoral *fabula*
- ▶ style takes their place
 - ▶ terseness, irony
 - ▶ parataxis
 - ▶ flights of metaphor
- ▶ the Op does the job well
 - ▶ and so does Hammett the writer
 - ▶ integrity: because what else is there?

Hammett gave murder back to the kind of people that commit for reasons, not just to provide a corpse....

The realist in murder writes of a world in which gangsters can rule nations and almost rule cities.... It is not a fragrant world, but it is the world you live in, and certain writers with tough minds and a cool spirit of detachment can make very interesting and even amusing patterns out of it.

Chandler, "The Simple Art of Murder," 58–59.

incipit

- ▶ What is distinctive about the opening paragraph of *The Big Sleep*?

metaphor

- ▶ What is going on in the *second* paragraph?

plot

- ▶ What is Marlowe hired to do? How do you know?

plot

- ▶ What is Marlowe hired to do? How do you know?

They were a couple of pretty smooth citizens, she and her father. He was probably just trying me out; the job he had given me was a lawyer's job. (chap. 3)

dialogue

- ▶ Using Marlowe and Vivan's first encounter in chap. 3, describe the workings of dialogue in the novel.

plot (again)

- ▶ Who's suspicious?

plot (again)

- ▶ Who's suspicious?
- ▶ Carmen, Vivian, the General, the Butler, the chauffer, Rusty Regan, the customer at the bookstore, the woman at the bookstore...

taste

I drove down to the Holloywood public library and did a little superficial research in a stuffy volume called Famous First Editions. Half an hour of it made me need my lunch. (chap. 3)

“Would you happen to have a Ben Hur 1860?” (chap. 4)

- ▶ Remind you of anything we've read before?

taste (2)

“Do you like orchids?”

“Not particularly,” I said.

The General half-closed his eyes. “They are nasty things. Their flesh is too much like the flesh of men. And their perfume has the rotten sweetness of a prostitute.”

I stared at him with my mouth open. (chap. 2)

next

- ▶ Read at least through chap 15.
- ▶ Something about a paper