

Creating A Custom Fit In An Off-The-Rack Genre World: The Proximal Investigator, The Corpse of Convenience, and Their Family of Circumstance in Crime Fiction

Jay Verney

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Creating A Custom Fit In An Off-The-Rack Genre World is about the three main kinds of characters found in murder fiction: the investigators, the victims, and the suspects. It is possible to place these characters along a creative continuum. from the relatively formulaic to the relatively unique, from stock characters to more fully-realised human beings. Custom Fit takes a fresh perspective on these characters, suggesting new terms for each role. The detective or investigator becomes the Proximal Investigator, and the victim the Corpse of Convenience. The collective term for the suspects is the Family of Circumstance, remembering that, initially at least, everyone in a murder novel is suspect.

Using examples from novels by Peter Hoeg, Henning Mankell, Walter Mosley, and Sara Paretsky, this text asks questions such as: how do murder fiction's characters achieve a sense of difference in their roles, even as they abide by established conventions, demonstrating traits and behaviours similar to other investigators, suspects and victims? How do they flout convention while following it? And how do they contribute to the genre's evolution and development?

Creating A Custom Fit in an Off-the-Rack Genre World is a stand-alone text but also a companion essay to the novel, Summon Up The Blood, both of which formed the author's doctorate in Creative Writing, which received a University of Queensland Dean's Award for Outstanding Research Higher Degree Thesis.



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