

Introduction to Crime Fiction

Prof. Andrew Goldstone

(andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)

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

April 27, 2023. Mosley (4).

mini-workshop

- ▶ Explain your most surprising idea from your work on the paper.

review

- ▶ the question of dignity
 - ▶ “worst kinds of racism”
 - ▶ a sign of the times: 1990s rather than the 1940s?
- ▶ “Survive like a man. When the voice speaks, I listen.” (100)
- ▶ Easy becoming a detective
 - ▶ another sign of the times (older narrator vs. younger actor)

invisibility

I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision....It's when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time.

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Vintage, 1952), 3–4.

Mosley's career

1952	b. Watts, LA (black father from Louisiana; Jewish mother from NY)
1957	Chester Himes, <i>For Love of Imabelle</i> (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett)
1965	Watts riots in response to police brutality
1971	attends Goddard College; "hippies"
1977	BA Poli Sci, Johnson State College
1981?	works for Mobil Oil as a computer programmer
1982	Alice Walker, <i>The Color Purple</i> (New York: HBJ; influences Mosley)
1980s	writes a novel, "Gone Fishin'"; rejected
1990	<i>Devil in a Blue Dress</i> (New York: Norton)
1991	<i>A Red Death</i> (New York: Norton); many more Easy Rawlins novels follow
1992	Bill Clinton acclaims Mosley
1996	president, Mystery Writers of America
1997	<i>Gone Fishin'</i> (Baltimore: Black Classic)
1998	<i>Blue Light</i> (science fiction)
2020	National Book Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award

double consciousness

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essay and Sketches* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 3, [HathiTrust](#).

- ▶ In what ways might Mosley represent a version of double consciousness in the novel?

he's just a little guy: discussion

- ▶ How are we supposed to respond to Mouse? Consider:
 - ▶ how he enters the narrative
 - ▶ what he does to the plot
 - ▶ how he is characterized
 - ▶ possible irony about Easy's attitude

not a dream

The voice said, “Don’t cry or beg, Easy.”...

“Evenin’, Frank,” somebody said in a friendly tone. It wasn’t me. I could tell that it was real because Frank froze. He was still staring at me but his attention was at his back. (151)

who?

“I know who killed that Richard McGee.”

“Who?”

“I can't see where it helps either of us for me to tell you. Best t'keep that to myself.” (149)

next

- ▶ finish the novel, finish the course