

Introduction to Crime Fiction

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(font change forced by diacritics)

backward glance

who	what	when
Poe	“Rue Morgue”	1841, 1845
Conan Doyle	“Scandal”	1891
Pirkis	“Redhill”	1892
[Jenks]	“Highwayman”	1901, 1917
Conan Doyle	“Pince-Nez”	1904
Smith	“ ‘Snitch’ ”	1917
Daly	“Knights”	1923
Hammett	“Crooked”	1923
Sayers	<i>Whose Body?</i>	1923
Chandler	<i>Big Sleep</i>	1939
Borges	“Death”	1942, 1954

overview thoughts on detective fiction so far

- ▶ What's wrong with the world?
- ▶ What, if anything, does the investigation put right?

wrong	fixed?
incompetent law	case solved
aliens/others	no
women	no
corrupt elites	no

finding ourselves

Kenya, modern borders: [OpenStreetMap](#).

East Africa as the cradle of humanity: [Wikipedia](#), s.v. “Early modern human”.

Petals as diagnosis

- ▶ What's wrong with the world in the opening of *Petals of Blood*?

school trouble

The pupils were mostly shepherd boys, who often did not finish a term but followed their fathers in search of new pastures and water for their cattle.

(7)

economic trouble

A few roads and a reliable water system would have improved their lives. A dispensary might have been a useful addition. (29)

[Nyakinyua:] “The young men also. Some go and never return...” (9)

The movement away had started after the second Big War...No...before that...No, it was worse after Mau Mau War...No, it was the railway...all right, all right...even this had always been so since European colonists came into their midst, these ghosts from another world. (23; ellipses in original)

postcolonial disorders: Fore!

Stretching for a mile or so outside Ruwa-ini was a golf course of neatly trimmed green lawn. Three Africans were laughing at a big-bellied fourth who kept on swining the stick without hitting the ball. (14–15)

sex and patriarchy: trouble

For those titillating minutes of instant victory and glory often left behind an emptiness, a void, that could only be filled by yet more palliatives of instant conquest. Struggling in the depths of such a void and emptiness, she [Wanja] would then suddenly become aware that in the long run it was men who triumphed and walked over her body. (67)

the immediate past

Munira [was] really shocked when in 1953 or so he heard that Mariamu's son had been caught carrying weapons for Mau Mau and was subsequently hanged. But the main reason he remembered her was because she would protest against low pay or failure to be paid on time where others trusted his father's word and his goodwill. She was respectful to Ezekieli but never afraid of him. Yet he never rebuked her or dismissed her. He had once heard her name mentioned in connection with his father's missing right ear – it had been cut off by Mau Mau guerrillas – and more recently in connection with Mukami's suicide. (18–19)

and also...

- ▶ there was a triple murder?
- ▶ next: finish Part One