

Introduction to Crime Fiction

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

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review

episode	target	how critiqued?
Rev. Jerrod Brown	religion/hypocrisy	satire: heartlessness; pathos: disappointment
Chui's	mockery of tradition	Munira's embarrassment; slapstick
Kimeria's	gender roles; political power	W's inner monologue; pathos
the lawyer's	the law; education; the "monster-god"; racism; irresponsibility	explicit critique

pilgrims' progress, cont.

episode	target	how critiqued?
Karega at Siriana (201-9)	?	?
Nderi wa Riera (210-16)	?	?
Jevanjee Gardens... and jail (216-20)	?	?
victory? (221)	?	?

man of the people

Then he was flooded with offers of directorships in foreign-owned companies. (208)

He had not yet worked out a coherent plan. But a politician was a politician and the sight of the growing crowd excited him (217)

victory!...?

Donations poured in from every quarter. (221)

- ▶ What is the tone of the description of the villagers' triumph?

what needs to be decolonized?

The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation. (*Decolonising*, 9)

Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (*Decolonising*, 16)

This resulted in the dissassociation of the sensibility of that child from his natural and social environment, what we might call colonial alienation. (17)

It is the final triumph of a system of domination when the dominated start singing its virtues. (20)

the struggle over language

African literature can only be written in African languages, that is, the languages of the African peasantry and working class. (27)

▶ Why?

Why, we may ask, should an African writer, or any writer, become so obsessed by **taking** from his mother-tongue to enrich other tongues? Why should he see it as his particular mission? We never asked ourselves: how can we enrich our languages? (8)

Right from its conception it was the literature of the petty bourgeoisie born of the colonial schools and universities....Its rise and development reflected the gradual accession of this class to political and even economic dominance. (20)

In its movement toward the people, it could only go up to that section of the petty-bourgeoisie—the students, teachers, secretaries for instance—still in closest touch with the people. It settled there, marking time, caged within the linguistic fence of its colonial inheritance. (22)

not all bad

It was inspired by the general political awakening; it drew its stamina and even form from the peasantry...It was shot through and through with optimism. But later, when the comprador section assumed political ascendancy and strengthened rather than weakened the economic links with imperialism in what was clearly a neo-colonial arrangement, this literature became more and more critical, cynical, disillusioned, bitter and denunciatory in tone. It was almost unanimous in its portrayal, with varying degrees of detail, emphasis, and clarity of vision, of the post-independence betrayal of hope. (21)

“critical, cynical, disillusioned”

▶ And *Petals of Blood*?

“critical, cynical, disillusioned”

▶ *And Petals of Blood?*

All looked to Karega to take up the broken thread. (249)

‘Now it [Theng’eta] has turned out to be a drink of strife. I suppose this had to be, though I still don’t understand it.’ (286)

We did not then know that within a year the journey, like a God who cannot let his generosity be forgotten, would send its emissaries from the past, to transform Ilmorog and change our lives utterly, Ilmorog and us utterly changed. (289)

title drop (almost)

- ▶ What are the ingredients of Theng'eta?

title drop (almost)

- ▶ What are the ingredients of Theng'eta?

The plant was very small with a pattern of four tiny red petals. It had no scent.

Theng'eta. The spirit. (251)

'Look. a flower with petals of blood.'

It was a solitary red beanflower in a field dominated by white, blue and violet flowers. No matter how you looked at it, it gave you the impression of a flow of blood. (26)

the answer (?)

I kept on asking myself, now that it has happened, what it was she was trying to tell us that night, Munira scribbled with the inner fury of trying to understand. Would it have stopped what has now happened if it, whatever it was, had been heeded? By whom? (269)

exercise due Friday

- ▶ 250–300 words on the way the novel *contextualizes* an apparent lesson
- ▶ (practice in targeted interpretation of the “novel of ideas”)

next

- ▶ finish the novel
 - ▶ or else: spoilers!
- ▶ exercise due next Fri.