

Introduction to Crime Fiction

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paper 2

- ▶ 2000-2500 words
- ▶ include Ngũgĩ or Mosley
- ▶ and anything else from the course
- ▶ find at least one scholarly source
 - ▶ warm-up on dealing with sources: exercise due Thursday
 - ▶ paper drafting exercise: due April 25
- ▶ evidence
- ▶ motive
- ▶ argument
- ▶ evidence
- ▶ EVIDENCE

review: *Decolonising the Mind*

- ▶ “spiritual subjugation” / “mental control”
- ▶ “colonial alienation” manifests in the gap between spoken and written languages
 - ▶ colonial language comes to stand for modernity, sophistication
 - ▶ ...and *literariness*
- ▶ African languages remain literarily deprived
 - ▶ and this is a correlate of cultural and economic subjugation
- ▶ Europhone literatures face a problem of audience
 - ▶ African writers’ choice: which literature to work for?

Karega finds his audience

He now knew his line of attack and approach. These divisions had to end if they were going to successfully demand recognition and a fair share of their own sweat. From nowhere, so it seemed, pamphlets started appearing: and they all carried the same theme: workers were all children of the machine and the New Road. Those who owned the machine did not care where a worker came from in the game of exploitation...

Workers would argue and discuss in groups of two and threes. Every pamphlet was the subject of heated discussion and it would secretly pass from hand to hand in the factory. Except for the few in the inner circle nobody knew the source. But what the pamphlets said was true and so to the workers its origins and source did not worry them. (361–62)

Karega...finds...his...audience?

He would often quote the verse 'Give unto Caesar' to show the separation between the secular and the religious struggles, that one need not exclude the other. But inwardly he knew that religion, any religion, was a weapon against the workers! (363)

While I was in A levels, somebody gave me a copy of *Decolonizing the Mind* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and [I] fancied myself an intellectual. The book impressed me because it used words like *decolonizing*. A very satisfying word: like a squeegee on a dirty dorm floor, it promised to leave things squeaky clean. We are not messy people, it said, you can pull a completely unpolluted person out of the mush. I was terribly impressed. So I decided to name myself with Gikuyu correctness.... [But this proved impossible, because] it would be stupid to go around telling people my name is Binyavanga wa Wainaina because then they would grin and start nattering away in Gikuyu and my fakeness would be exposed....

The problem with decolonizing is that it reveals you to be undecolonizable.

Binyavanga Wainaina, “In Gikuyu, for Gikuyu, of Gikuyu,” *Granta* 103 (September 2008), granta.com/letter-from-gikuyu/.

“critical, cynical, disillusioned”

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)

He wished he could swallow back the words. He had hurt her less by the didactic triteness than by a combination of tone and gesture. (387)

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She [Akinyi] looked shy and she spoke in Swahili. (408)

surprise! Not! (or...?)

- ▶ Whodunit?
- ▶ So what?

He was suddenly very lucid, calm inside. A sixteen-year mist had cleared. He was not jealous or anything. It was only that deep inside he knew that tonight, this Saturday, Kimeria would die. Only then would he regain the right to call himself a man. (375)

solved!

‘And I’ll now formally charge you with burning Wanja’s house and causing the deaths of three men. I may warn you that anything you say may be used against you in a court of law. Tell me: why did you do it?’

‘I—I wanted to save Karega,’ Munira said. (394)

solved!

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He walked away toward Ilmorog Hill. He stood on the hill and watched the whorehouse burn, the tongues of flame from the four corners forming petals of blood, making a twilight of the dark sky. (395)

solved?!

‘Kimeria, who had ruined my life and later humiliated me by making me sleep with him during our journey to the city . . . this same Kimeria was one of those who would benefit from the new economic progress of Ilmorog. Why? Why? I asked myself? Why? Why? Had he not sinned as much as me? That’s how one night I fully realized this law. Eat or you are eaten.’
(347)

‘No, no,’ he found himself saying. ‘There is another way: there must be other ways.’ And suddenly in that moment, remembering in a flash all the places he had been to, he was clear about the force for which he had been searching, the force that would change things and create the basis of a new order. (349)

what about Wanja?

[The lawyer:] “We reasoned: what’s wrong is the skin-colour of the people who ministered to this god: under our own care and tutelage we shall tame the monster-god and make it do our will. We forgot that it has always been deaf and blind to human woes. So we go on building the monster and it grows and waits for more, and now we are all slaves to it. At its shrine we kneel and pray and hope.” (195)

I could not quite tell him [Mwathi wa Mugo] that I was once pregnant, that I did have a child . . . that the world had suddenly loomed so large and menacing and that, for a girl who had just left school and had run away from home . . . that . . . that . . . that I did throw it, my newly born, into a latrine . . . There! I have said it . . . I have never said that to another person.'

Both Munira and Karega started a little. (346)

She remained sitting in one place, truly queen of them all under the electric light. (349)

So she edited the story as she went on. After all, a coherent narrative depended on knowing what details to tell and what to leave out. (382)

next

- ▶ article-response exercise: Gikandi or Roos