

EN2E7 Crime Fiction, Nation, and Empire: Essay 2

- ❖ **Deadline:** One electronic WORD DOC (not pdf if possible) should be **submitted on TABULA on Friday of Term 3, week 2** (check tabula for exact date)
- ❖ **Exchange students** with us for the full academic term who are registered on the code “EN2E7” adhere to these same assessment methods. Exchange students with us for one term only, will submit a 2,000 word essay on the last Tuesday of the term they complete.
- ❖ **WRITE 1 X 3000-word essay in response to one of the 13 questions below, considering, in each case, the implications on national and/or imperial ideals (sustained argument or overall conclusions).**
- ❖ Unless otherwise stated in the question, you may refer to and compare in your essays, **either:**
a (previously unused) Term 1 text from course with a Term 2 text from course
OR you may use two course texts from Term 2.
(NB: 2-3 short stories count as one “text”)
- ❖ You should ensure to **vary your topic** from the first essay.
- ❖ Narrow down your focus to a specific aspect of that topic. Speak to me in [office hours](#) or by email about approaches.
- ❖ Ensure to refer to the **feedback from your first essay** to avoid repeated errors, and to improve presentation and style.
- ❖ If the question includes a quote you should engage with some or all of the content of the quote.
- ❖ Please make sure that you are aware of and follow the [department guidelines](#) for the presentation of essays and of the [regulations on plagiarism](#).
- ❖ Use [MLA or MHRA formatting](#). See also, further departmental resources on essay and research skills on our [Academic Writing Moodle](#).
- ❖ [Extensions](#) are to be requested **via Tabula** (either next to the assignment for a specific extension over 5 working days with evidence, or using the separate “self-certify” button under your “Personal Circumstances” tab for 5 working days no questions asked).

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1. Write an essay exploring what is “queer” in / about the crime fiction of our period.
 2. “In the aftermath of the war, heroic masculinity appeared both untenable and bankrupt as an ideal within a domestic national context though it survived in the fantasized territories and relations of Empire” (Hilary Hinds, *Ordinary Disappointments*, 2009). Explore how some or all of the aspects Hinds discusses here are presented and interrogated in crime fiction.
 3. Write an essay on the relationship between crime/detection and art/theatre/performance in your chosen texts.
 4. Consider the form, function, and effect of “justice” and/or the legal system in crime fiction.

5. Examine how crime fiction negotiates the fears and anxieties raised by a colonial and/or racial/ethnic Other.
6. "Clairvoyance, telepathy and intuition [...] are not just uncannily reminiscent of the detective's mind-reading powers and miraculous feats of deductive reasoning, but are versions of these practices, and vice versa" (Srdjan Smajic, *Ghost-Seers, Detectives, and Spiritualists*, 181). Consider the attitudes toward intuition and/or the supernatural versus logic / reason in your chosen crime fiction.
7. Sarah Dunant writes that "Crime fiction, by its very nature, has an intimate relationship with the dead body" and "deals with death in a routine, even formulaic and ultimately reassuring way" ("Body Language", 11). Investigate the role of death and/or the corpse in your examples of crime fiction.
8. "The depiction of a woman in a crime novel, whether as victim, villain, suspect or detective, is loaded with social and cultural meanings as well as with expectations attached to the genre's typical characters" but "female characters are nevertheless used in ways that can be read as questioning and renegotiating social, gender and genre norms" (Hoffman, *Gender and Representation in British 'Golden Age' Crime Fiction*, 1). Explore the conservative and/or subversively gendered roles women play in your chosen texts.
9. Green and Dalrymple writes that Golden Age detective fiction frequently showcases the "genre's capacity for intertextual play and self-conscious engagements with literary formula and convention" ("Playing at Murder", 63). Explore how your chosen texts use and play with "Literature".

NB: For example, but not limited to, intertextual references to other crime fictions; to classical or other literatures; to the metafictional writing style, and/or to the industry of writing and publishing fiction.

10. "The replacement of the ingenious, hyper-rational murderer with a multitude of psychologically disturbed villains, many of whom were of ambiguous and controversial legal status in regard to criminal responsibility, is accompanied in many novels by the refashioning of the detective as a figure with a superior and extra-legal moral and psychological perspective" (Walton, *Guilty but Insane*, pp.14-15). Explore what your texts and their characters have to say about the "reasons" for criminality and what the consequences might be.
11. "Just as the quest of the theologian concerns the truth about faith, the detective's search for the solution to the mystery of a crime is an allegorical pursuit of a truth involving the superimposition of good over evil" (Michael Cook, *Narratives of Enclosure*). Explore the role of religion/spirituality and ethics in crime fiction.
12. "The story is also socially enclosed: lower classes, especially professional criminals, play very minor roles. The criminal comes from among the social circle of the victim, and servants are very rarely guilty – and if so will usually be in some form of social disguise. The master-villains who were so popular in the early twentieth century and who survive to the present in thrillers are not found" (Stephen Knight "The Golden Age", 2006) Analyse the roles played by, and attitudes towards, servants, and/or and the working classes in crime fiction.
13. Explore the use of maps and/or the specificities of setting in crime fiction.