



The Detectives Who Kill: Black Female Detectives in the Works of Oyinkan Braithwaite and Nnedi Okorafor

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Abstract. Works by Oyinkan Braithwaite and Nnedi Okorafor demonstrate the lethal duality of their Black detectives who are also killers. This duality sets the detectives apart, allowing them to pursue justice and defend the rights of others. The analysis shows how African crime fiction by Black female writers in the twenty-first century intertwines gender and sociopolitical discourses.

While the “origin” of crime fiction as a genre is an ongoing open question, its presence in African literature is more recent. The first African crime novels were published in Afrikaans in South Africa in 1929 by Karl Kielblock and Kas van der Berg (Nyela 180). Graphic novels featuring detective Sam Monfong were published by Kiti in the leisure section of *La gazette*, marking the first works by sub-Saharan African writers in this genre (Nyela 180). The first Anglophone African crime novel, *Fella's Choice*, was written by Nigerian author Kole Omotoso in 1974 (Nyela 180). Contemporary African crime fiction writers from across the continent include Richard Kunzmann, Malla Nunn, Kwei Quartey, and Deon Meyer. However, crime fiction has only recently emerged in African literature, primarily due to its capability to critically address various forms of violence associated with colonialism and its aftermath (Nyela 181). It serves as a vehicle for critiquing society throughout the continent (Nyela 178). This perspective aligns with Sam Naidu's viewpoint in “African Crime and Detective Fiction Reshapes the Genre,” emphasizing the significance of the genre not only because of its popularity but also its capacity for sociopolitical analysis. Similarly,

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