

Abstract

This article discusses an aspect of Shona literature that has not been given much scholarly attention, the detective story genre. Although an attempt has been made to explain why perhaps students of literature have not concerned themselves seriously with detective fiction as a genre the major focus of the researcher is on discussing the origin of the genre. An effort has been painstakingly made to argue that the modern written Shona detective story has its 'roots' in non-detective traditional shona folktales and not in reading the detective stories written by western authors or in watching western detective dramas on television. A study of the morphology of some folktales reveals the existence of a 'detective' story plot in them. It is argued that the shona traditional folktale is a kind of oral 'detective' story that reflects traditional methods of solving mysteries or puzzles and that rudimentary forms of the written Shona detective story should therefore be regarded as an extension or expansion of the non-detective traditional folktale