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Context. It can be said, that context defines the crime, can it not? For without stable values, themes, & societal issues, a crime, & therefore a text, cannot have a backbone.

The text "The Adventure of the Speckled Band", a short story written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is one such text that uses social & cultural conditions of the time to create a text, and crime, of enduring relevance.

Doyle's life spanned both Victorian and Edwardian Eras, and so his novels were affected by these contexts. During these eras, we experienced the rise of Science over magic, and this led to the creation of the character - Sherlock Holmes. This specific text shows that science must win, over the magic & mysticism of men.

This text deals heavily with the themes of "motivation", and "justice". When we talk about motivation, we must consider this - what type of crime? A crime of passion? Revenge? No. This is cold, & calculated murder.

"Even one of them would have been enough to cripple him... he has the motive."

This statement is made about Dr. Ginesby Roylott, the primary suspect, in relation to his daughters & their dowries that he had to pay.

In this time, family was incredibly important, & because of this, his crime, the murder of one of his daughters, is even more terrible. For Holmes to suspect that Helen Stoner's sister was killed

for money, is a fore running motif of the cosy crime Era.

A second theme that must be considered, is that of "family". In the eras in which Doyle wrote, everyone was very prim, and proper, and to be ~~caught~~ caught doing something naughty was a death sentence. This also meant that "what happened in the family, stayed in the family".

"Instead of making friends... he shut himself up in his house and seldom came out..."

Dr. Roylott had conveniently cut himself off from the rest of the world, & so for a crime to be committed, it could have only been by him, & so he set up his own downfall.

When looking at societal values & such, the crime & subsequent punishment has to be considered.

"She writhed as one who is in terrible pain, her limbs were dreadfully convulsed."

The death of Helen's sister & Helen's own fears for her life, instilled in the audience a wish for the punishment of Roylott. In this era of crime, it was clear that they had to make the crime interesting - hence the vague title, and the subsequent use of an animal as a weapon - and so the punishment had to be just as fearful.

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"Suddenly there broke from the silence of the night the most horrible cry to which I have ever listened."

Watson, the Narrator, says these words as Roylott is attacked by his own weapon, & dies as penance for the anguish that he caused.

Watson's use of eloquent, descriptive language is important in this scene, as it shows ~~that~~ a crime & punishment without the blood & gore that came with it. This was important in this era, as violence was not spoken of in society.

The text "Rear Window", directed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1954, is another text (film) that shows the use of context to create a crime.

In this time, it was clear that everyone was suspicious. Within America, it was not spoken of, but everyone was afraid, watching their neighbours - a situation that was mirrored in real life, as this was after the world war & everyone was paranoid.

"Do you think it's ethical even if it's to prove he didn't commit a crime?"

The primary theme of "Rear Window", is that of voyeurism. Is it ethical to watch out your window at someone even if you think that they're doing something wrong?

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"Looking out the window to kill time is one thing, but doing it the way you are, with binoculars & wild opinions about every little thing you see is, is diseased!"

Lisa's opinion of Jeff's spying is clearly shown in this clear section of dialogue, & thus we have our primary theme - the effective relationship between Lisa & Jeff. The murder & disposal of Mrs. Thawald is simply a MacGuffin, a medium through which Jeff & Lisa's relationship can grow in.

"She's too perfect, she's too talented... she's too everything but what I want!"

In this time, women's movements were starting to gain momentum, & this is reflected in the strong will & power of Lisa Carol Fremont.

Hitchcock uses a variety of film techniques to portray not only the relationship between characters, but the murder also. Each of the subsequent relationships that are shown in the apartment block through an opening penny slot shows each of the relationships that Lisa & Jeff could have, whereas dark lighting & "peephole" shots through camera lenses & point-of-view editing is used to insinuate the murder -

"Jeff, you've got a lot to learn about homicide... That sales man wouldn't just knock off

his wife after dinner & then toss her in the trunk."

This quote from a detective shows the disdain cops have for the naivety of amateur sleuths, and this is a mirroring of society of the time. This "microcosm" that Hitchcock presented, is a smaller view of the world that existed at the time.

This, is why the murder was never shown - Hitchcock simply used suspense to create fear, not joy. This is why Thorwald's confrontation of Jeffries at the end of the film is so terrifying - prior to this, the audience still isn't sure if Mrs. Thorwald was dead!

"Your friend, the girl, could have turned me in. Why didn't she? What is it you want?" This scene is terrifying, surreal, with flashes of lighting used to illuminate the terrifying image of Thorwald coming to attack Jeff.

When we consider context, it is considered wise to be able to compare a text to a work in another context - Hence, the text "Disturbia", the film directed by D.J. Caruso, a work of the film "Rear Window".

This film shows the same theme of voyeurism, & many direct parallels can be drawn between the two films -

Firstly, it is the entrapment of an amateur sleuth -

Leah is under house arrest & his

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ankle bracelet can be likened to Jeff's cast. He cannot leave the house, & so he has his trusty sidekicks - A trusty Asian best friend, & Ashley, the hot girl from next door... however, in this film, it seems that Kale uses his best friend, instead of the girl, as his primary tool.

A second parallel that can be drawn, is the use of red herrings - throughout both films, we aren't shown any murders, & this leads to the sleuths doubting themselves - Mrs. Thawald's post card, the dead deer in place of a dead body - all seem to make the audience doubt the sleuth.

However, definite differences can be noted, and this is easily shown due to a change in context.

"~~I know~~ I know you've been following me. Don't deny it... You're not the only one who's watching."

Modern audiences demand a lot more action than those in "Rear Window", & so in "Disturbia", Ashley & Kale are confronted earlier by Turner, who warns them through dialogue that he won't tolerate being watched.

Furthermore, we have Kale's views on voyeurism - "I'm not a stalker. These are just simple observations, a natural side effect from chronic boredom."

In "Rear Window", Jeff questioned war window ethics, but Kale doesn't, stating that in this society, if you're

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going to spy, you have to be a teenager with no conscience. Context also changed the way that the film was shot. Technology means no "psyched" shots through wide angle lenses - instead we see a lot of the action through hand-held cameras, a very personal, and often rewarding enterprise, as it is technology, not brains, that gathers evidence to support the murder. This shows a change in deduction techniques, from brains to computers.

Lastly, we consider Justice. In "ear window", Thawald will be tried, and perhaps killed. In "Disturbia", a modern context dictates vengeance, and murder. The last scenes in which hectic changing of camera angles and dim lighting illustrate the chase scene through the murderer's house, Kate kills the man who has murdered all these women, and because of this, the audience has been satisfied. In a world of terrorism, it is comforting for the modern audience to know that it's all over.

The last text to be considered when looking at good old "context making cine", is "The Real Inspector Hound", a play written by Tom Stoppard in the sixties, that parodies the works of various prime writers.

During this era, society was weary from war and financial difficulties, and people who read crime

was beginning to realise that crimes were not as formulaic as Christie would make them seem. Therefore, writers such as Stoppard created parodies of Christie's works.

"Sometimes I dream of a revolution of the second rank..." This entire novel deals with the idea of jealousy & ambition, & this idea is important, as it gives us a motive for the murders to come - "I think I'm waiting for Higgs to die... I wonder if it's the same for Puckridge."

Throughout the play, foreshadowing is used to excess, with even the characters having feelings that something is going to happen.

In Christie's novels, every thing was perfectly set up. The characters all knew ~~the~~ each other - "Magnus, the wheel-chair band, half-brother of her ladyship's husband..." and the settings were idyllic = charming but somewhat isolated Muldoon Manor."

Signposting was therefore extensively used by Stoppard to point out all of the stupid aspects of Christie's works.

Stoppard also concentrated on showing how perfectly crime worked - he showed that no matter how much you changed, the crime would carry on as if nothing was changing. Birdboot & Moon are inserted into the play, therefore breaking the fourth wall, and become the characters that they always wanted to be... and get killed,

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"Puckeridge... You cunning bastard."

These last words are so stupid, but at the same time, not. When the audience was expecting one thing, Stoppard would give them another -

"Enter Inspector Hurd. On his feet are his swamp boots... He carries a fighorn." The parody of Sherlock Holmes is the final straw, & shows Stoppard's disdain for the perfect sleuth, instead replacing him with an idiot.

"This is the time to speak!" He says.

"I -"

"Don't interrupt!"

Even the denouement in the end is ridiculous, as moon dies, & Magnus turns out to be 3 characters, one whom has taken on the role of the critic, & is sitting in the audience.

In conclusion, it is clear that when a crime text is written, it takes on the specific social & cultural conditions of its context. Whether it be excessive gore, terrifying suspense or pure nonsense, the enduring relevance depends on how it is that the composer represents universal societal constants. Without these, as well as technical aspects of different mediums, we would not have the enduring crime texts that we have today.

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