

THE AESTHETICS OF CRIME FICTION IN KENYAN FILM: AN EXAMINATION OF
THE PARADOX OF PAINFUL ART IN *NAIROBI HALF LIFE* AND *THE KITCHEN*

TOTO

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

DECLARATION


This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree at any other university.

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APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

ABSTRACT

This study analyses two films: *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, with a view to establishing why people would enjoy watching a film full of criminal activities, and which elicit pain when they avoid painful situations in real life. It aimed at finding out what makes audiences to feel pleasure while watching tragedies of crime and objects of distress which would be unpleasant or even horrific if set before them in real life. The objective of the study is to interrogate how the devices used by film makers to aestheticize criminal and violent actions function to represent stories of violence in an entertaining manner drawing the audience to feel pleasure in response to painful actions and to evaluate the impact of aestheticization of criminal activities. To address these concerns, the study was guided by Semiotics, Psychoanalysis and Film theory. Semiotics helped the study in analyzing how meaning is created in the selected films through the use of images, sounds, music, objects, gestures, words, body movements among others and how these signs work together to create meaning in a text. Third world film theory guided the study in examining the relationship between the films and the societies they reflect. Psychoanalysis guided the study in analyzing the audiences' perception and how the behavior and dialogue of the film characters reflect the audiences' unconscious, as they identify themselves with the characters when they watch a film and forge psychic bonds with the characters. The question guiding the methodology is "How do the cinematic techniques used in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* function to transform crime and violence into a pleasurable discourse while at the same time reconstructing the society?" The study is based on the hypothesis that though the fractured, chaotic, and violent aspects of crime would appear to be diametrically opposed to the entertainment functions of films, stylistic presentation of violence would cause the audience to enjoy watching films with criminal activities which they would otherwise shun in reality. The study employed a qualitative approach to research to gather data on how cinematic techniques function to create pleasure in the audience. The data comprised of textual analysis and viewer responses. The findings of this research explain how the cinematic techniques function to make the audience feel pleasure in response to objects of distress. The analysis has shown a strong correlation between the cinematic techniques and human psychology. The study concluded that cinematic techniques transform the unpleasant emotional responses the audience may have into pleasurable ones through psychologically engaging the audiences' mental schema thereby enticing the audiences to feel pleasure in response to tragedies of crime and objects of distress which would be unpleasant or even horrific if set before them in real life.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Painful art continues to be one of the most highly charged issues in contemporary cinema. Kate Bullen (2009) in her paper 'Review of The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart' writes that "According to Google Scholar, since the year 2000 over 17,000 books and articles have been written about horror and over 100,000 searches returned for books and articles on horror and genre." She adds that "many of these works relate to horror films, video games, or television, or analyze an aspect of the genre, such as gender and violence." Although many discussions of this topic focus on Hollywood movies, Kenya's film industry is coming up and crime is a common theme in Kenyan film. According to Thomas Leitch, "crime film is the most enduringly popular of all Hollywood genres, the only kind of film that has never once been out of fashion since the dawn of the sound era seventy years ago" (Leitch 28). His argument may be said to apply to Kenyan films too.

Contrary to the assumption that people derive pleasure from incidents that elicit positive emotions only, studies have shown that people more often derive pleasure from experiences which elicit painful emotions generally and especially from films. Charlotte L. Doyle in her commentary on, a study by N.F. Barrett, and Schulkin, J (2017) acknowledges that there is evidence that audiences enjoy grief, sadness, and other negative emotions from all art forms. She writes:

The evocation of sadness in an individual that is also enjoyed has been a topic on ongoing research debate. While evidence supports that grief, tragedy, sadness and other negative emotions are enjoyed in all art-forms, researchers remain skeptical. This

skepticism stems from the idea that negative emotions, such as sadness and grief are associated with withdrawal and aversion under normal circumstances.

Aaron Smuts argues that audiences do not experience these art works accidentally but seeks them out knowing just too well that the works elicit negative emotions. He writes:

Many of the most popular genres of narrative art are designed to elicit negative emotions: emotions that are experienced as painful or involving some degree of pain, which we generally avoid in our daily lives. Melodramas make us cry. Tragedies bring forth pity and fear. Conspiratorial thrillers arouse feelings of hopelessness and dread, and devotional religious art can make the believer weep in sorrow. Not only do audiences know what these artworks are supposed to do, they seek them out in pursuit of prima facie painful reactions (Smuts 59).

A study by Sarah E. Hall, Emery Schubert and Sarah J. Wilson concluded that participants were drawn more to sad music compared to music which elicited positive emotions such as joy. In the study, a number of respondents listened to and rated two sets of music in terms of preference and expressed emotions. The results showed that audiences enjoyed music with negative emotions more compared to the other emotions. This concurs with Hall SE and colleagues' findings that trait absorption was positively correlated with arousal induced by the music with the highest correlation for music that induced sadness. Natalja Deng and Daan Evers (2016) too acknowledge that people enjoy negative emotions. They write that ... Although People tend to keep away from the *causes* of negative emotions, such as violence and loss, these same people sometimes seek out and even enjoy the negative emotions themselves, such as sorrow or sadness. She continues that 'many people are drawn to *schadenfreude* and most people *Schaulust* (the pleasure in looking). People enjoy looking at car wrecks, bullfights, and crucifixions (p.340).

That people more often desire experiences which elicit painful emotions, generally and especially from art, instead of shunning them, is what this research refers to as the "paradox of

painful art." For a considerable period of time, audiences have turned to films featuring instances of intense human suffering for entertainment. Most films produced today have often been described by both reviewers and viewers as utterly depressing or heart wrenching. These works often have a negative emotional affect, which is frequently experienced as painful. Though terrifying and dread-inspiring, audiences not only watch them but repeatedly return to the same artworks even after they have had these painful experiences. Aaron Smuts gives an example of this behavior of turning to a negative experience not accidentally but knowingly from a skit that was featured in 1998 *Saturday Night Live* featuring a family having dinner. One of the family members, seated at the extreme end of the dining table takes a sip of milk from his glass and spits it out, exclaiming "Yuck! This is rotten." The person next to him replies, "Let me try," and has the same response. This is repeated until everyone around the table has confirmed firsthand how disgusting the rotten milk tastes. The skit is a good example of the paradox of pain since instead of the family avoiding the disgusting experience of the taste of rotten milk, they each desire a firsthand experience of how bad the rotten milk tastes.

In interrogating the paradox of painful art, the study concentrated on investigating the underlying principles that make crime films appealing hence attracting the audience despite featuring instances of intense human suffering. It is these principles governing the aesthetic beauty in crime films that the study refers to as the 'Aesthetics of crime'. The term aesthetics of crime has been used by a number of scholars in different lights. John Cruickshank first used the term Aesthetics of crime in 1964 in his book *Jean Genet: The Aesthetics of Crime* in which he critiques Jean Genet's writings. Genet is known for writing crime narratives which mirror his own personal criminal experiences. Cruickshank who describes Genet's works as done with a "dramatic skill and an extraordinary feeling for language" that makes indifference either impossible or irresistible argues that Genet's works, though crime narratives, have been

admired by many literary critics and scholars chiefly because of his artistic seductiveness. It is Genets 'irresistible' crime narratives that Cruickshank refers to as Aesthetics of crime.

Stephen Brauer's wrote an article critiquing Nicole Rafter's works on the different approaches that used in understanding the origin and prevention of crime. Brauer dwells on Rafter's recent study, "*Shots in the Mirror: Crime Films and Society*" in which Rafter deals with interpreting film. In this study Rafter discusses psychological, biological, and environmental reasons, and rational choice as the varying causes to which criminologists assign the origin of criminal behavior. Brauer titles his article on Nicole Rafter's works 'An Aesthetics of Crime'. Simon Joyce in a paper titled *Sexual Politics and the Aesthetics of Crime: Oscar Wilde in the Nineties* writes about the criminal as an intellectual or artistic genius. She writes that "the idea of an aesthetic of crime had begun to bounce back again about 40 years after De Quincey wrote an article, in part, as a response to falling crime rates." Her essay deals with the revived aesthetic interest on crime, reviewing films and articles that deal with crime generally and focuses closely on the picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde. Michelle Brown titles his 2006 paper dealing with the effects of crime on the society and in people's lives 'The Aesthetics of Crime; Philosophy, Crime and Criminology'. In his paper he analyses causes of crime in Western culture and shows how assumptions of human conditions and unsated values about civil society underlie the reality of crime.

In dealing with 'The Aesthetics of crime', this thesis works around how the cinematic techniques function to create pleasure in the audience. The thesis will thus be exploring the interplay between violence and pleasure in the selected films in which crime and violence are presented as beautiful masterpieces, with robberies and murders presented as art. Why people enjoy watching a movie full of criminal activities, and which elicits pain when they avoid such situations in real life is the concern of this study. It set to find out: what makes crime fiction

enchanting and overwhelming thereby arresting the audience, how crime fiction filmmakers re-dramatize pain and still maintain narrative pleasure, and how the narrative and cinematic devices the film makers employ work to create pleasure. This research addressed these concerns through an analysis of the effects of film techniques, arguing that conflict and tension in these films is calculated to attract the audience and to subject them to emotional and psychological influence drawing them to react in particular ways.

Some Kenyan film makers tend to idealize the Kenyan cityscape, giving a one sided picture of the complexity of the city. Lucy Chodota's *Rush* (2012) for example, revolves around four empowered African women as they go about their fabulous lives in their 'cosmopolitan world.' Their lives are glamorous with the city being portrayed as a place of opportunities and highlife. The film is full of glamour, and is set in the city's luxurious areas, unlike Tosh Gitonga's *Nairobi Half Life* which has some scenes set in the dingy dark corridors of Nairobi. Albert Wandago's *Naliaka is Going...* is another Kenyan film which portrays Nairobi as a city of opportunities. Naliaka escapes poverty from her rural home village to Nairobi for opportunities and finds her fortune. The film is shot in beautiful sceneries of Nairobi, coastal beaches, Western Kenya and Rift valley. It shows scenic locations which Kenya has offered for local and foreign films. The films mentioned above, among others, give a one sided picture of the city. Nezar Alsayyad, commenting on the film *Metropolis* writes that the city of the elite is reflective of many people's shared fascination with the skyscraper as an icon of modernity (Alsayyad 278).

The films analyzed in this study show that carnivals, beaches, skyscrapers, glamour and beauty are not the only aspects of the city life in Kenya. They expose the dark underside of Nairobi that some people do not understand and as such help viewers to better understand Nairobi's crime culture. The films portray the social conditions in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, with its

intense criminal activities and violence and foreground the fact that crime is a problem in Nairobi just like in most cities in the world. Jordache Ellapen asserts that “the realities of urban life are reflected through art” (Jordache 128). *Nairobi Half Life*, for instance, is a story about the life of gangsters in Nairobi city and examines the criminal figure as a representation of the urban space and its discourses portraying the 'city space' as a central location of criminal activities. Jean Baudrillard argues that “the city seems to have stepped out of the movies. To understand it, you should not then begin with the city and move inwards towards a screen, you should begin with a screen and move outwards toward the city” (Baudrillard 56). This argument implies that cinematic representation of the city reveal much about the urban condition. Tosh Gitonga, director of *Nairobi Half Life*, commented about the film during an interview that “It is an education, because most people in upcountry always says I want to go to Nairobi, I want to go to Nairobi. Now, maybe, they can even prepare better, get a better understanding of the Nairobi they want to go to.” (Gitonga 2012).

Though it could be argued that stylizing crime may diminish its seriousness since some of them focus on the criminal's perspective, celebrate conquest, and construct the hero as an admirable figure; daring, strong, courageous and whose fame rests on his criminal acts, by looking beyond the glamour, the cinematic crime depictions can influence the wider meanings that crime embody. Crime whether real or represented, embodies meanings which extend beyond the cinematic depiction to represent a wider social order that defines the relationship between crime and power ideologies. Portrayals of crime in films therefore reflect societies' social beliefs as Mike Davis puts it that, “A film reflects the society which produces it” (Davis 116).

Some crime thrillers are usually set in crowded towns and urban centres, with the cinematic gangsters presented as materialistic and street-smart. However, sometimes, such as in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, these criminals are portrayed as victims of circumstances since

the stories are told from their point of view. *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, focus on Mwas and Mwangi respectively, as the subjects and focus on their journeys which function as catalysts for the events that comprise the plot. Though the criminal activities are explicit they are not sensationalized. Mwas' criminal actions powerfully and discreetly portray the grave nature of crime and how the innocent become criminals. *The Kitchen Toto* on the other hand focuses on how a given group of people can be 'criminalized'.

Other than public attention, there has also been academic attention on cinematic portrayals of crime. Besides entertainment, crime films create and reproduce cultural narratives about social and moral order. Depictions of crime as a narrative generally, deploys a journey as a motif on the screen to address crime as a social issue and to underscore the seriousness of crime as a thematic material other than the criminal activities themselves being glamorized on the screen. When transposed into a cinematic discourse, crime turns into a powerful theme for academic concerns. Other than invoking reactions of horror or 'pleasure', crime fiction influences the public conceptions and understandings of crime. This is because it offers a better perspective than a written work as it can emotionally compel audiences by telling stories through cinematic representation. As a story unfolds on the screen, it captivates the interest of the audience while directly affecting their emotions, and perhaps, set of beliefs or ideological stance. Niyi Afolabi argues that "The visual medium is the most effective tool of mass communication, popularization and propagation of ideas and in it lies the power and potential to destruct or construct the mind" (Afolabi 169). Just like writers carefully select their tools and materials to ensure that the finished product has the desired impact, crime filmmakers in their scriptwriting, casting, shooting, editing, and screening select appropriate tools which enhance the depiction of crime scenes. This could be achieved through the use of formal codes; cinematography, mise-en-scene, editing, sound code, and lighting among others.

Though crime films have been produced globally, especially by Hollywood, this study focuses on Kenyan films only. For quite some time, Africa was represented exclusively by Western filmmakers. Today, African countries are not only redefining themselves in their films, but are also exploring various themes reflecting their social positions and making statements about their societies. On this premise the study further looked at how sincere these films are in portraying the society since some films give a one sided discourses hence misrepresenting the society and distorting history. Since its dawn in the early 19th century, film production in Kenya was, until recently, dominated by external film industries using Kenyan sites to tell their own stories. According to the Kenya Film Commission's website (2008), this dates back to 1930s when *African Holiday*, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, *King Solomon's Mines*, and *Mogambo Stanley and Livingstone*, and *Trader Horn* among others were produced in Kenya by Hollywood. These films featured Hollywood stars on wild adventures in the rugged Kenyan terrain. They portrayed black people as products of some hereditary irrationality. The blacks were portrayed as static characters who do not change their modes of operation no matter how the whites try to civilize them. Parker and Stanley have observed this kind of presentation in television. They say this distorted image of the black '...can be seen in much of the television presentation of Africa by the Western media, which portrays Africa in perpetual crisis and continues to fix the indigenous peoples as passive, infectiously smiling or suffering backdrops for white politicians and aid workers.'" (Parker 6). These films showed how the white colonizers viewed the black Africa and not what the black Africa was since a creative artist decides how to represent the society. The artist chooses the angle from which he looks at the world, usually to favor his standpoint. Olago Samuel concurs with this saying:

It is the nature of man to alter things to make him or his race look better. We as Africans study history written by other races, often in periods when the African was in the role of slave.' (Olago 12)

Films produced during these periods were constructed to portray the whites as superior and blacks as savages, barbaric and backward. Today Kenyan films made by Kenyans tell Kenyan stories making a mark on global audiences and reflecting the Kenyan life, culture, and values. Louis Giannetti explains this in his book, *Understanding Movies*. He writes that “Every nation has a characteristic way of looking at life, a set of values that is typical of a given culture, the same can be said of their movies” (Giannetti 465). The Kenyan film industry has flourished in recent years. Since about the year 2000, low budget independent feature films on Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), which uses digital technology to shoot films, have increased in Rivewood, a section of Kenyan film industry. Kenyan film industry is re-defining Kenya in its productions and making room for a new voice in film- the Kenyan voice.

Worth noting is that many of the most popular crime thrillers are intentionally crafted to induce painful emotions. At the centre of this study is how the cinematic techniques employed in the films work to create pleasure in the audience despite the films featuring pain and violence. This borrows from Smuts’ argument that audiences do seek out ‘painful art’ because they derive pleasure from them. This study attempts to account for the source of this pleasure, a pleasure assumed to be invoked by representations of events from which people do not derive pleasure in real life.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The fractured, chaotic, and violent aspects of crime are diametrically opposed to the entertainment functions of films. However, crime continues to be one of the most prevalent themes in contemporary cinema. Throughout film history, filmmakers have continually turned to crime narratives as a spectacle to entertain and to inform the audience by reconstructing the society in their films thereby influencing the perception of the society. Scholars have argued

that audiences turn to films that feature violence because ‘pain’ in these works is converted to pleasure or compensated for through the use of cinematic devices and techniques.

It is universally acknowledged that it is how crime films are presented that make them attract the audience or not. Film producers try to transform the unpleasant emotional responses the audience may have into pleasurable ones. They do this by making use of stylistic and cinematic techniques and conventions to convert films with violent criminal activities and instances of intense human suffering into captivating stories. This study focuses on how the stylistic and cinematic techniques used by film producers work to create pleasure in the audience in response to film featuring violence and suffering.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions

1. How do the cinematic devices used in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, function to cause the audience to enjoy watching crime films featuring violence and intense human suffering which they would otherwise shun in reality?
2. Are the films under study accurate in how they address and influence the conceptions and understanding of the complexity of the society?
3. What are the effects of the aestheticization of crime films on the audiences?

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The thesis sought to achieve the following objectives;

1. To interrogate how the devices used by film makers to aestheticize criminal and violent actions in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, function to represent the stories of

violence in an acceptable and entertaining manner drawing the audience to feel pleasure in response to painful actions.

2. To analyze how the films under study reconstruct and reflect the society thereby influencing the understanding of the complexity of the society.
3. To investigate the effect of aestheticization of crime and evaluate its impact on film audiences.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

Crime is one of the most prevalent issues in the contemporary society. A study of crime as a thematic concern is important to the literary body of knowledge since it contributes to people's understanding of the society. Films act as critiques of the society through the actions and events that happen to the characters in the film. Other than entertainment, crime films embody meanings which extend beyond the cinematic depiction to represent a wider social order that defines the relationship between crime and social order. A study of crime films therefore provides valuable information and insight to film critics and scholars.

The study is interested in aesthetics of crime and pain and sought to interrogate how the cinematic techniques used by film makers transforms pain into pleasure. Although scholars have studied films before, how cinematic techniques work to entice the audience to watch actions full of pain in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, which is the focus of this study, has not been studied. This study will enable film scholars and critics to widen their knowledge in the said area in Kenyan films.

This study focuses on stylistic representation of crime in Kenyan films. *Nairobi Half Life*, and *The Kitchen Toto* were selected for this study because they are Kenyan films, have a strong element of crime and violence, are presented stylistically and are primarily produced for entertainment. Though *The Kitchen Toto* is written and directed by an American, Harry Hook,

it is a Kenyan film. It is about Kenya from a Kenyan point of view with a Kenyan audience in mind. It draws its raw materials from the 1950's Kenyan society during the Mau Mau uprising. It is thus a product of Kenya's lived experiences in content, form and setting. since human experience form the basis for filmic expressions, film is a compound product of lived experience. What makes up the totality of a Kenyan film goes beyond its writer/director and language of expression. Featuring Kenya's struggle for independence and shot in Kenyan Kakamega forest, *The Kitchen Toto* is typically Kenyan with experiences which are immediately Kenyan, within Kenyan space from the Kenyan point of view

The two films are excellent filmic expressions of criminal activities presented aesthetically and presented with sensitivity to the stylistic dimensions of the criminal world, turning the criminal organization and activities into a system of aesthetic predispositions. Pain and suffering permeates the plots of the crime films selected and though they contain instances of intense human suffering, they are presented aesthetically thus entertaining the audience while reflecting the societies that produce them. The two films were used by the researcher as a window through which the crime film genre can be further understood.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study analyzed aesthetics of crime fiction in Kenyan film. In doing this, it focused on two crime films: *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, since the element under study, aestheticization of criminal activities in film, is adequately covered in them. Although the two crime films under study deal with a number of concerns and have several elements, this study was limited to analyzing the cinematic techniques used in the films since they are the most significant of the elements as far as the question of enticing and entertaining the audience is concerned.

The study focused on two films only so as to have an in-depth, analysis and a narrow base for argument. The two films are detailed in the elements the study is interested in and were therefore used as a representative of the other crime films to avoid subjecting the research to repetitive study of similar elements in homogenous films.

Although there are other Kenyan crime films, the study focused specifically on *Nairobi Half Life* since it is one of the best production in its category in Kenya owing to its recognition. It was nominated for nine awards at the African Movie Academy Awards, the first Kenyan film considered by the Oscars (in the Best Foreign Language Feature Category), won an audience award from the American Film Institute, won a Best Actor award for Joseph Wairimu from the Durban Film Festival, has been an official selection at several international film festivals, has been screened in more than one hundred theaters in the U.S., and has had a long run in Kenyan cinemas. The study focused on *The Kitchen Toto* owing to its unique treatment of crime during the Mau Mau uprising in the colonial Kenya. The interviews focused on the impact the two films have on the audience. However, although I would have wanted to interview a wider audience for a broader base for argument, the language and literacy barriers limited the interviews.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Film: Audio-visual works of art which involve photographing actual scenes with a motion camera.

Kenyan film: A Kenyan film is a film written about Kenya and embodies Kenyan experiences within their space from their own point of view. It is from the people, about the people, and for the people with meaning-oriented intentions. Film is a product of lived experiences that constitute themselves as the raw materials for its producer; content, form and setting thus define Kenyan film, not writer, director or producer.

Aesthetics: Principles concerned with artistic beauty

Aesthetics of Crime: The underlying principles that make crime films appeal to audiences

Sign: This study used the word sign in the semiotics sense. A sign in the semiotic sense is anything that can be used to communicate.

Crime Film: A film genre that revolves around the actions of criminals

1.7.0 LITERATURE/ FILM REVIEW

1.7.1 The Paradox of Painful Art

How an object of distress can be transformed to one of pleasure has been a discussion in the academic arena for a considerable period. To answer this question, David Hume (1985) propounded a conversion theory. His argument is that the same objects which evoke pleasure in a tragedy, would give the most unfeigned uneasiness if it were set before the audience in reality. Working with David Hume's assumption, this research attempts to answer the question of why audiences feel pleasure from what appears to be distressful emotions. His ideas guided this research in analyzing how cinematic representations of stylized crime can operate as a source of entertainment for the audience.

John Morreall (1985) propounded control theory in which he attempts to answer the question of paradox of painful art. According to him "fictional experiences are far less painful than those in real life because in regards to fictions, our powers of control are far greater than in real life." My study borrows Morrel's argument that our powers to control pain are greater in fiction and goes further to interrogate what makes our control greater in regards to fiction.

Several critics have dealt with the question of 'paradox of painful art'. One such critic is Aaron Smuts who questions how it is possible for audiences to feel pleasure while watching a horror movie or a tragedy. He writes that "audiences do seek out art that evokes painful emotions and

many artists create artworks that are painful. (Smut's 59). My study gains impetus from Smut's work on theories of painful art and moves forward in a different direction by focusing on how cinematic techniques are used to influence the audience and therefore transform films which depict painful situations into pleasurable spectacles of entertainment *Nairobi Half Life*, and *The Kitchen Toto*.

David Hume, propounds a conversion theory in which he attempts to explain the paradox of tragedy. He argues that "a more pleasurable prominent emotion would override a painful one making the entire experience feels pleasurable in retrospect, and as such, the pain felt is down played. Guided by Hume's conversion theory, this study intends to find out how cinematic techniques function to convert painful emotions elicited by violent actions in crime films to pleasure.

In an attempt to explain the paradox of painful art, Susan Feagin propounded an acknowledgement theory in her paper titled "The Pleasure of Tragedies" in which she argues that when something is part of the content of a work of art, it is almost as if it has been registered from the point of view of the universe. This is soothing because it gives us the sense that certain aspects of life are common to human beings. Feagin insights that sad art can make us feel less alone or 'soothe the pain of solipsism'. This research borrows from this theory the argument that audiences take pleasure in sharing perspective with the work and argue that part of what makes people to watch crime films is because they share the same painful experiences with the characters in the film.

Amy Price attempts to offer an explanation to the paradox of painful art. In her argument, she defends Nietzsche's view and argues that "people find comfort in knowing that the suffering endured is within the realm of human possibility." She argues that such an explanation may account for our feelings of reverence for fictional heroes. My study gains impetus from price's

work on human's ability to endure pain and focus on the techniques film producers use to enable audiences to bear the pain in crime films.

As a result of the domination of crime films, not only have the audience been attracted to the crime films but academic attention too. Adam Lowenstein examined the development of a horror-inflected aesthetic in Franju's two films: *Blood of the Beasts*, (1949) and *Eyes Without a Face*, (1959). He argues that it is within the realm of horror that a synthesis of Franju's desperate influences occurs (Lowenstein 37).

Alex Serguei discusses the aestheticization of banditry as an approach that reveals the ambiguous status of law in contemporary Russia. He argues that 'the existence of law-right or wrong-is a necessary starting point for the bandit myth to produce its captivating effect' and that 'the aesthetic clashes of the bandit style can be seen as a historically specific attempt to organize symbolically the state of outlaw. He writes: 'When the opposition of the legal vs. the illegal loses its normative meaning, it is the stylistic excess of the criminal order of things that is called upon to reflect the condition of social disorientation' (Surgei 358). This study focused on the stylistic re-packaging of the criminal world as a sign of the criminal reality.

1.7.2 Film in Kenya

Although the Kenyan film industry is small compared to the western industries, films have been produced in Kenya since the early 1950s when films such as *Men Against the Sun* (1952), and *Out of Africa* (1985), among others, were produced. Today Kenya can boast of a number of productions mostly relating the experiences of the people especially in the main cities of Kenya. Although the Kenyan Film industry is coming up and dealing with a range of issues in their production, audiences still shun local films for Tanzanian Bongo films, Nigerian Nollywood films, Hollywood and Bollywood films. In an interview with Mbye Cham, Ann Mungai comments that 'most Kenyans have not seen many African and Kenyan films and of

course a film like *Saikati*, a film done by Kenyans, acted by Kenyans, except for two British actors, and shot entirely on location in Kenya.(Cham 93).

Several decades after the dawn of film in Kenya, the Kenyan film industry is still groping in the dark. Njeri Kihang'ah comments about this state of film in Kenya. She writes that "Although Kenya has had an over 60-year exposure to location scouts, it still lags behind Egypt, South Africa, and Nigeria in film production". (Kihang'ah 2). Nyatichi laments about this slow progress when she says " It is very sad that many corporations in Kenya don't realize the potential of film like Nigeria where banks are fighting to sponsor films. Kenya hasn't gotten it the way Nigeria has." (Tichi Sitati, personal communication, August 20, 2008).

The slow progress of the Kenyan film industry can be attributed to the several challenges the industry is facing. According to the Kenya Film Commission and research, the challenges include lack of adequate film schools to offer rigorous training in film production. Tichi Sitati of the Kenya Film Commission surveyed the current courses offered in universities and reported that:

We have schools like Daystar and the University of Nairobi. They teach what we call communication courses. They teach media, but concentrate heavily on journalism. They don't have film lecturers. We want people to know more about the art of film. Don't teach me journalism and camera work and expect me to translate that into a film (Tichi Sitati, personal communication, August 20, 2008).

Finding an audience for their productions is another challenge facing the Kenyan film Industry. Most people prefer the latest Hollywood and Indian movies to Kenyan hits, as such Kenyans lack a market for their films once produced. In response to the challenges facing the Kenyan film industry, the Kenyan government has put some measures to curb the challenges. One such measure was the establishment of Kenya Film Commission (KFC) in 2005 which came into operation in mid-2006. This was followed by the introduction of film production in schools,

colleges and universities drama festivals in 2012. Coordinated by Simon Peter Otieno of the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi, this project saw schools, colleges and universities attempt film-making for the festivals starting 2012.

Nyamwaya et al (undated article) finds film industry in Kenya wanting. He acknowledges the work in existence like *Mlevi*, *Bushtrackers* and *The Rise and Fall of Iddi Amin*. He is however unsatisfied by the part played by the film in promotion of the Kenyan cultural heritage. He argues that Kenyan film should reflect the real Kenyan environment, culture and Kenyan consciousness since a film should be a medium for shaping up both social and economic development of a country. On the Kenyan film industry, he observes that the only thing that the country lacks is confidence, which the African had been denied by the colonial film producer not only through negative representation but also by mystifying film production process, branding it a complex project which only the whites can carry out perfectly. He says due to this, the black Kenyan had almost lost hope in ever producing a quality and up-to-international-standard film.

Kenyan film has attracted the academic attention too. Several scholars have researched on Kenyan film and have come up with different findings. Wanjiku Mukora (2003) widely discusses the problem and need for identity through creative works especially literary and cinematic creations. She bases her argument on Wanjiru Kinyanjui's feature film *The Battle of The Sacred Tree* (1994) and Anne Mungai's *Saikati* (1992). She sees the two Kenyan films as rich sources for understanding the complexities of the post colonial situation. She argues that post colonial films represent what post colonial novels represent. This research borrows this argument and advances films represent the societies that produce them and that *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* represent the post-colonial and the Colonial societies respectively.

The review of literature above has demonstrated that while there have been important changes over time and looking at individual and specific techniques in how crime stories are represented, aestheticized crime films have always been a prominent part of popular entertainment. It has also shown that though the Kenyan film industry is coming up, it is faced with several challenges and many film practitioners continue to lament about its seemingly slow progress. There is thus a need for both the entertainment and academic sectors to focus more on Kenyan films.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by three theories; Semiotics and film theory (third world film theory and psychoanalytic film theory). Semiotics presents a methodology for the analysis of texts regardless of modality making it relevant to this study. Writing in 1967, Roland Barthes writes that “semiology aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not *languages*, at least systems of signification” (Barthes 9). The term text for Semioticians usually refers to a message which has been recorded in some way (e.g. writing, audio-, and audio-visual such as video-recordings and films).

This study uses Ferdinand de Saussure’s strand of semiotics which he called semiology, and which he founded in the social sciences and investigated the nature of signs and the laws governing them. The theory of semiotics guided this study in establishing the underlying conventions; identifying significant differences and oppositions in an attempt to model the system of categories, relations (syntagmatic and paradigmatic), connotations, distinctions and rules of combination employed within *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*.

Since a Semiotic analysis of a film depends on both paradigmatic analysis and syntagmatic analysis. The theory aided the study in studying the text's structure and the relationships between its parts and in identifying elementary constituent *segments* within the text - its syntagms. The theory guided the study in identifying the signs within the text and the codes within which these signs have meaning (e.g. 'textual codes' such as camerawork or 'social codes' such as body language). It further guided the study in identifying the paradigm sets (such as *shot size*: long shot, mid shot, close up) and the structural relationships between the various signifiers (syntagms).

Saussure emphasized that “meaning arises from the *differences* between two kinds of signifiers; *syntagmatic* (concerning positioning) and *paradigmatic* (concerning substitution).” (Saussure 1983:121; Saussure 1974:122). “Paradigmatic relations are those which belong to the same set by virtue of a function they share (such as close up, long shot, and medium shot which all belong to shots and cut, fade or dissolve which all belong to transition). In a given context, one member of the paradigm set is structurally replaceable with another. (For example a long shot is replaceable with a medium shot or a close up while a cut is replaceable with a fade or dissolve) “Signs are in paradigmatic relation when the choice of one *excludes* the choice of another” (Silverman & Torode 255). This guided the study in analyzing how the use of one signifier (e.g. a particular shot such as close up instead of a long or medium shot or a transition such as cut instead of fade) rather than another from the same paradigm set shapes the preferred meaning of a text and manipulates the interpretation of the text. This aided the research in analyzing how:

- The choice of loud sounds, gunshots, screams, sharp lighting, fast movement and abrupt shaky camera instead of composed, soft sound, light and slow movements to shoot

scenes of violence and robbery in *Nairobi Half Life* elicit an abrupt and intense stimulation which create fear in the audience.

- Choosing to edit the scenes of robberies in a fairly high pace instead of standard realist mode of editing emphasizes suddenness and frequency in shot change arresting the viewers.
- Choosing quick cutting instead of fade or zoom out during Mwas and his Gang car jackings draw the audiences' attention to the suddenness of change of actions and the change in tempo of actions signaling the audience that there is something taking place. *Nairobi Half Life* employs quick cutting to film the scenes of robbery instead of fade or zoom out to make the change pronounced and more noticeable.
- Choice of a hand-held camera instead of camera on a molly during Mwangi's father's murder scene in *The Kitchen Toto* gives the images a wavering quality, making it shaky and frightening. The scene is filmed at night amidst screams, burning houses, confusion and running animals and figures.
- Choice of slow motion instead of the normal pace to shoot Mwas after escaping from the police in *Nairobi Half Life* to heightens the audiences' perception of time by expanding the amount of data for a given action. It gives more frames per second than ordinary speed establishes Mwas' mental state.
- Choosing the zoom shot to film the scene following Mwas robbery and the police cell scene where he is seen sad and depressed against the dark wall of the cell; small and forlorn. The zoom-out shot shows the audience the environment in which a point of view and the craft of cinema person or action is located, with the small world often ironically unaware of, or oblivious to the larger.
- Choice to cast adored and highly followed celebrities in Kenyan social media instead of ordinary people in *Nairobi Half Life* shapes the audiences reception of the films.

- Choosing familiar themes and storyline instead of remote or alien stories act as a window into the repressed desires of the film watcher. *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* employ characters and themes which the audience can relate with and foreground impulses which are similarly repressed in many people making the audience to reorganize themselves in the characters in the film.
- Choosing a close-up shot instead of long shot or medium shot to shoot Mwas, in *Nairobi Half Life*, and Mwangi in *The Kitchen Toto* activates the audiences' closeness to the characters in such a way that they identify with the character and support him/her.
- Choice of soft music when Mwas is lonely vs choice of hard rap when mwas gets in to Nairobi and during robbery scenes has a wider thematic bearing to the film since gangster rap songs majorly deal with themes such as crime and gangster life among others. This symbolically marks Mwas' initiation from innocence to gangster life in Nairobi.

Thus paradigmatic analysis aided the study in drawing conclusions on how choices of the codes used and the manipulation of these codes influenced both meaning and viewer interpretation of the text and the impact that the choices have on the genre, the text and the audience hence aiding the research in making a statement on what value the choices of codes and signifiers connotes and how effective the techniques selected can be in conveying the intended message to the intended audience. Thus semiotics guided the study was guided in interrogating how issues such as proximity, sound, camera position and light among others can be manipulated to influence audiences' interpretation and hence liking of a text. The theory aided the study to analyze how camerawork reflect degrees of formality through “*shot sizes* - close-ups signifying intimate or personal modes, medium shots; a social mode and long shots an impersonal mode” (Kress & Leeuwen 130-135). This aided the study in drawing conclusions on how the represented physical distance between the observed and the observer, signified by

shot sizes and zones of proximity, encourages feelings of emotional involvement with the characters or critical detachment in the viewer. High angles (looking down on a depicted person from above) were interpreted as making that person look small and insignificant, and low angles (looking up at them from below) make them look powerful and superior. A close-up shot activates the audiences' closeness to the character in such a way that they identify with the character and support him/her in contrast to the mid-shot which distances the character from the viewers.

While in film and television, paradigms include codes such as shots or ways of changing shot (such as cut, fade, dissolve and wipe), media or genres are also paradigms, and particular media texts derive meaning from the ways in which the medium and genre used differ from the alternatives. This aided the study in interrogating how the emotions elicited by portraying criminal activities and violence in news or reality show would differ from criminal activities and violence in film. It guided the study in analyzing how choosing to represent criminal activities in the pre and post colonial Kenya in form of film; *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life* would be a source of entertainment as opposed to airing the same in a reality show, news or as a documentary. This aided the study in concluding that messages are understood according to the genre or mode of presentation and that the same image may have very different meanings within different narrative genres and contexts of reception. While murder, for instance, may be 'painful' on news or reality show, it may be a source of entertainment in a film.

Pradigmatic analysis further aided the study in analyzing how choices of certain signifiers and not others helps to 'position the text's readers', the implication being that the choices influence the 'reading' of the texts hence making 'a statement'. For example if the whole film is edited in standard realist mode editing, it says very little other than that it is conforming to a norm. But

if a given scene is filmed out of a hand-held camera which gives the images a wavering quality, making it shaky and frightening, setting the scenes apart from the rest of the film indicating that it is to be viewed differently, it will be interpreted as 'making a statement'. This aided the study in analyzing how the violent scenes in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* were set off in order to shape the audiences responses. The analysis of paradigmatic relations aided the study in defining the 'value' of specific items in the text, such as how the choice of cast, editing, and language among others influenced the interpretation of the texts. Applying the concept of marked forms further aided the text in analyzing characterization and cinematography used in the texts. It guided the study in analyzing how the techniques of presentation used aimed at making the main characters 'marked'. Guided by this tenet, the study analyzed how the characterization and cinematography reflected a series of binary oppositions – close up vs long shot, level shots vs overhead, fast vs. slow pace, abrupt vs. gradual, excited vs. calm, active vs. passive, detached vs. involved 'positive' vs. 'negative' qualities among others. These binary oppositions in paradigmatic analysis aided the study in determining how the protagonists are presented versus how the antagonists are presented as well as how the scenes of violence are represented versus non-violent scenes. This aided the research in analyzing how the characterization of the protagonists; Mwas in *Nairobi Half Life* and Mwangi in *The Kitchen Toto* versus the other characters ensures that the audience identify with or support the main character. The main characters in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*; Mwas and Mwangi respectively are made attractive and adorable while the other characters around Mwas and Mwangi come across as repulsive so as to accentuate the stars' goodness.

The binary opposition further aided the study in analyzing the antagonistic systems existing within the texts under study; the colonialists' imperialism and the natives' resistance in *The Kitchen Toto* and that of the urban haves and the rural have nots in *Nairobi Half Life*.

A syntagmatic analysis involves an analysis of how each *frame, shot, scene* or *sequence* related to the others. Syntagmatic relationship aided the study in 'reading' the films. For instance when viewers encounter a shot in which someone is looking off screen, the next shot is usually interpreted as what they are looking at. If viewers encounter a shot, for example, of the liberty statue and the next shot is of children playing football, viewers 'read' that the children are playing football in New York. When viewers encounter a person sleeping and who suddenly wakes up and the next shot is of children playing football, viewers 'read' that the person sleeping has been woken up, probably, by the noise of the playing children. Such interpretations are not 'self-evident' but are a feature of a filmic editing code.

Film theory provides the essential framework for understanding films' relationships to reality, other arts, viewers and society at large. This study will be guided by third world film theory. Third world theory emerged as third world countries started attaining independence. Third world's theory proponents proposes a new cinema that contrasted Hollywood, and which represented the political colonial power in the film. The third world theorists are premised on nationalism and expect films to be from national industries portraying national experiences, produced in national language. Proponents of the third world theory hope to recover the national by eliminating the foreign. The theorists resented not only Hollywood domination of distribution circuits but also its caricatural representation of their (third world) culture and history. As a response to such caricatures, third world critics advocated for that would voice the third worlds' experiences and concerns.

Third world theorists suppose that the third world film maker should speak for the oppressed. Third world cinema should not be viewed as a poor relative of the Hollywood but a genuine part of the world cinema. Third world film theory therefore guided this study in discussing the extent to which *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* reflect the precolonial and the

postcolonial Kenyan societies respectively. It aided the study in making a statement on how Kenyan film is not a photocopy of Hollywood but imbued with a Kenyan voice and view taking a thematic turn from most of the films made in Kenya before. Earlier, Kenya was represented exclusively by external film industries using Kenya as a location to tell their own stories. Today, Kenya is redefining itself in her films, and also exploring various themes reflecting their social positions and making statements about their societies.

Third world film theorists created a set of interrelated questions, answers to which (though diversified) provide the main tenets of the third world film theory. Its concerns include among others the following: How best can film express National concerns? Which social experiences were neglected by the cinema created by colonialists? Who were progressive nationalists' films to be produced and financed? Which were the appropriate strategies for the colonised, Neocolonised and the newly independent countries? What was to be the role of the independent producer, script writer and the place of auteurism within the third world cinema? What role did the state play in resisting Hollywood dominance? How would the third world cinema conquer their own domestic market? Should it adopt Hollywood production and continuity codes? What was the appropriate language for this kind of film? To what extent should this film incorporate indigenous popular cultural forms? What cinematic language was most appropriate? To what extent should films incorporate indigenous popular cultural forms? What was the relation between third world film makers and the people to whom they represent?

1.8.1 Psychoanalytic Film Theory

Psychoanalytic criticism holds that “literature is fundamentally entwined with the psyche”. This research was closely guided by the audience's unconscious which, according to film theorists, is prompted and shaped during film viewing. The audience's unconscious approach to film analysis focuses on how the actions of film characters (behavior and dialogue) can be

interpreted as manifestations of the audiences' unconscious insofar as they come to identify themselves with the characters when they watch a film. This aided the study in analyzing the psychological mechanism behind how the cinematic techniques used by the film producers impact on the viewers.

Sigmund Freud's argued that the human mind is divided into two; the conscious and the unconscious. The unconscious, he says, encompasses visceral desires, fears and repressed wishes. This implies that thoughts that are considered undesirable to the conscious mind are pushed into the unconscious mind. Crime films being violent and terrifying, are embodiments of what lie in the unconscious thoughts. Psychoanalysis aided the study in explaining how crime films draw audiences to watch them by shedding light on filmic projections of the unconscious mind and the interpretation of personality development, revealing significant metaphoric illustrations of the human mind and its personality traits. The theory aided the study in understanding the role of crime films as a doorway into the unconscious and hence the repressed desires and instincts of the viewer. Psychoanalysis further guided the study in analyzing how such negative emotions as fear and disgust produce spectatorial pleasure. It guided the study in analyzing how the terror and fear generated by the violence in the films can be said to stem from the repressed fears or desires. Freud's argument aided the study in analyzing the audiences' behavior through the analysis of mental processes hence giving an explanation as to how the cinematic techniques function to create pleasure in the audience.

1.9.0 METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative approach to research as this was considered an appropriate way to gather data on the subjective dimensions of how cinematic techniques function to create pleasure in the audience. For the purposes of this research the data comprised of textual analysis

and interviews. The unit of analysis was cinematic techniques that were discernible throughout the texts and viewer responses. However the emphasis was based on how the techniques function rather than the techniques themselves. Technique identification was largely inductive but some elements in the data lent themselves to deductive identification. Overwhelmingly, the majority of the 'hows' of the techniques were inductively identified as the specific nature of how the cinematic devices function to create pleasure from a psychological perspective had not been studied before.

The study adopted several approaches in obtaining the needed data. Firstly, a close and critical watching of the films under study to identify the techniques used by the film producers to attract audiences to watch crime films and how these techniques function to create pleasure. Secondly, I interviewed selected respondents to determine the effects of the films on the audience. In addition, I obtained secondary data on crime films and the films under study from the library, internet, and journals within the scope of the study. These were read and analyzed as per the demands of the study

1.9.2 Study Focus and Sampling

The study used purposive sampling to select the sample respondents. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable the researcher to answer research questions. It is a choice, the purpose of which varies depending on the type of purposive sampling technique that is used. Since the study was interested in a specific characteristic; what makes the audiences to feel pleasure in response to crime films which feature violence and instances of intense human suffering, I used purposive sampling technique to specifically select only the respondents who enjoyed watching crime and violent films in order to find out what makes them to enjoy watching the said films.

In sampling the films to be analyzed, the following factors were considered: The films had to be Kenyan, they had to have a strong element of crime and violence, crime must have been presented stylistically in the films and fourthly the films must have been primarily produced for entertainment.

I interviewed selected respondents from Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County. Fifty sample respondents were drawn from Mumet Secondary School, University of Eldoret and Hawaii Estate in Eldoret since this population consists of persons of 18 years and above and are easily accessible. This was important for the study since the films under study are rated 18, therefore suitable for adult viewers.

1.9.3 Data Collection Instruments

The study employed questionnaires, oral interviews, observation and focus group discussion in obtaining the data needed. The questionnaires were used to provide evidence of patterns amongst the groups. While interviews gave a more indepth insights on participants attitude, thoughts and actions. An open ended questionnaire and interview schedule attached as an appendix was used. The questions for the interview were devised after a survey of literature that was available on the topic under study. The theoretical frameworks that influenced the construction of the interview were semiotics and psychoanalysis. The oral interviews were recorded on audio tape and then transcribed verbatim.

1.9.4 Data Collection

I collected two broad types of data: filmic signs and viewer responses. The former was identified through critically watching the films under study and the latter obtained from respondents who were requested to fill questionnaires or answer oral interview questions after watching the films. The questions in the questionnaires and interviews were guided by the research questions and designed to determine the impact the cinematic techniques used in the

films under study have on the audience. The responses from the respondents identified helped the researcher to determine the relationship between the codes identified earlier in the study and the audiences' responses.

Data collection was guided by semiotics. It began with a close and critical watching of the selected films; *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*. Semiotics aided the study in collecting signs such as words, images, movements, gestures, sounds, and music operating within *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* in order to identify the codes (such as camera work and body language; cast) within which these signs have meaning. Having identified the codes within which the signs have meaning, the study continued to identify the paradigm sets (such as shot size: long shot, mid shot, close up; shot range) and the relationships between the various sets, signifiers and their functions in the text. Using the paradigm sets identified, the study interrogated how the codes in the films relate to one another and how meaning of the text and the text's impact on audience is influenced by manipulating these codes, all in an effort to make a statement on the techniques that the texts employ, how the techniques function and the impact that the codes have on the genre, the text and the audience.

The study also identified sounds used in the films under study: diegetic sound emanating from the action in the story, non-diegetic sound, and simulated sounds, in order to determine how music serve as a technique to 'anchor' the images in the interests of establishing how music aids the films to bring out its effect on the audience.

1.9.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

After data collection, the data from questionnaires, oral interviews and discussions were analyzed separately, then compared to come up with a meeting point among the different sets. An overall pattern was then drawn as a conclusion from the points of concurrences.

The analysis was a detailed interrogation of how the sign used influences the interpretation of the text, what value the choice connotes and how relevant a technique can be in conveying the intended message to the intended audience. The analysis focused on the techniques employed by the films in terms of how the techniques employed by the film producers function to influence the audience.

Accordingly, the first task was to analyze the codes gathered from the films and determine their purpose in the text. The responses from questionnaires and interviews were then analyzed in terms of the impact the films generally and specifically the techniques used in the film have on the audience. The outcome of the project is a detailed description of the types of techniques found in the two films under study, and how the techniques function to create pleasure.

The analysis adopted a semiotic framework which is based on the tenets of semiotics. The format of analysis was as follows;

- Analysis of the codes based on their functions in the texts
- Analysis of the audiences responses to the films from questionnaires and interviews
- Analysis of the relationship between the techniques used in the films and the response from the audience
- Analysis of how manipulation of the codes used in films can impact on the audiences
- Analysis of the statements the films make about the society

The analysis and the research findings are presented in three chapters as follows.

1.10.0 CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

Chapter I

Introduction

Chapter II

Crime Film as a Social Commentary

This chapter gives an overview of what the two films under study are about. It analyzes the social issues presented in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*. It interrogated issues such as what prompts people to move from rural to urban areas, how socio-economic issues can contribute to one becoming a criminal, and how the society can criminalize a specific class/group of people. The chapter is based on the argument that films mirror the society and that the films under study foreground cinematic metaphors in realism.

Chapter III

Aesthetics of Crime

This chapter gives an analysis of the specific cinematic devices used by *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* and how the techniques work to present the violent and painful actions in an acceptable way. The devices were identified through critical watching of the two films; *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*. The chapter is based on the argument that it is how crime narratives are presented that makes them attract the audience or not.

Chapter IV

Crime Films as Entertainment

This chapter analyzed the responses from selected respondents to determine if the crime films under study; *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* entertain the audience or not, what it is in the films that attract them to watch these crime films, and what, exactly, they find entertaining. The responses were obtained by use of questionnaires and oral interviews and analyzed in terms

of their relation to the cinematic devices identified in chapter two. The chapter is based on the argument that there is a relationship between the cinematic devices employed in the films and the audiences' responses.

Chapter V

Conclusion

This chapter forms the overall conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 CRIME FILM AS A SOCIAL COMMENTARY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter interrogates the two films; *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* with a view to establishing the extent to which films can reflect and critique the society. It focuses on how the forces present in the colonial and postcolonial Kenyan governments divided people in terms of 'us' and the 'other' (colonizer-colonized in *The Kitchen Toto* and haves and have nots in *Nairobi Half Life*) with the process of 'othering' resulting into alienation and loss of identity. It further traces the protagonists' conscious struggle and movement to relocate themselves from the strictures and imprisoning experiences of 'othering', appraising the protagonists' denial of this alienation in their acceptance of homecoming. The chapter lays bare social issues such as how socio-economic issues can contribute to one becoming a criminal, and how a specific class/group of people in the society can be 'criminalized' in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* respectively.

The forces present in colonial and postcolonial Kenya have been developed in *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life* respectively by foregrounding characters and situations typical of the respective societies. Though works of fiction, the films have employed on the spot shooting, authentic characters and language creating authentic Kenyan stories. Though the characters in the films are all fictional, Kenya in the 1950s was controlled by British Colonial authorities, Kenyan freedom fighters rose against the colonial government and the post-colonial Kenya is paralyzed with assorted post-colonial problems.

2.2 Identity and Homecoming in *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life*

The Kitchen Toto, to begin with, is a complex cultural, historical and political film which has substantial ties to Kenyan history and to the issues of colonial ideology which ‘robbed’ Kenyans of their land and identity and defined them as the ‘other’, and their subsequent struggle to reclaim both. *Nairobi Half Life* examines the failure of the postcolonial Kenyan regime to uphold the principles that drove Kenya to independence: equal opportunities, equal distribution of wealth, jobs and employment among others. It reflects the post-colonial Kenyan government and how it has ‘redefined’ people in terms of ‘us’ and the ‘other’ robbing scores of Kenyans of a sense of belonging; ‘Us’ in the post-colonial Kenya being those who belong- in terms of material wealth and power. In an attempt to find a sense of belonging the rural folks move to the cities in search of a better life.

The Kitchen Toto talks about the identity crisis that ensued with the coming of the colonialists to Kenya. It addresses problems of isolation, land alienation, frustration and negation of an individual. Through the plight of the young Mwangi and the Mau Mau, the film foregrounds the pain Kenyans experienced within the colonial situation. The colonialists assumption of their own superiority, over the Africans whose lands they invaded created an identity loss for their subjects. They saw their culture as the only civilized, sophisticated and ‘metropolitan’ one. On the contrary, they defined the natives as savages, barbaric, backward and undeveloped. The colonizers therefore not only ignored the customs, religion and morals of their subjects but also disintegrated them. They saw themselves as the center from which the rest of the universe should be defined. The colonized were thus defined as the “other”. The effect of the ‘othering’ was to impose upon the Kenyan the western culture which led to a subsequent loss of their heritage and identity.

Culture and religion entails a community’s identity. The colonialists’ inversion of the Kenyan’s culture and their subsequent imposing of Christianity upon them was thus a dislocation and a

destruction of the Kenyan's identity. In *The kitchen Toto*, colonialism coupled with Christianity dislocated Kenyans from the realities of their traditional culture. As a result some of the Africans' values such as masculinity were undermined. This destruction of the means to self-identity, as seen through Mwangi, left some Kenyans at cross roads; belonging to different cultures one of which destroys the other. Mwangi is alienated and the confusing experience of mixing the two cultures destroys him. He is thrown to confusion and is trapped between two cultures unable to decide whether to place his loyalty with the British, whose money supports his family, or the Mau Mau, the people of his tribe. At one point he assists the Mau Mau fighters to escape when they are rounded by Mr. Graham's soldiers, at another he tries to save Mrs. Graham from the Mau Mau and later attempts to save Graham's baby from the Mau Mau. His indecision proves fatal; he dies in the hands of his own master having been rejected by both his master and the people of his tribe.

Upon realization that Christianity as a religion and a cultural force is responsible for Kenyans' alienation from their land, culture and identity, the Mau Mau attempts to reclaim their true selves by fighting against the alienation engendered by their sojourn in Christianity and the new culture, and to return to their reality. They attempt to make a fulfillment within the cultural and religious sphere of their ancestral people by administering a traditional oath. This fulfillment, a sense of homecoming, develops through a struggle to drive the white man out of their land, a move aimed at arriving at a socio-cultural and national identity they can identify with as their own. The Mau Mau fighters thus radically departed from the Western dominion and embarked on a journey to Freedom by fighting Christianity and Colonialism, which was the source of their alienation and which underlined the cultural forces out to destroy their identity.

Nairobi Half Life on the other hand foregrounds the post-colonial Kenyan government and its redefinition of people in terms of 'us' and the 'other'; 'Us' in the post-colonial Kenya being

those who belong- in terms of material wealth, and power. Set in 2012 Kenya, the film majorly deals with the twin theme of crime and violence. This is attributed to the fact that there is prevalence of crime and violence in postcolonial Kenya which parallels a history of crime and violence that is generally attributed to the youth in postcolonial Africa. According to Tom Odhiambo, “the prevalence of juvenile delinquents and the related acts of violence and criminality could be read as indictors of the failure of the postcolonial Kenyan State to ‘include’ their young men (and women) into the mainstream of society. There is a correlation between marginalization of the youth in society and their adoption of anti-social behavior as strategies to access material resources” (Odhiambo 134).

In *Nairobi Half Life*, the rural folks have been left behind in terms of development creating a sense of alienation and loss of a sense of belonging; as a result they move to the cities in search of a better life making the cities crowded. In turn lack of jobs and proper housing set in as the city gets more and more crowded. Lawlessness sets in and the police fail to maintain law and prevent crime, instead taking part in crime by protecting the criminals. Mwas, the film’s main character represents the rural folk and their move towards the city of lights in search of a better life, revealing the problems inherent in the post-colonial governance. It foregrounds the fact that though these colonies have attained an independent status, these nations of the Third World face a lot of economic, social and political problems such as bad governance, rural-urban migration, corruption, poverty, crime and violence, among others.

The society in *Nairobi Half Life* is built on different class structures; the high social class and the low social class. Those in the high social class live affluently, drive big cars and fight to maintain their social status as the low in the society fight to survive. Ruth and Amina, for example, sell their bodies in the brothel for as little as twenty shillings in order to survive. Others like Mwas having failed to make it in the village set out to Nairobi to forge a living. He ends up on the streets of Nairobi, jobless and homeless forcing him to join a gang which

specializes in stealing motor vehicle parts, both for a sense of belonging and to earn a living. The film further shows how certain facilities, such as theatres, are only accessible to the urban residents. For Mwas to achieve his dream of becoming an actor, he had to move from his rural home to Nairobi. At the national level there is joblessness, especially amongst the youth which increases the rate of delinquency.

2.3 Re-creating the Past: Film as a Historical Artifact

2.3.1 *The Kitchen Toto*

The Kitchen Toto and *Nairobi Half Life* can be viewed as artifacts of the colonial and post-colonial Kenya respectively. *The Kitchen Toto* is a historical and political story set in the 1950s Kenya during the colonial period. During this period there were political, social and historical changes taking place in Kenya making the historical aspects of the film just as important as the personal and psychological aspects of the characters. Kenya in the 1950s was a place of increasing tension and dramatic political, economic, and social changes. During this period, Kenya was a British colony and there was a wave of the Mau Mau blowing through the central Kenya. Conflicts between the Mau Mau fighters and the colonialists were fast developing, their seeds being in the colonial pattern of social and economic developments. Kenyans' oppression in the hands of colonialists brought about a series of conflicts which gave rise to freedom fighter groups, one of them being the Mau Mau uprising.

It all begun with the 1884-1885 Berlin conference which was convened to partition Africa in an attempt to settle the territorial disputes arising from the Congo region and other parts of Africa. This gave rise to colonial activities which saw East Africa being divided into territories and Kenya became a British colony. The British government founded the East African protectorate in 1895 and soon after opened the fertile highlands to white settlers. This was followed by cruel evictions of the Africans from their lands to give room for the white settlers.

The Africans thus lost their land to the white settlers and became squatters in their own land. In October 1947 for example, the colonial government brutally evicted African squatters from the Olenguruone settlement scheme and forcefully settled them at the semi-arid Yatta region of Machakos. The Africans lost houses, livestock and unharvested crops. Poor living and working conditions followed as the landless Africans were now forced to work for the Britons in their farms in order to raise money to pay taxes to the government. The Africans working on the farms were mistreated. They had pathetic living and working conditions in the white settler farms where they provided labour; their huts were dilapidated, they wore tartans and although they were provided with food, it was usually posho (maize), as a result they suffered malnutrition and were severely punished at the slightest excuse and even killed by their employers. On 5th September 1947, for example, a number of African workers were massacred following a strike at the uplands Bacon factory which provoked the urge of retaliation. The killers were not punished.

These changes, among others, set the stage for freedom fighting among different communities one of them being the Mau Mau uprising. When the uprising began, it got support from the unemployed urban Africans, many of whom were disillusioned World War II ex-soldiers. The officials of the central committee coordinated the movement while also organizing for oath taking. The oath was mainly for two reasons: first to ensure that the members remained loyal and honest and could be relied on to keep the secret of the movement and secondly to inspire courage and unite the members to one cause. *The Kitchen Toto's* plot is driven by this oath taking and the consequences of betrayal of the oath. The film opens with a section of the Mau Mau fighters asking mzee Moses; a clergy man, to convince his congregation to take the 'thenge' oath. Throughout the film, the Mau Mau officials organize for oath taking as they fight to drive the white man out of their land. Betrayal of the oath would lead to instant death and any contrary behavior was dealt with harshly by the Mau Mau. Moses faced his brutal

death in the hands of the Mau Mau after he failed to convince his congregation to take the ‘thenge’ oath and instead asked those who had taken the oath to step forward and denounce the oath. Mugo, the police commandant’s cook too is hanged after he failed to behead the police commandant. The Mau Mau movement begun with that oath as Kenya embarked on its long journey to national sovereignty. However the journey to sovereignty was not smooth. Since different people adapted and adopted British ways to varying degrees, some were loyal to the white man while others resisted. As such there was conflict not only between Africans and British but among native peoples as well. Betrayal by fellow Kenyans who collaborated with the colonialists was not tolerated. Such conflict between groups in the colonial Kenya is the theme of the film *The Kitchen Toto*. It is set against the backdrop of colonialism, conflicts between the colonialists and the natives, conflicts amongst natives, oath taking and Mau Mau’s struggle to drive the white man out of their land.

2.3.2 Authenticity in *The Kitchen Toto*

Although *The Kitchen Toto* features the 1950 Kenya, some aspects of the film misrepresent the colonial Kenyan society. Being a historical film, the question of truth and sincerity cannot be ignored. Though it is a common belief that film is a mirror of the society, *The Kitchen Toto* gives an unrealistic picture of the Mau Mau in relation to Kenyan Independence. The film begins with a caption “Kenya colony 1950” followed by another caption “A movement had begun amongst the kikuyu tribe to reclaim their land and achieve independence from the British.” The film opens with a section of the Mau Mau fighters calling upon Moses’ support in driving the white man out of Kenya as seen in the conversation between Kamau, a Mau Mau fighter and Moses, a clergy man.

(At night, Kamau together with some Mau Mau fighters ask to speak with
Moses)

Moses: If you must speak it now then come in, there are no private matters between me and my family.

Kamau: Mzee Moses we want you to help us, it's a small matter. We want you to speak in your church. The Europeans have our best land and we still scratch about it. Muzungu arudi Uingereza Mwafrika apate Uhuru.

Moses: (Interrupting Kamau).....stop! Your intentions are all wrong and you are crazy to think that I'm going to ask my congregation to take your thenge oath...now leave!

The film thus opens with a call to fight for Kenya's independence. The entire film then details the Mau Mau's activities including oath taking, recruiting and fighting the white man. The struggle intensifies towards the end of the film with the Mau Mau getting stronger and smatter and the Whiteman getting more and more desperate. The film ends with the white police commandant lying down in a very desperate state having lost his wife in the hands of the Mau Mau fighters and having failed to capture any of the fighters or get any lead to their base. The film then closes with three captions; "In 1952 a state of emergency was declared in Kenya colony", "During the conflict about 30 Europeans and over 14,000 Africans were killed" and "In 1963 Kenya got independence." The captions at the beginning of the film, the story line and the captions at the end all work together to give an impression that the Mau Mau uprising is responsible for Kenya's Independence. Despite the fact that the film may have a definite focus outside the entire independence events, it however misplaces some facts and therefore could mislead the viewer. Since the film does not feature any other uprising or even mention, the audience gets an impression that the Mau Mau was solely responsible for Kenyan independence. This may imply a misrepresentation of Kenyan history since the Mau Mau was militarily defeated in October 1956 and the Mau Mau leader, Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi,

captured signaling the end of the fighting in the bush. Kimathi was captured, tried, sentenced to death and hanged in February 1957. Kenya got its independence in 1963; six years after Mau Mau was defeated. Kenya's independence constitution was a negotiated document between the British government, the declining settler-based colonial order, and the African nationalists. The negotiations took place in a series of conferences that were held in Lancaster House, London and Government house, Nairobi, in January 1960, February 1962, and September 1963. The first conference, 1960 made it clear that Africans would take over political power and that settler rule was over. It also laid ground for the January 1961 elections which ended with a coalition government. The second conference produced a tight *majimbo* constitution that was formulated by another coalition government. This constitution called for regional government and was actualized by the elections of May 1963. The leader of Kenya African national Union (KANU, Jomo Kenyatta, won the election and set out to dismantle the *Majimbo* constitution. This was done in the third Lancaster house conference that increased the powers of the national government. These important events are missing in *The Kitchen Toto* due to limitation in film making scope. However these omissions may mislead the viewer into misinterpreting Kenyan history. Though the Mau Mau uprising did take place, the Mau Mau was not a national movement as most writings put it. The fighters were parochial focusing on the 'here and now' as opposed to reacting to a larger ideology of independence. Mau Mau was one of the units of resistances across Kenya struggling to reclaim their land from the colonialists.

The Mau Mau question, especially in relation to its relevance to Kenyan independence, 'presence' has dominated Kenyan social and political arena since pre-independence days. Different fictional writers, film producers and politicians have recreated the Mau Mau determining how the group is perceived by the masses. Some of these fiction writings on Mau Mau include *Carcass for Hounds* (1974) by Meja Mwangi, *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) By Ngugi

Wa Thiong'o, *Simba* a 1955 film directed by Brian Desmond Hust, and *The Oath* a 2005 film by Nathan Collete among others. These different interpretations have changed its original meaning and significance making the Mau Mau to signify whatever the narrators wish it to signify. Since these narratives about the past influences the society's beliefs, these interpretations have influenced what the society believe about the Mau Mau. *The Kitchen Toto's* treatment of the Mau Mau in relation to Kenyan independence is an example of how artists can rewrite history through their interpretations or 'misinterpretations' of the past. Thus contrary to the assumption that literature mirrors the society, writers and film producers can misrepresent the society hence distorting history and thus wrongly influencing people's beliefs and knowledge about the societies.

Although the Mau Mau veterans are today celebrated as heroes, the question of whether the Mau Mau fought for Kenya's independence has shifted over time with people across generations interpreting it differently. Nobody can deny that the Mau Mau existed; it did exist, however, the big question is what was the Mau Mau? Was it a kikuyu or a National movement? Was it responsible for Kenya's Independence? Different political groups have used the Mau Mau uprising to further their own political goals turning the Mau Mau into a form of political debate. Many years after Kenya attained its independence, there are still no conclusive answers to what the Mau Mau was. Getting correct information about Mau Mau has proved very difficult since many of those who claim to be ex-Mau Mau forest fighters never stepped in the forest. Teresa Peterson in her 2016 thesis titled "Mau Mau Remembered: How Narratives transform and Reflect Power and Identity in Kenya" reports that when she went out to carry out her field work, many ex-Mau Mau forest fighters came out in numbers to give her information. It is only later on that she realised that her first informant as well as several others never entered the forest. She writes:

In my field research, the main problem that I faced was one of choosing the reliable informants. I had faced the problem of knowing whether or not an informant was an ex-freedom fighter as he claimed to have been. I decided in a group interview then I discovered that one of my very first informants, who had told me that he had been a brigadier in the forest had actually not entered the forest. (19)

Today many Kikuyus claim that they fought in the Mau Mau war when they did not even get near the forest. Further, no one today accepts that he was a loyalist home guard against the Mau Mau movement. Another problem in getting correct information about the movement is lack of sincerity among people who give information about the Mau Mau forest fighters. This problem started at the end of the war. Waruhio writes that after independence in 1963, the freedom fighters were asked to come out of the forest by the new government. Waruhiu states that:

Men and women, bearing various ranks and titles, came out in large numbers, carrying imported and homemade guns, clothes and other personal belongings; and bringing their sheep and cattle with them. Many of the local Nyeri people who had come to watch the ceremony were astounded to see, among those claiming to be forest fighters, people who had been their neighbours up until a few days before. (17)

This has led to a lot of misinformation on the Mau Mau movement making the information given by the so called ex-Mau Mau fighters contestable. The whole misconception about the Mau Mau having fought for Kenya's independence has been a political issue over struggle for political power in Kenya. Every time Mau Mau is brought up it corresponds with a change in the logos of political power and ideological orientation. Different Kenyan politicians have used the Mau Mau to further their own political goals. In a meeting in Githunguri, in September 1962, President Kenyatta is reported to have said: "Kenyans are determined to have

independence in peace, and no hooligan will rule Kenya. Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated, and must never be remembered again". Since during this period the British was condemning the Mau Mau for being an evil savage group, Jomo Kenyatta portrayed the Mau Mau in a negative light to gain favor with the European powers. At the beginning of the 1970s, Kenyatta's hold in the Kikuyu's Fort Hall and Nyeri areas was unstable and he tried to regain the peoples support by 'returning' part of the independence glory to the region and its history. Since he needed political support he 'rehabilitated' the Mau Mau that he had discarded as an evil group, into the Kenyan historical memory. Kenyatta began to mention the fighters in a positive light and highlighted their struggle and contribution to Kenya's independence. He did this by reworking the entire concept of Mau Mau, narrowing it to a more confined, neutralized and nationally acceptable story that the Mau Mau fought to liberate Kenya.

During the period between 1975-76, the people of the Gikuyu Embu Meru Association (GEMA) dominated by Kikuyu, invoked Mau Mau for yet another political gain. During this transition period they called for a change in the Constitution to have limited term for the vice-president in power and allowed them to organize a wide base of support for their candidate. In order to consolidate Kikuyu support and widen its base in the Fort Hall and Nyeri areas, they called upon "Kikuyu solidarity that dates back to the glorious days of our common struggle". During this period, the house of the late Mau Mau leading general, Dedan Kimathi, was visited, and the GEMA people paid tribute to his courageous leadership.

In 1978, President Moi, a Kalenjine succeeded Jomo Kenyatta. Moi being a Non-Kikuyu President used the Mau Mau to seek support from the Kikuyu communities by reinstating the issue of the frustrated Mau Mau people in the public historical memory. In his first months in office, Moi released twenty-six political detainees who had been jailed by Kenyatta, most of them spokesmen for the abused people. The leading among them was the famous Kenyan

writer, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. In his text *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi details how the Mau Mau struggled for Kenya's independence. The issue of Mau Mau's struggle for Kenyan independence was intentionally retrieved on Independence Day and on Kenyatta's Day. On these occasions, the Mau Mau struggle was always upheld as part of the revived Kenyan history. Songs about the Mau Mau were sung on radio and captions on television during 1st June Madaraka day celebrations and 12th December Jamuhuri day celebrations. In President Moi's speeches new political and ideological ideas were generally invoked, and the Mau Mau revolt always interpreted as a struggle for freedom.

Literary writers and film producers draw their raw materials from the society. The raw material literature draws from the Kenyan society about Mau Mau is based on single sided stories and political debates that have little truth since different groups reconstructed the Mau Mau uprising differently to advance their own political goals. Contestants turned the issue of the Mau Mau into a political debate manipulating history to fit their own political agendas. *The Kitchen Toto* being a historical film feeds on what has already been formed, created, lived, and experienced by the society it reflects. The raw materials about the Mau Mau that the film draw from the society are themselves subjective; created by people who had personal interests in the Mau Mau movement giving a one sided and hence incorrect discourse about Kenya's independence. Though a writer has the ability to recreate history, Harry Hook recreates history of a time that he did not live. Writing in the 1980s, Hook's story of the 1950's Kenya relies on a memory passed on to him by historians, politicians and the natives who lived in the 1950's Kenya and who, as has been seen, manipulated their memories to suit their personal and political agendas. His story is thus one sided and only talks about the Mau Mau giving an impression that Kenya's independence was solely won by the Mau Mau whereas the opposition to British imperialism existed from the start of British occupation. The most notable was the Nandi Resistance of 1895–1905; the Giriama Uprising of 1913–1914; the women's revolt against forced labour in

Muranga in 1947; and the Kolloa Affray of 1950. Reading Kenya's history, one comes across several freedom fighters who were neither Kikuyus nor Mau Mau's. These were such as Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (Luo), Martin Shikuku (Luhya), Paul Ngei (Kamba), Ronald Ngala (Coast), Tom Mboya (Luo), Masinde Muliro (Luhya), Achieng Oneko (Luo), Bildad Kaggia(Kikuyu), Koitalel Arap Samoei (Kalenjin), Essau Khamati Oriedo (Luhya-Abanyore), Kungu Karumba (Kikuyu), Pio Gama Pinto (Asian), Musa Mwariama (Meru), Harry Thuku (Kikuyu), and James Beauttah. *The Kitchen Toto* does not mention any of these struggles.

2.3.3 *Nairobi Half Life*

Nairobi Half Life on the other hand is a post-colonial Kenyan film set in 2012 Kenya. The film majorly deals with the theme of crime which is prevalent in the post-colonial Kenyan society especially among the youth. The film features several sets of youth gangs among them Ndingo's gang, and Mwas' gang. The period after independence opened up economic opportunities for Kenyans as they took up positions initially held by expatriates. Since most of the jobs and opportunities were concentrated in the urban areas, there was acceleration in rural-urban migration. The rapid influx of people into towns created social problems in the provision of amenities and services in areas such as, employment, education, health and housing among others. Due to this, most migrants ended up jobless and homeless leading to proliferation of slums as demonstrated in *Nairobi Half Life*. It is estimated that about 60 percent of Nairobi's population live in slums where provision of essential services is inadequate. According to Government of Kenya sessional paper on unemployment, "most of those who are unemployed in Kenya are the youths. Statistics show that in 2005/06, youths aged 15-19 and 20-24 years had unemployment rates of 25 percent and 24 percent respectively—about double the overall unemployment of 12.7 percent for the entire working-age group". The paper also reported that "based on the 2009 census, the open unemployment rates declined for the youth. Among the youth aged 15-19 and 20-24 years, these rates were about 15.8 percent and 13.1 percent,

respectively-relative to a total unemployment rate of 8.6 percent”. The paper further reported that in 2005/06 and 2009, those who were unemployment in urban areas were about twice as large as the ones in rural rates. This disparity in unemployment rates between urban and rural areas could be attributed to overpopulation in the urban areas with the urban youth unemployment being much larger than that of the working-age population.

These trends imply that there is so much hopelessness among the youth who end up getting into criminal activities in order to survive. That the unemployment rate has increased to 40 per cent can be translated to mean that close to 16 million Kenyans have no formal employments with most of the employed lot being under paid hence unable to take care of their day-to-day needs. As such when these unemployed and frustrated youths sit together, chances are that they do not discuss how to get jobs since they have tried and know too well that their chances of getting jobs are close to zero but they discuss how frustrated they are for ‘hustling’ without success. This is one of the issues *Nairobi Half Life* deals with. The film advances the argument that congestion of people in towns can lead to social ills created by lack of jobs for those coming to urban areas to look for jobs. Due to frustration as a result of not getting jobs and the subsequent inability to take care of their needs, they end up getting into crime, prostitution and other social evils. Oti and Mwas together with the other gang members get only enough for their food and housing in a slum. Data from the Nation Newsplex project in partnership with the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) indicate that ‘although the rate of crime has been falling, the number of violent crimes reported has been rising’. This can be attributed to a higher population growth rate which contribute to the higher number of crimes reported. IEA’s Chief Executive officer Kwame Owino reported that crime in Nairobi increased by 80% between 2008 and 2012. Unemployment, poverty, crime, rural-urban migration, overcrowding in the cities, and urban youth delinquency among others are the themes covered in *Nairobi Half Life* as well as the situations on the ground in the 2012 Kenya, the period during which *Nairobi*

Half Life was produced. The Kenya Bureau of Standards released a report showing that the cost of living is on the rise due to high cost of food and fuel. The report indicated that as a result of the high cost of living, robbery for men and commercial sex working for women is on the rise in Nairobi. This trend is clearly seen in *Nairobi Half Life* as we see Ruth and Amina, among other prostitutes in the brothel, selling themselves for as low as twenty Kenya shillings, and Mwas and Oti being members of criminal gangs.

The Business daily on 2nd January 2012 reported that in “a survey conducted in 8 provinces using a sample of 2000 respondents, 67% said that the cost of living would worsen with only 17% remaining optimistic that inflation would fall”. This pessimistic attitude shows that most Kenyans have lost hope that the cost of living will improve. When people lose hope they become vulnerable and are most likely to resort to desperate means such as crime to make ends meet as seen in *Nairobi Half Life* where Oti and Mwas, among other criminals, engage in criminal activities for survival.

A report by *The Star* July 20 2016 indicated that a study conducted by Ipsos revealed that crime in Nairobi is about twice the national average. According to the study, “less than half of crime victims reported the matter to the police with 54% saying that they do not want to take the issue further and 40% saying that the police are inefficient. 3% said that the police stations are too far with another 3% saying that they do not report since they fear the police. 44% of those who reported argued that they were not satisfied with the response they got from the police after reporting their cases, most of them claiming that there was weak or no follow up on the investigations. 32% said that there was slow or no response and another 22% said that there was corruption among the police. These findings imply that the police force is less reliable in fighting crime. This is reflected in *Nairobi Half Life* in how the police collaborate with the gang and protect them while sharing their loot in return.

The ineffective criminal justice system has continually made it difficult to deal with crime. In most cases, criminals are released without punishment, under dubious circumstances, even after they have been convicted of an offence. Most of these criminals do not serve a jail term. Once out this way, the offenders tend to be hardened, arrogant and break the law with impunity. One of the themes in *Nairobi Half Life* deals with this failure of the law enforcement agents in dealing with crime. In the film, Mwas meets Oti, a criminal, for the first time at Central Police Station. Oti tells him that since Mwas' case is petty, he is likely to be released the following morning. Upon Mwas confiding in him that he has nowhere to go to and no one to turn to, he instructs Mwas to look for a man known as Ndingo in a place called Gazza to help him start up in Nairobi. Oti tells Mwas that he will join him later. When Mwas asks Oti when he is coming out of the police cell, Oti replies very confidently that *Kutoka si utoka* (we usually get out) implying that criminals have a way out from the 'long arm' of the law'. Just a day after Mwas is released from the police cell, Oti is out and going about his crime and sharing whatever he gets with the police, showing the viewers that the very police who should help curb crime are themselves increasingly becoming unreliable due to lack of transparency and corruption. Due to this unreliability, people have little confidence in the effectiveness of the law enforcement agents in controlling crime. As a result criminal activities have increased.

A study carried out by Prof. Enos Njeru reported that the police-based measures in dealing with crime were rated ineffective by 81% of the respondents who said they had little confidence in the police fighting crime since the police take bribes thereby compromising their responsibilities. His research further revealed that this failure is due to the failure of the government to do their part. He reports that the police face many difficulties such as ineffective transport services and facilities, proportionally low numbers given population increase, vastness of the area of coverage for each police station, inferior tools compared to those owned by criminals who appear to acquire more sophisticated tools by the days, city planning and

congestion/overcrowding which include illegal structures which provide additional hideouts for criminals making it difficult for the police to effectively carry out their operations, and lack of commitments among police officers most of whom are poorly paid and thus demoralized by their terms of service reducing their efficiency in fighting crime.

The same study by Prof. Enos Njeru reported that 'poverty was found to be widespread among the residents of Eastleigh area in Nairobi. The report indicated that slightly over one-half (55% of the sample) earned less than 5000 per month while less than one-third (29.3) earned between 5000 to ksh. 10000. These figures imply a situation below the poverty line. That a big percentage of people in Nairobi fall below the poverty line can be the cause of the high and increasing rate of crime as well as the presence and increase of street families in Nairobi.

A number of studies have shown that crime in Nairobi is alarming. Overpopulation and overcrowding are some of the factors which have contributed to crime as well as making crime difficult to deal with due to the irregular housing arrangements in the estates. To deal with lack of housing resulting from overpopulation, people resort to putting up extensions and other illegal rental structures to provide extra space for incoming residents some of who are criminals as a result of unemployment and high cost of living. These unplanned constructions allow for criminal activities as well as allowing criminals to escape while being pursued by law enforcement agents. In *Nairobi Half Life*, Ndingo and his criminal gang have their hideout in one of the informal structures in Gazza. It is this same place that later on Mwas and his gang meet Ndingo to get guns for their robberies and carjacking. When Mwas's gang is later rounded by the rogue police, they are locked up in one of the informal structures. Almost all the snatch and run thievery in *Nairobi Half Life* are made possible because of the crowding. One, among the many instances is when Oti snatches a phone from one of the passersby. He easily escapes into one of the dingy corridors where the owner of the phone would not dare follow him for

fear of meeting other gang members. Kenya's rapid population growth and high cost of living which contribute to high rates of unemployment and lawlessness in the city, set the stage for the themes articulated in *Nairobi Half Life*. The film seem to be asking a fundamental question "What happens when the rate of unemployment among the youth keeps growing more than the country's economy does".

2.4 Film as a Mirror of the Society

2.4.1 *The Kitchen Toto and the Society*

Common basis for literary realism is defined as social, political and economic representation of human interaction and society's development. *The Kitchen Toto* rises to this artists' social responsibility of holding a mirror against the Kenyan colonial society. It is influenced by the social and political experiences of the country and highlights the deep-rooted issues touching the 1950s Kenya. It enters deeply into a drama of conflicts and struggles set against a changing Kenya with the conflict between the colonialists and the Mau Mau and conflicts amongst the natives being the riding force that propels the plot. The focus of the film is not on the violence by the Mau Mau but the socio-economic and political scenario paralyzing the Kenyan situation at the time. The film chronicles the betrayal, sacrifice among other problems that Kenya went through in its struggle for freedom. Through the horrifying dilemma of Mwangi, viewers witness the plight of thousands of Kenyans who were trapped in the crossfire of a brutal struggle that would eventually claim several lives.

The film reveals Kenya's violent birth pangs and exposes the horror of colonialism and resistance seen through a child's eye. Working on both the individual and the collective levels, the film presents a picture of life in the colonial Kenya in which thousands died either in the hands of colonialists or their fellow Kenyans. The film does not 'faultyfy' the white high society and idealizes Kenyans as most colonial writings do instead it lays bare the ills of both

the societies during the time. It shows how the white colonialists mistreated the blacks as well as how the blacks themselves killed one another. Mwangi's family is one of the native families which turned against itself. Mwangi's father, a clergy man, is brutally murdered by his own brother, a Mau Mau, for collaborating with the whites; preaching against taking of the 'thenge' oath and asking his congregants to denounce the oath. Mugo, a white police officer's cook is hanged by his own people, the Mau Mau, for failing to collaborate with the Mau Mau in murdering his white employer. Mwangi's family serves as a metaphor for Kenya; a family whose members failure to understand one another tears apart and destroys their lives. The film provides a graphic picture of a nation whose members engage in a bloody struggle and will stop at nothing to regain their land.

The Kitchen Toto is ideological and political; inevitably a historical formation and demonstrates that Kenyan experience is historical, formed through the experience of colonialism. It thus analyses behavioral conditioning that developed in response to colonial domination such as Mau Mau uprising. Mwangi, main character in *The Kitchen Toto*, foregrounds the films' main theme; the effect of colonialism on the psychological state of its black victims. The twelve year old black boy shows how the black colonial subjects lived a life defined by fear and anger. Mwangi is limited by the fact that he has not attained sufficient education due to colonial practices that forced him to live in poverty. Furthermore, he is subjected to endless racism that portrays whites as sophisticated and blacks as either subservient or savage; they can only be white colonialists' servants. Colonialism thus suffocated the blacks making them react with violence.

The Kitchen Toto represents the colonial Kenya. It portrays the disrupting effect an externally imposed power system (the British) has on an internally imposed power system (African traditions and customs). Conflicts within the Kenyan society coupled with external invasion

resulted in disaster which would eventually lead to loss of several lives. In the film two cultures confront their differences. The film portrays the colonizer-colonized in human terms rather than as mere political caricatures and stereotypes. The film has succeeded in showing that though the colonialists imposed themselves killing scores of Africans, the Africans themselves were not angels either. They were divided amongst themselves, betrayed one another and took part in the killing of their own. The whites too killed their fellow whites. Edward Graham, for example, accidentally kills his own mother in an attempt to fight the Mau Mau just as the Mau Mau kill Mugo and Mwangi's father. Both the blacks and whites lack a functional purpose. The white families do not seem to have a clear-cut motivation other than preserving themselves from the native forces and the blacks are simply bent on killing the white settlers to drive them away. Both sides are held up in a time-capsule that does not seem to gravitate towards any destiny. This makes the ending tragically empty with both sides having achieved nothing other than terror on an innocent child.

2.4.1.1 Psychological Effects of Colonialism and Racism on the Colonized

The Kitchen Toto speaks of Kenya's 'unspoken' history. The narrative is an illustration of the harsh reality of the colonial injustices in Kenya and the subsequent struggle for independence. Colonization came with colonial ideology which perpetuated colonial subjugation of the natives leading to massive human suffering in a once peaceful continent. The colonialists emerged as a powerful force socially, politically and economically. Europe's struggle to control the 'New World' came with plundering of both natural and human resources. As a result of this colonial domination, the natives of the 'New World' became poor. The blacks were poor and suffered immensely. While the whites lived in affluent houses, colonial ideology of white superiority and black inferiority subjected the natives to poverty and pathetic living conditions. They lived in dilapidated huts and wore tatters. Bwana John, the police commandant's workers do not share the mansion with their white master, they live in

a separate mud walled and thatched hut with huge gaping holes. They have no furniture and are forced to spread a mat on the floor with nothing to cover themselves with. The ‘servants’ quarters’ is nothing but a space to lay one’s head.



Fig 2.1 Bwana John’s servants’ quarters



Fig 2.2 Bwana John, the white police commandant’s house



Fig 2.3 Bwana John and his wife in front of their house

The colonial subjects' poverty is also seen in the clothes they wear. Mwangi puts on a tattered short, which is contrasted with the clothes the whites wear. Most blacks put on torn shorts or trousers without shirts.



Fig 2.4 A native in tatters digging the ground for earth worms; for food



Fig 2.5 Mwangi and Edward Graham



Fig 2.6 Mwangi in a tattered short with no shirt

Through the young Mwangi, the film enables the viewers to have a glimpse of what the blacks went through in the hands of the colonialists. Mwangi becomes a kitchen toto; a native black servant, at a very tender age after his father is murdered by the Mau Mau, who later forces him to take an oath to liberate their land from the British colonialists. As a Kitchen toto, he is subjected to endless racism by the whites. To begin with, when he, together with his mother

and siblings arrive at the white police commandant's compound, they are not allowed to step inside the house for fear that being blacks, they might dirty or contaminate the house. Edward, Bwana John's son orders them to go and wait behind the kitchen as he calls his mother. Upon his being hired as a kitchen toto, Mwangi is not allowed to step into main house until he is 'clean'. Mugo, one of the native workers is ordered to wash, scrub and disinfect Mwangi before he is allowed into the house. For a 12 year old circumcised kikuyu boy to be bathed naked in full view of everyone including a white woman was a great humiliation. As he is scrubbed 'clean' he cries out of shame and humiliation. The humiliation he endures in such a terrible condition brings to his attention how powerless they are under the white colonial rule. The knowledge of his family's situation does not allow him to rebel and run away from the humiliation he is subjected to by the white colonialist. He is trapped by his circumstances; All he can do is to cry.



Fig 2.7 Mugo scrubbing Mwangi as Mrs. Graham pours disinfectant into the water



Fig 2.8 Mugo undressing Mwangi as Mrs. Graham inspects

After being scrubbed clean and disinfected, Mwangi is given a new dress-like attire and his original clothes set on fire, symbolizing the new image of Kenya after the arrival of the colonialists, purging the old traditions which were labelled evil. He looks at his new attire and cries. Mugo comforts him that the attire does not matter as long as he knows who he is. This wearing of women-like attire symbolizes a loss of their male identity (masculinity) since women clothes are an image of femininity. Whitehead asserts that clothes and other accompanying accoutrement “signify gender and at times sexual identity. The way a person dresses speaks a lot about self-definition and identity formation” (Whitehead:45). The female dress on a man’s body is a metaphor of cross dressing that recognises the instability of the male character which is inconsistent with African cultural presuppositions of normative behaviour. This, for Mwangi and other Africans was an image of submission or resignation to white authority.

As a Kitchen toto, Mwangi does not move in with the white police commandant; his master. He joins the other natives in a dilapidated hut and sleeps on the floor as the whites enjoy the

luxury of the mansion. Edward, the Police commandant's son who is Mwangi's age mate enjoys privileges which Mwangi does not have. Besides, he treats Mwangi with a lot of contempt and orders Mwangi: to clean and brush his shoes while on his feet, to act as a ladder and carry him whenever he needed to climb a tree, and to serve as a dummy on which he practices targeting and shooting. On one of the hunting escapades that Edward drags Mwangi into, they stray into another Whiteman's farm and are caught. Edward takes off and leaves Mwangi to the white man who whips and inhumanly ties him to a tree for trespassing and poaching on his farm. Mwangi is left alone in the forest at night, scared and tied to a tree. On reaching home, Edward does not bother to inform his parents or the workers that Mwangi is tied to a tree in the forest, neither do his parents bother to find out where Mwangi is since he is just a black boy and is not worth the bother.



Fig 2.9 Mwangi strangled, whipped and tied to a tree by a white settler



Fig 2.10 Mwangi in the forest at night tied to a tree

Trapped by these circumstances, Mwangi feels helpless that at his age and having already been circumcised he cannot do anything to help himself and his family. When these feelings of shame and fear overwhelm him, he reacts with hatred and anger. The morning after the night Edward left Mwangi alone in the forest, Mwangi sees Edward and curses calling him *kehe*; an uncircumcised boy. Later, after Mwangi spent the night in the cold forest tied to a tree, the Grahams go for a picnic and take with them Mwangi and the other servants to serve them snacks and drinks. When Mwangi sees the white man who tied him to a tree, he spits in the sandwich before he serves it to him.



Fig 2.11 Mwangi spitting in a sandwich before serving it to the white man

Through the young Mwangi's action, viewers can learn that racism and oppression can turn innocent people into savages. Mwangi's action leads to the conclusion that even the Mau Mau fighters were probably not born violent criminals. They are products of social injustices of the British colonial system and the racism that suffuse it. The innocent Mwangi's mind turns to hatred after he is subjected to inhuman treatment by the Whiteman. The exploration of the young Mwangi's psychological corruption shades light on the psychological effects of colonialism and the subsequent racism on the black population in the 1950s Kenya. Their psychological damage resulted from the constant oppression they faced in the hands of the colonizers. The blacks lived in pathetic conditions with no opportunity for success. Their resulting attitude toward whites was a volatile combination of powerful anger and powerful fear. Mau Mau was thus a product of the colonial system. They conceived of "whiteness" not as individuals but as an overpowering and hostile force set against them and that had to be overcome. As such they did everything they could to fight the colonialists. This included 'forcing' their fellow blacks to take an oath of secrecy and union against the white man and

mercilessly punishing any betrayal. It is on these grounds that Mwangi's father, a clergy man, and Mugo, the white police commandant's cook are brutally murdered. Mwangi's father, is murdered for preaching against taking of 'thenge' oath and asking his congregation to denounce the oath while Mugo is hanged for failing to behead the white police commandant. The killing of a white man or his black collaborators does not evoke guilt in the Mau Mau. Their brutal murder of Mwangi's father and the subsequent torching of his home and later the murder of the cook are both brutal and cold blooded. The film does not spare any of these gruesome cruel details nor does it bring out the Mau Mau as traditional heroes. Instead the film emphasizes the extreme pain and rage the Mau Mau feel which make them capable of such terrible acts as murdering their own in cold blood. By explicitly showing the brutal acts, the film shows that the Mau Mau are not morally innocent. They are not presented as people to be admired, but as frightening and upsetting figures created by colonialism. Colonialism has destroyed their innocence, awakening within them the capability to murder. The Mau Mau's killing of Mwangi's father and the cook was thus not an act against an individual, but a defense against the colonial world in which they lived. Mau Mau in this light is certainly a reaction against colonialism. The hate and fear the white society cultivated into the blacks thus became an inextricable part of their personality. Thus the Mau Mau's descent into criminality and violence is an inherently colonial story.



Fig 2.12 Mwangi's father brutally murdered and hanged upside down

The reality of race relations is brought out so clearly by the living conditions of the natives. The film does not infuse the natives with any of the romantic aspects or traits common to literary heroes. Due to the social conditions in which the blacks lived during the colonial period, the Mau Maus became violent, hateful, and resentful; made by the colonialists. The film illustrates how racism corrupted the minds of the blacks. Blacks were forced to act subserviently before their oppressors. They were feminized by being forced into demeaning menial tasks that were more demanding than a man would demand from his spouse. This resulted to conflicts between the oppressor and the oppressed leading to a revolt to bring a change of the status quo. Kenyan men felt deprived of manhood by white supremacy. They suffered physical and mental hardship, violence, abuse, political disfranchisement, inequality in law and mental disadvantage. They were denied equal opportunity, and in innumerable cases treated in every respect as an underclass. Studies have traced the reasons behind these treatments by the whites on the natives to the ideological and power structures that are intertwined with them and have gathered that the basis of unfair treatment is because of their dark skin colour. The whites viewed themselves as a superior race in terms of political,

economic, social and cultural engagements. Colonialism thus led to changing of definitions, standards and norms of African masculinity, especially those of being the breadwinner, having strength and dominating women. The African men were thus feminized and sometimes reduced to levels lower than that of African women. Mau Mau was thus a revolutionary claim for human dignity and identity. Masculinity is divine in Africa and gender hierarchy was in such a way that men held a superior position to women” (Cross and Marcus :67). Gender roles were clearly defined and men were considered heads of families while women carried out domestic chores such as cooking, fetching water etc. Uchendu describes this superiority when he says that in the African set up, men are regarded as the unquestionable heads of the family and held positions of power from the home and into the wider society. In such a society a man cooking and serving a woman is a humiliation too grave. In *The Kitchen Toto* colonialism reduced fully grown circumcised kikuyu men to cooking for a woman and serving her tea in her bedroom; a psychological humiliation too deep to bear. The African men were discontented at the way the white settlers undermined their African masculine values and forced them into submission. The aggressive tendencies of the white colonialists deprived the African males of manhood defeating them in every essence wanting to take possession of the future as well as the present. Given such conditions, it become inevitable that the blacks would react with violence and hatred. The Mau Mau movement was thus instinctive and inevitable.



Fig 2.13 Mugo serving half naked Mrs. Graham tea in her bedroom

The film emphasizes the vicious double-edged effect of racism: though the Mau Mau fighters' violence stems from racial hatred, it only increased the racism in the society as it confirmed racist whites' basic fears about blacks. Whites effectively transformed blacks into their own negative stereotypes of "blackness. The whites believed that blacks were savages, barbaric and criminals. When Mwangi is found carrying Graham's baby, it is concluded that since he is black, he kidnapped the baby. He is not given a chance to explain the circumstances surrounding his having the white baby. He is shot dead for a crime he does not commit. Racism kills Mwangi just as it killed his father. The film seems to argue that it is only until understanding will exist between blacks and whites that they will be able to perceive each other as individuals, not merely as stereotypes. Blacks perceive whites as a negative force imposed upon them while whites perceive blacks as savages totally incapable of coping with civilized ways. The blacks 'take up' the label and become the criminals they are labeled. Howard Becker (1974), in labeling theory argues that "when someone is given the label of a criminal, they may reject it or accept it and go on to commit crime." The Mau Mau take up their label of brutal savages and murder mercilessly. The title *The Kitchen Toto* itself suggests the aggressive racial stereotype the colonialists labeled on the blacks. It implies that the colonialists have defined the blacks as low class, fit only for menial jobs. Right from a tender age Mwangi is not anything important, he is a kitchen toto; a native black servant.

2.4.1.2 The Effect of Racism on the Oppressor

The film illustrates that racism is destructive to both groups. The white colonialists in the film fall victim to the obvious pitfalls of racism among whites: the unthinking sense of superiority that deceives them into seeing blacks as less than human. This sense of superiority is a weakness on the part of the whites. The blacks live in separate quarters from their white masters. Since the natives' residential area is unsecured, the Mau Mau can get access to the unfenced native quarters to have the black servants take an oath or to organize for the killing

of their white masters. It is the white racist policies which enabled the Mau Mau to succeed in attacking from within. Since the blacks working for the whites were oppressed, it becomes easy for the Mau Mau to use them in plotting against their white masters. When the Mau Mau's were rounded up by the white police and their soldiers, it is the holes in the natives' unkempt huts that served as escape routes. The racism that the whites exhibit create the black savages, who turn on the whites and kill them. In the film, the policeman's wife is kidnapped by the Mau Mau, subsequently Edward Graham in an attempt to kill the 'black savages' shoots his mother dead. Just as racism kills Mwangi so does it the police commandant's wife.

When the blacks are cornered with racism they react with violence which impacts on the white man. The whites' inability to see blacks as human beings play a crucial role in the circumstances of the Mau Mau's rebellion and their subsequent murders. This set of circumstances shows the vicious cycle of racism in colonial Kenya: Mrs Graham's inability to see blacks as human beings causes the blacks to live their lives in fear and hatred thereby turning to violence which in turn kills her. Her actions represents the inability of the colonialists as a whole to see blacks as anything other than the embodiment of their enforced stereotypes of blackness. She begrudgingly pays their wages and treats them with a mixture of contempt and fear. She believes that the blacks are all potential Mau Maus and as such potential murderers. When Mr. Graham tries to explain to her that Mwangi is just a young boy, she replies that they are all potential murderers and that he may be young but he is a Kikuyu and he has taken the *thenge* oath. To her, blacks are potential murderers whether young or old. The whites are just as afraid of the blacks as the blacks are of the whites and their reactions to these fears are the same: defiance and violence. Quite often, in life the oppressed become the oppressor and the abused, abuser. In the film, the white society oppresses the black natives who in turn become violent and kill them.

2.4.2 *Nairobi Half Life* and The Society

Nairobi Half Life holds a mirror against the postcolonial Kenyan society and exposes the social order in the postcolonial society. Whereas in the colonial Kenya the violence was between the colonizer and the colonized as portrayed in *The Kitchen Toto*, In post-colonial Kenya violence is between the haves and the have-nots as seen in *Nairobi half Life*. In the film, Nairobi city is shown as more complicated than an outsider might assume. The film gives a description of the city showing how social and economic conditions can reinforce the crime culture in the society. Societal factors such as poverty are shown to predispose people to crime. In the film, the rural folk seem to be left behind in terms of development. As a result they move to the cities in search of a better life, making the cities crowded and reducing opportunities and employment (Quetelet :157).

The migration from the rural to the urban areas and especially to Nairobi City is a reflection of regional inequality in distribution of wealth. Rural dwellers move out of their poorer rural homes to the city or other destinations with promising economic opportunities. One of the questions *Nairobi Half Life* tackles the rural to urban migration. This inequality dates back to the colonial administration of Kenya which focused on developing a modern sector in urban areas. Due to the concentration on urban development, the country's economy was characterized by the neglect or marginalization of rural areas. Agesa and Kim (2001) noted that " Since the government concentrated on developing the urban areas, job opportunities outside the urban areas were not there." Over the years, these disparities have acted as a strong motivating for people to move from rural to urban areas in search of a better life. Mwas, who aspires to become an actor, cannot achieve his dream in the village since there are no theatres there. He has to move to the city as revealed in the conversation between him and Jose.

Mwas: Naeza kuwaje actor?

(How can I become an actor)

Jose: Aa uko poa, uko poa. Noma ni uko ocha

(You are ok. The problem is that you are in the rural area)

Mwas: Aaaa, naeza kuja Nairobi

(I can come to Nairobi)

Jose: Alafu?

(Then?)

Mwas: Can you help me?

Since there are no theatres in his rural village, Mwas goes to Nairobi to jump start his acting career. In Nairobi, he suffers assorted misfortunes and finds refuge in the hands of other jobless youths. Since Mwas and his friends were jobless they were prone to poverty and poor living conditions in one of the slums in Nairobi. The film takes viewers into the epicenter of life in Nairobi City slums and presents them with a picture of poverty and misery. The gang lives in very pathetic conditions; they share a small room where each member has only a space enough to spread his bedding on the floor. While the men try to survive by becoming criminals, the girls go to an extent of 'selling' themselves for as little as 20 shillings as revealed in the conversation between Mwas and one of the girls at the brothel.

Ruth: Mwas

Mwas: Eeee

Ruth: Wasemaje leo? Si uniamulie soo na nitakuguzisha vizuri hata...(interrupted by Mwas)

(What do you say. Give me one hundred shillings and I'll do you so well, you won't be able to say no)

Mwas: Aaii zii

Ruth: Kuwa mnyonge.. soo tu. Haya basi tufanye 50 bob basi na nitakufanyia style

zingine hata we hujawai kucheki. Za kucome, zile mbaya. (Mwas

not concentrating. Amina is heard screaming as she is whipped by her

client) Si 50 ni sawa, hako ka 50? (Mwas is quiet) Mbao. Blue nao ni

mwisho na mi nakuambia hata Kesho utacome.

(Dont be so mean, only one hundred shillings. Ok let's make it fifty shillings

then and I'll give you imported styles, styles you've never seen before.

Twenty shillings then. Twenty is the last price, and I tell you I know you will

come again) (Amina screams again and Mwas runs to her aid, leaving the girl)

The film depicts the disastrous effects that poverty has upon the society. It shows how poverty in the land reflects on the mind. It exposes men's vulnerability in the face of poverty leaving them desperate, absurd, and resigned to fate, low self-esteem, and loss of social order. The effect of poverty manifests itself in many spheres among them the adoption of deviant-sub cultural norms. The film also reveals that associating with antisocial peers can lead to one becoming a criminal. Mwas, an innocent young man, aspires to become an actor. Obsessed by his quest to become an actor, he sets out to the city of opportunities; just like many young stars who see Nairobi as a city of opportunities. He is robbed of all that he had just as he lands in the 'City of Lights'. Confused and distraught, after his robbery, he paces confusedly along the city and lands in the hands of the Nairobi City Council officials, who arrest him and throw him in the police cell. While in the police cell, he meets Oti, one of Nairobi's street smart gang members who introduces him to his gang upon leaving the Central Police Station. As Mwas lives with Oti and his gang, he learns about the crime culture in Nairobi thereby becoming a criminal by association. Mwas becomes so good at stealing that he even initiates his small snatch and run gang into car-jacking and robbery with violence. As Mwas continues living in

the poverty stricken crowded slum with his gangster friends, morality becomes increasingly ambiguous and complex. The film's depiction of Mwas' life in the city suggests that in a world complicated by poverty, and a failed system, it is not simple to identify right and wrong. Mwas's actions do not represent a moral action; by all standards, he is a criminal. However, though a criminal, the film implies that he is not fully to blame for his actions. Though Mwas makes a conscious choice to join Oti and his gang thereby becoming a criminal, the mindset in which he makes these choices has been shaped by the social structure; poverty coupled with desperation that the society helps to perpetuate. Mwas goes to town an innocent boy in search of his dream of becoming an actor but ends up on the streets, miserable, jobless and homeless. Sociological factors such as the social services gap between the rural and urban areas contribute to people leaving their rural homes to search for opportunities in the city. Social services facilities such as theatres are located in urban areas and as such for Mwas to become an actor he has to move from his home village to the city. With the increase of population in the urban areas comes decrease in employment, housing and transport among others. The resultant joblessness and shattered dreams provide a fertile ground for criminal activities. Mwas' gang comprises of jobless urban residents whose places in the society are determined by forces almost completely beyond their control. A long-standing unequal division of wealth has trapped them within a disadvantaged class. They lack the opportunity to get meaningful employment as Oti says *'hii ni Nairobi huwezi mek bila connection'* (This is Nairobi, you cannot make it without connections). Poverty is thus a trap determined by forces beyond the ordinary citizens' control.

Naturally most people buy into the dream of becoming successful, rich and powerful. Mwas dreams of becoming an actor, just as Daddy M dreams of living big. He acts out scenes from the movies he is selling until he comes across a theatre group from Nairobi, and sets out to Nairobi to achieve his dream. When he ends up on the streets homeless and frustrated, he seeks

refuge in a gang who readily accept him. Many times young people who are threatened by their environment, attacked or hurt and need protection often readily find offered in the street gangs. They then learn the techniques of crime under the tutorage of the gang around them. An individual's peers can influence their decision to commit a crime.

Literature helps us to make meaning of societal issues and understand everyday happenings. *Nairobi Half life* is a realist postmodern film that is concerned with 'social deviance' in the society and how the society defines and shapes it. It goes behind closed doors and reveals the contemporary city as one replete with corruption, robberies with violence, police brutality, poverty, prostitution, alcohol and drunkenness, lawlessness, and hypocrisy of the law among others. It focuses on the consequence of city habitation such as the slums which points to the problems that continue to tear the society apart today. The film like many other African works of fiction has been influenced by the country's cultural and political experiences. It is deep rooted in the economic and social issues touching on the postcolonial Kenya. The film holds a mirror to the Kenyan society reflecting its problems, particularly, the problem of poor governance among other social problems plaguing the Kenyan society today. It satirizes the police force and the ruling elite as an integral part of the problems paralyzing the present day Kenya. In the story, the youths fall into crime because they have been marginalized and left out in developmental issues. The film has demonstrated that the unequal distribution of wealth may cause the underprivileged to fragment away from the mainstream to form their own deviant sub cultures resulting into crime. According to Henry McKay and Clifford R. Shaw of the Chicago School, "poverty and economic deprivation disposes people to crime with informal social structures further making it difficult to maintain social order in a community".

According to the film poverty exposes individuals to anti-social behaviours. When an individual is impoverished and unable to find legitimate ways of meeting their needs, they may end up turning to criminal activities as a means of earning a living. Bowlby says "In an attempt

to satisfy the many needs the society has, poor people resort to criminal activities since they lack the means.” (Bowlby:60). Poverty goes beyond just inability to satisfy basic needs like food, clothing and shelter. It goes beyond lack of essential assets and includes lack of opportunity to improve the living conditions and to achieve a quality of life considered acceptable. Poverty is therefore not just an economic condition; rather, it involves human and social elements that contribute to the lack of capability and the absence of opportunity to change one’s conditions. *Nairobi Half Life* reveals the presence of both income and non-income poverty in the city. Poverty is shown to dispose people to low levels of education. The human capital base of the poor including the level of education is low. As a result, accessing employment is difficult. The few who do access jobs end up with low-skill and hence low-paying jobs. This is because the underprivileged’s main goal is purely survival. Often privileges such as education and opportunities are forgotten and the search for necessities such as water, food, and shelter becomes the sole purpose in life.

Although *Nairobi Half Life* has sub plots, the major plot is set in Nairobi slums. Nowhere in the film do we see the characters preoccupied with education. The characters are people who are struggling to survive. Low level of education is one of the factors disposing people to crime. A study carried out in 2003 in Kenyan prisons showed a a very low level of education among the inmates. This was attributed to their long periods of unemployment and low income jobs owing to their low level of education. Renzetti argues that “ oorly aid individuals tend to engage in crime to provide for their basic needs” (Renzetti 80). Criminals are therefore not their own making; they are products of circumstances beyond their control. The poor and low educated individuals also easily get initiated into alcohol and drugs. *Nairobi Half Life* articulates the disastrous effects unemployment and poverty among the youths has upon the society. It shows how poverty in the land reflects in the mind. The film demonstrates people’s vulnerability in the face of poverty leaving them desperate, disillusioned, absurd with loss of

sense of belonging, low self esteem, loss of sense of judgment leaving them vulnerable to drugs and alcohol. Drugs and alcohol in turn lead the individuals to crime. According to Renzetti “Drugs and alcohol impair people’s judgments and reduce their inhibitions leading them to greater courage.” (Renzetti, 81). In *Nairobi Half Life* we see Mwas, Oti and their friends spending most of their happy moments drinking. When we first meet Ndingo, we find him together with his gang smoking in their dingy hideout. He talks to Mwas amidst puffs. Amina, Otis’ woman in the brothel, has the same habit. She spends most of her time smoking.

Easy access to fire arms in Kenyan black market has been shown in the film as one of the key factors that leads to rising crime rates in Kenya. Mwas and his gang easily graduate from petty snatch and run thievery to carjacking at gun point because they can easily access guns from Ndingo. Every time they needed more guns or needed to upgrade, they went to Ndingo and easily found guns at a cost. The film reveals that crime in the city is a social and economic weaknesses resulting from the failure of the postcolonial Kenyan government to enforce law and order.

2.4.3 The Hypocrisy of the Justice System

The Kitchen Toto shows foregrounds the inequity of the colonial justice system. Mwangi is judged as a criminal and a kidnapper; his case is decided before it even goes to court: in the vicious cycle of racism, a black man found with a white baby is guilty of kidnap regardless of the factual circumstances of the incident. Mwangi is labeled a kidnapper, a Mau Mau collaborator, and a traitor; none of which he was. He receives neither a fair trial nor an opportunity to defend himself. The whites thus attempt to reshape Mwangi’s identity, and by extension the blacks identity, as criminals.

The same hypocrisy of the justice system in the colonial Kenya is present in the Post-colonial Kenya. *Nairobi Half Life* depicts a justice system so undermined by corruption that the concept

of law and justice holds little meaning. The film examines the post colonial Kenyan criminal justice system and finds it wanting, most notably in how the police handle the criminals. In the first place, the innocent Mwas is jailed by the county council of Nairobi for a 'crime' he does not commit, which succeeds only in turning a well-meaning boy into a menace to society. His well meant journey to Nairobi is ironically reversed when he comes out of the cell a criminal, showing how the society can make criminals out of innocent citizens.

The police fail to maintain law and order and instead of apprehending the criminals take part in crime by sharing in the criminals' loot and in turn offering them protection from the law. The police get a percentage of whatever the robbers make. While they protect the criminals, they make untrue identifications to deceive the public about unsolved crime cases as revealed by Oti to Mwas when they are locked up in a secret hideout by the police. He says:

Mose: Walahi tena wametunyuria (Mwas looks at Oti questioningly)

(Oh God we are dead)

Oti: sikukuchanua

(Sorry I didn't tell you dude)

Mwas: Kunichanua kuhusu nini

(Tell me what?)

Oti: sisi si watu, si ni maiti

(We are now dead men walking)

Mwas: We! Unasemaje? Na hapa tumefika vipi?

(What are you saying! And why are we here?)

Oti: Nairobi ni genji, kuna crime cases hazijawahi kusolviwa. Mabeast lazima basi waround up washike maboyz ili kufunga raia macho.

(Nairobi is full of unsolved crimes.)

The police have to round up some guys from time to time to fool the public)

Mwas: Kwani itakuwaje

(What will happen to us?)

Oti: Watatumalizia, bodies zetu zikuwe exhibinje, alafu wadahi

tulikaangwa tukinyamishiana

(They'll kill us and use our bodies as evidence for something we didn't do.

Then they will claim we were killed in a shootout)

This criticizes the police force and shows how in a corrupt system, decisions can be formed on false evidence. Justice in the post-colonial Kenya, then, is shown to be unjust and unable to grasp the truth of the situation. It is also unable to reform the criminal, who is likely to respond to the reinforcement and protection from the police by becoming more of a criminal and further alienating themselves from the society. When criminals realise that they will not be caught, their criminality is reinforced. In *Nairobi Half Life*, the police reinforce crime by failing to apprehend the criminals and share in their loot as revealed in the conversation between Oti and Mwas:

Oti: (pulls Mwas to a hiding when he spots two cops) Shit! Shit! Shit! Fuck!

Mwas: Nini?

(What?)

Oti: Mabeast. Hao ndio mafala walinidandia

(Cops. These are the idiots who arrested me)

Mwas: Si uliniambia we ni odinari

(I thought you are untouchable)

Oti : Mi ni odinari, lakini hawa ni wa kucome. Wanadai eti showbiz fifty fifty

(Yes I am, but these cops are new in the area. They want us to split 50 50

for everything we make)

Mwas: Aai!na tukiwakausha?

(Aiiiii and if we don't give them?)

Oti: Eeeee. Tushh, (imitating a gun shot on the head)

The film further reveals the corruption in the police force through a conversation between Oti and two cops as they go to collect 'their share'. Instead of the police arresting the criminals they encourage and urge them to 'work harder' in order to make more:

Cop: (To Oti) Leo ni Tuesday ama umesahau

(Today is Tuesday or have you forgotten)

Oti: Afande wacha tubonge kiasi (they step aside from the rest of the gang)

Maze afande kuna vile mradi haijajipa. So ka unaeza come next week itakuwa poa.

(Officer, we need to talk)

Cop: Unafikiri nakula nini?

(What am I going to eat?)

Oti: Si hivyo afande. Elewa saa zingine mradi haijipi. Shika hii..(oti gives the cop one thousand shillings)

(Officer we are broke, we have not had a job in ages. I am asking if you can come next week. Just understand how this business works)

Cop: (pocketing the money) Na uweke bidii ee?

(You guys need to work hard)

Oti: Haina noma

(No problem)

Though the criminals ultimately pay for their sins through death, no part of this process is achieved through the criminal justice system. Mwas escapes all together showing that not all criminals face consequences of their crimes.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been constructed following the second objective of the study which sought to analyze how the films under study reconstruct and reflect the society thereby influencing the understanding of the complexity of the society in terms of social constructs. The chapter was able to closely relate the films under study with what goes on in the society hence drawing a conclusion that lived experiences form the basis for filmic expressions and that a community is reflected in the cinema it produces. The chapter has demonstrated that Kenyan films made by Kenyans redefine Kenya; telling Kenyan stories, reflecting the Kenyan life, culture, values and making statements about the Kenyan society. However, the chapter has also demonstrated that films can sometimes misrepresent the society and distort history.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 AESTHETICS OF CRIME FILMS

3.1 Introduction

Why people watch painful art has been a discussion in the academic arena for a considerable period. This dates back to 335 BC when Aristotle wrote *poetics*, in which he talked about tragedy arousing pity and fear in the audience and leading to catharsis. Theorists have come up with various arguments to this question with the most common argument being that these art works accord the audience pleasure. These theorists include John Morreall, David Hume, Susan Feagin and Noël Carroll among others. Borrowing from these theorists, this chapter argues that through cinematic techniques, film producers are able to translate crime films, featuring violence and instances of intense human suffering, into entertaining stories by converting the negative emotions to pleasure or by compensating for them. This chapter interrogates how the cinematic techniques used by *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* function to make the audience to feel pleasure in response. The chapter makes the argument that stylistic devices and cinematic techniques can play on human psychology and cognitive mechanism to achieve their objectives. According to John Bowlby (1988) human beings are born with an innate psychological system; what he calls the attachment behavioural system. It is the fact that the mechanisms are innately wired in the natural human making that makes it possible for the techniques to succeed.

Message attributes are understood according to the mind set of the observer. How viewers interpret images of violence is not just a function of gun shots heard, amount of blood seen or number of screams heard. The same image may have different meanings within different narrative genres and contexts of reception. While murder, for instance, may be 'painful' on news or reality show, it may be a source of entertainment in a film. *Nairobi Half Life* and *The*

Kitchen Toto producers have used cinematic codes and conventions which transform violence and criminal activities into captivating stories by transforming the unpleasant emotions the audience may have into pleasurable ones with varying degrees of success which this chapter sets out to interrogate.

The violence in the films have been aestheticized by codes such as invite hypotheses, identification with a character, mixing pathos and farce, cinematography, eloquence of the narrative, cast, music and sound tracks among other techniques making a considerable section of the audience to perceive the violence differently.

3.2 Invite Hypothesis

Invite hypothesis as a style functions by using invite techniques such as search for cause, plot and identification with character among others. This technique attempts to create pleasure in the audience by using the naturally occurring pleasure chemical dopamine which is released when the brain is expecting a reward. When human beings actively pursue new information through curiosity, their brains are flooded with the pleasure-inducing chemical dopamine. In film viewing, acquiring knowledge and gaining an understanding of the film is the reward for curiosity. Film producers employ techniques which create curiosity and which in turn stimulates the production of dopamine in the brain.

According to George Loewenstein (1994) curiosity is “a cognitive induced deprivation that arises from the perception of a gap in knowledge and understanding.” In his information gap theory he argues that curiosity functions like other drive states, such as hunger, which motivates eating. Building on this theory, Loewenstein suggests that a small amount of information serves as a priming dose, which greatly increases curiosity. Loewenstein’s idea is supported by a study by Jeong Kang and colleagues which found out that “decision-makers were least curious when they had no clue about the answer and if they were extremely confident; they were most curious

when they had some idea about the answer, but lacked confidence. In these circumstances, compulsion to know the answer was so great that they were even willing to pay for the information even though their curiosity could have been sated for free after the session”. In line with Loewenstein’s theory, invite technique as a cinematic device functions by giving viewers a little clue to whet their curiosity. This stimulates the production of dopamine which floods the brain with pleasure in anticipation of the reward of knowing what will happen next in the scene. *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* are constructed to ‘invite’ the audience to view them by introducing techniques, or, codes which cue the audiences’ curiosity throughout the films. One way through which these films attempts to invite the audience is by use of codes that solicit hypotheses by viewers about what will happen next or what prompted a given action. One of the codes that prompt hypothesis formation is ‘effect in search for cause’.

3.2.1 Search for Cause

Human beings exhibit an adaptive behavior of directing their own attention to the target of the other human’s attention upon an encounter. According to George Butterworth, this tendency of looking at what other people are looking at as a natural means of information gathering takes hold in infancy and is generally a natural innate human perceptual behavior. He observed the relation of children to their mothers’ in rooms full of objects and wrote that “invariably, children follow the trajectory of their mother's glance to its target object” (Butterworth 20). It is almost natural that when a person looks towards a given object, the others looking at him/her will follow his glance to that object. This perceptual practice, readily represented in films, is elaborately used in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*. The films use point of view editing to invite the audience to follow the characters’ gazes in search of causes of their actions. Point-of-view editing succeeds in making the audience glued to the screen by the camera movement between the character’s gaze and the target being deleted hence inviting the

audience's curiosity to want to find out what the character is looking at. Psychologically, this produces a feeling of lack and creates a desire to fulfil the lack as the audience wishes to find out what the character is looking at. Sigmund Freud explains that "desire is a natural human response stemming from the Oedipus complex". According to Jacques Lacan, the ego is called into existence and the process of judgment begins when the baby recognizes himself as an individual and therefore separate from others. (Lacan 1977). "As soon as the ego is in operation desire for objects is brought about, and the mother becomes the first object of desire". (Lacan 1977b:277) The baby does not fulfil the wish to own its object of desire due to competition with the father for the mothers love. This 'predicament' of dissatisfaction, according to Lacan, causes the need for constant 'wish fulfilment' (desire) from the mirror stage onwards throughout the baby's life and into adulthood. This psychological deprivation and constant desire for fulfilment creates a center stage for curiosity making the film audience to always want to find out more about the characters and events in the film in an attempt to fulfil the psychological lack. Curiosity as an invite technique in film arouses in the audience the original desire for wish fulfilment of the psyche. Invite hypothesis as a cinematic technique may succeed because curiosity is innately wired in the human behavior

Nairobi Half Life and *The Kitchen Toto* tend to present the audience with a person looking off screen as an invite technique. When the audience is presented with a character looking off the screen, they will want to find out what the character is looking at. In the first scene shot in *Nairobi Half Life*, the camera focuses and lingers on Mwas as he acts the 'five step scene' from one of the films he is selling. Mwas suddenly stops acting and intently gazes downward towards the road. The audience is presented with Mwas gazing off the screen but the object of his gaze is not given. In a natural perceptual behavior, the audience will tend to follow Mwas' gaze to find out what has caught his attention. This keeps the audience watching as well as triggers the curiosity which will cue the audiences' expectations and a desire for fulfilment throughout the

film. Once the audience discovers the object of Mwas' gaze a road show truck advertising "The Vultures", the audience remains fixed to the screen to want to find out the outcome.

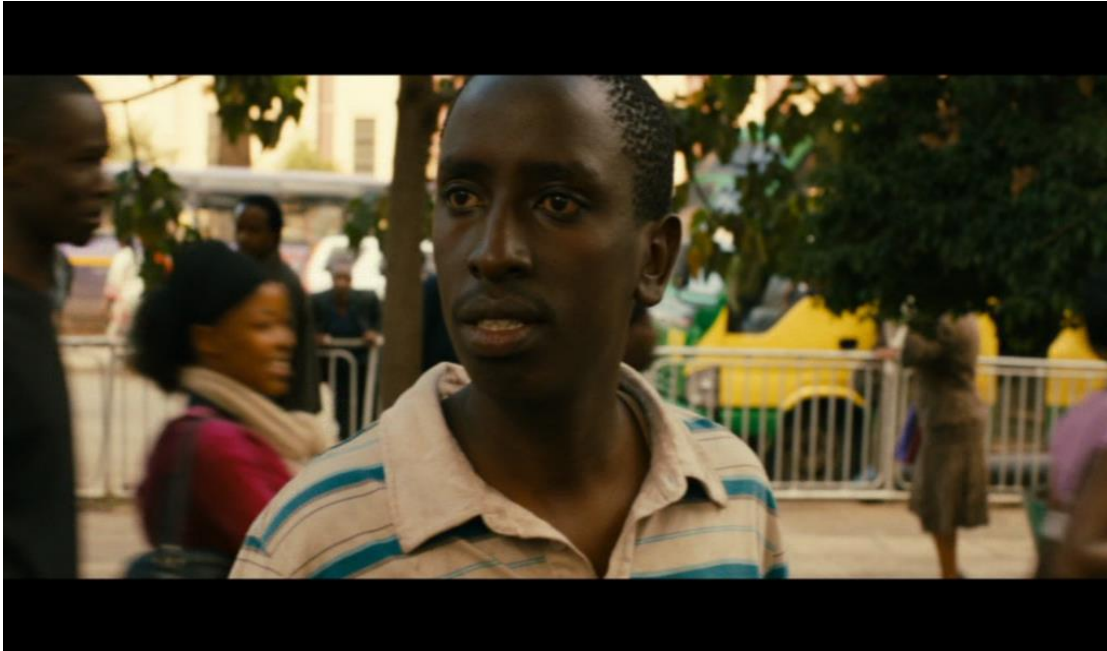


Fig 3.0 Image of Mwas in a point glance shot

In another scene, after Mwas is robbed of his luggage, he tries to overcome his affliction gradually by pacing along the streets. Suddenly, his face, shown in a point-glance shot, is gripped by shock. He gets rooted to the spot and stares. The shock gradually fades and is taken over by a smile. The recognition on the viewer's part comes with the expectation that whatever is eliciting that emotion could be exciting or reassuring, arousing the audiences' curiosity to want to know the object of Mwas' emotion. The camera then cuts to a point-object shot of the street with several boys stealing side mirrors, head lights and indicators from parked cars. With the knowledge of the emotion on Mwas' face the audience can surmise this as the object of Mwas' attention. Point of view editing thus functions to create suspense; hence a desire, drawing the audience to want to find out more. The audience finds it hard to resist following the character's gaze, since it is readily picked up and applied, virtually by reflex. Point of view editing thus succeeds because it is keyed in this intimate human perceptual

makeup. It invites the audience by structurally delivering the glance to the target, while functionally supplying information about the agent whose gaze concerns the audience. It may lead the audience to ask “what is the character gazing at and what will be the result of the emotion?” The correspondence between this cinematic device and ordinary perceptual behavior is what makes the audience glued to the screen. It is the audience's appreciation of the natural human perception that a glance has a target and a move an outcome coupled with the audiences’ curiosity that makes such a conventionally abnormal exercise as the audience being glued to crime film possible.

3.3 Cast

Characterization and cast as cinematic techniques make use of the scopic drive. According to Sigmund Freud (1905) the pleasure in looking, is a “partial-instinct innate to the childhood process of forming personality”. Freud explains that “the child initially understands the mother’s breast as being part of itself and experiences its withdrawal as a rupture at the level of its own being. This marks the subject’s division and that is clearly motivated by the loss of the primary object and the attempt to recover it again in the field of the Other. The mother’s breast becomes the lost object which always remains present within the circuit of the drive and sustains its interminable search for satisfaction” (Freud 1905) Jacques Lacan echoes Freud’s sentiments and refers to this lost object which is the cause of desire to ‘look’ *’objet petit a.* (Lacan 1964) According to Lacan a baby’s whole life is that of drive satisfaction or jouissance; all that babies do is breastfeed (oral drive), stare at their primary caregiver’s face or gaze (scopic drive), listen to the primary caregiver’s voice (invocatory drive) and defecate (anal drive). However, there comes a point in a child’s development when the child is finally separated from the mother (primary caregiver) which puts limitations on the child’s drive satisfaction. This loss of the mother's body (which the child initially understands as being part of itself) leaves the child with a feeling that there is a part of it that it has been separated from

and that the child must find in order to be whole again. The mother's body thus becomes the lost object that it forever haunts all the days of its life. It is this unconscious search for the lost object that causes the desire to 'look' in order to get satisfaction in the form of the virtual jouissance.

This 'lost object' which is essentially a lack, a void or an empty spot throughout the course of one's life, gets linked to certain idealized and libidinally-invested traits. The mother is the most beautiful thing a child first encounters; good looking, loving, caring and with the most beautiful voice. As such the child grows up to associate libidinally invested traits with the traits of the mother. These traits (*das Ding*) get laid down in the mind as the most basic coordinates of jouissance and form fundamental "pleasurable associations" with jouissance or drive satisfaction. They become the primary markers of jouissance and master signifiers marking points in one's environment that are reserves of jouissance. The lost object comes to be associated with the mothers' traits, qualities, and other features and determinations which satisfy ones lack hence returning one to the satisfaction one once had with the mother. Each one (via fantasy) comes to unconsciously associate certain empirical features with that missing "part" of the self. These include what one idealizes such as nice buildings, what one desires such as love and care, what one would like to be such as good looking, sexy, eloquent, beautiful voice, smart, brave and daring among others. Good looks thus becomes a master signifier for jouissance. This explains why people are attracted to good looking people and why film makers cast good looking celebrities and beautiful sceneries. Film makers cast good looking, eloquent, caring, daring, courageous and smart celebrities as cues. These traits act as 'master signifiers' and primary markers of jouissance 'inviting' the viewers to watch the film as a way of reconnecting to the lost object. The films further use close up shots, to attempt to mediate the connection between the viewers and the actors.

The cast in *Nairobi Half Life* consists of celebrities who are considered to be beautiful by many Kenyans. Nini Wacera, for example, is a renowned Kenyan actress and director who has been praised by many in the social media as being beautiful. Nini has acted in many films and television series. She has acted as Kui in *Dangerous Affair* (2002), Julia Oyange in *Kona*, Suzzane in *Wingu La Moto* (2003-2006), and Ese De Souza in *Desperate Housewives Africa*. Other notable roles include those in *Silent Monologues*, *The White Maasai*, *Epilogue*, *Life in D minor* among others.



Fig 3.1 Nini Wacera



Fig 3.2 Her terror stricken face after her phone is snatched by Oti

Nancy Wanjiku Karanja popularly known as ‘Shiks Kapyenga’, who plays Amina in *Nairobi Half Life*, is another celebrity who is considered to be beautiful and has dominated the Kenyan social media for a long time. The Hot 96 Radio presenter has acted in many films among them *Nairobi Half Life* and *Shuga*. She is one of Churchill Show (a popular Kenyan comedy) comedian and has also acted in ‘Beba Beba’. Most people love her husky voice



Fig 3.3 Nancy Wanjiku Karanja (Shiks Kapyenga)

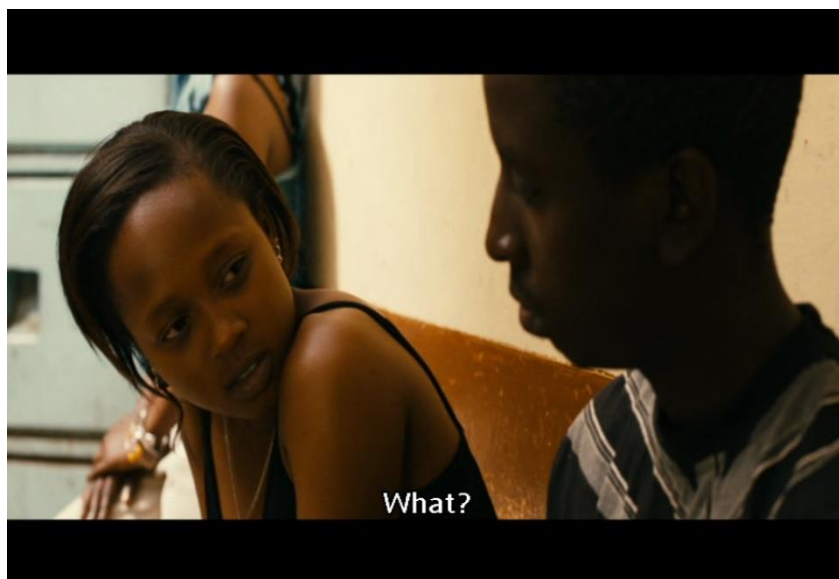


Fig 3.4 Amina (Nancy) and Mwas

Jacky Vike has acted in *Simiyu Samurai*, NTV's Wash and Set and in citizen TV series *Papa Shirandura* as Awinja. She is a professional dancer and a yoga trainer.



Fig 3.5 Jacky Vike

The characters are imbued with attractive traits which 'invite' the audience to like them. They are brought out as attractive, resilient and hardworking. Mwas goes through horrendous and spine-chilling experiences, but remains strong and focused on achieving his dream of becoming an actor. He faces numerous problems ranging from, internal conflict, instability, poverty, uncertainty, and social upheavals, some of which are a consequence of unequal distribution of social amenities which denied the rural folks opportunities. He rises above these difficulties and comes out strong. His poor back ground and lack of social amenities in the rural area does not stop him achieving his dream. He does not return to fate and instead begins his life searching journey with just an idea and rises above difficulties and obstacles. His strong character and resilience is seen in how he makes a decision to travel to Nairobi to chance his success and how he struggles to retain his dream in the face of complexities and misfortunes.

Amina faces more challenges being a woman. Though a sex worker in a brothel, she hopes to one day quit the brothel for a life of dignity. She tells Mwas that her aim is to get capital (from her work in the brothel) to start up her own salon and a beauty shop. Amidst difficulties and unstable upbringing, Amina hopes for a better life. *The Kitchen Toto* too has admirable characters. Mwangi, for example, though young, unschooled and naïve confronts his destiny with little help but courage and persistence. At the age of twelve, he knows nothing about employment but does not despair. He navigates his way through racism, confusion and psychological torture. Though he is thrown into all these by forces beyond his control, his resilience and determination reveal strength of character. The villains on the other hand are constructed as people worthy of the hero's attention, ones who could mess up the world if they get away with their evil plans.

Casting is central to the construction of films. The cast conditions the reception of the film, since the audience's perception of a character depends to a large extent, on their view of the actor or actress who plays the part. Casting thus is not only a powerful tool in the definition of character, but also an effective means of trying to entice the audience to watch the film. That films cast celebrities has a wider psychological bearing. According to Freud's theories on narcissism, 'objects' are part of the individual who has chosen them as 'their' object. Thus, the desire of object is viewed as an attempt at self-satisfaction. Freud argues that "a person may love an object depending on the narcissistic type" He gives 4 narcissistic types as: "a) What he is himself, b) What he once was, c) what he would like to be, and d) Someone who was once part of himself" (Jacoby 1990:79). According to psychology, in film viewing process, identification with the characters comes about from a, b and c. The film viewer may be attracted to a character in a film not because they love the character but the trait of the character which acts as a 'master signifier' of jouissance. Film viewers may love to view celebrities because they love their looks, or fame and would like to be like them. The cast in *Nairobi Half*

Life and *The Kitchen Toto* consists of some young people who have made it in the entertainment world and are admired and envied by many. The viewing process thus becomes desirable since it provides the audience with an opportunity to look and in looking, the audience is presented with an opportunity to experience narcissistic love. This returns the audience to the infant love of the mother and therefore satisfying the ego by finding the 'lost object'. Identification with characters in film is thus an associative practice. Audiences unconsciously draw connections to a form of narcissistic love of themselves and in doing so experience a satisfaction compared to the first experience of oneness with the mother. They thus experience a part of themselves in the objects they watch.

"Not only do people judge books by their covers, they read the ones with beautiful covers much closer than others," says Jeremy Biesanz. A study, published in *Psychological Science* by Biesanz and Lorenzo, suggests that "people pay closer attention to people they find attractive" (Biesanz et al 1780). Since time immemorial, people have always equated being lovely to being lovable and, by implication, to be loved.

Beauty is known to fascinate the audience. The films have used glamorous scenarios as their settings. Some scenes in *Nairobi Half Life* are set against the background of the Nairobi's CBD with its beautiful cityscape. Immediately after Mwas is robbed upon his arrival in Nairobi, the film cuts to a scene with Mwas walking along the streets, frustrated. The telephoto lens is used to give the audience a glance into the beautiful city with tall glamorous buildings, giving them a relief from the harshness of the violence. This concurs with the conversion theory which argues, firstly that "painful emotions had in response to art are converted into pleasure through some more prominent emotion and secondly that the entire experience feels pleasurable in retrospect, and, as such, the pain felt is more or less forgotten".



Fig 3.6 The beautiful Nairobi cityscape



Fig. 3.7 Kenyatta Avenue, Nairobi CBD's main street

3.4 Cinematography

Aestheticization of suffering in crime films is achieved through visual and sound patterns which draw the audience to the films. The films present violence as a form of expressive art in which the violence is so gruesomely harsh and fearsome. These effects are achieved by manipulation of camera or lens or by editing techniques such as use of sound effects, slow motion, telephoto lens, zoom lens, quick-cutting and montage, close-up, sharp and abrupt

lighting among others, conditioning the audiences' response to the violence. The combination of graphic representation of robbery with an aesthetic representation of violence produces fear and anxiety in the audience resulting into a startle response. Cinematography as a cinematic technique attempts to arrest the audience by making use of the startle response.

Startle response is an innate human tendency to 'jump' at loud noises and to recoil at fast movements. This tendency, psychologists say, is hard wired, innate, involuntary and impenetrable to belief. Cinematography as a cinematic technique functions to attract the audiences by making use of the startle reflex. It does this by engaging certain audio-visual patterns and sound effects in crime films. This is made possible because the startle response is an unconscious defensive response. The presence of gunshots, screams, sharp lighting, running, fast movement and shaking camera among other cinematic techniques elicit an abrupt and intense stimulation which create fear in the audience. It is the fear created by these techniques that make the audience to feel pleasure. According to a study led by Vanderbilt University's David H. Zald, In addition to adrenaline, fear releases the pleasure hormone. Dopamine conditions responses to certain stimuli, and signals the production of fight-or-flight response when the brain senses one is in danger and pleasure hormones when the brain senses one is safe. Thus the fear created by cinematography within the context of a film elicit pleasure in the audience.

The Kitchen Toto places the brutal scenes of violence very much in the spotlight. The violent scenes are filmed in cinematic techniques that differ significantly from the rest of the scenes in which the murder scenes are embedded. In the scene where Mwangi's father is murdered, for example, the diegetic sound is lowered and special film sound track is added for the effect of both estrangement and fear. The scene is filmed out of a hand-held camera which gives the images a wavering quality, making it shaky and frightening. The scene is filmed at night amidst

screams, burning houses, confusion and running animals and figures. All this is manipulated to accentuate fear in the audience. In *Nairobi Half Life* the standard realist modes of editing and cinematography are violated in order to spectacularize the violent scenes. When Mwas and the gang steal side mirrors from parked cars, the camera work is abrupt and shaky, imitating the gestures of violence. The actions tend to move very fast arresting the viewers (what is commonly called "action-packed"). The robberies are edited to a fairly high pace compared to the other less violent scenes. The robbery scenes are set outside dialogue. There is no clear spatial orientation. All that the viewers see and hear are shaky images, gun shots, sound tracks, metals banging, hooting, darkness, running footsteps and screams which creates a scary scene hence creating a startle reflex and captivating the audience attention. The scene in which Mwas is robbed upon arrival in Nairobi is filmed in a montage of close-ups, the camera positioned at a low angle, moving along with Mwas' struggling body. As the men take off with Mwas' baggage, the camera moves along and gives a close up of Mwas' anguished face. The close up employed in this scene has a synecdochic effect; the images of the part expressing the whole. The camera zooms in on Mwas' anguished face making it the subject and representing the frustration he is subjected to by the robbery. The use of these techniques emphasizes suddenness and frequency in shot change. The effects of quick cutting draws the audiences' attention to the suddenness of change of actions and the change in tempo of action, signaling the audience that there is something taking place. This has the possibility of drawing the audience to watch despite the violence. Since quick cutting and montage is a change in the rate of progression, it makes the change pronounced and more noticeable. The more noticeable the change, generally, the more pronounced the effect; the viewer is reminded that something significant is happening, whetting the viewers' curiosity to want to watch to find out what is happening. Quick cutting is a resultant sense of suddenness. The audience may forget the pain

of the violence as they get excited at the prowess with which the thugs can dislodge and take off with the head lights and side mirrors.

The techniques may further make the spectator to forget himself making the violent acts to be seen as bearable, providing a peek into the world of criminals without the horror that goes along with the real crime. The manipulation of camera angle, position, shot among others creates some sort of fantasy which can be likened to dreaming. It is due to this that psychologists have likened film form to a dream. It is this outside structure- “the aesthetic beauty or the formal arrangement of the work”- that Freud describes as the forepleasure, “a bribe to the onlooker” (Huss 1986: 37-8) By this Freud means “it is a way of attraction, a looning towards the underlying meaning of the dream”. The beauty of the cinematography creates in the audience a desire to see. Haywood claims that this “desire to see or pleasure in viewing is associated with psychology as explained by Freud as the ‘object’ of desire that comes about with a child’s development of libido. A desire known in Freudian terms as ‘scopic drive” (Haywood 2001:318)

Slow motion too has been used in *Nairobi Half Life* to heighten the audiences’ perception of time by expanding the amount of data for a given action. It gives more frames per second than ordinary speed. When Mwas escapes from the police and is running towards Phoenix Theatre, slow motion is used to try to establish his mental state. This is achieved by using the telephoto lens. As he sprints toward the telephoto lens, he seems to move in place without any progress, making the viewer to share in Mwas’ strain and frustration. This was earlier seen in the shot following Mwas’ attack and robbery upon arriving in Nairobi. After Mwas gets up from the horizontal position in which the attackers left him, he is shot in a telephoto lens moving in position towards the camera. The telephoto lens compresses distance, diminishing dimensional perspective, and so progression toward the camera is proportionately compressed. Mwas moves but there seems to be no progress at all.

Also of significance is the zoom shot. The zoom-out shows the audience the environment in which a point of view and the craft of cinema person or action is located. It too shows contrapuntal action, with the small world often ironically unaware of, or oblivious to, the larger. After Mwas is robbed, as he strolls, the camera zooms out to the larger city which is unaware of what is happening to Mwas. The camera shows the busy Nairobi streets with busy people going about their businesses as usual. The lens zoom out, drawing away from Mwas, letting the viewers see him as merely a small poignant figure in the large crowded city. This is repeated in the scene in the police cell where he is seen sad and depressed against the dark wall of the cell, small and forlorn.

3.5 Plot and the Eloquence of narration

Films may act as a window into the repressed desires of the film watcher. According to Freud when audiences watch a film, “they identify with the behavior and dialogue of certain characters and forge psychic bonds with the characters and unconsciously project their own fantasies, phobias, and fixations onto their alter egos. Whenever the characters say or do something that touches upon one of these fantasies, phobias, or fixations, the audience derive unconscious satisfaction or dissatisfaction accordingly”.

Film viewing is not just the relationship that occurs between the viewer and the screen, but also the relationship the viewer had before watching the film. Film viewing thus goes beyond the material and visible factors to psychoanalytic perspective and the spectators’ unconscious emotional engagement. Much of the audiences’ emotional engagement happens at an unconscious level with the emotions in the audience secondary to a prior cognitive appraisal of the meaning of a certain situation. Fischer-Litche (2008, p.153) when discussing the emotions aroused in an audience witnessing an actor being subjected to self-inflicted injuries or to physical abuse by others says, “the spectators experienced these emotions because

violence against self and others had been charged and connoted with intense emotions for them prior to the performance” (153). Harper and Porter in answering the question about crying in cinema say that “memories of key scenes from films gave respondents a kind of fast track access to emotional high points in their lives” (1996 p.153).

Crossberg (1992 p 52) says “audiences are meaning - making beings who constantly struggle to make the text mean something that connects specifically ‘to their own lives, experiences, needs and desires” (1992 p52). Audiences exhibit a powerful cognitive and affective connection with something they encounter in a film if it generates a memory the audience can identify with. The intense identification with a narrative or plot line which generates a memory gives a strong affective reaction to what is on the screen. Film makers make use of this psychological phenomenon by crafting stories and creating characters the audiences can identify with. *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* employ characters and themes which the audience can relate with and foreground impulses which are similarly repressed in everyone. It is this repression which is shaken up by the situation of the film that makes the audience to reorganize themselves in the characters in the film by recognizing that they are susceptible to the same misfortune as the characters. In both *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* the main characters in the films are neither perfect nor fundamentally evil. They are people the audience can identify with. They move from positions of happiness to unhappiness due to mistakes they commit and partly due to circumstances beyond them. These mistakes, unconscious or error in Freudian terms and tragic flaws in Aristotalian terms, are mistakes the audience can identify with as common to humans and can be committed by anyone. The sorrows the characters go through which are as a result of their faults (which the audiences can identify with), are calculated to draw the audiences to identify with the characters since they too can commit such mistakes and land in the same state of unhappiness.

Mwas, the main character in *Nairobi Half Life* is a person the audience can identify with; a person in search of a better life as most people do. He moves from his rural home to Nairobi to fulfil his dream of becoming an actor having been promised a place in 'the Vultures' by Jose, a member of the Vultures. Mwas lands in the hands of thugs and is robbed of everything that he had. A misfortune that can befall anyone. He is mistakenly arrested by the city council and thrown in the police cell where he is mishandled by the seasoned hard-core criminals he finds in there. When Mwas leaves the police cell the following morning, he gets stranded in Nairobi with no relative, no friend, no money and nowhere to start from. Being homeless, he spends the cold rainy night on top of the hotel tables, with nothing to cover himself. When Mwas later finds Jose, the man who promised to help him start up a career as an actor in Nairobi, Mwas realizes that Jose conned him and that there is no slot for him as an actor in the theatre group. By the time he comes to this realization that he has been cheated and conned, he is already in Nairobi, jobless, penniless and homeless. Mwas goes through events that evoke pity in the minds of the audiences. The recognition in the minds of the audiences that such misfortunes can befall anyone including them is what evokes pity for Mwas in them and the fear that they too can fall victim of such circumstances. *The Kitchen Toto* too follows this trend. Mwangi, a 12 year old boy watches his father murdered in cold blood. He then suffers racist policies at the white police commandant's house where he offers his services as a kitchen toto. Being black, he is mistreated, looked down upon and underpaid. Mwangi is then confronted and forced to take an oath to help in fighting colonialists by the same Mau Mau fighters who killed his father in his full view. Young as he is, he is terrified and confused. He finds himself in the middle of a battle field; between the white colonialist-his master and the people of his tribe-the Mau Mau. His master rejects him for fear that he is likely to be loyal to the people of his tribe. He is arrested and tortured by his master's soldiers and is later shot dead by his master's soldiers. He dies a victim of circumstances having been rejected by both his master and the

people of his tribe. Mwangi ends up paying for crimes that he knows nothing about; a sacrifice for a cause he did not know. The identification with Mwangi in *The Kitchen Toto* and Mwas in *Nairobi Half Life* reside in the fact that the hero, who is neither perfect nor fundamentally evil, and who is a person like the audience, a person we see in the society every day and can therefore identify with, passes from a state of happiness to unhappiness on account of a certain misfortunes that can befall anyone. Mwangi's father is murdered and Mwas is cheated and conned.

3.6 Identification with a Character

How audiences interpret violence varies according to their own position vis-à-vis the narrative characters. It will be interpreted differently if the violence is perpetrated on or by a character constructed in the narrative as close to the audience. Psychological investigation into the expression of emotion has amassed a compelling amount of data to the effect that, interacting with people closest to one intensifies emotions. Naturally people would do anything to protect the ones close to them. The actor/observer bias tells us that the more you know about a person you are watching, the more you are likely to trust them, even if they are not moral. *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* have made use of this psychological phenomenon to entice the audience by shooting or editing in a certain way to ensure that the audience identifies with or support the main character even if they do some morally questionable things. In many occasions, audiences will tend to follow the actions of the main character. The more the audience knows about a character, regardless of their shady morality, the more they defend them even if their actions are violent. The audience will thus keep on watching to follow and support 'their person' despite the violence and will celebrate if the person against 'their person' is killed even if it is their person perpetuating the violence. The act of violence is thus viewed positively, welcomed, anticipated and cheered when it comes. The violence will thus give the

audience pleasure by giving the 'bad guy' his comeuppance with the murdered or the mutilated body turned into an object of fascination.

The close up shot is a device designed to activate the audiences' closeness to the character in such a way that they identify with the character and support him/her. *Nairobi Half Life* opens with a close up shot; the diegetic narrator keeps the camera focused on Mwas and slowly zooms out to a medium shot, then wide shot of Mwas acting out a scene in one of the movies he is selling. The audience identifies Mwas as the main character or star. Throughout the first scene, the camera remains static and lingers on Mwas, simply observing his actions, and zooms rather than cuts in its transitions. Though the opening shot has other characters; they are shot in a medium long and medium shots indicating that they will feature less prominently in the film, which distances them from the audience. The close-up singles out Mwas in most of the scenes he is involved in. By having the camera focus on Mwas', it positions the audience with him and thus helps in mediating the relation between Mwas and the audience. Within the first few seconds of *Nairobi Half Life*, the audiences not only get to know the main character but are also drawn to him as a lively and focused character. He humorously acts out scenes in the movies he is selling, first 'the five step scene', and then 'the spartan boy'.

Other than being creative, he is focused and determined. The audience is drawn to like Mwas such that when he later on becomes a robber, the audiences are likely not to question his character, instead they see him as a victim of circumstances, sympathize with him, blame others for his actions and celebrate his achievement even if it is a robbery or a violent act of killing. Mwas is presented as the purest of the characters, who is innocently and unknowingly initiated into stealing by Oti and is later on forced into carjacking by Daddy M. Other than making Mwas an adorable character, the film maker has ensured that the other characters around Mwas come across as repulsive so as to accentuate Mwas' goodness. Daddy M for example, is presented as a repulsive character. He is a thug who tries to persuade Mwas to join him (in

robbery) so that Mwas too can live like a big buck and stop making fifty shillings from selling movies, he eventually forcefully initiates Mwas into carjacking. He forces Mwas to rob a Toyota VX for him to compensate for his stereo player which Mwas lost in the hands of robbers. Most of the other characters are also presented as repulsive: Mwas' father is a reckless drunkard who neglects his family, Ndingo tries to exploit Mwas and his gang of what they rob, Oti spends all that he makes on prostitutes and beer, and the policemen are cheats. By the time Mwas becomes a robber, the audience has taken Mwas' side enough to welcome anything that he will do to succeed. There is the pleasure of Mwas winning in the long run, regardless of what he does to win, and the pleasure of the people against Mwas being killed. *Nairobi Half Life* affords the audience the comfort in knowing that Mwas finally succeeds and the 'bad' guys are punished in the end; the bad guy being the one against 'our person' and not the criminal, robber or murderer.

This bringing out of other characters as repulsive is seen in *The Kitchen Toto* too. Mwangi is constructed as an innocent boy, always a victim of circumstances. Edward Graham, the white police officer's son is a nasty boy who treats Mwangi with a lot of racism and contempt. He does such inhuman acts to him as taking him to the forest to practice shooting/hunting on him. The white police officer's son using Mwangi; a black native boy as a dummy to practices targeting is an act which reduces the black boy to less than an object. He later runs home leaving Mwangi to spend the night in the cold forest alone, tied to a tree. The police officer (John Graham) and his wife (Janet Graham) too come out as less caring for the black boy. Other than hiring Mwangi as a house boy at a very tender age, the Grahams do not make an effort to search for him when he is missing late in the night; he ends up spending the night in the cold forest where one of the white settlers had tied him to a tree while Mrs Graham reads bedtime stories to Edward, who is the same age as Mwangi. The Grahams are white colonialists who exploit the native Kenyans. They have employed scores of natives whom Janet pays begrudgingly.

While the Grahams live in a bungalow, the black servants live in an unkept 'slave quarters' where the young Mwangi joins them as a paid slave. This draws the audience to hate the Grahams and sympathize with the young Mwangi thereby identifying him.

The opening sequence of *The Kitchen Toto* introduces some narrative structures which get the audience to identify with the main character. The opening shot gives the point of view to the young Mwangi, establishing him as the narrational centre. Using secondary internal ocularization, (the subjective camera is attached to his look) the audience is made one with Mwangi and sees what he sees. In the opening scene, the audience traces Mwangi's look to his father being murdered by his brother, a Mau Mau fighter. The audience is drawn to share in Mwangi's fear and frustrations which are enhanced by darkness and shaky images as Mwangi runs to seek help. The film uses the first person perspective to film the murder scene; the camera does not turn away from the fear and panic on Mwangi's face. The audience thus shares in Mwangi's psychological torture of his father being murdered in cold blood right in his full view; a torture too grave for a boy of his age. By the camera being attached to Mwangi's look, the audience is made complicit in Mwangi's suffering as they follow the trajectory of his gaze. *The Kitchen Toto* thus uses both the subjective camera and the close up shot to position the audience with Mwangi. Other than this first shot, the film consistently constructs Mwangi's point of view. Every scene in the film is presented obliquely from Mwangi's point of view and the audience lives through his experiences. It is as if the camera frequently takes up the position of Mwangi's eye. This concurs with Tunner's argument that "identification can occur because of Cinema apparatus- the way the screen is positioned; Large and in front of us as though the camera becomes our eye" (Tunner 2003:133) he adds that "the screen image becomes as it were an extension of ourselves" (Tunner 2003). Both *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, presents the experiences of violence from the point of view of the victim portraying the

perpetrators as victims of circumstances. As such the audiences do not judge them when they commit violent acts.

3.7 Joining Farce and Pathos

Putting pathos and farce side by side can make pleasure derived from art works to compensate for the pain these same works may embody. Often, when the pleasure had from something outweighs the pain, it downplays the painful emotions one would have gotten from it. This succeeds through the use of foregrounding. Film producers use buildings, humorous scenes, sound, lighting, camera angles and movements among others as foregrounding devices. Often, when the pleasure had from something outweighs the pain, it downplays the painful emotions one would have gotten from it. The negative emotions audiences may feel in response to a drama, for example, may be down played by the excitement experienced in anticipating for a happy ending. Relief may often play a role as well, for example when the audiences are relieved that the main character is not going to die after all, something the audiences were probably afraid would happen throughout the film. Noël Carroll in her compensatory theory argues that pleasure derived from art works can compensate for the pain these same works may embody. Patricia Greenspan defends this view saying “it is not the release of fear that is pleasurable, at least in immediate terms, but the fact that one is soon released *from* it.” (Carroll 32) Both *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* comfortably accommodate a combination of sorrow and humor, moving the audience to tears and laughter with the laughter making the tears bearable. Aesthetic pleasure is enhanced when one emotion serves as a foil to the other and allows the audience some relief before or after the film plunges deep into a negative emotion. The juxtaposition of humour and sorrow is seen in several instances in the films. Before Mwas is robbed of his luggage upon arrival in Nairobi, the audience is given a humorous, almost ridiculous picture of Mwas; a shoddy villager in town, with a ridiculously big luggage, ridiculously smiling at his ‘achievement’ of getting to Nairobi. The picture sends the viewers

into laughter before exposing them to the pain of Mwas losing his luggage to robbers upon arrival in Nairobi.

As the bus moves to Nairobi, a song plays at the background welcoming the audience to share into Mwas' joy and excitement of going to Nairobi; the first step to achieving his dream of being an actor. The camera zooms out to give the viewer a glimpse of Nairobi. The camera's movement is slow and composed, imitating a graceful and beautiful entrance into Nairobi. As Mwas alights from the bus, a song plays as though to welcome Mwas into Nairobi. The whole entrance is artistic and beautiful eliciting a positive reaction in the viewers just before the film plunges into the pain of Mwas being robbed.



Fig 3.8 Mwas desperate attempt to save one of his bags

Almost every robbery scene is preceded by humorous scene or followed by one. When Mwas and his gang car jacks a lady at the garage, the whole scene is brought out so humorously that the audience are relieved from the harshness of the robbery by the humor. The lady's desperate attempt at saving her car is humorous. The gang is canny and smart; a car pulls in front of the lady and blocks her way, she stops and gets out of her car to find out what the driver is up to, from behind her, the boys quickly get into her car and start off. Just when she hears her car

start, the driver to the other car moves creating a barrier between her and her car. She beats the car using her fists for blocking her way and tries to push it out of her way using her hands to the amusement of the audience. As her car speeds off, she desperately tries to wave it to a stop and chases after it on foot. The whole scene is funny. The gang's prowess is captivating. The audience is drawn to the grace of the robbers' actions in the process downplaying the pain of the robbery. This concurs with the argument advanced by the compensatory theorists to the effect that pleasure that is sufficient can offset the pain involved.



Fig 3.9 The lady chasing after her car on foot

In *The Kitchen Toto* the juxtaposition of humor and sorrow alleviates the pain that the audience feels by watching the suffering of Mwangi. The pain of him being a house boy at a very tender age after the murder of his father is downplayed by the stupid boyish enthusiasm with which he takes up his job. It is further alleviated by the relationship between Mwangi and his master's son whom Mwangi humorously calls "Boss ndogo"; "the young boss". *Nairobi Half Life* further accomplishes the blending of humor and sorrow by the incongruity of comic language in a melodramatic situation. The film uses comic relief which relieves the audience from the pain elicited by the violence. Mwas' frustration after losing everything to robbers and

his attempt to start up in a strange land is clothed in humorous *sheng*. The conversation between Ndingo and Mwas and later on between Mwas and Oti makes the viewers to forget Mwas' frustration as they concentrate on the street smart *Sheng*. They go:

Mwas: (Mwas walks into a dingy shanty with several men playing draught)

Natafuta Ndingo

(I'm looking for Dingo)

Kyalo: Na we ndiyo nani?

(And who are you)

Mwas: Mi ni Mwas, nimetumwa hapa na Oti niangalie Ndingo. Oti tulikuwa nayeye Central.

(My name is Mwas, I was with Oti in Central Police Station and he sent me here to look for Dingo)

Ndingo: Sema nikusikie (puffing a cigarette and lifting his head to face Mwas)

(Talk to me)

Mwas: Natafuta ka life. (The whole gang laughs at Mwas' statement)

(I need a life)

Ndingo: Hatukindi life hapa (makes a move on the draught board)

(We don't sell life here)

Mwas: Unaeza niorganaizia ka works?

(Could you hook me up with a job?)

Ndingo: Wafikiri hii ni ofisi ya labour nini?

(What do you think this is? Labour office?)

Mwas: Si hivyo natafuta kitu inaweza kuniletea doo. Unaeza niorganaizia ka works?

(I'm just looking for something that can keep me going for a while)

Ndingo: (to one of the gang members) Mzeiya si umpeleke kwa mama Kiz adunge works kiasi (*Dude, take him to work for mama Akinyi*)

The conversation ends with one of the gang members taking Mwas to Mama Akinyi and he is hired on the spot. The work Mwas does is too much and without clear instructions. Mwas is given heaps of utensils to wash and serve several customers at a go. Having no house, Mwas spends the cold rainy night on the hotel tables with neither a mattress nor a blanket. Oti arrives the following morning from Central police station. They converse with Mwas in the same street mart sheng.

The streetwise snappiness and informality of Sheng fascinates the audience. The overall effect is that of evoking a uniquely Nairobi street identity, evoking pleasure especially in the audience. Mwas joining Oti comes to the audience as a relief. The audience thus do not judge Mwas' move of joining Oti's gang since it saves Mwas from having to sleep on cold tables in the cold Nairobi, and from having to start life with no money and knowing no one. His joining the gang is therefore likely to be welcomed and the stealing not questioned.

3.8 Music

Neuroimaging studies have shown that music can activate brain areas that are typically associated with emotions. According to psychologists the enjoyment of music involves the same pleasure center in the brain as other forms of pleasure, such as food, sex, and drugs. Studies have shown that an aesthetic stimulus, such as music, can naturally target the dopamine systems of the brain that are typically involved in highly reinforcing and pleasurable.

Film music is an integral part of a film experience. Films that use music involve the audience completely and expose the inner feelings and thoughts of characters and can shape the way the viewers feel about what's happening on the screen. Music complements cinematography to encourage viewers to appreciate a film. It Combines with the other channels of information

to help create the narrative and control the way the audiences interpret a film. Mwas' journey to Nairobi is shot against the background of music and sound tracks. As the bus moves, soft music is played on the background inviting the audience to share in Mwas' joy. The camera zooms out to the landscape and buildings creating a feeling of beauty and excitement. As Mwas alights from the bus, in Nairobi, the soft music is replaced by hard rap music which functions to change the mood. This has a wider thematic bearing to the film since gangster rap songs majorly deal with themes such as crime and gangster life among others. This symbolically marks Mwas' initiation from innocence to gangster life in Nairobi. As the rap plays, a gang descends on Mwas robbing him of everything. Immediately after Mwas is robbed, the rap music is taken over by a slow melancholic tune as Mwas tries to recover from his attack and robbery. The slow motion editing combined with the music function to convey Mwas' emotion to the audience. Without words spoken, the audience can feel Mwas' pain and loneliness. By working with other channels of information, music moves beyond the role of simply reflecting or filling the background to the role of affecting how viewers interpret meaning in a film.

Music functions to convey emotions and suggests connections to themes in the film by guiding the audience towards a set of expected responses. One of the themes of *Nairobi Half Life* is robbery with violence and music and sound tracks is the tool that has been used to convey this theme to the audience. Just before a robbery takes place, often, music is used to create anticipation in the minds of the audience. When Mwas arrives in Nairobi, as he alights from the bus, the soft music; a kikuyu song that has been playing is replaced by a gang star rap which goes:

Hodi hodi naingia Nai
Walisema toka ocha mi siwesi ngoja
Nairobi mimi huyo mi nakuja
Ninaenda milango mi napiga hodi
Wengine wakiniona yaani hawanioni
Wengi wezi wako kwenye mitaa
Mimi bado ninapita balaa
Wanataka kunishika mang'aa
Mi kijana moja ingine mataa

Knock I am getting in to Nairobi
I can't wait to get to Nairobi
Nairobi, here I come
I'm knocking on doors
Nobody sees my woes
Nairobi estates are full of thugs
I'm going through hell
They are waiting to rob me
But I'm smart

Hodi hodi hodi naingia Nai x4

Knock I'm getting into Nairobi x4

utatingishwa tingishwa
Ukishikwa na karao boss noma
Kama huna ganji basi boss noma
Yeh yaani huku ni noma
Tunago tu kinoma

You will be roughed up
You are in trouble if you get arrested
Woe unto you if you are penniless
Life in Nairobi is tough
You have to be smart to survive

The change in tune from a soft song to a rap signals the audience that something has changed and that the change from the rural to Nairobi is more than just a geographical relocation. This generates anticipation as the audiences' curiosity about what will happen to Mwas in the city of thugs as suggested in the line; 'Nairobi ni kunoma' is aroused. When Mwas goes to Ndingo, the soft background music that has been laying is replaced by a hip hop/rap. This is witnessed throughout the film. Every scene featuring robbery, carjacking, counting money from the robbery, drinking and smoking, among other scenes involving Mwas' gang and Ndingo's gang has rap or hip hop music playing at the background. The rap music other than aiding the audience to understand the film has deeper meaning. Rap music is associated with violence and gangster life. This has a wider historical bearing since rap music developed as a form of resistance to the subjugation of working-class African-Americans in urban centers. The themes

of rap music has its roots in the history of African-Americans from their beginnings in West Africa, to their enslavement throughout the early history of the United States, to their struggles against racial prejudice and segregation after Emancipation, to the continuing battles against *de facto* economic segregation and reclamation of cultural identity of many African-Americans today. Rap music appears to be excessively violent because it stems from a culture that has been seeped in the fight against political, social, and economic oppression. Foreman 2004; Watkins 2004 writes that “the roots of Rap music began in the inner city streets of the ghetto. The African-American experience has been shaped by the legacies of slavery, segregation, and economic and political subjugation, and has been marked by institutions and incidents of violence, rebellion, conquest and bloodshed”. Rapper Chuck D thinks that much of the violence and nihilism in rap music is the legacy of the hate that minorities have faced in the United States. He says: "We [African-Americans] were a product of what hate produced. We were taught to hate ourselves, so a lot of [intra-racial conflict] is bred out of ignorance." Chucks observation applies not only to the marginalized African-Americans but marginalized Kenyan Youths too who find themselves in crime. Many rap songs focus on escaping the ghetto through strength or street smarts in order to achieve wealth and success. Iyamoto (2003) describes this stereotype as “being hyper- masculine; attempting to create an image of a man that has no feminine characteristics and epitomized exaggerated features of masculinity”.

In the present day societies, Kenya included, rap music still serves as a voice of resistance and points to an outcry of an already-existing problem of youths whose world views have been shaped by experiencing economic inequalities. The criminal gang in *Nairobi Half Life* live in poor households and neighborhoods, are unemployed, and have spent time in prison at some point in their lives. According to Cornel West, a professor of Religions and Afro-American studies at Harvard University, " Some of the popularity of the "thug life" celebrated in the "gangstar rap" sub-genre is the opportunity it may provide for economic and social power in

neighborhoods where hope has been lost. For many poor, inner-city youth, the gun, which has had a central role in the lyrics of many gangstar rappers, represents a way to empower oneself and gain respect within continuing cycles of racial and economic prejudice” Foreman (2004) considers Rap music “a way of creating an abstract space for commentary on the meaning of urban space and race. Hip Hop music in Nairobi Half Life therefore seemed to offer a commentary on the city gangster life”.

Music can be used to soften the harshness of the violence. This occurs when the music used opposes what is being seen on screen. Some harsh, violent and painful scenes are toned down by music. This is achieved by employing music that opposes the mood of what is happening on screen. The harshness of the life the gang leads in a crowded miserable shanty is down played by the song that Mose sings the night Mwas joined them.

Songa Kando Mpango wa Kando	Move aside mistress
Kila siku waleta Zogo	All you bring is distress
Songa kando mpango wa kando	Move away mistress
Ninayo mpenzi	I have a lover
Tunapendana	I have a lover

The song evokes a conversation which gives the viewer a glimpse into life in the city. Later when the gang is rounded by the police and locked up in one of the hideouts awaiting ‘slaughter’, Mose sings his ‘Songa kando mpango wa kando’ song. A painful reminder to the audience of Mose’s shuttered dream of becoming an artiste.

Though the arguments above show that film music fulfill more than just one role in a film, they do demonstrate that music works rhetorically to convince or persuade the audience, and though film music does often fulfill the basic roles of conveying emotion and suggesting connections or themes in the film, it also works in more complex roles to affect the meaning

in film. Film score is thus more than just a reflection of a character's feelings or the general mood of the film; rather, it shapes and affects meaning in film. It helps to not only to shape the way that viewers feel about what's happening on screen but also to involve them. Music is thus one of the channels through which the audience gets enticed to watch films which involve violent actions.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter was constructed following the first objective of the study which sought to interrogate how the devices used by *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* to aestheticize criminal and violent actions function to represent the stories within a context of violence in a pleasurable and entertaining manner drawing the audience to feel pleasure in response to painful actions. The chapter has interrogated some of the techniques used in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* to gain an insight into how they function to create pleasure. Having interrogated how the techniques function to elicit pleasure in the audience, the chapter draws a conclusion that cinematic techniques make use of natural innate human construction and audiences' own psychological needs to cue audiences' responses to films which feature crime and violence.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 CRIME FILMS AS ENTERTAINMENT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the responses from selected respondents to determine if *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, being crime films, entertain the audience or not, what is in the films that attract the viewers to watch these films despite the violence in them, and what, exactly, the audience find enticing. It presents the analysis of data collected from respondents and interpretations of the findings in terms of their relation to the objectives of the study. The interpretation is done by accounting for the relationship between the cinematic devices employed in the films and the audiences' responses, guided by the questions formulated in the questionnaire and oral interviews.

4.2. Characteristics of the respondents

The administration of the questionnaire was to a sample of respondents purposively drawn from four study locations: Mumetet Secondary School, University of Eldoret- town campus, University of Eldoret- main campus (Chepkoilel), and Hawaii Estate. The Films were watched and enjoyed by both the literate and those who have not attained sufficient levels of literacy. Some of the respondents had no formal education yet they could watch, follow and enjoy the films. Those with lower primary education too enjoyed watching the films just as the literate respondents, implying that illiteracy does not hinder one from watching and enjoying films. This could be attributed to the fact that film is a visual art using visual day to day images that all would relate to and understand.

The questionnaires and oral interviews were administered to a wide range and variety of respondents making the study results reliable.

4.3 Results and Discussion

In this study the observations, the focus group discussions, the questionnaires and the oral interviews have provided a strong evidence and consistency to the effect that the selected audiences enjoyed watching the films under study with varied reasons accounting for their enjoyment. The results added weight to the arguments put forward in chapter three on the cinematic techniques used by film producers to entice the audience to watch the said films. The results from the questionnaires were compared to those of oral interviews and results analyzed. While the questionnaires took a short time to administer, the interviews were relatively elaborate giving time for the researcher to gauge the participants' attitudes towards the subject. The data also highlighted issues related generally to the differences in the instruments of data collection and the target groups. While the structured questionnaires led participants to address all topics more or less equally, within the interview setting participants were freer to speak as they chose allowing the interviewer to ask follow up questions as well as gauge the respondents' attitudes and expressions. Thus there was data to use when drawing conclusions about the audiences attitudes towards the films and the question of violence.

One of the objectives of the study was to identify the devices used by film makers to aestheticize criminal and violent actions in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, and to interrogate how these devices function to evoke pleasure in response to violence and intense human suffering. The findings from the questionnaires and oral interviews have shown that although the two films feature instances of intense human suffering which are designed to elicit negative emotions experienced as painful or involving some degree of pain, and which people generally avoid in daily lives, audiences still enjoyed watching them and found them entertaining.

4.3.1 Presentation

The responses from the questionnaires and oral interviews showed that several factors motivated the respondents to keep on watching the two films despite the violence; however, the main reason was seen to be how the films are presented. The respondents argued that although the two films feature instances of violence which evoke painful emotions, beyond the horrific aspects, the films are stylistically presented creating a beautiful spectacle which captivates the audience. Most respondents argued that the beauty with which the actions in these films are presented is what makes them watch the films despite the violence.

Jonah Ngetich, a teacher at Mumetet High school, argued that the films are so beautifully presented that even a violent act like killing becomes beautiful and enjoyable to watch. When asked what exactly he finds 'beautiful and enjoyable' in the said violent actions, he gave several reasons among them being that the criminals are so smart that you even wish you were like them. He gave an example of a robbery scene in *Nairobi Half Life* where a gang swiftly carjacks and gets away with a Toyota VX in a flash. He said "The prowess with which the robberies are done makes you forget it was a robbery and start cheering. You get lost in their world and just want to watch them do their thing. They are so smart you can't take your eyes off the screen". Though the respondent did not use the literary term *cast*, his response concurs with the argument in chapter three that *cast* in a film can cause the audience to enjoy watching a film. This respondent's argument that 'the criminals are so smart that you wish you were like them' concurs with Freud's argument on the theory of Narcissism that "a person may love an object depending on the narcissistic type" He gives 4 narcissistic types as: a) What he is himself, b) What he once was, c) what he would like to be, and d) Someone who was once part of himself (Jacoby 1990:79). This respondent's argument proves that a film viewer may be attracted to a character in a film not because they love the character but the trait of the character which acts as a 'master signifier' of *jouissance*. The respondent seem to be attracted to Mwas because he

is smart and daring. Thus cast and characterization has succeeded in enticing the audience to find pleasure in watching the film. Film viewers may love to view celebrities because they love their looks, fame, brevity, smartness among other admirable traits and would like to be like them.

Maurice, a teacher at Mumetet High school argued that the robberies and killings in these films are like art. He said: “These guys are artists in killing, robbing and escaping. Take how Mwas in *Nairobi Half Life* for example, escapes from the police when his gang is finally rounded up. He ‘flies’ over walls and skillfully maneuvers his way to the theatre. It’s like he even defies the laws of gravity”. This response concurs with the argument in chapter three that cinematography works to evoke pleasure in the film viewers.

According to Sharon, Mumetet High School, the violence and murders in these films are not necessarily bad. She argued that though these films have violent scenes, violence is not necessarily a bad thing. It depends on who executes the violence, to whom the violence is directed and the purpose of the violence. For her everything in this world has two handles; the positive and the negative. Violent actions such as robbery and murder can either be negative or positive. He argues that the murder that takes place towards the end of *Nairobi Half Life*, for example, is on the positive and should not be viewed as painful since it is the killing of criminals who have been terrorizing people and the corrupt police officers who have failed to maintain law and order. According to this respondent, had Mwas been killed it would have been painful since the audience knows that he is an innocent boy who became a criminal due to circumstances. The violence in *The Kitchen Toto* too, she argued, is welcomed since the Mau Mau only kill the cruel colonialists and their black collaborators who made the Africans suffer. As such, according to her, they are good killings which do not elicit any pain. She argued, “Kwani mtu mbaya akiwawa kuna shida gani? (what is wrong with an evil person being

killed)”This respondent’s argument is in line with identification with a character as a cinematic technique. That when the film viewers identify with the film characters they are drawn to like them and take their side no matter what happens.

A big percentage of the respondents reported that they loved the way the scenes with the violence in the films are embedded within a mixture of actions; sound tracks, quick movements, light and darkness, which sends the heart pounding. These techniques, they said, create a very beautiful picture which captivates the audiences. Gathered from the responses, these techniques send the audience to a world of fantasy where the impossibilities like ‘flying’ over tall buildings is made possible; a kind of day dream that is so arresting and captivating that you can’t just avoid watching. They send the audiences to speculate, imagine, think of as probable, guess, suppose, and visualize possibilities; remaining glued to the screen all the while. This finding concurs with Sigmund Freud’s argument that “being present as an interested spectator at a spectacle or play does for adults what play does for children, whose hesitant hopes of being able to do what grown-up people do are in that way gratified”. (Freud, 1942:305)

These arguments further concur with compensationist theorists who argue that though these art works (crime films) are painful or involve some degree of pain, the pain is compensated for by the pleasure involved in the same. They argue that the best answer to the question of why people seek to watch crime films is that such works provide certain compensatory pleasures that audiences expect to be greater than any feelings of pain. Thus the beauty with which the films are presented, as reported by the respondents, compensate for the pain elicited by the violent actions.

4.3.2 Cast

A good number of the respondents indicated that actors would make them watch a film despite the violence. The findings show that most audiences, as seen from the responses from the

interviews and questionnaires, would watch a film acted by their favorite actors and those they consider good despite the violence. When asked how they determine their favorite actors most of the respondents reported that when one watches a movie and someone is a good actor, the next time one hears they have acted something they will want to watch it. Maureen, a student at UoE responde to this by saying: “Awinja hunibamba tu na kuwa funny, mi hupenda kumwatch tu (I Like Awinja and I like watching her act)” Ngetich says, “Shiks Kapyenga any day anytime. Walahi watching her would make any man feel happy, ni vile tu hawatakuambia. Kwanza hiyo sauti yake wah!” when asked why he likes watching Skiks Kapyenga, he responded by saying “ni kama tu kuwatch Betty Kyallo kwa news, her beauty and eloquence makes you feel good” Vivian Asibitar says “Enyewe mtu supuu aki act kitu unasikia tu kuwatch, kuna watu wengine waki act hata hutamani kuangalia hiyo movie. Shiks by the way hubamba watu wengi, sio mimi tu (A beautiful actor would make you enjoy watching a film, many people like Shiks Kapyenga.)” Gathered from their responses, good implies characters who are brave, smart, courageous, and generally having admirable traits. Others argued that when a given actor is widely talked about; adored by many people, the actor becomes a favorite. The responses showed that *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* have been acted by actors the audiences classify as ‘good’ actors and for some, favorite actors. Most actors in *Nairobi Half Life*, the audiences said, are celebrities well admired for their achievement in the Kenyan entertainment scene as well as characters with admirable traits in the films. Such, they said, included, Nancy Wanjiku (Shiks Kapyenga), Jacky Vike, Nini Wacera, and Jimmy Gathu, all who have acted in different films, comedies and TV shows and who are admired for their lavish lifestyles. According to the respondents, these celebrities give one a reason to stay glued to the screen. The responses by some respondents that part of the reasons why they liked *Nairobi Half Life* is because of its casting of prominent celebrities in Kenya’s entertainment field concurs with a study, published in *Psychological Science*, by Biesanz and Lorenzo suggesting

that “people pay closer attention to people they find attractive” (Bienz and Lorenzo 1780). These celebrities are attractive owing to the high lifestyle they display on social media.

When asked what they mean by great characters, some responded that good actors are ones who are perfect and will not let you down; perfect in the sense that if he is a hero, he is so heroic that you just want to be like him, if he is a robber, he is so good at it that you just marvel at how he does it, and if he is a villain, he is so evil that if he is not tamed, he would mess up the world. Maurice, even went further to give an example of a film he once watched in which the main actor was blind. He explained that “The blind man was throwing such thorough kicks that for a moment nilitamani kukuwa blind (for a moment I longed to be blind)”. Audiences further said that the gang in *Nairobi Half Life* is so swift in carjacking that you almost think it is so easy to point a gun at someone and own a Toyota VX in a flash. Their prowess is so amazing that you just want to watch them over and over. The policemen’s corruption comes as a shocking revelation that they make you want to keep watching to find out what else they do in the name of service. From the sample responses, villains were found to move the audience too, especially when they are very evil. The audiences will want to keep watching to find out what other evil plans they have and whether they will be apprehended or not.

When asked whether they would still find the same films interesting if they were acted by different actors other than the ones they have voted as their favorite or good actors in the said films, a number of respondents said they would not watch arguing that good and favorite actors is one of the major reasons influencing their attitude towards a film, and which plays a big role in their enjoying the films. Maurice again gave an example of *The Transporter*, a film with two different editions, one acted by Jason Statham and the other by James Bond. He said “Ushawahi watch *The Transporter*? I watched *Transporter* ya Jason Statham. Ilikuwa poa sana hadi when I heard that Kuna *Transporter* ingine imeactiwa na James Bond I had to get it, lakini wah! hata

sikumaliza kuiwatch” (enjoyed watching the version acted by Jason Statham very much that when I later on heard of the same movie acted by James Bond, I acquired it but could not stand it, and even stopped watching the film half way.) Sharon said “Mimi nitawatch tu kama hao actors wengine pia ni wazuri” The majority of the respondents said they would still watch and enjoy the films even if they were acted by alternative actors provided that those alternative actors are equally good and credible.

The responses above have clearly shown that actors or actresses may influence the audiences’ reception of films. This concurs with E. M. Forster’s argument on the importance of characterization when he says that “it is through characters that the writer is able to appeal to the intelligence and imagination of the reader, as the latter seeks to find out, to whom the action happened” (Forster:126). Forster’s observation underscores the importance of actors/ actresses in arousing the viewers’ interest as seen from the interview responses. Actors can appeal to an audience, “invite” them to watch, create fascination, cue their expectations throughout the film and evoke pleasure during film viewing.

Though the respondents do not use the literary terms ‘cast’ and ‘characterization’, the findings imply that viewers’ involvement in a story largely depend on the cast and characterization. According to the responses, viewers may get involved in a story more if they identify with the characters and if they find them smart, interesting, real and credible, implying that how characters are constructed in a story can contribute to viewers watching the film or not. From the responses above, it was clear that though the films under study: *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life* are crime films, the actors casted draw the audience to watch the films despite the violence. The audiences will tend to follow the actor they consider heroic, villain, smart, among others to find out what happens to them eventually. All the while as the audiences follow the activities of the character, they will be glued to the film knowing well that they are yet to

watch more, or even greasier violence. Film producers manage to arrest the audiences to the screen by constructing the characters in such a way that the audiences would want to follow them however evil. The survey has thus proved that characterization is central to the construction of films. The cast conditions the reception of the story as seen from the responses, the audience's perception of a character depends to a large extent, on their view of the actor or actress who plays the part. Psychology has it that the more the audience like the person they are watching the more they are likely to trust them, even if they are not morally upright. This finding concurs with J. Hawthorne's argument that "...characters can be used to tell a story; to exemplify a belief; to contribute to a symbolic pattern in a work, or to facilitate a particular plot development." (Hawthorne 40). Hawthorne's observation reveals that characterization plays a multi-faceted role in a story. Furthermore, for viewers to be fully involved in a story, they normally look for characters in the story with whom to identify. Audiences want to closely accompany their favorite characters through the story, overcoming obstacles with them.

4.3.3 Setting

A big number of the respondents reported that setting is one of the aspects that made them to enjoy watching the films. From the interview results, it was evident that the environment within which a film is acted can entice the viewers to watch the film. Sharon said that she likes forest areas and that films with forest scenes help one to appreciate nature. Others like Maurice and Eliud argued that fights taking place in the forest create a captivating tension as the opponents search for one another or are lost in the thick forest. Maurice gave an example of two scenes in *The Kitchen Toto* acted in the forest and argues that tension is created and the audiences hold their breath as Mwangi, alone in the dark scary forest, probably infested with wild animals, is tied to a tree. The heart pounds even faster when one of the Mau Mau approaches Mwangi, wielding a sharp knife. 'This causes a beautiful tension as one is gripped with fear' said the respondent. Another example is when Edward Graham and Mwangi attempt to climb a tree

only to rattle a python who turns wild on them. These instances increased their heart beats and kept them holding their breaths. Others who preferred the beautiful side of the forest gave examples such as the scene where the Grahams had gone for a picnic in the forest. Some preferred tall, beautiful buildings arguing that a sophisticated cityscape is beautiful to look at. Sharon argued that “it is amazing how the criminals manage to maneuver and find their way between tall buildings and dingy corridors of a complicated city ‘this makes a fight scary and captivating’”. These findings clearly show that setting fascinate the audience; whether it is the beauty of nature as seen in forest settings or the sophisticated cityscape.

4.3.4 Story

A good number of the respondents said that the crime films watched are not just a collection of robberies, fighting and violence. Beneath these films are stories which the audience can follow from the start to the end. In the process of following the stories to find out what happens to the characters, one gets glued to the film. Winnie, a student at UoE, who had earlier indicated that she is not fascinated by crime films, though she sometimes watches them said “sometimes I find myself watching these crime films to the end as I try to follow the story.” Her response as well as others indicated that most of the viewers were glued to the screen in an attempt to find out what would happen to Mwangi eventually and if Mwas would achieve his dream of becoming an actor or not. *Nairobi Half Life* opens with Mwas aspiration of becoming an actor. The film chronicles his journey as he overcomes one obstacle after another until he finally achieves his dreams. The story is structured in such a way that it involves intrigue and suspense, cueing the audiences’ expectations as they journey with Mwas through his dream of becoming an actor. *The Kitchen Toto* too has a story line that traces Mwangi’s journey from when his father dies in the hands of the Mau Mau to when he dies in the hands of his own master.

Though these respondents do not mention the literary term plot or eloquence of the narrative, this argument is in line with plot as a technique which is normally constructed to touch on the repressed impulses in the audience. Like other narratives, crime films are persuasive stories with plot, point of view, characters, subject matter with pressing social, environmental, or spiritual values, conflict, and themes. The plot of the stories in the two films flow and develop logically from the exposition of characters and introduction of conflicts, to the rising of conflict and heightening of tension, to the climax and eventually the falling action. As seen from the responses above, how the events are ordered in a cause and effect manner rouses the audiences' curiosity to want to know the outcomes of events hence arresting them to the screen.

The second objective of the study was to assess how the films under study mirror the society thereby influencing people's understanding of the complexity of the society. The findings have revealed that other than the cinematic manipulations by film producers, there are several other factors that cause audiences to watch films full of violent activities.

4.3.5 Thrills and Chills

Almost all the respondents reported that they like how the crime films play on their emotions. Most of the respondents reported that the films keep one at the edge of the seat, especially when 'your guy' is close to danger, or a victim is about to be caught. According to Rhona, "Tension has a way of making you feel good, you know, These action packed films have a way of making my heart pound...which feels good" audiences reported that the film makers seem to have a way of heightening tension with every succeeding scene. An atmosphere of suspense, tension, anticipation, terror and a sense of panic is created by the sound tracks, movements and lighting which are deliberately manipulated to induce frightening fantasies. These findings from the questionnaires and interviews reveal that the audiences do not only watch these films because they evoke pleasure but because they evoke fear and tension. It is this fear that the audiences

seek out when they set out to watch these films. These responses concur with psychologists' argument that fear stimulate the release of pleasure chemical dopamine, which causes the audience to feel pleasure as a result of fear. This is in line with cinematography as a cinematic device being manipulated by film producers create pleasure in response to tragedy of crime and representations of violence.

These findings, that fear causes the audience to feel pleasure, further concur with Aristotle's argument that tragedy offers a way for people to purge their negative emotions. Aristotle uses the term catharsis in his *Poetics*, to refer to explain this. Aristotle's on purging of emotions is reflected in Freud's arguments. Freud uses the terms 'unconscious' and 'error'. He contends that it is "by means of 'fear and pity' that art allows people to experience emotions and to purify themselves, as by activating and representing the repressed unconscious wishes in the audiences". In discussing catharsis, Freud points out the criteria which enable the spectator to be able to enjoy negative emotions. He says that to move the audience to a state of pity, firstly "the hero should not be psychopathic, but only becomes psychopathic in the course of the action of the play". Secondly, "the repressed impulse should be one of those which are similarly repressed in all of us, and the repression of which is part and parcel of the foundations of our personal evolution". It is this repression which is shaken up by the situation of the play. He contends that these two characteristics are what make the audience to reorganize themselves in the characters making the audience to see that they are susceptible to the same conflict as the character in the play is. Thirdly that "the impulse struggling into consciousness, however clearly it is recognizable, is never given a definite name; so that in the audience too the process is carried through with his attention averted making the audience to have a grip of his emotions instead of taking stock of what is happening". (Freud, 1942:309).

Crime films, specifically the two under study, agree with Freud's argument on catharsis. The films meet the conditions of possibility for catharsis in that the hero, main actors in the films, are neither perfect nor fundamentally evil. They are people the audience can identify with. They move from positions of happiness when the story begins to unhappiness due to some mistakes of judgment that they commit. These mistakes, unconscious or error in Freudian terms and tragic flaws in Aristotelian terms, are mistakes the audience can identify with as common to man. The sorrows the characters go through which are as a result of their faults (which the audiences can identify with), are calculated to manifest the fallibility of the hero leading directly to catharsis.

4.3.6 Films Mirror the Society

The respondents reported that the crime films under study reflect the society and voice the concerns of the people. They argued that these crime films are not just a collection of robberies and fights; they contain complete stories which reflect what goes on in their societies and that though works of fiction, the characters are credible and appealing with believable heroes and villains who the audience can identify with. Most of these stories, the audiences say, follow the exact same trend that we see when we look at our society; corrupt system, oppressed down trodden youths who are not involved in development, youths struggling to make it in a cruel world, people who are conned and robbed among other themes. Most of the respondents reported that they enjoyed watching the films because they could identify with the events and the characters almost at every level. They argue that these films represent people we see in real life every day; people such as Mwas, in *Nairobi Half Life*, who are not privileged in life and end up falling victims of crime, people who are conned of their hard earnings, characters like Amina, girls who 'sell' their bodies for a living, characters like Mr. Graham who sleeps with his best friend's wife among other people we see in the society every day. Johna responded that, "These stories feel so real, there are times, in these films when you feel so moved by what

these guys go through. It scares you”. Winnie, during the interview said “As I watched the two films, I kept asking myself, what if that was me?”

These responses concur with the argument in chapter three that plot as a technique may create pleasure in the audience if the audience can identify with the story, themes and the characters. This is because audiences exhibit a powerful cognitive and affective connection with something they encounter in a film if it generates a memory they can identify with. According to the respondents, the two films, *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* are true to life and do not give viewers stereotypes, like most crime films do. They shed light on the nature and flaws in human character. In the two films, one sees a lot of good in the bad people and a lot of bad in the good people. It’s exactly how human beings are; not completely bad and not absolutely good. In *Nairobi Half Life*, Oti, who roughs up Mwas in the police cell and makes him clean the filthy toilet ends up helping Mwas start up in Nairobi. Mr. Graham, a harsh colonial police commandant takes in Mwangi after his father is murdered. Eliud, said “these two films are ‘real’ and different from the other crime fictions in which the police or detectives are heroes and all the crimes are solved by the time the story ends.” He said, “In most cases, a crime is committed, a hero arrives - an officer of the law, or a private detective- to solve the crime. He identifies the perpetrator, and order is restored”. However, *Nairobi Half Life* is different. It shows how crime is so pervasive in Nairobi that it has almost become part of the order. In the film the crimes are not conclusively solved by the end of the story due to the corruption of the police and the inefficiency of the system. This mimics the real-life situation and the nature of law and justice in Nairobi. Where as in many films the hero or victim ends up succeeding after a long struggle, in *The Kitchen Toto*, Mwangi, after suffering for so long, is shot dead by his own master’s soldiers. A situation to which Natasha said “That is how life is; life is not a Nigerian movie, one does not necessarily succeed just because they have suffered.”

The study sets out to analyze how the films under study reconstruct the society. The findings imply that though crime films are full of instances of violence, the audiences like the themes they foreground since they can identify with them as reflecting the society they live in. Though terrifying, the audiences want to watch more in order to find out how bad crime in the society is. *Nairobi Half Life*, said one of the audiences, “is rooted in the real-life disparity between the rich and poor in present day Kenya, and the interactions between the two social strata. *The Kitchen Toto* too is rooted in the conflict between the colonizer and the colonized”. These films contain messages that are part and parcel of Kenya and help us to understand the horrific crimes and cruelties committed in this world through the screen. The findings underscore the fact that the two films under study not only entertain the audience, they also reflect the various societies they represent. *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life* represent forces in colonial and postcolonial Kenya respectively. Both stories show how social and economic conditions can make criminals out of innocent men, women and children.

4.3.7 Law breakers

The responses have shown that another reason why people enjoy watching crime films is that they identify with evil. Some respondents argued that human beings are always thinking of doing bad things, or wanting to get away with evil. The responses showed that most audiences tended to identify with the criminals and not the ‘so good’ guys because it offers a comfortable consolation that ‘I can also get away with some of the small ‘sins’ I commit after all there are worse people’.

The respondents’ argument about identifying with evil concurs with Sigmund Freud’s argument about human’s psychology. Freud argues that the human mind is divided into the conscious and the unconscious. The unconscious is the storehouse of the painful experiences: fears, guilt desires and unresolved conflicts which we would not wish to remember. These

experiences are hidden from our consciousness through the process of repression. However, by repressing them, we do not eliminate them. Instead they become powerful organizers of our current experience and continue to influence our thinking at all times. The suppressed wishes in our unconscious Freud says, are actively striving for expression. Human beings, he says, for example, are violent. They would always want to be involved in violence but the society does not allow it. These feelings are suppressed and enter the subconscious layer of the mind seeking to be fulfilled in one way or another. These suppressed wishes in the subconscious achieve fulfillment in a modified and disguised manner. For example, since the society does not allow us to express our violent nature, we get satisfaction by watching and cheering violence. It accords us the satisfaction that the society denies us. We watch crime films and want the criminal to get away with their evil deeds because inwardly we are evil, we always want to take advantage of others, or get things done our way even if we do not deserve it.

4.3.8 Curoosity

Almost all the respondents indicated that one of the reasons they remained glued to the screen throughout was because they wanted to find out what was going to happen next or eventually. They argued that most people hear about crime but rarely see it, or have the roughest idea of how it happens. Rhona argued that “Its crazy though, but whenever I hear it’s a crime film or a detective film, I will always want to watch to see how it happened and how it was solved.” Rhona, went ahead to give an example of ‘a naked man’ saying that “Its just like a naked man, when people hear that someone has gone crazy and has stripped off his clothes, people run to the scene to see ‘how naked’ the naked man is, its just some irrational curiosity”. The respondent argued that you will often realize that these people do not run to the scene with clothes to cover the naked man but strain their necks to get a glimpse of the nakedness. Winnie interjected in Rhona’s comment adding that “the same applies to accident scenes, people know too well that a scene of accident is a painful site likely to cause pain but you will often see

drivers slowing down and passengers straining their necks hoping to catch a glimpse of the gruesome scene”. Shammah said “There's something about the unknown that fascinates, we are always worried about crime; something we don't know and don't understand. When we hear crime we always want to know: How it happens, why it happens, who does it, if it could happen to me, and how I can keep it from happening to me.” This response concurs with invite hypothesis as a cinematic techniques, that curiosity whets audiences' appetite to keep watching.

Most of the respondents reported that they liked *Nairobi Half Life* a lot more because it is about the crime culture in the Kenya's capital city. Something most people who have not lived in Nairobi hear so much of and are always curious to knowing more about. Maureen said “Every day we hear about carjacking, pick pocketing, and police who eat with criminals in Nairobi among other ills and we wonder: How do these criminals do it? How do they manage to escape the law? Is this likely to stop, and who will stop it?” She added that “watching *Nairobi Half Life* really gave me a glimpse of criminal activities in Nairobi.” These findings imply that how a story is told would entice the audience to watch a film. When a story is constructed in such a way that it creates suspense and raises the audiences' curiosity and expectations of finding out about the unknown or unraveling the hidden, viewers will find pleasure in watching the film.

4.3.9 Hope and solace

Some of the respondents said that since most crime films end in the criminal being apprehended, they get some solace that there is justice in the world and that the evil will pay for their evil deeds. In *Nairobi Half Life*, by the time the film ends, all the criminals and corrupt police officers are killed in the exchange of fire between the criminal gang and the police. The good guys on the other hand are rewarded. Mwas, for example, is a good guy who fall victim of circumstances. Being a good guy he is not destroyed together with the bad guys. The films

accord some sort of justice which is not always seen in the real world. It is comforting to know that there is justice in the world after all, and that there is an end to evil.

Maureen argued that there are two sides to crime; there is the crime, and the attempt to solve the crime; by law or nature. There's the flaw and there's the brilliance. Most of these crime films have officers or detectives who are committed to solving the crimes. It gives some peace that there are people who are committed to solving crime; people like the Mau Mau in *The Kitchen Toto* who will do everything to protect their land.

4.3.10 Understanding the mind of a criminal

Some interviewees responded that the two films are worth watching since they help one to know the psychology of a criminal in an effort to anticipate their next moves before they strike again. Eliud and Sharon both concurred that that criminals have their own personal agendas, and they're all different. Watching crime films can make one to understand the mind of a criminal and hence spot one at a distance and avoid falling victim.

Others argued that these films can make one understand a lot about crime culture as well as to erase misconceptions people have about crime and criminals such as: The police will find finger prints on a gun used by a criminal, criminals will get caught, among others. These crime films enable us to know that it is not easy to catch a criminal; let alone get finger prints from a gun used by a criminal since they always have their way out either through collaboration with the police or wiping the guns clean. Watching *Nairobi Half Life* for example, one learns that that the criminals are not caught because the police who are supposed to apprehend them protect them.

4.3.11 Crime Films Teach

Some of the respondents argued that crime films teach the audiences about how our criminal justice system works, and how it doesn't. Winnie said that "*Nairobi Half Life* for example, shows how a failed system can result into disaster for its citizens. It also shows how criminals work to execute crime and how the corrupt police help the criminals get away with crime". Eliud argued that "there is so much that we can learn from watching crime films. We can correct erroneous ways of thinking such as 'rapists lurk in the bushes or in darkness'. From crime films like *Nairobi Half Life* you can learn that these rapists could be people you know and even trust; people close to you. Some are even relatives who attack their victims in broad day light when you least expect it. Amina, for example, in *Nairobi Half Life* is abused by her client whom she invited to the room. Rapes committed by strangers do happen, but not quite often. It makes you not fear that a stranger will break your door and abuse you but fear of your friends or relatives you invite into your room.

4.3.12 Love Makes the World Go Round

A small percentage of the respondents reported that love scenes in crime films is part of what fascinates them in crime films. They argued that love and sex is part of life, and that for a film to be considered a true reflection of the society, it has to include all aspects of the society. These respondents argued that it's crazy that people would rather watch others being killed than watch people making love. Jonah says "Personally I enjoy watching love scenes, a film without a sex scene is not complete." He continued that "I hate it when people pretend to be too holy and too righteous to watch love and sex scenes. This are the same people who end up falling victims of rape, exploitation and sexually transmitted diseases and families breaking." Eliud added to Johnas comment that "I think these film makers know about this since in every film, even in the most unexpected, they throw in one or two sex scenes". He adds that no one expected a sex scene in a serious film like *The Kitchen Toto* and that just when things are so

serious and tense; the Mau Mau break into Grahams compound, his wife is shot dead and his son falls on his mother crying hysterically, amidst all these tension the film cuts to Graham wildly and passionately making love to his best friend's wife. The respondent argues that this sex scene helps relieve the tension during this terribly tense moment.

According to "Winnie sex scenes in a film teach us about our society. *Nairobi Half Life* for example dares the field of sex and foregrounds the stories of women's predicaments in the face of poverty. The girls sell themselves in the brothel for as low as twenty shillings. It further shows us how in our societies women fall victims of male oppression physically, sexually, emotionally and psychologically since they are not enlightened. Amina is whipped to her clients' satisfaction. It gives the girls who want to dare the brothel something to ponder over and teaches those who do not know about brothels a lot about it." The sex scenes in the two films, the respondents say, handle messages often marginalized by other writers; such as sex and young girls in the face of poverty, pointing to the problems that continue to tear our society apart today. Because of what these films address, they are capable of speaking to practically any audience; they are true to life. There is so much we don't know that we can learn from these films; subjects that are rarely talked about. This fascination with sex scenes concurs with Sigmund Freud's argument that human beings wishes are largely sexual. He argues that everything is dictated by sexual feeling. He understood life from a point of sexuality and reasoned that these sexual wishes are fulfilled in a disguised manner. It can be fulfilled through stories with sexual connotation, watching movies with obscene language, or watching rape scenes among others. The above responses have shown that audiences welcome sex scenes embedded within crime films arguing that they can help subvert the pain of violence by relieving the audience from the tense atmosphere of the crime films as well as educate the audience about sex issues in the society.

4.3.13 Not Real Life

The study sought to find out why people are attracted to violence in films when they fear them in real life. All the respondents responded that they are aware that the violence they are watching is not real life and therefore does not hurt and that the people involved in the films are just acting. Though there appears to be violence, the people involved are not hurt in any way. This makes the violent acts to be seen as bearable, providing a peek into the realm of human evil without the horror that goes along with the real violence. This finding concurs with John Morreall's argument that "fictional experiences are far less painful than those in real life because in regards to fictions, our powers of control are far greater than in real life. This is because our control over fictions comes from our choosing whether or not to have these responses and our ability to walk away if we cannot take them anymore".

The finding that crime films do not hurt because they are not reality concurs with the assumptions of pleasure theorists whose basic assumption is that "there is a fundamental dissimilarity between the kinds of events we are willing to encounter via representations and those that we welcome in our daily lives". An experiment on pain thresholds carried out by pleasure theorists revealed that "when subjects were able to say when the pressure on their finger should stop, they could take far more pressure and pain than if the experimenter does not give them the option". Their study reported that "subjects reported feeling greater amounts of pain when they were unable to control the experiment. Likewise, experiences of art are less painful since the audiences can usually control whether or not they happen or when they should stop". The audiences' awareness that they possess the power to decide to leave a theater or stop the film whenever it gets to be too much to handle makes watching of violence bearable. Robert Yanal argues that according to the control account, "if a spectator is trapped in a theatre then the fiction should seem more painful" (Yanal 45). He gives an example of taking a roller coaster ride at an amusement park in which he says "Imagine taking a roller coaster ride and after the

train pulls into the docking station, it immediately begins again, without letting anyone off. Over the loud speaker, you hear that something is wrong and the operators cannot stop the ride, or even worse, you discover that the ride has been taken over by a gang of sadists who say that they will release the passengers "as soon as we feel like it and not a moment sooner." After hearing such news, it is hard to imagine that the ride would remain fun for much longer. Roger Callois in *Man, Play, and Games* argues that "play must be voluntary; that is, one must be able to step out of the game whenever one wishes, or the activity will cease to be playful" (256). In so far as experiencing a fiction is analogous to play, the control theory suggests that the control we have over our fictional engagements makes them less painful, or at least that if we lose control the nature of the experience may become far more painful.

The experiences of negative emotions in response to fictional events are less painful or more tolerable because art provides a certain degree of safety not present in real life situations that arouse extreme distress, disgust, anger, fear, horror, misery. Aristotle too concurs with the argument that painful art is bearable because art is not reality. In (Chapter 4, 48b 9–13) Aristotle's argument on representation concurs with this finding. He gives an example that a spectator would be horrified at seeing a mother massacre her children but he is able to listen keenly and enthusiastically, to the account given of this murder in a tragedy because the account is not reality but a representation". Aristotle's argument here is that negative emotions are "transformed by the art of mimesis, into pleasure". The pleasure had from watching violent films is thus linked to 'representative action'— an 'act of representation- one that is not reality'

The arguments imply that despite the violence involved, audiences still watched and enjoyed crime films because they are not reality but mere representations of reality. When asked to compare crime films to non-violent films, a big percentage of the respondents reported that they preferred crime films to non-crime.

From the findings, it was evident that majority of the respondents preferred crime films. According to them, non-violent films are too engaging and taxing to watch. One has to be totally engaged and keenly watch to follow the story line. They argued that as for the crime films, the actions tell the story; not the words. The robberies and the shootings are so conspicuous that you don't have to seriously engage your head to know what has happened. You'd get the flow of events even if you do not understand the language or are illiterate. For Jonah, Vivian, Sharon and Maurice the non 'action packed' films are too boring. According one of them, "nothing moves you in these other films unlike crime films which creates tension as the criminal is closing up on someone to kill or rob. They keeps your heart beating, sometimes you even stand on your seat, you jump, you scream, you want to get inside the screen and shout at the victim "damn! he is over there, run!. It keeps you at the edge of your seat. If you were eating something while watching, you realize that during these tense scenes you chew faster and faster. It engages your adrenaline". When asked how they feel at the sight of the violence, most responded that the violent actions sent chills down their spines. The respondents' responses to violent actions ranked as shown below:

Table 4.1: Audiences responses to violence

1–pleasant, 2-heroic 3-scary, 4–blood chilling

Type of violence	Mean	Rank
a. Robbery at gun point	2.54	3
b. Murder	3.86	4
c. Slaughter	3.77	4
d. Car jacking	1.74	2
e. Sexual assault	2.61	3
f. Forcefully administering an oath	2.82	3
g. Pick pocket	2.92	3

From the responses there is a strong indication that the audiences who enjoyed watching films with violence are aware that these crime films are designed to elicit negative emotions and in fact make them shiver. Despite knowing this, they still love watching them and always seek them out in pursuit of these painful reactions; they love the negative emotions the films elicit. This finding concurs with Aaron Smuts' observation that "Although one may agree with Arnold that painfulness is an aesthetic flaw, one cannot deny that audiences appear to seek out painful art and that many artists attempt to create artworks that are nothing short of painful. In fact, the breadth of painful emotional experiences to which audiences willingly submit themselves is staggering." (Smuts 59) In his discussion, Smuts gave an example of the religious bio-film *The Passion of the Christ* (Mel Gibson, 2004), designed specifically to disgust and outrage viewers, which ironically became a box-office success. Noel Carroll too in her book 'The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart' agrees that the audiences seek painful art knowing too well that the arts elicit negative emotions. She argues that "horror is a genre perhaps most familiar through films. The "Nightmare on Elm Street" series, the "Halloween" series, and the more recent "Saw" series scare the living daylights out of viewers, who happily go back for more with every sequel." (Carroll 272).

4.3.14 Conclusion

This chapter was constructed after the third objective of the study which sought to investigate the effect of aesthetization of crime films and evaluate its impact on the audiences. The findings have revealed that stylistic presentation of crime can draw the audiences to like the films. The responses have shown that audiences enjoyed watching the films under study with varied factors accounting for their enjoyment. The factors included: the beauty with which the films are presented, identification with given characters, tension created by the violent scenes, persuasive stories with plot, point of view, characters, subject matter with pressing social,

environmental, and spiritual values, and how events are ordered in a cause and effect manner rousing the audiences' curiosity among others. The chapter thus concluded that use of stylistic and cinematic devices would cause the audiences to feel pleasure in response films that feature instances of intense human suffering and which appear to elicit distressful emotions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The study set to find out what causes people to derive pleasure from films full of criminal activities, and which elicit pain when they avoid such situations in real life. In doing this, the study drew impetus from a number of factors. Firstly, that stylistic presentation of violence would cause the audience to enjoy watching crime films which they would otherwise shun in reality.

The second positing was that audiences are drawn to watch what they identify with. The study acknowledged the fact that lived experiences form the basis for filmic expressions and as such a community is reflected in the cinema it produces. The study based on the premise that the proximity of the literary artists to their society influences them to echo in their works the experiences drawn from their societies as well as values that the society upholds. The study envisaged the existence of illustrations that depict the society as reflected in the eye of the camera.

Thirdly, that aestheticization of crime in films impact on the audience. The study had anticipated influence of aesthetization on the viewers owing to the possible manipulation of cinematic devices in the films. In view of these facts, the study thus set to find out how the techniques used in crime films function to re-dramatize pain and still maintain narrative pleasure making it possible for audiences to feel pleasure while watching a painful movie, while also addressing and re-constructing the society.

The study's response to these demands took two significant pertinent dimensions. First of all it considered the techniques film producers use to paint the crime and violence in the films positively, the study then interviewed selected respondents to determine the effects of the techniques used in the films on the audience. In examining the audiences' responses, the study

frequently referred to the cinematic devices earlier established as having been used in the films. The reference to the cinematic styles employed assisted the study in interrogating the connection between the audiences' responses and the cinematic styles used. The study looked at style in relation to how language and cinematic devices are used in the films to create a beautiful narrative environment which works to convert the unpleasant emotions into pleasurable ones. Under this premise, the study discussed how close up, long shot, telephoto lens, plot, characterization among others are used to spectacularize the actions and as a way of enticing the audience to watch the films. After a critical analysis of style, plot and character portrayal within the study's scope, the study was able to draw conclusions that could serve as generic representation of what draws audiences to watch crime films which elicit pain and violence and which they shun in real life.

While accounting for the pleasure had from representations of events from which people do not derive pleasure in real life, the study, also attempted to answer a pertinent question of whether crime films are solely for entertainment or they also influence the audiences' understanding of society, and what statements they make about the society; in case they do.

5.1: Research Findings and conclusion

The study on the aesthetics of crime in Kenyan films: an examination of paradox of painful art in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* has led to some insight into how film makers entice audiences to watch films which elicit pain and which involve actions which they would find repulsive if put before them in real life, and how films shape peoples understanding of the society. The study found out that through cinematic techniques, film producers are able to translate criminal imaginations into an entertaining narrative. As pointed out earlier, film is considered as a mirror of what goes on in society. The study was able to closely relate the findings in the films examined with the audience responses. Basing on how the selected

respondents responded to the lead questions of the study, a number of observations have come to the fore:

During the sampling of titles for the study, it was discovered that crime is one of the most highly sought after theme in contemporary cinema, Kenyan cinema being no exception. Most films that film dealers and movie houses reported as highly selling were those that feature instances of crime and violence. It was also discovered that most audiences turn to these films featuring instances of intense human suffering for information and entertainment. The interviews revealed that audiences prefer these crime films to others due to how these films are presented; in terms of cinematic techniques and their representation of the society. Though during the sampling stage the study established that other films other than crime films are also available they were found to be less preferred by buyers and viewers. This was attributed to the fact that these films are not as glamorous as the crime films which were found to move relatively fast and packed with suspense and tension hence arresting a majority of the audiences.

The first objective of the study was to interrogate how the devices used by film makers to aestheticize criminal and violent actions in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto*, function to represent the stories of violence in an acceptable and entertaining manner drawing the audience to feel pleasure in response to painful actions. The study found out that these film makers succeeded in drawing the audience to watch these films by using several cinematic techniques one of them being the use of codes to cue the audiences' expectations thereby gluing them to the screen. One of these codes was found to be 'invite technique'. It was discovered that the film producers often present the audience with a character looking off the screen or focusing on some point to 'invite' the audience to want to find out what the character is looking at. This was discovered to work for the film producers due to the belief that human beings are

naturally curious and would always want to direct their own attention to the target of another human's attention in order to find out the object of other person's fascination. It was further discovered that the suspense these invite techniques create work to entice the audiences by rousing their curiosity to watch crime films because of the human beings natural perception that a glance has a target and a move has an outcome. As such, for every action or move in the film, the audience will stay tuned and watch out for the outcome just as for every glance they will check out for the target and the outcome.

Characterization too, in these films, was found to be manipulated to arrest the audience's attention. The study recognized the fact that films embody the values that the writer wishes to propagate or perpetuate and that these values are largely passed on through characterization. Characterization thus becomes important in film since the viewers see themselves and their society through the actors. The study examined how a character can be manipulated to entice the audiences and found out that the film producers bank on audiences' ability to identify with and to like the characters to entice the audience. The study found out that in the two films, the protagonists are presented in such a way that the audiences are drawn to them. They are lovable, innovative, determined, or victims of circumstances like Mwangi in *The Kitchen Toto* and Mwas in *Nairobi Half Life*; worth the audiences' sympathy and attention. In contrast to the "hero" image bestowed upon the protagonists, the picture painted of the villain is a negative one. The latter operate within established role and character stereotypes as evil, unfaithful, unreliable, lazy, and malicious. They are always cruel and always want to take advantage of the victim. The picture painted of the protagonists in the two films is that of a victim oppressed by a cruel evil villain: Mwangi in *The Kitchen Toto* together with the other black colonial subjects are victims of the cruel white colonial masters, likewise Mwas in *Nairobi Half Life* together with his gang are victims of the post colonial system which has left its citizens poor and desperate. Generally, the main characters are constructed in such a way that they draw the

audiences to like them since interacting with people one likes intensifies emotions and that the more the audience likes a character, regardless of their immorality, the more they defend them even if their actions are violent. It was found that film makers achieve this by employing certain cinematic devices which engage the audiences' innate capacity to identify with the main character hence trusting them. These devices were found to include close up shot which is designed to activate the audiences' closeness to the character in such a way that they identify with the character and support him/her. This technique was found to succeed due to the fact that people would do anything to protect the ones close to them, as such the violence of those close to them will be condoned or viewed positively. From these findings about characterization the study draws a conclusion that how a character is constructed would draw the audience to watch a crime film.

The plots of the stories were discovered to be arranged in a cause and effect manner which induces suspense in the audiences, drawing them to follow the actions of the main character despite the violence. The study found out that the plots of the two films under study are arranged in such a way that they create suspense, surprise, and fulfill expectations. The film producers based this on the argument that human beings are naturally fascinated by the unknown. Audiences always want to follow up a story to find out what is beneath the surface. They thus construct the plot of the story in a way that fulfils this psychological need to captivate the audiences. On this, the study concludes that how the plot of a story is constructed would draw an audience to watch a violent film.

It was found out that the experiences of violence are represented from the point of view of the victim thereby portraying the criminals as victims of circumstances. As such the audiences do not judge them even when they commit violent acts. Pity, Aristotle tells us, "is felt for the man who has not merited his misfortune, and fear for the misfortune of a fellow-man". *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life* are told from Mwangi and Mwas' perspectives respectively. The

audience therefore sympathizes with them and do not condemn their violent actions. This possibly explains why people would view their violence positively.

The research also found out that the cast in the films are made attractive by being composed of beautiful celebrities adored by many Kenyans. It was gathered that people adore beauty and pay closer attention to people they find attractive. Audiences tend to welcome the violence perpetuated by a beautiful girl or a handsome man in the films. Their violent actions seem to be camouflaged in their beauty because people equate beauty to goodness and ugly to evil. As such the audiences find their violent actions bearable. This made the study to draw a conclusion that the reception of a film largely depend on the people they cast. This diversion of the audiences' attention was further found to be accentuated by music as well as the combination of sorrow and laughter. Both *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* were found to comfortably accommodate a combination of sorrow and humour, moving the audience to tears and laughter, with the laughter making the tears bearable. It was found out that the film producers used humour before or after a violent action. This was discovered to give the audience some relief before or after the film plunges deep into a negative emotion relieving the audiences from the pain elicited by the violence.

The study found out that beauty fascinates the audiences. The two film producers used glamorous backgrounds as their settings to entice the audiences to watch their productions despite the violence involved. Most scenes in *Nairobi Half Life* are set against the background of the beautiful Nairobi's CBD with its beautiful cityscape; the beauty of the city distracting the audience from the pain elicited by violent action by directing the audience's focus to the cityscape, inviting the audience to respond to the beauty and not the sorrow'. *The Kitchen Toto* too is set against the beauty of the country side which engages the audiences to appreciate nature as well as romanticize the African landscape with its beautiful savannah, terrains, rivers

and the wild jungle-full of life. The study thus concluded that setting can be an invite technique used to draw the audience to watch a film.

The analysis of style revealed that language and cinematic techniques are some of the aspects used by the film producers to draw the audiences to watch the films despite the negative emotions they may elicit. The cinematic techniques were found to place the films in the spot light hence making them outstanding and attractive. Aestheticization of pain, violence and suffering in these films was found to be achieved through stylistic representations of actions. The violent actions are presented as a form of expressive art. These effects were found to be achieved by manipulation of camera or lens or by editing techniques; such as use of slow motion, telephoto lens, zoom lens, quick-cutting and montage, close up, long shot among others, conditioning the audiences' response to the violence. The study found out that the combination of a graphic representation of robbery with an aesthetic representation produces contradictory effects which disorient the spectator who forgets the pain of the violence as they concentrate on the beauty of the presentation. The study found out that the brutal and violent scenes in the films were designed to be outstanding so as to attract the audience. They are filmed in cinematic techniques that differ significantly from the rest of the scenes in which the murder scenes are embedded. Cinematography was thus found by the study as one of the techniques used by the film makers to entice the audience to watch films with instances of violence.

Film music is one of the techniques that was found to aid the films in enticing the audiences. It was discovered that music works side by side with cinematography to encourage viewers to appreciate the serenity of the landscape. As the music plays, the audiences' attention is focused on the music swaying the audiences mind away from the sorrow and inviting the audience to respond to the picturesque which affects their interpretations of the characters and

plot. This is because music tends to sooth people making them to suspend reality hence enabling the audience to believe what they watch on the screen.

Also of significance is the plot of the story. On plot, the study discovered that human beings are naturally fascinated by the unknown. As such audiences always want to follow up a story to find out what is beneath the surface. Script writers design the plot of a story in a way that fulfils this psychological need. They manipulate the events/elements in a story to interact in such a way that they create a story with complexity, intrigue, surprise and suspense, captivating the audience.

The second objective of the study was to analyze how the films under study reflect the society thereby influencing an understanding of the society. The films under study; *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* were found to be reflections of the societies which produce them. Other than entertainment, invoking reactions of horror or 'pleasure', the two films under study were found to influence the audiences understanding of the society. Human experiences form the basis for expression in films. Since human experiences are not separable from social reality, cinema can only be understood in its larger social context. Cinema is dependent on the experiences existing in the society and as such it is assumed to be reflecting reality. Hermeren reiterates this conclusion when he states that “works of art are not produced in a vacuum. Every work of art is surrounded by what might be called its artistic field ... political, economic and socio-cultural. All this may influence the works of art” (Hermeren 3).

The Kitchen Toto and *Nairobi Half Life* were found to represent forces that are present in colonial and post-colonial Kenya respectively. They foreground the social, political and economic representation of the country during the said periods. While *The Kitchen Toto* speaks of Kenya’s history and makes a statement about racial inequality and social injustices associated with colonialism, *Nairobi Half Life* deals with the crime and violence which is

attributed to the prevalence of crime and violence in postcolonial Kenya. The study's interest took cognizance of the fact that these producers belong to communities and are often influenced by the societies in which they live. The study found out that since *Nairobi Half Life* is a post colonial film, it deals with assorted post colonial problems such as how socio-economic factors can contribute to one becoming a criminal. These factors were found to include poverty which was found to expose individuals to anti-social behaviors. The analysis of the films revealed that when individuals are impoverished, they will tend to look at criminal activities as a means to take care of their needs if they fail to find an option. The study also showed that poor educational backgrounds which subjected people to long periods of unemployment and low income jobs contributed to crime. Easy access to fire arms was also found to be one of the factors that contributed to crime. In *Nairobi Half Life*, for example, the fire arms were seen to be readily available in black market. *The Kitchen Toto* on the other hand looked at the racial inequality and social injustices associated with colonialism. It focused on the colonial ideology of white supremacy and the subsequent revolt by the blacks. Under this premise, the study concluded that other than entertaining the audience, crime films mirror the societies that produce them.

The third objective of the study was to investigate the effect of aestheticization of crime and evaluate its impact on the film audience. Based on the findings from the questionnaires and oral interviews the study concludes that although the two films feature instances of intense human suffering which involve pain, and which people generally avoid in daily lives, audiences still enjoyed watching them and found them entertaining. The study found out from the audiences that the audiences do feel pleasure from films which appear to elicit distressful emotions. Several factors were found to have motivated the respondents to keep on watching these two films which contained instances of violence. From the audiences' responses, the study found out that the beauty with which the films are presented make even violent actions

like killing worth watching. The study found out from the respondents that the audience liked the colorful and art-like presentation of the violence. The study concludes that the film producers manage to entice the audience to watch violent films by constructing the violent actions like art. They achieve this by manipulating the tone, light, shot, sound, editing among others.

It emerged that some of the said violent actions were not only viewed positively but were also anticipated and were fascinating when they came. It is clear from the responses that this is because audiences interpret the violence in the films according to who executes the violence, to whom the violence is directed and the purpose of the violence. It was gathered that when a violent action is directed to a person the audience is against, it became fascinating. When such is the case, the audience eagerly waits for the violence and cheers when it comes. The study, thus, concludes that identification with given characters in a film explains why audiences bear to watch greasy scenes, sometimes of extreme violence and murder, with excitement. The findings imply that viewers will get more involved in a film if they identify with the characters. How characters are constructed in a story can contribute to viewers watching the film or not. From the responses it was clear that though the films under study; *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life* are crime films, the actors draw the audience to watch the films despite the violence. The findings have further shown that when an audience identifies with a character, he/she becomes part of them such that any evil he/she does would not be condemned; this implies that a killer in a film is not necessarily a bad guy. Psychology has it that the more the audience like the person they are watching the more they are likely to trust them, even if they are not morally upright. The nature of the pleasure experienced in watching violent films is thus the result not only of the identification with the main character, but especially of the feelings that emerges in the audience during the watching of the film. The response revealed that audiences get glued to films however violent because the audience may be confronted with what he has been, with

what he might have been, with what he should have been, with what he would have liked to be, and with what he is owing simply to error. What makes the audience glued to violent films thus is the identification and the realization that what has happened to my fellow-man may also happen to me and that the 'great error' of the hero primarily concerns me.

The audiences love the tension created by the violent scenes. That when these scenes with robberies, violence and murder were embedded within a mixture of actions; sound tracks, quick movements, light and darkness, they created tension in the audience. The study considered this the epitome of the paradox of the painful art; that the audiences enjoyed the films not just for the beauty of presentation but for the tension that it creates. It was clear in their responses that the audiences do not get caught up in the violent films by chance, these audiences know too well that the films are full of violence yet they chose them and continually return to them even after experiencing the violent acts. Paradoxically the audiences seem to love these feelings of strong agitation. The study found out that the audiences like how the crime films play on their emotions. That the films cause the heart to pound is a reason to watch the films. This finding links with the use of cinematography in chapter two where it was found out that the film producers use cinematic techniques like speed editing, shacking images, sound track, music among other techniques to create and enhance tension, an atmosphere of suspense, anticipation, terror and a sense of panic. The study concludes that just as Aristotle argues about catharsis in poetics, the tension created by the violence in these films offer a way for people to purge their negative emotions.

Another paradox of art revealed by the responses is that when villains are expected to repulse the audiences, Villains were found to attract the audience to watch crime films, especially when they are too evil. The audiences not only watch to find out what their evil plans are but also because they enjoy their evil actions. Most of the respondents identified more with the bad characters than the good ones claiming that the society has more evil than good.

It was evident that the environment within which a film is acted can entice the viewers to watch a film. Some argued that the tension created by forest scenes such as when Mwangi is alone in the forest at night tied to a tree, when one of the Mau Mau freedom fighters, approach Mwangi, wielding a sharp knife, when Edward Graham and Mwangi attempt to climb a tree only to rattle a python who turns wild on them among others create tension which glue the audience to the screen. Tall, beautiful buildings and sophisticated cityscape which gives the police a headache to find the criminals was voted to be one of the reasons that made the audience to watch the films. These findings clearly show that setting fascinate the audience; whether it is the beauty of nature as seen in forest settings or the sophisticated cityscape.

The study has shown that crime narratives are not just a series of violence, they are primarily complete stories told through the use of actions enhanced with sounds, music, and voice-overs conveying scenes which work on the audiences' imagination. Like other narratives, crime films are persuasive stories with plot, point of view, characters, subject matter with pressing social, environmental, or spiritual values, conflict, and themes. The study concludes that how the events are ordered in a cause and effect manner rouses the audiences' curiosity to want to know the outcomes of events hence arresting them to the screen. People watch these films to find out more about crime culture. On this premise, the study concludes that when film producers deal with issues people are likely to be curious about, it draws them to watch the films. Other than for entertainment the study also found out that some audiences watched these films for the education they get. They argued that these films can make one understand a lot about crime culture as well as to erase misconceptions people have about crime and criminals such as: The police will find finger prints on a gun used by a criminal and that criminals will get caught, among others.

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The study also found out that other than the cinematic manipulations by film producers, there are several other factors that cause audiences to watch films full of violent activities. The audiences are drawn to these films more when they reflects their societies and voice the concerns of the people; film made in the very streets they walk on everyday showing the people they can identify with. The two films under study, the audiences say, follow the exact same trend that they see when they look at the society; corrupt system, oppressed down trodden youths, who are not involved in development, criminals struggling to make it in a cruel world among other themes. The study concludes that when the audiences can identify with the characters they will watch even their violent actions without shying away. The study concludes

that the crime films not only entertain the audience, they also reflect the various societies they represent making the audience want to watch them to find out about the society.

The audiences were found to identify with evil. The respondents argued that human beings naturally have evil in their system of thinking and that they always think of doing bad things, or wanting to get away with evil. Some respondents argued that while watching these crime films, people tend to identify with the criminals and not the 'so good' guys because it offers a comfortable consolation that 'I can also get away with some of the small 'sins' I commit'. Therefore, according to this study, this is one explanation as to why people prefer crime films to others.

From the responses to the questionnaires, it was clear that the crime films under study involved instances which evoked painful emotions. Though painful, the audience could bear the pain arguing that since it is not reality it does not hurt. From the responses to the questionnaires, it was clear that the crime films under study involved instances which evoked painful emotions. Though painful, the audience could bear the pain arguing that since it is not reality it does not hurt. It was therefore concluded that audiences can bear, and even enjoy watching, painful emotions from films which they cannot bear in real life. The research established that majority of audiences enjoyed watching films with instances of pain and that film producers have succeeded in using language and cinematography to increase tension in films. Despite these the audiences still seek to watch these films not by chance but knowing well that these films contain these instances. The producers manipulate linguistic and cinematic devices to create more tension and also to stylistically present crime, creating an aestheticized spectacle in which suffering and art coalesce into an aesthetic experience turning violence and criminal activities into a captivating story which can entertain the audience.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

Preamble

Dear Respondent,

Good day! I am Lencer Achieng', a graduate student from the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi pursuing Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Literature. I am trying to find out the effect of crime films on the audience through this brief survey, and your answers will be very helpful in determining this. It is therefore my request that you fill all the sections of this questionnaire honestly and truthfully. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used for the purpose of this research only. In case you have any questions regarding this survey, please do not hesitate to ask. Allow me to thank you most sincerely for sparing your valuable time to assist by answering the questions.

Questionnaire No..... Date.....

Please tick the appropriate response or give a brief comment where applicable

Part A: Demographic Details

1. Name of Respondent: (optional)
2. Gender [1] Male [2] Female
3. Education level:
 [1] No formal education [2] Primary and below [3] Secondary [4] Post-secondary
4. Age bracket:

[1] Below 18 [2] 18-30 [2] 31-40 [3] 41-50 [4] 51+

5. Occupation:

[1] Student [2] Teacher [3] House-Help [4] Other

Part B: Responses to Crime Films

6. Indicate the crime film(s) you have watched.

Title of film	Tick appropriately
<i>a. Nairobi Half Life</i>	
<i>b. The Kitchen Toto</i>	
c. Other crime films (specify)	

7. a. Did you enjoy watching the films mentioned in 6 above? YES NO

b. If yes, list some of the features that made the films interesting

i)

.....

.

ii)

.....

iii)

.....

iv).....

.

v).....

.

8. Based on your watching of the films mentioned in 6 above, comment on the following features in the films watched (give reasons for your judgements)

Elements	Response to the films (Tick appropriately)		Reason for like or dislike
	Like	Dislike	
a. Setting			
b. Actors			
c. The story			
d. Language			
e. Sound effects			
f. How the story is told (techniques)			
g. Action			
h. Other (specify).....			

Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts with me this far. Please turn over to the next page for a few more questions.

9. a) Name the actors you liked most in the films you mentioned in 6 above.....

.....

b) What made the actors in a) above more appealing than the rest?

.....

.....

.....

.....

10.a) Did you have knowledge of the actors mentioned in 9 above before you watched the films?

YES

NO

b) If yes, did this prior knowledge of the actor(s) influence your attitude towards the film?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. Suppose the films you watched (6 above) were acted by other actors would you still find them appealing? (Give reasons)

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Have you watched other films other than crime films?

YES

NO

13. Compare how you felt while watching the films with violent scenes to the other films that are non-violent

.....
.....
.....
.....

14. Use the options below to rank your response to the violent scenes in the films watched:

1–pleasant, 2-heroic 3-scary, 4–blood curdling

Type of violence	Rank
h. Robbery at gun point	
i. Murder	
j. Slaughter	
k. Car jacking	
l. Sexual assault	
m. Forcefully administering an oath	
n. Pick pocket	

I highly appreciate your continued support in this survey.

15. a) How would you would feel if the violence mentioned in 14 above happened to someone you know; say a neighbor, a relative or a close friend.

GOOD BAD NO FEELING

b) If bad, why then do you watch in films the same violent actions which make you feel bad in reality?

.....

.... If the same representation of crime as in *Nairobi Half Life* and *The Kitchen Toto* were to be aired on news or as a documentary, would you still watch them with the same enthusiasm? YES NO

16. If NO, What is it that makes you watch it as a film and not watch it in another form

.....
.....
.....
.....

17. "It is the way films are presented that makes them entertaining or not" Do you agree with this conclusion?

AGREE DISAGREE PARTLY AGREE AND PARTLY DISAGREE

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX II: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Dear Respondent,

Good day! I am Lencer Achieng', a graduate student from the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi pursuing Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Literature. I am trying to find out the effect of crime films on the audience through this brief survey, and your answers will be very helpful in determining this. It is therefore my request that you fill all the sections of this questionnaire honestly and truthfully. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used for the purpose of this research only. In case you have any questions regarding this survey, please do not hesitate to ask. Allow me to thank you most sincerely for sparing your valuable time to assist by answering the questions.

Interview Schedule No. Date.....

Interview Questions

1. Name Occupation
2. Based on your watching of *The Kitchen Toto* and *Nairobi Half Life* did you find the films entertaining or otherwise
3. How did you treat the objects of distress present in the films
4. Please give an overview of what you found interesting in the films.
5. How would you feel if what happens to the characters in the films were to happen to you?
6. Based on your answer in 4 above, what then is the difference between these actions happening in reality and in film
7. What in your opinion makes draws you to watch these crime films when you would not want to witness the same actions in reality.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION