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Post-colonial Criminality in John Kiriamiti's

My Life in Crime

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Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Post-colonial Criminality in John Kiriamiti’s *My Life in Crime*” is our own work and all the resources we have used have been acknowledged by means of references.

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Dedication

All praise is to Allah, by Whose grace good deeds are accomplished.

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, **Noura** and **Khadir**, to whom my deepest gratitude goes for always being my source of unconditional love and for all the things they have been providing me with to help me accomplish my long educational journey that has started 17 years ago. Without you, my darlings, this work would have never seen the light.

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Meriem Merzougui

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late father, who wished to witness me become the first graduate in our family. To my loving mother, who did her best to compensate us for the loss of our father. To my little brother, sisters, and my best friend. To my aunt who has been by my side until the last moment. And, finally, to all my beloved ones.

Alia Latrach

Abstract

Crime is one of the most common problems in the modern world, and its complexity intensifies when it emerges in post-colonial societies. Consequently, this dissertation examines crime-related issues in African countries that experienced European colonization through crime fiction representations, with Kenya serving as a case study. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Kenyan crime fiction's engagement with post-colonial challenges, shedding light on its impact on society's perceptions of crime and criminals. Through an analysis of John Kiriamiti's autobiography *My Life in Crime*, the study examines how the book tackles the issue of crime present during the post-colonial era and attributes it to the legacy of colonialism. Moreover, it discusses the depiction of the capital Nairobi as a city plagued with crime where the youth are pushed into a life of crime because of the colonial legacy. Furthermore, the research delves into the moral dilemmas surrounding criminal confession in literature and questions its reliability and purpose through an exploration of the author's narrative techniques, as well as the definitions of guilt such as that of Freud's. It also investigates the portrayal of criminals as heroic figures, delving into the motivations that drive authors to employ this narrative device and the readers' tendency to sympathize with such characters. In order to achieve this, the research provides a comprehensive historical and critical account of Kenya's colonial background in addition to an examination of the colonial and neocolonial legacies. Additionally, it relies on Edward Said's insights on neocolonialism and the consequences of Imperialism on post-colonial countries, as well as certain theories of criminology, in order to analyze Kiriamiti's autobiography.

Key words: colonial legacy, crime, crime fiction, post-colonialism, neocolonialism, confession, autobiography.

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General Introduction

“The real tragedy of our post-colonial world is not that the majority of people had no say in whether or not they wanted this new world; rather, it is that the majority have not been given the tools to negotiate this new world”. — Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (132, 133).

Literature is a window to the real world. Many, if not all writers, use literature as a tool to capture and get hold of the readers’ emotions as if they are really a part of their stories. E.M. Foster argues that “What is wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of the man who wrote, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulse”, indicating the ability of reading significant literary works to transform readers and awaken their creative instincts. Thus, the power literature carries and how it plays a great role in depicting and influencing human beings’ lives, especially those who have been colonized, must be taken into consideration.

Literature plays a crucial role in exploring and understanding the complex dynamics and impacts of post-colonialism. Thus, post-colonial literature emerged in the mid-twentieth century. Before defining post-colonialism, it is always interesting to look back at the definition of colonialism. It is the military, political, economic, and cultural domination of one country, mainly a Western country, over another. The period after colonialism is known as post-colonialism. In this period, most former colonies continue to be controlled by the political, cultural, ideological, and economic hegemony of the colonizer. Post-colonialism is a literary theory that addresses the problems and consequences of the post-independence period in Africa, Asia, South America and

other parts of the world. Some of the well-known African authors of post-colonial literature include Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, and Ama Ata Aidoo (Quayson). However, the criminal activity that occurred after their countries achieved independence was not the focus of their writings.

Crime is a pressing developmental concern that plagues post-colonial nations, with its detrimental effects resonating deeply within the lives of individuals, hindering social progress, and impeding economic growth. Kenya, in particular, has suffered significantly from the pervasive influence of high crime rates, as highlighted by the National Crime Research Centre (11). In this context, it becomes evident that a significant portion of the populace, particularly the youth, have found themselves compelled to engage in criminal activities as a direct result of unemployment or insufficient incomes. This socio-economic backdrop has given rise to a state of profound instability within the country, which gained momentum during the tumultuous decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Consequently, it becomes important to pose a question about whom to blame in order to prompt an exploration of the complex factors contributing to the proliferation of crime.

The British colonizer influenced Kenya's political system. In fact, they made it authoritarian and undemocratic because their aim was to exploit the country (Bayah 89). Moreover, the post-colonial Kenya was interested in developing its economy. Yet, various degrees of disappointment have characterized the national experiences of industrial and economic progress. Kenya has failed to improve its industrial and economic growth because of several factors which relate to the legacy of colonialism (Fahnbulleh 33). In other words, they are inextricably linked to its historical context. Thus, it is interesting to take into consideration Kenya's conditions after the end of colonialism and the effects that made the country suffer from crime, violence, and corruption.

In fact, no precise number of robberies was reported. However, some report that at least one bank is robbed every week. “The robberies are well executed...they strike very early. They sometimes enter with employers or disguised as cleaners. They seem to do their homework well” banker Micheal Karanja said (Simmons). It is important noting that crime rates were significantly inconsequential in pre-colonial Kenya. However, because of unemployment, low education, and other economic and social conditions, many of Kenyans engaged in criminal activities like violent robbery (Odiwuor 20-36).

John Kiriamiti, who is a Kenyan author, wrote about the crimes that he himself committed between the 1960s and 1970s in Kenya. He is a former bank robber who later became a writer. By the age of twenty, he was already one of the most wanted criminals by the police. In 1971, Kiriamiti was arrested and imprisoned (Mūsangi 5). During his years in prison, he published his first and most famous literary work, *My Life in Crime*, in which he narrates how he became a pickpocket at the age of fifteen years old and how he gradually turned into a violent bank robber (7). This book has a great significance in African post-colonial crime fiction since it deals with the issue of criminality in newly independent Kenya and the incidents recounted take place between the 1960s and 1970s. It really depicts Kenya’s difficult conditions at that time and the causes that contributed to them. In addition to this work, he wrote two other novels: *My life with a Criminal: Milly’s Story* and *My Life in Prison*, making the bestselling trilogy in Kenya.

Since there is a need for a deep analysis to provide a clear understanding for this issue, this study is going to find out the real causes behind committing crimes in Kenya as a post-colony, referring to Kiriamiti’s *My Life in Crime*. Thus, the general purpose of the current research is to expound that the effects of colonialism have largely been, and still, a major cause of the political, economic, and social situation of the post-colonial countries. However, it mainly focuses on the

relationship of the legacy of colonialism with the criminal activity that emerged in post-colonial Kenya. Particularly, it attempts to examine how John Kiriamiti contextualized criminality in his work *My Life in Crime*. In addition, criminal confession is discussed as to why the author confesses his crimes and whether he is being honest with his readers. Also, this study tackles the issue of depicting a criminal character as a hero in this autobiography and how the author makes his readers sympathize with him during his attempts to commit crimes or to evade arrest. It also attempts to investigate whether this moral dilemma occurs because of the colonial legacy that the protagonist witnesses or because of personal purposes.

This being said, this study aims to provide answers to the following main question: how does the legacy of colonialism, mainly in urban settings, lead to the evolution of crimes and criminals based on the Kenyan colonial and post-colonial experience? In order to answer this question, this dissertation attempts to answer the following sub-questions: How did the economic and social conditions in Kenya turn many people, especially the youth, into criminals? How is Nairobi's reputation as a city of criminals related to those conditions? How can the application of the theories of criminology help to analyze the behavior and motivations of criminals, particularly the protagonist, within the context of Kenya's colonial and post-colonial experiences? And for what purpose did Kiriamiti confess his crimes and make his readers sympathize with him as a criminal in his fictional autobiography?

Many studies analyzed crime in African post-colonial crime fiction and have always concluded that it is a result of economic, political, and social status and poverty in African post colonies. However, few have linked the deteriorating conditions to their true roots, which are post-colonial legacies, as seen in post-colonial fiction. In regards to John Kiriamiti's *My Life in Crime*, Tom Odhiambo, an associate researcher at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research,

states in an article entitled “Juvenile Delinquency and Violence in the Fiction of Three Kenyan Writers” that violence occurred in African countries after they achieved independence of the colonial rule. He argues that the Kenyan state did not pay attention to the youth and their position in the society after independence. Therefore, this marginalization and deprivation of material resources, according to him, led to the spread of violent and criminal behaviour in the country, especially among youths (Odhiambo 137).

In addition, a Master’s thesis submitted by Jennifer Beatrice Mūsangi to the Faculty of Arts, University of Witwatersrand, tackles the issue of criminality in post-colonial Kenya by analyzing John Kiriamiti’s *My Life in Crime*. She discusses how is Nairobi a criminal city and the protagonist’s relationship with it. She also tackles the idea of representing the criminal as a heroic figure and how the author makes his readers sympathize with him. Unfortunately, this thesis does not discuss crime from a post-colonial perspective, but rather it focuses on how Kiriamiti represents the Kenyan urban space using the criminal figure.

Moreover, an online review of the book written by Abdiweli Dabar explains that the book delivers some lessons to adolescents and their parents too. He also expresses his doubts concerning Kiriamiti’s claim about the story being completely non-fiction and argues that the book violates moral values by encouraging prostitution and alcoholism. Another online review by Susan Mukami argues that the book makes its readers sympathize with these robbers because, according to her, they are also humans and that we all might do the same things they did or more if we lived under the same conditions they experienced.

Furthermore, Larry Ndivo, in his article entitled “The Illusion of Truth in Three Kenyan Crime Novels” focuses on the dishonesty of Kiriamiti’s claim that his three works are a depiction

of his real life experiences as a criminal. He also argues that the book narrates some contradicted events and how they are “an illusion of truth” (6) that makes the reader skeptical about its credibility. He, then, comes to the conclusion that the writer depicted his criminal life through combining both fiction and truth in his autobiography. Unfortunately, none of these works aimed to investigate the crimes committed in the book from a post-colonial perspective. Therefore, this research seeks to establish a link between criminality and post-colonial legacy.

Understanding the involvement in criminal behaviour and the actual causes behind it in post-colonial countries can be achieved through tracing the colonial legacy in those countries. The post-colonial critical approach is an important tool to investigate the actual causes of involvement in criminal behaviour in such countries. Post-colonial theory helps study crime in the former colonies’ economic, political, and social situation after they achieved independence. Therefore, it serves as a tool to understand *My Life in Crime*’s protagonist, Jack Zollo, and why he was involved in criminal activities. This research also uses Edward Said’s insights on the nature of colonialism and Post-colonialism to investigate the legacy of colonialism in Kenya as a former colony of the British rule. Certain criminological theories can also be applied to analyze the behavior and motivations of criminals in *My Life in Crime*.

In terms of structure, this dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is entitled “Post-colonial Kenya and Crime Fiction: A Socio-historical and Theoretical Background”. It is devoted to highlight the Kenyan colonial experience and the political, social, cultural, and economic legacy in independent Kenya. In addition, it depicts the European Neocolonial exploitation of Africa in general and Kenya in specific. Also, this chapter attempts to shed light on the depiction of criminality in post-colonial literature and the actual reasons behind the involvement in criminal behaviour, especially in post-colonial countries, and how the long-lasting

effects of colonialism contributed to it. Finally, it tackles the genre of post-colonial crime fiction and its significance in post-colonial nations. It discusses how is this genre used in addressing and critiquing the social and economic issues prevalent in the society.

The second chapter is entitled “Crime and Violence in John Kiriamiti’s *My Life in Crime: An Analytical Reading*”. This chapter is related to the analysis of the novel using the post-colonial critical theory. It first gives a brief biography of the author and the novel’s synopsis. Then, it deals with the post-colonial disillusionment in the novel and discusses post-colonial crime, violence, and youth criminality in the book, and also applies some criminological theories to understand the reasons that drive the criminals to commit crimes. In addition, it sheds light on the representation of Nairobi as a criminal city. It examines the economic and social environments in which the protagonist and his companions turned into criminals. Moreover, it tackles the theme of criminal confession and then explores the idea of sympathizing with the criminal. Finally, the chapter seeks to answer the question of how the legacy of colonialism led to the evolution of crimes and criminals.

Chapter One

Post-colonial Kenya and Crime Fiction: A Socio-historical and Theoretical

Background

1- Introduction:

A post-colonial country refers to a nation that has previously been colonized by another and has since attained independence. Kenya was once a British colony but gained independence while still grappling with the enduring effects of colonialism. This chapter delves into an exploration of the country's history with colonialism and its legacies, as well as the contemporary neocolonial exploitation that Kenya continues to face. Additionally, the criminal activities that have plagued the country since achieving independence are examined, along with their underlying causes and effects on Kenyan society and economy. Finally, the chapter also delves into a discussion of the unique crime fiction genre that has emerged in Kenyan literature and how it is used as a tool to condemn the social issues present in the country.

2- The Kenyan Colonial Experience:

Pre-colonial Kenya was characterized by peace, stability, and unity. People in ancient Kenya were highly unified and dependent on their social and familial networks. The concept of the group was frequently referred to as one's family. There was a prevailing sense of responsibility towards others, with expectations of sacrificing personal interests for the benefit of the group. The population was divided into several ethnic groups such as the Kikuyu which is considered as the largest group (Scroope). Some groups relied on agriculture and cultivation, while others lived on herding or hunting and gathering. Concerning religion, Christianity was not yet introduced to the

population of ancient Kenya, instead, they had a belief that their diseased ancestors' spirits had the ability to provide them with good fortune (Phagudom). However, colonialism had a profound impact on pre-colonial Kenyan societies which can be understood by examining the changes it brought to their existing dynamics and structures.

On July 23, 1920, Kenya became a British colony. The colonial rule lasted for seventy years, during which time political, social, and economic policies were implemented. Large tracts of fertile lands were taken over by white settlers, and strict labor regulations were applied to make Kenyans work for low payment (Kenya Embassy Washington DC). In June 1921, The Young Kikuyo Association, often referred to as the East African Association, was founded to defend Kenyans' rights and to reclaim Kikuyo property that had been illegally taken. They protested mainly against low salaries, the ban on Kenyan cultivating coffee and cash crops, and the Christian missionaries and it gained support from the Kikuyo tribe. On March 14, 1922, British police detained Harry Thuku, a Kikuyo tribesman from the Kiambu district, because he opposed the British colonial control in Kenya. On March 16 in the same year, thousands of people demonstrated in front of Nairobi's central police station where police killed twenty demonstrators. In addition to Thuku, two other members of the Kikuyo tribe, including Waiganjo Ndotono and George Mugekenyi, were expelled from Kenya by the British administration (University of Central Arkansas). In addition, in 1923, the colonizer pretended to be concerned about Kenyan people. To that end, the colonial secretary published a "white paper" in which he stated that Kenyan interests needed to be taken into consideration. However, his announcement did not lead to any significant improvement (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). Then, conditions remained the same until Jomo Kenyatta's coming.

Throughout the 1930s, Jomo Kenyatta, an anti-colonial activist, used peaceful tactics to promote a number of related issues such as the necessity for Kenyan representation in the legislative council, respect for traditional African customs, educational opportunities, and land rights. As a result, in 1944, a Kenyan member was elected to the legislative council in Nairobi. In 1946, they became two members, then to four in 1948, and finally to eight in 1951 (History World). However, conditions had changed in 1952. According to the Kikuyo, European settlers were a threat because the newcomers enjoyed more pieces of land than the Kikuyo themselves who were restricted to reservations. Poverty, unemployment, and overpopulation were all present in these reservations which created a difference between indigenous people and settlers (Newsinger 160). As the political landscape of Kenya began to shift, tensions escalated and new challenges arose in the 1950s.

Members of the Kikuyo were even evicted from reserves and had to work in the Europeans' farms and others were forced to work in towns under inhuman conditions and were paid insufficient wages that didn't meet their basic necessities. They were often undernourished, unclothed, and homeless (161). Therefore, the year 1952 saw the emergence of the militant movement known as the Mau Mau, which was unique from all earlier African liberation movements. It persuaded the British that Kenya needed reforms and it later contributed to the country's independence (184). This movement was led by Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi and it mainly consisted of the working class, peasants, and the urban poor who first attacked the members of the Kikuyo who were loyal to the government. Then, they started to revolt against the British Empire by campaigning against the European settlers in their fields and organizing themselves into gangs to attack them. As a reaction, the British proclaimed a state of emergency in October 1952.

In March 1953, the Mau Mau intensified its attacks on both the Kikuyo and European settlers (Imperial War Museums). However, the British government also intensified its reactions.

The British started to increase the number of local forces and they arrested a large number of the movement leaders. They also attempted to punish the Mau Mau by imposing certain policies such as seizing their land and property. However, the revolution forced the removal of the ban that had prohibited Kenyans from cultivating coffee which benefited the Kenyan farmers. In the period between 1956 and 1964, there was an increase in the recorded output value of African smallholdings from £5.2 million to £14 million. Over the same period, the average yearly wage for African laborers went up from £52 to £107 (Newsinger 178). Despite the defeat of the Mau Mau that was marked by Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi's arrest in 1956, the rebellion helped Kenya gain its independence from the British colonization on December 12th, 1963 (Mwangi 16). In spite of being an independent nation, Kenya had to face the considerable amount of colonial legacies that hindered the country's development.

3- Colonial Legacy in Independent Kenya:

The events that the Kenyan society faced had a significant impact on both the country and its people. The effects of colonialism can be seen in all aspects of the Kenyans' lives (Scroope). The colonial existence left a devastating legacy that kept the country suffering from several political, economic, social, and cultural issues.

3-1-Political Legacy:

Politically speaking, Kenya's current political system has been shaped by the British colonizers. It followed a model similar to that of the West. Since their goal was to exploit Kenya, they used an undemocratic system of government. Thus, Kenya's authoritarian and anti-

democratic government is a legacy of their colonizers (Bayeh 89). According to Mamdani, the use of chiefs' councils, native tribunals, and local native councils for colonial governance was a distortion of democratic principles, as these institutions, led by colonial district officers, were employed as legal and administrative tools to ensure the subordination of Africans. He also asserts that these institutions were used for political convenience and to burden Africans with administrative costs. The main objective was to uphold law and order for the benefit of British capitalist accumulation only (cited in Nedge 3). Another important event is that Europeans and their elites deprived Kenyans from their posts and replaced them in both the executive and legislative councils. Nedge argues that “the Europeans dominated executive and legislative councils formulated policies and made budgets in Nairobi with the approval of London. Africans were excluded from these councils, which were chaired by the governor until and after the Second World War” (4). Foreign institutions have also taken the place of Kenyan institutions. As a result, the country lost its political independence.

It is important to pay close attention to the problem of ethnicity that the colonial forces left behind. In fact, it had a negative effect on the entire political structure of the Kenyan government. Dividing people into ethnicities led to several problems and conflicts and the Kenyan political communities experienced exclusion and marginalization as a result of the ongoing rivalry (Bayeh 90). In December, 2007, the results of a hotly disputed election were declared by the Election Commission of Kenya. Two significant tribes, the Kikuyo and the Luo, accused each other of cheating in the elections. As the results were announced, the nation was rocked by bloody protests and murders. These protests and violence were a direct result of Kenya’s new political system that was a hybrid of democracy and authoritarianism left by the colonizer. The colonizer’s elites also facilitated the violence (Simbi). Without taking into consideration the Kenyan’s opinions, the

colonial authorities and political elites made decisions about them (Bayeh 90). For instance, the borders established during the colonial period were created without any regard for the history of the regions involved or the people who were affected by their division (Phoebe). According to Ogot, factors such as natural boundaries, ethnic unity, economic ties within regions, or migratory patterns of tribes were also neglected. These borders arbitrarily combined more than 40 villages into a single territorial entity which partly contributed to the violence that occurred both during and after colonialism (cited in Nedge 3). This has led to several problems inside the villages.

These facts conclude that after achieving independence, constitutional changes have made Kenya's presidential system a dictatorial one (Nedge 4). Many, if not all post-colonial political leaders were characterized by dishonesty and corruption and the government became more despotic (Njoku 103). Daniel Arap Moi, for instance, ruled Kenya for 24 years during a post-colonial era that was marked by political repression, economic stagnation, and notorious corruption. His rule was characterized by suppressing opposition, consolidating power, and commencing a dictatorial reign. Moreover, his political party controlled the legislative and judicial systems, which allowed him to remove judges and officials and override decisions. He also controlled the news media, as well as the police and military services, and his pronouncements carried the weight of legal authority. During his tenure, the economy struggled, and corruption was pervasive in various transactions, ranging from cab rides and the provision of goods and services to public and private dealings. Furthermore, Mr. Moi responded severely to any opposition, using tactics such as imprisonment, torture, and murder to suppress dissent, and he even shut down universities when a group of intellectuals opposed his regime (McFadden). This dictator leader was a result of the colonial rule that left behind such corrupt people since it serves their interests.

3-2- Social and Cultural Legacy:

The colonialists not only destroyed Kenya's society during the colonial period but also affected it after independence. The colonial authorities implemented policies that favored European settlers over the Kenyan population, leading to a system of racial segregation and discrimination. This legacy created social divisions and tensions that persist to this day, with ethnic and regional identity often playing a significant role in political and social dynamics. In addition, they neglected to invest in social services such as education and healthcare in areas outside of economic interest to them, which limited opportunities for social mobility and development. This legacy has also contributed to persistent inequality and poverty, with many Kenyans lacking access to basic services and opportunities for social and economic advancement (Scroope). The long-lasting impacts of colonial rule have had profound consequences on Kenya's social fabric and continue to shape the country's socio-political landscape.

Kenya has a wide range of ethnic groups with the Kikuyu as the largest. Kenyan people typically have a strong identification with their ethnic groups and tend to adhere to their distinct customs and traditions. According to Scroope, "the population of Kenya is concentrated in the southern parts of the country, where most people live in rural towns and villages. Nearly three quarters of the population (73.5%) reside in rural parts of the country". Thus, it is important to understand that ethnic categories in Kenya are complex and sometimes overlapping. Previously, there were strong tensions between ethnic groups, partly due to the legacy of colonial rule by the British. It must be noted that people who live in rural towns are unlike those who live in urban cities such as Nairobi. Without doubt, the ones that live in the urban cities are a reflection of the new Kenya that is influenced by the colonizer, while the others live a traditional life (Scroope).

The dynamics of ethnic identity and cultural practices vary between urban and rural areas in Kenya, reflecting the diverse experiences and influences that shape the country's population.

Culturally speaking, Kenyans were subjected to what is known as the civilizing missions, or as Rudyard Kipling describes it: “The White Man’s Burden” (1), reflecting the authoritarian attitude of the colonial powers toward the indigenous populations. Edward Said argues in the *Los Angeles Times* that “Every empire tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate”. He highlights the tendency of empires to justify their actions by presenting themselves as unique and noble, claiming that their purpose is to educate and free, rather than exploit and dominate. The British colonial powers used the word civilization as an excuse to expand in the country and to leave their traces there which threatened the Kenyan culture. They attempted to impose their own cultural values and norms on the Kenyan population, leading to the erasure of indigenous cultural practices and traditions. Many Kenyans felt disconnected from their cultural heritage and experienced a sense of loss and dislocation. Additionally, they often conducted missionary campaigns to spread Christianity. There were many traditional religious adherents who were made to be ashamed of their indigenous religions and therefore converted to Christianity which makes up the majority of the population today (Elimu). Consequently, the imposition of colonial ideologies and the promotion of Western values by the British colonial powers significantly impacted Kenyan culture, resulting in the erosion of indigenous practices and the widespread adoption of Christianity.

Education under the colonial authority was largely intended to prepare the officials for the administration rather than to benefit Kenyan educators or to encourage advancement inside the country. Ocheni and Nwankwo argue that the primary objective of colonial education was to provide training for occupations such as clerks, interpreters, artisans, and produce inspectors,

which would facilitate the exploitation of Africa's abundant resources (51). The colonizers used education as a tool to make Kenyans dependent on them in all domains.

3-3- Economic Legacy:

After independence, Kenya was seeking to develop its economy. However, this goal was characterized by several disappointing colonial legacies that interrupted the country to achieve it (Fahnbulleh 33). For instance, the driving force behind British colonialism was mainly the pursuit of economic gains for both British metropolitan and local investors. The British sought to maximize their profits by exploiting the resources and markets of their colony (cited in Ocheni and Nwankwo 47). Therefore, it remained financially and commercially dependent on Britain. In addition, the economic policies of British colonial rule in Kenya encompassed various aspects that affected the country adversely (53). These policies included appropriation of land for European settlers, imposition of taxes on Kenyans, use of migrant and forced labor as well as the promotion of agricultural production dominated by settlers (47-53). As a result of these economic policies, Kenya faced significant challenges in achieving its economic development goals after gaining independence.

Moreover, the production of colonial goods caused significant environmental damage due to inappropriate methods. The allocation of forest concessions by both individuals and companies resulted in vast deforestation (Nedge 5). Furthermore, the colonizer distorted the social amenities and the patterns of urbanization, prompting the majority of the population to move from the rural towns to the urban cities where amenities were available. Nonetheless, the excessive use of these services and the migration led the urban cities to be much more crowded, in addition to other problems such as an unclean and depressing environment, the spread of pandemics, ethnic

division, and other social issues (Ocheni and Nwankwo 52). In light of these challenges, it becomes evident that the colonial legacy had several effects on both the environment and societal dynamics.

Overall, the economic policies of the colonial period in Kenya played a significant role in integrating pre-capitalist communities into both the colonial and global economic systems. This integration continued even after the country gained its independence. Ake's analysis reveals that the impacts of colonial economy on Kenya continue to persist in the post-colonial economies in two ways. He argues that both the colonial and the post-colonial economies were characterized by two major forms of disarticulation: geographical and structural...The first refers to enclave development, which is concentration of development activities in a few urban areas: Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuro...Structural disarticulation refers to the development of a limited range of activities. He further mentioned that a limited range of activities, which were centered around agriculture and a narrow set of industry activities, were developed (cited in Nedge 6). The lasting impacts of the colonial economy on Kenya's post-colonial era are evident in the continued disarticulation of the economy, both geographically and structurally.

Besides, poverty and unemployment were among the most unpleasant legacies of colonialism faced by Kenya and which was not admitted as a real issue until the beginning of the 1960s (Fanbulleh 45). The source of the unemployment issue that spread after independence is the eviction of Kenyans from their lands since the colonial powers occupied the country (35). Even more, the British colonizers forced Kenya to produce primary products and raw materials at low prices while importing expensive manufactured goods. This created unequal trade transactions and resulted in food shortages and higher food costs and, thus, interrupted the country's economic development (Ocheni and Nwankwo 51-52). The adverse effects of colonialism in Kenya are also

reflected in the persistent challenges of poverty and unemployment, which were largely overlooked until the 1960s.

The transportation network in Kenya was also fragmented by the colonizers. Instead of connecting urban and rural areas, the transportation system was primarily designed to facilitate the export of raw materials. What's more, Kenya can be classified as a neocolonial nation that is subordinate to and exploited by imperialist countries. The capitalist system of production adopted in neocolonial countries allows imperialists to take advantage of their resources which contributes to underdevelopment and also results in creating a wide gap between the upper and the lower classes. Poor people from the lower class are deprived from the basic amenities like housing, water, sanitation, education, and health care, while the rich enjoy more facilities and get richer (52). Ultimately, the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions that were left behind by the colonizer after independence had a significant impact on post-independent Kenya. The colonialist left a huge developmental gap that needed to be filled.

4- European Neocolonial Exploitation of Africa and Kenya:

The term neocolonialism was coined after World War II to describe how former colonies continued to depend on foreign countries (Halperin). It refers to the subtle spread of socio-economic and political influence by former colonial powers with the aim of promoting capitalism, neo-liberal globalization, and cultural dominance over their ex-colonies. In a neocolonial state, the previous colonizers ensure that the newly independent countries remain reliant on them for economic and political guidance. This dependency and exploitation of the socio-economic and political aspects of the new independent nations serve the economic, political, ideological, cultural, and military interests of the former colonial powers. Unlike the direct military control seen in the

colonial era, neocolonialism operates through indirect control over the economic and political practices of the newly independent states.

A thorough examination of post-colonial Africa necessitates an exploration of the concept of neocolonialism and its impact on the diminished sovereignty of African nations. This crucial factor significantly influences the realization of political independence, for which the African populace made substantial sacrifices, argues Maloba (5). According to Kwame Nkrumah, neocolonialism represents a fresh means of oppressing and dominating the economic, social, cultural, and political aspects of African life. He describes it as the “final and perhaps its [imperialism] most dangerous stage” of imperialism (9). He argues that European imperialism in Africa has undergone multiple phases, beginning with slavery, followed by colonization, and finally culminating in neocolonialism as the ultimate stage of imperialistic subjugation and exploitation (15). In light of these perspectives, it is important to analyze the neocolonial implications on the African continent in general and in Kenya in specific.

According to Rukudzo Murapa, the rise of nationalism provoked colonial powers to initiate measures to safeguard their interests during the anti-colonial nationalist movement and ensure the protection and expansion of those interests after the colonial period. He states that “a handful of educated Africans were sprinkled here and there within the state machinery and the foreign companies. This appointment of Africans into positions once labelled “for Europeans only” must be seen for what it was: “Blackenization” not Africanization” (Murapa 57). However, this replacement of the colonial masters did not mean fundamentally challenging the colonial power structures or the need for radical societal transformation, Murapa argues (57). The aim, according to him, was to initiate a process of decolonization that would relinquish political power while retaining economic control. The Africans who were subjected to this process received an education

according to the values and ideologies of the colonial powers and Europe. They were compelled to embrace the principles of individualism, the individual's right to own property, and the idea that the government's role is to protect private property. Consequently, the newly-formed elite assumed the responsibility of upholding and maintaining the political and economic values of colonialism and capitalism (58). Thus, the shift in power dynamics did not lead to a substantial transformation in the underlying structures of colonial influence and control.

Because of the continuing exploitation of Kenyan resources, class divisions re-emerged in the post-colonial era after African nationalism failed to completely eliminate them (58). The petty-bourgeoisie became the new elite, lacking the economic basis for the exercise of power and the ownership of industries, banks, and major enterprises (59). The European class that controlled the economy during colonialism still owns the major modern sector. Moreover, colonial policies prevented Africans from owning certain property, including land in certain areas (60). The conditions in urban areas were quite similar to those in rural areas, as both experienced segregative land tenure policies. The cities were primarily located in regions designated as "white land areas," which meant that Africans migrated to the cities primarily in search of employment rather than to establish permanent residency or own property (61). According to Kwame Nkrumah, investing in a country under neocolonialism widens the economic divide between wealthy nations and poorer ones instead of decreasing it. This is because during traditional colonialism, the colonizing nation was required to provide reasoning and justification for its actions abroad to its own people. However, he further argues that this was not the case with neocolonialism. Those who served the ruling imperial power in the colony had the protection of the imperial power against violent opposition (qtd. Marxists Internet Archive). In addition, according to W. O Maloba, capitalism has emerged as the established framework for guiding the economic and social policies of the nation.

He argues that “capitalism would move Kenya to development and social justice. But why had it not done so in the past? What had prevented it from developing Kenya?” (6). This is because capitalism is characterized by inherent contradictions, especially disparity in income and wealth distribution, and is also inseparable from imperialism (6). The legacy of colonialism, along with the persistence of exploitative economic structures have hindered the progress and development of Kenya.

During the time of gaining independence, protecting the economic and strategic interests was the primary goal of Britain. To ensure the achievement continuity of this objective after the political independence, it was crucial to transfer power to indigenous leaders who were perceived as favorable and cooperative (Maloba 19). The new ruling elite in Kenya, thus, was becoming a noticeably privileged class in the country which used corruption to gain wealth (215). Because of this elite, “corruption at the higher levels of the civil service, in the business community and even at the Cabinet level was, it turned out, very widespread with a lasting impact on the country’s social values and also on its political and economic institutions”, Mloba argues (216). These revelations shed light on the profound challenges faced by neocolonial Kenya in addressing systemic corruption.

5- Criminal Behaviour in Independent Kenya:

Colonialism exploited Kenya politically, socially, and economically which resulted in the country’s retreat in all domains. Therefore, it is of no surprise that the miserable situation of the country would result in the outbreak of criminal activities. Kenya has suffered from widespread criminal behaviour, especially after independence. Organized crime gangs have gotten more and more involved in Kenyan cities during the period between 1980s and 1990s (National Crime Research Centre). The UN office defines a gang “as a structured group of three or more persons

existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offenses in order to obtain directly or indirectly a financial or other material benefit” (United Nations on Drugs and Crime 9). Criminal gangs are a group of criminals working together for financial advantage and they may use violence and force in order to get what they want. Kenya and its institutions, mainly banks, faced many of the crimes committed by these gangs (National Crime Research Centre 13-14) and, therefore, The National Research Centre was established to conduct research on the factors that contribute to the spread of crime, how to avoid it, and to facilitate the arrest of criminals (1). In light of these circumstances, addressing the root causes of crime makes it easier to create a safer and more prosperous environment for the people of Kenya.

In order to understand the motives that lead certain individuals to involve in criminal activities in Kenya, the social and economic situation of the country should be discussed. In the economic sphere, the state’s underdeveloped economy contributed to both the emergence of crime and the increase of its rates. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the colonial legacies interrupted the country’s economic development. As a means of economic survival, it is highly likely for groups of young people to form as a way of coping with the economic difficulties they encounter. These groups have the potential to evolve into criminal gangs (20). For instance, the high rates of poverty and unemployment in Kenya led the youth to commit illegal activities, mainly robbery, and embrace it as a source of income (Wairimu 4). According to Sifuna, the insufficient and limited access to economic opportunities, inadequate distribution of resources in urban areas, and the lack of social support for the youth further complicate the issue (cited in Wairimu 4). These factors are recognized as the primary drivers behind criminal behaviour, among other contributing causes.

In addition, low-paying jobs also contribute to the increase of poverty rates and eventually crimes. People with low incomes, and sometimes with no work, frequently turn to be criminals

because they are more likely to believe that doing so will allow them to meet their basic necessities. For instance, the majority of people that live in Mlango Kubwa neighborhood in Nairobi are daily-laborers. Hence, they are unable to offer their families with sufficient basic needs for a decent standard of living (de Andres 34). In such conditions, it is no surprise that, in Buck's words, "Hunger makes a thief of any man" (140).

Moreover, crimes in urban and sub-urban cities, according to Gordan, appear to be more than in rural towns. The high rates of crime in these cities refer to the existence of slums where people are poor, jobless, and suffer from inhuman conditions. It goes without saying that there is a huge difference between people in urban cities with people from the upper and middle classes and those who are from the lower class (Scroope). Furthermore, Cloward and Ohlin suggest that the current state of society structures prevents a lot of people from achieving success so they choose to commit crimes. Frequently, individuals perceive crime as a shortcut to achieving success that is quicker and more efficient. In impoverished neighborhoods, the most prominent prosperous individuals are typically affiliated with organized crime (cited in National Crime Research Centre 19). Thus, these people see crime as their sole path to achieve success.

Lack of education is another factor that contributes to this issue. The criminal organized gangs are primarily comprised of individuals who have dropped out of secondary school. Leaving school early reduces their chances of finding employment or access some public services due to their inferior educational backgrounds, which can lead them to turn towards criminal activity (de Andres 36). Additionally, peer pressure is a significant factor that drives young people and teenagers to commit crimes. Initially, teenagers seek out a sense of belonging and often come together in groups. Unfortunately, these groups eventually evolve into criminal gangs that continue

to recruit younger members (36). Low levels of education and peer influence can be considered as the major reasons for engaging in criminal activities.

Next, the effects of globalization on values and cultures are having a greater impact on young people compared to other age groups. This is because globalization is causing the rapid destruction of local cultural connections and generational ties, and is imposing destructive sets of values that cannot be achieved in the long term (National Crime Research Centre 17). That is to say, globalization impacted the youth in a negative way. This can lead to the loss of intergenerational connections and the imposition of values that may not align with long-term societal well-being.

Finally, Amado de Andres highlights the connection between drug and alcohol use and the increase in crime and violence. He argues that “Drug and alcohol use are strongly associated with crime and violence. Actors in the criminal justice sector that were interviewed suggested that more violent crimes such as sexual assault and robbery with violence have been linked closely with drug and alcohol use”. The community of Mlango Kubwa, for instance, is particularly concerned about this issue because children are exposed to drugs at an early age due to the normalization and availability of drug use (39), which makes them drop out of school early and engage in criminal gangs.

One of the most prominent aspects of violence and crime in in post-independent Kenya is violent robberies. Indeed, robberies have become so common that people call the capital “Nairobi robbery” (Simmons). Among the most committed form of robberies in Kenya are bank robberies. In fact, they occurred nearly every week, especially in Nairobi, and they come after murder in terms of the number of arrests. Notably, the young age of the offenders is a distinguishing trait in bank heists. They are between ten and twenty (Gimode 304). The danger in bank robberies lies in

the fact that violent actions may cause both physical and mental harm to others (cited in Gimode 296). This type of crime is primarily a result of the intensified urbanization. No one can dispute the reality that Nairobi was, and still experiencing fast urbanization which affected the society in a negative way (297). Around 60% to 70% of people in Nairobi live in informal settlements under inhuman conditions. The majority reside in only one room that can be used to sleep, cook, and eat, and they suffer from the lack of clean water; others are even homeless (United Nations on Drugs and Crime). As a matter of fact, the huge amounts of money gained from each succeeding bank robbery is what made this type of crimes distinctive. According to local press sources, banks in Kenya suffered losses of around \$ 8,5 million in 1998. Authorities claim that the rate of violent bank robberies was constantly increasing (Simmons). Thus, the threat on banks was high in Kenya.

Another common form of robbery in Kenya is carjacking. It is a criminal act in which an individual uses force or the threat of force to steal a vehicle, including a car, a motorcycle, a scooter, or a van from its driver and it commonly occurs in public places such as streets, parking lots, or gas stations. The offenders often take the opportunity at red lights, while parking, during traffic congestion, and sometimes they even pretend to offer help during an accident (Next Insurance Blog) or pretend to be police officers after borrowing uniforms and firearms from corrupt policemen. Subsequently, the perpetrators modify the vehicle's color and license plates, and either sell it or employ it in another robbery before ultimately abandoning it (Gimode 307). Carjacking is one of the most common and dangerous type of crimes in Kenya.

A different group of criminals has developed a particular expertise in burglarizing houses within residential areas of the city. This unique and terrifying form of robbery has instilled a significant sense of insecurity among Kenyan citizens. Typically, they strike during the nighttime and they utilize an array of tools, including large stones to break doors, metal crowbars, machetes,

and firearms (Gimode 308). Furthermore, young teenagers who specialize in mugging, purse snatching, and pickpocketing constitute a fourth category of criminals (309). Although they may not possess the same level of organization or weaponry as bank robbers and burglars, they nonetheless pose a significant threat to public safety (304). They usually focus on stealing money from foreigners who appeared unfamiliar with the city and jewelries from women who were unable to defend themselves against them (309). It is crucial to closely examine the consequences of criminal activities on the prosperity of the country and its people.

Obviously, the high rates of robberies, whether violent or non-violent, have long-term impacts on Kenyan societies as well as immediate effects on human welfare. There is absolutely no doubt that illegal actions made by organized gangs have a negative impact on both society and economy. According to the National Crime Research Centre,

Crime is a pervasive national security threat with far-reaching effects on Kenya's social and economic well-being and international reputation. Its impact can be felt throughout the public and private sectors, undermining communities, destroying lives and costing Kenyans and non-Kenyan visitors and investors significantly each year. The threat is wide-ranging and complex, spanning everything from malicious cyber-attacks to terrorism and varies in depth and complexity, from simple frauds to high-end corruption (1).

More than ever, the Kenyan citizens are anxious, frightened, and restless and many people now live differently. For instance, they become more careful and take safety measures such as possessing weapons in order to defend themselves in case they face a criminal or a gang or coming back home early (48). This sense of insecurity makes people suffer to accomplish their daily activities.

Economically speaking, public institutions, especially banks, suffered from enormous losses due to thefts along with the terror and fear they experienced. In addition, gambling, drug trafficking, terrorism, trafficking of humans, arms, and drugs, maritime piracy as well as cybercrime all had traumatic effects on numerous individuals and families. Moreover, negative consequences like increased food prices, forced business closures, poorer quality products, unemployment, monopolies, and higher taxes are a direct result of the infiltration of labor racketeering and illegitimate businesses. Furthermore, organized crime's corruption of public officials generates public distrust regarding the integrity of politicians in general. This, in turn, leads to higher taxes and misappropriation of public funds. Besides, organized crime is constantly devising new fraudulent schemes such as counterfeiting, fraudulent consumer credit cards, and airline tickets (21). Therefore, it is essential to address and combat these crimes to protect the country's prosperity and the well-being of its people.

6- Crime Fiction in Kenyan Post-Colonial Literature:

Crime fiction is one of the most thriving literary forms and its popularity is increasing globally (Augart 1). It is a literary genre that involves a crime, such as a murder or theft, its underlying motives and tactics as well as its consequences. The genre includes various recurring themes and sub-genres, such as detective stories, political thrillers, and heist stories (Sumayao). Crime stories appear to have been present across the globe for a significant period, regardless of their source or origin (Philips 6). With such enduring prevalence, it is clear that these narratives have captivated audiences across different cultures and generations.

The few recent centuries witnessed an increase in the popularity of crime fiction due to people's fascination with crime as a form of entertainment. Readers take pleasure in joining the detectives in the investigation of a crime to unravel the motives of the criminals and their heinous

acts (Edwards). However, crime fiction can also enhance people's comprehension of the world and allow them to delve into the most obscure aspects of society as well as to discover their fears and concerns about the potential consequences of the current social issues (Philips 11-12). Also, Korte and Palatschek argue that recent investigations of the genre usually portray crime fiction as a reflection of society often from a historical perspective (cited in Augart 1). For instance, South African crime fiction is fixated on the Apartheid, Indian on Partition, and the southwestern United States' crime fiction typically revolves around issues like the border, migration, and drugs (Philips 12). That is to say, in examining crime fiction from various regions, cultures, and even authors, it becomes evident that each has a distinct focus based on the historical context.

African crime fiction has recently gained increased prominence in scholarly literature, not only through works that are set in Africa such as Alexander McCall Smith's *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series, which is set in Botswana, but also due to the works of renewed African authors like Angela Makholwa and Sam Naidu from South Africa, Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ and John Kiriamiti from Kenya, Yasmina Khadra from Algeria, Hawa Jande Golakai from Liberia and many other African writers who contributed to the genre (Augart 1). Several interpretations and definitions have been presented and discussed among scholars in academic discourse regarding the African crime fiction subgenre (2). In light of these scholarly conversations, a comprehensive understanding of this subgenre has been gradually emerging.

Katja Meintel's definition of African crime fiction is restricted to the crime novels that are set in francophone African countries of sub-Saharan Africa. However, Sarah Keil's perspective encompasses all the crime novels written by African writers, with African characters or settings, as instances of African crime fiction. Nevertheless, in order to gain a more valuable understanding, it may be of use to investigate the ways in which the crime fiction genre is utilized rather than

solely focusing on the setting or the authors' origins as the defining factors. Gosselin, as well as Oed and Matzke, describe African crime fiction as a mixture of social commentary and pleasure, portraying it as a "murder with a message" (qtd. Augart 2). This depiction remains consistent despite the various themes, modes, linguistic and narrative strategies as well as the social, cultural, and historical contexts explored within the genre. When an author wishes to criticize a certain society through a crime novel, not only the beliefs and values of that society are reflected in the work, but also its flaws and shortcomings. For instance, the Algerian writer Mohammed Mousselhouli who writes under the pen name Yasmina Khadra, uses crime fiction to express his critical views of society (2). In doing so, these authors shed light on societal issues and challenges that often go unnoticed in their respective countries.

For Kenyan literature, it experienced great changes following the transition from colonial domination to independent rule, with the urban Kenyan novel gaining popularity starting in the 1970s (Kurtz 7, 33). The impacts of urbanization are examined in narratives that depict Kenyan and African characters who come in face-to-face with criminal activities (Quinn and Schleh. cited in Augart 3). In the 1980s, literary production was restricted due to censorship during the era following Kenyatta's leadership. As a result, the majority of published works were educational in nature (Kurtz 48, 49). Therefore, the MacMillan Education Programme intended to provide popular and affordable books, particularly focusing on children and young readers. Their Publications consisted primarily of novels that addressed contemporary moral and social issues. About one-third of these novels were crime fiction and were mainly published in Kenya and Nigeria (Quinn and Schleh. cited in Augart 3). The birth of the Kenyan urban novel marked the development of early crime novels and the two genres exhibit similarities (3) since crime is a

common element of urban life in Kenyan literature (Mũsangi 100). This intersection between urban fiction and crime fiction provides a unique lens to explore societal dynamics and challenges.

Kenya is a popular setting for Crime fiction works. Its popularity has increased thanks to John Locker's best-selling novel *The Constant Gardener* (2001), and more recently, the hugely acclaimed novels *Nairobi Heat* (2009) and *Black Star Nairobi* (2013) by Kenyan diaspora author Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ. Nonetheless, this genre is not new in the world of Kenyan literature because since the post-independence Kenyan novel first appeared, Kenya had its unique and widely read works of crime fiction. Kenya enjoys a wide variety of crime fiction from popular authors of the genre such as David Maillu or John Kiriamiti who come under the umbrella of post-colonial literary heritage (Augart 1). The focus of the novels is not always on the thrilling investigation of the crime but rather on depicting and criticizing the post-colonial Kenyan society which often capture the reader's attention and become the center of academic analyses and discussions (2). The exploration of crime fiction within the Kenyan literary landscape offers a valuable lens to delve into the socio-cultural fabric and complexities of the country.

Since these novels present a critical perspective on societal issues, it is apparent that the Kenyan authors who utilize the crime fiction genre do not utilize it solely for amusement purposes, but rather as a means to convey their political criticism (Augart 2). For the post-colonial Kenyan novel, which appeared after Kenya's Independence in 1963, it focused primarily on the country's political and social issues in the context of its newly independent state (Kurtz. cited in Augart 3). In the context of Kenyan crime fiction, Tom Odhiambo, a literary critic, suggests that David Maillu's use of crime narratives serves as a platform to offer a critical view of both the challenges faced within Kenyan society and the exploitation of the country by international corporations (cited in Augart 2). Delving into the works of specific authors within the Kenyan crime fiction genre

provides deeper insights into the multifaceted narratives and perspectives that contribute to the critical examination of societal issues.

In this regard, a number of popular Kenyan writers used their pens to criticize society and imperialist legacies. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is a highly recognized Kenyan author, with his novel *Petals of Blood* (1977) being one of the most renowned African literary works. The novel serves as a prime example of how a crime narrative can be utilized to examine the post-independent social and political issues. Another Kenyan famous author is Meja Mwangi who is recognized for his ability to offer social commentary through his novels in which he shows the issues of the Kenyan society and how they lead to the increase of criminal behaviour such as in *Kill Me Quick* (1973), *The Bushtrackers* (1979) and *Assassins on Safari* (1983) (Augart 4). Exploring the works of these influential Kenyan authors provides valuable insights into the diverse range of perspectives and thematic explorations within the crime fiction genre.

Due to the popularity of the genre, it was only natural for the autobiographical crime fiction to rise to popularity too. The sub-genre of autobiographical crime fiction referred to as the “my life in crime” sub-genre by Kurtz (100), is distinctive and highly favored in Kenya. John Kiggia Kimani is a Kenyan writer who has written criminal autobiographical works including *Life and Times of a Bank Robber* (1988) and *Prison Is Not a Holiday Camp* (1994). Kimani's education was disrupted by Kenya's struggle for independence from colonial rule. Furthermore, John Kiriamiti's trilogy of *My Life in Crime* (1984), *My Life with a Criminal: Milly's Story* (1989), and *My Life in Prison* (2004) is one of the best-seller autobiographical crime fiction works. It depicts Kiriamiti and his own experiences with criminality and imprisonment. However, both Kimani and Kiriamiti experienced change and became reformed individuals despite their criminal pasts (Augart 6). Delving into the captivating stories of these autobiographical crime fiction authors

provides a distinct perspective on the personal journeys and evolutions entangled within Kenya's criminal underworld.

7- *My Life in Crime* Synopsis:

My Life in Crime is an autobiographical novel written by John Kiriamiti as the first work of his trilogy. It follows the captivating journey of Jack Zollo, a charismatic protagonist navigating a dangerous criminal world. Before delving into the plot summary, it is essential to introduce the key characters who play significant roles in the protagonist's life and shape his journey. Zollo's sister, Connie, supports and stands by him while hiding his illegal actions from their family. Zollo's friend, Wanjau, becomes his mentor, teaching him the art of pickpocketing in Nairobi. Despite the dangers, Milly, Zollo's girlfriend, remains devoted to him, even though he leads a criminal life. Captain becomes Zollo's loyal partner in crime with whom he commits several operations. Another important character is Stephano, a rich Greek millionaire in Congo, for whom Zollo becomes a chauffeur, unexpectedly. This job entangles him with Stephano's daughter, Helene, leading to a life-changing event. Another surprising connection emerges when Ms. Makarios, Stephano's secretary, finds herself linked to Zollo. Along the way, Zollo has a chance encounter with a Kenyan couple from his own village. He pays them a visit at their home and is greeted with a warm and welcoming reception, leaving him with a sense of familiarity and belonging.

The story begins when Jack Zollo drops out of school and escapes his home at a young age. Zollo, then, is introduced to the world of crime as he learns pickpocketing and later bank robbing to become one of the most wanted criminals by the Kenyan police. Kiriamiti depicts Zollo as a criminal character that commits crimes in an area that is filled with prostitutes, criminals, police officers, hotels, bars and how he dealt with these people and places. As the plot evolves,

Kiriamiti narrates Zollo's escape to the Congo, the event that led to it, and the police intensified search for him. In Congo, Zollo becomes the chauffeur of a wealthy Greek millionaire named Stephano after adopting a new fake identity as Albert Nguere.

However, Zollo's first attempt to make legitimate money is soon disrupted by his careless actions. Both Stephano's daughter and secretary get pregnant by Zollo and threaten him to end their own lives if he does not marry them. This troubling and dramatic event compelled Zollo to return to Kenya after stealing a great deal of Stephano's money. On the way back to Kenya, Zollo gets caught at the airport in Rwanda but he manages to escape and goes back home to his girlfriend Milly. The difficult financial situation compels Zollo to plan another final bank robbery then retire after Milly insisted on him to quit criminality. However, things do not go as he planned. When Zollo got involved in this robbery, the police shots some of his companions and catches others and, therefore, he becomes the only remaining member of the gang. Zollo, then, decides to hide at home for a while, yet, Milly's pregnancy and desire for a wedding party brings his demise. That is to say, on the wedding eve, which was on December 14th, 1970, the police arrests Zollo in his hometown in Thuita, Muranga'a.

8- Conclusion:

In conclusion, Kenya's history as a former British colony and subsequent struggle for independence has left a lasting impact on the country. The legacies of colonialism, including economic exploitation and political instability, continue to impact Kenyan society and economy today. Moreover, the country has been subject to neocolonial exploitation, exacerbating the issues of poverty and inequality. The criminal activities that occurred in post-independence have further hindered Kenya's development. However, in the face of these challenges, the unique crime fiction genre that has emerged in Kenyan literature serves as a powerful tool for understanding and

critiquing the social and political issues facing the country, especially those that are related to criminality and violence. By exploring the complexities of Kenya's post-colonial experience, this chapter shed light on the ongoing struggle for economic and political independence in the region, and also discussed the unique Kenyan crime fiction.

Chapter Two:

Crime and Violence in John Kiriamiti's *My Life in Crime*: An Analytical

Reading

1- Introduction:

John Kiriamiti wrote *My Life in Crime* in 1984. The book is set in Kenya and it tackles the period between the 1960s and 70s during which the author himself joined criminal gangs and committed crimes and robberies. With that being said, it might be confusing whether the book is a novel or an autobiography. However, when investigating the difference between an autobiography and a novel, one finds out that it incorporates both the elements of a novel and the characteristics of autobiographical writing. Philippe Lejeune, a French professor and researcher specialized in autobiography, defines autobiographical writing as “the retrospective account that a real person gives of their own existence, when the emphasis is on their individual life, and in particular on the history of their personality” (qtd in Lebdaï 100). An autobiography, therefore, is characterized by the description of actual events as well as actual people and situations.

In *My Life in Crime*, Kiriamiti states in the book's epigraph that “Except for the names of persons, the names of places and the scenes of the crimes referred to in this story, every other element is true”. This statement sounds contradictory, but it shows that the book is both an autobiography and a novel at the same time. In this autobiographical novel, the author explores certain themes that capture the essence of post-colonial disillusionment. This chapter, thus, focuses on several aspects that relate to crime and violence, reflecting the prolonged colonial legacies in the society, as well as exploring it through the lens of criminological theories. Additionally, the reputation of Nairobi as a criminal city is discussed in relation to Kiriamiti's representation of its

dark spots which leads us to question the reasons that contributed to that. Moreover, the use of criminal confession as an interesting narrative device is questioned as to whether the author employed it to express his guilt and redemption from the crimes he committed or for other purposes. These human complexities as well as the ability to change or repent through the use of confession are discussed. Besides, Kiriamiti's attempt to present his criminal protagonist as a hero and making the readers sympathize with him is also discussed within the chapter.

2- The author:

Born on February 14th, 1950, in Kimacharia, Thuita village, in Kenya, John Batista Wanjohi Kiriamiti is a former criminal who turned an author. His parents are Albert and Ann Wanjiru, both of whom are elementary school teachers in Murang'a. He studied in Thuita village's elementary school where he passed his Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). Then, at a time when the majority of Kenyans could not afford the ksh 1,080 school fees charged, he had the privilege of being one of the first nine African students to study in the dominantly-white Prince of Wales school in Nairobi, where he resided with his uncle in Bahati Estate. However, his time as a student there did not last long. When he was fifteen years old, he was expelled from school for organizing a student strike. At that point, his formal education came to an end despite his parents' requests to continue his education elsewhere. By the time he was twenty years old, he became a renowned thief and among the most wanted criminals by police (Mũsangi 5).

While committing crimes, Kiriamiti used the names John Khamwene, Charles Lukindo, Richard Mwangi, Albert Ngunjiri, Albert Wanjohi, and Jack Zollo (5-6). Before being detained in November 1970 on the eve of his wedding, Kiriamiti managed to avoid the police for all the crimes that he committed. On January 6, 1971, he was accused of robbery of violence and put in jail. At

first, he was very depressed, but he soon met older prisoners who had been there for at least twelve years (Darubini). After thirteen years, he was released from Naivasha Maximum Security prison in August 1984, only five months after publishing *My Life in Crime* due to his good behaviour and his achievements in innovating literacy in prison (Mūsangi 6). Unfortunately, he did not enjoy much as he was thrown back into jail and accused for being a member of Mwakenya (Wa Gacheru). Following his release from Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, he turned a philanthropist and a social reformer (People Pill). He has started a program to council young people in different secondary schools and colleges throughout Kenya. He speaks to students about dreams and writing, but all topics were about the genre that destroyed him, formed him, and a reality that he cannot escape: criminality (Ruthii).

Along with publishing novels, Kiriamiti also owns *The Sharpener*, a newspaper that he established when the government outlawed the Gikuyo version, *Inooro*, in 1995 (Mūsangi 7). When Kiriamiti wrote his first novel *My Life in Crime* (1984), he was still in prison (7). The crimes that he committed were well documented in his book which went on to become the best seller book and the most well-known work in Kenya (Wa Gacheru). Kiriamiti wrote his novel during a time when crime, violence, armed robbery, and bank heists were widespread in Nairobi. Before the late 1960s and the early 1970s, these types of robberies were uncommon and did not gain as much attention as pick pocketing, burglaries, and thefts did. It has been turned into a film that was released in June 9, 2018 by AfroDev Production Company (Cush).

Following this novel, he wrote *My Life with a Criminal: Milly's story*. In it, his lover, Milly, shares the story of her relationship with him. At first, he was polite and kind with her. However, she discovered later that he is a gangster. This work too has been released as a movie (Cush). Moreover, *My Life in prison* is John Kiriamiti's third masterpiece. He describes the difficulties

that he had faced while imprisoned. Also, he wrote *Son of Fate* (1994) where he told the story of how he struggled to survive after being released from Kamiti Maximum Prison. Additionally, he published *The Sinister Trophy* in 2004. The concept of crime remains of basic interest in almost all of his novels. He depicts his life as a criminal through a series of books. Mũsangi asserts that despite the fact that he is a criminal, he is depicted as a hero and, thus, the readers are manipulated to sympathize with him.

3- Post-colonial Disillusionment in *My Life in Crime*:

The content and structure of literature in Africa have been significantly influenced by key historical events, specifically the colonization by European powers and its subsequent consequences. The theme of disillusionment is prevalent in the majority of the post-colonial African literature and post-colonial writers use their literary pieces as a tool to describe the disappointment experienced by modern-day citizens. For instance, Kenyan prose fiction reflects people's colonial experiences and the idea that individuals are still suffering, despite their independence, is frequently brought up in Kenyan literary works. After independence, Kenyans looked forward to a better life, yet, they continued to experience several social problems including corruption, violence, crimes, etc. As a result, the majority of Kenyan prose literature emphasizes the disillusionment that is left behind by colonialism. These works cover a wide range of topics, including criminality, which is one of the most popular literary genres in the country (Adetuyi 103-104). Nevertheless, not all of these works openly delve into colonial experiences and legacies or directly critique contemporary post-colonial states. In fact, some of them may not even mention these topics explicitly. However, attentive readers can still discover the hidden themes and reflections related to post-colonialism within the narrative by examining the temporal context and the socio-historical events that surround the book's creation and publication.

The historical and political context of post-colonial Kenya shaped the cultural, social, and personal identities of people. Sam Odhiambo Owino argues that

This situation in turn affects their consciousness and actions in different ways. Some resign to a life of hopelessness and despondency while others seek recourse in various ways, including crime, prostitution and other forms of moral decadence as well as indulgence in corruption. The actions and consciousness of the disillusioned citizens, especially those in urban areas continually shape urban life and urban fiction at large (91).

In the novel, the characters are influenced by their disillusionment with the promises of independence and the realities of a post-colonial society (93). In the same vein, *My Life in Crime* reflects the sense of disillusionment that Jack Zollo and some other characters whom he interacts with in his criminal life experience.

At the personal level, when Zollo's parents bring him back home as a form of punishment after he gets expelled from school, he steals six hundred shillings from his father's coat and returns to Nairobi, marking his first experience with theft. Zollo loses hope and becomes disillusioned due to the numerous difficulties he faces there (94), which are always a direct cause of the colonial legacy. The situation for immigrants in urban cities becomes more complex, yet, most of them would rather endure hardship than return to their rural villages (95). For instance, despite all the troubles he has faced, Zollo never contemplates going back home. It's not surprising that living far from home and getting in touch with undisciplined peers puts teenagers at risk of engaging in criminal activities (101). This situation leads Zollo to change his identity by adopting other names and getting involved in criminal behaviour, which ultimately helps him earn a substantial amount of money.

Zollo's introduction to the world of crime starts with pickpocketing, which he learns through a friend he gets to know in Nairobi named Wanjau,

So, now here I was back in Nairobi and on my own, but this time with a different occupation. I was now a pick-pocket under instruction. I had so far managed to pick the pockets of about six people and had got away with about 1,500 shillings which I had shared with Wanjau. He was, of course, a professional and I, only an amateur. (*My Life in Crime* 19- 20)

Zollo also describes a time when he was extremely hungry and went without food for almost two days. He explains the difficult situation after spending all his money, saying, “For some months after finishing all the money I had, I really got into problems. Sometimes, I would get very hungry until one time I thought about selling the clothes I had” (16). This difficult situation is what forced Zollo into the world of crime.

Socially speaking, crime was widespread in the Kenyan society because it was viewed as the sole path to financial success, particularly after independence. In the novel, the protagonist was disappointed thinking about the numerous financial difficulties that constantly make him in need of the simplest means of survival, which make him think that gaining money would solve all his problems even if it is through illegal means (Owino 99). In this regard, Zollo argues that “After all, what is better than money in this world? Get a hell of a lot of it and every door will open itself when you approach it” (*My Life in Crime* 114), reflecting a perspective that places great value on financial wealth and the potential power and opportunities it can bring. Culturally speaking, *My Life in Crime* portrays the moral values in Kenya as highly corrupt, with numerous nightclubs, bars, prostitutes, and alcohol and how Zollo spends his money on them. “The problem with me

was that with all the cash I had, I did not buy a thing I could live to remember. Instead, I spent it on beer, from this bar to the other, making sure that every prostitute looked my way” (41), Zollo says. This exemplifies the significant shift in social values and subsequent changes in people's behaviour following independence, which can be attributed to the impact of Western influence.

4- Post-colonial Crime and Violence in Kiriamiti's *My Life in Crime*:

Crime and violence are widespread in the Kenyan society. The presence of violence and crime can be attributed to the disillusionment experienced by individuals due to their unmet expectations (Wanjohi 14). According to Kasina, the majority of people who commit crimes in Kenya and contribute to the country's high crime rates are those who come from impoverished and unstable family backgrounds, as well as young people who are unemployed and have lower levels of education (cited in Sitienei 187).

Kiriamiti covers several thematic issues in his book *My Life in Crime*, with two of the most prominent being crime and violence. He presents Nairobi as a city that is plagued by high levels of criminal activities and violent robberies, posing safety concerns for its inhabitants and visitors. This city gained such reputation indirectly due to colonialism. The various challenges faced by the post-independence Kenyan state led to the outbreak of crime either as a means of survival or as a form of protest against the situation. One of the clearest examples of Kiriamiti's emphasis on this reputation is when a boy informed Zollo that he could lose his belongings in Nairobi as long as he didn't take care. “Are you new here? Next time, don't leave your box unattended. This is Nairobi and you can lose it any time if you don't take care” (*My Life in Crime* 12), the boy declares. The phrase “this is Nairobi” further indicates that it is an unsafe place where theft can occur at any moment. Also, Kiriamiti provides a clue about how the law enforced harsher punishments to

combat the issue effectively due to its rapid growth (Owino 108). Zollo states when his friend Wanjau got imprisoned for robbery with violence, “I was quite sure that that was the end of the road for Wanjau. He would get no less than fourteen years. The new law on robbery with violence was by then at its worst and everyone arrested and charged under it was going in, whether he was guilty or not” (22). This quote highlights the harsh reality faced by individuals charged with robbery with violence.

In addition, the lack of quality education and employment opportunities in a newly independent country worsened the case for Kenyan people, leading many of them to choose to survive on robbery. For instance, Zollo’s poor educational background limits his opportunities for finding a decent job so he chooses a life of crime since the beginning. His friend, Captain, although an educated man, also faces the problem of finding a stable job and, like Zollo, he chooses a life of crime; “With his education you would not have thought he could be a robber. He had lost three responsible jobs. Then he had thought it wise to try the other side of the law” (25), Zollo says about his friend Captain, indicating that the level of education is not able to secure people a decent job.

Moreover, the British colonialists’ exploitation of Kenya’s lands and resources led to a system of economic inequality and unfair distribution of resources in the aftermath of independence. This contributed to widespread corruption and bribery that affected all levels of society, from government officials to ordinary people. Zollo's journey to the Congo serves as a clear example of this prevalent corruption. Even though he didn't have the necessary travel documents, Zollo easily crossed the borders by relying on the power of money. As he wisely puts it, “money can open borders” (93). This simple statement reveals the harsh reality of a deeply corrupt society, where financial power gives individuals special privileges and helps them overcome bureaucratic obstacles. It exposes the troubling truth that dishonest practices have

tainted the social fabric, enabling the wealthy to navigate through systems that are supposed to promote fairness and equality. He also noticed that people gave him way when they saw him park the millionaire's Benz in the Congo, revealing the society's emphasis on money and how wealthy individuals are valued above others.

The theme of violence explored within the novel can be analyzed in light of the concept of post-colonialism. Socio-economic disparities, political corruption, and a legacy of colonialism contribute to a culture of violent behaviours. The social structures discussed above, namely poverty, unemployment, and corruption, enhance violence and lead individuals towards an aggressive and violent life. Thus, understanding the complex dynamics of violence in post-colonial societies sets the stage to explore the issue of youth criminality in greater detail.

5- Youth Criminality in *My Life in Crime*:

In recent times, subjects concerning the younger generation have dominated the world. What is common is that the youths are recognized for their contribution in progress and creativity. Nonetheless, they are criticized for being the primary culprits of criminal activity and various forms of violence. No one can doubt the fact that there is an increase in the crimes committed by young individuals, especially in post-colonial countries like Kenya (National Crime Research Centre 6). Therefore, it is important to examine the youth being stuck in a vicious cycle of committing and perpetuating crime and violence in post-colonial nations.

The issue of the high crime rates among the youth in Kenya can be tracked back to the era of colonialism. The imposition of colonial rule faced significant opposition from Kenyan communities, with the youth as the leaders in this resistance. As a result, the colonial rulers labeled the youth as troublesome and lawbreakers. To address the growing issue of youth delinquency at

that time, a set of correctional facilities and authorized educational institutions were established during the 1950s and the 1960s. Albeit, between the 1970s and the 1980s, as Kenya experienced rapid population growth, young people began to face increasing marginalization. Consequently, there was a significant rise in the number of youth crimes during this period (9). The colonial legacy contributed to the outbreak of criminal activities among younger generations.

It is agreed that unemployment and poverty are major consequences of the colonial existence in the country. These consequences in turn result in committing crimes by young people (7). According to Bayart, the youths occupy a low position in the hierarchy of individuals who can access wealth in Kenya due to their age and limited connections in the social and economic networks of powerful groups. As a result, they turn to criminality to sustain their needs (cited in Odhiambo 136). As an example, in *My Life in Crime*, John Kiriamiti portrays the life of his protagonist, Jack Zollo, as a criminal who began his illegal journey at a very young age. Zollo does not complete his formal education as he drops out of school at the age of fifteen years old and later escapes home. He was first introduced to a minor criminal activity in Nairobi when he observed a young boy stealing money from a man's pocket,

Suddenly, I saw him look from side to side and, satisfied that he was not being watched, he pulled a wallet from the back pocket of an old, well-suited padre. The wallet was quite fat. For no reason at all, I was filled with fear, my heart skipped a beat, my hands started shaking and yet, I was not the one who was pickpocketing. As the wallet left the pocket, the boy turned and saw that I was staring at him with my mouth wide open. The boy put the wallet in his breast pocket. He passed near me and signalled me to follow him. I knew he was afraid that I might raise an alarm, but he was wrong. That was one of the few things I could not do. (*My Life in Crime* 16-17)

Zollo's decision to keep silent and not expose the boy marks his first step into the world of crime. The challenging circumstances of the urban life in Nairobi forced several youngsters, like this boy whom Zollo befriends later, to steal from others to survive in such environment (Odhiambo 135), rather than give up to their harsh realities.

Kiriamiti presents his protagonist's progression from adolescent delinquency and minor illegal activities to adult criminality in which he commits riskier crimes. The protagonist narrates,

Within two years, that is, between 1965 and 1967, I had become known to many criminals, from robbers, car breakers, shop breakers to car thieves and racketeers. I had also come to be known by the name of Jack Zollo. I left the risky job of picking pockets and joined car breakers. This was risky too but not half as risky as picking pockets. Besides, the job paid almost twice as much as the other one. We broke into tourists' cars mostly, or cars that we had good reason to believe carried enough goods. (*My Life in Crime* 20)

This quote showcases Kiriamiti's portrayal of the protagonist's transformation from engaging in minor illegal activities during adolescence to becoming involved in more serious and dangerous criminal endeavors as an adult. The protagonist's narrative highlights his progression from pickpocketing to joining a group of car breakers, reflecting the escalating risks and higher potential rewards associated with their criminal actions.

In this regard, Jean-François Bayart argues that the socio-economic and political systems of post-colonial Kenya have the potential to bring about youth's downfall. This arises from the various factors that dictate the generation of wealth, the exploitation of economic resources, and the distribution of wealth. Due to this system, various youths who have been marginalized from

the official system turn to some other methods of obtaining economic resources to survive, including criminality (cited in Odhiambo 136). This is further testimony to how a post-colonial government is unable to properly manage its resources because of the colonial legacy and, therefore, unable to address the root causes of youth marginalization.

Because of the injustice in wealth sharing and distribution, a significant portion of Kenya's economic resources is controlled in the hands of selected few individuals (136). This idea is frequent in Kiriamiti's *My Life in Crime*. Zollo often portrays white men as wealthy individuals, almost suggesting that they are the only rich people in Kenya. For instance, they robbed a white man's bag that contained a vast amount of money to the point where Zollo was shocked and encountered difficulty counting it,

The cash was all poured on to the bed. So many hundred shilling notes, fifty, twenty, ten and five. I was given the job of counting as I was regarded as being fresh from school. I did it but it was with a great struggle that I managed to hide my shock. I had never seen so much money before and had never expected to. A total of 33,000 shillings. (30)

This draws attention to the recurring theme of wealth disparity in Kenya and the perception that a significant portion of the country's economic resources is concentrated in the hands of a privileged few. Zollo's portrayal of white men as wealthy individuals in the novel reflects their possession of wealth and enjoyment of economic prosperity. The shock and awe Zollo experiences upon encountering a large sum of money further emphasizes the stark contrast between his own limited means and the seemingly endless wealth possessed by others.

6- Unraveling the Criminal Mind: A Criminological Exploration of *My Life in Crime*:

Criminology can be defined as the interdisciplinary study of crime. It combines legal theory, psychology, sociology, and moral philosophy to understand various aspects of crime. Criminology explores the nature and definition of crime, different types of crime, the factors that contribute to its occurrence, and methods for preventing crime (Oxford Reference). Jeffrey R. Wilson, a teacher-scholar at Harvard university, argues that criminology “can now be understood as the systematic study of crime, criminals, criminal law, criminal justice, and criminalization” (62). Criminology includes a wide range of theories that seek to explain the causes and dynamics of criminal behavior. This analysis of the protagonist Jack Zollo in *My Life in Crime*, will draw upon selected criminological theories to gain insights into his motivations, actions, and the societal factors that influenced his criminal carrier. These theories are General Strain Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Labeling Theory.

6-1- General Strain Theory (GST):

GST is a theory of criminology developed by Robert Agnew. It suggests that when individuals experience significant strains, such as parental rejection, victimization, financial struggles, or discrimination, they are more likely to turn to crime as a way to cope with negative emotions and relieve the pressures they feel. In other words, strains increase the likelihood of criminal behavior because they create a strong urge for corrective action, and crime becomes one possible response to relieve those strains (Agnew 1892).

In the case of Jack Zollo, he faces numerous strains that play a significant role in his transformation into a criminal. One such strain is the limitation of opportunities and financial

hardships. The experience of limited prospects and financial struggle likely placed Jack Zollo under considerable strain, intensifying the pressure and urgency he felt to alleviate his economic hardships. These strains may have influenced his decision to resort to criminal activities as a means to address his financial challenges and find a source of income, which ultimately provides him with a sense of relief.

6-2- Rational Choice Theory:

Rational Choice Theory posits that individuals engage in criminal behavior after evaluating the potential rewards and risks associated with their actions. By making rational calculations, individuals weigh the advantages against the disadvantages before deciding to commit a crime. In essence, the theory suggests that people are more likely to engage in illegal activities when they believe the benefits outweigh the potential costs (Criminology Theories).

Analyzing the decision-making processes of Jack Zollo in *My Life in Crime* through the lens of this theory can help in understanding his motivations, considerations of consequences, and perceived benefits of engaging in criminal activities. Zollo was introduced to the world of crime by learning pickpocketing then he develops his skills by joining car breakers, “I left the risky job of picking pockets and joined car breakers. This was risky too but not half as risky as picking pockets. Besides, the job paid almost twice as much as the other one” (*My Life in Crime* 20). The provided quote can be analyzed through the lens of Rational Choice Theory. Zollo demonstrates rational decision-making by leaving the risky job of picking pockets to join car breakers. He evaluates the risks involved and concludes that the latter option offers a comparatively lower level of risk and a higher financial reward. This decision aligns with the theory's emphasis on individuals weighing the potential costs and benefits before engaging in criminal behavior.

6-3- Social Learning Theory:

Social Learning Theory suggests that individuals acquire criminal behavior through their social interactions and exposure to deviant actions. This theory proposes that people learn to engage in illegal activities by observing, imitating, and being rewarded for such behavior. Proponents of this theory argue that individuals are not inherently inclined to commit crimes but rather learn criminal behavior from others within their social environment. (Criminology theories). Analyzing the protagonist's exposure to criminal models, peer influences, and reinforcement of criminal behavior in the book can provide insights into how social learning processes contribute to his involvement in crime.

John Kiriramiti argued in an interview with The Standards that:

Criminals are born every day. There is no woman who is segregated in the maternity ward because she will give birth to a criminal because all children are born innocent. How they grow up is what turns them into criminals. Stay close to your children. Note even the smallest changes. If, for example, your child has been timid and is suddenly exceedingly brave, there is someone behind that courage (John Kiriamiti, The Standard).

This statement reflects the emphasis of Social Learning Theory on the role of environmental factors in shaping individuals' behavior. Kiriamiti highlights the significance of the upbringing and experiences during the developmental stages in influencing the path towards criminal behavior. This argument also underscores the importance of parental guidance and monitoring in the context of Social Learning Theory. Kiriamiti advises parents to be attentive and observant of their children's behavior, as even small shifts in behavior may indicate external influences. This aligns

with the theory's emphasis on the impact of social interactions and exposure to deviant behavior in the learning process.

Wanjau plays a significant role in Jack Zollo's introduction to the world of crime, highlighting the principles of Social Learning Theory. As Zollo's first friend, Wanjau becomes his mentor, teaching him the art of pickpocketing. According to the theory, individuals acquire behavior through observation and imitation, and Jack Zollo learns from Wanjau's techniques and actions by observing the consequences experienced by him, which influences his decision-making and shapes his own criminal behavior. Additionally, the relationship demonstrates the influence of reinforcement, as Jack Zollo receives positive outcomes from engaging in pickpocketing, which strengthens his inclination to continue such behavior.

6-4- Labeling Theory:

The theory examines the importance of social reactions in shaping the behavior of individuals who are labeled or reacted to as deviant, including both the effects and causes of those reactions (Triplett, Upton 271). Analyzing the impact of labeling and stigma in the book can provide insights into how labeling processes influence and enhance the criminal behaviours of the protagonist.

Zollo, for instance, states that he “had become known to many criminals, from robbers, car breakers, shop breakers to car thieves and racketeers” (*My Life in Crime* 20). This quote suggests that he has established a reputation within the criminal community. In the context of Labeling Theory, this recognition from other criminals could contribute to the development of a criminal identity or label. Once labeled as a criminal, he internalized and embraced this identity, which led to further engagement in criminal activities.

In addition, he mentions that the police added him to the list of the most wanted criminals and how his friends keep warning and reminding him of this (*My Life in Crime* 41, 61). In terms of Labeling Theory, being placed on such a list and reminded about it can result in societal reactions, such as increased surveillance, stigma, and potential marginalization. These reactions can further reinforce the criminal label and can contribute to the internalization of a deviant identity, potentially influencing Zollo's ongoing engagement in criminal activities.

7- The Representation of Nairobi as a Criminal City:

Since the early 1900s, Nairobi, a significant city in East Africa region, has consistently played a significant role in various works of art, especially literature (Kiguru 124). This city, being the capital of Kenya and the prominent economic center in the region, is depicted as both a sanctuary due to its vast landscape and strategic geographical location as well as a symbol of disorder and uncertainty (Kiguru 125). Simon Gikandi and Evan Mwangi argue that there is a close relationship between the city and the East African Anglophone literature. They also argue that “[t]he city and Anglophone literature in East Africa are intricately connected because they are both new phenomena and depend on each other for sustenance” (125). According to Roger Kurtz, “the image of Nairobi as paradise is by no means dead, but Kenyan writers have been complicating the picture considerably in the thirty years since independence” (5). Most Kenyan literary works often described Nairobi as a city characterized by frequent occurrences of armed robberies, highlighting its association with criminal activities and labeling it as the birthplace of robbers and criminals (Mūsangi 50).

However, John Kiriamiti's depiction of Nairobi is different from the depictions of other novelists because, while they only provide a negative description for it, he allows the reader not

only to explore its regions and hidden corners but also to delve into the criminal characters' illegal activities within the area which provides a deeper understanding and insight into the city's criminal underbelly (50). For instance, Nairobi, as an urban setting, provides Zollo with a chance for exciting experiences and the potential to improve his social economic status. In reality, Kiriamiti opens the story with the first encounter of Jack Zollo with the city, which marks the beginning of the crime story (56). Zollo excitedly chooses to study in one of Nairobi's high schools without taking into consideration the school's quality or reputation. His primary aim at that moment was to live in the city perhaps because of the prospects or attraction it offered. However, the protagonist later reflects on the negative consequences of being in Nairobi, stating that he would have hated the city from the beginning if he had realized how it would shape him into a vulnerable and powerless individual, expressing a sense of regret and disillusionment due to the negative effects and disappointment he encounters as a result of his stay in Nairobi (*My Life in Crime* 8).

As a matter of fact, there is a clear distinction between the city and small villages; a comparison between the rural and the urban life is established through the depiction of life in both the village and the city (Kiguru 125). For instance, Kiriamiti portrays the village as a quiet place in which people still celebrate their traditional practices and values. It also represents a sense of appreciating unity and familial relations. Zollo describes the warm welcome of his brothers and sisters when he came back to his village, "At home, I was welcomed by my young brothers and sisters. They were very happy to see me. They did not seem to know that it was not through my wish that I was at home. They were only very glad that I would be with them" (*My Life in Crime* 11). He also mentions his enjoyment of the traditional practices they held such as dance parties and hunting games at night and goes on to say that "that type of life persuaded me to stay at home for about a month" (12). This showcases the deep connection between the community members

and their commitment to preserve and practice their traditions. When Zollo meets a Kenyan couple from the same region of his in Congo, he describes both his and their happiness to meet each other, comparing it to the feeling of reuniting with his parents after a significant period of time (115).

By contrast, life in town and city is described as a place where morals are corrupt and people give less value to family relations. This appears in Zollo's portrayal of the town as a place filled with prostitutes, alcohol, and night clubs and how he spent most of his money and time on them, "now I had come to know several barmaids and common prostitutes in town. I had changed greatly. For over a year, I had not visited home nor had I got any reports from or about my people there" (20). This comparison shows how the city's influence affected Zollo's behaviour and sense of belonging, revealing the decline of traditional values and family connections in urban areas.

Moving forward, the relationship between the city and money, in this novel, is portrayed as being closely connected. The city has a big impact on how the characters' lives are shaped. The acts and motivations of the characters are seen as mostly driven by money. Zollo, for instance, frequently states that his main goal is to acquire a great deal of money and become wealthy. Furthermore, Mūsangi argues that there is a close relationship between the criminal and the city, which represents a space where the acquisition of money becomes a means of survival and personal fulfillment. For Zollo, Nairobi is where he feels most active and where he commits his criminal operations (58). For instance, when his parents decide to punish him by sending him back to the village after he got expelled from school, he decides to return to Nairobi even without their approval, "I came to a conclusion that even if I went home, I would go back to Nairobi with or without their consent" (*My Life in Crime* 11), revealing his strong bond with the city and how he can't operate outside it since it serves as a suitable environment for his activities.

After he goes back to the city, he discovers new ways to survive there when he meets his new friend Wanjau and learns pickpocketing from him. The criminal, therefore, is not like the other inhabitants of the city who give in to their socio-economic situation, but rather takes the risk and steals money from someone's pocket or breaks into someone's car. He also knows the city and its areas better than anyone else (Mūsangi 59). For instance, when Zollo comes across a car that was parked near the Nyanza Bar in downtown Nairobi, he quickly discovers that its owner must be new in the city because of parking his car in that area which is considered unsafe for parking, “then on the driver’s door, I saw a sticker that told me that the car belonged to a tourist club in Uganda. Whoever had parked it there was new in Kenya and was probably searching for a lodging, or had left it there unaware of how Nairobi operated” (*My Life in Crime* 38). This demonstrates the criminal's familiarity with locations where criminal activities are more likely to occur due to his own engagement in activities that make such places unsafe.

8- Criminal Confession:

John Kiriamiti’s *My Life in Crime* is considered as a confessional book since it is a fictionalized autobiography of the author’s life as a criminal. Kiriamiti claims that the events he narrates throughout the book are true. He confesses the crimes he committed, mainly robberies, and frequently reminds his readers that he has reformed and changed. However, an exploration of what confession is and of the way Kiriamiti uses it through his protagonist, Jack Zollo, as well as an investigation of the purposes behind these confessions raise the question as to what extent he is being honest with his readers and what motivated him to take such a daring step.

A confession refers to a comprehensive narrative expressed either in written or spoken form, where an individual openly admits their participation in a wrongful act, usually taking

accountability for the committed offense (Kassin and Gudjonsson 35). Confession in literature is a narrative technique characterized by a first-person perspective. While it is typically known that confession is expressed through specific literary genres such as autobiographies, memoirs or diaries, it can also be found in works of fiction where the author draws inspiration from his/her personal experiences such as novels or poetry. Confessional writing helps to explore the thoughts of the writer and also helps the confessant through his/her journey toward redemption and repentance. However, this does not apply unless the confession is reliable and accurate and does not distort any facts or details, which is impossible in most cases. According to Joseph Kronick, “confession, like autobiography, promises to make truth, but to do so it must be haunted by literature, the possibility of fiction” (qtd. in Ndivo 3). Confession in literature may not be completely accurate due to several factors that would be further discussed in this chapter.

John Kiriamiti’s *My Life in Crime*, which he claims to be a true account of his own life in crime, is a fictionalized narrative that derives from his own lived experiences. In the book’s epigraph, Kiriamiti claims that “except for the names of persons, the names of places, and the scenes of the crimes referred to in the story, every other element is true” (*My Life in Crime* 7). This contradictory statement makes it even difficult to tell whether the events and personalities mentioned are real because of the deliberate blending of fact and fiction. Readers must examine the book critically and acknowledge that it is more of a creative interpretation of his experiences, rather than an objective autobiography. Kiriamiti adds in the epigraph that he “tried to keep as much to the truth as possible” (7), which is a clear admission that there are some variations or constraints which definitely means that his work lacks perfect accuracy in narrating events.

Additionally, he admits through his protagonist that he is a proficient storyteller and narrates how he told fake stories to fool others several times. For instance, when he meets his sister

Connie and her husband, they keep asking him questions about his disappearance and when he would go back home, “Then the endless questions and answers started. Why did you run away? Where do you stay? What do you do? When will you go back home? Would you like any help? and so many others” (33). However, he fakes a story to get rid of their questions without telling them the truth and he admits to the readers his ability of telling lies easily, “But as I have told you, I am very good at answers and reasoning. I gave them such a story that I almost believed it myself” (33). He also lies to the Kenyan couple he meets in the Congo concerning his existence there and that his father is a friend of the millionaire he is staying with,

Brother, repeat a lie several times and you yourself will come to believe it as the truth. When I uttered those words, I had not intended to lie to these two who were ready to help me had I been without work, but since it had slipped out of my mouth, it was to stay that way. I had repeated the lie to several people so much that I now told it without a second thought. ‘I will stick to my lie whether they discover it or not, as God knows I didn’t intend to lie to them,’ I told myself. (116)

My Life in Crime employs a narrative technique that makes it easy to question the accuracy of Kiriamiti’s confessions. Mūsangi explains that the novel utilizes narrative tropes that portray the criminal protagonist as a heroic figure (28). This positive portrayal of a guilty character manipulates the readers’ emotions (Vaage 116), and makes them sympathize with Zollo even with the awareness that he is a criminal. For instance, he narrates his escape from prison in such a dramatic and heroic way that makes the reader wish him luck in his pursuit of freedom such as when he successfully makes his escape by squeezing through the narrow window of a restroom at the Astrida Airport as guards stand at the door with firearms. By playing on the reader's emotions, Kiriamiti blurs the distinction between right and wrong (Mūsangi 29), which makes it even harder

to judge Zollo's actions fairly. Due to this manipulation, it is unclear how much of Kiriamiti's experiences are accurate in the story and how much of it is used to evoke certain emotional reactions from the reader.

Furthermore, Zollo's criminal activities are portrayed more as exciting adventures than crimes (10). Ndivo argues that, in this novel, "The question of guilt and shame is overshadowed by the thrill of adventure" (4). Zollo often succeeds at fooling the authorities and evading capture, which further romanticizes the depiction of his life of crime. This glorification of crime and escaping prison distorts reality and portrays crime as an exciting and even a desirable pursuit. The story focuses on the pleasure of the illegal activities rather than on their negative effects. Thus, the book fails to provide an accurate and detailed portrayal of the effects of criminal behaviour on people and society. This failure of objective portrayal of crime's effects is even more serious as it entails a failure to link the socioeconomic conditions that control people's lives in Kenya to its root, which is the legacy of imperial exploitation.

It is worth highlighting that the time and circumstances under which *My Life in Crime* was written and published also raise the urge to question the reliability of the author's confessions. Kiriamiti authored and released the book while serving a jail sentence for his involvement in illegal operations. This raises concerns regarding the authors' intentions as to whether his main goal was to profit from his criminal reputation or to repair it. Besides, confession is usually used as a way for people to admit their mistakes and reinvent the self so that it fits in the society (Ndivo 2). Criminals, for Kassin and Gudjonsson, confess "when they need to relieve feelings of guilt or shame" (46). However, Kiriamiti's use of confession may not effectively achieve these purposes. The book's repetition of Zollo's confessions weakens their sincerity. Although Kiriamiti claims that he is a reformed person, "I am wholly decided to be on the right side of the law as long as I

live” (*My Life in Crime* 196), his confessions are used as a way of self-justification instead of as a way of seeking forgiveness or redemption.

Also, Kiriamiti often portrays his protagonist's fear of going to prison, which raises more questions about the sincerity of his confessions. It suggests that his remorse and choice to leave a life of crime may be influenced by the harsh experiences he had while incarcerated. For example, when his friend Captain suggests committing a violent robbery, Zollo openly expresses his fear of the severe punishment that comes with such crimes, “My heart skipped a beat when he added the words ‘with violence.’ Where violence was concerned, the court was very strict” (24). After completing his book and handing it over to a person named G.G for revision, Kiriamiti received a suggestion to include his experiences in prison. However, Zollo immediately refuses the idea, exclaiming, “Prison? For God’s sake don’t remind me about prison, and the things men do to others! Let us leave it at that” (197). Nevertheless, he eventually writes his third book of the trilogy, titled *My Life in Prison* (2004), which raises further inquiries about his use of writing as a means to confess his crimes.

The feeling of guilt is one of the most important themes discussed among scholars. Jayantika Chakraborty defines guilt as a mental or emotional sensation that arises when an individual becomes aware or holds the belief that they have deviated from their personal code of behaviour or crossed a moral boundary, leading them to acknowledge a substantial accountability for that transgression (55). In his book, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud gives an insight on how to indicate a guilty person, “To begin with, if we ask how a person comes to have a sense of guilt, we arrive at an answer which cannot be disputed: a person feels guilty (devout people would say sinful) when he does something he knows to be bad” (115). Freud here provides a perspective on how to identify a person experiencing guilt and how the only way to do so is when

that person is aware that the actions they engaged in are morally wrong. Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that determining whether a person is experiencing guilt or not becomes relatively easier by observing their actions and words.

In *My Life in Crime*, Zollo's actions and words expose the absence of any kind of guilt or remorse, especially his betrayal for his girlfriend, Milly, with other women which makes the readers doubt his sincerity. Larry Ndivo argues that "the credibility of a person's – the criminal's – feelings is judged by his/her sincerity" (5). When Zollo first meets Milly, he compares her to Helen of Troy, a character from Greek mythology who is considered to be the most beautiful woman who ever existed, "I felt for sure that I had at last met my Helen of Troy. This girl looked feminine" (*My Life in Crime* 42), which also means that he is only attracted to her physically. He does the same with the secretary of Stephano, "this girl, Miss Makarios, was as beautiful as Helen of Troy who caused the Trojan war, if she ever existed" (106). This reveals that Zollo is not even concerned or feeling guilty for his betrayal of Milly (Ndivo 9), with whom his relationship is considered to be a serious one.

Another evidence for Zollo's absence of guilt is when Milly asks him to arrange a wedding for them and he keeps lying to convince her to give up on the idea for several reasons, especially that he could get caught by the police. "I could see by her reaction that I had won the battle", Zollo thinks to himself when Milly is convinced of what he says. The expression "won the battle" indicates his tendency to win an argument through deception without experiencing guilt or showing empathy towards his girlfriend's feelings. Kiriamiti's absence of guilt extends beyond his romantic relationships, raising questions about his sincerity and moral compass. This exploration of his character sets the stage for a deeper examination of the potential to sympathize with a criminal figure.

9- Sympathizing with the criminal:

Readers sympathize with guilty characters, especially protagonists, for several reasons. Sympathy is usually regarded as a positive quality, as it involves the ability to understand and share the emotions of others (Vaage 116). However, this quality becomes morally questionable when a guilty individual is treated upon it. In crime fiction, this characteristic recurs a lot and it is what distinguishes this genre from other literary genres. The persistent popularity of this genre can also be attributed to its capacity to provide captivating drama by featuring heroes who deal with unusual circumstances as if they were ordinary (Law Aspect).

First, the author's portrayal of a certain morally corrupted character as a hero manipulates the readers' emotions and may lead them to support a character whom they are aware is a criminal. Mūsangi argues that "this is one of the defining features of the crime thriller because it is only by exhilarating the reader that the crime writer can win the reader to the hero's side" (34). For instance, John Kiriamiti's Jack Zollo is a criminal character that Kiriamiti succeeds at winning the readers' sympathy and support for him.

Another main factor that contributes to this undeserved sympathy is the use of the first person perspective in his narrative. Garrett Stewart argues that the author's use of a first-person narrative voice in a novel puts the reader in the protagonist's shoes regardless of whether this protagonist is morally good or corrupt (cited in Msūangi 36). Another reason for sympathizing with guilty characters is the difference between sympathy experienced in real-life situations and sympathy experienced towards fictional characters as Margarethe Bruun Vaage suggests. Fiction, for Vaage, "might facilitate empathy because of the lack of practical obligations and implications for the spectator". She also argues that fiction has the ability to connect the readers with fictional

characters, granting them insight into their inner thoughts and emotions and observe them in private moments (118).

Kiriamiti does this with his character Zollo by humanizing him and delving deep into his inner thoughts and complexities which allows the readers to understand the driving forces behind his actions. For instance, he often uses the techniques of stream of consciousness and the internal dialogue which provide a close look into his mindset, emotions, motivations, and fears, making him feel more vivid and relatable. To illustrate, Kiriamiti depicts Zollo as a character who is always drenched in his thoughts and he exposes these thoughts and conversations with himself to the reader. When he was in the Congo, he expresses his guilt for betraying his boss Stephano by making his only daughter pregnant by him,

I went straight to my room and after changing into a pair of jeans and a Kitenge shirt, I went to my bedroom and lay on the bed, staring at the ceiling, deep in thought. ‘Stephano is my boss and I am his chauffeur but to him I am no more and no less than his own son. The way he treats me proves it without his saying so. But I have impregnated his only daughter whom I am quite sure he loves best. According to Hellene and his son Karamikos, he has been advising her to take the greatest care possible of herself, as much as she can. She has obeyed him for many years, until I came into her life. (*My Life in Crime* 118-121)

Although Zollo is being regretful for a fatal mistake he has committed, the reader can experience feelings of sympathy for him because he is allowed to read his mind, and therefore, is able to understand the situation he is going through.

The depiction of the circumstances that led Zollo to the world of crime and robbery also contribute to the readers' support and sympathy for him. Ndivo argues that "By playing the victim, Kiriamiti comes across as a blameless person who has been forced into the world of crime by circumstances beyond his control" (7). Despite the stable family background that Zollo comes from, he is exposed to the harsh realities of his environment such as unemployment and economic inequality. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Zollo doesn't have a strong educational background, yet, that does not mean that he would have found a stable job if the case was different. Because even the educated people suffer from this issue like his friend, Captain (Mūsangi 33). These characters also suffered from poverty which forced them to enter the world of crime. Zollo describes his economic situation which was difficult to the extent of thinking about selling his own clothes (16).

Furthermore, Kiriamiti convinces the readers to think of him as a different person from when he was a criminal and invites them to "be good and forget it" (*My Life in Crime* 7). However, he does not express any kind of regret or remorse for the crimes he committed. Ndivo argues that "Although Zollo is aware of his criminality, he nonetheless refuses to be remorseful" (4). Instead, he only repeatedly focuses on how he changed and became a better individual throughout the book,

I am a reformed person. I am wholly decided to be on the right side of the law as long as I live. The main reason is that I have learnt that crime does not pay. Another reason is that I have not learnt a lot of skills – signwriting, silkscreen printing and the art of painting – that I did not know before and I would never have got a chance to know (196).

This passage suggests that the author's main reason for reforming is the realization that crime does not bring positive outcomes. The negative consequences he experienced, namely imprisonment, played a role in shaping his decision to stay on the side of the law. Kiriamiti adds, "And please do not misunderstand me. I would not have wanted to learn them in prison, however, no matter how much they would fetch" (196). While he acknowledges the acquisition of new skills as a positive aspect of his reformation, his statement about not wanting to learn these skills in prison may reflect a desire to distance himself from the criminal environment rather than expressing regret for his past actions as a criminal who survived on robbing people and banks. This argument does not doubt the author's repentance but an honest expression of regret is required to reflect his moral responsibility and a desire to admit the harm caused to people and society, especially when it comes to the type of fatal crimes he was involved in.

10- Conclusion:

To sum up, the second chapter's discussion suggests that John Kiriamiti, or Jack Zollo as he is known in the novel, experiences disillusionment due to the challenging circumstances he endures, primarily influenced by colonialism's aftermath in post-colonial Kenya. Although the novel does not explicitly discuss this idea, it is discussed within the chapter after a careful reading for the work. The harsh conditions that the people experienced at the time of the novel such as poverty and unemployment are discussed in relation to the characters who get disillusioned and finally resort to crime and violence as a means of survival, which is also discussed from a criminological perspective. Additionally, the novel offers multiple perspectives of Nairobi, delving into the criminal underworld to gain a deeper understanding of the city's criminal behaviour. Kiriamiti claims that his narrative is based on a true story that he himself experienced, yet, the chapter puts this claim under scrutiny and questions the sincerity and the purpose behind

his confessions. Remarkably, Kiriamiti's storytelling evokes sympathy from the reader toward the criminal protagonist which was also discussed and criticized in this chapter.

General Conclusion

This dissertation discussed the crimes committed in the African post-colonial context, focusing on Kenya in the aftermath of independence from the British colonial rule. It first discussed the colonial legacies that affected all walks of life whether political, social, cultural or economic. Then, it examined the European neocolonial powers and their exploitation of the country, highlighting how foreign interests and economic dependencies have interrupted its developmental processes.

In addition, the criminal behaviours that the country suffered from after gaining independence were discussed along with their causes that led to them and their most recurring and popular types. Social, economic, and political factors contribute to the rise of criminal activities as individuals seek to secure a source of income in a system that failed to provide adequate resources and opportunities for all. Crime has had far-reaching effects on the Kenya society and economy as it influences public safety and undermines progress in several sectors. It increases poverty rates, disrupts economic stability, and therefore, hinders the country's development prospects.

Moreover, this dissertation also investigated the crime fiction genre in Africa in general and in the context of the Kenyan post-colonial literature in particular. It provided its definition and some of its well-known authors and literary works. This genre played a significant role in depicting the issues that the country suffered from and criticizing them, rather than being just a means of entertainment. The autobiographical crime fiction is one of the most popular sub-genres in Kenya and it also serves as a tool to explore and critique the realities of post-colonial disillusionment and social injustices.

The second part of this study examined how John Kiriamiti, a Kenyan author of crime fiction literature, dealt with crime in his most popular work *My Life in Crime*, which is a fictionalized autobiography in which he narrates his experiences as a criminal during the post-colonial era in the country. That period was characterized by certain disillusionments such as unemployment, poverty, and economic inequality. These issues also led to the appearance of greater problems in the society like robberies, crimes, violence, prostitution, and moral decay, especially among the youth, and were analyzed through the application of post-colonial theory and the theories of criminology. Kenya's capital, was discussed as a city which reputation was inclined with many issues, especially criminality and robberies. Kiriamiti depicted this urban space as his protagonist's place of operation and described its hidden corners and his use of them which is different from the rest of the normal Kenyan citizens.

In the concluding arguments of this study, the second chapter brought to attention the questionable reliability of Kiriamiti's confession and his alleged reform from a life of crime. Usually, people confess because they want to release the feelings of guilt and resentment for the past mistakes they committed. However, Kiriamiti's use of the theme of criminal confession is questioned in this thesis as to whether he employed it for moral purposes or to gain personal benefits. This exploration allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities of human nature and the impact of personal accountability.

Lastly, the admiration with the criminal protagonist is a thought-provoking element within the novel, which prompts readers to question and confront their own moral boundaries and norms. Kiriamiti challenges conventional notions of heroism and offers a nuanced portrayal of an individual who exists in the gray areas of morality through his criminal protagonist Jack Zollo, prompting reflections on the complexities of human motivation and empathy. Moreover, the

colonial experience of the characters in the novel further deepens the moral debate. The legacy of colonialism, with its history of oppression and exploitation, has shaped the characters' perceptions of power and justice. Kiriamiti's portrayal of Zollo as a hero challenges the conventional narrative of colonizers versus colonized, blurring the lines between right and wrong, and forcing readers to reexamine their preconceived notions of morality within the context of colonial influence.

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المخلص

تعد الجريمة من أكثر المشكلات شيوعا في العالم وتزداد تعقيدا عندما تنتشر في المجتمعات التي شهدت الاستعمار. وبناء على ذلك تقدم هذه الأطروحة شرحا للمسائل المتعلقة بالجريمة في البلدان الأفريقية التي عانت من براثن الاستعمار الأوروبي من خلال أدب الجريمة والتصورات التي يقدمها حول الموضوع كما أنها تتخذ دولة كينيا كعينة في الدراسة. تهدف الأطروحة إلى تقديم فهم شامل لطرح أدب الجريمة في كينيا للتحديات التي واجهتها البلاد في فترة ما بعد الاستعمار، مسلطة الضوء على تأثير هذه التحديات على تصورات المجتمع للجريمة والمجرمين. علاوة على ذلك، تتضمن الأطروحة تحليلا للسيرة الذاتية للكاتب جون كيراميتي حياتي في عالم الجريمة وكيفية معالجتها لمشكلة الجريمة التي طرأت خلال فترة ما بعد الاستعمار، كما تنسبها للإرث الاستعماري. تناقش الأطروحة أيضا وصف الأدب للعاصمة نيروبي على أنها مدينة تعج بالجرائم حيث يلجأ الشباب إلى ارتكابها كنتيجة لهذا الإرث. يتطرق هذا البحث أيضا إلى المعضلات الأخلاقية المحيطة باعتراف المجرمين بجرائمهم في الأدب ويشكك في موثوقية هذه الاعترافات والغرض منها من خلال استكشاف الأسلوب السردى للكاتب وتعريفات مصطلح الشعور بالذنب كالذي يقدمه فرويد. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تقوم الأطروحة بمناقشة الأسباب التي تدفع بعض المؤلفين إلى استخدام أسلوب سردي يتضمن تصوير المجرمين كشخصيات بطولية وميل القراء إلى التعاطف مع هذه الشخصيات. من أجل تحقيق هذه الغاية، تقدم الأطروحة شرحا للإرث الاستعماري والكولونيالية الجديدة، كما أنها تعتمد في تحليل هذه السيرة الذاتية على نظريات إدوارد سعيد حول فكرة ما بعد الاستعمار ومخلفات الامبريالية في البلدان المستعمرة سابقا بالإضافة إلى البعض من نظريات علم الإجرام.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإرث الاستعماري، الجريمة، أدب الجريمة، ما بعد الاستعمار، الكولونيالية الجديدة، الاعتراف، السيرة الذاتية.