

**THE COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF THE TYPES AND CAUSES OF CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
IN JOHN KIRIAMITI'S MY LIFE IN CRIME, MY LIFE WITH A CRIMINAL MILLY'S STORY AND IN
NGUMI KIBERA'S THE DEVIL'S HILL.**

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ABSTRACT

The research provides an in- depth investigation into the problem of crime in Kenya to be precise. As much it has also affected different countries in the world. Crime and punishment have become increasingly central to our understanding of how society works. Crime varies widely across time and place that is globally, regionally and locally. The overall objective of this study is to seek explanations of different crimes varying from petty theft, murder, corruption sexual crimes such as rape, carjacking, terrorism kidnapping and many more. With a view of suggesting crime prevention and crime punishment and also communicate its findings. In reference to Ngumi Kibera's *The Devil's Hill*, John Kiriamiti's *My Life in Crime and My Life with a Criminal: Milly's Story*. The major theories that i considered are Sigmund Freud Psychoanalytic Theory and Reader Response whose proponents are Walker Gibson, Norman Holland, Richards L, Hans Robert and Louse Rosenblatt which worked hand in hand.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This is an outline of the important elements of the research study. It lays the background of the study and also includes; Statement of the problem, research objectives, significance of the study, site description, research questions, justification of the study, theoretical framework and assumptions of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The aim of the study was to carry out a research into the cause of crime and punishment and to disseminate research findings and how the literary writers like John Kiriamiti and Ngumi Kibera have used a pen to highlight issues of crime, and to show how literary level of crime in Kenya to be precise people are vetted of crime. Although perhaps Kiriamiti is not the first novelist to write about crime in Kenya, Kiriamiti's *My Life in Crime* (1984) has been recorded as Kenya's bestselling novel of the early 1980s and the first in the "crime craze" (Danysh 2001)

According to Henderson (2017), for readers to analyze any work of art that relates to issues of crime, it is important to first of all get to know the authors background. An understanding of this background, helps the readers to know the society in which the authors has come from. In most cases, the authors present their own experiences in the text (s). Publishers will often concentrate on works that look appealing. Authors who are victims of crimes, present their works in a more realistic and detailed manner. They point out issues associated with criminal activities such as; drug abuse, domestic violence, class conflict, corruption in the current governance. Therefore, the printed works of art are comprised of the presentation of the social environment; the morals, principles from the societal-expectations. For a reader to analyze the literary text, she/he has to take into consideration the cultural background, the traditions, the past events, that have played a role in shaping the plot of the story. In addition, political factors and strategies of the authorities, organize the presentation of crime in works of literature. In general, representation of crime in literature, reflects the expectations writers have concerning the audience; the social information, morals, principles, and traditions about illicit actions, in order to come up with ways of preventing crime in society and hence, creating justices for the wrong doings (Henderson, 2017). This study will present a critical reading of John Kiriamiti books *My Life in Crime*, *My Life with a Criminal: Milly's story* and Kibera's *The Devil's Hill*.

A lot of literature has been published about crime in general. However very little about crime is known. This study brings forward and make people aware of the crimes that are happening in the society and the prevention that should be accorded.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

Literary writers in their works of crime have proven beyond doubt that most criminals engage in criminal activities to satisfy their needs, some of the reasons are unemployment which leads to extreme poverty thus engage into theft to at least afford basic needs. For example, in Kirimiti's crime books characters engage in

crimes such as robbery with violence, not because they want to cause harm to people but because they have needs to satisfy.

Crime is present in various Kenyan literary books; Literary writers have written books of crime elsewhere in the world. This study will present a critical reading of John Kiriamiti books *My Life in Crime*, *My Life with a Criminal: Milly's story* and Kibera's *The Devil's Hill*.

1.3 Research Objectives

- i. To compare and contrast the types and causes of crime in John Kiriamiti's *My Life in Crime*; *My Life with a Criminal Milly's Story* and Ngumi Kibera's *The Devil's Hill*.

1.4 Significance of The Study

The purpose of the study was to seek explanations of crime, the causes and types of crimes in different literary works with a view of suggesting crime prevention and punishment. The study focuses on how crime and punishment has been presented in John Kiriamiti's books *My Life in Crime*, *My Life with a Criminal* and Kibera's Ngumi Kibera *The Devil's Hill*.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was limited to psychoanalytic theory and reader response theory which worked hand in hand to make a critical analysis of the three crime texts. Psychoanalytic theory originates from Sigmund Freud, when analyzing literary texts, the psychoanalytic theory was used to interpret the concealed meaning within a text or to understand the authors intentions. Freud believed that events in our childhood have a great influence in our adults' lives shaping our personality effective information in order to provide the quality of crime books.

For the reader response theory, the proponents are Louise Rosenblatt, Richards, Walker Gibson and others. They were concerned with how readers respond to serious interpretation of a work of art and emphasizes on the reader (audience) and their involvements of a fictional work. It identifies the reader as a vigorous representative who interpolates the reality of what is presented in the text. Therefore, meaning is completed through interpretation of the work. Rosenblatt (1978) also notes that, a text may fail to have the same connotation of ideas for all the readers (audience), and every person integrates his/her own facts, trust, morals, social anticipation to the interpretation of the text.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter entails a review of literature review related to crime and punishment as portrayed in Kiriamiti and Kibera's books which specifically deal with crime and punishment. The review is hereby organized according to the objectives of the study

A review of Toni Morrison's works, crime is significant in most of her pieces of art. Contrary to other written works, in *Beloved* she has plainly and clearly represented the issue. The storyline when literally described, illustrates a despairing mother who attempts to free her children from oppression by murdering them. She is able to kill one child and then is troubled by the spirit of her dead child. Toni Morrison, presents to the readers, the cause of the mother (Sethe) committing the crime (Blauner, 2018). She is very oppressed and distressed by the black's oppressions and slavery from the whites. Characters find themselves committing crimes, because of the social influence the environment surrounding them portray for understanding what is taken for granted in the narrative (Henderson, 2017)

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design used in conducting the study. It was a library-based research with a close reading of the texts sampled in the study by involving only non-numerical data.

3.2 Location of the study

The study was conducted in the library, repeated themes, images, reports, social media and the particular novels were used.

3.3 Research Design

This study was conducted using qualitative research design involving the features attributes and appearances of occurrences that were deducted thematically. Qualitative research design can be viewed as a method that involves a detailed analysis and presents data in a written structure, compared to use of numeric. Qualitative research aims at getting an in-depth analysis and interpretation of data, from the target population (Cheshire, 2018). In this research study, crime books for the researcher to access crime and punishment in the selected books by John Kiriamiti and Ngumi Kibera were used.

3.4 Target Population

The target population consisted of the three selected crime books. They include *My Life in Crime* by John Kiriamiti, *My life with a Criminal: Milly's Story* by John Kiriamiti and *The Devil's Hill* by Ngumi Kibera.

3.5 Data Collection

This research study used both primary and secondary courses for data collection. The research data was purely from the library and therefore note making was used as a tool of data collection. According to Surbhi (2017), primary data includes data borrowed direct form the source of information, the original work. While secondary data refers to information borrowed from somebody else.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This section in the research work, presents the findings based from the critical analysis of selected works. The research findings, are in-line with the previously stated research objectives.

4.1 Causes of crime in the three novels

As writers represent the different crimes that are committed in the society, on the other hand they also illustrate what leads to the criminals' immoral behavior. In both John Kiriamiti's and Ngumi Kibera's works, the authors start with the childhood background of the criminal. An analysis of the beginning of the plot, helps the reader to understand what the 'criminal to be' experiences and how these experiences lead to life in crime.

4.2 Societal experiences

In *My Life with a Criminal: Milly's story*, the home place where Milly lives as a child requires much parental care. They live in Bahati, which is an estate in Nairobi. Nairobi as the capital city of Kenya, is known as a place of highly-reported social immoral cases. Children growing up in such an environment, require good parental care. This is not the case with Milly, whose parents don't portray a good example. The social experiences from the place and the people that one socializes with, can determine the kind of behaviors they are likely to acquire.

4.3 Childhood background

As illustrated by John Kiriamiti in *My Life with a Criminal*, the childhood background of the writer, influences the kind of life she gets to live in the future. For the writer, her childhood life was one surrounded with people getting drunk. Milly's mother, used to own a beer-selling business in the house that they lived. She therefore grew up observing men coming to the bar and immoral behaviours that surrounded her and her sister.

4.4 Parental negligence

In *My Life in Crime* (Kiriamiti, 1989), parental negligence is evident in this text.

From a critical point of view, Milly's mother introduces her into a bad, immoral environment when she is less than ten years of age. Milly does not even know her biological father until she is eleven. This is because of the large number of men, who would go to her mother's room. The poor parental care, makes Milly to accept living in such kind of environment. Milly tolerates Jack's criminal activities, even when authorities are looking for him as a wanted criminal. Milly's relationship with Jack, can be viewed as providing support for more criminal activities to take place. Therefore, the writer illustrates parental negligence as a factor in shaping up immoral behaviors to children. And some of these behaviors turn to be illegal in future.

4.5 Poverty

From the analysis of *My Life with a Criminal*, we get to realize Milly is from a poor background. Her father who is a drunkard leaves the family and her mother opens a beer-selling business. Milly's mother who only has less to survive with, she takes her children to her sister's place.

"In December 1985, mom came for us and took us to Bahati where she had found a bedsitter, which we all shared" (Kiriamiti, 1989,p2).

In spite of Milly performing very well in primary school, the mother does not have enough money to take her to the school that she had been called. She misses out this golden chance, which would have created a better opportunity for her. When Milly gets to meet with Jack, she is surprised by the kind of money that Jack has because she is not used to it. For Milly, this was the beginning of a new life with luxuries.

"I saw him take a bunch of keys and selected one. He went to a Datsun and unlocked it...and for the first time in my life, I entered a car which I had good reason to believe was part of my life it was the first time for me to be in a hotel of this class...out of the hundred shillings note Jack gave to the waiter, he received change of about seven shillings, which he did not even take..." (Kiriamiti, 1989, p11)

It is evident from this text; Milly blindly falls in love with Jack without the realization that he is a criminal. She thinks the money that Jack has it's from the 'big job' which he claims to be having. It is due to poverty, characters like Milly get involved with criminals unaware of what their partners do for a living.

"He dipped his hand into his pocket and took out a hundred-shilling note. I was shocked That kind of money was too much for me. In fact, it needed only another twenty shillings to pay our house rent for two months." (Kiriamiti, 1989, p. 13)

It is poverty that drives characters into innocently accepting a lie. This is what leads to Milly accepting Jack's criminal life. Milly was aware the money that Jack used to give her, was from robbery.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Research Findings

The research also aimed at finding out some of the causes of crime in the selected texts. It is evident that the social experiences, childhood background, parental negligence and poverty, play a role influencing people to be criminals in the society. Both Ngumi Kibera and John Kiriamiti, have displayed the life of criminals from their childhood experiences.

The characters start committing crimes from tender age and when they become adults, they are unable to stop. Hence, they end up becoming the most wanted because they always earn a living from committing crimes. Ngumi Kibera has clearly illustrated parental negligence on children. Parents who are not strict to their children, they contribute in making them to adopt bad morals. The parents are not keen on the social environment that the child get exposed. Failure to carefully monitor the behavior of the children, lead to engagement in illegal behaviors even in adulthood.

5.2 Conclusions

The research study, attained its objectives in addressing the commitment of crimes using three selected texts. Authors from the selected texts, John Kiriamiti and Ngumi Kibera have well portrayed the social environment of Kenyan society. The study sought to create awareness, to fully address the issue of crime and punishment as seen in the society.

5.3 Recommendations

Firstly, authors need to guide the youths the need on the right decisions to make in their literally works. They should be educated on the right way, to avoid them getting involved in immoral behaviors like drug abuse, which results to criminal activities.

Secondly, the authors need to address the safety issues on crime to the society. This will act as a strategy of preventing crime in the society.

Lastly, although there are novels which address the issue of crime in the society, more needs to be put into writing, because this is a contemporary issue, this will create awareness and citizens will take the necessary strategies to avoid getting into trouble which will create a safe environment for generations to come.

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