

## **Abstract**

The city is one of the most enduring symbols of modernity in Africa. Owing to its advanced industrial, economic and infrastructural development in relation to other parts of most postcolonial African countries, the city invites an intense artistic gaze. The Kenyan city of Nairobi is one such example of a postcolonial African city which has provided writers with ready-made literary material. Nairobi is depicted in popular Kenyan fiction as a key signifier of what modernity has to offer to the women and men who migrate to it. This search for modernity has different results for different individuals. Success or failure depends on the individual's capacity to "read" the city strategically and exploit available opportunities.