

**NARRATING TRANSNATIONAL VIOLENCE AND CRIME IN MUKOMA wa
NGUGI'S NOVELS**

SAMUEL WAMBUGU WANJOHI

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination or the award of a degree in another university:

Signature _____

Wanjohi Samuel Wambugu

Date _____

This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors:

Signature: _____

Dr. Jennifer Muchiri

Date _____

Signature: _____

Dr. Makau Kitata

Date _____

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my late parents Wilson Wanjohi and Monicah Wanjiku. You urged me to go to school.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the thematic concerns which Mukoma addresses in his novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. The theme of transnational violence and crime is prominent in both novels. In addition, Mukoma has demonstrated that other issues which continue to trouble the world today remain relevant and urgent for writers of literature. The project also focuses on the narrative strategies employed by the author in communicating his concerns. This study relied on the theory of narratology in examining how transnational violence and crime and related issues are narrated. I have analyzed *Nairobi Heat* by focusing on the themes of betrayal, corruption, racism, greed and deception. These concerns are linked to violence and crime in this novel.

I have also discussed themes which Mukoma advances in the novel *Black Star Nairobi*. It is evident that Mukoma is concerned with international violence and crime and the intricate webs of relationships that sustain the violence and crime. The narrative techniques the author uses and their effectiveness have also been discussed in relation to corruption, racism, and the question of identity as explored in the novels.

It is evident that Mukoma has successfully weaved intricate detective narratives using well thought out narrative techniques which enables him to communicate transnational violence and crime, and other related concerns which he has addressed in these two novels in an effective manner.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Mukoma is a Kenyan novelist, poet and literary scholar. He was born in 1971 in Evanston, Illinois, the United States of America but raised in Kenya before returning to the United States for his university education. He is the author of the detective novels *Nairobi Heat* (2009), and *Black Star Nairobi* (2013). He has also authored an anthology of poetry, *Hurling Words at Consciousness* (2006), and *Conversing with Africa: Politics of Change* (2002). In the latter book Mukoma expresses his thoughts on Africa's dilemmas. He examines the issues which affect the African continent. These include abject poverty, despotism, coups and ethnic cleansings. Mukoma advocates for dialogue among Africans so that they can be their own agents of change and seek pan-African solutions to the problems which bedevil the continent. He has published poems in '*Tin House Magazine*', '*Chimurenga*', '*Brick Magazine*' and '*Smartish Pace*'. In addition, Mukoma has published political essays and columns in '*Los Angeles Times*', '*Radical History Review*', '*World Literature Today*', '*Daily Nation*', '*East African*' among other publications. His short story "How Kamau wa Mwangi Escaped into Exile" was shortlisted for the Caine Prize in 2009. Caine Prize for African writing is an annual literary award for the best original short story by an African writer, whether in Africa or elsewhere, in the English language.

Mukoma was also shortlisted for the 2010 Penguin Prize for writing his novel manuscript, "The First and Second Book of Transition." He is the co-founder of the Mabati-Cornell Kiswahili

Prize for African Literature and co-founder of the Global South Project. Mabati Cornell Prize recognizes excellent writing in African languages and encourages translation from, between and into African languages. *Nairobi Heat* was his first detective novel. It tells the story of the murder of an American girl whose body is found in front of an African professor's house in an American suburb. Mukoma's second novel, *Black Star Nairobi*, is a sequel to *Nairobi Heat*. Violence is manifested in these two novels. Violence and crime cut across international frontiers. I carry out a systematic study of the narration of transnational violence and crime in the two novels. I focus on the narrative strategies used in the selected novels and demonstrate how effective these strategies are in communicating the thematic concerns addressed by the author.

Artists do not write in a vacuum, they derive their experiences from the societies in which they live, hence their artistic works are a reflection of their individual experience and that of their societies. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mukoma's father and Kenya's foremost literary writer commenting on literature in *Writers in Politics* says:

Literature results from conscious acts of men in society. At the level of the individual artist, the very act of writing implies a social relationship: one is writing about somebody for somebody. At the collective level, literature, as a product of men's intellectual and imaginative activity embodies in words and images, the tensions, conflicts contradictions at the heart of a community's being and process of becoming. (5)

In reference to the preceding quotation from *Writers in Politics*, the younger Ngugi's experience of the societies he has lived in shapes his work of art and this is evident in the events narrated in

his novels. The stories in *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi* cut across two continents, Africa and America. Mukoma experienced hostile political climate in Kenya in his youthful years when people like his father Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo were sent into exile. Besides, when his parents returned to Kenya in 2004 they were attacked in the hotel they were staying in. They attended a court hearing in connection to this attack. This kind of violent attack is reflected in his novels. These experiences seem to contribute to his view of Nairobi city and it is no wonder he paints it in dim light in these two novels.

Black Star Nairobi is set against the backdrop of the 2007 Kenyan Presidential elections. Violence broke out soon after Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of the vote. The ethnic animosity reared its ugly head when neighbours turned against neighbours. It is the intense violence which bothers Mukoma in *Black Star Nairobi*. *Nairobi Heat* takes us on a journey to the past in an attempt to reconstruct the events which lead to the murder of a young American girl who is found murdered at the doorsteps of an African professor, the prime suspect. A detective who is trying to resolve this murder receives a call to the effect that if he want the truth he must go to its source. This takes him to Nairobi and then through the terrifying slums of this city. As the events unfold it is evident that the memories of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 have a bearing on the violence revealed in *Nairobi Heat*. It is therefore evident that violence and crime are not localized but they are transnational phenomena.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Violence and crime are interconnected. Mukoma's novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi* are detective narratives in which the narration of transnational violence and crime is central. This study examines the narrative strategies employed by the author in addressing transnational violence and crime and related concerns in the contemporary world. Violence and crime are a global phenomena, thus my study focuses on the narration of a current world concern in the two novels.

1.3 Objectives

This study sets to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To examine some of the themes addressed in the two novels.
- (ii) To identify and evaluate the narrative strategies employed in the novels.

1.4 Hypotheses

This study is guided by the following assumptions:

- (i) The author is concerned with the circulation of transnational violence and crime and related themes in his two novels.
- (ii) The author employs various narrative strategies to effectively communicate his message.

1.5 Justification

This study focuses on the narration of transnational violence and crime and the effectiveness of the strategies employed by the author in communicating his message. An examination of Mukoma's novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi* reveals to the reader issues which are relevant in contemporary Kenya, Africa and the world. Violence cuts across these two novels. Violence is a threat to peace and stability not only to a country where it occurs but also to other nations of the world. Violence may take the form of murder as it happens in Mukoma's novels, rape, terrorism, genocide due to political intolerance and struggle for political power. Violence destabilizes a country and generally leads to loss of human lives. This destabilization of society and destruction of human life are some of the key happenings in Mukoma's novels. This study focuses on narration of transnational violence and crime and the effectiveness of the narrative strategies employed by the author in depicting these issues.

I selected Mukoma because of his American and Kenyan identities and experiences. Having been born in the United States of America and raised in Kenya gives him what I would say is a better understanding of issues which are of local and international concern. The question of violence, search for identity, post colonial racism, genocide and local and international politics are concerns which are current and international in nature. This is evident in Georgette Spelvin's review of Mukoma's novel *Black Star Nairobi*. Indeed Spelvin concludes the review by saying that the series *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi* revolve around international crime fiction, politics and social issues. I concur with Spelvin on this statement which I find relevant to this study.

Mukoma is not concerned with writing just a thrilling story of which detective narratives are commonly known for. Mukoma in an interview with Kate Haines as it appears in her e-article “Kate Haines Africa in Words” says he thinks that for people like Helon Habila there is a recognition that you can do a lot more with this form and it is accessible to people.

In concurrence with Mukoma, detective narratives can be used to address issues which affect the world today. This is what Mukoma has done in his novels. He has employed various narrative strategies to focus on specific issues in his fiction. The post – election violence in Kenya in 2007 is the backdrop against which *Black Star Nairobi* is set. International terrorism is a reality the world is battling with. Violence, among other issues addressed by the author, is not a localized phenomenon. It is therefore important to understand the international connections of crime as it is evident in Mukoma’s novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. The literary output by Kenyan writers has been great in the various genres. Mukoma has chosen to write detective narratives which many writers in Kenya and even in Africa have not. He chooses to write about a contemporary Kenya in relation to global issues focusing on international crime.

1.6 Literature Review

In this section I review works on narration of violence in literature. The reviews which that have been done on Mukoma’s detective novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi* are of interest in this section. I also review works on narratology and theory which forms the basis of analysis of the two texts under study. My focus will be on what has been written on transnational violence and crime and how effectively the narrative strategies are used in rendering the message which the author wants to communicate.

In “Review of Mukoma wa Ngugi *Black Star Nairobi*” Spelvin gives an overview of what happens in this novel. She draws the attention of the reader by giving the context in which the novel is written. It is December 2007 and Kenyans are anxious about the results of an election which has pitted the incumbent Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, and Raila Odinga, leader of the leading opposition party, ODM. Mwai Kibaki is declared the winner by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) in what many see as a rigged election. The country explodes into mayhem and many police officers, divided along ethnic lines, commit acts of violence too. It is against this background that the private detective of Nairobi’s Black Star Agency investigates the death of a black American whose body is found in Ngong Forest. My study builds on Spelvin’s review although it explores violence and crime from a wider perspective. Violence and crime is dealt with in this study as a global phenomenon and not just as a local issue. The similarity between Spelvin’s review and this study is the subject matter. Besides, the unraveling of the murder of the black American found in Ngong forest is what drives the detectives to move across borders in an effort to bring the culprit to book.

Spelvin highlights the violence which broke out after the election results were announced. She then explores the relationship of the characters in the text. Characters are an important vehicle through which the narrative is rendered. This study goes further than this emphasis on characters. Though the electoral violence is centered on Kenya’s election polls, it is important to connect violence to the international scene. The study sets out to connect such incidences of local violence and crime to the transnational crime scene and how the author employs various narrative strategies which contribute to the understanding of the thematic concerns addressed in his novels.

Detective fiction is a genre of writing where a detective works to solve a crime. A detective story therefore features a mystery and or the commission of a crime, emphasizing the search for a solution. The reader is challenged to solve the crime by clues provided before the detective reveals the answer at the end of the novel. Although a crime usually has been committed, the reader's attention is directed to baffling circumstances surrounding the crime rather than to the event itself. Suspense is one of the artistic devices an author employs in capturing the attention of the reader as events unfolds in a story. I compare Fyodor Dostoyevsky's treatment of the crime committed by Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* to how Mukoma unravels the crime committed in his novels. Though Dostoyevsky's story is not a detective novel, he provides clues why the protagonist murders Alyona and her sister Lizaveta. Suspense is evident in this novel as the events leading to the murder of these two characters unfold. I find the narrative device relevant to this study which focuses on how effective Mukoma uses narrative strategies to narrate transnational violence and crime in his two novels.

Ann Covey in her review of the novel *Those Who Love Night* by Wessel Ebersohn, which also examines the relationship between violence and politics, focuses on the character Abigail Bukula's tribulations in Zimbabwe. The repression of populace in a dictatorial regime and the violence meted out to those who are opposed to it is the central concern in this novel by South African writer, Ebersohn. Covey traces the movement of Abigail, a South African attorney who is on leave and has time to cross to Zimbabwe to help her cousin who is believed to have been netted by a secret government agency called central intelligence organization. Those who are opposed to the government are rounded up, tortured and killed. The story of Ebersohn tells of strongmen without limit and people who are "disappeared" into horrific prisons in modern day

Africa. Sadly it is a contemporary story. Covey's review is relevant to this study as it appreciates violence directed to certain people by those in government. The politics of exclusion is a watershed for explosion of violence as it happened in the Rwandan genocide.

Immaculee Ilibagiza in *Left to Tell: Discovering God amidst the Rwanda Genocide* narrates her experience of the ordeal she went through during the genocide. The genesis of the holocaust is grounded in colonial Rwanda under Belgium's rule. Ilibagiza is the survivor of the violence which erupted in Rwanda in 1994. The Hutus and Tutsis, the two dominant communities rose against each other resulting to hundreds of thousand deaths. Ilibagiza's story is comparable to Mary Karuhimbi's narration of violence in Mukoma's novel *Nairobi Heat*. The similarity of the two accounts makes Ilibagiza's novel relevant to this study. Indeed Mukoma's novel *Nairobi Heat* is set against the backdrop of Rwanda genocide. The tribal animosity leads to mistrust, suspicion and eventual violence which is triggered by the death of president Juvenal Habyarimana in a plane crash. The violence witnessed in Rwanda is replayed in Kenya as revealed in Mukoma's second novel *Black Star Nairobi*. The electoral violence in Kenya takes a tribal dimension and this is the reason why detective Odhiambo, who is a Luo, cannot bury his wife Mary, a Kikuyu, in Luo land. Violence erupts when the sitting president, Mwai Kibaki, is declared the winner of the vote against his closest competitor Raila Odinga. Ilibagiza looks at violence and its ramification at the national level but Mukoma addresses violence and crime that transcends national boundaries in his detective novels.

Jennifer Muchiri in “Mukoma gives distorted portrait of Nairobi in his novel —*Nairobi Heat*,” gives a critical review of this novel. The review covers preliminary investigations by Ishmael from the time he picks up the case in Madison, Wisconsin. He then proceeds to Nairobi where he links up with David Odhiambo, a Kenyan detective, in an effort to unravel the murder of an American girl whose body is found in front of an African professor’s house in an American suburb. What arouses my interest in Muchiri’s review is the connection between the discovery by the detective that the murder case is related to the 1994 Rwanda genocide. My study focuses on the aspect of violence and crime in this novel. I therefore go further in examining how Mukoma communicates violence and crime which go beyond the national boundaries. Muchiri has focused on how the story develops and to a certain degree on the difference between Mukoma and his father Ngugi wa Thiong’o in terms of their writing. The key point Muchiri is making in this review is the negative portrayal of Nairobi in this novel I endeavor in this study to trace transnational violence and crime in Mukoma’s novels and how effectively it is mediated through the narrative strategies employed by the author. In this respect my study partly builds on Muchiri’s thoughts about *Nairobi Heat*.

Randall Arlin Fegley in the article “Rwanda Civil War” (Microsoft Encarta 2009) points out that –the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda provoked a wave of ethnic violence, prompting the United Nations Secretary General by then Beutros Ghali to accuse the Hutu dominated Rwanda Army of genocide against the Tutsi. At the height of the violence, the UN forces, lacking a mandate to protect the civilians, abandoned Kigali. Fegley’s focus is specifically on violence in Rwanda, its history, socio-economic and political concerns and Rwanda’s struggle to recover from genocide. The struggle for political dominance between the

Hutu and Tutsi communities was a threat to peace and political stability in Rwanda. Fegley's review is relevant in this study since the electoral competition in Kenya in 2007 which resulted to the perceived rigging of the presidential vote led to violence. Mukoma's novel *Black Star Nairobi* is set against the backdrop of post-election violence in Kenya. At the centre of Fegley's review of "Rwanda Civil War" and the post- election violence in Kenya as narrated in Mukoma's novel is the politics of exclusion. This creates tribal animosity which can be a prelude to violence. It is evident that violence and crime is not confined to a particular country or region. Since violence and crime is a global concern, my study is centered on how it is narrated in Mukoma's detective novels.

Muchiri in her review, "Mukoma wa Ngugi sets on another thrilling trail of criminals," highlights on violence that erupted soon after the announcement of post presidential results of Kenya's 2007 general election. Muchiri captures the transnational violence in the novel *Black Star Nairobi*. She points out that Mukoma addresses the issue of international crime, particularly terrorism. Mukoma demonstrates that terrorism affects all corners of the earth. Muchiri explains that Mukoma also explores the tribal suspicions that exist in Kenya and in particular between the Kikuyu and Luo communities. This is brought into the fore when O's wife is killed in Nairobi. His mother and the clan are categorical that they cannot bury her on their land because she is a Kikuyu. *Black Star Nairobi* is concerned with international crime particularly terrorism. Muchiri captures this fact in her review of this novel. My study addresses the narration of transnational violence and crime. Muchiri in her review highlights how the detectives Ishmael and O travel from Kenya to America as illegal immigrants through Mexico in an attempt to hunt for the killers and bomber. In addition to examining the articulation of transnational violence and crime, this

study goes further to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of the narrative strategies in narrating international crime in each novel.

Roberts J. Mara in his essay, “Conflict Analysis of the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya” says that Kenya has been riddled with conflict and violence throughout its brief history as a nation. The 2007 post– election violence in Kenya however was of a different magnitude. He cites tribal loyalties to the leaders and the culture of corruption which fuels suspicion among communities. This is relevant to the novels under study where we find the hostility between the Kikuyus and the Luos during the bungled 2007 presidential election. Indeed, the chairman of the Electoral Commission of Kenya made the now infamous pronouncement “I don’t know whether Kibaki won the election” (Samuel Kivuitu, Kenya Electoral Commission chair, January 2nd, 2008). Mukoma’s novel *Black Star Nairobi* is set against the backdrop of 2007 election violence in Kenya. Hence, Mara’s findings and Mukoma’s treatment of violence in his novel makes the examination of violence and crime compelling in this study.

The Honey Guide, a detective novel by Richard Crompton, is set against the background of 2007 General Election in Kenya. Muchiri reviewed this novel in an article, “Nairobi today: Crompton’s book explores the problems of the contemporary Kenya society” which appeared on Standard on Saturday March 8th 2014. Tension gets higher in the build up to election day. In a process surrounded by controversy, the incumbent president is sworn in and the country explodes into one of the worst crisis in the history of independent Kenya. Muchiri observes that this detective novel is about a police detective, Mollel, who is trying to unravel the murder of a young woman in Nairobi whose body is dumped in a storm in Uhuru Park. From this review we

learn that Crompton's protagonist is a Maasai and as the story unfolds, the murdered girl and the murderer, when she is eventually discovered, are Maasai. The foregrounding of the Maasai in this novel, Muchiri concludes, is to demonstrate that no community lives in isolation and whatever ails the country affects all people regardless of tribe. Indeed the murdered woman and the murderer are both prostitutes in Nairobi. Corruption and greed are highlighted by Muchiri in this review. The review is relevant to this study since some issues addressed in this novel, *The Honey Guide*, are similar to the concerns Mukoma explores in his novels. Muchiri's review therefore complements this study. We note the hypocrisy of institutions such as the church which is expected to provide moral guidance in society.

The conduct of the church is comparable to the non-governmental organization Never Again Foundation in the novel *Nairobi Heat*. This organization solicits funds from abroad in the name of helping the refugees but it is a business enterprise controlled by a small clique of people. Corruption, greed and hypocrisy, vote rigging to mention a few are some of the problems of contemporary Kenyan society. However, violence and crime are not confined to Kenya. This is the connection between Crompton's novel *The Honey Guide* and Mukoma's novels. Susan N. Herman in her article, "Rape" recognizes rape, sexual intercourse against a person's will, as an act of violence rather than principally a sexual encounter. Most experts, she says, believe the primary cause of rape is an aggressive desire to achieve sexual fulfillment. I find this relevant to this study when I focus on detective Ishmael intervention to rescue the school girl from rape down in Mathare slum as revealed in the novel *Nairobi heat*.

Jennifer Beatrice Musangi, in her research project “A Walk Through The Criminal’s City: John Kiriamiti’s *My Life in Crime* and *My Life in Prison*,” examines Kiriamiti’s use of criminal figure to represent the urban space and its discourses. Musangi posits that what emerges clearly in the Kenyan urban novel is the fact that ‘low-income habitats, the slum areas, seem to attract criminals and criminal activities. Violence and crime in Nairobi are as a result of disillusionment due to unfulfilled expectations. This is also evident in John Kiggia Kimani’s novel, *Life and Times of a Bank Robber*. This autobiography tells how Kimani gets involved in a historic bank robbery. He innocently leaves his rural home in Murang’a district hoping to better his life in the city. However, he is attracted to the world of crime. It is a human story of violence and counter-violence of crime and punishment, and crime and penitence. Crime and violence in Kiriamiti’s and Kiggia’s works reflect what happen in Mukoma’s novel. The aspect of violence and crime in Kenyan urban novel links up well with Mukoma’s novels. The focus of this study is narrating transnational violence and crime in *Nairobi Heat*, and *Black Star Nairobi*. Hence these novels complement Mukoma’s concerns in relation to violence and crime.

Tom Odhiambo’s review “Dispatches from Fragile Congo, the death arena” is illuminating on transnational violence and crime. Odhiambo has reviewed Gerard Prunier’s two works *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, and *From Genocide to Continental War: The Congolese conflict and the Contemporary Africa*. Odhiambo’s review on the first work focuses on the Rwanda crisis. As explained in this text, the country’s pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories have shaped the tribal matrix that created animosity between the Hutu and Tutsi. Odhiambo says that Prunier in *The Rwanda Crisis* shows there is a long history to the violence that has haunted the country. Odhiambo’s review on *The Rwanda Crisis* focuses on the violence

in Rwanda. This violence is as a result of political struggle for dominance between the Hutus and the Tutsis. It is the politicians who fire up the tribal emotions among their respective communities.

Mukoma in his novel *Black Star Nairobi* advocates for new crop of politicians. He creates a scene in this novel where O has a chance to detonate a bomb planted by the terrorists at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre. It is only then that a country can have a new crop of leaders who are not steeped to the historical differences among the communities. In *Black Star Nairobi* the tribal animosity among the Kikuyus and the Luos is evident. This tribal animosity in 2007 presidential election reared its ugly head because of the presidential candidates Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, a Kikuyu and a Luo respectfully. The perceived rigging of the vote was the trigger of the violence that engulfed the country. Odhiambo's review centers on how bad politics can lead to transnational violence. The crisis in Rwanda and the Congolese conflict have impacted negatively on Eastern, Southern and Central Africa. It is on this basis that I find Odhiambo's review relevant to my study. However, this study differs from the review in that how effectively this international violence and crime is mediated is central in my work.

Odhiambo in his review of *From Genocide to Continental War* captures the intricate relationship between Mobutu Sese Seko and the ex-FAR and genocidaires on one hand and Banyamulenge militia, then supporting Kabila senior, on the other hand. The volatile situation in DRC Congo is a perfect recipe for violence and crime. Indeed he concludes by saying that the tragedy of the Congo has also spawned tens of NGOs, Congo/ Great Lakes specialists, research groups among others. These groups are hardly interested in discussing the deaths. One can compare the NGOs

cited here with 'The Never Again Foundation' in *Nairobi Heat*. The Never Again Foundation is used as a conduit through which money is channeled from foreign governments and agencies. Millions of shillings go into the private accounts of the board members and their subordinate staff but the refugees for who this money is meant for never benefit. Crime is committed in Never Again Foundation. Samuel Alexander who is connected to this foundation is murdered in mysterious circumstances. This study examines such crimes and violence as explored in Mukoma's novels.

This literature review would fall short without the mention of Kenyan urban novel. Novels in this category which deal with violence and crime are many particularly which were written during Kenya's literary boom in 1970s. The popular novels and the city which were written thereafter covers to the present time. Meja Mwangi, John Kiriamiti and John Kiggia Kimani for instance highlight Nairobi's underbelly and the authors' concerns with the crippling poverty and disillusionment which lead the major characters into crime and violence. Roger Kurtz in *Urban Obsessions Urban Fears: The Postcolonial Kenyan Novel* observes that:

In examining the development of the Kenyan novel, it becomes clear that a defining characteristic of this genre is its fascination with urbanization. The city, especially Nairobi, is present in almost all Kenyan novels, and is a dominant feature in most of them. The overarching theme of this study, which provides the descriptive half of its title, is that the city is where Kenyan novelists regularly project both the obsessions and the fears of their society. (5-6)

Kurtz's examination of Kenyan urban novel reveals that Nairobi is no longer the paradise it used to be. There is a lot of rot and violence and crime is not uncommon. Kurtz observes that "Meja Mwangi's well-known trilogy, *Kill Me Quick*, *Going Down River Road*, and *The Cockroach Dance*, has become the paradigm for the exposure of Nairobi's urban underbelly." (5) I find this portrayal of Nairobi by Mwangi similar to Mukoma's depiction of Nairobi in his novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. It is evident that Mwangi and Mukoma, like many other Kenyan writers, find the city an appropriate setting for their novels since this enables them to communicate their concerns in a more effective way due to the fact that it is possible to juxtapose the very rich environs and the poverty ridden slum areas. Kurtz observes that Mwangi excels in this vivid portrayal of Nairobi's marginal spaces. It is a city replete with contradictions. It is in the poor places that are frequented by poor and Nairobi's middle working classes. These places are prone to violence and crime. Mukoma's portrayal of Nairobi is not different from other Kenyan writers and this makes Kurtz's study relevant to this study which focuses on narration of transnational violence and crime in Mukoma's novels.

Dino Felluga in his review "General Introduction to Narratology: Introductory Guide to Critical Theory" focuses on three theorists of narratology. These are: Peter Brooks, Roland Barthes and Algirdas Greimas. Felluga observes that Brooks says that plotting and narrative ties the readers to their sense of human life world. This means that the events in a work of art should relate to what happens in real life situations. Brooks, in Felluga's view, points out that in a narrative text there should be a sense of closure and that the heroes of a narrative create and sustain narrative movement through the forward march of desire to reach the quiescence of closure. That all actions tend to be geared towards an anticipated closure when all loose ends will be tied. Brook's

view is also shared by Barthes. Felluga observes and point out that Barthes argues that every narrative is interwoven with multiple codes. I find the hermeneutic and proairetic codes helpful in my analysis of *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi* in relation to the focus of this study.

The hermeneutic code refers to those plot elements that raise questions on the part of the reader of a text. Most stories hold back details in order to increase the effect of the final revelation in a story. Barthes posits that the genre of the detective story operates primarily by the hermeneutic code. A murder is committed and the rest of the narrative is devoted to determining the questions that are raised by the initial scene of violence. The detective spends the story reading the clues that, only at the end, reconstruct the story of the murder. The proairetic code, on the other hand, refers to the major structuring principle that builds interest or suspense on the part of a reader. The proairetic code applies to any action that implies a further narrative action. I find Felluga's review on narratology and theory relevant to this study since he has focused on the meaning of key concepts which are used in narratology theory which will be helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the narrative strategies employed by Mukoma in narrating transnational violence and crime in his novels. Indeed proponents of narratology theory advocate the application of these concepts among others as tools necessary in the analysis of a narrative text.

In conclusion this section on literature review has focused on critical works which have been done on Mukoma's novels, *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. Narrating transnational violence and crime have not been given a systematic study by literary scholars. Besides, the narrative strategies employed by the author and how effective they are have not been given a systematic and in depth analysis. In addition to the critical work on Mukoma's novels, I have

included writings on violence based on Rwanda genocide of 1994. The post- election violence of 2007 in Kenya is part of this literature review. Indeed *Black Star Nairobi* was written against the backdrop of post-election violence 2007-2008.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The focus of this study is narrating transnational violence and crime in Mukoma's novels. The study also involves identifying and evaluating the effectiveness of the narrative strategies in the delivery of thematic concerns addressed in each novel. To achieve the set objectives of this study I rely on theory of narratology. In *Literary Criticism: An Introduction Theory and Practice* Bressler E. Charles defines a literary theory as any principles derived from internal analysis of a literary text or from knowledge external to the text that can be applied in multiple situations. It is the set of concepts and intellectual assumptions on which rests the work of explaining or interpreting a literary text .Peter Barry in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* has defined narratology as “the study of how narratives make meaning, and what basic mechanism and procedures are common to all acts of story-telling” (222). Mieke Bal in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* says that “narratology is the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events, cultural artifacts that tell a story. Such a theory helps to understand, analyze and evaluate narratives” (3).

Bal says that the main point of narratology theory, the basis for its usefulness for analysis, is the three-layer distinction it proposes. She defines a narrative text as a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound or a combination thereof. A story, she defines, is the content of the narrative text and produces a

particular manifestation, inflection and ‘coloring’ of a fabula and that a fabula is presented in a certain manner. A fabula, which is the third layer, is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. The terms narratology or theory of narrative are used interchangeably to refer to the study of narrative as a genre. The objective of narratology is to describe the constant variables and combinations typical of narrative and clarify how these characteristics of narrative text connect theoretical models. Narratology is the study of narrative structure. The theory looks at what narratives have in common and what makes one different from another.

The methods of narrative theory are inspired by modern linguistics in the sense that narrative theory tries to trace how the narrative emerges from the narrative text, the words on the page. Like structuralism and semiotics from which it derived, narratology is based on the idea of a common literary language, or a universal pattern of codes that operate within the text of a work. Gerald Genette in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* has made three distinct meanings of the term narrative. First, it refers to the narrative statement, the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events. Second, narrative refers to the succession of events, real or fictitious and to their several relations. Third, it refers to an event, not the event that is recounted, but the event that consists of someone recounting something: the act of narrating in itself. Narrative discourse according to Genette endeavors to identify the common, near universal principles of text composition. The reader attempts to discern the relations between the element of narrative, story, and narration triad. These relations operate within four analytical categories: mood, the narrative instance, level and time.

Seymour Chatman in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* argues that narrative discourse can be divided into sub components. These are the narrative form and manifestation. The former refers to the structure of the narrative transmission while the latter is its appearance in a specific materializing medium. Chatman says that structuralists theorists argue that each narrative has two parts. These are the story and the discourse. The story is the content or chain of event in addition to characters and items of setting. Discourse is the expression or the means by which the content is communicated. The Russian formalists too made this distinction but used only two terms: the “fable”, the sum total of events to be related in a narrative, and the plot, the story as actually told by linking the events together. According to formalists fable is the set of events tied together which are communicated to the reader in the course of the work or what has in effect happened. The plot, on the other hand, is how the reader becomes aware of what happened, that is basically, the order of the appearance of the events in the work itself.

Genette’s contribution to the theory of narrative cannot be gainsaid. He posits that narration and discourse can be classed together as narrative discourse by putting together the narrative act and its product. The story is then that which the narrative discourse report, represents or signifies. The notion of time is central in Genette’s text *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. He observes that the relationships between the time of story or plot and the time of narrative may be classified in terms of order, pace or duration and frequency. The narrative discourse depends absolutely on that action of telling, since narrative discourse is produced by the action of telling in the same way that any statement is the product of an act of enunciating. Genette advances the view that story and narrating exist only by means of intermediary of the narrative. That the

narrative can only be such to the extent that it tells a story without which it would not be narrative, and to the extent that it is uttered by someone, the narrator, without which it would not in itself be a discourse. Hence an analysis of narrative discourse is a study of the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and between story and narrating.

Reflecting on the narrator, Bal, in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* says:

The narrator is the most central concept in the analysis of narrative texts. The identity of the narrator, the degree to which and the manner in which that identity is indicated in the text, and the choices that are implied lend the text its specific character.(18)

Using the theory of narratology a literary researcher is called upon to examine who is telling the story in the narrative. I find Bal's argument that how the story is narrated largely depend on the narrator very useful in my analysis of the two novels. The relationship between the narrator and the story is significant in the process of making meaning of the author's message in a text. It is the narrator's point of view that the reader experiences the events as they unfold in the narrative. Monika Fludernik in *An Introduction to Narratology* says that the narrator is a basic aspect of the structure of narrative. She says that the term person is used in narratology to indicate the relationship of narrators to the figures they tell about. Genette, on the other hand uses the term voice instead of traditional opposition between "first person" and "third person". Voice deals with narrating and it refers to a relation with the subject of enunciating.

Richard Abcarian and Marvin Klotz in *Literature: The Human Experience*, posit that, "the formalist critic views a work as a timeless aesthetic object, we may find whatever we wish in the

work as long as what we find is demonstrably in the work itself". In addition, they say that, "the job of criticism is to show how the various parts of the work are wedded together into an organic whole, that is to say, for it is the form that is its meaning" (808-809). In agreement with Abcarian and Klotz this study will analyze the various narrative strategies Mukoma employs in rendering the issues and events in his two novels, *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. Robert V.E. and Jacob E.H in their text, *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing* say:

Writers have a number of modes of presentation or "tool" which they use to write their stories. The principal tool (and the heart of fiction) is narration, the reporting of actions in chronological sequence. The object of narration is, as much as possible, to render the story, to make it clear and bring it alive to the reader's imagination. (462)

1.8 Scope and Limitation

The focus of this study is narration of transnational violence and crime in Mukoma's novels. There are thematic concerns which the author addresses. He has used various narrative strategies to communicate his message. This study is limited to Mukoma's detective novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. The study does not include Mukoma's other literary works, but where they are referred to it is for the purpose of complementing my reading of the primary texts.

1.9 Methodology

My study begins with a close reading of the primary texts *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. This provides a case for argumentation and formed a basis for the research project. I also read Mukoma's other literary works. The literary reviews on his two novels was of interest in this study in an effort to establish what scholars have said about each of these novels under study and the perspective in each review. I read other literary texts which deal with violence and crime, as a way of complementing my findings on Mukoma's novels. These were necessary since they complemented my findings on Mukoma's novels. The theory of narratology guided my analysis of the thematic concerns and the narrative strategies employed by the author. The study relied on the textual and inter-textual evidence. My conclusions are therefore largely derived from textual analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

NARRATION OF VIOLENCE AND CRIME IN *NAIROBI HEAT*

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the novel *Nairobi Heat*. I have started with the synopsis of the text laying emphasis on the main events which start with the murder of a young white girl whose body is found at the porch of an African Professor, Joshua Hakizimana. This leads to the commencement of investigations which take Ishmael to Nairobi in an effort to find the truth about this murder. Ishmael then travels back to America with incriminating evidence against Joshua. The novel ends with the murder of Joshua who has admitted to murdering Macy Jane. I have analyzed the major themes which Mukoma explores in this novel. I have given attention to violence and crime which transcend national boundaries. The Rwanda genocide is the backdrop in which *Nairobi Heat* is written and this is illuminated in the theme of transnational violence and crime. I have looked at the various types of violence and those who are involved in each case. Betrayal, greed, deception, corruption and the racial tensions and how they connect to the main theme is a point of interest in the analysis of the themes. This chapter concludes with the identification and analysis of the narrative techniques Mukoma employs in communicating the themes in this novel.

2.2 Synopsis of the Novel

Nairobi Heat tells the story of an African American detective Ishmael Fofona who leaves America for Nairobi to resolve a case involving the murder of a young American girl whose body is found at the porch of an African Professor's house in Madison Wisconsin, an American

suburb. When Ishmael arrives in Nairobi, he is met by David Odhiambo, simply referred to as O, a Kenya detective working at the Criminal Investigation Department. Like in many detective stories this murder case is complex because the detectives have no way of identifying the murdered girl. Ishmael had received an anonymous call from Nairobi asking him to travel to Nairobi if he wanted to find the truth. As the detective traverses the city and its environs, he discovers that the African professor, Joshua Hakizimana played a role in the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

The detectives encounter obstacles as they try to follow leads to the murder and their security at times is not guaranteed. This makes them become violent as they respond to the various attempts to gun them down. Ishmael had become a thorn in the flesh of unscrupulous people behind Never Again Foundation, an organization bringing together a consortium of donors in the name of raising funds for humanitarian aid for the Rwandan refugees. In actual fact, the foundation is used as a conduit to enrich those involved in the syndicate. Some of the refugees such as the women running Kokomat Supermarket are paid to keep quiet about the role professor Hakizimana played in the murder of hundreds of thousands of Rwandese during the genocide.

Detective Ishmael, O and Muddy, a girl of Rwandan origin, are attacked on their way to the airport when Ishmael is being escorted out of the country back to America after he had had considerable clues to indict Joshua with the murder case. This attack which leads to the shooting of the assailants makes O and Muddy change course and they propose that Ishmael should take a flight from Uganda. It is when they make a stopover at Butere, a village in western Kenya, when Ishmael discovers the identity of the murdered American girl. She is Macy Jane Admanzah.

Ishmael gets other details concerning the Admanzah family who were missionaries at the time of the genocide in Rwanda.

When Ishmael finally makes it back to America he pieces the evidence together amidst an attack on him which leads him to shooting those behind the attack. Chocbanc, the leader of this attack, makes important revelation about the dealings of the Never Again Foundation before Ishmael shoots him dead. Ishmael approaches James Wellstone who works with the Ku Klux Klan militia who shoots Joshua fatally as he prepares to leave for Paris. Detective Ishmael also shoots dead the KKK goon who had accompanied Wellstone before confronting the latter and shoots him dead as he walks out of Joshua's apartment. Joshua is a dying man when Ishmael finds him in the house and justice for Macy Jane Admanzah has been done at last.

2.3 Themes

Introduction

Nairobi Heat is a detective novel in which Mukoma captures the attention of the reader as the protagonist exposes the intrigues behind the murder of a young American girl. International violence and crime is central in this novel but Mukoma also explores other equally serious thematic concerns which are linked to the central theme in this novel. Racism, betrayal, greed and deception are issues Mukoma explores and challenges the international community to deal with these vices which bedevil contemporary world and this affects the well being of people of all races and nationalities. The thematic concerns Mukoma explores in this novel may seem ordinary but he narrates them in a more refreshing manner through a deliberate choice of effective narrative techniques which enable him to communicate with his audience.

Transnational Violence and Crime

Mukoma has addressed a number of thematic concerns in the novel *Nairobi Heat*. Key among them is transnational violence and crime which cut across America and African continents. Besides transnational violence and crime, Mukoma also focuses on this theme at the local level. His purpose for doing this is to demonstrate that violence and crime at the national level can move to the international level and therefore he is making an appeal for the law enforcement agencies to ensure that crime and violence are dealt with to safeguard the security of the people. At the international scene a combined effort between and among governments is necessary if this vice which involves loss of human lives is to be combated. This is the reason why we find Ishmael Fofona, an American detective, working closely with his Kenyan counterpart David Odhiambo in an attempt to unravel the murder of Macy Jane Admanzah, a young American girl whose body is found at the door steps of the house of Joshua Hakizimana, a Rwandese professor living in Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

Transnational violence and crime is the major theme addressed by Mukoma. The murder of a young American girl whose name we come to know later is Macy Jane Admanzah triggers off investigations which takes detective Ishmael from Madison, U.S.A to Nairobi, Kenya and back to U.S.A. Unraveling this murder becomes a complex task since the identity of the girl is unknown until later in the novel. In addition, there are forces working to stop Ishmael in his mission of establishing the truth about who the killer or killers of Macy are and the motive behind this murder. Hence in the course of unraveling this murder, many more killings take place both in Kenya as well as in America. Ishmael becomes a targeted man since he is bound to expose details concerning those behind the murder case and the dealings of Never Again

Foundation and the refugee centre. Abu Jamal, a junior partner of Alexander in the foundation, tells Ishmael, “I made the call as per Mr. Alexander’s instructions. It seems that you were becoming a thorn in our side as you Americans say, and you were invited here so that we could kill you” (112).

When Ishmael and O are at the Timbuktu bar Ishmael is attacked by a young man who intended to knife him. At the same time the woman who is together with the young man shoots at O but it turns out that O manages to gun her down. This is the first attempt to eliminate Ishmael and O in their quest for justice for the murdered Macy Jane. We learn from the young man that Lord Thompson had sent these assailants to kill the detectives. Indeed, this is not the first time Lord Thompson had used this young man and the woman. The young man says, “We do work for him all the time. He call, we go to his place. He pay, we work” (67). Mukoma is making a point here that these assailants are driven by poverty to engage in violent crime in order to earn a living. They are not concerned about the reasons why they are commissioned to kill by Lord Thompson. All they want is money and they are paid even before they execute the killings. Upon being asked by Ishmael who had sent them he replies, “you, you *Mzungu* tourist, we want money” (66).

Rivalry among the members of the Never Again Foundation leads to criminal acts which end in violence. Abu Jamal is a junior partner to Samuel Alexander and with Alexander dead, Jamal thinks that he stands a chance of becoming a prominent member of the foundation. However, Joshua would be a stumbling block to his quest for control of the foundation. We learn that Jamal is behind Ishmael’s attack and subsequent kidnap when he stops at a store close to O’s to take a

bottle of Fanta to quench his thirst after taking Muddy back at her place. Although Jamal was in the scheme of eliminating Ishmael, he says that now that Alexander is dead things have changed. He plans to use Ishmael to help him get Joshua out of his way. In this respect Jamal reveals to Ishmael how the Refugee Centre and the Never Again Foundation were founded to supposedly cater for the welfare of the Rwanda refugees. However, the money received is spent to benefit those running the foundation and they also give bit of it to few individuals such as the women running the Kokomat Supermarket so that they do not speak out which would expose their hypocrisy and deceit.

Another attempt to kill Ishmael is when he is being escorted to the airport by O and Muddy. It is Jamal who calls Ishmael to warn him that he was being followed by people who had bad intentions. The occupants of the red Peugeot and a Range Rover which are trailing Ishmael on his way to the airport are almost all white. It is only the Peugeot that had a black man. Mukoma's message in this case is to point out the fact that transnational violence and crime requires the collaboration of all countries and people of all races. The criminals work hand in hand to beat the efforts of combating crime at the international level. At the same time, preventing and fighting transnational crime requires concerted efforts from the international community and this is the reason Ishmael is working closely with O, his Kenyan counterpart.

The violent shoot out that ensues leaves the three white men and the guitarist dead. The black man was the contact person of the white men. The dead Americans were connected to the Never Again Foundation. The guitarist reveals that they had been sent by Joshua to have Ishmael killed. The guitarist had produced a MoneyGram receipt for one hundred thousand Kenyan Shillings

which had been sent from Chicago by Joshua Hakizimana. We note that there is a lot of communication among those who are involved in the affairs of the Never Again Foundation and they would like its shady dealings to remain secret among its operatives. This is the third time detective Ishmael has escaped being shot dead in his mission in Kenya within a span of one week. The incident at Timbuktu bar and the airport episode are tied to transnational violence and crime while the incident at Mathare reveals violence at the local level where Mukoma portrays Nairobi as a very insecure place.

Mukoma also reveals that it is not only Nairobi which is prone to violence and crime especially where an organization such as Never Again Foundation receives aid in form of money from local and international donors. Madison is equally not a very secure place as we find Ishmael being attacked in his house as he prepares to go and see Joshua. Three white men dressed in expensive looking business suits are involved in this assault. It turns out that they are later joined by Andrew Chocbanc, an elderly black man who is among the donors of the Foundation and a beneficiary of the funds meant for the refugees. Consequently, he works very well with Alexander. After Ishmael is interrogated by Chocbanc and it is apparent that he would be killed, he manages to overcome the two men who are leading him out of his apartment. He kills the two men and shoots the third person in the parking lot. Ishmael finally shoots Chocbanc dead. Chocbanc had confessed to Ishmael that Macy Jane had been killed by the foundation. Ishmael reports back to Jordan, Chief of police, and finds him predictably furious. Ishmael says, “The violence had come to America, to a small town called Madison in Wisconsin, and he had four bodies to deal with, three of them White” (178- 179). The point Mukoma is making in this incident is that it is important to see the link between the attempts made on Ishmael’s life both in Nairobi, Kenya and

Madison, U.S.A. This confirms the fact that violence and crime are global phenomena. Indeed when Ishmael is asked by Police Chief Jackson Jordan how Africa was for him he says, “Well, Chief, Africa is just Africa... Just like the U.S. is the U.S. I could have died there, but then again I could have died here” (209).

The violence against detective Ishmael is carried out by people connected to the Never Again Foundation. Mukoma in *Nairobi Heat* is communicating the message that it is not easy fighting transnational crimes. The criminals are bound to fight back to ensure that their criminal acts remain unexposed. Jamal tells Ishmael that he had called Ishmael so that they could kill him in Nairobi. This view is reinforced by Chocbanc who tells Ishmael, “you, my friend, are threatening a well-balanced money making machine. You can say I am the Never Again Foundation, but I am legion ... Behind me are many” (167).

Mukoma explores the theme of political violence emanating from the struggle for political power. He focuses on the connection between Joshua Hakizimana and the part he played during the 1994 Rwanda genocide. Joshua is a Rwandese who lived through the genocide. He is considered a hero for saving many lives. The Rwanda genocide forms the connection between the death of Mary Jane and Joshua, the prime suspect. When Ishmael is interrogating him he responds, “Detective, where I come from death is a companion, like lover or good friend” (12). Ishmael comes to the conclusion that Joshua had lived with death and this is the reason why he appears so calm in the face of a dead white girl on his doorstep. The death of Mary Jane was just one more dead amongst a million.

The Rwanda genocide had its devastating effects for the survivors who were lucky to escape to the neighbouring countries. Many of them had lost their loved ones. A case in point is Janet and Madeline who prefers the name Muddy. Janet is a young girl who lost her parents, just like Muddy, during the genocide. The violence during the genocide had ethnic bearing since it pitted the Hutu against the Tutsi communities. Violence of this nature causes psychological trauma. This is evident as Janet becomes violent towards one of her classmates at school. Life for her is difficult unlike that of her schoolmates. Muddy, on the other hand, is bitter about what happened in her mother country. She reveals to Janet that she woke up one day alone, yet the day before she had had parents, brothers and a sister. Muddy says:

Sister, this is a cruel country on a cruel continent, there are no second chances. You decide here and now whether you want to live or you want to die. If you want to die a slow death, then come with us and I will find you a job working as a barmaid. (109)

The message Mukoma is communicating is that ethnic violence is traumatizing and it destabilizes those who survive the conflict. The refugees have a difficult life in the countries they seek safety in. Muddy has had it rough working as a barmaid and entertaining people in low class bars. However, she has chosen to fight for her life and not surrender and accept failure. Women and children are the greatest sufferers in the event of violence in a country. The women running the Kokomat Supermarket are a case in point. The revelation by Mary Karuhimbi, the managing director of Kokomat Supermarket, which is owned by a Rwandan women's cooperative, reinforces Ishmael's conviction that Joshua is guilty of Macy Jane's death. It is clear that Joshua used his school to trap thousands of people who landed in the hands of the marauding young men who were used by Joshua to kill those who were seeking safety from the violence which was

sweeping across the country. Mukoma captures the bitterness and the disdain in which Joshua is held by these women who escaped death by sheer luck. For instance, Karuhimbi tells Ishmael and O, “That is Joshua, your hero ...” (127). Karuhimbi is angry that Joshua is considered a hero after committing crime against helpless civilians who were desperate and required safety more than anything else. At the end of her moving account she tells Ishmael that they want to hire his services so that he could pursue Joshua to the end. She places three hundred thousand dollars on the table and says, “You have our blessing. Let the beast walk this earth no more” (132).

After the genocide Joshua moves to America and having been recruited by Alexander, he becomes the poster boy for the foundation that raises money supposedly to cater for the Rwanda refugees. More details connecting Joshua to the murder of the white girl are revealed in the novel when Ishmael discovers Macy Jane’s photograph and that of Admanzah’s family in a small church in Butere, a small village in western Kenya. The Admanzah family had been running an underground railroad out of Rwanda during the genocide. Mukoma connects the murder of the Admanzah family with Joshua who did not like the competition created by Admanzah’s family. Ishmael says:

Joshua was of course using the school as a cover to lure more innocents out of hiding and he wasn’t keen on competition, so he had ordered fifteen or so of his killers to descend on the Admanzah family — killing them all, or so he had thought. (173)

The evidence that Joshua ordered the killing of the Admanzah family is corroborated by the newspaper cutting Ishmael finds in the church. The violence witnessed in Rwanda did not affect

only the Hutus and the Tutsis who were the main actors in the political divide. Ishmael reveals that:

From the cutting, I gathered that the Admanzahs were a missionary family who had been running an underground railroad out of Rwanda during the genocide. The genocidaires had found out and massacred the whole family. Macy Jane survived by pure luck — she was away in boarding school at the time. Her brothers, much younger than her, were not so lucky. (157)

This quotation is important since it reveals the reason why Joshua orders the killing of the Admanzah family. Joshua was not amused by the competition created by this family and this makes him order their killing. Macy Jane survived because she was in a boarding school. she is now seeking for justice for the death of her parents and her brothers. Mukoma in *Nairobi Heat* connects the violence in Rwanda to the violent murder of Macy Jane which occurs in America. Macy had decided to seek justice for her family and this would lead to exposing Joshua for what he had done. The fact that a crime is committed in Rwanda and in search of justice a family member is murdered in Madison, U.S.A, clearly points to the nature of transnational violence and crime which Mukoma addresses in his novel. Bill Quella, the pathologist at Madison, holds the view that, “A person cannot be guilty of genocide and innocent of murder. It just doesn’t add up. His instinct is to kill, just like a scorpion stings” (182). Quella is not convinced how Joshua can be innocent of Macy Jane’s murder. Ishmael has to investigate further the possible role Joshua may have played in this murder.

Violence and crime in the novel *Nairobi Heat* are not restricted to the main story of the death of Macy Jane. Crime can occur anywhere in the world be it in Africa, America or other continents. A case in point is an immigrant who shot five white hunters one after the other. When he is questioned he says that they had fired at him first and therefore he killed them in self-defense. This had happened in America and it had provoked anger among the Ku Klux Klan militia group when Joshua, another immigrant, who is considered a hero for saving hundreds of Rwandese in the middle of the genocide, is suspected of murdering the white girl. Indeed James Wellstone, the leader of this militia, had begun mobilizing its members with the intention of lynching Joshua, according to their more radical members. This criminal act which was intended by the militia has racial undertones. However, the point Mukoma is communicating is that crime can happen in any part of the world regardless of the motive behind it.

Mukoma portrays Nairobi as a very insecure city in this novel. This is brought into the limelight when O tells Ishmael that Nairobi is referred to as 'Nairobbery' but he assures him that so long as they in the Land Rover and the fact that they are armed the criminals dare not mess up with them. But in the same breath we find the same state of insecurity in parts of Madison. An example is Allied Drive which is comparable to Mathare in Nairobi. The level of poverty in these two places is comparable and we find that these are places which are prone to crime and violence. Mukoma is saying that poverty which deprives people a decent livelihood is a contributing factor to crime. When Ishmael is travelling to contact James Wellstone, the leader of the KKK militia, he says:

To get to the farm, I had to drive through desolate looking neighbourhoods, where poor whites stared at me with a mixture of hate and envy. Poverty, here like elsewhere, whether in Allied Drive or in Mathare, was the original sin. (202)

This reveals that poverty-ridden places whether in America or in other parts of the world is a contributing factor to violence and crime. Poverty is portrayed as an underlying issue which can lead to frustration. This frustration is manifested in violence and crime. A case in point is the poor man in Kenya who had been working for thirty years without a break. When he somehow finds one thousand shillings, he takes his family out to have a good time but thereafter he kills his wife and two children. He does not want them to live the kind of life he provides for them. It is therefore evident that out of frustration he commits a crime which can be classified as domestic violence.

The Africans working for Lord Thompson are a frustrated lot. They turn violent when they learn of their employer's death. They are exploited and as a result they blow up the wall safe and dollar bills and pound notes float in the air. They react in this manner since they have no hope of things changing for the better even after the death of Lord Thompson. Ishmael says, "Sure, the old white man was dead, but it would be long before some rich African bastard ended up with the farm, and then they would be right back where they started. It was the way of the world everywhere" (77). The reaction by these workers could have been an expression of anger due to the murders committed by Thompson, thus their revenge, or their feeling of being dispossessed. Thompson owned so much land while they owned nothing and as much as he imitated living what he thought was the essence of Africa life, to the workers he was just mocking them.

Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks* says, “It is the racist who creates his inferior” (3). In *Nairobi Heat* the African workers are made to feel they are just cogs in a production unit. Their status remains the same regardless of who their boss is. The black guards at the gate to Lord Thompson are least motivated in their work. Ishmael says:

The guards didn't say anything. They simply lifted the gate and we drove in. It didn't surprise me — Lord Thompson wasn't worth their lives and rather than engage us it was simply easier to let us through. Thompson's whiteness had long been a shield only because the black people around him held it up. And in return? Humiliation and murder were his stock-in-trade. (72)

The black people working for the white man are frustrated and they feel betrayed by their government. We note that the workers are landless whereas a former colonial master owns a lot of land. The point Mukoma is making at this point in *Nairobi Heat* is that there is need for radical change so that the government can empower its citizens economically otherwise the violent outburst exhibited by the African workers cannot be wished away.

Crime can be motivated by varied factors. Mukoma has dealt with criminal acts which are also violent in nature although they do not cut across the national boundaries. However, this is not to say that such criminal acts are not found elsewhere in the world. Though the crimes committed can be viewed in the light of the national context, the motives behind their commission go beyond the national boundaries. Business rivalry and greed has been known as a cause of conflict which may lead to crime and violence. In *Nairobi Heat*, we have the case of Amos Kamau who murder his business partner, his wife and two young children. O says that Amos wanted to make

all the money hence the cause of his eliminating his partner and his family. We can connect the motive of the murder to the intrigues we find in *Never Again Foundation* where Samuel Alexander plots to have Macy Jane murdered and then incriminate Joshua for this murder. In so doing he would be left in charge of the Refugee Centre and Never Again Foundation without Joshua who is costing the Foundation quite a bit of money.

Violence against women is a concern addressed by Mukoma in *Nairobi Heat*. Rape is a heinous act performed when one party wishes to exert complete power and control over another. Sexual assault is an example of violence against women which is perpetrated by men. Janet, the young Rwandese girl and a student is raped and Ishmael comes to her rescue in Mathare. It is apparent that the rapist is not alone. Ishmael and O are accosted by four young men wielding AK-47s whose intention is to secure the release of the rapist. Ishmael says, “It was then that I understood what I had done. It was as if my partner and I had gone to Allied Drive without back up, arrested a gang leader, and then tried to walk him out on foot” (42). This is an indication that rape which is a criminal act and violent in nature is not limited to Nairobi but it is an international concern. Muddy narrates her ordeal during the Rwanda genocide when she was captured by the genocidaires. By this time she had joined Rwanda Patriotic Army. She tells Ishmael, “They brutalized and raped me, but they didn’t kill me. Instead they left me out in the forest to die,” (104). It was soon after this when she was a little bit better that she left for Kenya where she could have a peace of mind. Apart from the physical violence emanating from rape, Mukoma also highlights the emotional turmoil experienced by women in Rwanda during this period. Mary Karuhumbi, the managing director of Kokomat Supermarket, recounts her bitter experience.

She says she had met rapists and murderers but what happened to them at the hand of the young militia as they sought refuge in Joshua's school was beyond comprehension. Joshua also tells Ishmael that tribal animosity was also triggered by the fact that people from his community were denied the best jobs; the best land and their women were also taken away and sexually assaulted. It is evident from these examples that Mukoma is concerned with violence and crime which cut across national boundaries.

Lord Thompson, one of the British settlers who remained behind at independence, had killed two Africans on his farm. He has no regard for Africans and he projects a colonial image of master and servant. He informs Ishmael that twice he had been acquitted on the basis that the first murder he did it in self- defense while the second one was purely accidental. Ironically he says, "I have the great fortune of African justice working in my favour, and O does not like it" (62). This explains why O is not amused by the reasons Lord Thompson gives for his killings. It is from O that we learn the true account of these two killings later in the novel. O says:

The first man he killed was a poacher. Thompson hunted him. I mean he tracked him down like an animal and shot him. The Africans out on the farm told me. But in the end he was not even booked...poachers do not get much sympathy from me, but you don't kill a man for killing an animal, I don't care how beautiful it looks. Take him to prison, but do not kill him. The other man he killed was a game warden. He was out of Thompson's property looking for poachers. Again Lord Thompson tracked him down and afterwards claimed that he mistook him for poacher. But that's very unlikely. The man was in a bright green game warden's uniform. But he got away with it again: White skin and wealth equals impunity. (70)

Lord Thompson projects a colonial mindset in which he looks down on the Africans. This is what Mukoma is challenging in this novel, *Nairobi Heat*. The judicial system is weak and all people are not equal before the law. We find Lord Thompson being acquitted on the basis of skin colour and wealth whereas the poor man who had been working for a whole year without a break is hanged for killing his wife and two children. Amos Kamau corrupts his way out after killing his business partner, his wife and two children. Kamau goes ahead to chair fund -raisers for politicians, giving money to poor children and generally living it up. Mukoma is indicting the judicial systems in African countries which are so lax that violence and crime are rampant. The perpetrators of violence and crime and those who protect them should not be spared. It is in the light of this that Ishmael and O shoot dead the two South African mercenaries guarding Lord Thompson in his bedroom.

It is O who finally shoots Lord Thompson dead and says that Thompson ought to have died a long time ago. O is disillusioned by the judicial system in Kenya. The fact that Thompson has been acquitted twice, while a poor man is hanged for killing his wife and two children out of frustration, makes O develop a very negative perception of administration of justice in Kenya. After the poor man is hanged O says, “So, after that I started believing in justice I could see. We live in anarchy; life is cheap and the rich and the criminals can buy a whole lot of it” (72). With this kind of perception, we understand why O is impatient with Thompson and shoots him dead cutting him short in his explanation of how you use honey to catch ants. In O’s eyes the world is compartmentalized into two; his world and the outside world. Ishmael says:

O had drawn a line between what he considered his world and the outside world. The good people —his wife, Janet, the dead white girl—existed in the outside world. When

he was in that world, he was visiting and he behaved accordingly. He did not carry his bad dreams and conscience into it. But sometimes those from his world went to the outside world and did terrible things. And when he came across them, or they crossed back into his world, there were no rules, and there was no law. There was a duality to him that was so complete that he moved between the two worlds seamlessly. (77)

The message Mukoma is communicating through O is that detectives and the criminals operate in the inside world. The detectives track down the criminals whose preoccupation in perpetration of crime and violence. In the inside world there is little observance of the rule of law. In view of the weak judicial system as evident in *Nairobi Heat* the fight against perpetrators of crime and violence require drastic measures and this is the reason why Ishmael and O do not spare those who threaten their lives, and as a result they meet their fate in a violent manner like their victims. In the same breath, criminals stalk on law enforcement agents in the city. It is no wonder O calls Nairobi 'Nairobi robbery' when he meets Ishmael at the airport. Roger Kurtz in *Urban Obsessions Urban Fears: The Postcolonial Kenyan Novel* says, "The chaos that constitute Nairobi is also a source of fear and danger, and many of the urban novels take the city as symbol of the threats to society" (85).

O and Ishmael have got to be careful as they go to the bottom end of River Road. This is one section of the city which is portrayed as being very insecure. O says, "River Road is a dangerous part of town" (87). Twenty years after independence the criminals had become so daring unlike during the colonial era. One Koitalel, a notorious bank robber, had shot dead Henderson, a British colonial officer who had become the Head of the CID after independence.

Betrayal

Betrayal is a theme which Mukoma addresses in *Nairobi Heat*. We find that people come together in pursuit of a common goal but mid-way one party out of selfish motives betrays the other. This betrayal may lead to crimes which are violent in nature. Some of these crimes may be committed outside the national boundaries hence making them transnational in nature. In *Nairobi Heat* Samuel Alexander betrays Joshua in that he wants Joshua out of his way and this is the reason why he wants to incriminate him with the murder of Macy Jane. Alexander had set up the Never Again Foundation and he had found Joshua and recruited him as their poster boy. Ishmael, on being informed by Abu Jamal about the Foundation, says, “This man was some sort of middleman in a corrupt corporation fronted by the Refugee Centre and the Never Again Foundation with Samuel as the acceptable white face and noble Joshua the stirrer of the guilt. Together they had preyed on the world’s conscience ever since the genocide”(114). It is therefore evident that Alexander and Joshua were working in together but later on Alexander wanted to control all the finances donated to the foundation. It is greed which makes Alexander betray Joshua.

The Africans working for Lord Thompson are a disillusioned lot. They are bitter because they do not own land, yet Thompson owns so much land yet he is a foreigner who opted to stay in Kenya after the country attained independence. It is the duty of any independent government to ensure its citizens are settled but in this case we find a former colonial settler occupying so much land while the native Africans work for him and live as squatters. The government has betrayed its people and this is the reason why the workers have no sympathy at all on learning the death of Lord Thompson. Out of anger and frustration they become violent by blowing up his wall safe.

They are certain that their lives would not change as Ishmael says, “Sure, the old white man was dead, but it wouldn’t be long before some rich African bastard ended up with the farm, and then they would be right back where they started. It was the way of the world everywhere” (77).

The Rwanda refugees also feel betrayed at two levels. First they are betrayed by their government for its inability to protect the lives of its citizens during the genocide when the Hutus and the Tutsis hacked members of each community to death. The political violence which left one million or so people dead could have been avoided. Mahmood Mamdani, in *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* says:

Units of the Presidential Guard came from Kigali. The Interahamwe were brought in from neighbouring communes. Youth who had been trained in self-defense units after the civil war began provided the local trained force. (5)

It is the responsibility of any government to offer security to its citizens. Yet this quotation reveals that the government used the presidential guard, the Interahamwe militia and trained youth to attack people viewed as being disloyal to the ruling class. This results to violence which drives thousands of Rwandese into refugee camps in the neighbouring countries. Joshua betrayed the two hundred Rwandans who were seeking refuge in his school from the violence that was sweeping the country. Mary Karuhimbi was the leader of this group of people. The group had first sent Karuhimbi’s son to find a way to the school and also to consult Joshua, the headmaster of the school, and inform him that they needed his assistance. Joshua permitted them and even gave Karuhimbi’s son some money just in case they were not listened to by the militia. However, it is Joshua who later organizes the attack of this group. Ishmael says:

It made perfect sense. The black Schindler, as the media had called him, had saved a few in order to use them as bait and reel in whole villages searching for refuge. It was a brilliant set-up because no one would have expected such evil, especially from a man who a few weeks earlier had been educating their children. (130)

In view of this quotation we understand Karuhimbi's bitterness towards Joshua. She would be happy if Ishmael manages to eliminate Joshua. Joshua had used the school to attract hundreds of people seeking safety and these were massacred in the forest by the militia operating under Joshua. Alexander also betrays the trust of the non-corrupt donors who donate money to the Never Again Foundation in the hope that this money would educate children orphaned by the genocide and those in Refugee Centre. On the contrary, this money benefits the top cadre of the Foundation and those refugees who are paid to keep quiet and safeguard the corrupt dealings of the foundation.

Greed and Deception

Mukoma addresses the issues of greed and deception and examines how these can lead to transnational crimes. Samuel Alexander and his accomplices including Joshua are unscrupulous people who set up a foundation which raises funds for humanitarian purposes but this money is diverted and it is used to enrich those managing the foundation. The logbook given to Ishmael by Jamal is a catalogue of "donations coming in and money going out" (118). The record also shows the organizations and governments which had given money to the foundation. It is important to note that the world was silent as the genocide went on. The former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan in an interview "Kofi Annan talks about growing up in Ghana,

terrorism, Rwanda genocide” with Starr FM says that the Rwandan genocide was a painful experience for him. Thousands of innocent people had been murdered in cold blood at a time when United Nations operations in Somalia had collapse and government were busy looking for their own. In a situation like this the question of protecting the Rwandans was secondary. It is therefore no wonder donations came in millions. Ishmael says, “This was the world trying to clear its conscience and to do that it was prepared to pay close to seventy million dollars a year” (118).

Certain organizations were making donations to the Never Again Foundation in order to evade paying tax. They would receive back a good sum of the money they had donated and this money would go to the pockets of the Chief Executive Officers of the organizations and whatever remained with the foundation would be used by the managers to meet their selfish ends. Ishmael reports that, “It was such a neat cycle, that each year generated so many millions for CEOs and wealthy philanthropists, that it might as well have been legal. The rich had found a way of giving back to themselves”(118). The politicians are also deceptive as in actual fact they are paid to keep quiet. There is also blackmail from representatives of the Foundation and the Refugee Centre who threaten to go public if the Foundation and the Refugee Centre did not send money to them. It is this deception and greed for money which makes Alexander plot to have Macy Jane murdered and incriminate Joshua.

Mukoma in *Nairobi Heat* explores corruption as a vice affecting society. Corruption involves bribery where one party gives money out in exchange of some favours and this leads to ineffectiveness in administration of justice. Corruption is used as a cover up for various crimes

and violence which may have been committed by an individual. There are other reasons why bribery is involved as it is evident in *Nairobi Heat*. Amos Kamau kills his business partner, his wife and two children. Kamau is arrested yet we find that he bribes his way out. Mukoma is questioning why such a criminal should not face the full force of the law when everyone knows that he is a killer. This is the moral rot Mukoma is concerned with in this case. Kamau is treated as an important person who fundraises for politicians and thrives on deception by contributing money to the poor children. The judicial system is compromised and this is the reason why O is cynical about it. After the poor man who murdered his wife and two children is hanged, O believes that the society lives in anarchy. The rich man who had exploited this poor man working for him for thirty years end up getting everything yet he is the cause of the frustration of the poor man. Besides, the rapist shot dead by O “would have been out of jail the following day for five hundred shillings” (72).

The writer presents a scenario where corruption has eaten deep into the moral fabric of the society and it is apparent that even getting information from certain quarters or even getting certain favours you have to bribe those concerned. Mukoma is challenging the society to confront and reject corrupt means to have certain things done. For instance, we find Muddy bribing the security guard at the massive gate of the Kokomat offices. Ishmael says, “She chatted with him for a few seconds before reaching into her back pocket for some money and what was clearly a joint” (125). Muddy, Ishmael and O want entry so that they can talk to the Rwandan women running the Kokomat Supermarket. In the same breath Mary Karuhimbi, on behalf of the top ranking executives of Kokomat supermarket, places three hundred thousand dollars on a coffee table for Ishmael. This would facilitate Ishmael to track down Joshua and eliminate him.

This is evident as Karuhimbi says, “you have our blessing. Let the beast walk this earth no more” (132). The fact that Muddy gives out some money does not mean that she is corrupt, but she is doing it on purpose so that they can access the Rwandan women who own Kokomat Supermarket. She asks Ishmael if her mother is also corrupt when Ishmael says that Karuhimbi reminds him of his own mother.

The message Mukoma is communicating is that to fight crime we need people like Muddy and Ishmael. Ishmael does not take the money placed before him. He reasons that Joshua should account for the death of Macy Jane and Ishmael will pursue him for the sake of justice and not for money however much he could do with the money. Ishmael says:

I thought about everything I could do with money. I could buy a house and still have a lot of change left over. Muddy and I could leave Kenya and set up shop on some Island I had never learnt of. But this would be no ordinary bribe, if there is ever such a thing — a million people had died and I wasn’t going to become part of yet another secret related to genocide. This cycle has to end. I swear to you that I’ll get him for the murder of the white girl, but I won’t kill for money. (132)

Corruption

Corruption is also evident in the operations of Never Again Foundation. It is the government officials who should be in the forefront in ensuring that the shady deals by non-governmental organizations do not take place. Yet we find a Minister for Internal Security and a Member of Parliament of Kenya involved in receiving money from the Foundation. Corruption makes people commit crimes since they know they will get away with it. However, Mukoma advocates

that such people should be made to account for their actions. Hence the board members of the Never Again Foundation resign in the end and they are under investigation for fraud and racketeering. The politicians in the United States, Rwanda and Kenya whose names are in the logbook are forced to resign when the dealings of the foundation are exposed. The fact that we have politicians in America, Rwanda and Kenya involved in the transactions carried through Never Again Foundation points to the fact that the crimes committed are not localized but transnational.

Racism

Mukoma explores the theme of racism in post colonial setting in *Nairobi Heat*. From the very onset he prepares us for this by starting the novel with a sentence which has racial undertones. The narrator says, “A beautiful young blonde was dead, and the suspect, my suspect, was an African male” (1). A crime has been committed against a white girl and the suspect is an African professor. Ishmael says:

If I was to give advice to black criminals, I would tell them this: do not commit crimes against white people because the staff will not rest until you are caught. I mean, if a crime is not solved within the first forty-eight hours, it has all but officially gone cold. But a black-on-white crime does not go cold. (7)

This observation by Ishmael is evident that racism in America is rife and investigation has to be carried out to establish who the murderer is. It is a week after the murder and Ishmael is traversing Nairobi and its environs trying to gather evidence to unravel this murder. It is also evident that the black people in America are discriminated against based on skin colour. Jackson

Jordan, the Police Chief in Madison, is confronted by people who throng the police station, and the media is part of the crowd. He is trying to calm everyone down and the fact that he is the police chief of a mostly white police force in a mostly white town makes it all the more difficult for him. Ishmael tells us that “there would be the facts of the case and the politics of the case, and the two never mix well” (16). This means that this case has racial undertones since Jordan is under pressure to ensure that this murder case is resolved to the satisfaction of the white people.

Jordan had been elected as the Chief of Police because he is tough on crime committed by black people. This means that if he were to be fair on all crimes, committed either by black or white people, he would not be holding that high office. Indeed, Ishmael has also to be paired with a white detective. He tells Jordan that he is working on this murder case alone. Being a black American, the whites are suspicious of him. His partner had retired and he insists that, “if I was going to get a partner, I wanted one for the right reasons, not to balance the racial Maths” (17). It is apparent that if Ishmael and Jordan are successful in this high profile case, it would open more doors for the black people in the force.

The press is biased against the black people and it views them as criminals and especially now that there is a murder case which points to the African professor as the main suspect. As Ishmael leaves the Chief’s office he observes that:

The press looked up as I walked down the steps and convulsed towards me, realized I was not the chief and went back to their chatter. For them, there were only two kinds of black people in the police station — those in handcuffs and the chief. (21)

The press associates the African Americans with violence and crime. Ishmael has to work closely with Monique Shantell, or Mo as she preferred to be called. Mo works for the “*Madison Times*,” a small ragtag tabloid that everybody read. After Mo’s story on the murder, the other media outlets have picked it up and the whites are feeling they are under siege while the black Americans feel that white justice is going too far in incriminating Joshua. Racism also advances violence and crime, especially in the murder case of the white girl. For instance, James Wellstone had started mobilizing members of the KKK militia who want to lynch Joshua. Wellstone is a racist as it is evident from his utterances when he confronts Ishmael in his office in an earlier incidence when he had come complaining after a white child had been beaten up in Allied Drive. Ishmael tells us, “I had knocked some respect into James a couple of years earlier when he had entered my office yelling nigger this, nigger that after a white kid, a prep boy who loved weed, had been beaten up in Allied Drive”(23).

The Mayor and the Governor of Madison are white men and they are putting pressure on the Police Chief in connection with the murder case at hand. Their political utterances have different interpretation depending on which side of the racial divide one is on. For instance, if the Mayor says that he “trusts the chief police will do all in his power to ensure that the right thing is done” (23), the whites interpret this to mean that the chief will incriminate the professor and he would not hesitate to hang him if it means doing so. To the blacks it means, “Don’t forget who own the police” (23). This is part of the politics of the case which Ishmael has alluded to in an earlier pronouncement. The transnational violence and crime has racial undertones in this regard. The black leaders, the type of Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton have started rallying around Joshua and referring to him as the black Schindler. To them Joshua was their man because he was an African

but Ishmael warns Joshua that he might be some sort of a hero but in America the whites would not hesitate to kill him for being suspected of killing Macy Jane. A black undercover agent has been shot dead by the white police officers in New York just as they had shot another black forty-one times in the same place. In this instance, the point Mukoma is communicating is the link between racism and transnational violence and crime which is connected to the murder of Macy Jane. O is a bitter man because Lord Thompson has killed two Africans and he has been acquitted. Thompson boasts that he has the great fortune of African justice working in his favour. However, it is because he is a white man that he has been acquitted twice. Mukoma is challenging the judicial systems in independent African countries to reject the colonial mindset where the whites are considered superior to native Africans.

Thompson has no regard for African even those working for him. Besides killing a poacher, the second man he kills is a game warden who is looking for poachers on Thompson's property. The claim that he mistakes him for a poacher is highly unlikely because the warden was in bright green game warden's uniform. He gets away with it because he is a white man and wealthy. Thompson is also involved in perpetrating transnational violence and crime when he agrees to set up a trap to eliminate Ishmael and O at Timbuktu bar. He is acting at the behest of Alexander. Thompson is wealthy and protected and no one is forcing him to help Alexander but he is doing it because the latter is a white man. Ishmael observes that:

The poor fool, he couldn't see it. He had done it to preserve an old order of race and class because a fellow white man had asked him. And because he could. The same reason why he had killed before. (74)

It is apparent that Thompson's behavior is guided by racial consideration. He treats Africans with contempt and it is no wonder they show no sympathy when he is shot dead. Abu Jamal considers Alexander as a savvy businessman who realizes that there is money to be made out of the guilt of the world which stood by and did nothing as a million or so people died during the Rwanda genocide. Romeo Dallaire in *Shake Hand with the Devil* says:

April 11, the fifth day of slaughter, the Security Council and the office of the secretary general were obviously at a loss as to what to do. I continued to receive demands to supply them with more information before they would take any concrete action. What more would I possibly tell them that I hadn't already described in horrific details? The odour of death in the hot sun; the flies, maggots, rats and dogs that swarm to feast on the dead. (289)

It is evident that the international community did not act swiftly to stop the Rwanda genocide. The United Nations was informed of what was happening yet it was slow in acting to stop the mass murder in Rwanda. Genocide is not a problem for Rwanda but it is an international crime. Ishmael says, "One million lives did not move the world, African countries included, to intervene, but the death of one beautiful blonde girl would" (121). The Refuge Centre and the Never Again Foundation is successful with Alexander as the acceptable white face and noble Joshua playing the stirrer of that guilt. There is the racial consideration in the hierarchy of the Never Again Foundation. Jamal says that Alexander and him were partners but naturally, being black, Jamal was the junior partner. Racism coupled with greed to control money being received by the foundation leads Alexander to plot the murder of Macy Jane and incriminating Joshua for

her death since he is an African and therefore he is considered a junior partner just like Jamal, yet he is costing the Foundation quite a bit of money.

Jordan, the Police Chief, is furious when Ishmael briefs him about his findings of the donors to the Never Again Foundation and the beneficiaries of this money. Transnational crime which involves fraud is committed by the cartel surrounding the Foundation. Jordan suggests that they need to tie the concerned to the death of the white girl and anyone involved in it is going to go down no matter how powerful they are. In addition to this Jordan is unsettled when Ishmael reports to him that he had been attacked soon after returning to Madison from Nairobi. The attack is carried out by three white men and one African American, Andrew Chocbanc. In a strange turn of events Ishmael shoots the four dead and Jordan is upset since he has to deal with four dead bodies, three of them white. Ishmael says, “When I finally made it to the chief he was predictably furious — the violence had come to America, to a small town called Madison in Wisconsin, and he had four bodies to deal with, three of them white” (178-179). Jordan is not at ease with violence which is being reported at his back yard since it adds pressure on him to act ruthlessly on the African American in view of the fact that three whites are reported killed in the latest incidence. The point Mukoma is making is that the violence and crime Joshua witnesses in Kenya are also happening in America.

The KKK militia is involved in violence and crime but they are never questioned on the basis of their colour. The black neighborhoods are regularly stormed by law enforcement agents as they look for drugs and guns which everyone knew were to be found on the KKK militia farm. The two rednecks with swastika guards at the gate, although they did not say it, wonders, “Why a

nigger cop was knocking their door” (202). This is when Ishmael visits James Wellstone whom he intends to use to eliminate Joshua. Wellstone makes a racist comment when he is given the Never Again Foundation Logbook. He says, “Jews and niggers follow the dollar” (203). This racist attitude is further brought into the limelight when he asks Ishmael whether he was prepared to see a black man die for the murder of a white woman. It is evident that Mukoma addresses racism in *Nairobi Heat* and connects it to transnational violence and crime in a way that it is difficult to treat the two themes independently.

It is evident that the themes analyzed in this chapter reveals that Mukoma is concerned with issues which are global and which affect contemporary world. The theme of transnational violence and crime is key since the novel is written against the background of Rwanda genocide of 1994. Ishmael relocates from Rwanda to America and together with Alexander and rally the world in donating money for the refugees but greed to control the fund leads to betrayal. Mukoma addresses the issue of corruption at the international level and how it undermines the welfare of the disadvantaged lot.

2.4 Narrative Strategies in *Nairobi Heat*

Narrative strategies are the artistic choices, techniques or methods an author employs in a narrative in order to communicate their message effectively. Mieke Bal in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* says that, “The aim of textual analysis is not to account for the process of writing, but for the conditions of the process of reception” (75). This, in effect, emphasizes the significance of how the narrative text comes across to the reader in a certain manner. E. Carl Bain in, *The Norton Introduction to Literature* says:

The way a story is mediated is a key element in fictional structure. This mediation involves the angle of vision, the point from which the people, events, and other details are viewed, and also the words of the story lying between us and the history. (73)

Bain is referring to the importance of the narrator. The person telling the story, according to Bal, is “the most central concept in the analysis of narrative text” (18). Mukoma uses various narrative techniques in *Nairobi Heat*. The events in the novel are not chronologically structured and this makes the novel have a complex plot. The fabula, on the other hand is organized in sequential manner. Bal defines fabula as “a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actor” (5). Mukoma titles the beginning of the narrative “A Beautiful Blonde is Dead” (1). The first sentence read, “A beautiful young blonde was dead, and the suspect, my suspect, was an African male” (1). Mukoma starts his narrative with the murder of a white young girl and *Nairobi Heat*, being a detective narrative, captures the attention of the reader creating the urge to read on and discover who this girl is, who the murderer is and the reason behind this murder. This is a powerful start which triggers investigation to unravel this murder case. Bain argues that:

The ordering of events, then, provides stories with structure and plot and has its consequences in effect and meaning. The first opportunity for structuring a story is at the beginning, and beginnings are consequently, particularly sensitive and important. Why does a story begin where it does? To begin a story the author has to make a selection to indicate that for the purposes of this story the beginning is a given point rather than any other. (20)

Mukoma starts his story in the middle. Michael Meyer in *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* says, “Stories can also begin in the middle of things (the Latin term for the common plot strategy is *in medias res*) in this kind of plot we enter the story on the verge of some important moment” (65).

It is at this point we find Ishmael Fofona, the detective and the protagonist of this narrative, travelling to Nairobi to find the truth in relation to the murder case. The beginning of the narrative introduces the main focus of the novel, the murder of the white girl. The crime has been committed in Madison, Wisconsin, America yet the suspect’s past lies in Africa. This sets the stage for the geographical setting of the novel. The events take place in America and Africa pointing to the transnational nature of violence and crime which is the focus of this study. The murder of Macy Jane takes place before the story begins. It is not part of the plot but it is this murder which drives the narrative forward which is characteristic of detective narrative. Bain says:

In a detective story, for example, the crime has usually been committed before the story begins, in the history and not in the plot. At the end, when the detective explains “who done it” you must think back not only to the crime, but to all hints or clues that you have been given. (22)

The beginning of *Nairobi Heat* is an exposition where the author introduces the narrator and the characters in the story. It also includes the background information which leads Ishmael to travel to Nairobi in spite of the fact that the crime was committed a week before. This helps to bring the issue of racial relationships between the African Americans and the white Americans to the fore,

as Ishmael says that a black-on-white crime does not go cold since the state will not rest until the black criminal is arrested. The conflict in the plot is revealed at this point. In the middle the protagonist faces difficulties as there are other issues and characters that complicate the unraveling of the case all the more. For instance, Joshua's connection to the genocide in Rwanda and his subsequent becoming a stirrer of guilt which drives international donors to channel their aid through the Never Again Foundation, causes complication at this point. The fact that there is Samuel Alexander, a white man, controlling the money channeled to the Foundation contributes to the rising action in the story. The crime prone areas in Nairobi, specifically Mathare and Eastleigh, feature in this part. Mathare slum is where Ishmael expects to find Rwanda refugees who are survivors of the Rwanda genocide who crossed over to Kenya. Mathare and Eastleigh areas which are occupied by poor people and violence and crime are common occurrence. It implies that the safety of the refugees is not guaranteed in spite of running away from the civil strife in Rwanda.

The shifting of action as Ishmael and O traverse the city from Mathare to Eastleigh, then to Muthaiga, provides a window for us to see the contrast and to have a feel of the insecurity in areas such as Mathare slum which is occupied by low class people and it is prone to crime. Mukoma is pointing at inequalities existing in Kenya and the situation in Mathare and Eastleigh is symbolic since it reflects the contemporary situation in Kenya and the world at large. In Kenya one finds that estates are occupied by people depending on an individual's social class. In America, we have the Allied Drive which is prone to crime. This contrast helps to communicate the theme of transnational violence and crime in the novel.

Gerard Genette in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* posits that, “Folklore narrative habitually conforms, at least in its major articulations to chronological order, but our (western) literary tradition, in contrast, was inaugurated by a characteristic effect of anachrony” (36). Genette defines anachrony as any event which disrupts the chronological structure of the narrative. Monika Fludernik in *An Introduction to Narratology*, in agreement with Genette, says, “anachrony is the temporal reordering of elements of the plot on the discourse level in relation to their chronological order on the story level” (150). Genette categorizes two types of anachronies; these are analepses and prolepses or flashbacks and flashforward respectively. Genette says that, “anachrony is one of the traditional resources of literary narration” (36). Mukoma in *Nairobi Heat* puts analepses into good use.

On arrival in Nairobi, Ishmael is taken for a drink by his Kenyan counterpart O after which he takes us back to Madison, Wisconsin and narrates how he was called in to commence investigations on the murder of the white girl whose body is found in front of Joshua’s house. He gives details of his interaction with Joshua and his conversation with the police chief, Jackson Jordan. It is in this flashback that we understand that the crime he is dealing with is transnational since he receives an anonymous call from Nairobi telling him that if he wants the truth he should go to the source since the truth was in the past and he should thus travel to Nairobi. In the course of his conversation with Jordan the racial tensions between the African Americans and the white Americans is also introduced. The shift in time to the past explains why Ishmael is in Nairobi and the mission at hand. The action then shifts to the present and Ishmael and O start traversing the city to trace where they could find Rwandan refugees and also any information which could shed light on who Joshua is and his past.

Ishmael accompanies Macy Jane's body back to Rwanda for burial and we understand his emotional attachment to her. In a flashback, Ishmael narrates how he had gone to Betty Bling store to buy a shroud in which Macy Jane would be buried in. It was at this time that he started thinking about Jane's extended family. The details of how Admanzah's family had probably been excommunicated from Montana after they converted to Catholicism and how the family opted to settle in Rwanda are revealed in this flashback. Betty, the owner of the store, does not charge Ishmael for the shroud and he is so moved by this gesture and it pains him that Macy Jane had to die as a result of transnational violence and crime. Betty says, "No charge. You did a good thing...It's the least I can do" (187). It is these words which drive Ishmael to tears and he becomes angry and sad. Hence, we understand why he makes a commitment to pursue justice for Macy Jane.

It is Ishmael's presence in Rwanda during the burial when the grim picture of the genocide is cast powerfully to the fore. Accompanied by Muddy, a character who plays a significant role in the novel, Ishmael travels to the graveside of the white missionary Admanzah and his wife. Jones B.D in *Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure* in capturing the magnitude of the genocide says:

The Rwanda genocide was horrific even by the standards of a century repeatedly marred by mass political and ethnic slaughters: Of Armenians at the onset of the century, of Jews during World War II, of Cambodians at the height of the Cold War. In the final decade of the twentieth century, mass genocide found its most brutally efficient expression to date in Rwanda. (1)

It is evident that the magnitude of Rwanda genocide is incomparable to the violence which had occurred in the world in the past years. The fact that Jones compares Rwanda genocide to what happened in Cambodia and Armenia is a proof of the transnational violence and crime which Mukoma addresses in *Nairobi Heat*.

Bal says, “The events presented in the anachrony lies either in the past or in the future. For the first category I use the term retroversion; for the second, anticipation” (83). Bal avoids the traditional terms “flashback” and “flash-forward” for their psychological connotations. Mukoma uses retroversion or what Genette calls alepses and this narrative strategy enriches our understanding of the present events in the novel in the cited examples.

Suspense is another narrative strategy Mukoma employs in *Nairobi Heat*. According to Seymour Chatman “suspense and surprise, are clearly related to the concepts of plot kernels and satellites” (59). Kernel is a major event which advances the plot by raising and satisfying questions while satellites are minor plot events. Chatman says that suspense entails to a lesser or greater degree foreshadowing and that suspense and surprise complement each other in a narrative. Ishmael and O are ambushed at Timbuktu bar where they had been directed to go by Lord Thompson. The young man and the woman assailants reveal that they had been sent by Thompson to kill the two. The shift of action from Timbuktu bar back to Thompson’s house is suspense filled. We want to know what will happen when Ishmael and O face Lord Thompson. The answer is supplied when O shoots Thompson dead. Hence, we find violence and crime being communicated to the reader and suspense becomes an effective technique used by Mukoma.

O and Ishmael find Samuel Alexander dead in his house and as they embark their search for Muddy in low class bars down town, suspense builds up since we want to know who Muddy is and what connection she has with Alexander and Joshua and thus she becomes an important character. In the scene at Muddy's residence in Limuru we identify foreshadowing when Ishmael walks to the milking shed and then to the small orchard behind the house early in the morning. The incident appears odd at first for a visitor to walk alone out of the house early in the morning. However, his behavior falls in place when the same is almost repeated when he takes a walk into the countryside at Butere when they make a stopover since Muddy needs to see a friend. Ishmael walks into a lonely church where he discovers the photographs of Admanzah family. He discovers the identity of the young white blonde, Macy Jane Admanzah. Mukoma all along withholds the identity of this girl thus creating suspense which makes the story compelling to us as we walk with Ishmael in his attempt to unravel the murder of this girl.

Howard Haycraft in *The Art of the Mystery Story* says, "A detective story involves a problem which must nearly always be criminal, the guilty man must be discovered by the detective and brought to justice unless his breach of the law was technical rather than moral" (24). As the story progresses suspense is created through the manipulation of events leading to the resolution. Similarly, Fludernik in *An Introduction to Narratology* says:

Suspense is created when concrete events are anticipated, and we are curious as to how they come about... In crime novels, the body which will lead to the reconstruction of the murder is discovered at the beginning of the tale. Suspense is generated by withholding important information, for instance by introducing a mystery which is only solved at a later stage. (46-47)

Suspense in Mukoma's novel *Nairobi Heat* is not only generated by what happens within the story but also by the reader's expectation to know the killer of Macy Jane and how detective Ishmael goes about resolving this case. Hence, the violent attempts to eliminate O and Ishmael, and at one time Muddy as well, as they drive to the airport, make us identify with the three as opposed to the evil forces working against the investigations into the mysterious murder of Macy Jane.

The setting and the structure of *Nairobi Heat* are critical to the narration of transnational violence and crime in this novel. Ishmael leaves Madison, United States where the crime is committed and travels to Nairobi, Kenya where we witness more violence and crime. The protagonist then returns to Madison and he is ambushed as he steps outside his apartment. In a surprise move, which complements the suspense at this point, Ishmael manages to kill three white men and an elderly black man, Andrew Chocbanc. The revelations by Chocbanc put the dealings of the Never Again Foundation into perspective. The resolution of the conflict which is introduced at the beginning of the novel and the complication created by the introduction of characters in the Foundation who want to incriminate Joshua reaches a climax when Ishmael watches Joshua's life ebbing out thus achieving justice for the dead Macy Jane. Mukoma adopts the full cycle strategy in this narrative where the events starts at Joshua's doorsteps and ends at the same place.

Bal argues that, "The narrator is the most central concept in the analysis of narrative text" (18). She says that the identity of the narrator and the manner in which that identity is indicated in the text determines whether we have first person narrative text or third person narrative text. Bal

argues that in narrative the narrator is basically 'I' whether first person or third person and as a result she identifies two types of narrators. These are the character bound narrator and external character. Mukoma in *Nairobi Heat* uses Ishmael as a character bound narrator in the sense that the 'I' is to be identified with a character, hence an actor in the fabula. Ishmael is a participant in what is happening in the novel. He holds the dominant point of view from which the story is rendered to the audience. It is through the eyes of Ishmael, the protagonist of the novel, the story unfolds to us. He is involved in the violence and crime as they happen and it is easy for us to identify with him as he unravels the murder case. The narration by a character bound narrator is an experience by the agent itself and therefore we do not doubt its veracity. The importance of having a character bound narrator in narrative is that the narrative voice and the perpetual point of view through which events are communicated are those of the narrator.

In the development of the novel Mukoma withdraws Ishmael from the narration to give room to other voices to communicate their feelings and perceptions in regard to certain events in the narrative. Ishmael becomes an active listener and this gives room to us to have a feeling of the multiplicity of voices in the novel. Mikhail Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination* says, "The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (26). The stylistic uniqueness of a novel, unlike any other genre, is a combination of these voices which the author employs in communicating their message.

In *Nairobi Heat*, for instance the violence and crime directed to the people in Rwanda during the genocide is communicated powerfully through the narration by Mary Karuhimbi who is a

survivor of the horrific mass murder organized by Joshua when the victims were searching for safety at his school. The episode details the harrowing experiences the women went through and the pain of losing their loved ones at the hands of the militia. It is important to note that Muddy plays the role of the translator but the narration still remains that of first person narrator. By using this strategy, Mukoma is able to hold the attention of the reader as details of Joshua's past are revealed first hand. We are persuaded to empathize with the survivors of the genocide and look forward to the time Ishmael would bring Joshua to account for the atrocities he committed in Rwanda as well as for the murder of Macy Jane. At this point we are in agreement with Bill Quella that, "A person cannot be guilty of genocide and innocent of murder. It just doesn't add up. His instinct is to kill. just like a scorpion stings" (182).

The language Mukoma ascribes to the protagonist, Ishmael, is also striking in the sense that it is characterized by several American slang and swear words. Ishmael utters these words when dealing with a difficult situation involving violent characters and when he is angry when events do not happen at a pace he expects them to. The use of such words gives credence to his American background. However, when characters in the bar adopt these swear words in such a short span of time we are left wondering whether this is possible. Ishmael's language varies depending on situations and the person he is talking to. For instance when he is talking to the chief of police his language is more formal as compared to when he is holding dialogue with O or Muddy. Ishmael tells O in one instance, "Listen, you schizoid sonofabitch" (85). This kind of expression is common in America when the speaker is really close to his listener who happens to be a companion. Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination* says:

Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). These distinctive links and interrelationships... this movement of the theme through different languages and speech type... is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel. (263)

Individualized speech of characters through which heteroglossia enters the novel help in the identification of the character associated with a specific utterance depending on the choice of words in such an utterance. For instance 'O' tells Ishmael, "Nairobi robbery" that is what we call it... but no worries, as long as we are in this,... criminals will know not to mess with us" (5). This indicates that 'O' is a law enforcement agent and he is engaged in combating crime and violence.

The use of dialogue in *Nairobi Heat* enables Mukoma to communicate the theme of transnational violence and crime in an effective manner. It is through dialogue between Ishmael and Jordan that the theme of violence and crime is introduced to us. They discuss the murder of the young white blonde and related racial dimension which the solving of this case entails. It is through the use of dialogue that characters are revealed to us. For instance when the body of Macy Jane is found at Joshua's doorsteps, he is calm and composed in his living room. He is least startled by this occurrence. Indeed he tells Ishmael, "Detective, where I come from death is a companion, like lover or good friend. Always there"(12). This statement points to his possible link with his past. His role in the genocide as revealed later by Mary Karuhimbi, the managing director of

Kokomat Supermarket is intimated to earlier in the novel, a foreshadow within a dialogue between him and Ishmael in the following conversation:

Ishmael, you know what it means to die? He asked. I shook my head. It means nothing, Nothing unless you live. Paradox. Survivor like me know death. You never kill, Ishmael? Yes, I answered truthfully....? And you, Joshua, have you ever taken a life? Genocide, no game? No hide and seek, no police and rubbers. I ... I traded lives, Ishmael. (26)

It is through the use of dialogue that more hints are given to the reader which point to the possibility that Joshua is not only the prime suspect of the murder of Macy Jane but the culprit of the murder. Indeed Chocbanc says, “But you see, Ishmael, we have to learn from our mistakes. Had Joshua finished what he had started years ago we wouldn’t be here. The past would be precisely that, the past” (168). This is a pointer that Joshua had had a hand in the killing of the Admanzah family during which Macy Jane survived. Joshua later confirms how he killed Macy Jane. Hence, Mukoma uses dialogue effectively as a narrative technique in narrating transnational violence and crime. It is by using dialogue that an author creates scenes where the narrator interact with other characters in the novel and they engage in dialogue which capture the attention of the reader. Dialogue can be used as a tool by an author to make the narrative interesting if it is realistic. In addition, the reader shares the emotions of characters directly as opposed to when their actions and reactions are narrated.

Ishmael’s view of Africa is dim in that he associates Africa with “wars, hunger, disease and dirt”(1). As he lands at the airport the place is chaotic with hawkers and vendors and later the roads are not any better. While Mukoma seems to exaggerate his portrayal of Nairobi, he uses

symbolism to communicate his message. The situation in Nairobi is symbolic of the rot of most African countries struggling to find their feet in post colonial era. For instance, when Ishmael lands at the airport he says, “I found myself outside the airport in what felt like a market – a wall of people shouting and heckling, selling newspapers, phone cards, even boiled eggs”(2). He is concerned with the neglect by those in charge of running public affairs since they do not take it upon themselves to offer quality service to their motherland and its citizen. Corruption is rife within government ranks and we find a Minister for Internal Security and a Member of Parliament involved in corrupt deals with Never Again Foundation. The state of poverty and crime in the slum of Mathare and the insecurity at Allied Drive are symbolic of what leads to transnational violence and crime in many parts of the world. Mukoma has chosen narrative strategies which successfully assist in delivery of his message.

2.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the novel *Nairobi Heat* reveals a lot that an author can communicate using detective narrative as a genre. Besides being a thriller Mukoma has addressed serious issues which are current and global in nature. In particular transnational violence and crime is a concern which continues to engage the world today. Combating this vice concerted effort between and among nations is critical as criminals adopt advanced methods in their nefarious acts. The death of Macy Jane whose body is found at the doorsteps of the African professor, Joshua Hakizimana seemingly appears to be a common crime but it turns out to be a complex crime which takes detective Ishmael to Kenya where details of Joshua’s origin in Rwanda and the role he played in the Rwanda genocide is revealed and his relocation to America. Other thematic concerns addressed on this novel such as betrayal, racism, greed and deception, and corruption and how

they link to transnational violence and crime has been discussed. The presentation of the story to the audience is critical since this determines how effectively the author communes with his or her audience. The narrative strategies employed by Mukoma enables him achieve his goal of narrating transnational violence and crime. He effectively reaches his audience and we understand that the transnational violence and crime in *Nairobi Heat* is rooted in something very dark, ugly and complex, the Rwanda genocide, and the moral issues he addresses are indeed grave and serious.

CHAPTER THREE

NARRATION OF VIOLENCE AND CRIME IN *BLACK STAR NAIROBI*

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on transnational violence and crime and related themes explored by Ngugi in the novel *Black Star Nairobi*. Like the previous chapter the theme of violence and crime, which is global in nature, is given prominence in *Black Star Nairobi*, which is a sequel to *Nairobi Heat*. The other themes analyzed in this chapter have a close connection to violence and crime in the sense that they are also global in nature and are facilitative in transnational crimes. I have also given an overview of the text in an attempt to contextualize it before embarking on the analysis of the thematic concerns. In an effort to connect the content of this novel to the topic of this study which is narrating transnational violence and crime in Mukoma's novels, I have also identified and discussed the narrative strategies employed by the author and how effectively they communicate his message.

3.2 Synopsis of *Black Star Nairobi*

Black Star Nairobi is a detective novel which focuses on two detectives: Ishmael and O who are engaged in unraveling the murder of Amos Apará, an American, whose body is found in Ngong forest. The investigation into this murder is complicated by the bombing of Norfolk Hotel in down town Nairobi.

There seem to be a link between the bombing and the murder of Apará. The American Embassy spokesperson holds the view that the explosion at Norfolk is an act of terrorism carried by Al

Qaeda with the help of Al Shabaab. This is a view the detectives and Jason, the CIA representative in Kenya, are doubtful. The novel is set against the back drop of Kenya's troubled presidential elections of 2007. O's wife Mary is shot in an ambush in their house and as burial arrangements are underway post-election violence escalates and Kenya becomes unsafe for Ishmael and O since there are people who are after them. Besides Sahara the key suspect of Apari's Murder may have escaped to America after three of his men are killed at O's house.

O and Ishmael are accompanied by Muddy when travelling to America through Mexico which is considered a safe passage since the migration procedures are not strictly observed. They will be in America as illegal immigrants and they need to find details of who Sahara is and the people he is working with. As the novel unfolds Mukoma reveals how international crimes take place. There is selling of drugs from Mexico to America in exchange for guns. Drugs are then shipped for sale in Africa. Sahara and company run an organization whose goal is to eradicate leadership in the government and in the opposition and then allow new leadership to emerge from the people. Sahara slips back to Kenya and Ishmael, O and Muddy catch up with him and shoot him dead in a hotel room minutes before he detonates bombs at Kenyatta International Conference Centre where the president, the prime minister and their ministers are meeting to discuss forming a unity government.

3.3 Themes

Introduction

Black Star Nairobi advances several themes which I examined in *Nairobi Heat* in the previous chapter. The theme of transnational violence and crime bears additional thrust as Mukoma

introduces sub-stories in this narrative. The American Embassy spokesman, Paul, maintains that the bombing of Norfolk Hotel is an act of terrorism while Ishmael, the protagonist in this novel, connects the murder of Amos Apara to a criminal act of the explosion at Norfolk. The unraveling of the murder case is complicated by the post- election violence of 2007/2008 in Kenya. *Black Star Nairobi* is an exciting detective narrative in which Mukoma engages the reader in his exploration of transnational violence and crime.

Transnational Violence and Crime

Mukoma has explored various themes in the novel *Black Star Nairobi*. Transnational violence and crime is key among the themes Mukoma addresses in his second detective novel. This novel is written against the backdrop of Kenya's troubled presidential election of 2007 which resulted in post- election violence committed by ethnic gangs where people from different ethnic group rose against each other yet they had lived peacefully over the years. Daniel C. Macaria in *The Grand Coalition Kenya: Slippery Road to Democracy* says:

There was widespread violence that erupted in several parts of Kenya following the announcement of the presidential election results of December 27, 2007. The events leading to the violence, and the mediation efforts that followed, culminating in the formation of a grand coalition in 2008, are seen through narratives and conversations of fictional characters in this book. (1)

It is against this background that detective Ishmael and O who had set up the Black Star Agency three years before are called upon by Yusuf Hassan, the CID chief, to investigate the murder of a black man whose body is found in the middle of Ngong forest. This is not an ordinary crime as Ishmael observes that for a person to be murdered and his body left in Ngong forest he has to be

'somebody (9). Ishmael cites the murder of prominent personalities such as J.M Kariuki, a radical politician, and Robert Ouko, an astute politician. Kariuki was murdered in 1975 and his body was discovered in Ngong forest while the remains of Ouko were found in Got Alila in Kolu near his home in Kisumu in 1992. The two politicians were murdered at different times. O says, "This man has many secrets to tell" (7). As it turns out, this murder sets in motion an investigation which takes Ishmael, O and Muddy from Kenya to America through Mexico and back to Kenya in an effort to track down Sahara who is believed to be behind this murder. Mukoma is communicating the fact that violence and crime is a global phenomenon and the perpetrators of such crimes operate on an international plane.

A day after the discovery of the body in Ngong forest an explosion occurs at Norfolk Hotel in down town Nairobi. It is not clear at first who are behind this bombing. However, during rescue mission that follows, O sees a ball bearing and on looking closely Ishmael notices that the bearing is similar to the one Kamau, the pathologist, had found in the stomach of the dead man. Indeed, more bearings are strewn around the site of the explosion. Ishmael and O think there is a connection between the bombing of the hotel and the murder of the black man while Paul, the American Embassy spokesperson, links the bombing to an act of terrorism carried out by Al Qaeda with the help of Al Shabaab from Somalia.

It is apparent that resolving the murder case will be a complex issue because there is involvement of America represented by Paul who is pursuing the official line of terrorism act while Jason Lauer, the CIA head of African Bureau would like Black Star Agency to report to him about the facts of the murder case in order to establish the truth. However, later in the novel it becomes

evident that Paul is on the side of those who were behind the bombing and also the murder of Amos Apara whose name we come to learn later in the novel. Indeed Paul is in Sahara's camp and therefore he subscribes to the goals of International Democracy and Economic Security council. This is an organization which controls political leadership in Africa and other third world countries. It is this complex web that Ishmael and O find themselves when they embark on resolving the murder case. Mukoma is making a statement in this case that transnational violence and crime involve intrigues by government officials and therefore it is not easy to fight international crimes without the co-operation of international communities.

Pursuing the perpetrators of transnational violence and crime is also complicated by the fact that the criminals also fight back when they realize they are being followed. This is evident in *Black Star Nairobi* where four white men and one black ambush Ishmael, Muddy and Mary, O's wife while O has left the house to go and visit his mother in hospital. The white men are Tsavo, Kilimanjaro, Serengeti and Sahara while the black man is Jamal. Sahara is the one who is in command of this group and he is a dangerous and a violent man. Ishmael says that Sahara "was simply speaking a language of pure violence, shorn of hate or love, he was laying out the most efficient way to get information from me" (74). It is evident that Sahara wants some information which would enable him and his members to be ahead of the law enforcement agencies and also stop Ishmael and O from pursuing him. Indeed, Sahara says, "We do not want you back on our trail. So we have made it impossible for you to continue with the case... in fact you could say that we have made it impossible for you to continue with your life as you know it" (74). Sahara uses blackmail by threatening to shoot Mary if Ishmael does not feed him with the information which he wants. In the end Serengeti shoots Mary dead.

Sahara also reveals that Ishmael, O and Muddy are wanted since they are in the US terrorist watch list. After Sahara connects a Safaricom wireless device and access the internet, Ishmael says:

He placed it in front of me and opened two pages, one after the other: the U.S Transportation Security Administration and U.S. Homeland security. He pointed at the addresses so that I could make sure they were authentic. He typed something that took him to a secured page where he entered a password. The page opened on to the U.S. terrorist watch list. He pointed to three names: Madeline Muteteli, Ishmael Fofona, and Tom Odhiambo. There were photographs of us, armed and looking dangerous, followed by short descriptions. Muddy was a Rwandan ex-guerilla fighter who had fallen under the sway of Ishmael, a disgruntled black American Muslim who had in turn become radicalized in Kenya. O was the Kenyan cop who provided cover for both of us. (74-75)

This quotation reveals that the criminals of transnational crimes do not operate alone. They have infiltrated government security systems and they manage to do this with the assistance of powerful people in the political systems and these people in the government are compromised because of their own self interests. Jason, for instance, would like terrorists stopped from entering Kenya so that he continues trafficking drugs which are sold by Julio, his contact man in Mexico, to America and then shipped all over Africa.

Mukoma does not give criminals an upper hand in their unlawful acts. He seems to suggest that criminals have got to be confronted with the full force of the law in order to combat violence and

crime. O, on his return from hospital, manages to shoot Serengeti and Tsavo while Jamal kills Kilimanjaro. It is important to note that Jamal was not one of the gang which is led by Sahara. He had cooperated with them for a fee and it is no wonder he kills Kilimanjaro and uses his pocketknife to snap the handcuffs from Muddy and Ishmael. Although Sahara escapes, it is evident that he has suffered the loss of three members of his team. Perpetrators of international crimes operate across the international boundaries. When Ishmael meets Jason and tells him that Sahara has escaped, Jason tells Ishmael that Sahara might be in the U.S.A where he might be safest and therefore the best chance of getting to know who Sahara is lies in the United States. Jason says.

The United States – you have to go to the U.S.... only way we are going to see this thing through. You have to go back to the beginning – he got those four young men from somewhere in the U.S, they were trained somewhere, there is a trail somewhere in the U.S., and you have to find it. (141)

In detective narratives, a crime has been committed and it is the work of the detective to piece the evidence together as he or she tries to unravel the case at hand. It is in the light of this fact that the protagonist takes us back into the past in order to collect evidence which will incriminate the suspect of the crime. This is what makes Ishmael, O and Muddy travel to America as illegal immigrants. Besides, Jason tells them, “Kenya is no longer safe for you – not for a while, anyway. There are some people asking about you. The only reason they haven’t found you is the chaos – and they’re afraid of getting caught in one of those roadblocks...” (139-140). It is important to point out that fighting international crimes requires collaboration of all nations. This

is the point Mukoma is making by having O, Muddy and Ishmael working together to hunt down the criminals yet they come from different countries.

Crime and violence is also evident in Mexico, a country Ishmael, O and Muddy pass through in order to cross over to America. Before leaving Kenya Jason provides them with the necessary travel documents and on arrival at the airport they are received by Julio who is in communication with Jason. As they are driven from the airport to a Mexican slum they are trailed by a sports utility vehicle whose occupants open fire when they are a few hundred metres behind Julio's vehicle. Ishmael says, "They opened fire. The bullets rained on the rear window, leaving small pock marks. They let out another burst that skirted all around us" (151). The message Mukoma is communicating is that violence and crime is not only found in Nairobi but it is a global concern. Julio says, "In Mexico, everyone you want to kill has bullet proof windows. And in Mexico, everyone is a target ... sometimes you do not know who wants you dead until you are dead already" (150-151).

The two days' stay at Julio's slum reveals a lot about criminal activities undertaken by Julio. He is a drug dealer and his security is tight in this slum. As they get behind the gate into the slum, stopping the vehicle which was trailing them from the airport, Ishmael makes the following observation:

But what was going on soon became apparent, as four jeeps with heavily armed young men joined the Mercedes to make a convoy. Old women were smiling and waving at Julio while little children in ragged clothes ran alongside us. On the tin rooftops, I could

see armed men perched, barely managing to hold on. No one was going to bring war to this slum unless they were ready to pay a high price. It was Julio's slum. (151)

From the foregoing, it is evident that Julio is no ordinary person. He is involved in drug peddling and the risk involved in this kind of business is high hence he has his own security detail. He is heavily guarded by four jeeps with heavily armed young men. The point Mukoma is making is that it is difficult for such a person to operate in a business of this nature without protection from high placed persons in the government. Ishmael says that Julio took them to one of the small buildings where they found naked men and women packing cocaine into bricks. "Each of the house was a processing zone for weed or cocaine brought in by armored trucks that were just rolling in as we left with the last house".(156) It is evident that with Jason being involved in drug trafficking, the CIA is working with drug cartels to fight terrorism. Julio sells drugs to America while America sells guns to Mexico in return. There is an understanding between America and Mexico as Julio says, "They sell us the guns, we sell them the dope. No blanket of lies between us" (157).

Julio is a ruthless and a violent man. He holds the view that one of his workers had betrayed him at the airport. The teacher who is working closely with Julio is suspected of informing the police that Julio is picking Ishmael, O and Muddy from the airport. He is tortured and his life depends on his telling the truth since Julio would like to know who the teacher really is. The teacher at last identifies himself and says, "I am Detective Robert Gonzalez. I work with the Mexican anti-terror unit. You are harbouring known terrorists, it had to be reported" (166). Ishmael and O prevail upon Julio to save the teacher's life. It is O's account about the loss of his wife, Mary, at

the hands of Sahara that finally moves Julio into sparing the teacher from death. However, the second suspect is not as lucky. He is brought in, all bloodied up and Julio hands the teacher an army knife and instructs the teacher to kill this man. Ishmael tells us, “The knife sliced into his stomach and he cried out in pain. The teacher removed it and plunged the knife into the man’s heart and he died. No one moved as the dead man slowly slid down to the floor” (170). The violence in this case involves Julio and his workers. However, Mukoma’s message in this case is that this violence is connected to transnational violence and crime in that Ishmael, O and Muddy are here since they are on transit to America to track down Sahara. This is the argument advanced by Ishmael in trying to save the teacher that Sahara is the one who is responsible for the situation they find themselves in. Ishmael says:

I knew O wanted to get to the U.S. for Sahara and that nothing would stand in his way. But witnessing another cop getting killed in front of us, and because of us, though in the larger scheme of things it was Sahara who was responsible — even O couldn’t justify that. (167)

When Ishmael and his associate are in America we witness more violence when they gain access into Sahara’s compound under the cover of Ninja Car Washers. Sahara, whose real identity is Jim Delaware, has invited members of International Democracy and Economic Security Council (IDESC) “to Give us an update and to suggest we take counter measures in case we had been exposed”(231).When the guests leave Sahara, O and Muddy shoot three people dead and wound the guard. Sahara escapes this encounter. It is after this that Ishmael, O and Muddy move to Hilton Hotel in California and they find Martin Kimani, a member of IDESC, in his room and after interrogating him, Ishmael shoots him dead. Kimani is one of the perpetrators of

transnational violence and crime and therefore such people do not deserve to be spared. Indeed, when Ishmael and associates visit Amos's father in Compton, the father is relieved that one of the men responsible for his son's death has been killed.

Detective Ishmael, O and Muddy follow Sahara in Nairobi where the president and the prime minister are scheduled to converge at Kenyatta International Conference Centre, KICC, to discuss forming a unity government. Sahara intends to detonate bombs, thus killing all the current political leaders and giving IDESC an opportunity to recruit new leadership from the youth. Jack Mpande, the survivor of Norfolk explosion, reveals that Amos Aparara had opposed the involvement of IDESC political wing in spearheading political change in the targeted countries. Aparara's opposition to Sahara earns him a spot in Ngong forest where he is found brutally murdered. Ishmael and his associates are just on time and O shoots Sahara once in the head. Justice has been achieved for Amos Aparara, the sixty six victims of Norfolk Hotel bombing and above all the innocent Mary, O's wife. The fact that O loses his wife to violent criminals reveals that detectives and their families are also at risk of being attacked by criminals as these perpetrators of crimes fight back to derail the efforts of law enforcement agents. The transnational violence and crime closes with the shooting of Paul, "the U.S Embassy spokesperson who fed information to Sahara and his army" (263).

Post- Election Violence

Kenya's presidential election is characterized by name calling and accusations and counter accusation and it is evident that ethnic loyalty is the basis on which vote casting is conducted. There are rumours about machetes from China and the destination of this consignment is not known. Hassan says that the police have picked up two shipments and the person who came for them was supposed to take them to an empty hut in Rift Valley. Hassan says, "We just have to keep watching, this is Kenya — a little blood to bless the winner. But, hey, we have nothing to worry about, we have guns" (43)

It is evident that violence looms in the presidential elections which have followed the usual name calling, corruption, tribalism and worst of all these are pronouncement by politicians which stir up tribal animosity. Ishmael says, "There was one piece of news that piqued our interest: large caches of machetes made in china,... had been found at the port in Mombasa" (14). It is Muddy who keeps on cautioning that kind of talk by Hassan and the drunkards at Broadway's Tavern that a little bloodshed for the electoral winner may turn out to be a flood. Ishmael says, "what people like Hassan were refusing to consider was that a little blood-letting, with all these other things going on could turn into a flood, as Muddy put it" (43). Muddy and Ishmael are referring to the possible post- election violence which may be triggered by the unguarded utterances by the politicians.

The land issue is cited as a cause for post- election violence. Kipng'eno Ruto in *Root Cause of Ethnic Violence in Africa: a Case Study of the Kenya Post- Election Violence of 2007-2008* says:

There exists the view that grabbed land from some ethnic groups leave them landless, hence submerge them to poverty. Reactions of discontent have been revealed in the land clashes of 1992, 1997 and 2007. These clashes display the anger among those in impoverished conditions. (68)

The armed youth whom Ishmael and O meet close to Nakuru claim that they are “Kalenjin warriors” (105). These are young men who are manipulated by politicians who are out to achieve their political ambitions. In Nairobi the slum areas are the most affected by violence. Dandora is a case in point. Mukoma is of the view that poverty in slum areas is a contributing factor to crime and violence. The youth are involved in violence and the gap between the rich and the poor in society needs to be addressed. Ruto in *Root Cause of Ethnic Violence in Africa: a Case Study of the Kenya Post Election Violence of 2007-2008* argues that:

Poverty and unemployment amongst the youth can be easily used by politicians to meet their ambitions. Poverty increases the sense of unfair play and predisposes affected sections of society to easy political manipulation. In Many occasions it was cited that people in the slum areas for instant Kibera and Mathare were involved in violence. People from slums are usually poor. Most of the people who participated in 2007-2008 violence were young jobless Kenyans who can easily be bribed for violence. (75)

Mukoma is concerned about the glaring disparities in Kenya where the poor are consigned to the slums such as Dandora, Kibera and Mathare to cite a few while the rich live in secluded and secure places such as Runda, Lavington, Muthaiga and such places where violence is not experienced. The post-election violence therefore exposes issues such as land ownership, poverty

and the widening gap between the rich and the poor which need to be addressed. Mukoma is also concerned that the political class does very little to address these issues and the politicians manipulate the poor jobless people, and the common rural people so that they can achieve their political ambitions. It is the post election violence which drives the government and the opposition to negotiate the formation of a unity government and this is the reason why the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister are gathering at Kenya International Conference Centre and Sahara is set to detonate bombs which would eliminate these leaders. This would in effect advance the theme of transnational violence and crime.

Revenge

Transnational violence and crime in certain instances lead to revenge from the affected characters. Mukoma explores revenge in *Black Star Nairobi* as a theme which the affected characters pursue in seeking justice for the pain inflicted on them. O is one of the characters whose motivation to combat violence and crime, as his career demands, is motivated by revenge especially from the time Sahara kills Mary, O's wife. Mary's death is devastating to O and the sense of loss is quite evident as Ishmael says:

Sahara and his handlers, whoever they were, didn't know what had just happened. They had unhinged O. The duality in which evil and good were compartmentalized in him was over. O had once told me that we were good men who did bad things. Mary had been all that kept him in our side of the world. (86)

Ishmael's statement focuses on the effect Mary's death has on O and as they set off to America, through Mexico, their missions apart from tracking down Sahara is clearly defined by Ishmael when he says:

O was going to do whatever it took to kill the man behind his wife's murder. Muddy was here because in spite of her attempts to leave a life of violence behind, I had never known her to turn down a fight. She could have decided to stay home and look after Janet and Mary's mother, but she was here and I followed a case to the bitter end because that was how I defined myself—it was all I knew. It was all I could stand on. (162)

In the light of this quotation, we understand why O would not stand Julio's attempt to kill the teacher, a fellow officer who is not responsible for Sahara's senseless killings. The death of the teacher would not be worth the revenge O is seeking since it would only cheapen his revenge. O is therefore a bitter man and he says:

I will do a lot worse to destroy the men who killed her. When I am done, they will know what my wife's name was worth. I am not telling you all these things so that you think I am a tough man, but so that you know how serious I am when I say I will not let you kill that man, because his life is the only thing separating you from me. (168)

In two instances, O demonstrates that he is focused on avenging his wife's murder. First, when they get into Sahara's house in California O is the first to shoot two guards who are in the house while Muddy shoots dead the man who is one of the guards who had been at the gate. Ishmael has no time even to draw his gun since the incident takes less than five seconds. It is also important to note that it is O who finally shoots Sahara when they catch up with him in his room

at Visitor Hotel. Apart from avenging his wife's murder O does not lose focus of the larger goal of tracking down the perpetrators of transnational violence and crime. This is evident when he says, "I am going to kill you now. This is not for my wife — she would want me to forgive, not to kill in her name. But you have no place in this world. There is no place here for men like you" (257).

The message Mukoma is communicating is that the evil minded people who trot the globe causing pain and suffering by unleashing violence upon the innocent people should not be spared. The moment they are caught up by law enforcement agents the Saharas of this World pay the ultimate price. Apará's father has been looking forward to a time when he would know what happened to his son. He is a tormented man and he would like those responsible for his son's death to pay for it. He reveals his suffering because of the loss when he says, "I've been holding my peace too long — what good is it? Peace fed my family to the dogs — picked off one by one by thugs, police, and by life itself" (239). Apará's father is determined to revenge for his son's death. This is evident from his pronouncement, "I want to shed blood for my son, not my tears. I want the men you say did this" (238).

The post-election violence in Kenya reveals aspects of revenge carried out by the militia Ishmael and O encounter as they travel to Limuru to make arrangements for Mary's burial. Much as this violence is on the basis of political affiliation and tribal loyalties, the leader of the gang at the makeshift roadblock asks Ishmael, "Do you know what they are doing to our people in Kisumu? Did you hear about the church in the Rift valley? Little children, women —screaming —burning to death?" (120).The Kikuyu militias also ambush Ngatia, his wife Mumbi and his visitors at Limuru and burn down their house. Ngatia is shot dead although the militia suffers severely at

the hands of Ishmael, O and Muddy. It is Mumbi who reveals why the militia kills her husband. Ngatia was a home guard who helped the British when Kenya was fighting for independence and therefore he is treated as a traitor. Mumbi says, “But that is not why they killed him. They killed him because his daughter married a Luo. But that makes his murderers worse — they are traitors to the human race” (135).

The post- election violence where one community rises against another community, neighbor against neighbor, people who had lived in harmony for so long is a concern Mukoma addresses in the novel *Black Star Nairobi*. As the counting of votes is in the process and Kenyan are anxious who would emerge the winner of the presidential poll, Muddy keeps on warning of the little bloodshed which people do not seem to care about. Bearing the experience she underwent during the 1994 Rwanda genocide, she says, “There is no such thing as a trickle of blood, each drop today is a flood tomorrow ... You can yell ‘Kenya up’ standing on top of God knows what all you want. But someday soon, please remember my words” (67).

Mukoma is concerned about violence which engulfs Kenya in the troubled presidential polls of 2007. Whatever happened in Rwanda could as well happen in any other country and Kenya is not an exception. The elections have divided Kenyans along ethnic lines and O cannot bury his wife Mary, a kikuyu, in Luo land since the elders are against it. The clan had spoken and this is devastating to O since “Mary’s death had fallen along the same ethnic demarcations” (102). The Kikuyus are supporting their presidential candidate, Mwai Kibaki, while the Luos support of Raila Odinga. It is the Rwanda genocide which has made Muddy who she is. She has lived through violence and this is the reason she pursues those who perpetrate it. Ishmael says,

“Muddy was here because in spite of her attempts to leave a life of violence behind, a part of her was addicted to the smell of gunpowder” (162). It is this ethnic hatred which leads one community to rise against each other and whoever wins the presidential vote those who lose engage in violence to revenge for what seems to be a rigged elections. The clan’s refusal to bury Mary is a kind of hit back to the Kikuyu, the community which she belongs to.

Corruption

Corruption is a vice which undermines adherence of the rule of law and it is a crime that needs to be curbed in order to combat related international crimes. Mukoma presents a scenario where corruption is used to facilitate transnational violence and crime. As Jason discusses with Ishmael and O of the route to take to America, he says that the detectives cannot fly into Canada since it is too risky. He says, “No. Canada is too risky,...If you get flagged, you cannot bribe your way through the airport” (142). It is for this reason that they settle for passage through Mexico. Corruption is rife in Mexico and Jason says, “In Mexico, the dollar is the law ...” (142). This means that it would be safer for Ishmael, O and Muddy to travel through Mexico and then cross over to America as illegal immigrants

Julio is involved in an illegal private business in selling drugs to America. Jason has already acquired three Kenyan passports with fake names and Ishmael is now James Mwangi, Muddy is Jane Mwangi while O is given the name Patrick Onyango. The three are also given three Social Security cards which are stamped indicating that they are ‘eligible for work’. In addition, they are given fake drivers’ licenses and ten thousand dollars each. Jason knows Mexico is a corrupt country and compares it to Kenya which implies that the travel documents he has obtained are

illegally acquired. He says, “Mexico is another Kenya; the dollar goes a long way there” (141). This view is corroborated when Julio is trying to find out who betrayed him that he is harbouring known terrorists. Julio says,” Five thousand U.S dollars ... That is all it took. Five thousand dollars for your life. Judas sold Jesus to one person, but your *jefe* has sold you and my guests many times over – because of you” (169). Mukoma is making a statement that corruption is a vice which needs to be dealt with in order to combat transnational violence and crime.

When Martin Kimani is cornered in his room in Hilton Hotel in California, he tries to influence O to spare his life and he says he will ensure O rises through the police ranks plus other benefits which he promises. Kimani is trying to compromise O so that he is not punished for the crimes he has committed. He tells O:

Whatever you want I can offer ten times over. You walk out now – and in five years, you are the police commissioner. If you want to retire, how about a twenty — acre farm anywhere in the country? Perhaps you’d like a hotel in Mombasa? (227)

Kimani is a former special advisor of President Daniel arap Moi. Currently he is an assistant manager at Kenya’s pineapple growing and canning company. When he identifies himself to Ishmael, O and Muddy he is out to intimidate them given that he is used to giving orders and not being talked to by women as if they were equals. He wants to compromise O so that he can go scot free yet, he has committed crime which need to be exposed and the culprit brought to justice. Mukoma is against this kind of impunity which Kimani advances by attempting to bribe O. O’s refusal to be corrupted is a statement that seems to declare that to fight transnational

violence and crime the agents entrusted with this task should have a moral obligation and stand firm in pursuit of justice at whatever cost.

It is important to note that O remains focused in achieving justice for the violence meted out on the victims of Norfolk explosion, the murder of black American Amos Apara, and also for his wife Mary. Mukoma is concerned about the level of corruption which is a social ill since even ordinary people are involved in transnational crimes when corruption is allowed to flourish in a society. For instance when O and Ishmael drive to Limuru Country Club, which is a golf club patronized by tourists and the rich, they meet Nyiks, short for Wanyika, a former boxer who is involved in money laundering. Ishmael intends to use Wanyika to give them information he may come across in connection with those who may be responsible for the murder of the black American. Ishmael says:

He was at the club to buy and sell American dollars to tourists and wealthy Kenyans. It was illegal, of course, but legality could be easily bought — and so he operated freely, so freely that he had set up shop in one of spa rooms. He even had regular business hours, 6.00p.m to 10.00.p.m. (66)

The fact that an illegal business is transacted in such a place reveals the level of rot in the society which if it goes unchecked allows international crimes to take place. Ishmael reveals that in detective work you do not rule out even small details. He says that they had ruled out Ngotho, the owner of Ngotho Repair-It-All Company only to realize later that they were wrong. Ngotho held some clue to the Norfolk explosion. Indeed, in connection to corruption Ishmael says, “A Kenyan reporter for CNN had been fired because he was bribing witnesses. But how else was he

going to get the truth?” (52). Combating transnational violence and crime requires law enforcement agents who are not compromised. Although Jason assists the detectives in tracking down Sahara, it is evident that he is not a clean man since he is involved in drug trafficking in Africa and in particular Kenya where he is stationed. Manipulation of vote in elections is a claim which leads to electoral violence in Kenya and this is the feelings of the opposition whenever the vote is hotly contested. This is what is apparent in the presidential elections of 2007 in Kenya. Ishmael says, “The counting of the electoral votes was still going on, with a live update of the tally — it looked like Kenya would be swearing in a Luo president” (110).

However, Mwai Kibaki emerges the winner at the last minute. “We turned on the radio just as Kibaki was being announced the winner. Raila had been leading. Kibaki’s last-minute surge was suspicious, to say the least” (116). It is this kind of scenario of claims of vote rigging that points to corruption of the electoral process.

Racism

Racism in America is a theme which Mukoma has addressed in *Black Star Nairobi*. The African American are descendants of slavery who were captured from Africa, transported over the seas and sold in America to work in plantations. It is against this background that even after the right of African- American has been granted and efforts made to ensure that both African Americans and white Americans enjoy equal rights, there are still instances of racism in America. The African Americans are discriminated against on the basis of their skin pigmentation. The African Americans have a history of being sidelined from the political and socio-economic life in America. Ishmael says:

I had always thought of Obama as black like me. Black people in the U.S had been at the centre of it all – the building of the country, inventions science sports – yet somehow we had remained on the sidelines. To be in the White House, finally? (13)

In America the presidential elections are underway and it is apparent that Barack Obama, an Africa America whose origin is Kenya, is going to be elected president. When he declares his candidacy the talk is that he is a Kenyan citizen and not an America, “like being Kenyan is a crime”(13). In Nairobi people are enthusiastic and everyone is honking while others are waving Obama posters and selling T-shirts and coffee mugs bearing Obama’s name. Mukoma is challenging the Kenyan electorates to reject ethnic politics in Kenya. While the Americans would be electing Obama who has his roots in Luo land, Kenyans are still engrossed in ethnic politics where a Kikuyu would not vote for a Luo candidate and a Luo would not vote for a Kikuyu. However, sections of American electorate are still doubtful whether an African-American will be elected president. This is a racist view which is proven wrong when Obama is finally declared the President of United States of America. O says, “you’ll be surprised — we have had only black presidents and look at Africa, look at how divided ...” (41). It is evident that in Africa tribal politics have held swing the psych of the people and violence looms large in ethnic politics. Jason is also skeptical whether Obama will win or not. He says, “I don’t think he’ll win. Race matters more than anything else ... like tribe here, only without the machetes ...” (48).

Ishmael loves Mo, the Pulitzer—winning journalist who works for the *Madison Times* but she sees Ishmael only as a black detective. This is evident of “the United States and its racism of

class and colour” (14). This relationship is comparable to O’s marriage to Mary. While the two live happily in Nairobi, upon Mary’s death the ethnic divide rears its ugly head since Mary cannot be buried in Kisumu because the elders have spoken. This pains O since his hopes of burying Mary in Kisumu are dashed by the clan yet he had bought that piece of land for her mother. Ethnicity in Kenya is comparable to racism in America; a fact that Mukoma is challenging in this novel. When O and Ishmael travel to Limuru to meet Mary’s parents and find out whether the parents would agree to bury their daughter, Ngatia, Mary’s father is reluctant at first. He expects O to bury his wife. O tells him, “Because of me she is dead — but she was dead to you a long time ago. See what your hatred has brought home?...It is people like you and my mother who taught these young men to hate” (124).

Racism has shaped Ishmael view of Hassan’s method of dealing with petty criminals. Hassan is an ex-military man and he does not believe in the premise that a suspect is innocent until proven guilty. “Suspicion, and only poor young men from the slums were suspicious, meant a bullet to the head” (39). Hassan is a man of action and this is what makes him favourite among Kenyans. Ishmael says:

I didn’t hate Hassan’s methods because I was American — it was because I was a black American. Before I was a cop, I knew being black, poor, and urban meant you were the scapegoat that no one cared about. After I became a cop, the stink of racist policing rubbed off on me and some family members called me a sell—out to my face. To see so many killed in Kenya without even the semblance of a court of law reminded me of what middle class America, white or black, wished upon on the poor black male. (40)

Ishmael experiences racism when he is growing up in Madison, Wisconsin. His parents are middle class and Ishmael's view is that majority of the African American are poor and they are discriminated against on the basis on their skin colour. It is his lot who are subjected to violence in America just as it happens in Kenya under Hassan's watch. Ishmael therefore is against his method of killing the poor who are suspected of being involved in crimes.

Jason would like Ishmael and O to report their findings directly to him based on the fact that the murder case they are investigating is of an African American. This murder is connected to the Norfolk Hotel bombing in which Jason wonders how a terrorist organization exploded a bomb in the middle of Nairobi killing ten Americans. It is O who challenges him that he only thinks about the dead Americans and forgets that there are Africans who lost their lives. O says, "It is funny how you Americans never count the Africans dead..." (58)

Identity

Ishmael is an African American detective who is brought up in Madison, Wisconsin in America. He has relocated to Kenya and together with O they have formed a detective agency —Black Star Agency. He is looking for a place to call home. He had been in Nairobi before and his attitude towards Kenya has not changed much. He has a low opinion of Kenya since the country cannot be compared to America in terms of technological advancement. He is even skeptical whether the body of Amos Apara will yield much given the small volume of Kenya's criminal data. Ishmael says:

We might never figure out who he is ...DNA was useful only with a large criminal database — Kenya's was in its infancy, and unless we were extremely lucky, there would

be no match. And dental records? Forget about it. We just had to hope that the body would yield some secrets. (9)

He misses America despite its racist tendencies that are evident against the African Americans.

When Kenya's president declares a public holiday following Obama's win, Ishmael says:

For a moment, I had felt homesick. The strong but tired rhythm of small Madison, Wisconsin, where I had grown up; my parents and their pretense to wealth; --- in that moment, I missed the career I had left behind. I missed my other life, my parallel life, the life I was supposed to live, the one that didn't involve being in love with a woman like Muddy, or having a partner like O — the life with a pension ahead of me, and if I did not make it that far, at least my own would be taken care of. Only for a moment, though because the life I had chosen was here, in this country. (14)

Much as Ishmael considers Africa as the land of his ancestors he still has strong attachment to America. He is looking forward to have Obama elected as president of America and besides it is apparent that Ishmael has been at home in Kenya until he sees the body of Aparah, and Kamau, the pathologist, confirms it is the body of an African American. Ishmael says:

I hadn't felt American for a long time. In fact, I hadn't wanted to. A black man from U.S., I liked getting lost in the sea of black in Kenya, rather than standing out in a sea of whiteness in Madison, Wisconsin. But the idea that a fellow American, a black man like me, could be shot and his body left in the middle of Ngong forest to be devoured by hyenas stirred up an anger in me that I knew was dangerous. In the U.S.A. We died in all sorts of ways, but never like this. (24)

It is evident that Ishmael reacts the way he does not because a man has been murdered but it is an African American who has lost his life. He identifies himself with America and not Kenya. The message Mukoma is communicating is that Ishmael faces an identity crisis. In America there is racism where an African American is not treated equally with a white American. Ishmael has chosen Kenya as his home yet he has not made effort to learn Kiswahili so that he can communicate with other people he interacts with apart from O, Muddy and Hassan from Kenya. The feeling of not being fully at ease in Kenya haunts him and he says:

To be away from home — to live as an immigrant among people who were black like me — would there ever come a time when home could be anywhere we wanted it to be? I had chosen Kenya — or any other place would choose me? Truly embrace me as one of its own? (145-146)

Ishmael wants to learn Kiswahili much as most Kenyans want to speak in English with an American. However, a part of him still resists and wants to remain American. Were it not for the nature of his job, investigating transnational violence and crime, Ishmael would not be experiencing the identity crisis he is in. He says, “But there was a part of me that resisted, that made me want to never fully belong, and I had begun to suspect that, deep down, I wanted it that way — there was a part of me that wanted to remain American. --- I was sure about one thing though — I was excited that I would be home, back in the U.S. California and Wisconsin were worlds apart, but it was still home” (146).

There is a sense of longing to belong as Ishmael goes back to America. But ironically he will be in America as an illegal immigrant. His being at ease in America is evident when they arrive at

San Francisco since he feels at home although he is far from Madison. He says, “I was home, but home was largely unrecognizable — San Francisco wasn’t Madison, by far. I had never thought of language as anything other than words, but to be surrounded by it after so long, to wallow in it, to understand everything around me — it was as if a long — dulled sense had awoken” (182).

In conclusion suffice it to say Ishmael is in search of a place to call home and he is torn between identifying himself with Africa or America where he was born and brought up. The police department is riddled with institutionalized racism and he relocates to Nairobi to become a private investigator together with his Kenyan counterpart David Odhiambo. Ishmael’s dark skin let him blend in but his American accent betrays him. He misses America, his parents and the dreams he enjoyed as he grew up in Madison. Ishmael’s identity is found in his work and he influences O and Muddy to deal with perpetrators of transnational violence and crime in an attempt to bring about a world in which everybody feel secure and have a sense of belonging.

3.4 Narrative Strategies

Authors choose to employ narrative techniques in their work for various reasons. The primary purpose of an author in writing a work of art is to communicate their message to the target audience. How effectively one communicates depends on the narrative strategies or the artistic choices employed in the work. Genette, in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* argues that, “To study the temporal order of a narrative is to compare the orders in which events or temporal sections are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events or temporal segments have in the story” (35). In the analysis of a narrative therefore it is important to identify the order in which the events occur. Genette recognizes the fact that, “folklore

narrative habitually conforms, at least in its major articulations to chronological order” (36). However, in detective and mystery narratives the order of events is not as straight forward as it may seem. The story begins with a crime, mostly murder, which has already occurred and the narrator takes us back as the detective tries to gather evidence of the cause of the murder and those who are behind the crime.

Black Star Nairobi starts with the discovery of the body of the murdered black American in Ngong forest. The investigations are complicated by the Norfolk bombing coupled with post-election violence. This is the background against which the events in the novel take place in Kenya. Indeed Mukoma structures his novel such that the first eight chapters the events are happening in Kenya. The body of Aparara is found in Ngong forest, there is the Norfolk bombing; Mary’s murder by Sahara and her subsequent burial against the background of post-election violence which erupts after the presidential results are announced. The second phase of the novel focuses on events when O, Muddy and Ishmael are in Mexico where they are the guests of Jason’s contact man, Julio. The third part focuses on what happens when they cross over to America. Details of Sahara, the prime perpetrator of transnational violence and crime, are explored in this section. Ishmael, O and Muddy are back in Kenya in the last three chapters of the novel. The structure of the novel and its setting connects well with Mukoma’s treatment of the theme of transnational violence and crime.

Chatman, in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, argues that:

Narrative structure imparts meaning on event, character and details of setting. Events can be any kind of physical or mental action, while character can be any entity that can be personalized, and setting is any evocation of place. (25)

In a detective narrative the events, the investigators and the setting are significant in the analysis of the narrative in an attempt to derive the message which the author wants to communicate. The setting of *Black Star Nairobi* gives evidence to the narration of transnational violence and crime since the events start from Kenya and we find the detectives crossing over in America through Mexico and the violence witnessed in Kenya cut across these countries. E.M Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel*, says, “A plot is a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality” (61). Forster argues that just like in a story, which he defines as a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence, the time sequence is also preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it in a plot. In *Black Star Nairobi* most of the events are narrated in the past tense meaning that the events being narrated have already taken place and then there is progression of events being narrated in present tense as the hunt for Sahara move from Kenya to America and then back to Kenya. As in *Nairobi Heat*, Mukoma starts his story in *Black Star Nairobi* in *medias res*. In *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* Michael Meyer says, “Stories can also begin in the middle of things, in this kind of plot we enter the story on the verge of some important moment” (65). The discovery of the body of the murdered black American and the bombing of Norfolk Hotel the following day raises a lot of questions which Ishmael and O are determined to seek answers to as they embark on gathering evidence against Sahara and his men.

Suspense is one narrative strategy Mukoma effectively employs in communicating his message in *Black Star Nairobi*. For instance Mukoma withholds the name of the murdered black

American and very few details are revealed by Peter Kamau, the pathologist, who gives the indication that the murdered man could be African-American. The name of the murdered man, Amos Aparu, is revealed to us much later in the novel, hence, suspense has been building up as we keep asking ourselves about the identity of the dead man. Bal in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* defines suspense as, “the effect of the procedures by which the reader or the character is made to ask questions which are only answered later”. Bal argues:

It is possible to get some grasp of the various kinds of suspense in terms of focalization. These questions may be asked and answered within a short space of time, or only at the end of the story. It is also possible that some questions are solved fairly quickly, while others are shelved. If suspense is developed then the questions will somehow, be recalled repeatedly and the answers postponed. (163-164)

There are two instances when suspense is at its peak and we ask ourselves what is going to happen next in this novel. The first instance is the scene where Ishmael, Mary and Muddy are ambushed leading to the shooting of Mary. O is just on time and as he comes in and shoots Serengeti and Tsavo we wonder what is going to happen to Sahara who is the leader of the violent gang. The second instance is at the Visit Hotel when the detectives come face to face with Sahara and it is a race against time since Sahara intends to detonate the bombs he has set in Kenyatta International Conference Centre where the president, the prime minister and their ministers are meeting to discuss formation of unity government. At last O shoots Sahara before he executes his plot.

The time of the narrating a story is an important aspect which need to be considered when analyzing a narrative text. Genette says:

I can very well tell a story without specifying the place where it happens, and whether this place is more or less distant from the place where I am telling it; nevertheless, it is almost impossible for me not to locate the story in time with respect to my narrating act, since I must necessarily tell the story in a present, past or future tense. This is perhaps why the temporal determinations of narrating instances are manifestly more important than its spatial determinations. (215)

Genette is laying emphasis on the importance of time of the narrating in relation to the setting, where the action takes place. It is difficult to ignore the time aspect in the narrative act. He identifies four narrating instances. These are: subsequent, which is the past tense narrative and therefore the narrating is subsequent to what it tells. Prior, which refers to predictive narrative generally in the future and the third instance is simultaneous where the narrative is in the present contemporaneous with the action. The fourth instance is interpolated but it is the subsequent and simultaneous narrating which Mukoma employs in communicating his message in *Black Star Nairobi*. From the onset of the novel a crime has been committed and a body is lying in Ngong forest even before Ishmael and O arrive to pick it and commence investigations. Chapter one begins:

A day before the explosion at the Norfolk Hotel, O and I stood in the middle of the infamous Ngong forest, looking at the body of what had once been a suit-wearing tall black man. Devoured by the wild animals of Ngong, the man's corpse looked more like an animal carcass. (7)

These two sentences in which the dominant tense is past tense reveal that the narrating time is subsequent to the events it tells. This is the dominant strategy Mukoma has used in the novel and it is the commonest narrating instance used in narrating mystery narrative where a crime has already been committed. However, Mukoma also uses simultaneous narrating instance where the events happen at the same time as they are being narrated. For instance Ishmael says:

In the video, he walks to the back, looks at what is presumably equipment, and then waves them on through. The van goes into the underground parking lot. The men got out and the driver reverses and parks facing the ramp... they give the guards in the security room a full view of nothing important. (54-55)

This incidence has already taken place but Ishmael is narrating what is taking place when the video is playing of how the men suspected of bombing Norfolk hotel and accessed the place. It is also important to note that Ishmael is narrating the events as he watches them from the video but he is not personally involved in the events of the story being narrated. His role is a passive one since he is an observer of what is happening. Ishmael's role as a passive narrator changes in another instance of simultaneous narrating when Sahara leads his gang and attacks Ishmael, Mary and Muddy in O's house. Ishmael narrates:

A soft sound coming from the door that freezes us in place ...like someone is running a feather along it, followed by silence. As if on cue, Serengeti takes the safety off his gun and continues holding it to Mary's temple. Tsavo stands behind Muddy, his hand slightly over his gun ... I look under the table but Sahara is gone. I rush over to Muddy, dragging the chair along ...she is a bit dazed, bleeding from a cut in her forehead... Then I see

Mary's body on the floor. I take Sahara's gun and go after him. I'm going to kill him.
(77- 81)

In this case Ishmael is involved in the events taking place at the same time as the narrative act. The use of present tense brings the sense of immediacy and this also heightens suspense as we ask what is going to happen next. Besides, Mukoma wants the reader to experience violence and crime which in this case makes us empathize with Mary who is shot dead.

The narrative voice is a narrative strategy used by authors in communicating their messages. Bal says that, "Traditionally, narratives have been called according to the voice of the narrator, 'first person or 'third person' novels with an exceptional second person experiment" (20). She argues that the narrator is the most central in the analysis of narrative text and his identity lend the text its specific character.

Black star Nairobi has Ishmael as the narrator and also a character in this narrative. Hence it can be identified as a first person narrative text. Ishmael is therefore a character bound narrator since he is also an actor in the fabula. It is through his eyes that most of the events unfold to us. It is important to note that when the novel opens at the beginning Ishmael appears to be an observer particularly when he is at the crime scene at Norfolk Hotel. We listen to his voice telling us of events that mainly involves other characters who are at the scene trying to rescue a survivor, Jack Mpande and his family, who is trapped in the rubble. It is after this incident that Ishmael as a narrator and the protagonist is cast as a participant in the events of the story. This use of the first person protagonist makes the reader identify with Ishmael as he endeavours to combat crimes

and as he tries to unravel the mystery surrounding the murder cases in the two novels. Hence Ishmael's account of the events that unfolds in the novel becomes credible to the reader especially when Mukoma gives other characters a chance to communicate their points of view regarding what they experience in certain instances thus complementing what the reader hears from Ishmael.

Apart from the protagonist's voice, Mukoma uses other voices in the text to communicate his message. He does this when he employs dialogue when characters communicate their experiences of the events which happen to other characters or to themselves as the story unfolds. Mukoma ascribes different characters specific languages based on the diction which he feels fit certain characters. For instance, Kamau is a pathologist and he uses medical terms as he explains his findings of the autopsy he has conducted on Apará's body. He also uses proverbs and riddles that Ishmael says only made sense in his place of work. At Broadway's Tavern the kind of language spoken by MC Hammer reveals the type of people who patronize this bar. They are the common lot who think that a little bloodletting is good to bless democracy. The conversation involving Ishmael, O and Muddy is marked by American slang and swear words which reflect the American setting. Ishmael is born in Madison Wisconsin in U.S.A. and the fact that O and Muddy pick these American slangs and swear words suggests the influence Ishmael is exerting on his associates. When he is back in America he says:

Yet, at the same time, it was home. American English! I had never thought of language as anything other than words, but to be surrounded by it after so long, to wallow in it, to understand everything around me, it was as if a long-dulled sense had awoken. Even

when I couldn't make out a whole conversation or even a single sentence in the noise of people and machinery, there was a sense of familiarity, of being home. (182)

Ishmael has relocated from America to Kenya and as he carries out his mission of investigation he has a nagging feeling of belonging. Much as his ancestral continent is Africa, the language he speaks draws him more to America than to Africa. Mikhail Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* says, "It is impossible to lay out the languages of the novel on a single plane, to stretch them out along a single line. It is a system of intersecting planes" (48). Bakhtin argues that, "The novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice" (261). It follows that in the analysis of a novel one takes into consideration the "stylization of the various forms of oral everyday narration. It is this oral everyday narration which makes internal stratification of language, of its social heteroglossia and the variety of individual voices in it that are characteristic of authentic novelistic prose"(261). Mukoma uses the various voices to communicate transnational violence and crime and other concerns which are of global in nature.

In advancing the theme of post- election Mukoma employs contrast as strategy to communicate the disparity between the rich and the poor. He juxtaposes areas where the poor and jobless youth are manipulated by politician with estates where the rich people reside. For instance, Ishmael describes Runda Estate as, "An Island of wealth and calm — the violence hadn't touched Runda" (245). This is the estate where Hassan holds Mpande, the South African survivor of Norfolk Hotel bombing. The place amazes Muddy when they drive there to meet Mpande. Muddy says, "Like the aristocrats in fucking England — holding other nobles as

prisoners of war in castles, with servants and everything” (245). In contrast Dandora is a slum where the poor people reside.

It is one of the areas in Nairobi which experiences post- election violence. This juxtaposition of poverty alongside affluent effectively communicates one of the underlying causes of post- election violence which is triggered by the seemingly rigged election. Ishmael tells us:

Dandora slum, en route to Runda, was still smoking from the fires of a few days ago. The debris and trash along the road to Runda was much worse than it had ever been before, and hundreds of people now stood there despondently, looking at the passing cars. Runda was clean — clean security company cars parked by the gates manned by armed guards in clean blue uniforms. In Dandora there was no vegetation — Runda was like being in another climate, where manicured green hedges sprouted from the ground. (246)

Mukoma also uses contrast to reveal Kenya’s crime world in the social places. For instance Broadway’s Tavern is “located between the slum of Kangemi and rich mountain view Estate” (11). It is a place which is patronized by low class people, but thieves, politicians, prostitutes and even police officers meet at this place and share beer and roast goat. There seems to be an understanding between police officers and criminals. Information is shared which helps the police officers to combat crime and unlike Broadway’s Tavern, Limuru Country Club is a golf club patronized by tourists and the rich people. Crimes and violence are plotted in this place and these are not the ordinary criminal activities discussed in Broadway’s Tavern. Ishmael says, “Under the guise of playing golf and protected by the privacy of a club house, everything from land grabs to hostile takeovers was discussed here. The pot bellied black and white men in white

polo shirt and golf gloves went back to their businesses a little bit richer every day. (65)The crimes which are discussed in Limuru Country Club involve both Africans and white people which demonstrate that these crimes involve people of all nations. For instance the idea of hostile takeovers suggests the use of mercenaries to overthrow targeted governments hence advancing transnational violence and crime.

Foreshadowing is another narrative strategy Mukoma employs in *Black Star Nairobi* to communicate his message. O says that Mary has dedicated her life to saving at least one pupil out of the many who attend Kangemi Primary school. These pupils have a bright future which O compares to the Promised Land. However, with the impending post election violence this Promised Land will be coloured red meaning there will be bloodshed. O says, “Yeah, she’s almost done teaching ... I can see the Promised Land — and Ishmael, we are going to paint it red” (18). After the presidential vote are announced violence breaks out in various parts of the country confirming what O had intimated to earlier. Hassan informs Ishmael and O that they should watch out as they investigate the murder of Aparara since those involved are likely to counter their efforts, thus Hassan warns, “Be very careful — if we could not see these people coming, neither will you. This is an enemy without a face, a name, and a history ... There is no way of knowing where this will take us” (42-43). Hassan’s message is that criminals are well aware that they are being followed and they also fight back to stop the law enforcement agents from pursuing them. These criminals strike when they are least expected hence the need to be alert at all times.

Hassan's warning comes true when Ishmael, Mary and Muddy are ambushed at O's residence by Sahara and company. This incident turns violent and bloody since the attackers kill Mary when their blackmail fails. The attackers also suffer the loss of three white men, Tsavo, Serengeti and Kilimanjaro. Sahara and company are involved in transnational violence and crimes and they are connected to other people who are after Ishmael and O. This makes Jason arrange for Ishmael, O and Muddy travel to America, through Mexico, and track down Sahara who is believed to have moved to America after the incident at O's apartment. When O, Ishmael and Muddy meet with Mary's parent at Limuru in preparation for Mary's burial, the armed militia whom they had come across at the makeshift road block follow them up to Ngatia's home. Ngatia, Mary's father has a beer he is taking and before they leave the house and take cover in the tea plantation, he gaps the last of his Tusker with an impish grin and says, "I might as well die happy" (126). Ngatia does not survive the raid by the militia. He is killed in the tea plantation although many of the attackers are also killed in the shootout. Ishmael reports that, "If Amnesty comes here tomorrow and they count the bodies, this will be massacre, no matter what we say" (132). Ngatia's pronouncement foregrounds his death and it is evident that this narrative strategy is effectively used to communicate post election violence which Mukoma addresses in this novel.

Kenyans are divided along ethnic lines during the presidential elections which Mwai Kibaki a kikuyu is pitted against Raila Odinga, a Luo. It is ironical that violence marks these elections and close to one thousand people are killed while thousands are displaced. On the other hand Kenyans are united in celebrating the victory of President Obama who is of Kenyan origin. Ishmael says, "The Kenyan president had got on radio to say that the following day would be a public holiday. That was a good move; the whole country was going to be hangover tomorrow

anyway” (14). Mukoma is challenging Kenyans to reject politics based on ethnicity since these are divisive politics which do not augur well for the country. Much as we celebrate Obama’s win of the United States presidency, negative ethnicity should not be the guiding factor in Kenyan electoral process.

It is also ironical that O is not allowed to bury his wife Mary in Kisumu on a piece land he had bought and built a house for his mother. When the elders meet they are against O’s wish that Mary be buried in Kisumu. Ethnic consideration, particularly during this time of elections, becomes a factor which makes people to act prejudicially. Yet, back in Nairobi we find neighbours from different ethnic background coming together to console O as they mourn Mary. Ishmael says:

It didn’t matter that most of the neighbours hardly spoke to each other, that they were from different ethnicities, or that they had to go to work the following day — they kept O company till six in the morning, talking and laughing about things peculiarly Kenyan, peppering me with questions about America and Muddy about Rwanda.(109)

The spirit of unity is evident in the people gathered at O’s place. They mourn Mary and they have met here to console and support O during this time of sorrow and it is evident elections have not divided them along ethnic lines much as everyone is entitled to support their preferred presidential candidate.

Mukoma uses flashback to highlight how O meets Mary when he had gone to her school when there was a theft case. By this time O is a constable and Mary is a school teacher. It is Ishmael

who narrates O's account of how O starts dating Mary. Hence it is a flashback which is actually narrated to us by a second person. Ishmael recounts:

When they first met, he hadn't even made detective yet. He was a constable called to her school because someone had broken in and made off with grounds maintenance equipment, wheel barrows, shears, and the like. He saw her as she was walking to lunch. He tried to get himself invited along. She said no. He kept coming back to her school and questioning potential witnesses until she said yes. (107)

It is this flashback which reveals how O ends up marrying Mary and we understand why he is so aggrieved by the murder of his wife and he will not rest until he avenge for her death. His emotional balance is tilted and he will not spare anybody connected with crime and violence. Indeed, O says, "That case of the missing wheelbarrow has never been solved to this day, ... But the case of lonely hearts was" (107). This is how O's relationship with Mary starts and he ends up marrying her; they are the two lonely hearts who end up in a happy matrimony.

Mukoma employs symbolism in this novel in narrating transnational violence and crime. Kennedy and Gioia in *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* defines symbolism as 'a thing that suggests more than its literal meaning. Symbols generally do not 'stand for' any one meaning, nor for anything absolutely definite; they point, they hint ...they cast long shadows" (251). The title *Black Star Nairobi* is symbolic in the sense that Nairobi is portrayed as a very insecure place. The insecurity is evident from the murder of Aparara whose body is found in Ngong forest. Following the murder is the bombing of Norfolk Hotel which is frequented by tourists yet Sahara and his accomplices plant a bomb and they are not noticed by

the guard at the hotel. Against this background the post- election violence deals a blow to the slum areas such as Dandora and Nairobi is not a safe place and its star is dark and therefore fails to give hope to its inhabitants and visitors to the city.

Janet is a Rwandan who crosses over to Kenya with her parents to escape the Rwanda genocide. Her parents live in Mathare while she is adopted by O and Mary who become her surrogate parents. She is rescued by Ishmael and O from rapist in Mathare. Her embracing O and Mary symbolize a bright future where the youth do not suffer from ethnic bigotry of the old generation. It is this old generation which is to blame when O cannot bury his wife in Kisumu because of ethnic animosity which has been fuelled by the presidential elections. O captures this animosity when he tells Ngatia, “Yes ... because of me she is dead — but she was dead to you a long time ago. See what your hatred has brought home? ... It is people like you and my mother who taught these young men to hate” (124).

In conclusion, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that Mukoma has addressed issues which are of global concern and the narrative techniques he has employed enables him to communicate with his audience effectively. Transnational violence and crime is central in this novel and it is enhanced by the very setting of the text. Kenya, Mexico and America in which the events take place provide a window to the reader to have a grasp of how crimes and violence across international boundaries are organized and executed. The complexity of unraveling the murder of Apará demonstrates the necessity of combined efforts of international community in fighting transnational violence and crime.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In this study I have examined the issues addressed in Mukoma's novels *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi*. The overriding theme in these novels is narration of transnational violence and crime. Mukoma explores the world of crime and violence and how the criminals operate to defeat justice. The detectives endeavour to unravel the crimes perpetrated by these criminals amidst challenges posed by the cartels in the crime world. Mukoma reveals that these criminals work in collaboration with well connected people in governments which make it difficult for the detective to resolve the crimes since the investigators are hindered by those who work together with the criminals. Mukoma is challenging the people to reject such leaders in government who work for their own selfish end at the expense of the general populace whom they are supposed to render service to.

The novels which were the primary source of information are detective narratives which presuppose that a crime, mostly murder, has been committed. Mukoma's novels involve the murder of a young American girl, and an African American man in *Nairobi Heat* and *Black Star Nairobi* respectively. The difference lies in the fact that Macy Jane is murdered in Madison Wisconsin, America while Amos Apara is murdered in Kenya and his body found dumped in Ngong forest. Ishmael Fofona is the protagonist in both novels but in the *Black Star Nairobi* he has relocated to Kenya and together with O, his counterpart, formed a private detective agency —Black Star Agency.

The two novels use the first person narrator who is also a participant in the events taking place in each novel hence we have a character bound narrator. Mukoma does not make his readers depend solely on Ishmael since he introduces other voices of the characters in the novels and this enables the reader to have the different points of view as the events unfold. Different characters engage in acts of violence guided by what they want to achieve while others do so depending on the attitude they have towards a certain section of the society. In the case of Alexander, he is driven by greed to control funds donated to the foundation, while Thompson is led by his contemptuous attitude towards Africans. Mukoma has demonstrated that there is much more an author can achieve using this sub genre of literature. He does this by exploring thematic concerns which engage the contemporary world and which are a threat to the international community.

In communicating the theme of transnational violence and crime Mukoma has made a deliberate effort in the choice of characters who are credible and their involvement in the central theme in both novels leaves the reader in no doubt when they are involved in acts of violence and crimes or even those who are in the fore front of combating crimes. The participation of Ishmael, O and Muddy is a demonstration that combating transnational violence and crime requires the combined effort of people of all races and nations of the world.

This study shows that Mukoma uses various narrative strategies to communicate his message in the two novels. The multiplicity of narrative voices employed by the author reflect the characters experiences and their views in regard to violence and crime which they take part in or how they are affected as they seek safety and also combat crime acts. The Rwanda genocide is the backdrop against which *Nairobi Heat* is set and its effects are effectively communicated by the

refugees themselves through the account narrated by Mary Karuhimbi. Mukoma withdraws the protagonist, Ishmael, and allows the victim of the violence to express her emotional account.

In both novels Mukoma has addressed other themes related to transnational violence and crime. He has demonstrated that besides writing a thrilling detective novel, issues such as racism, tribalism, greed and betrayal, revenge, polarized politics and the resultant post-election violence are also explored and how they link to violence and crime at the international scene. Hence these issues are global in nature and Mukoma has gone further to challenge the international community to work together in an effort to combat them since they are impediments to world peace and harmony.

I have identified and discussed the narrative techniques Mukoma uses in both novels. *Black Star Nairobi* is more complex in its narration since in certain instances Mukoma uses simultaneous narrating instances which is not the case in his first novel, *Nairobi Heat*. This technique makes the events being narrated more vivid and captures the attention of the reader as the events unfold. The use of present tense in simultaneous narrating instances is comparable to watching a live or a recorded commentary of a cinematic event. The use of present and present continuous tenses enhances the immediacy of the narratives hence Mukoma takes the reader with him and experience the events as they unfold.

In both novels there are certain characters that are central in unlocking the secret behind the murder cases being investigated. Chocbanc in *Nairobi Heat* is an important character who reveals the shady deals of the Never Again Foundation and the conflict between Alexander and

Joshua. The revelation contributes to the resolution of the conflict and assists Ishmael in resolving the murder of Macy Jane. In *Black Star Nairobi*, Jack Mpande plays a similar role to Chocbanc, since it is through him that Sahara's role in International Democracy and Economic Security Council is brought to the limelight. These revelations by the characters in each novel contribute to the development of plot in each novel as the detectives conclusively unravel the murder cases which Mukoma introduces at the beginning of the two novels.

This study has found out that Mukoma chooses to address transnational violence and crime in an attempt to demonstrate that crimes affect everybody wherever they are committed. For instance in *Black Star Nairobi*, Americans, Europeans and Kenyans lose their lives in a bomb blast at Norfolk Hotel yet they are innocent. Sahara and his accomplices' intentions are to kill Jack Mpande because he disagrees with the rest of the members. Mukoma also suggests that transnational violence and crime need not be carried out by known terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab. Groups of individuals operating under the cover of nongovernmental organization are also involved in circulation of international crimes. In *Nairobi Heat* we have the Never Again Foundation which receives donations which are intended to help the Rwanda refugees but the funds end up benefitting the managers of the Foundation.

This study reveals that the issues Mukoma addresses are effectively communicated through the narrative strategies he employs. He has made a deliberate choice of the setting of two novels where events in *Nairobi Heat* occur in America, Kenya and Rwanda while in *Black Star Nairobi* the events take place in Kenya, Mexico and America. These places represent other countries in the world and Mukoma emphasis how transnational violence and crime circulate across

international frontiers. In fighting international crimes and violence Mukoma demonstrates the critical role women play. Muddy is an important character in both novels and she symbolizes women and their efforts in working together with their male counterparts to defeat violence and crime. She has the experience of the Rwanda genocide and having worked as a soldier for Rwanda Patriotic Front, and her military skills become handy when they are attacked by the Kikuyu militia when they take cover in the tea plantation together with Ngatia and Mumbi. Hence, Mukoma gives prominence to women's contribution in this case and the reader appreciates Muddy for the moves she makes to outdo the perpetrators of crime in several instances in the two novels.

It is evident that an author can address serious issues in a detective narrative. This sub genre in literature has always been common and it would be an area of interest in literary discourse where researchers can engage in a comparative study particularly in how different authors treat the thematic concerns they raise in their novels and how these concerns are communicated to the readers. Transnational violence and crime is not unique in detective narratives in Western world but it would be interesting to have a comparative study of how writers from other parts of the world, especially Africa treat issues which have engaged other parts the world more than ever before in recent times. Such engagement would contribute significantly to comparative literary discourse.

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