

Abstract

This article critiques four Kenyan prison documentaries which present young women's pathways to prison. The critique reveals how the documentaries effectively go beyond the spectacle of crime, interrogate the histories of the young women convicts, and challenge a judicial system that downplays the link between childhood abuses and criminality. By reading the imprisonment of young women in the larger context of crime, this critical engagement envisions transformation of society: it critically demonstrates societal practices that violate the rights of girls which subsequently result in their aggression. I further signpost detention at the President's pleasure and life sentences imposed on the young offenders as the epitome of state patriarchy. Above all, this critique unmasks imprisonment enabled by patriarchy in Kenya and argues for transformation of societal structures that facilitate gender inequalities.