

**KENYAN DRAMA FILMS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE AESTHETICS
OF SELECTED FILMS.**

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*Kenyan drama films :
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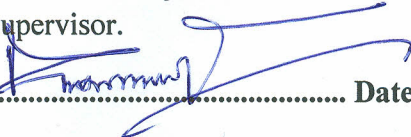
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SUPERVISOR: This Project has been submitted for review with my approval as a University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This is a special dedication to my beloved son, Mukenia, for his love of films.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Glory be to God for his care and providence.

I wish to thank my dear Lecturer and Supervisor Dr. Mugubi for his untiring effort in guiding and instructing me throughout the course. Your support and advice is highly appreciated Sir.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the aesthetics of selected Kenyan drama films. The movies selected are those produced, directed, and acted by Kenyan people in Kenya. Three Kenyan movies were analysed; *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) by Billy Mbilikimo, *Chasing Moses* (2009) by Alexander Konstantaras and *The Village Cassanova* (2010) by Simon Nduti. In order to establish the parameters under which Kenyan drama films could be critiqued, the study sought to analyse dramatic aspects of the selected drama films, establish the peculiarities of its aesthetics and investigate the socio-cultural aspects embedded in the selected drama films. Two theories were used in this study. The formalist film theory popularly advocated by the Russian formalists like Tynyanov emphasises on the aesthetic value of film and argues that the meaning of a film can be deciphered from the aesthetic elements employed by the film maker. The postmodernism theory emphasises the reworking of existing ideas and styles as typified by the techniques of pastiche and intertextuality. In this respect, the styles in the films may not necessarily be complete innovations of the directors but rather a reworking of existing film styles to suit their own artistic expression depending on the intent of the films they produce. The methodology that was used for research is the descriptive case study design where selected films were analysed after watching them. The films provided the primary data to be used in the analysis while secondary data was attained from the internet, journals and books. This study involved an analysis of the specific films' aesthetic elements after which a conclusion of the findings was done to ascertain the fact that Kenyan drama films have their own aesthetics which characterise them. It was clear that the various filmmaking techniques employed by the filmmakers created dramatic effect and worked together to make the films communicate and appeal to the audience in a particular way. The various social cultural aspects embedded in the films reflect the society's beliefs and values in relation to religion, family, wealth, morality and alcohol.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Intertextuality: Showing a relationship between a film and other earlier films in style either by explicit or implicit referencing.

Aesthetics: Artistic phenomena of a movie. A conception of beauty, taste and pleasure for both the spectator and the theoretician.

African film: Film produced directed and acted by African people to tell the African story.

Hegemony: The taken-for-granted 'common sense' outlook on some aspect of human reality shared by the vast majority of people within a society

Kenyan film: Film produced, directed and acted by people who live and work in Kenya, whether born in Kenya or not, and in one way or the other have been influenced by the Kenyan way of life and narrate stories relevant to the Kenyan audience.

Drama films: Films that tell a story dealing with contemporary problems and conflicts which have a plot carried out by juxtaposing of shots and by what characters do and say in a particular setting.

FILM: A modern art that uses technology to stylize real life through visual narration in order to reach and influence the thoughts and feelings of the audience.

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CHAPTER ONE:

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Theatre practitioners and theorists like Stanislavsky and Brecht have had great influence in film. These practitioners had divergent views on actor training and performance which impact a lot on aesthetics of films. Realist theorists like Andre Bazin (1918-1958) and Siegfried Kracauer (1889-1996), argue that film thrives on the basis of realism because,

“We simply could not make sense of fictional narratives if we did not bring to them something like a default assumption that the characters have motives and feelings of basically the same kinds as real people do, that physical and social processes operate in much the same way in the world of fiction as they do in reality” (Stam. and Miller. 2004:114).

The audience believe what is happening on screen and they emotionally respond to it as they would respond to real events in the real world. Aesthetics therefore, “covers reflection upon the phenomena of signification considered as artistic phenomena which implies a conception of ‘beauty’ and thus of the taste and pleasure of the spectator as well as the theoretician” (Aumont, et al. 2004:6). In this respect, film aesthetics depend upon general aesthetics which is a philosophical discipline concerned with all arts since “in philosophy, aesthetics formed part, together with ethics and logic, of the triad of ‘normative’ sciences devoted to devising rules concerning the beautiful, the good, and the true respectively” (Stam and Miller 2000:257).

Stanislavski believed on the importance of aesthetics. Writing to a young student, Stanislavsky says that he gave up his personal business and went into theatre because theatre is the most powerful art which influences more than books or newspapers. He further asserted that “an actor is a teacher of beauty and truth” (Stanislavski. 1958:27). For film to be successful in its influence and pedagogy it should have a beauty that appeals to the audience so that they can sit for a long time with their eyes on the screen or else they would be bored and stop watching.

Brecht, a theatre and film practitioner, who has had great influence in theatre and film production, came up with theories that have influenced film production through actor training, scripting, directing, editing and in overall production of movies. He emphasises the need of alienation of both the actor and the audience. Brecht also underscores the importance of aesthetics in a ‘Short organum for the theatre’ where he argues that, “to explain the theory of theatrical alienation except within an aesthetic frame work would be impossibly awkward” (Brecht, 1964:180).

“Brecht's theatre of enlightenment and entertainment confronts a public largely indifferent to critical theatre practice” (Silberman. 1980:95-105). His system concerns itself with estrangement, making the familiar look unfamiliar. According to him, film should be appealing and at the same time incite the audience to action. He argued that films should leave the audience pondering on what they need to do to bring change to their lives. Brecht developed a highly elaborate and sophisticated new aesthetics -epic theatre- to address the spectator in a more rational way. According to Brecht, aesthetic standards were linked to the cognitive adequacy of a work of art. Such new aesthetics involved a radical departure from any attitude of indifference to practical experience. It posed new questions concerning the relationship of a pleasure-provoking object to "external reality."

The new aesthetics re-defined imagination as creative, the aesthetic attitude as a significant activity, and the aesthetic response as a constructive and interpretive event. Cognitive meaning was thus recognized as a no less important element of "style" than, say, sensuous surface. Within such a context Brecht felt that his "theatre of a scientific age" could take up its abode in aesthetics. Even natural sciences, he explains somewhat curtly in the *Organon* preface, create an aesthetic of their own, and he quotes approvingly Oppenheimer's dictum about a scientific stance "having its own beauty and being well suited to man's position on Earth" (Suvin, 1967).

Kenyan drama film is still in its early stages of its creation and so the aesthetics of Kenyan film is still being forged in the crucible of practice. Not many studies have been carried out regarding its aesthetics. It is a film that cannot be divorced from the circumstances of its creators and as such should be analysed in respect to those circumstances and not on the ideologies of the West. The aesthetics in Kenyan drama films are also influenced by the social, cultural, political, historical, economic and technological conditions of the country and are tailored to suit the Kenyan audience and can be of interest to outside world. Aesthetics of Cinema can be studied in two facets: the general aspect and the specific aspect. The general aspect contemplates the aesthetic effects of the Cinema as a medium while the specific aspect is centred on analysis of aesthetic qualities of particular works, which is the direction that this study took. This study therefore, attempted to find out the aesthetics of selected Kenyan drama films in reference to:

- i. Narrative structure, themes and ideas
- ii. Mise en scene- Scenery, figure placement and movement, props and costumes
- iii. Camera work-framing, lighting, focus, camera movement
- iv. Sound –dialogue, music

- v. Editing-composition of shots

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although Kenyan film has been in existence since independence its aesthetic appeal has not been studied. Film critics have done very little in critiquing Kenyan film and as a result, it has remained unknown by film scholars elsewhere in the world. Kenyan film has been influenced by historical, economic, cultural and technological factors which have greatly impacted on its aesthetics. For the Kenyan film makers therefore, the aesthetics they use in making films are those that are possible and applicable in their environment. **Film Kenya**, on Monday December 20, 2010 posted in their blog an article on marketing and distribution of films from the Kenya film industry and the writer lamented that “The differences in economic circumstances and fundamental culture between different groups in the country are so marked and outstanding that there is no definite “Kenyan Aesthetic” in most of the arts, not just film”. This argument is farfetched and poses challenges to film critics to explore and document the Kenyan film Aesthetics. The writer further said that “we need to be working harder to discover or create a film aesthetic that will hold unbridled appeal for Kenyan audiences”(mvitti185, 2010). This assertion triggered the researcher’s curiosity and desire to find out if there are truly any Kenyan film aesthetics in Kenyan drama films and what such aesthetics entail. The appeal of Kenyan film to the local audience is manifest in the number of people who watch movies made in Kenya with some being aired by local Television channels and others sold in various other points like **Nduti one stop shop** at Nairobi and some Supermarkets in many parts of the country. A visit to public places like pubs, tea kiosks and other places in rural areas where people meet to relax is a testimony of the extent to which Kenyan film is

pleasurable to the local audience. Actors like Jackie Nyaminde, Angel Waruinge and Samwel Kinuthia are known even by little children in primary schools; which is evidence that Kenyan audience like to watch local films. This shows that Kenyan film has got its own peculiar aesthetics that appeal to the local audience and therefore, what remains is for scholars to find out and theorise Kenyan film aesthetics. This study is very important because it sought to develop a framework in which Kenyan film can be studied and analysed.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To analyse the dramatic aspects of the selected Kenyan drama films.
- ii. To establish the aesthetic peculiarities of Kenyan drama films.
- iii. To investigate the socio-cultural aspects embedded in the selected Kenyan Drama films.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the dramatic aspects of the Kenyan drama films?
- ii. What are the aesthetic peculiarities of Kenyan drama films?
- iii. Which socio-cultural aspects are embedded in the Kenyan dramatic films?

1.5 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Film as a medium thrives in aesthetics. No one would be willing to spend money and time in order to watch a film if it does not appeal to the senses. Different scholars agree that aesthetics in film is indispensable if it is going to meet the objective of edutainment. Brecht for example in his 1949 manifesto 'A Short Organum for the theatre' argued that "It has been theatre's business to entertain people as it also has all of the other arts". He further said that, if it is turned into a 'purveyor of morality' it would run the risk of being debased, and this would occur once it fails to make its moral lesson enjoyable to the senses (Brecht 1964:180). Film should therefore remain something entirely appealing to the senses and this is only achieved through use of aesthetics. This study will help scholars in analysing Kenyan drama films and so it will be a breakthrough for future studies in Kenyan film aesthetics.

The choice of the three movies was arrived at after watching various Kenyan drama films. The movies were chosen because they possess aesthetic elements which could be representative of the aesthetics of Kenyan drama films. Both films were made in Kenya by different directors and due to the fact that they tend to use some common aesthetic elements in their films, then we can use them as a representative sample of the others.

1.6 SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

This study is based on the analysis of three Kenyan films produced by local producers who do not have any formal training on film production and therefore out of experience tell African stories through films. The films analysed are, Billy Mbilikimo's *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), Alexander Konstantaras' *Chasing Moses* (2009) and Simon Nduti's *Village Cassanova* (2010). Some of the aesthetics in the films may be evident not because the directors used them deliberately but as a coincidence. In such cases this study

assumed that such coincidence serves to ascertain that such aesthetics naturally find their way into Kenyan film because of the Africans natural way of telling stories which is distinct from the west. Since only three selected films were analysed it might not have been possible to identify every aspect of the aesthetics of the Kenyan films and so this study was limited to the three films selected. For purposes of being thorough, this study did not concentrate on the Narrative structure but on the other aspects-Mise en scene, Camera work, Sound and editing.

1.7 REVIEW OF RELATED OF LITERATURE

Since very little has been done on the aesthetics of Kenyan film, this chapter discusses literature related to film aesthetics in general and how such aesthetics has influenced film production. It particularly focuses on film aesthetics as advocated by other scholars and seeks to point out the gaps left by those scholars in reference to Kenyan film.

The new outlook for artistic culture is no longer that everyone must share the taste of a few, but that all can be creators of that culture. Art has always been a universal necessity; what it has not been is an option for all under equal conditions (Stam & Miller 2000:291). Film, like a mirror to society, reflects the culture of that society from which it is created. Film makers have grown in cultures that shape and influence their thinking and this is evident in the content of the films they produce. Thus in any film, the culture of its creators is embedded in it which gives it a distinct aesthetic appeal. Scholars have not researched on the socio-cultural aspects embedded in Kenyan drama films and this is one area this study will seek to address. The question as to what is Kenyan film may arouse a lengthy debate. Scholars may not wholly agree on what constitutes Kenyan film. Some may argue that Kenyan film is film produced by Kenyan directors; others may argue that it is film produced and shot in Kenya, while still others may argue that it is film acted by Kenyans. The question of authenticity of film has been at the heart of much critical discussion but for the purposes of this study Kenyan film is taken to be film produced, directed and acted by people who live and work in Kenya and in one way or the other have been influenced by the Kenyan way of life and so narrate stories relevant to the Kenyan audience.

The mood of revolutionary optimism for example, which accompanied the process of decolonisation saw the birth of the theory of what was to become known as 'Third Cinema'

which was first developed in Southern America and which stressed the political function. The fact is that every film carries with it a national image; and however arty the film, or however distorted the image of the society that comes across, the 'national face' behind the screen remains all too clearly discernible (Houston, 1963). The beliefs, attitudes and values implicit in any film tend to resonate with those beliefs, attitudes and values which are dominant in the society from which the film originates (Linton, 1979). The same beliefs, attitudes and values influence how directors infuse dramatic aspects in their films in order to attract attention of the audience. Dramatic aspects of Kenyan drama films have not yet been theorized and it is only by theorizing such dramatic aspects that we can find out what is peculiar to Kenyan drama films and what gives them a Kenyan 'feel'. Too heavy a reliance on foreign films, as is the case in Africa, in effect, becomes cultural enslavement. It erodes the ability to discern the beauty of one's culture and art. Those African films which, in intent, content and execution, exhibit awareness belong to the mainstream of Third World cinema. In this cinema, then, we witness a conscious attempt by the film makers to seek out cultural equivalents from their own culture: the stock of references, the signifiers, are all drawn from the indigenous culture.

Kenyan film is influenced by Kenyan culture. For example, in an oral culture like Kenyan culture, speech is golden; no less emphasis is placed on seeing than on hearing. Therefore, although the mainstream film may emphasize on action more than speech, to a Kenyan, both are paramount and so Wanjiku's assertion in her 1999 unpublished thesis that Kenyan film has "poor dialogue" is unfortunate. Kenyan film has got its own peculiar aesthetics which differentiate it from films from the rest of the world and this we shall find out in this study. Scholars have done very little to research on aesthetic use of language in Kenyan film and this will be one area of study in the project.

Brechtian aesthetics were at first conceived in theatre, and later the same were employed in film by Brecht himself and others. Several known directors have used Brechtian aesthetics in their films. Godard for example, who was totally radicalized by the events of May 1968 in which a coalition of college students, intellectuals and workers was suppressed by the government, repudiated all his previous movies as bourgeois and vowed that he would use film as a tool of Marxist revolution. He was greatly influenced by Brecht's belief that a play should not make the audience emotionally identify with the characters but should instead provoke self-reflection, engaging the mind to question one's views. Borrowing a concept from the German Marxist Bertolt Brecht, Godard used a variety of distancing techniques to prevent the audience from identifying emotionally with his characters. Some of the techniques he used are: destruction of plot, political debates, avoidance of emotionally involving close-ups, authorial intrusion in the form of written titles or voice over commentaries, interview scenes and lengthy monologues directed at the camera (Giannetti. 2010:254). Other devices that Godard used are: to film characters from behind as they talk; jump cuts to disrupt the editing flow; characters address the audience directly. For example, in his movie, *Bande Apart* (1964), when Karina turns to the screen and proclaims, 'A plan? What for?'. Another device is seen when Arthur directs the gang to a cafe to prepare for the robbery; the repetition of dialogue from a different camera angle and throwing the audience by including irrelevant details with no connection to the story, for example, Odile feeding a tiger on her way to visit the boys (Mvitti185 20/02/2010). Godard developed a counter cinema whose values are counter posed to those of orthodox cinema but similar to those that Brecht used to counter Aristotelian theatre. These are as follows:

Orthodox cinema

Counter cinema

Narrative transitivity

Narrative intransitivity (episodic)

Identification

Estrangement

Transparency

Foregrounding

Single diegesis (homogeneous)

Multiple diegesis (heterogeneous worlds)

Closure

Aperture (open ended, intertextuality)

Pleasure (entertaining)

Un-pleasure (provoking)

Fiction

Reality (representation of truth)

(Rosen, 1986:120-129)

Scholars are yet to come up with values that distinguish Kenyan film, from film from other parts of the world, since the above is a comparison of western films. This study therefore, forms the bedrock for future studies of Kenyan film. On the Kenyan film, Wanjiku Beatrice (1999) says that, the funding deficiency has greatly affected the quality of films produced here and that evident technicalities are obvious drawbacks to aesthetics. However, she does not point out the aesthetics she refers to in that case. Our study sought to find out these aesthetics. This study also sought to ascertain that the Kenyan film aesthetics are in no way inferior to aesthetics from other parts of the world and that the argument by Wanjiru that films from Kenya have “substandard cinematography and poor dialogue” is farfetched and highly influenced by Hollywood ideology. Kenyan scholars should appreciate the films

produced in Kenya and instead of comparing it to the western films try to see the “Kenyaness” of the productions.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

This study was modelled on the formalist film theory (1915-1930) and Post modernism Film Theory (1980 to date).

1.8.1 FORMALIST FILM THEORY

The formalist movement flourished roughly from 1915 through 1930s and revolved around two groups: the linguistic circle of Moscow and the society for the study of poetic language. The proponents of this theory include Shklyovsky, Tynanov, Vladimir Prop and Vertov. The tenets of this theory include:

- i. All aspects used to compile a film for example rhythm, montage, music comprise the aesthetic form.
- ii. In film, aesthetic perception is autotelic.
- iii. The cinema deployed procedures like lighting and montage in order to render the visible world in the form of semantic signs.

They sought a scientific basis for a highly subjective field: aesthetics. The formalists focused on the texts self-expressive, autonomous dimensions. The early formalists were rigorously aestheticists; for them aesthetic perception was autotelic, an end in itself.

They explored the analogy between language and film. Montage was comparable to prosody in literature. Just as plot is subordinate to rhythm in poetry, so plot is subordinate to

style in cinema. The cinema deployed cinematic procedures like lighting and montage in order to render the visible world in the form of semantic signs. Formalism emphasises how film as a specific form of communication, can be used to produce particular meanings. The formal properties of a film-shot size, camera angle, lighting and editing -all influence meaning. The purpose of art, the formalists argued tautologically, is about being aesthetic, about renewing perception, about making the reader/spectator feel the 'stoniness of the stone'(Stam. 2000:51-2). Brecht Bertolt subsequently politicised the formalists' concept of 'defamiliarization,' re-conceiving it as his *verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect or distanciation), whereby the work of art would simultaneously reveal its own processes of production along with the society. This theory is relevant in this study because it concentrates on the techniques used in filmmaking-for example in editing, camerawork and sound, which constitute to the film's form-because this study sought to find out how the various formal properties of film found in Kenyan drama films are aesthetic.

1.8.2 POST MODERN THEORY.

Postmodernism began in the 1980's. The proponents of this theory include; Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998), Gilles Deleuze, Fredrick Jameson, Jacques Derrida and Francois Chatelet. The tenets of this theory are:

- i. The mainstream conventions of narrative structure, characterisation and suspension of disbelief are not binding.
- ii. There should be no division between "high" and "low" art styles, techniques and texts. It is possible to have a pastiche of many genres and styles.

iii. A self-reflexivity of technique that highlights the construction and relation of the image to other images in media and not to any kind of external reality is accepted. This is done by highlighting the constructed nature of the image in ways that directly reference its production and also by explicit intertextuality that incorporates or references other media and texts.

Whereas modernism was epitomised by experimentation and innovation in cultural production such as film making, postmodernism emphasise the reworking of existing ideas and styles as typified by the techniques of pastiche and intertextuality. The boundaries between different styles are also broken down through an eclectic approach. Post modernism foregrounds the fragmented and heterogeneous nature of socially constituted identity in the contemporary world, where subjectivity becomes “nomadic” and “schizophrenic”. (Stam, 2000: 300). Postmodern art tends to be reflective and ironic. The most typical aesthetic expression of postmodernism is not parody but pastiche, a blank neutral practice of mimicry, without any satiric agenda or sense of alternatives nor for that matter any mystique of originality beyond the ironic orchestration of dead styles, whence the centrality of intertextuality and what Jameson calls the cannibalisation of all the styles of the past. Postmodernists believe that if it works for you it is right. This fits well in the African film since it advocates for freedom of choice from various styles or even amalgamating styles to enable one communicate in ways that are appropriate to them. The theory was applied in this study since it typically extends to a mixing of techniques that traditionally come with value judgments as to their worth and place in culture and the creative and artistic spheres and gives freedom to directors to decide how best to present their stories depending on their environment as is the case with Kenyan film.

This chapter deals with the design and methodology that was used in the study. It also shows the area where the study took place, population and sampling procedures employed and the data collection instruments that were be used.

1.9.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design that was employed was descriptive case study design. The study analysed Simon Nduti's *Village Cassanova* (2010), Billy Mbilikimo's *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) and *Chasing Moses* (2009) by Alexander Konstantaras. The researcher used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from observation, analysis and criticism of film texts themselves, while secondary data was gathered from internet, books and journals. This research design is the best since the study depended on qualitative data analysis.

1.9.2 SITE OF THE STUDY

The study was carried in Kenya where directors who live and work in Nairobi, the capital city, had their films analysed because of their accessibility and availability.

1.9.3 POPULATION SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The researcher visited the Kenya Film Commission where he was assisted with a list of Movies that were entered for Kalasha awards in 2010 and 2011. From this list directors of various movies were contacted and their movies accessed for viewing. After watching many movies, the researcher settled for a total of three films due to their use of various aesthetic techniques that could be representative of the others. The selected movies were

arrived at with biasness towards purposeful sampling to ensure that the movies had the desired aesthetics.

1.9.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Data was first gathered through unstructured viewing of movies to get the desired aesthetics. Later, observation and analysis was done during watching of movies. Because of the nature of this study, the researcher participated in data collection.

1.9.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was done by the researcher as he watched and analysed the films chosen. Emphasis was put on the language, combination of shots (editing), camerawork, sound and Mise en scene in order to identify the aesthetic elements in them.

1.9.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data that was collected was qualitative in nature and so it was analysed by the researcher to find out Kenyan drama aesthetics manifest in Kenyan drama films. The process was based on data reduction and clustering into different stylistic devices. The information was represented in prose. The analysis done was used to inform the conclusions that were made.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. DRAMATIC ASPECTS OF KENYAN DRAMA FILMS

2.1 INTRODUCTION.

In trying to define what dramatic speech is, Styan argues that, “A snatch of phrase caught in every day conversation may mean little. Used by an actor on a stage, it can assume general and typical qualities. The context into which it is put can make it pull more than its conversational weight, no matter how simple the words (Styan, 1993:11). In film however, anything dramatic can be defined as that which captures attention, denotes conflict, contradiction and/or defiance, heightens the scale of the action, unusual and presented in a striking manner such that although it may seem trivial it becomes an incisive and major force affecting the lives of character(s) in a film, whether it is Mise en scene, sound, cinematography or combination of shots, and so moves the plot further to a cliff-hanger making the overall story pleasant and thrilling to the audience. This chapter analyses various filmmaking techniques in order to find out dramatic effect achieved by employing such techniques in the three selected films.

Zeinabu Rundi Nyumbani (2008) is a film that deals with the woes of a physically challenged, poor Dedan (Joseph Kinuthia) and his beautiful inherited wife Zeinabu (Josphine Kamwenga) who live a happy life and work together to earn their living. The bliss of their marriage is ruined by intrusion into their life by a rich handsome Kavila from the city and the loose talk of Dedan to Kavila, which Zeinabu overhears from the kitchen, about his wife (Zeinabu) and his intention to marry another wife. Kavila elopes with Zeinabu (Josphine) who suffers in the hands of a harsh mother in law. Left alone, Dedan also suffers greatly both

physically and emotionally. The two in different situations of suffering make up their mind to fight for their happiness and marriage until they are lastly united again.

Chasing Moses (2009) is about Moses (Joseph Kinuthia), a poor crippled man who lives with his family in Kibera slums. One fateful day he steps, with his wheelchair, on expensive shoes worn by a rich man, Jitu (Phillip Chege). Jitu (Chege), who was once a soldier deals in illegal business. He and his men beat up Moses and destroy his wheelchair but Moses in self defence hits Jitu on the groin and escapes. Jitu hires Trigger (Simon Smithers), who was once a colleague soldier, to kill Moses but Moses runs to the village and so the chase begins. Moses seeks protection from a traditional witch doctor. Trigger follows Moses to the village but the power of the witch overpowers him making him friendly to Moses. The two together start looking for Jitu and his men and end up Killing Jitu.

Village Casanova (2010) is a story about a rich man in the village who uses his money to sexually abuse women. The husbands to these women have neglected their families because they are drunkards and poor and so end up being debased and some being battered by their wives. Mr. Kipara (Ben Mwangi) is a church elder who does not live up to his ideals and so secretly uses his wealth to lure women into having sex with him. A couple from the city, Shakina (Ruth Wacuka) and Ali (Samuel Maroro), move to the village after the husband (Ali) loses his job. This couple plans to use Mr.kipara's weakness to get money from him so that they can go back to the city. They trap Kipara into their home where he comes to have sex with Shakina only to find that it was a set up and so he is made to sign documents giving out his car and land to Ali.

Comparing the visual style of three Kenyan drama films, Constantara's, *Zeinabu Rundi Nyumbani* (2008), Mbili Mbilikimo's, *Chasing Moses* (2009) and Jitu's, *Village Cassanova* (2010), reveal intriguing dramatic aspects in Kenyan Drama feature films. The directors employ many stylistic techniques to attain dramatic effect in their films. The three films were directed by different directors but comparing their use of Mise en scene, Camera work, Editing and Sound techniques, reveal how Kenyan filmmakers manipulate film making techniques to create dramatic effects in their films.

2.2. Mise en scene.

Mis en scene is everything that the audience see in a film. Visual elements in a film, establish differences among characters, character motivation, setting and action in the film. Mise en scene creates the look of the story world. Abrahams. et al. (2001) in reference to Mise en scene observes that:

This term originally developed in relation to theatre and literally translates as 'putting on the stage'. For Our purposes it refers to 'placing within the shot' (93).

Whatever we see in the shot is very important in understanding a film since considerable meaning of a film comes from the visual content. The filmmaker uses mise en scene the way a writer uses words to enable readers to read a story. In the same way mise en scene helps us to read a shot and so the whole film to which Monaco (2009) agrees that:

Because we read the shot, we are actively involved with it. The codes of Mise en scene are the tools with which the filmmaker alters and modifies our reading of the shot (205).

It is the director therefore, who decides on what is to be included in a given shot or not depending on the message he wants the audience to decipher. He also decides on how to arrange the content of the shot because composition is central to Mise en scene. Monaco (2009) also compared Mise en scene to montage and quotes Gordad:

“Montage is above all an integral part of mise en scene,” he wrote. “Only at peril can one be separated from the other. One might just as well try to separate the rhythm from a melody....What one seeks to foresee in space, the other seeks in time.” More ever, for Gordad, Mise en scene automatically implies montage. (464)

This is very true because for the audience to understand a shot they must interpret it in relation to other shots before or after it. Mise en scene therefore, is the staging of a scene through artful arrangement of actors, setting, props and costumes.

2.2.1. Setting

Setting refers to where the film’s action unfolds and this is mainly captured in film as an establishing shot at the beginning of a scene. Abraham. et al (2001) writes:

The setting provides the space in which all other elements of Mise en scene are situated. The setting like props, and costume, set up expectations in the viewer and can instantly produce meanings; it signifies certain things. (93)

Village Casanova (2010) is set in the village. The establishing shot is of a farmland with food crops growing on it. Mr. Kipara’s Stone house is shown and in the preceding shots; houses of Tumbo (Kinuthia) and Juma (Kang’ethe) both of them mud houses, Saidi’s (Kamwamba) iron

sheet house and Ali's stone house which is not well furnished. The shots which form the exposition of the film reveal the environment in which the action takes place. The village setting immediately conveys meaning to the audience in relation to the characters' socio-economic ways of life.

The houses give a hint on the economic status of the owners. Kipara's magnificent building shows that Kipara is a rich man in the village. On the other hand, both Tumbo's and Juma's houses are mud houses while Saidi's house is made of iron sheets with walls pasted with empty bags of cement. All these men are poor. Ali's house is made of stones but it has not been furnished. This reveals that Ali had a good past which in one way or the other is not the case now. The audience can rightly guess that he built the house when he was living and working in town and after he lost his job he could not furnish it.

Setting is also used to form contrast. The town setting in the film forms a contrast of the way of life in the village and in the city. In the village there are farmlands and the people there are mainly poor. The setting of the village also helps to point out that people are poor in the village because they fail to work hard. When Tumbo (Joseph Kinuthia), goes to visit Mr. Kipara the scene is set at Kipara's cow shed. This shows that Kipara is not rich by chance but as a result of hard work and commitment as compared to Tumbo who is a busybody. In the city there are businesses, big buildings, and cars. It is as if the filmmaker is telling the audience to compare and contrast the lives of people living in the different settings. Kipara although living in the village is attached to the city. Kipara goes to withdraw money from an ATM machine in Nairobi. He is also seen inspecting a building under construction in the city. In this respect the director is

using setting to underscore success and economic growth of Kipara as compared to Ali's economic failure in the city and his subsequent return to the village.

Using setting, the filmmaker is able to contrast the life of the rich and the poor and at the same time show that although the characters with money are seen as living a well organised life this may not be the case. Kipara leaves his gorgeous wife and posh seats and goes to Juma's house and seats on a dilapidated bench with the aim of having sex with Chausiku, Juma's wife. Kipara is using his wealth to oppress poor men in the village and misuse needy women. Although he may seem comfortable and successful, he is a weak voracious womaniser who cannot control his passion.

In *Zainabu Rudi Nyumbani*, the setting of Kavila's home forms a contrast with the setting at Dedan's home. In Kavila's home there is a gate with a gatekeeper which shows the class of the family. The magnificent house emphasises that this is a rich family in the city. The presence of the gate keeper shows that security in the city is lacking as compared to Dedan's home (the village) where Kavila just entered the compound. This setting also helps us to understand the future of Zeinabu's relationship with Kavila and the mistreatment she gets from the Mother-in-law. Zeinabu is now in a worse situation than when she was married to Dedan.

Chasing Moses (2009) is set in the city. The city, which in the other two films represents success and wealth, another dimension is shown, that even in the city poverty abounds. Moses (Joseph Kinuthia) and his family live in Kibera which is the largest slum not only in Kenya but also in East Africa. On the other hand rich Jitu lives in the city and when one compares the two

settings in the city he/she realises that some people live in want and others in abundance. Jitu is a rich man while Moses is poor and survives by selling groceries to feed his family.

The bar setting in the film helps the audience to understand that the village men spend most of their time in the bar taking beer instead of working in the farm. This is even more dramatic when contrasted with the setting in the farm where women are working as they complain about their husbands' irresponsibility and insobriety. The bar setting is equated to irresponsibility, escapism and idleness which breeds poverty. The filmmaker is in a way saying that the men are poor not because they should be but because they have chosen to be poor by their own lifestyle. Even when Kipara goes to the bar he does not go to drink. Mama Njeri comes to the bar not to drink but to batter her husband for neglecting them. Women are portrayed as able to fight for their rights and be assertive. Kenyan women in the recent years have gone to the street to demonstrate against men's excessive drinking. The film therefore addresses the issue of drunkenness which is a teething problem in many Kenyan families. **The Daily Nation** of 20th December 2001 for example had a story about women who pulled down a bar in Murang'a during a protest against sale of illicit brew and also stoned a vehicle that they claimed that it was carrying the contraband liquor, shattering its windscreen. The inclusion of this setting is truly dramatic because it is addressing a problem already well known by the local audience.

The setting of the bar in the city also is used to portray a negative image in *Chasing Moses* (2009). It is presented as a place where irresponsible wicked people spend their time. Trigger is seen with other men gambling. When Trigger takes their money they plan to pick pocket him. They manage to take some money from him but Trigger realises that his money has been stolen when he orders another beer and finds out that there is no money in his pocket. Their

second attempt to steal from him is met with heavy blows from him. It is still in the bar where Jitu comes to hire trigger to kill Moses after Moses steps on him with his wheelchair.

The audience can understand the economic activity of the characters from the setting. *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) is set in a village where poor crippled Dedan lives with his beautiful wife. From the setting the audience can learn that Dedan is poor. He is in a stone building which is not clear whether he built it or not and this serves as suspense to the audience until when he talks of inheriting Zeinabu from his dead brother that one can guess that he inherited the house too. Dedan is a gifted man who can sculptor and also repair cars. They sell their goods in the city. The film opens with Kinuthia and his wife riding to the market which happens to be on the roadside. It should be noted that the director improvises a market setting instead of paying money to shoot a real market in order to cut on the cost of production. This ability to improvise does not in any way mean that the film lacks realism because as Monaco 2009:466 while quoting Brecht's dictum asserts that, "Realism doesn't consist in reproducing reality, but in showing how things really are". At the same time the director shows that Dedan and his wife sell their goods on the road side which is a common occurrence in Kenya. Instead of hiring a dance hall he improvises a dance stage in an open place and uses real musicians like Eric Wainaina and Lulu Abdala to sing for verisimilitude purposes. This alienates the audience and so instead of invoking their emotions, their intellect is awakened. By doing that the director communicates to the audience that Kavila has taken Zeinabu and Dedan to a dance hall but the improvised dance hall prevents the audience from being involved in the film. The director cuts production costs and delivers the message he intended by using this technique.

Setting helps to define characters. In both films a contrast is made of life in the village and in the city. Kavila, a rich young man, comes to the village and by having Kavila in a village setting we can learn his character. He is a man who cannot be trusted. After Dedan asks his wife to prepare a bed for Kavila, Kavila gets a chance to sweet talk Zeinabu into loving him. Just like Kipara in *Village Casanova*, Kavila is rich, of loose morals and a womaniser. The bar setting in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumani* also manifests irresponsibility and wastage by Dedan. After Dedan and his wife sell their goods they go to the bar. Men take beer while women take tea. It is like the filmmaker is telling the audience, "See, they can't be rich because they squander all what they get." In both films, the audience is left to question the relationship between drunkenness, neglect of families and family break up. Do we blame rich Kipara and Kavila, for taking other people's wives or the men for neglecting their wives? This question is left for the audience to answer. The roadside setting where the Dedans sell their produce helps the audience to understand the relationship between Dedan and his wife. The two love each other so much. Zeinabu sells a mask and puts money in the pocket of Dedan, they count money, are happy and hug each other. They are in love! This setting is used to establish their relationship and point out to their source of income. From the town setting in *Chasing Moses* (2009), we learn that Jitu does illegal businesses like exhorting money from poor business people and other corrupt deals. The man who delivers shoes is beaten when he asks for delivery charges.

The change of setting from Dedan's home to a dance hall in the village marks a turning point. Zeinabu and Kavila are now in love but soon their lives will take a new direction. Immediately after the entertainment, Zeinabu leaves her husband for Kavila and the two go to town. The change of setting after Kavila and Zeinabu elope, point to another twist in the story.

The new relationship is being emphasised by a swing which Zainabu is led to by Kavila. The swing points to the swinging life of Zeinabu from one man to another and the bliss that she has in the new relationship. As Kavila leads her to the swing, she has her eyes covered to surprise her, but in real sense she is mentally blind because she has left her husband for a man she barely knows. The swing foretells of Zeinabu's unstable life after leaving Dedan.

The change of setting from the town setting to rural setting, where Moses runs for his life, in *Chasing Moses* (2009) marks an important turning point in the film. Moses runs to the village and seeks protection from a witch doctor. This setting helps to reveal another aspect of African way of live, belief in magic. When trigger comes to the village pursuing Moses, he is compelled by the powers of the witch to forsake his wickedness and be a "good" person. There is change of character when he comes into contact with the village life and the witch doctor. From then onwards he goes back to the city a changed person and he goes to look for Moses not to kill him but to join hands with him so that they can kill Jitu. The expansive desert which Trigger and Moses had to go through is showing the difficulties each of them is facing in the chase. Trigger faints out of thirst after the little water he depended on to give him strength was poured by Moses. The slum market setting helps the audience to learn Jitu's arrogance. He comes to the market and demands money from the poor business people. His brutality is also manifested in the way he treats Moses after he accidentally steps on his shoes with his wheelchair. Jitu's house shows class and decency when compared to Moses' house in the slum. The house is well furnished and guarded which again brings out the question of security in the city. If people like Trigger can be hired to kill and mistreat others like what he did to Moses' wife, then there is

need to worry about security. All the same the poor cannot afford to hire guards and so live with the risk of insecurity.

Apart from its physical significance, setting in the three films creates a mood that has social, psychological, economic, and cultural significance and its use in these films is quite dramatic.

2.2.2. Props

Abrahams. et al (2001) defines props as “the inanimate objects placed within a setting.” Props are used to strengthen the effect of setting by making the environment more visually convincing. In *Village Casanova* (2010), the wall photo on Kipara’s house convinces the audience that Kipara is married to Mrs. Kipara (Waruinge). Towards the end of the film Mrs. Kipara breaks the wall photo. Their life is shattered as a result of Kipara’s irresponsible behaviour. Their marriage is not any better than the others in the village. The breaking of the wall-photo symbolises family break up. Since this is a Christian family and the bible allows divorce on the basis of adultery, then, this family is already broken. The tools found at the compound of Dedan in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), tell us a lot about the life of Dedan and make the setting more convincing. The carvings, onions, eggs and cabbages tell us what the Dedans do for survival. They are farmers and carvers. A heap of carvings and a tool box together with chicken at Dedan’s home convince the audience that the Dedans engage in farming and carving at the village. This helps the audience to understand the source of the goods the Dedans were selling in the earlier scene at the road side. Although this family is not rich they are truly industrious and comfortable with what they have. The wheel chair was a means of transport. It supplemented the inability of Dedan to walk. Just as Mrs. Kipara broke the wall photo, Zeinabu

too breaks an egg which falls from her hand as she stares at Kavila. This foretells of a relationship that will break. The relationship between Zeinabu and Dedan later came to an end.

Props are also used to establish character. The props that a character possesses tell more about his taste, class and personality. Kipara's affluence is emphasised by the props in the house which include; a wall photo, expensive seats, newspaper and cell phone, T.V set and wall unit and together point out that the Kipara's are people who enjoy life. The Bible conveys an idea to the audience that this is a Christian family. The cell phone shows that Kipara is a modern man who has embraced technology. A newspaper at Kipara's house is an indication that he is ahead of the other villagers not only economically but also socially. He is exposed and up to date. He is a man who is well informed and knows what is happening in the world around him.

Props establish economic status of characters. Kipara is a man of class who is envied by both men and women in the village. The fact that he owns a vehicle puts him in a class of his own in the whole village. At the door of Juma's house there are dry beans to tell the audience that Juma's family has a piece of land where they grow crops. This is also emphasised by a machete which he carries and sticks for fencing the land. The audience can therefore understand that the economic activity of Juma's family is farming. When Kipara comes to woo Chausiku, he is given milk in an aluminium cup. Though Kipara is rich he is so debased that he drinks from low quality cups. He is inwardly poor and this is the reason why he leaves a well cared for wife at home to be with Chausiku. This emphasises the equality of mankind. No matter the material possessions, people are human beings with needs and weakness they struggle with. The plastic plates that are used by Saidi's family together with a plastic jug used to clean hands show that this family is poor to the extent that they cannot afford to buy a basin. They use the plates to eat

and wash hands with. Poverty in this family is further revealed by the seats that are there. These are rickety stools made from waste timber cuttings. The aluminium cups they use for drinking show their economic class; they are poor.

Change and development of characters is also depicted by use of props. The poster hanged on Juma's wall show that the family takes part in voting. It further reveals the political preferences of the characters. The poster is a campaign poster for the then ruling president Kibaki. Poor people in Kenya vote for leaders who after taking positions forget about the problems of those people who elected them and instead continue to enrich themselves. Poor people are oppressed by both politicians and rich businesses men. But still the question remains, whose mistake is it? This, the director leaves the audience to figure out thus the film is open ended. The filmmaker leaves the audience to think and come up with the solutions to problems highlighted in the film. In this way the filmmaker incites the audience to think about themselves. This political function of Kenyan films is aesthetic in itself.

They are also used as symbols to underscore certain messages. Money is treated as a source of power in the hands of Kipara while in the hands of Chausiku it is a means of survival. On the other hand when Kipara falls into the trap of Ali, Ali is armed with a camera and a machete. A machete is a symbol of power in the hands of Ali just as money is in the hands of Kipara. Ali menacingly waves the machete to threaten Kipara just as Kipara gives money to Chausiku to woo her. The writer again leaves the audience to think whether it was right for Ali to use such a trick on Kipara. A machete is also used symbolically in the film, *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), just as in *Village Casanova*. In this film it is also used as a means of power for poor Dedan. Kavila took away his wife using money and he is going to bring her back using a

machete. He uses the machete to cut the chain locking the gate thus freeing her wife, Zeinabu. Ali also used a machete in *Village Casanova*, to free poor people from exploitation by Kipara. This is African socialism. In the two films, conflict is brought by men desiring to oppress others by having sex with their women. The foundation of Malthus' theory relies on two assumptions that he views as fixed, namely that food and passion between sexes are both essential for human's existence and this is what causes conflict in the films. Just like Kipara, Hannah too has a phone. Apart from being a medium of communication a phone is also used as a tool for planning evil things. This dramatically connects with the time Kipara received a phone call while with his wife. Kipara was using a phone to cheat on his wife. A phone becomes a symbol of modernity and dishonesty in this film. The blanket which is used to cover people and prevent them from cold is used to show how women mistreat their husbands. Zeinabu uncovers Dedan because he has swept off the cosmetics from the table with his hand to draw Zeinabu's attention to him. Zeinabu throws the blanket out and when Dedan goes to pick it, he is locked outside. The love that was between them is no longer binding. In the film, a bunch of Keys in the hands of the mother-in-law, reveal her character. She is controlling, domineering and oppressive. She has keys to all doors and so she knows anyone going in or out.

The beauty manual and cosmetics in Dedan and Zeinabu's bedroom point at Zeinabu's change in character. After Zeinabu overhears what Dedan said and getting acquainted with Kavila her character change is foretold by the makeup she applies on her face. Her desire and concentration on her face shows that she has started to be conscious of how she looks which was not the case earlier on. A carrot is a prop that gives us more hints on the sour state of the Dedans' relationship. Earlier on, Zeinabu used to feed her husband but now she neither cooks for him nor

feeds him, but instead throws a carrot at him when he needs food. Later, after eloping with Kavila she feeds him with a banana. The banana in this case is used to emphasise their intimacy. The change in Zeinabu's attitude is emphasised. She now has new goals, new ideals and of course new love.

Wine and alcohol in the three films is used as a motif. Wine is used to form a contrast between the rich and the poor people's drinking habit in *Zeinabu Rundi Nyumbani* (2008). Kavila's family take wine as they play cards and so the rich use wine for relaxation and it is not abused. By such contrast the filmmaker shows that alcohol in itself is not bad but when people abuse it then it has regrettable consequences. Dedan goes to the bar to take beer after his wife deserts him in order to relieve stress which makes him fight in the bar. This is irresponsible drinking. The wheel chair too is a motif that stands for weakness.

2.2.3. Costumes.

Talking about costumes, Abrahams et al (2001) writes that:

Costumes help create an actors' character. They can place a character within a particular historical period, indicate social class or lifestyle, and even determine what is possible and what is not. A space suit makes survival in space possible. A cow boy wearing a gun can survive a shoot-out. This example indicates that there can be an overlap between props and costume-at what point does the gun cease to be a prop and become part of a costume? As with the previous two categories, costume can also help define genre of a film. (94)

Costumes define characters. In *Village Casanova* (2010), Mrs. Kipara wears a pair of trousers. This shows that she is exposed and has touch with the city life. Trousers in this case when worn by females show sophistication. This is because many Kenyan societies in rural areas do not encourage women to wear trousers but rather dresses or long skirts. When Shakina also comes from the city she is in trousers. The lady in the city who Mr. Kipara admires is wearing a

short skirt as compared to the long skirt worn by Chausiku while in the village depicting how the characters have been influenced by city life. By wearing clothes with oil stains, the audience understand that Dedan, in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) is a technical man -a mechanic and a carver. Zeinabu's dressing while at the bar portray a true village woman. She wears a cardigan and a head cap. Kavila wears casual clothing while driving to the village showing that he is a casual person. In *Chasing Moses* (2009), the film starts with a scene at the bar where Trigger and two other men are gambling. All of them are casually dressed portraying their carefree living. Moses is in an apron which tells us that he does menial work that exposes him to dirt. On the other hand, Jitu is in a suit and a tie. He is an official man. Jitus' girlfriend though, wears a hood that is half way zipped exposing her tattooed body. She is a casual friend and not Jitu's wife. Jitu's guards wear clothing that portray them as villains. Ali wears a trouser folded on the legs showing that he was working but when he goes to visit Kipara he changes and wears decent casual wear.

Clothing and lack of it carries cultural implications. A wrap 'khangas' is Kenyan attire for women in the coast. Clothes depict culture of the people. It is culturally accepted in Kenya that women should cover themselves properly and not to wear clothes that leave their body parts exposed. Scanty dressing among females is something rampant in the city although the same influence is nowadays reaching the villages. In *Village Casanova* (2010), Mama Njeri, Hanna and Chausiku have 'Khangas' tied round their bodies to serve as aprons while in the farm. They also wear head caps. Shakina is wearing a 'Khangas' round her waist and a head cap as she comes from the river to fetch water. Mrs. Kipara has tied a 'Khangas' round her waist while washing clothes. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), Zeinabu has tied a 'Khangas' round her waist as she

collects eggs and also in the house while cooking. She also has a 'Khanga' round her waist as she irons clothes at Kavila's home under supervision of Kavila's mother. In most Kenyan communities women cover their bodies with 'Khangas' as they perform house hold chores which serve the purpose of aprons and this is manifest in the films.

In *Chasing Moses* (2009), the witch doctor is in 'Kitenge', a cloth which is considered to be African. This identifies her with African Magic. The man, who shows Trigger the way to the village where the charm he had taken from Moses' wife is made, is also in 'Kitenge' which is also a cultural dressing. At the witch doctor's house, Trigger is covered with a wrap (Kikoi) with red, blue and white stripes which is the Kenyan National dress colour. This shows that Trigger is assimilated in the traditional cultural beliefs of African magic. After his encounter with the witch doctor, Trigger goes back to the city with the wrap round his body which implies that he believes in Kenyan culture which people in the city, like Jitu, have almost forgotten as is evident in the way he oppresses others which is not culturally acceptable. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), Eric wainaina, a singer, is also in 'Kitenge'. Two other men among the extras in the dance are also in 'Kitenge'.

Clothes tell about the life of a character. The clothes worn by Ali also tell us about his past. He is in expensive, open shoes which show that his past life was prosperous. The worn out cap that he wears now show his current state of lack and poverty. Baba Njeri wears cheap clothes and sandals made of waste car tyres. By folding his trousers, Juma shows that he is from work. Costumes must be interpreted in the context of the film and not as common to all films. The clothes that Tumbo wears are cheap and combined with his body language they bring out humour in the play.

Change of costume may denote a change in character or change of fortune. When Kipara visits Chausiku in *Village Casanova* (2010), he brings her new clothes. Chausiku changes from the 'Khangas' she was in, and wears the new clothes which Kipara brought her after which Chausiku and Kipara go to bed. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), Zeinabu wears new clothes which Kavila brings her from the city and then they go to dance, after that she elopes with Kavila. Her changing of clothes connotes her change in behaviour. In *Chasing Moses* (2009), Triggers change is connoted by him covering himself with a wrap 'Kikoi'. After Moses is given money by Trigger, his business expands and in the process Moses changes clothes from the overall he was wearing to wearing a coat and a trouser denoting his economic appreciation. Costume transition may show good fortune but loss of control of one's life. Zeinabu gets new clothes and she gets married to Kavila, a rich man, but loses control of her life while at Kavila's home where her mother in law dictates all what she does. Chausiku gets new clothes from Kipara and also money but then her life gets controlled by Kipara who misuses her.

2.2.4. Actor Bodies.

Phillip (2000) writes:

Perhaps the most taken-for-granted aspect of Mise en scene is the actors. Actors contribute very significantly to Mise en scene. They convey meaning through their physical appearance and through their movement, as well as through the words they speak. Some actors convey meanings that come from their familiarity in a particular kind of role. Beyond this, some actors-stars-convey meanings that derive from the off-screen knowledge the audience has about them. (35)

He further adds that:

The physical body is such a strong source of visual communication. It is usually the most important of all the aspects of Mise en scene (76).

In both cases the scholar underscores the importance of the actors as part of the *Mise en scene*. The actor's body movement, speech, gestures and facial expressions convey meaning more than the spoken word. The audience can understand the character through the actor's physical cues, exaggerations, contradictions and satire. The actor's body language can provide humour to the audience. In *Village Casanova* (2010), Tumbo's walking style as he walks away from home to visit Kipara, tells more about his personality. He is bossy, proud and domineering. He swaggers to emphasise how important he is but in real sense he is a useless man who borrows money from rich Kipara to take beer. Tumbo is a braggart and by his bossy demeanour he satirises himself. He comes to the bar coughing. The coughing is exaggerated and captures attention of other characters in the bar, causing humour. Kenyans love comedy a great deal. Kinuthia is well known in the Kenyan TV drama *Tahidi High* for causing humour and he uses the same to capture the attention of the audience and satirise himself by the way he behaves which contrasts sharply with what he is. The gestures he employs as he orders beer at the bar emphasise his pride and arrogance. He satirises himself also as he tries to flag Kipara down while Kipara ignores him. In both *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) and *Chasing Moses* (2009), Joseph Kinuthia is a main character acting as Dedan and Moses in the films respectively. He is physically challenged. His disability and the suffering he goes through as a result of oppression by the advantaged Kavila and Jitu respectively evoke sympathy from the audience. His physical challenge draws sympathy from the audience from the word go. It is also lovely to see how he refuses to sink into despair from his sorry physical state and oppression meted out by the rich Kavila and Jitu, but instead stands his ground to fight for his rights. When Kavila takes away Zeinabu, Dedan goes to bring her back. Jitu clobbers Moses for accidentally stepping on him with his wheel chair but Moses

defends himself and hits Jitu on the groin. He might have a physical disability but his ego remains strong making his determination very dramatic.

Makeup and hair styles establish time period, reveal character traits and signal changes in character. Barsam (2007), looking back at the classical hollywood studio system when an actor's box office appeal depended on that individuals appeal to project a screen image that audiences would love points out that:

Today's audience have learned to love actors for their individual looks and styles, not for their conformity to ideals determined by the studios, which, as a result, led to the typecasting of actors in certain kind of roles with which they become identified... Today's actors, unfettered by rigid studio contracts tend to play a wider variety of roles than they would have in the 1930s and '40s (102).

No special make up has been used on the characters to typecast them. They perform in the films, roles that are different from roles that they play in other films. Angel Waruinge for example who is commonly known in the TV drama *Tahidi High* as Mrs Morgan, a strict teacher, is playing the role of Mrs. Kipara in *Village Casanova* (2010). Samuel Kinuthia, popularly known as Omosh, the school casual labourer, in *Tahidi High*, is playing the role of Tumbo, Hanna's husband. Jackline Nyaminde also famous in TV drama *Papa Shirandula*, is playing the role of Kavila's mother. Zeinabu has got her head covered with a headscarf all throughout the film until when they are going out with Kavila and Dedan to a dance hall when the hair style is exposed to show change in character. The style is the modern day hair style in Kenya. The hair style of Mrs. Kipara is also modern since it is still being put on even now.

2.3. CINEMATOGRAPHY.

Cinematography is the process of capturing moving images using a camera on a film or any other medium. Barsam (2007) emphasises the importance of cinematography in film making when he writes:

Although cinematography might seem to exist solely to please our eyes with beautiful images, it is in fact an intricate language that can (and in the most complex and meaningful films does) contribute to a movies overall meaning as much as the story, Mise en scene, and acting do. The cinematographer (also known as the director of photography, or DP) uses the camera as a maker of meaning just as the painter uses the brush or the writer uses the pen: the angles, heights, and movements of the camera function both as a set of techniques and as expressive material, the cinematic equivalent of brush strokes or of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. (140)

2.3.1 Framing.

Barsam (2007:159) defines framing as “the process by which the cinematographer determines what will appear within the borders of the image during a shot.” He continues to argue that,

This process requires decisions about each of the following elements: the proximity to camera of main objects, the depth of the composition, camera angle and height, the scale of various objects in relation to each other, and the type of camera movements if any (159).

Framing shows point of view. The camera’s point of view (POV) depends on the physical position of the camera during shooting. The omniscient POV shows what the camera sees, a single character’s POV shows what that person would be seeing of the action and the group POV shows what a group of characters would see at their level. In *Chasing Moses*, when Trigger follows Moses to the village his vehicle develops mechanical problems. He gets out of the

vehicle complaining and the camera placed in front of him is used to tell the audience that he has seen something. The next take is done with the camera behind Moses and emphasises Trigger's point of view. That camera position helps the audience to see what Trigger is seeing -Moses escaping- and this creates dramatic tension. The camera behind Trigger, shooting Trigger as he runs after Moses indicates the omniscient point of view. The audience see what the camera sees - Trigger running after Moses- and this increases dramatic tension too. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* the omniscient point of view is evident when Kavila's car develops a mechanical problem near Dedan's home. The Camera is in front of Kavila and by use of a close-up, the audience see Kavila's gaze which indicates that Kavila is seeing something. In the next shot the camera position shows Kavila's point of view -Dedan working on a carving which creates suspense since the audience wonder whether Kavila will get assistance from Dedan. Character point of view is used when Kavila and Zeinabu see each other from a distance as Dedan was repairing Kavila's vehicle. This is used to help the audience understand that there is attraction between the two. In *Village Casanova* the camera assumes the omniscient point of view in the opening scene at Mr and Mrs Kipara's house. The audience see everything taking place in the story world from the omniscient point of view.

2.3.2. Shots.

A shot is a single uninterrupted series of frames. It is the film's basic unit of expression. Maria (2006:104) argues that long takes build dramatic tension. The long shot emphasises the environment and space surrounding the character. This prods the audience to think about how the character relates with the environment thus adding meaning to the film. In *Village Casanova*, Ali and Shakina come from the city. A take lasting 42 seconds is used to underscore the

disagreement between the two just after alighting from the vehicle thus building dramatic tension. Shakina's hesitance to follow Ali shows her unwillingness to be in the village, an attitude that Ali exploits to make Shakina accept to act as bait to trap Mr. Kipara. Another long take lasting one minute and twenty seconds, is used when Juma goes to see Mr. Kipara but instead meets Mrs. Kipara who explains that Kipara did not sleep home. The long take is used to build dramatic tension. The reaction of Juma when he hears that Kipara slept out, leads to dramatic irony since the audience know that Kipara is immoral, a fact that his wife does not know.

Long take is used in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* showing Kavila and Zeinabu at the park on a swing. The shot is about one minute long and is used to emphasise the continuity of time and space. The shot helps the audience to understand the intimacy between the two and gives insight into the earlier days of their relationship. The two have time to be with each other not while doing business as was the case with Dedan, but in a park relaxing and having fun. The long shot emphasises the light moments they share after they eloped. This long take is used to emphasise the bliss of their love and the joy they have in their new relationship which later withers when Zeinabu is taken to Kavila's home where she gets mistreated by her mother in law -Kavila's mother.

2.3.3. Slow and fast motion.

By manipulating speed of filming, cinematographers can either expand or compress time. Fast motion shortens the duration of an action while long motion lengthens the duration and seems to break down human movement into its component parts. This effect can be used for both comic and dramatic purposes. In *Village Cassanova* (2010), when Baba Njeri is asked by Juma

whether it is true that he gets battered by his wife, he denies it but for comic effect, a slow motion shot of his wife running after him is shown. This amuses the audience who see the irony of what he is telling his friend Juma. Saidi's bragging, by saying that if his wife tries to beat him there would be 'mass destruction' is dramatic irony. The audience connect what he is saying and what actually happens to him and they become amused. By use of this technique the director satirises men who hide when they are physically abused by their wives. The issue of men getting beaten by their wives was an issue that was at one time getting discussed in radio and T.V stations in Kenya after it was discovered that many men get assaulted by their wives although they never complain to avoid embarrassment.

2.3.4. Camera Distance.

The proximity of the camera to the subject being shot influences our emotional involvement with those subjects. Barsam (2007) observes that,

Of course, nearness is not the only degree of proximity that engages our emotions. Each of the possible arrangements of subjects in proximity to each other and to the camera has the potential to convey something meaningful about the subjects on screen, and thankfully most of those meanings come to us naturally (161).

The effect of any shot distance must be interpreted in context. Medium close-up and close-up produce a sense of intimacy between the character and the audience because viewers focus on characters' faces and character emotions. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*, the close-up of the rotating wheel of a wheelchair and the close-up of the wheel chair pedal emphasise the speed at which Dedan and Zeinabu rush to the market to sell their goods. After sales the two count their money and as they hug, a close-up of their faces is shown to show their feelings. The feelings they show excite the audience. After Zeinabu tells Kavila that Dedan is her husband, a close-up of Kavila's

face shows surprise. He is surprised to hear that Dedan, a poor crippled man, has such a beautiful wife. This provokes the viewers' emotions and sympathy for Dedan. Later when Zeinabu starts to mistreat Dedan and gives Dedan a carrot to eat instead of food, a close-up of Dedan's face as he eats the carrot show pain and agony at his wife's mistreatment. The viewers sympathise with Dedan. Zeinabu tells Kavila to wait for her outside just before she elopes with him and a close-up of Kavila's tough unhappy look show irony of actions and expressions. Instead of Kavila being happy that they are eloping with a woman he is claiming to love, he is unhappy. This leaves questions in the minds of viewers who are left wondering why there is such a contradiction in the emotions and actions of Kavila thus creating suspense. The audience would have expected Kavila to be more emotional and happy but he is not. This leaves the audience wondering whether Kavila is truly in love with Zeinabu or only misusing her. After Kavila takes Zeinabu home, she is ruthlessly mistreated by Kavila's mother. The Close-up of Kavila's mother shows arrogance. She dictates everything Zeinabu does and treats her like a lesser being. Zeinabu reports to Kavila. A close-up of the faces of Kavila and Zeinabu show a pleading Zeinabu while the face of Kavila shows disgust at Zeinabu's complaint forming a sharp contrast in their emotions. He even slaps Zeinabu when she says, "Kavila, Mama yako ni shetani", meaning your mother is a devil. The mistreatment meted on Zeinabu becomes more dramatic when compared to the tough unhappy look of Kavila's face in the Close-up before they eloped.

The close-up of Hanna and Tumbo as they speak in *Village Casanova* (2010), reveal their emotions. Hannah's close-up as she tells Tumbo that she sold the cock and next time she will sell a goat, show sarcasm. Tumbo's close-up as he tells Hannah that if she sells a goat he will sell her, show firmness. After Tumbo leaves, Hannah's close-up of her face show mockery as she

soliloquises, that the same Kipara, whom Tumbo goes to see, comes to see Hannah since they have an affair. A close-up of Saidi's foot with a fly on the leg shows that he is dirty and poor. Juma's close-up of his face on hearing that Mzee Kipara didn't sleep at home is dramatic. This tells the audience that there is something Juma knows about Kipara which his wife does not. A close-up of Shakina's face when she falls as she carries water reveals her feelings. She is exhausted. The close-up of Tumbo coughing when he enters the bar creates humour.

In *Chasing Moses* (2009), close-ups at the beginning of the film form the establishing shots. Close-ups of fingers on a guitar, Smithers (Trigger), money, cards, Moses (Kinuthia), sick child, and charm on Moses' neck all combine to introduce the story. Close-up of hands create suspense. The close-up of a man being clobbered creates suspense too because the viewers are left wondering who the tormentors are. A close-up of Jitu's expensive shoes shows the importance of the shoes to Jitu and to the overall conflict in film. The shoes symbolise his pride. The close-up of the wheel chair stepping on the expensive shoes sets the conflict between Jitu and poor Moses. By Moses stepping on Jitu's shoes, he has hurt Jitu's pride. As Moses escapes a close-up of his face reveals exhaustion. The medium shot of Moses hugging his wife before Moses leaves for the village, makes the audience identify with the characters and experience the pain experienced by poor Moses who has to escape to the village leaving behind his poor family and a sick child in the city. Close-ups of props in *Chasing Moses* show their importance in the development of the story. The close-up of a charm is important because it is a means of protection to poor Moses. Trigger uses the charm to trace the whereabouts of Moses. The close-up of the bottle of water shows the only source of strength to Trigger in the semi desert during the chase. When Moses pours the water in the bottle it shows that Trigger is now left helpless.

The close-up of Moses and Trigger at Moses' home helps the audience to note the charm on their necks. The charm bonds them. They are now fighting from the same side.

2.3.5. Camera angle and height.

This is the level of the camera in relation to the subject during shooting. The normal camera angle is eye level which takes subjects the way the audience normally see them. Barsam (2007:170) says that "an eye level shot is made from the observer's eye level and usually implies that the camera's attitude toward the subject being photographed is neutral". He further points out that "a high angle shot is made with the camera above the action and typically implies the observer's sense of superiority to the subject being photographed."

High angle shots tend to minimise the subject. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* a high angle shot of Kavila and Zeinabu asleep at the park gives the audience the superior feeling over them so that he/she can critically observe their relationship to each other. The same shot is a combination of a long take and a medium shot lasting for one minute and six seconds. Combining a high angle, medium shot and a long take in the same shot is quite dramatic and allows the viewer to be emotionally engaged with the characters and at the same time critically analyse their relationship. The high angle shot minimises the subject giving the viewer a sense of superiority over the subject thus prompting him/her to observe the characters actions. The long take gives the viewer the opportunity to look at the details of the action, while the medium shot makes the viewer to identify with the emotions of the characters. The high angle medium shot reveals Zeinabu and Kavila asleep. Zeinabu wakes up smiling which may be interpreted to mean that she is fond of Kavila. She looks lovingly at Kavila and exits the frame. Kavila is left asleep and his face is expressionless. Zeinabu enters the frame with a leaf and a banana in her hands.

She pans the sleeping Kavila who wakes up smiling. She starts to feed him with a banana. Kavila is not emotionally charged. He closes his eyes but there is no other expression on his face to give a hint that he is fond of Zeinabu. The audience is left wondering whether Kavila truly loves Zeinabu or whether he is only taking advantage of her. The way Kavila and Zeinabu respond to each other is a complete contrast. Zeinabu is so emotional while Kavila is not. This contrast alienates the audience. Combining these techniques allows the audience to compare and contrast the relationship the characters have for each other and also enhance the viewers' emotional engagement.

A high angle shot which is also a long shot combine to limit the viewers' emotional engagement with the characters and so distance the audience. In *Village Casanova*, while Mr Kipara is inspecting his construction, he sees Shakina from the top of a building. The high angle shot of Shakina allows the audience to see Shakina from the perspective of Kipara which is quite dramatic. The viewers see Shakina as Kipara sees her. The same shot is a close-up of Kipara's head from the side thus the viewer is emotionally engaged with Kipara but distanced from Shakina. In other words the audience get to understand that Kipara is attracted to Shakina who is not aware that someone is looking at her. This helps the audience to understand the character of Kipara -he is a lustful man.

In *Chasing Moses* (2009), a bird's eye view shot (high angle shot) diminishes the size of escaping Moses. The shot is a long shot and so distances the audience from the character but at the same time a tracking movement of the camera is used to make the viewer follow the movement of Moses thus emphasises the speed of Moses and urgency of the situation. This shot therefore emphasises on the weakness of Moses as compared to the energetic Trigger (Smithers)

who runs after him. Moses is frail, he is a cripple and so the possibility of him being caught and getting killed is high. This builds tension and leaves the audience cliff hanging. Moses is running away from a force that is great and which will likely catch up with him in the long run. An overhead shot of Moses hiding in a gulley also diminishes Moses and emphasises his physical weakness. This engages the viewers emotionally and makes them identify with Moses. Overhead shots also called bird's eye shot give a unique perspective of the action from above. While Moses is hiding in a gulley, an overhead shot of Trigger depicts his boundless strength and enthusiasm as he tracks Moses down the gulley making the chase much more dramatic.

A low camera angle, Barsam (2007) argues,

“...is made with the camera below the action and typically places an observer in the position of feeling helpless in the presence of an obviously superior force” (171).

In *Village Casanova*, Jitu and his men are shot using a low camera angle as they walk round the slum demanding money from poor business people. The shot exaggerates their stature and so emphasise their power and superiority. The low angle shot is intended to hint to the viewers that Jitu is a force in the city that is feared by people living in the slum. This was the case in Kenya when Mungiki -an illegal sect- used to demand security fee from people who did business in some parts of Nairobi. After Moses steps on Trigger with his tricycle a low angle close-up of Jitu's face is shown. Jitu is looking down on Moses. By using the low camera angle close-up, the filmmaker intends to make the audience understand the feelings of Jitu after he was stepped on by Moses with his tricycle and also emphasise on Jitu's power, thus leaving the audience wondering what is going to happen to Moses. This creates suspense. A low angle, medium shot of Trigger after Moses pours the little water in the bottle that kept Trigger going, emphasises not

only the power of Trigger over Moses but also reveals the exhaustion and desperation in Trigger and loss of energy to continue chasing Moses. Trigger gets out of the frame staggering. This signals change in fortune. Trigger is now weak and at the mercy of Moses. A low camera angle combined with a close-up or a medium shot tend to encourage the viewers' emotional engagement in the film.

2.3.6 Colour.

Maria (2006), when commenting on film stock and colour argues that,

Directors and Cinematographers choose their film stock according to aesthetic effects they are seeking to achieve. For example, black-and-white and colour film stock may be used in the same film to contrast between past and present, perhaps, or between reality and fantasy (135).

In the films selected for this study, film makers have used black-and-white to depict past events when a character is involved in a flash back. In *Village Casanova* (2010), when Mrs. Kipara starts to contemplate about her husbands' queer behaviour, black-and-white is used to show Mrs. Kipara's flash back of the past incidences which she never took note of and which provided hints about her husband's immoral behaviour. Her earlier talk with Chausiku in which Chausiku came to tell her about her husbands' desire for Shakina, is shown in black-and-white to show what is going on in her mind. Black-and white is also used to show the reaction Juma showed when Mrs. Kipara told him that Kipara had slept out. This is used to show the internal suffering that Mrs. Kipara is going through. She is now joining the loose ends of important incidences she was ignorant of which could have informed her that her husband was having affairs out of wedlock. The use of black-and-white emphasises Mrs. Kipara's panic, distress and inefficacy of Christianity on her husband.

Black-and-white is also used to show Tumbo's internal remorse as he tries to lie to his wife as to why he had come home late the previous night. A flash back of a scene at the bar where he was with a prostitute, is in black-and-white and sharply contradicts with his assertion that he was late helping a friend, whose car had a puncture, leading to dramatic irony. The audience is aware that Tumbo is cheating on his wife, a fact that his wife is not aware of. Ali asks Baba Njeri if it is true that he gets battered by his wife to which Baba Njeri brags that if his wife attempts to beat him then there would be 'mass destruction'. After Baba Njeri brags thus, the following shot is in Black-and-white to depict a past event when Baba Njeri was beaten by his wife. At the same time, the filmmaker uses slow motion to break the motion of Baba Njeri as he runs from his wife to save himself, and in so doing, brings about comic effect and satirises Baba Njeri.

In *Chasing Moses* (2009), Trigger (Smithers), remembers the time they were working with Jitu in the army. He remembers a time he wanted to rape a woman but before he could do it, Jitu kills her. This comes back in his mind as he wants to kill Moses' wife and after he remembers that incident, he changes his mind and leaves the woman alone. The incident is in black-and-white to show that it happened in the past. By using this technique, the filmmaker dissects the evil nature of both Trigger and Jitu and also sheds light to their earlier relationship while in the army. Jitu always came into the way of Trigger whenever he wanted to achieve anything.

Black-and-white is used in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), after Zeinabu is assaulted by Kavila, while she was complaining to him that Kavila's mother is mistreating her. She goes back to bed crying and remembers the good times they used to have with Dedan, whom she

abandoned after meeting Kavila. Just as in *Chasing Moses* and in *Village Casanova*, black-and-white is used in this film to show a past event. This is happening in the mind of the character (Zeinabu) as a flash back. Apart from showing that the event is in the past, the technique helps to open the mind of the character to the audience giving the audience the ability to understand the inner thoughts of the character. From this, the viewer can conclude that Zeinabu is regretting as to why she left Dedan because of Kavila. So, in addition to indicating a past event, use of black-and-white helps reveal what is going on in the character's mind thus serving as a visual soliloquy. Black and White sequences indicate past events.

2.3.7. Camera Movement.

This is the way the cinematographer manipulates the direction of the camera in relation to the subject. Barsam (2007) points out that the moving camera,

...allows the viewer to accompany or follow the movements of a character, object, or vehicle, as well as see the action from a character's point of view. The moving camera leads the viewer's eye, or focuses the viewer's attention and, by moving into the scene, helps create the illusion of depth in the flat screen image. Furthermore, it helps convey relationships: spatial, causal, and psychological (176).

A camera at the same position may produce a sense of stagnation. A moving camera may encourage viewers to become involved in the characters' physical or psychological sensations. A Pan gives a panoramic view and it is used to guide the audience's attention to characters or actions that are important and can be a part of the films' dramatic strategy. It is also used to show an expanse of landscape. *Village Casanova* (2010), for example, opens with a pan of a landscape to emphasise the environment. The pan is followed by a zoom-in that reveals a magnificent house to show where the action takes place. After a discussion between Mr. and Mrs. Kipara concerning the friends that Mr. Kipara keeps, another pan follows to reveal a dilapidated mud

house belonging to Tumbo, one of Kipara's friends. The use of pan in this film is to introduce the environment in which the action takes place and so acquaint the viewer with the environment of the story world. This is important because people's behaviour is to a great extent influenced by their environment. Mama Njeri's and Chausiku's houses are also preceded by a pan at the introduction of the film. A pan in both cases is used for establishing shots.

A pan may also be used to create suspense, for example, a high angle pan of Kibera slum in *Chasing Moses* (2009), shows a magnificent building and the roof tops of the slum houses with rusted iron sheets forming a great contrast with the church. Because in the earlier scene Trigger was looking for Moses and has been told that he lives in Kibera slum near Pentecostal Church, the pan of the slum causes anxiety to the viewer concerning the fate of Moses. As pointed earlier in the study that a pan establishes the environment where the action is taking place, this pan allows the audience to observe the slum where Moses lives. The magnificent building forms a contrast with the other dilapidated buildings in the slum. Although people in the slum are generally poor, they are religious and could join hands to construct a good church. Knowing that this is where Moses lives and that Trigger has already been told so, leaves the audience apprehensive of what is likely to happen. The pan ends in a tilt that reveals Moses escaping even before Trigger comes to look for him and so the suspense is resolved. This helps to maintain the viewers' interest in the film.

A pan can be used to direct the eyes of the audience to a certain action, for example when following the movement of characters. In *Chasing Moses* (2009), Trigger comes to search for Moses where Moses has a grocery. A camera trails on Trigger's movement for about forty seconds to emphasise his search for Moses. In this shot, there is a combination of several camera

movements which include, pan, tracking shot, still camera and a zoom all combining together to emphasise Triggers' determined search for Moses. The camera movement directs the audience to follow the movement of Trigger as he looks for Moses and in so doing the filmmaker emotionally engages the viewers. At the village where Moses goes into hiding, a pan of the environment ends in the approaching car that belongs to trigger. This awakens the anxiety of the audience and once more emotionally engages them and also creates suspense because the audience do not know what will happen to Moses if Trigger finds him.

A still camera shows stagnation. In *Chasing Moses* (2009), a still camera on Moses as he escapes through the back door of his house, until the door closes behind him, gives the audience time to see what Moses does as he reaches the door. It shows that Moses does not have enough time so he must hurry up to save himself. Using the technique of a still camera the filmmaker arouses the emotions of the audience who already know the danger facing Moses. Any waste of time may be fatal to him because somebody is running after him. The audience feel uneasy by such stagnation and wish that Moses could hurry.

A stationary camera on Dedan and Zeinabu in *Zeinabu Rundi Nyumbani* (2008), as Dedan is fed by his wife, allows the audience to see how loving the two were before Kavila came into their life. The use of a stationary camera lets the eyes of the audience remain fixed on the action for some time thus engaging them emotionally. A medium shot of Dedan after a carrot is thrown to him by his wife, Zeinabu, is done by a stationary camera. This makes the audience to flash back to the time when Dedan was being fed by the same woman and in so doing the use of a stationary camera provokes thought and shows Dedan's frustration as a result of the mistreatment he gets from his wife. This also engages the audience emotionally.

Mr. Kipara meets with a school child and offers to give her a lift in his car, in *Village Casanova* (2010). A stationary camera on them is used to allow the audience time to compare and contrast the characters. It is also used to emphasise the school girl's assertiveness in declining the offer of Mr. Kipara for a lift and money he offered to her. This gives the audience time to analyse the action in detail. Mr. Kipara's morality is so debased that he even wants to exploit a school child young enough to be his daughter. The girl is portrayed to be of higher moral standards than the women in the village. The tracking shot of the school girl soliloquising after she blasts Mr. Kipara is intended to make the audience follow the movement of the girl and hear her words which are intended to prod the intellect of the audience to think about the action of sugar-daddies, who mislead school children, which is a serious problem in Kenyan society facing young girls.

A Tilt can simulate a character looking up or down and help isolate or exaggerate the vertical dimension of an object or setting. In *Chasing Moses* (2009), a tilt is made to show Moses as he escapes through the shanties. The tilt shows speed, urgency and struggle as Moses escapes. As Trigger pickpockets the man who had stolen from him, Jitu enters the Frame. The lower part of Jitu's body is seen as he enters the frame. As Trigger rises from the squatting position and stands, the camera follows the movement in a tilt to reveal the upper part of Jitu. The tilt in this case is used to exaggerate the height of Jitu and portray him as a powerful man capable of doing anything.

Maria (2006:117), rightly affirms that tracking shots can trace movement of characters laterally (across the frame) or in and out of the depth of the frame. A Tracking shot shows the energy and strength of movement of a character. In *Village Casanova* (2010), a tracking shot of

Shakina carrying water from the stream, emphasises her exhaustion. Her exhaustion is revealed by the way she staggers with a jerry-can of water on her back. The tracking shot of Mr. Kipara as he walks towards Chausiku's house reveals to the audience that Kipara fears to be seen while going there because it gives the audience the chance to analyze Kipara's body language. The tracking shot emphasises how he walks with caution. This creates suspense to the audience who wonder where he is going and why he is so cautious.

A tracking shot is also used to emphasise the forward momentum of a character. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), a tracking shot of Dedan on a tricycle going to rescue Zeinabu shows speed, urgency and determination. He is determined to rescue his wife under any cost. The tracking shot of Dedan and Zeinabu on a tricycle after they were united emphasises their joy. The tracking shot reveals a relaxed ride after their reunion.

2.3.8. Lighting.

Lighting creates our sense of cinematic space by illuminating objects and characters, defining shapes and textures and creating high-lights and shadows. Camera, like the eyes, depends on light in order to capture images. Light can denote time and mood of the story. Barsam (2007) notes that,

“We can generally (*but not always*) associate hard, high-contrast lighting featuring deep shadows (*known as low-key lighting*) with serious or tragic stories; and soft, even lighting (*high-key lighting*) with romantic or comic stories”(149).

In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), Dedan is not properly illuminated as he rushes to rescue Zeinabu to show time of the day. Earlier on, the shot of Dedan rushing to rescue his wife was well illuminated to show that it was during the day. Light is used to show the time Dedan took to reach Kavila's home. He travelled the whole day since he started the journey in the morning and was going on in the evening. The soft light used in the bar scene as Zeinabu and her friend took tea while Dedan and other men took beer, shows that they are indoors and it is in the evening. The soft lighting evokes the mood of relaxation. Soft light is also used at the scene in the bar in *Chasing Moses* (2009), where Triger and other two men take beer and gamble. Very little light is evident when Moses is undergoing rituals at the witch doctor's compound to show it is at night. This lighting causes a melancholic mood. Moses faints in the process. The soft lighting used on Shakinah and Mr. Kipara, when Mr. Kipara goes to bed with Shakina, in *Village Casanova* (2010), shows romance.

2.4. EDITING.

Editing is the creative process by which the editor combines and coordinates individual shots into a cinematic whole. Eisenstein himself emphasised the film-making process rather than the filmed event, and developed-in both theory and practice-a tendency towards editing, or more accurately montage. For him, shots constitute the raw material from which the shots meaning are created.

Maria (2006:161), states that editing contributes to the aesthetic quality of a film because, it emphasises character development, establishes motifs and parallels and develops themes and ideas. This is so because when images are joined, audiences formulate ideas and derive meaning

by comparing the visual details of each shot. A comparison of two shots can reveal important changes in character development and Mise-en-scene. By involving viewers in comparing and contrasting juxtaposed shots, the viewers take part in creating the film's meaning and by being involved they become active and so their interest is held until the end of the film. In this way editing helps to create meaning. The audience formulate ideas and derive meaning by comparing two shots put side by side. The meaning the audience create and the ideas they formulate are influenced by their past knowledge, experience, age, level of education and culture and so they create varied meanings of the same film except when they have a shared knowledge.

2.4.1. Shot juxtaposing.

In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), a shot of Zeinabu reading a letter that was brought to her during breakfast, is followed by a shot of lonely Dedan curled in bed. Comparing these two shots the audience develops the idea that Zeinabu is enjoying life while Dedan is suffering. This makes the audience sympathise with Dedan such that when Zeinabu gets mistreated in the following shots, dramatic effect is achieved.

In *Chasing Moses* (2009), a shot showing Moses in a cave hiding and the lower part of Trigger showing that Trigger is right above Moses, diminishes Moses. That shot is followed by a close-up of Trigger's face that reveals fatigue and exposes Trigger's searching eyes. It is then followed by a close-up shot of Moses' face showing his emotion as he held his breath. This combination of shots helps build tension and leaves the audience holding their breath in anticipation of what would happen.

A shot of Mr. Kipara with Chausiku at Chausiku's home in *Village Casanova* (2010), is followed by a pan showing Kipara's magnificent house, followed by a close-up of a Bible in Mrs. Kipara's hands and then a medium shot of worried Mrs. Kipara. Comparing and contrasting the shots, the audience can deduce the moral standards of the actors. Kipara's family upholds the teachings of the bible although Kipara is a hypocrite. By combining these shots in that manner, the editor satirises the behaviour of Mr. Kipara.

Editing complements dialogue by shaping visual information to evoke a response from the audience on emotional and intellectual levels. The way shots have been juxtaposed speaks visually to the audience. Even where dialogue is missing, the audience can infer the story from the way shots are combined because a shot is interpreted, not on its own, but in relation to other shots coming before or after it. A shot where Dedan refused to eat food and leaves Kavila to be served by Zeinabu in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) is followed by a close-up of Zeinabu looking at Dedan with displeasure and then another shot of Zeinabu serving Kavila. From these shots, the audience can see that the relationship between Dedan and Zeinabu is turning sour, thereby complementing the dialogue that was between Dedan and Kavila pertaining marriage earlier in the film. A shot of Zeinabu sleeping on the floor is followed by a shot of Dedan and Kavila doing final touches on the car, and then a shot of Zeinabu feeding chicken is followed by a shot of Kavila walking towards her after which a shot of Kavila and Zeinabu hugging each other is seen. All these shots together help the audience to see that the relationship between Kavila and Zeinabu is taking a new direction-they are growing fond of each other.

The dialogue between Jitu and Trigger in *Chasing Moses* (2009), when Jitu comes to hire trigger to kill Moses, is complemented by the shots that are edited together. The shot showing

Jitu and Trigger greeting each other, is followed by a shot of Jitu giving him an envelope with the name Moses written on it, and a cross sign below the name “Moses” suggesting that Moses must be eliminated. A shot of Jitu giving Trigger a gun follows. The shots help the audience to understand that Trigger is getting hired to kill Moses. When Moses informs his wife that he wants to leave the city for the village, another shot follows of their close-up to show their worry and then another one of them hugging and then another shot of Moses leaving. The pain that the poor couple feel for parting with each other is clear from their body language and facial expression. The audience get emotionally engaged with the characters evoking feelings of sympathy on the poor family.

2.4.2. The shot/reverse shot.

The shot/reverse shot editing technique accentuates the emotional content of a scene. This is done by timing the cuts to correspond to the pattern of dialogue in order to shift the audiences’ perspective so that it remains focused on how characters respond to the spoken word. This method dictates that a shot of a character speaking will be followed by a shot of another character’s response, taken by a camera placed at the reverse angle of the first shot. Combining close-ups and medium shots can evoke the idea of the continuity of a conversation. Nduji’s *Village Casanova* (2010), uses this technique when Mr. Tumbo asks for breakfast from his wife Hannah. He combines medium shots and close-ups of Hannah and Mr. Tumbo as the conversation goes on and this creates continuity in the conversation. The audience see the characters’ facial expression as they speak and listen to each other. Since editing emphasises how each character responds to what the other has said, this technique makes the film more real and emotionally engaging. Constataras’ *Chasing Moses* (2009) also employs this style when

Moses asks the witch how she would help him. The close-up of the witch is followed by a close-up of Moses thus contrasting the turmoil in Moses with the courage of the witch. A combination of close-ups and medium shots is used to show continuity of their conversation even when the completed scene may be composed of many performances filmed over a week.

2.4.3. Eye line match.

Editing makes the audience to assume the point of view of a character. This can be achieved by editors when they use eye-line match technique during editing. This match cut uses a character's line of sight to motivate the cut. Constataras uses eye-line match in *Chasing Moses* (2009) to draw the audience into Trigger's perspective of Moses as he escapes and to underscore Trigger's emotional strength and physical vulnerability of Moses. This is also the case when Trigger follows Moses to the village. His car develops a mechanical problem and after he hits the car tyre with his leg he moves forward and looks ahead. A cut is made at that point when Trigger looks off-screen and the following shot shows Moses escaping in the distance. The audience therefore see Moses from the perspective of Trigger. Editing via eye-line match allows the audience to see what has captured Trigger's attention.

The eye-line match is a powerful storytelling device because it may provide audiences' access to a character's feelings. A scene from Nduti's *Village Casanova* (2010), where Mr. Kipara is inspecting a building under construction, reveals how effective editing can draw audiences into a character's emotional state. From the top of the building Mr. Kipara sees Shakina walking down the road. A shot of Kipara at the top of the building, is followed by a shot of Shakina walking down the road, and then cuts back to a close-up of Kipara gazing at her, to

hint to the audience what he has seen and his response to it. This shot is then followed by another shot allowing the audience to see Shakina from Kipara's point of view, and another shot showing Shakina's point of view of Kipara, and ends with a close-up of Kipara lustfully looking at Shakina. By use of this technique the audience understand the feelings of Kipara. Eye line match technique is used in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), when Kavila's car develops a mechanical problem near Dedan's home. Kavila looks off screen and then a cut is made followed by a shot of Dedan seated carving with a tool box beside him, and then another shot of Kavila looking off screen at Dedan, prompting the audience to guess what the character thinks -he has seen Dedan and wants to seek assistance from him. This makes the audience see what Kavila is seeing. An eye line match technique is also used in the shot where Zeinabu is looking off screen followed by a shot showing Kavila and Dedan inspecting the car after which Kavila looks off screen too. What follows is a shot of Zeinabu inspecting her dressing while still looking off screen before she starts to walk towards them in response to her husband's call. This technique is used here to emphasise the attraction between Kavila and Zeinabu for the very first time they see each other, a fact not known to Dedan. When Dedan introduces them to each other and asks his wife to go and prepare tea, dramatic irony is achieved. Such sequence of shots makes spatial relationships clear to the audience and guides viewers through a characters' thought process.

2.4.4. Shot transitions.

A shot transition is the method of replacing one shot on the screen with another shot.

Examples of shot transitions are cut, fade in/out, dissolve, wipe. Cuts connote an instantaneous change in mood or character. Fades can have pronounced effect on the pace of a film because they give audiences a literal visual pause in the action. Fade out can be used to indicate passage

of time. This technique is used in *Chasing Moses* (2009) to displace the shot of dawn with a shot of daytime to show that the time has passed from early morning to sometime in the day time. A shot showing Zeinabu feeding her husband in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) is followed by a fade, and then a shot of Dedan asleep to show that after supper, he went to bed earlier than his wife. Zeinabu went to bed after her husband was already asleep. After Zeinabu comes to bed, a fade is again used to show time difference from that shot to the next shot of Kavila driving. The audience can conclude that the next action of Kavila driving takes place the next day. A fade can also have pronounced effect on the pace of a film because it gives the audience a literal visual pause in the action. Dedan frustrated, throws the paraphernalia on top of the cabinet beside his bed after reading the letter left by Zeinabu. A fade that follows gives the audience time to pause before they are taken back to the bliss of Kavila and Zeinabu. The editor juxtaposes these shots to form contrast.

Dissolves introduce a memory or fantasy. A shot of Trigger menacingly pointing a gun at Moses' wife in *Chasing Moses* (2009), dissolves into a shot of Trigger wanting to rape a woman before she was butchered. This transition hints that the next shot is a flash back. Trigger remembers the past and this memory prevents him from harming Moses' wife. The dissolve is again used as a cue to demarcate the past and the present when it is followed by a close-up of worried Trigger after the woman is butchered. When things turn sour to Zeinabu in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), she starts to think about their earlier life with Dedan. A shot of Zeinabu crying after she was slapped by Kavila, dissolves to a shot of Zeinabu and Dedan riding a tricycle to the market and then to other shots of the happy times they used to share with Dedan. This helps the audience to understand what is in the mind of Zeinabu. In this way, the editor is able to reorder

chronology of the story without confusing the audience. The same transition is used in *Village Casanova* (2010), to show the thoughts of Mrs. Kipara when she remembers the past events that suggested that her husband was having affairs outside marriage. A shot of Mrs. Kipara deep in thought after her husband failed to come home the previous night, dissolves into a shot of Chausiku and Mrs. Kipara discussing about Kipara. Mrs. Kipara scolds Chausiku for telling her that her husband is following Shakina. The shot is about a past event and not the present. Another shot of Mrs. Kipara still thinking about her husband's changed behaviour dissolves into a shot of Mrs. Kipara and Juma when Juma came to visit and shows how Juma reacted after he was told by Kipara's wife that Kipara slept out. The dissolve signals to the audience that the event happened in the past and shows that the actor is filled with past memories. Mr. Tumbo also remembers the events of the previous night when his wife complains that he came home very late. A shot of Tumbo trying to explain to his wife why he came late is followed by a dissolve and then a shot of the events in the bar which again dissolves to a shot of Tumbo going on with the explanation. The first dissolve signals that the story is going back to a time in the past and the next dissolve signals a return to the present. This juxtaposing of shot leads to dramatic irony.

Placing shot transitions so that they coincide with certain visual and sound elements punctuates emotional and intellectual content of a scene. Cuts for example can correspond to lines of dialogue to draw attention to how characters are responding to what is said as pointed out in shot/reverse shot above. Editing can allow filmmakers to rearrange the sequence in which events are shown. This can be used to re-order chronology to suggest a similarity into points in time or cause and effect relationship. The most common being flashback -when events taking

place in the present are interrupted by images or scenes that have taken place in the past. Visual cues like dissolve or a fade clarify that a film is making a shift in chronology.

2.4.5. Parallel editing.

Parallel editing -also called cross cutting- is cutting back and forth between two or more events occurring in different spaces to suggest that these events are happening at the same time. *Village Casanova* (2010) starts with an establishing shot of a farmland which immediately conveys the message that the action is taking place in the village not in town. The shot of the farmland is followed by another shot of a magnificent house belonging to the rich Mr. Kipara and another shot follows that shows the sitting room of the house with Mrs. Kipara (Angel Waruinge) reading a newspaper and then Mr Kipara enters the frame. They sit and start a dialogue. After this event, another establishing shot of the farmland is presented followed by a dilapidated mud house belonging to Tumbo (Samuel Kinuthia). Tumbo and wife too start conversing. During shooting the farmland is captured using a pan and the editor uses dissolves to replace shots in the screen. The juxtaposing of these shots showing different events form parallels. This is used by the filmmaker to encourage the audience to consider the similarities and differences of the lives of the characters living in the same environment, to create suspense and help develop theme. Parallel editing is also evident in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008). Shots of Kavila and Zeinabu having fun at the park are followed by a shot of Dedan curled in bed despondently. This helps the audience to compare the lives of Dedan and Zeinabu in the two different settings. Zeinabu starts to get mistreated by Kavila's mother and as she tries to save herself Dedan is shown resolving to go and look for his wife after he sees Kavila's address.

2.5. SOUND.

Sound is anything that is perceived by hearing in film. Sound includes music, dialogue, and the aural effects of objects and settings. Barsam (2007:274) while quoting Steven says that, “The eye sees better when the sound is great”. In this respect, sound is used to reinforce action in film. It is important to note that sound in film could be diegetic or non-diegetic. Diegetic sound refers to sound whose origin is the story world, for example, the voices of characters and sounds of objects that exist in the story world together with the music made by instruments that form part of the story world. Non-diegetic sounds have their origin outside the story world. These include sound track of films.

2.5.1. Dialogue.

Phillips (2000) argues that,

One interesting and valuable use of dialogue is to create dramatic irony—that is, a pointed contrast between two actions or between what is said and what is happening. Dramatic irony can, but does not have to be humorous ...Another use of dialogue is to create a powerful pathos (72).

Maria (2000:212) also says that, “the primary function of spoken dialogue is to externalise a character’s thoughts and feelings, bring motivations, goals, plans and conflicts to the surface.” We are able to understand the characters from what they say. Dialogue plays an important role in establishing character, emphasise setting, or a character’s cultural background. It also helps to define a character’s relationship to others in terms of age, authority or class and can also reveal a character’s level of education.

The films studied show a tendency towards code switching in dialogue. This a normal occurrence among Kenyan people who switch from one language to another in a conversation so long as both speakers are conversant with the languages in question. This is mainly the case with the young generation. Characters switch from English to Kiswahili or Mother tongue. The conversation between Ali and his wife Shakina over water in *Village Casanova* (2010), show how code switching is done in a conversation;

ALI

Hei, Shakina...eei Shakina! Huyu mwanam (this woman)...Shakina!

SHAKINA

Eeh!

ALI

Ba, hata huna haja (are you not ashamed). Ever since we came from the city you've turned me into a cat... eh! Mimi paka nioge na mate? (am I a cat to wash myself with saliva)...Angalia (look)...Kwani ulichota mitungi mingapi ulipoenda mtoni? (How many jerry-cans of water did you fetch when you went to the river?)

SHAKINA

Listen here my dear....listen...Mimi sio punda (I am not a donkey). And if you thought you came here to bathe like a fish; you can as well as forget.

ALI

Just listen to yourself...Unaniambia nini wewe Mwanamke? (What are telling me woman)...hati wewe...(That you...)...mmchi...(chuckles)

SHAKINA

Mimi sio punda. (I am not a donkey)

This way of speaking makes the Kenyan audience relate with the characters and makes the characters credible since it is a common way of speaking among the young generation. In the above dialogue, Shakina and Ali switch from Kiswahili to English and still understand each other. Code switching in Kenya is common among the young generation and is widely accepted in social circles and so using it in film makes the film appealing to the Kenyan audience. From the dialogue it is also easy to tell the relationship between Ali and his wife, Shakina. Men's lordship over women is portrayed and women's defiance to men's authority is evident. This brings about power struggles among gender - a common occurrence among the Kenyan people with men on one side protecting the status quo and women demanding equality. The dialect and accent of the characters in the dialogue is a powerful indicator of background and social status. Through dialogue audiences recognise a character's nationality or tribe. Kenyan audience can easily recognise the tribe of the characters from their accent. Accent and dialect is a powerful indicator of not only background but also social status. This background information plays an important role in helping audiences to understand a character's motivation or in helping the audience to explore broader themes. When Tumbo is speaking in the dialogue below he makes good use of pitch. His deep voice can be associated with power and authority but the deep voice of Mr. Kipara in *Village Casanova* (2010) while speaking to the school girl can be associated with evil or duplicity. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), when Zeinabu complains that she was made to wash dishes and clean the house, Kavila answers, "Hapa ni kwa mamangu" (this is my mother's house) with a deep voice to show that Kavila is angry with what Zeinabu has said.

The louder a person speaks the greater the emotional intensity of his/her words. Loudness connotes that a character is experiencing intense emotion like anger, fear or passion. The school

girl in *Village Casanova* (2010) rebukes Mr. Kipara loudly to show that she is angered by Kipara's wiles. Chausiku too speaks loudly to her husband Juma after he tells her that he might pour water on her. She answers, "Njitiriria! Njitirira! (Pour on me, pour on me). This sudden rise of voice indicates change in emotion on her from tenderness to anger.

Another aspect of dialogue is use of figurative words by actors. Apart from the metaphorical use of words which gives them a deeper meaning, the use of words figuratively evoke humour. In *Village Casanova* (2010), Tumbo asks for breakfast and Hannah tells him that there is no food. Tumbo asks her why he didn't slaughter the cock as agreed and when Hannah says that she sold the cock, Tumbo complains;

TUMBO

Nakuulize aje ukamuza mpaka alarm clock yangu? (Let me ask you, you sold my cock)

HANNAH

Nishamuuza. (I have sold it)

TUMBO

Alarm clock yangu? (my alarm clock?)...na ndio nimechelewa leo.
(That's why I am late today).

Code switching is evident in this dialogue too because although Tumbo speaks in Kiswahili, he uses the English word "alarm clock" to refer to a cock instead of the Kiswahili word "Jogoo". By referring to his cock as "alarm clock," he wants the audience to understand that the cock wakes him up in the morning, thus serving as an alarm clock. The use of this word by a Character like Kinuthia, who is known by many Kenyans in the TV show *Tahidi High* - which is a TV drama depicting high school life- where he acts as Omosh, evokes humour. The

way he emphasises the word when speaking, and the body language, all combine to create humour because dialogue makes meaning through the text and the subtext.

2.5.2. Voice over.

Diegetic voice-over may function as a character's meditation of past events or to allow the audience access a character's immediate thoughts, feelings and perspective. For example, when Dedan wakes up in the morning in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), he sees a letter on the side board and when he looks at it a voice over is used to inform the audience about the contents of the letter that Zeinabu had written to Dedan before she eloped with Kavila. Zeinabu wrote the letter and placed it on the side board and left leaving the audience wondering what Zeinabu had written in the letter. The suspense is used to retain the viewer's interest and it is purged by the voice-over, which helps the audience to know what Zeinabu had written. This also helps the audience to understand the motivation behind Zeinabu's decision to leave Dedan and leaves the audience curious as to what Dedan would do.

2.5.3. Music.

Maria argues that music in film can establish motifs and parallels, and can evolve with narrative context. He further states that,

...systematic use of music can contribute to the emotional and intellectual complexity of a film in five ways: it can establish the historical context of a scene; it can help depict the scene's geographical space; it can help define characters; it can help define the emotional tenor of a scene; and it can provide a distanced or ironic commentary on a scene's visual information (2000:227).

Chasing Moses (2009) begins with a slow paced melancholic music thus shaping the emotional tenor of the film. The film, from the beginning to the end is full of sadness.

The singer, in this case Lulu Abdallah, who performs the music, is part of the story world and so the music is diegetic. The song echoes the desperate lives of characters like Trigger and Moses. Their life is full of problems that are brought to them by wicked Jitu. Despite the fact that the song is a sad one, the words show optimism and determination as is evident from the words, “there is always something to live for.” And that “everything is gonna be alright.”

The melody that follows is fast to show that the mood of the scene at the bar where trigger is gambling is a jovial one. Music therefore, can be used to help in interpreting the mood of a scene. Using music, filmmakers can therefore emphasise dramatic shifts in the emotional content, from scene to scene within a single film. Part of the music used at the beginning of the film is repeated in the scene where Moses is waiting to board a public service vehicle to run to the village. This makes the mood of the scene a sad one since Moses is leaving his wife and children, one child already sick, in town to go and hide in the village. When Trigger saw Moses under the white tree in the village and started to run after him, another melody is used that depicts the tense mood of the scene. The film ends with the same song that was used at the beginning even after Trigger gave Moses’ wife money that was to be a prize for killing Moses and even though Moses and Trigger were able to kill Jitu. Sadness in life is inevitable.

Music in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) was performed by Lulu Abdallah and Eric Wainana. The film starts with a fast paced melody to show joy as Dedan and Zeinabu ride their tricycle to town to sell their merchandise. From the scene where Dedan, his wife and others are in the bar, all through to a time when they go to bed, the song acts as a commentary thus distancing the audience. In the bar the song is saying that “maisha matamu.” (Life is sweet) and is followed by a chorus saying, “Nipe ahadi mama utanitoroka” (Promise me that you will not

run away from me). Thus the music exploits contrast between sound and image to distance the audience, so that they can see the images from a more critical perspective. Then in the scene where Zeinabu feeds Dedan, the music says, “Wapendanao ndio waleanao. Nilee nikulee”. (Those who love each other are the ones who feed each other. Feed me I feed you). Then the chorus above is repeated. Using this technique the filmmaker offers a wry, satirical commentary. Kavila comes with presents for both Dedan and Zeinabu and when he takes them out the music comments, “Ndari ya mma ni nyina wa mundu”. (A true darling is a person’s mother). The language used in the song is Kikuyu language thus the music used in this case bears a specific cultural significance. The phrase above is also a Kikuyu saying. The music therefore suggests the cultural make up of the setting’s location and so the audience can also perceive the geography of the setting.

2.6 Conclusion

It is clear that the Filmmakers of the selected films use various film making techniques in order to convey specific messages to the audience, appeal to their senses and communicate to them in a particular way. The films therefore, engage the audience by leaving them to fill gaps in the untold story, which they create through inference. The filmmakers also, are greatly influenced by the Kenyan culture and the Kenyan way of story-telling. This is manifest in the way they use language; sentence structures, figurative use of language and use of indigenous sayings. It is also important to note that in so doing, they are able to communicate using cinematic language thus making the films highly eclectic. This instance of borrowing from the Kenyan culture and story-telling techniques, and amalgamating with the mainstream filmmaking

techniques, gives the films their own peculiar aesthetics, which will be of concern in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. AESTHETIC PECULIARITIES OF KENYAN DRAMA FILMS

3.1. INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter we are going to discuss the aesthetic peculiarities of Kenyan drama films in regard to Themes, Camerawork, Mise en scene, Editing, and Sound.

3.2. Themes.

Themes that are addressed in the three selected films are those that are relevant to the Kenyan society. The themes are derived from the actual way of life of the Kenyan society and they are mainly contemporary in nature. The filmmakers are informed by the issues that are affecting the Kenyan people, and so, use film as a means of transforming reality in the social and rational field, to inform the audience and incite them to analyse and criticize the reality in which they are living. Film, like other forms of art, derives its material from the society of its creators just as Stam and Miller (2004:3) said that the films' promiscuity points every day in every way toward the social. It is a recorder of reality, a manufacturer of reality, a part of reality and social reality. In this respect, Kenyan drama film is utilitarian in nature. It is derived from the society to educate and entertain the society and so embraces Brecht's idea of edutainment.

Chasing Moses (2009) addresses issues of class struggle. The conflict between the rich and the poor in society is addressed in the conflict between rich Jitu and poor Moses. Jitu is determined to kill Moses because Moses just stepped on Jitu's expensive shoes with his tricycle. Jitu hires the services of Trigger - a poor ex-soldier. A contrast of the way of life of poor slum dwellers is shown with the rich way of life lived by people like Jitu. This way of life is apparent

with some people living in luxurious houses while others live in shanties in many cities in Kenya. A visit to the slums in Nairobi like Kibera and then another one in a place like Muthaiga will show the contrast of the two living environments. The rich engage the services of the poor to oppress the poor just as the whites used the services of the Africans to oppress the Africans during colonial period. But when Trigger runs after Moses to the village, he comes into contact with the reality of hard life and faints due to exhaustion and lack of water. He is helped by the witch doctor and given a charm which unites him with Moses and they both start looking for Jitu. The poor are united to save themselves. This echoes Karl Marx's (1820-1895) theory which emphasises the existence of opposing forces in the life of individuals, groups, social structures, and society in general. This view is true in the film because Trigger is a poor white Kenyan man, Moses a poor Kikuyu Man and the witch doctor a poor Kamba lady. The three have one thing in common and that is, they are poor. Jitu's men are poor but Jitu uses them to oppress other poor people. For example when a man brings shoes to Jitu and asks for delivery charges, Jitu orders his poor men to beat him. They are also the ones who break Moses' tricycle.

Village Casanova (2010) also addresses the theme of poverty. Mr. Kipara uses his wealth to oppress the poor village women. He buys Mr. Tumbo beer and, leaving him drinking, he goes to sleep with his wife. Poor village folks are helped by Ali - a man who has come to the village from the city after he lost his job. Together with his wife Shakina they set a trap for Kipara and make him sign documents to give them his car and land. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumani* (2008) the rich Kavila takes away the wife of poor Dedan (Zeinabu) only to mistreat her in the long run at his mother's house. Kavila takes advantage of poor Dedan but towards the end of the film Zeinabu poisons her rich tormentors and on the other hand Dedan resolves to come and fight for

his wife. The two are joined together after Dedan cuts the big chain on the gate to open it for Zeinabu. In the three films, the poor end up fighting for their rights and defeat the rich. This is an idea that was advocated by Multhius when he asserted that capitalism created two competing classes of people; the bourgeoisie, who owned and controlled the means of production and hired wage laborers, and the proletariat, who were common workers who owned nothing but the right to sell their own labor. Capitalism's very nature would ensure that eventually, these classes would struggle against one another to the point where the class of workers would get large enough and oppressed enough that it would overthrow the bourgeoisie, seize the means of production from it and end the economic system known as capitalism. The system of socialism would be ushered in and gradually evolve into pure communism. These films therefore, advocate the rights of the poor people and intend to incite them to unite and fight to eradicate poverty and exterminate all who use their powers to oppress them. The film makers want the audience to understand the situation they are in and mobilize them to work together to change their lives for the better.

Other themes addressed in *Village Casanova* include immorality. Kipara's determination to woo a school girl, fail out of the girl's assertive nature. This is the case in Kenya where rich men are accused of misusing college girls after luring them with gifts and money. Family violence is another theme addressed in *Village Casanova*. Some men getting battered by their wives is a common occurrence in various parts of Kenya that has hit the Kenyan news headlines in papers and radio stations. Baba Njeri is one character who is frequently beaten by his wife, but when Juma asks him about the rumours, he denies it bragging that if his wife dares do that, then there would be mass destruction. The film maker satirises him when his wife comes to the bar

and beats him right there at the bar. This shows power struggle between gender, a common occurrence in Kenya under the wave of women empowerment and women rights. The theme of drunkenness is also addressed in all the films. Dedan loses his wife to Kavila in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* as a result of his drunkenness which resulted into a loose talk with Kavila that triggered Zeinabu to make up her mind to follow Kavila as is evident from the letter she wrote to Kavila. Drunkenness also led men in *Village Casanova* to neglect their families and so put their wives at risk of being sexually misused by the rich and famous Kipara. In *Chasing Moses*, drunkenness leads Trigger into gambling and getting hired to kill Moses while the men they were gambling with plan to steal money from Trigger that he had acquired from them through gambling.

3.3. Mise en scene.

Mise en scene refers to everything that is visible in a film. The elements of Mise en scene include; the setting, the human figure and lighting. Setting refers to the places where the films' action unfolds. These places could be real or imaginary places. Many filmmakers construct set to enjoy maximum degree of control over their shooting environment. The three selected films however are shot on location. Shooting on location is cost effective in producing low cost films. Improvisation of location is a common feature in the films. The dance scene in *Zeinabu Rundi Nyumbani* is in the open to avoid hiring dance halls which could be very expensive. The mud houses of the actors in *Village Casanova* are borrowed from people to avoid construction costs. The village setting in *Chasing Moses* is done in a solitary dry land near Nairobi to cut transport cost to the villages. The market where Dedan and his wife sell their products is on the road side.

The actors that are used are not professionally trained but some are those who are common in local TV productions. Mrs. Kipara in *Village Casanova* acts as Mrs. Morgan in The local TV drama *Tahidi High* while Mr. Tumbo acts as Omosh in the same. Jackline Nyaminde who acts as Kavila's mother in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* acts in *Papa Shirandula*. Most actors are armature actors with a basic knowledge of acting in theatre which they apply in film. This is the case in Kenya because there are no acting schools as for now and although film was introduced to Kenya by the colonial government it was neglected by the government. The fact that actors in Kenya are poorly paid also makes it difficult for people to enrol in acting schools even outside the country. This situation is changing in the recent times when the government in the vision 2030 highlighted the importance of film in economic growth and as an employment tool. It is expected that in the near future acting courses will be taught in colleges and universities. Nevertheless, the actors who perform in Kenyan drama films are able, with little or no training, to play their roles well in the films selected.

Some of the costumes they use are their own clothes and do not necessarily involve the services of the costume designer thus cutting down the production cost. Since the producers aim at producing low cost films they make use of the actors' clothes instead of making new set of costumes for the performance. Other clothes that they use are low cost clothing bought from second hand clothe outlets. Use of wraps -"Khangas" wrapped by women round their waists to act as aprons- is common in the three films. The wraps carry with them a cultural significance. Wraps are used by African women while working in the farm or in the kitchen to prevent dirt and they are also wrapped by women in coastal areas to serve as clothes as does Hannah in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*. Use of actors' usual clothing is done to reduce cost of production, while use of

wraps by women give the films a Kenyan “feel”. The props that they use are local Kenyan things like charms, spear, club and shield. The props are discussed in chapter two.

3.4. Sound.

Sound includes dialogue, music and sound effects. The language they use is eclectic in nature. There is mixing of Kenyan languages and English. Actors result to code switching in their dialogue. The actors at the same time are wordy, a phenomenon that is common in Kenya. Use of parables is evident in *Village Casanova* when Hannah narrates a story of a stray goat that went to feed on a neighbour’s piece of land, implying her decision to stray and move with another man. The accent of the actors is not learnt but rather natural and so, one can easily identify the tribe of the actors. No effort is made to artistically speak in a certain accent and so dialogue flows naturally without seeking to mark any class difference. In this respect it is right to conclude that language in the selected films is not used artistically but rather naturally for communication purposes. This natural use of language though, is aesthetic in itself since the audience who come from the same tribe identify with the actors while those from other areas find humour in the speech flaws of characters for example in pronunciation. Humorists in Kenya, for example in the *Kenya Corner* show on Citizen TV, exploit the varied accents of Kenyan people for comic purposes. The accent of Mr. Tumbo for example when he says, “Ukijaribu Kuuza Ng’ombe hata wewe nitakuuza,” is humorous. Zeinabu’s failure to pronounce letter L and instead pronouncing it as R when she says, “Kavila ningojee kwa gari,” may also be humorous to some people while others identify with her.

Music is also used in the films in a very peculiar way in two of the selected films. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*, music is performed by actual Kenyan musicians, Lulu abdallah and

Eric Wainana who form part of the cast thus making it a live show. Lulu Abdallah also performs music in *Chasing Moses* while at the same time acting as a bartender. The songs used in the two films, act as commentaries to the events taking place in the film. Use of sound effects is minimal in the three films but in *Chasing Moses* it is used to indicate a gunshot. Use of music and sound effects is not as elaborate as is the case with Hollywood films in order to reduce the production cost of these low budget films.

3.5. Editing.

Editing is done by placing together contrasting shots thus provoking thought and comparison. Since film is didactic the audience are expected to learn from it. The editor therefore, places contrasting shots side by side so that the audience can compare them and make conclusions. In this way the audience are involved in the film making it more interesting. This, the editor achieves through parallel editing too, where events taking place in different places are placed side by side to show that they are happening at the same time. For example in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008), a scene showing Kavila and Zeinabu having fun in the park dissolves into a scene where lonely Dedan is curled in bed allowing the audience to compare their situations and form their own opinions about them. Editing enables the editor to structure the story thus introducing twists and turn of events, building a climax and providing a resolution.

3.6 Conclusion

It is evident in this chapter that Kenyan film has got its own peculiar themes which it addresses. Filmmakers are informed by the issues that affect the Kenyan people, and so, use film as a means of transforming reality in the social and rational field to inform the audience. These films like other forms of art derive their material from the society and point towards the

social and acts as a recorder of reality, a manufacturer of reality, a part of reality and social reality which includes culture as will be discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1. SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS EMBEDDED IN KENYAN DRAMA FILMS

4.2. INTRODUCTION.

Socio-cultural factors are the larger scale forces within cultures and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals. Abrahams. et al (2001) argue that,

The subject of globalization has led to a fierce debate because of the claim that the imbalance in global communications amounts to cultural imperialism. In effect, the values and beliefs and ways of life represented in American films are, it is argued, gradually eroding the traditional values and beliefs of other cultures (69).

From the above assertion, it can correctly be argued that film is a powerful tool in transmission of culture and that the films carry with them the culture that has influenced the director which can influence the lives of the audience of that particular film. This makes film a medium of cultural change, amalgamation and unification of society. In this respect, film can be used to build a Kenyan culture out of the many traditional cultures that co exist in Kenya. This chapter deals with the cultural aspects that are embedded in the three selected films.

4.3. Gender

Culture consists of the beliefs, values and ways of life of a people. Kenya with its forty two tribes has a set of beliefs and values which make it distinct from other countries. The way of life of a people is always changing in one way or the other, and so it can be said that it is always in the transition. Films express and implicitly shape national images and symbolic representations of cultural fictions in which ideas about indigenous identity have been embedded. The films selected depict certain social-cultural aspects which will be the focus of

this study. In the past, male dominance over females was the norm of Kenyan society but in recent years, as a result of feminism and human rights activists, this trend is changing. There is a common belief of gender equality. This may not be the case in every respect because, silently and behind the scenes, some men regard themselves as more powerful than women while some women are conscious of their limitations. This is the case in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* where after selling their goods, Zeinabu puts the money into Dedan's pocket and accompanies him to the bar and takes tea with another woman while Dedan and other men take beer. No matter the many women empowerment programmes in place, the fact is that these programmes impact on the relationship between men and women and a time may come when men become oppressed by women if balanced affirmative action is not taken on both. The struggle for women to assert themselves in a culture that is masculine is so powerful in Kenya. Women are asking for equality in gender. The new Kenyan constitution for example, has provisions for a third women representation in all public appointments to ensure that women are not sidelined during such appointments. The struggle for women to be given leadership positions and to be given economic freedom is a common trend in the Kenyan culture and the same is evident in the films selected. Towards the end of *Chasing Moses*, Trigger comes with the money which he was paid to kill Moses and gives it to Moses' wife who starts a business with it. Her life changes from that of a house wife to a business woman. This is women empowerment, a common trend in Kenyan culture. Mama Njeri stands her ground and rebukes her irresponsible husband, who comes demanding for food and gives him a plate of water to bring him to his senses for not giving them money to buy food. Chausiku in *Village Casanova* advises her husband on what to do to help improve their economic status but when Juma fails to take the advice a quarrel erupts and

Chausiku becomes assertive. This depicts a cultural change from the era when women were silent even under oppression to a period where women are forcefully putting forward their ideas and feelings. Baba Njeri asks her wife to have another baby but she refuses. This shows that women too have power to decide on the size of the family which earlier on rested on men.

Male masculinity is being questioned in these movies. Mulhern, in reference to literary discourse once said that:

The class subjectivity of women and their sexual identity thus became welded together in nineteenth-century discourses and took new and sinister dimensions of meaning. Ruling groups had traditionally used the sexual and domestic virtue of their women as a way of valorising their moral authority. By focusing on the issue and image of female sexual conduct, questions about the economic and political integrity of dominant groups could be displaced (1992:87).

The culture, where men ruled over women because of their economic and political status was no more. A situation where women now take care of the families while men spend their time drinking is shown in the films. Women do not sit at home and wait for men to provide for their needs but they struggle to feed their families. Both Dedan and Zeinabu work hard in the village in the film *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*. Zeinabu feeds chicken and Dedan carves. They together go to sell their produce to the market and so both are productive. Men are not respected just because they are men but because they are able to act responsibly. In *Village Casanova* (2010), men are only respected if they are successful. Mr. Kipara is respected among the villagers because he is wealthy. Men like Tumbo, Ali, Juma and Baba Njeri are despised by their very wives because they are poor and unable to care for their families. In the scene where women are in the farm they discuss their men and complain of their drinking habit and failure to care for them.

Chausiku tries to talk to her husband, Juma, so that they can work and be as rich as Kipara but

Juma is adamant. This led Chausiku to say, “Kweli dunia hii nilikosa mwanamme.” (Surely in this world I lacked a man), implying that her husband is not a real man because he is not doing what is expected of a man.

Men are portrayed as oppressive to women which is a source of conflict in the Kenyan society between men and women. Zeinabu, in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* (2008) leaves her poor husband for rich Kavila but at Kavila’s home she gets mistreated by Kavila’s mother and when she complains to Kavila, she is assaulted and decides to go back to her poor husband who had looked down on her because she was slim. Kipara, a rich man, leaves his wife at home and starts moving with other women. Mrs. Kipara is helpless and cries alone at home when she discovers that her husband is unfaithful to her, until she is visited by a pastor who comforts her. The issues about men and women relationships are so complex in the Kenyan society due to the different forces that are pulling in different directions. On the one hand there is the traditional male dominance view and on the other is the modern feminism movement and these forces are still at work. Gender equality is yet to take shape in Kenya and so the films depict a society that is at the crossroads concerning gender. This is what led the constitution to address it so that it can set a legal path.

4.4. The Family.

Moses, a poor man, leaves his poor wife and children and escapes to the village to save his life in *Chasing Moses*. They hug each other and this shows that their family is a happy one despite the fact that they are poor. After the death of Jitu, Moses works together with his wife in their business. The importance of a family cannot be over emphasised in the Kenyan society and this is why different directors address it in their films. Despite the fact that there is a crisis in

gender relationship the family unit in Kenya is strong and survives in the midst of the struggle between the sexes. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nymbani*, Dedan goes to rescue his wife Zeinabu and the two are united and ride their tricycle together as was the case at the beginning of the film. The two were able to salvage their family and start afresh. Kipara too in *Village Casanova* goes back to his wife and asks for forgiveness and tells them to pray for him. Kenyan culture puts great importance to the family unit and the family is very much respected.

4.5. Alcohol.

Alcohol use and misuse is another cultural aspect addressed in the films. Kaufman while quoting Heath, D.B. asserts that,

“Socio-cultural variants are at least as important as physiological and psychological variants when we are trying to understand the interrelations of alcohol and human behavior. Ways of drinking and of thinking about drinking are learned by individuals within the context in which they learn ways of doing other things and of thinking about them--that is, whatever else drinking may be, it is an aspect of culture about which patterns of belief and behavior are modeled by a combination of example, exhortation, rewards, punishments, and the many other means, both formal and informal, that societies use for communicating norms, attitudes, and values.” (1982:438)

From the above quotation it is right to argue that the way individuals think about drinking and the way people drink depend to a large extent on what they learn about alcohol in their culture. This makes the issues of drinking complex in the Kenyan culture with some Christians shunning it as evil while some other beliefs condone it. The matter regarding alcohol use was also addressed in what is famously known as Mututho laws in Kenya. This shows that there is a common ground about alcohol in Kenyan society which recommends responsible use of alcohol. The films makers address the issue in its complexity.

Drinking is a social act that is performed in a recognized social context. The most effective way of controlling alcohol abuse is through socialization. The men in *Village Casanova* are irresponsible drunkards who do not care about their families. Alcohol abuse has been a teething problem in many Kenyan societies. Use of illicit brew in some parts of Kenya has been protested by women who hold demonstrations to show their displeasure about men's excessive use of alcohol. In *Village Casanova* the effects of alcohol abuse is so clear. Tumbo engages in alcohol drinking until late in the night and he had to look for an excuse to give to his wife early the next morning. Baba Njeri is so lost in Drinking such that he could not feed his children and this made his infuriated wife to come looking for him in the bar and in the process beat him in public. Dedan, in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*, drinks in the bar with friends and this at first does not affect the relationship between him and his wife. Everything changes though when Kavila spends a night at his place and the two start drinking traditional alcohol. It is at this point that Dedan speaks indiscreetly about his wife and when his wife hears what he says, she gets hurt. This later leads to her decision to elope with Kavila.

Alcohol is also treated as a way of relaxation where Kavila and his family are seen drinking wine as they play cards. They are drinking responsibly. Trigger in *Chasing Moses* (2009) is also drinking in the bar while gambling. Drinking in Kenya is widely accepted but irresponsible drinking is discouraged or drinking by young people below eighteen years.

4.6. Costumes

Some costumes used in the film have cultural significance. The wrap “Khanga” is one of them. Other kinds of dressing mainly among women also carry cultural significance. The kinds of clothes that women wear in rural areas are different from those worn in urban areas. Trousers among women and short skirts are common among town women as opposed to women in the village. This is the reason why Kipara buys clothes for Chausiku in *Village Casanova* and tells her that he would take her to town because the clothes he bought her are not worn in the village. Mrs. Kipara though living in the village wears trousers at times and the same case applies to Shakina. The two are influenced by city life. Clothes too are a cultural phenomenon that is not yet defined in the Kenyan culture. Except for the traditional Maasai dressing like the one that Trigger gets from the witch doctor to signify his change in morality there is no single attire that can be seen as Kenyan. Most of the clothes worn in Kenya are from the western world. There was a time the government advocated for a Kenyan dressing but this dress is rarely worn by people. Even clothes that were previously common in urban setting are now common in the rural setting as well. The minister for education Mr. Mutula Kilonzo once in the year 2011 hit the headlines when he commented on the length of skirts that he recommended to be worn by school children. This varied view about clothes is evident in the films for example when Kipara tells Chausiku that he would take her to the city where she could wear clothes that he bought her. Zeinabu too in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*, escapes with Kavila clad in clothes that Kavila bought her. Kavila’s mother complains about the clothes that Zeinabu wears at their home and says that she must not dress like that.

4.7. Religion.

Kenyan belief in charms and witch craft is evident in the film *Chasing Moses*. Moses and his wife wear charms round their necks. Trigger runs after Moses up to the village and when he comes into contact with the witch doctor, he too is given a charm. Charm is believed to provide protection against evil. The charm in the film serves a unifying purpose between Moses and Trigger. The witchdoctor giving the charm speaks Kamba language which is spoken by one of the tribes in Kenya that is believed to be specialized in charms. It is a common belief among the Kenyan audience that there are people who seek the services of witch doctors to help them succeed in business, politics and other endeavours in life. Many Nigerian movies too have their story lines addressing witchcraft and hence the term, 'Africa magic' since Africans have a common belief about magic. This belief makes Moses to run to the village to seek assistance from the witch doctor in order for him to overcome his assailant which turns to be well for him after Trigger comes into contact with the witch and also receives a charm that unites him with Moses. Moses' wife had a charm that Trigger took away from her and used it to trace Moses.

Kipara's family is a Christian family. His wife reads the bible and Kipara himself is referred to as the church elder. Christianity is accepted among the Kenyan people. In Kenya, religion depends on ones convictions and there is no set of faith that is superior to the other. Christians like Kipara are portrayed as doing things that are not acceptable in the Christian faith. Such people are viewed negatively in the society because they do not live their faith. *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* never deals with any aspect of faith. It can be assumed that the characters are not concerned with any form of belief, a situation that applies to some people in Kenya. Some people

in Kenya cannot be ascribed to any faith and so live their life as they deem fit. There is a coexistence of beliefs in Kenya since there is freedom of worship. None can accuse Moses of visiting a witch doctor because Moses is living his faith and surely he gets the protection he needed from the witch doctor. A culture that accommodates differing beliefs is depicted in the films.

4.8. Gender roles

The films also give hint about Kenyans' traditional view of the roles of men and women. It is generally accepted that men should be able to take care of their families and any deviation from that is not plausible in the society. This belief was passed to Kenyans from their traditional cultures and no matter how much the equality issue is addressed the fact remains that there is an expectation for men to care for their families. Even in situations where both couples are earning, a man has more responsibilities to bear in the family. This therefore makes the Kenyan audience not sympathise with Baba Njeri when he is beaten by his wife because he has failed to do his part. He does not give his wife money to buy food and so, when he asks for food and is instead given a plate of water and rebuked by his wife for not providing them with food, the audiences have no pity for him but rather laugh at him. Moses in *Chasing Moses* gives his wife money to buy food and works very hard to get money to feed his family that lives in the slums. When Jitu starts to beat him the audience may feel moved but when Moses strikes Jitu with his crutch the audience may be thrilled. Moses is a hard working person who deserves respect. He is struggling to feed his family as is evident at the beginning of the play where he gives money to his wife to

buy food. For the same reason, men who are as rich as Kipara win admiration of all the women in the village and win respect from all men. Successful men are admired and respected.

4.9 Conclusion

Film is a powerful tool in transmission of culture. Films carry with them the culture that has influenced the director's life and thinking. This makes film a medium of cultural change, amalgamation and unification of society. In this respect film can be used to build a Kenyan culture out of the many traditional cultures that co exist in Kenya. Film therefore, can be used to promote Kenya's values, lifestyle and the physical environment to the entire world and in the process promote other industries like tourism. It can also be used as a custodian of the Kenyan history for the coming generations.

CHAPTER FIVE.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with a summary of the major findings of the study, the implications of the findings and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Summary.

Kenyan filmmakers use various film making techniques to make their films appealing to the audience. Mise en scene in the three drama films studied shows various dramatic aspects. Setting for example helps to define the environment that surrounds the actors. The environment of the actors to a great extent determines how they behave. Actors' response and relationship with the environment they live in, dramatically influences their decisions, choices, aspirations behaviour and relationship with each other. Zeinabu in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* decides to poison Kavila and his family to regain her freedom as a result of the influence of the environment around her in Kavila's home. Her decision to elope with Kavila was also influenced by the environment she was in.

Props help define characters. Depending on the props at a character's disposal, the audience get to know the social class of the actors, their tastes, desires, beliefs, economic level, cultural values and they influence the way they relate with each other. The fact that Kipara owns a car in *Village Casanova* is enough to show that he is rich. Baba Njeri is always in sandals showing that he is poor. The charm on Moses' neck, in *Chasing Moses*, tells of his beliefs as is the case with the bible in Kipara's home in *Village Casanova*. The characters themselves are an integral part of the Mise en scene. They way characters relate with each other and with the

environment they live in, the way they speak and behave, their body stature and complexion, the costumes they wear and what they decide to do all combine to help the audience understand the themes, the plot, the conflicts and the twists in the film making it much more aesthetic. Kipara's relationship with women in the village in *Village Casanova* helps the audience to understand the theme of unfaithfulness in the family.

Cinematography plays a crucial role in enhancing the visual aesthetic appeal of the film to the audience. Camera movements help to create meaning and also elicit various emotional reactions from the audience. The camera distance influences the audience to either identify themselves with the characters or alienate themselves from them. Close-ups for example, make the audience to identify with the characters, while long shots distance them from the characters. Camera angles also affect the relationship of the audience to the characters. Low camera angles make the characters dominant while high camera angles diminish the stature of the characters making them subjective. Camera movements also enhance the meaning of a film and contribute to a great extent on the film's aesthetic appeal. A pan for example may be used to help establish the location where the film is taking place. It directs the eyes of the audience to parts of the Mise en scene which are important in the story world and which influence the characters and their relationship to each other. Film makers use the tilt to create suspense, and to direct the eyes of the audience to either look up or down depending on the direction of movement of the camera. This is also used to emphasise the stature of a character.

Sound is paramount to understanding the thoughts of characters and the film. A film sound track is composed of three elements: dialogue, Music and sound effects. Film sounds do not reproduce reality but they produce an aesthetic experience in conjunction with the images on

screen. Sound effect is any noise that forms part of the film sound track apart from dialogue and music, like gunshots and footsteps. These are seldom recordings of the actual events the audience is being shown, but rather recordings of sounds made by creatively manipulated materials, for example the gunshot that is heard when Jitu is shot in *Chasing Moses* (2009). Film makers use film sound to bring realism to the film. Dialogue moves the story forward, gives voice to characters, and reveal characters' aspirations, thoughts, and emotions often making conflicts among characters evident in the process. Dialogue makes meaning through the text and subtext. Its primary purpose is to externalise a character's thoughts and feelings, reveal motivations, goals and plans, and bring conflicts to the surface. Dialogue also plays an important role in establishing character, emphasising setting or a character's cultural background and helps define characters' environment and their relationship to it. Dialogue defines a character's relationship to others in terms of age, authority or class; reveal a character's level of education, or portray the level of a character's emotional and intellectual engagement with the story events.

Editing contributes to the aesthetic quality of a film because it emphasises characters' development, establish motifs and parallels and develops themes and ideas. Editing helps in forming contrasts and parallels which enhance the meaning of the film. It evokes emotional response when sharply contrasting shots are juxtaposed or when parallel editing is done since the meaning of a shot is determined not only by the material content of each shot, but by its association with the preceding and succeeding shots. The editor through editing imposes a narrative structure on the film.

Kenyan drama films contain peculiar dramatic aspects distinct to them. The use of characters who have had no formal training in film acting is evident in the films. This armature

actors use the knowledge they have acquired in drama for schools and in theatre to act in film. Angel Waruinge who acts as Mrs. Kipara in *Village Casanova* for example started acting from high school. Other actors used in the films are also familiar in Kenyan theatres. The actors, all the same, are able to play their roles well and excite the Kenyan audience and convey the story in an appealing way. Low cost productions also characterise these films. Film production is an expensive venture but the producers of these films, Jitu studios and Nduti, have been able to produce relatively low cost productions that are captivating. They have indulged in improvising settings instead of hiring them. The dancing in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* is done in the open instead of hiring dance halls. The director shelves the idea of using a real dance hall so long as the audience understands the story. It can be deduced that the directors' focus is on delivery of the story and not necessarily on realism in the literal sense. So long as the story is clearly and interestingly delivered all else is subordinate. This is true postmodernism because postmodernists believe that if it works for you, then it is right. The village in *Chasing Moses* also where Moses runs to meet the witch doctor does not have any other people living there and so it is an improvisation. This helps cut the cost of transport to an actual village because the film was shot in Nairobi. But since the idea of the village is presented to the audience by improvising one in the outskirts of Nairobi, and the audience willingly suspend disbelief and understand the story then all is well.

Themes addressed in the film are those that affect the Kenyan audience and the directors seek to influence the audience so that they can decide to change the situation. The films therefore are for education and entertainment-they educate and entertain at the same time. Because of this, it can be argued that the films are utilitarian in nature. The film making techniques are subject to

the story and are basically used as tools to help tell the story and the director is not bound by any rules in use of the techniques as long as the story is delivered effectively.

Lastly, the three films studied reveal various socio-cultural aspects embedded in the films. The societies' perception of the family unit is very clear from the films. Family is an important institution in Kenyan society and requires respect and care. The husband and the wife are expected to solve their problems and do all they can to save their family from disintegrating. All the three films end with husband and wife getting reunited although they were separated at first. Kipara goes back to his wife after the incident where Ali makes him pay dearly for sleeping with his wife Shakina in *Village Casanova*. Moses goes back to his family after he visits the witch doctor and after the death of Jitu they work together in a family business in *Chasing Moses*. Zeinabu is lastly united with her husband Dedan after she poisons Kavila and his family in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*. From the films the sanctity of the family is emphasised.

The society's perception on poverty and wealth is also manifest in the three films. The rich are portrayed as oppressors of the poor. They use their wealth to rule over the poor people. In *Chasing Moses* Jitu uses his wealth to hit back at Moses for accidentally stepping on his expensive shoes. He hires Trigger to kill Moses but Moses escapes to the village leaving behind his sick child and his poor family in the slum. Kipara in *Village Casanova* uses his wealth to woo the village women into sex. He buys Tumbo beer and then leaves him in the bar to go and have sex with Hannah. He tries to woo a school girl by offering to give her a lift in his vehicle. Kavila a rich man from the city takes away Dedan's wife in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*. He brings Dedan and Zeinabu presents and takes them out. In the process he manages to woo Zeinabu into following him to his home. While at Kavila's home, Kavila's mother and brothers oppress her by

making her do everything in the house. Rich people in both films oppress the poor. Poor people on the other hand seek to liberate themselves from the rich. In *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani*, Dedan takes up arms to fight and take back his wife from Kavila but on reaching the gate he meets with Zeinabu who had already poisoned Kavila and his family. Ali manages to trick Kipara into his home and in the process makes him pay for what he had done by making him sign documents to surrender his car, land and also told them his account pin number so that they could withdraw money from his account in *Village Casanova*. Ali was fighting for the rights of the poor. Moses and Trigger join hands to kill Jitu in *Chasing Moses*. Jitu who was hunting Moses was the one they hunted down and killed. The struggle between classes is common in any society. Poor people are looked down upon while the rich are esteemed.

Alcohol use and misuse is also addressed in the films. Drinking is a social act and the use and misuse of alcohol is learnt in the society. Each culture has its own belief in relation to use of alcohol. In Kenya alcohol is misused by the poor. In most areas where poverty is rampant incidents of death caused by alcohol have been reported in the media. This misuse of alcohol led to formation of parliamentary laws seeking to regulate use of alcohol in Kenya. These laws have famously been called Mututho laws after the Member of Parliament who introduced the bill in parliament.

Village Casanova shows characters who indulge in alcohol use to their detriment. Baba Njeri ends being assaulted by wife in public due to his continuous use of alcohol at the expense of taking care of his family. Tumbo too fails to take care of his wife and in the process his wife sleeps with Kipara his assumed rich friend. Ali's wife too is wooed into extramarital sex due to poverty and her husband's negligence in providing for her needs due to drunkenness. Dedan in

Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani is left by his wife after he speaks ill of her as a result of being drunk. Kavila and his rich family though, are seen taking wine as they relax and play cards. They are taking beer for relaxation and to be merry. Frustrated Trigger is also presented as a poor man and a drunkard although he worked in the army. He is lost in alcohol to ease his frustration and this does not make his situation any better. He engages in gambling and later he gets hired to kill Moses in *Chasing Moses*. The cultural belief in use of alcohol is therefore embedded in the selected films.

Props that carry with them cultural significance also help to show the belief of characters in the films. Moses wears a charm around his neck together with his wife in *Chasing Moses*. They believe in traditional African magic as a means of protection. The bible in *Village Casanova* also reveals the Christian faith of the Kiparas. Kipara and his wife are Christians and this is evident when Tumbo tells Kipara to start a church of his own. The society's diverse beliefs that coexist harmoniously are imbedded in the films.

5.3. Conclusion.

A great film is aesthetically satisfying, dramatically effective and profoundly innovative. It appeals to the feelings and at the same time arouses root attitudes of evaluation and turns the audience to a new direction. The techniques employed in the selected films, make the films attain their aesthetic appeal and enhance the audiences' understanding of the stories. The three films studied reveal recommendable use of techniques by the directors that help make the films acquire dramatic effect and their overall aesthetic appeal. Dramatic aspects in the films are manifest in the way the filmmakers have used the various techniques to capture the attention of the audience.

They make use of camera work to satirise, create suspense and reveal characters' motivations, for comic effects and to provide point of view.

Editing is used to structure the story, form contrasts and comparisons, help understand successive shots, reveal characters' reactions to what other characters say and do and to combine sound effects and sound with the sources of those sounds to create mood. Mise en scene is used to reveal characters motivations in their actions, to form contrasts and comparisons in class, reveal character tastes and create suspense. The shot of night in *Chasing Moses* and a buzzing mosquito and the sleeping Moses all together leave the audience wondering what next will happen.

Camera positions tend to emphasises on certain aspects of the actors. Camera angles for example diminish or exaggerate the stature of the characters and therefore impact on the meaning of the story. A high camera angle for example diminishes the size of Moses as Trigger is looking for him in the gully thus emphasising the weakness of Moses in *Chasing Moses*. This evokes feelings of sympathy on the audience. Editing is used to show the point of view of characters. Trigger looks ahead and the following shot shows Moses running. The audience see what Trigger is seeing.

From this study it can be argued that the directors attain dramatic effects in their films by artistically using the various camera making techniques which combined together give the desired effect. The films also have their distinct features resulting from the experiences of the directors and cost incurred in producing those films. Jitu productions for example contain settings that are improvised like market and dance hall in *Zeinabu Rudi Nyumbani* and the village in *Chasing Moses*. Nduti makes use of borrowed houses in *Village Casanova* to cut down

on production cost. Both producers make use of simple costumes mainly clothes instead of making clothes for the actors by costume designers. Cultural aspects like the societies' view on family, wealth, alcohol and religion are reflected in the films. The films get their material from the society and so they reflect the same society.

5.4. Recommendations.

From this study it has been found out that the selected films contain dramatic aspects intended to sustain the viewers' interest. It has been found out that the filmmakers use varied film making techniques to attain dramatic effect but it has not yet been found out how viewers respond to them. This will require other scholars to research on the viewer response as far as these films are concerned. As pointed out earlier in the study, there are peculiar dramatic aspects in the films which arise from the circumstances of the filmmakers which include the socio-economic and cultural factors. Other scholars may seek to study the dramatic representation of the male character in the three films.

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