

The Portrait of a Secondary School Student in a Contemporary Kenyan Television Drama: A Study of Tahidi High.

Wesonga O. Robert

C50/CE/12616/2005

A Research Project submitted to the Literature Department, School of Humanities and Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts, Kenyatta University.

Wesonga, O. Robert
*The portrait of a
secondary school*



2011/355993

June, 2011

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University

Signature: 

Date: 13th June, 2011

Wesonga O. Robert

C50/CE/12616/2005

This project has been submitted for review with our approval as University Supervisors:

**1. Prof. Wangari Mwai
Department of Literature**

Signature: 

Date: 14th June, 2011

**2. Dr. John Mugubi
Department of Literature**

Signature: 

Date: 14th June, 2011

DEDICATION

With esteem and reminiscence, I dedicate this work to my late parents, Sarah and James Wesonga. Without being there, you were always there.

To my siblings Tobias, Jacky and Marlin.

To the larger Wesonga family.

Finally, to the hardworking men and women who have got to endure the unforgiving Nyahururu-Maralal Road in their travels – it is upon this road that some of this work was thought out.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely acknowledge the persons without whom this study would not have been successful. It is because of their efforts and co-operation that the completion of this study was made possible. First, I particularly mention Prof. Wangari Mwai and Dr. John Mugubi, two dedicated and dependable literary scholars who supervised this work. There was always a sense of urgency in responding to my work, a fact that encouraged me to work on. It is because of the intellectual input of my supervisors that the study took the desirable shape it eventually took. I will take pride in this piece of scholarship because of their constructive criticism and encouragement.

Secondly, I thank all the teaching members of staff in the Literature Department for their various forms of assistance. In this regard, I would like to single out Dr. Mugubi for making me believe in the importance of doing a Masters Degree in Literature. To all the non-teaching members of staff, I say thank you too. Peter Muindu (Kabianga University College), you encouraged me to carry out a film-related study. I appreciate your advice.

Also, I offer special thanks to Catherine Wamuyu Nguku, Director and Producer of **Tahidi High**, for enabling me to get the DVDs and scripts of the Television Drama. Many a time and oft did I call you at odd hours requesting assistance and booking appointments. All that time, your assistance was always forthcoming. Thank you once more for being the producer and director of **Tahidi High**, a show that inspired me to undertake this study. Also, I acknowledge Josephat Odipo of Royal Media Services for helping me get in touch with Catherine Wamuyu. In this respect, I also extend my appreciation to all the people whose efforts go into the production of the Television Drama. These include all the technicians and performers.

To those who took their time to read my work despite their busy schedule, I say thank you. I appreciate Rachael Diang'a (Department of Theatre Arts and Film Technology, Kenyatta University) for reading my project proposal and giving valuable direction. Furthermore, I appreciate Frankline Okata Omuyonga and Asuka Ondigo for reading my project and offering honest criticism. I take this opportunity to profusely thank Frankline Okata Omuyonga for meeting all the printing costs of this study.

At this point, I appreciate the presence and the common sense of struggle enjoyed together with my classmates: Waiganjo, Welimo, Amutabi, Naomi, Cheruiyot, Mudanya and Khaemba. I also sincerely acknowledge the encouragement and support that I always received from my colleagues in Kisima Girls' High School – Samburu.

Finally, may the Almighty God, who was present all through this study, bless all those who contributed to the success of this work, including those not mentioned here.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
Definition of Terms	vii
Abstract.....	viii

Chapter One

1.0	Background of the study.....	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Television drama in Kenya: a Shift to the Local	3
1.3	Statement of the problem.....	5
1.4	Objectives of the Study.....	5
1.5	Research Questions.....	6
1.6	Research Assumptions.....	6
1.7	Significance of the Study.....	6
1.8	Scope and Delimitation of the Study.....	8
1.9	Literature Review	9
1.10	Theoretical Framework.....	12
1.11	Research Methodology.....	16
1.12	Population Sample	16
1.13.0	Data Collection.....	17
1.13.1	Primary Data.....	17
1.13.2	Secondary Data.....	17
1.14.0	Data Analysis	17

Chapter Two

2.0	Identity: Students at Crossroads	18
2.1	Introduction.....	18
2.2	Career Choices: The Conflict between Desire and Parental Expectations	20
2.3	“To be with or not to be with?”: Quest for Affiliation and Belonging.....	23
2.3.1	Feeling of Otherness vis-à-vis the Fear of Alienation.....	27
2.4	The ‘Absence’ of Home.....	29
2.5	Trickster Figure Boys: The Bad-Boy Syndrome	31
2.6	Identification with the Order of Society	34
2.7	The plague of Naiveté.....	39
2.8	Teenagers and Responsibility	39
2.9	Role Modeling: The Role of Adults in Teenage Identity Crises.....	42
2.9.1	The Preoccupation with Celebrity Status	43
2.9.2	The Role of Adults in Modeling Teenagers	46
2.10	Conclusion.....	52

Chapter Three

3.0	Setting: The School as a Shaper of the Student Characters	56
3.1	Introduction	56
3.2	Home as a Prelude to the School Setting	57
3.3	Shift to School: A Strategy for Realistic Characterization	61
3.4	The School and Carrying on of Adult Types	63
3.5	Standing on the Frontline: The Voice of Students on HIV/AIDS	69
3.6	The School and Politics of Gender and Power Balancing	72
3.7	Class and Social Stratification: “Carrying Economics and Status to the Classroom” ..	75
3.8	Conclusion.....	79

Chapter Four

4.0	Language for Imaging the Characters.....	82
4.1	Introduction	82
4.2	Language as Class: Instrument of Protest and Survival.....	83
4.3	Sheng and the Story of the Kenyan Secondary School Student.....	89
4.3.1	Kenyanized English.....	91
4.4	Influence of Western Popular Culture on Teenage Language	92
4.5	Language for Gender Delineation.....	93
4.6	Conclusion.....	94

Chapter Five

5.0	Conclusion and Recommendations.....	96
5.1	Summary of Findings.....	96
5.2	Conclusion.....	100
5.3	Recommendations	100
6.0	Bibliography	102
7.0	Appendices.....	104
7.1	Appendix 1: Observation Checklist for “Identity”.....	104
7.2	Appendix 2: Observation Checklist for “Setting”	105
7.3	Appendix 3: Observation Checklist for “Language.”	106

DEFINITION OF TERMS

CHAT Awards:	Awards given to personalities or groups depending on the voting of teenagers
KALASHA Awards:	Kenya's Film and Television Awards
Kenyanised English:	A version of English with features of syntax and phonetics peculiar to Kenya.
Opposite-Sex-Affiliation:	Intimate and/or sexual relationships between boys and girls.
Voice of Authority:	Action and/or statements from adults that have the ability to influence teenagers.

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine the portrayal of student characters and their behaviour patterns in a Kenyan Television Drama, **Tahidi High**. Main characters from both genders were selected and studied. The study strived to find out the relationship between the behaviour patterns of the characters and their psychology. In the modern day age, it was also one of the intents of this study to incisively analyse the conduct of the student characters as seen in **Tahidi High** vis-à-vis the modern value system arising from emerging technological advancements. Since the student characters in the **Tahidi High** are not portrayed independent of other characters, this study also examines the resultant main student characters' image in their interaction with other characters in the TV drama. This is because the student characters in **Tahidi High** do not operate independent of other character. Besides, while noting that content is expressed in form, the research invested in analyzing the elements of style and how they enhance the realization of the characters under study. To facilitate the fulfillment of the objectives set in this study, watching of the videos of the TV drama, library research and use of the Internet were important components of this study. The internet provided insights into what scholars, both local and from other parts of the world, have said about the study of Television Drama. Theoretically, the study was informed by the stylistics literary theory and the theory of Discourse Analysis. The stylistic appreciation helped in revealing how the artist(s) (creators of **Tahidi High**.) employ language, setting and characterization among other techniques to facilitate entertainment as well as communication of social issues. Discourse Analysis, as perspective of literary criticism, was used to explain the communicative significance of the utterances by the characters under study. This was done with

the objective of seeing to what extent the discourse of the characters is reflective of their mental processes, and personality. It is the conviction of the researcher that this study is a contribution to scholarship, especially considering that this field is yet to be fully explored by scholars. Besides, the researcher believes that this study provides a fair critique on the realistic presentation of the main characters in the Television Drama. Finally, it is the view of the researcher that this study paves the way for the study of such productions as **Tahidi High** by both students and teachers of literature.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Background of the study.

1.1 Introduction

Tahidi High is a Television Drama that has been on air in Kenya on Citizen Television since the year 2006. A lot has happened since. At the beginning of this study, the production had gone beyond fourteen seasons. The programme is aired every Tuesday evening, with repeats coming on Sunday afternoons. It is episodic with each weekly episode addressing an independent subject matter. This episodic nature has several advantages. First of all, the episodic nature of **Tahidi High** allows it to give timely and immediate attention to contemporary topical issues in the Kenyan society. Secondly, it is possible to maintain an attentive and loyal audience because the viewers are treated to interesting performances whose conflicts are resolved in a timely manner. By this way, viewers do not have to watch the drama for months or even years to be entertained and educated as is the case with soap operas.

Notwithstanding the above, cases of up to four successive episodes addressing the same idea(s) have been noted by this study. It is important to mention that even in cases where the Television Drama runs a number of episodes to communicate one idea, it does not lose the basic objective of early resolution of conflicts. The concept of **Tahidi High** was created by Naomi Kamau and Catherine Wamuyu Nguku. The latter is also the producer and director, while the former has written scripts for a significant number of episodes. Other script writers who have written for the Television Drama are Simiyu Barasa, Joseph Wachira and Natasha Likimani.

It is set in Tahidi High School, a microcosm of any other secondary school in Kenya. The action features students, teachers, and sometimes parents, with the focal point being on the student

characters. Other important characters are the subordinate staff who also play a role in advancing the plot, the themes and most importantly, in shaping the profile of characters under focus here: students. Most of the action takes place outside the classrooms with very few instances of action taking place within the classroom. In certain cases, the action shifts to the classroom so that the audience can see the effect of the conflicts and tensions outside of classroom. It must be said that some of the inciting incidents sometimes originate in the various classrooms – and get to be played out without such classrooms.

Considering the Kalasha and CHAT (Chaguo la Teenieez) awards that **Tahidi High** has won in the recent years, this study can hypothesise that the Television Drama enjoys the biggest ‘viewership’ in comparison to all the other local Television Dramas. Additionally, a survey conducted by East Africa's Independent Media Review (2009)¹ says that **Tahidi High** has the largest following in terms of the audience in Kenya, with a bias on the youth.

With regard to characterization and casting, **Tahidi High** should be described as unique because of the ever changing cast and with it, the changing of characters. This is the case even with the lead characters. The departure of one lead character, or more than one, sees the entry of another who again shapes the drama in his/her own way, showing his/her own peculiarities. In spite of these changes, **Tahidi High** still retains its salient characteristics as the study will later reveal.

This study was also motivated by the realization that viewers, especially the youth, have gained and continue to gain from the more realistic, direct and honest information on HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and relationships relayed by the media than from their parents, schools and churches, who

¹ www.eastafricapress.net

can be said to be reluctant to face the reality in the language that the youth best understand.

1.2 Television drama in Kenya: a Shift to the Local

Up to the late nineties and early in the 21st century, Television Dramas and soap operas from the West dominated Kenyan television stations. Local audiences derived entertainment from watching *The Bold and the Beautiful* on Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation (KBC) Television and other Filipino and Mexican soap operas on both KBC and other Kenyan television stations. This was before the popularity of local television dramas. Local television dramas and soao operas were to later gain prominence on local television stations.

Even before the advent of foreign soap operas on local television stations, KBC Television had begun airing locally produced television dramas. It started with dramas like *Vitimbi*, *Tushauriane* and, *Vioja Mahakamani*. In the new millennium, there came *Heart and Soul* in 2002, followed by the screening of *Reflections* in 2003. These two, alongside *Tausi* and the short-lived *Wingu La Moto* on (NTV) the Nation television station, and Kenya Television Network (KTN's) *Better Days*, provided more local experience for Kenyan television audiences. They, for the first time, offered professionally produced programmes with spontaneous acting, varied setting, credible flow and convincing story lines.

Tahidi High's successful entry in 2006 eventually had Citizen Television take the lead on local programming. This was because **Tahidi High** followed other shows on the same television station, including *Mother-in-Law*, *Papa Shirandula*, *Inspekta Mwala*, *Siri*, *Tabasamu* and *Waridi*. NTV followed suit in quick succession exhibiting *Beba Beba*, *Cobra Squad*, *Wash and*

Set, and *Tetemo* among others.

Several reasons can be advanced to explain the popularity of local television dramas over the foreign ones. Chief among the reasons is the issue of language. In the Kenyan produced dramas, local audiences encounter characters speaking their languages (Kiswahili and/or “Sheng”) and going through the social tensions and problems that the local audiences are familiar with and can identify with.

In addition, according to *East Africa's Independent Media Review* (2009), sponsorship by advertisers has also been a big boost. According to the same *East Africa's Independent Media Review* (2009), it is projected that local content, especially television dramas and soap operas, on local television stations will continue to get popular. The same prediction goes on to say that in a few years' time, local content may even represent 80%, with the foreign getting about 20%. Elizabeth Kamwiri, a producer at KBC Television is one of those who foresee a bright future for the locally produced Television Dramas. She observes that people have realised that they would rather concentrate on local programmes. They also want to promote local talent. “In the past we’ve had *The Bold and the Beautiful* and Mexican soaps but local sponsors now feel they should promote their own”, she observes. (*Ibid* 2009)

Considerably, therefore, it was justifiable that a study be done in this field. That is why the objectives of this research were geared towards studying the presentation of the Kenyan Secondary school student’s image in a contemporary local Television Drama: **Tahidi High**.

1.3 Statement of the problem.

The study of the local TV dramas just like any other works of art worthy of scholarship is yet to be done as extensively as studies in other genres have been done (at least at the time of this study). This study sought to make a contribution in this regard by interrogating **Tahidi High**, one of the most popular TV dramas in Kenya. The study examined the contribution of the school setting in **Tahidi High** towards forging the student characters' image that is portrayed in the work. By the end of the study, it was possible to tell what the authors of the Television Drama achieve by setting most of the episodes of **Tahidi High** outside of the classroom.

Language is an important element in any work of art. However, with regard to television dramas in Kenya, it is yet to be the subject of any scholarly inquiry. This research aimed at showing how idiosyncrasies in language have contributed to the presentation of unique student characters in **Tahidi High** as will be seen later in this work. At the time of this study, scholarly work addressing the identity crises in characters in any locally produced television drama was unavailable. This realization not only necessitated the study, but also made the achievement of the study's objectives possible.

1.4 Objectives of the Study.

This study aimed at:

1. Investigating the student characters' Identity Crises in the **Tahidi High**.
2. Discussing the influence of the school setting on student characters in the selected Television Drama.
3. Examining the contribution of language in the presentation of student characters in **Tahidi High**.

1.5 Research Questions.

This study aimed at finding reliable answers to the following questions:

1. What are the manifestations of the students' Identity Crises in Tahidi High?
2. How has the school setting affected characterization of the students in Tahidi High?
3. How has language been used to facilitate the presentation of the student characters in the selected Television Drama?

1.6 Research Assumptions.

The following research assumptions guided this study:

1. There are certain universal identity crises in the student characters in Tahidi High.
2. The school setting has largely contributed to the realistic portrayal of the students in the TV Drama Tahidi High.
3. Tahidi High exhibits idiosyncrasies in language which contribute to the presentation of the general student image in it (Tahidi High).

1.7 Significance of the Study.

The researcher determined that locally produced Television Dramas, and indeed Tahidi High, were yet to be subjected to sufficient scholarly study. One of the chief motivating factors was: even though Tahidi High is one of the most popular locally produced television dramas at the time of this study, no study had been carried out on it. The lack of scholarly study meant therefore that there was no organized body of knowledge on the study of television dramas in Kenya. Using the selected Television Drama, Tahidi High, as a springboard, this research strived to elaborately identify the literariness in locally produced television dramas. It is the belief of the researcher that this study has contributed towards the

consolidation of a body of knowledge in this field.

Secondly, it is hoped that this study has contributed to criticism of this yet-to-be-studied, production, **Tahidi High**, by coming up with what can be termed as objective and balanced criticism that is backed by textual evidence. This is a clear gap that the study aimed at filling. Before the study, the researcher had determined that in the few cases in which there has been an attempt at objective appraisal of **Tahidi High**, it has been in terms of sparse and sporadic comment.

Thirdly, there was need for a study of a contemporary television drama that addresses emerging and current social issues. **Tahidi High** addresses the place of the youth in the face of issues like HIV/AIDS, corruption and Information Technology. Hence, this study was justified because it strived to come up with what was hitherto thought to be still missing. This study made an effort to analyse and document, in a scholarly manner, the response of students to such contemporary issues. Consequently, further studies in this genre are thought to have been provoked.

This particular Television Drama was selected because of what was perceived to be its popularity among all the local Television Dramas. **Tahidi High** has for four consecutive years (2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010) won national awards, one of them being 'Chaguo la Teeniez' (CHAT), and 'Kalasha' (Kenya's Film and TV Awards). This was a testimony to its popularity at the beginning of the study. It was therefore deemed worthwhile that a creative work of such a profile be given scholarly attention.

Lastly, it is our hope that this study will be useful to television audiences because it would equip them with an impartial critical guide for interpretation of **Tahidi High** and other similar programmes. With this, the audience and the future critics could get an objective basis for their arguments.

1.8 Scope and Delimitation of the Study.

This study situated its emphasis on the analysis of the main student characters in a contemporary Kenyan television drama, **Tahidi High**. The characters studied were selected equally between the genders (male and female). This enabled the researcher to attempt a successful attempt to present a wholesome understanding of the teenage student personality.

This work was restricted to the study of video CDs of three seasons. One of the seasons among the selected for the study was the latest at the time of the beginning of the study (Season 14). Within this scope, it was possible to identify the salient properties in students' characterization. These aspects of student character presentation have been exhibited over the years in **Tahidi High**'s production. Although focus was on the lead/main student characters, other characters were also referred to because of how far they contributed to the portrayal of the lead characters. The study was completed within three months of its beginning.

This study faced several challenges. To begin with, acquisition of sufficient Video CDs depended upon the goodwill of the Citizen TV station and the producer of **Tahidi High**. However, accessibility to the Video CDs of the required three seasons was granted by the

producer, Catherine Wamuyu Nguku. Efforts were made to secure all the necessary Video CDs. Secondly, bearing in mind that, at least at the time of the study, there was not as much literary scholarly work on the study of the local television dramas as we would expect, was challenging to get sufficient books, journals and other reference materials laying emphasis on the study of local television dramas in Kenya. To get over this obstacle, it was imperative to read works by scholars from other parts of the world for better understanding of the object of the study.

The aforementioned challenges did not, however, compromise the quality of the study. Within the boundaries set by the study, there was sufficient ground for getting important insights into what the locally produced television dramas in Kenya portray in relation to the struggles, aspirations and dilemmas of the Kenyan youth as they strive to adapt to changes in society.

1.9 Literature Review

At the time of this study, the Kenyan literary landscape had seen quite a number of studies on film and related fields. Hence, studies directed towards the understanding of the relevance and literary style of television dramas in Kenya, were insufficient. This fact was proven by the lack of substantial literature – especially that originating from the country - in this field. Further, at the time of this research, **Tahidi High** was yet to be studied by any other literary scholar. It was because of this reason that this study sought to provoke further and more detailed research on the locally produced television dramas in Kenya.

Regardless, this research was informed by what scholars from other parts of the world have

said about the influence of the media, the content of television programmes, the audience, censorship and the interrelation between culture and television.

Diang'a R. (2007) is one of the scholars who have studied film in Kenya. In her dissertation, **A History of the Kenyan Film: The Evolving Image of the African**, she examines the negative portrayal of Africans in films produced by Western directors. Besides, her study shows the level reached by African, specifically Kenyan, film producers to correct the negative portrayal of the African. She contrasts the presentation of the African in films by Western filmmakers with the "re-presentation" of the Africans in productions by Kenyan filmmakers.

Diang'a (2007) undertakes a postcolonial reading of films by the likes of Wanjiku Mukora, and not a study of locally produced television dramas. In as much as it gives valuable insights into the differences between the pre-colonial film and the post-colonial film, Dianga's work does not study locally produced television dramas.

Wanjiku Mukora in '**Beyond Tradition and Modernity**' examines the issue of identity as expressed in film from the perspective of her understanding of the films '**Battle of the Sacred Tree**' (1994) by Wanjiru Kinyanjui and '*Saikati*' (1992) by Anne Mungai. She posits that the two works present the dilemma of women in the face of two conflicting world views: on the one hand, women have the desire to pay loyalty to tradition and on the other, hand they have the urge to embrace modernity. Also, her study interrogates full feature films and not locally produced television dramas.

Bell, I., Abrams N and Udris, J (2001) hold that a film only acquires socio-cultural importance in the existence of an audience. This then informs us that without techniques used to maintain an audience, no film or television drama can enjoy significant popularity. They further clarify that people decode information contained in films not depending on the way the producer may have encoded the film but on their personal experiences and background.

The above view is supported by Halloran (1970) who contends that there is normally an exchange between the media and the audience. In this event, therefore, the viewer approaches the viewing situation with a complicated piece of 'filtering' equipment composed of the past, present and future wishes and fears. These however, are findings on the interaction between the audience film or television drama and the film or television drama, and not a study of characterization in any locally produced television drama.

To get insights into the strategies that producers of **Tahidi High** employ to make characterization a success, the research referred to Geraghty (1996) who pinpoints the strategies used by the authors of television dramas; making them attract and sustain a big audience. Among the issues stated by Geraghty (1996) are: interlocking stories, organization of time, characterization and plot that avoids tedium. Geraghty (1996) also analyses the character types and hence the study related her ideas to the work under study. Clearly, Geraghty's work does not concern itself with the study of the portrayal of youth in film, to be specific; it does not talk about the youth in locally produced television dramas.

Appleyard (1991) writes on the influence of texts to various categories of readers/audience

according to the difference in the developmental stage. Arguing by his ideas, the various stages of human development correspond to changes in the psychology of individuals. In his view, the youth are likely to be interested in that which realistically appeals to their surroundings. Having grown from the stage of childhood, where all that matters is fantastic heroism, the youth aspire to see themselves and the world they live in featured in the books they read and the films they watch.

In view of the foregoing, it was clear that more scholarly attention needed to be accorded to locally produced television dramas, hence necessitating this study.

1.10 Theoretical Framework.

To facilitate the achievement of the objectives set in this research proposal, the study was informed by the Stylistics theory and the theory of Discourse Analysis. The application of stylistics aided in showing how items of form, namely: language and setting, contribute to the understanding of the selected lead student characters in **Tahidi High**.

Although stylistics gained prominence in the 20th century, especially in the 1950s, it has its origin in the ancient Greek Rhetoric. Rhetoric, the art of public speaking, began at about 465 BC in ancient Greece. According to Aristotle, Rhetoric is an ornamental language of persuading others in order to convince them in an argument. The proponents of Rhetoric respected certain properties of speech which they observed: clarity, correctness, propriety and most importantly, ornamentation. These are critical features of stylistics and literary appreciation.

Stylistics concerns itself with the study of the skillful application of language in communication. In other words, it involves an investigation into the idiosyncratic choice of language by individual writers. Mugubi (2005) states that style is a personal and creative fashioning of the resources of language which a writer's period, chosen dialect, genre and his/her purpose within the genre, offers him/her.

In the application of stylistics, it was possible to comment on the literariness of the selected Television Drama and hold it up as a literary work deserving literary scholarship. The stylistic approach enabled the researcher to fulfill the intention of pointing out the peculiarities of the author(s) on the choice of the techniques of expression and how the chosen techniques contribute to the portrayal of the youth personality in **Tahidi High**.

Another application of this theory was to interpret **Tahidi High** with regard to diction, symbolism, register, grammar and the speech patterns of the characters, among other devices. Consequently, it was possible to put **Tahidi High** at the centre of investigation with recognition of the fact that, as a text, it is independent and has its own world, with its own intrinsic meaning. Even where the intended meaning of the author was to be deduced, stylistics helped to provide the required evidence. Therefore, Stylistic Literary Criticism as an approach was not only important in helping to understand the meaning of the text, but also in providing justification for the statements that were for the first time made by this study.

Emmanuel Ngara's thoughts on Stylistics in his **Stylistic Criticism and the African Novel (1982)** were referred to in interpreting the peculiar use of language in the work under study. Ngara, (1982), posits that even though there are other elements of a work of art like plot, setting, characterization and theme, language is a more important element which is responsible for unifying all the other elements. It is the medium by which the other elements of a work of art are relayed. According to Ngara (1982), a good critic should therefore look at language as a common property shared between the speaker and the listener; between the writer and the reader. Further, he talks of the need for a literary critic to view language in a work of art not merely as informative, but as expressive and informative. It should hence be clear how invaluable the application of this idea was in finding out the interrelationship between language, character and setting.

One of the aims of this study was to find out if **Tahidi High** is characterized by any deviations in terms of style and language. This is an important part of what is referred to as foregrounding in stylistics. Foregrounding is a contribution of the Structuralist School of thought to stylistics. According to this idea, the likes of Mukarovsky and Viktor Sholovsky (Carter, 1982) argued that deviating from the norm of the everyday language contributes to the literariness of a text. Mukarovsky (1964), states that literariness is found in the violation of the norm, that is, in the breaking of the rules of language. While keeping in mind that deviation is not the only means of conveying literariness, this research investigated how the author(s) used deviations to facilitate the communication of the intended meaning. At the same time, the study appreciated conformist use of language.

Another important contribution to the branch of foregrounding comes from Roman Jakobson, a linguist and a member of the Prague Structuralist Circle. Jakobson and those of his school were interested in the linguistic structures of texts and how such linguistic structures affect readers. The Prague Structuralists contend that deviant features contribute to the appealing nature of texts.

The theory of Discourse Analysis was specifically used as a guide in the interpretation of the linguistic aspects in the Television Drama. As a consequence, the influence of the above said linguistic aspects on the portrait of the student characters in **Tahidi High** was examined. The use of this theory complemented the use of the theory of Stylistics. Discourse Analysis is a branch of linguistics that is also known as Discourse Studies. It refers to the various approaches used in analyzing written, spoken and sign language. It is the study of discourse (discourse here referring to a general term used to mean any writing, talk, conversation, or any other communicative event that may be neither written nor spoken).

In the case of this study, discourse was defined as the study of language in use. (Fasold 1990: 65). This undertaking was based upon the understanding that language depends on context for its existence and meaningfulness. Fasold goes on to state that without context, it is impossible to understand language. Hence, to comprehend the language of the student characters, and what it says about their personality, context will be closely referred to.

Discourse analysis has its origin in the work of Harris (1952) in a paper written in response to his own work on Transformational Grammar, which he had done in the 1930s. This critical

approach was used to explain language use by the characters in the Television Drama, besides examining how such choice may be motivated by factors like age, status, and being within or outside of a group.

1.11 Research Methodology

This study was guided by the qualitative approach to research. This research procedure involves collection of qualitative data followed by qualitative textual analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The two steps above were preceded by the sampling of the primary material to be studied.

1.12 Population Sample

The primary materials under study were video CDs of the already aired performances of Tahidi High. However, sometimes the written scripts – which are secondary to the Video CDs – were consulted. The availability of both the video CDs and written scripts helped especially considering that there was need for the two to complement each other. The written scripts provided accurate quotations in the cases where it was necessary to give such quotations. Video CDs of three seasons were watched and analysed.

The selection of the Video CDs was done in such a way that there was fair distribution of the number of episodes to cover the four objectives. Hence, sampling ensured that the four objectives, which constituted the four chapters of the study, were informed by the same number of episodes.

1.13.0 Data Collection

1.13.1 Primary Data

The primary data of the object of this study was collected by observation. This process was guided by an observation checklist to help gather data on aspects of setting, characterization and language. Video CDs of the performance of the selected Television Drama were watched. This went hand-in-hand with the noting down of the literary elements such as characterization, setting and language in each episode.

1.13.2 Secondary Data

Library research involving the reading of secondary texts was undertaken. Texts and scholarly works written on film from the university library and libraries of other universities like Maseno University, Moi University, University of Nairobi and The Kenya Institute of Mass Communication were consulted. Other relevant materials focusing on film/television drama and media studies were referred to. Besides, research on the internet facility was done to complement information that was gathered from other sources.

1.14.0 Data Analysis

The primary and secondary data collected were analysed using Content Analysis. According to Earl Babbie, content analysis is an approach in social sciences used to study the content of communication found in books, paintings and websites. This approach was applicable as a scholarly method in humanities. By it, the decoded text of the Television Drama was studied to understand the key components and meaning. The approach contributed to the understanding of both the audio-visual elements and the written scripts under study. After the analysis, comprehensive synthesis of the notes taken was done to come up with a coherent, final dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Identity: Students at Crossroads

2.1 Introduction

To interrogate the issue of identity crises in the student characters of Tahidi High, reference was made to the work of psychologist Erik Erikson. Erikson (1970) defines identity as a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, juxtaposed with the sameness and continuity of some shared world image. In other words therefore, one's identity is that person's conscious or unconscious being, viewed vis-à-vis the way the society is structured. The implication, hence, being that society has a bearing on the identity of its individuals.

Besides, Erikson (1970) defines Identity Crisis as a period of time when an individual carries out intensive analysis one's person and explores the various ways of looking at oneself. Because Erikson believed that personality develops in stages, he outlined the different stages of psychosocial development through which a person's identity systematically changes and becomes shaped. Of all the stages, Erikson contends that the teenage years mark the time when the identity crisis intensifies and emerges more clearly. At this time, the teenagers are caught in between feelings of identity and role confusion. In discussing the identity crises in the student characters, Erikson's stages of psychosocial development were called upon to make informed arguments and conclusions.

Erikson's work is further advanced by Marcia (1966, 1976, and 1980). He comes up with four different identity statuses namely: identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and identity diffusion. Identity achievement is a status at which one commits to a specific identity after a period of exploration and experimentation of various identities. This case is evident in Tahidi High. According to Erikson (1970), human beings experience a status of moratorium, when they

are actively involved in exploring divergent identities. By virtue of the age bracket of the student characters in **Tahidi High**, this state of identity search formed an important part of this chapter.

The above scholars realize that there are exceptions. Some individuals, few in this case, have the benefit of making a commitment to one given identity without attempting exploration. Those of that kind are said to be in the status of identity foreclosure. The fourth and last status, identity diffusion, refers to the rare case in which neither exploration of various identities is made, nor a commitment to any achieved.

The research done by the above two psychologists informed the manner in which this study analysed the identity crises in the lead student characters in the Television Drama. Nevertheless, in some cases in which a character does not fall neatly into the designated statuses identified above, the study strived to describe each character's identity crisis as peculiar to that particular character.

To help in understanding the student characters insofar as identity is concerned, it is important to understand the characteristics of Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development. The stage in Erikson's terms is referred to as *Fidelity: Identity vs. Role Confusion*. It covers the teenage bracket of between thirteen and nineteen years. The student characters in the Television Drama fall within this age bracket. It is this stage that represents the transition from childhood to adulthood and with it, come the most intense crises in the life of a human being yet. The reason given by Erikson leads to the understanding that at this time, teenagers experience radical

changes including body changes that come with puberty and a more developed mind to analyse the intentions of the self and the intentions of others.

During these years, the individual becomes concerned with their appearance before others, explores various career and occupational choices, and desires affiliation with other people or groups. Generally, teenagers during these years ask questions about who they really are. According to Erikson, most teenagers finally end up achieving a realization of who they are and eventually knowing and even determining the direction of their lives. In this chapter, the study committed itself to analyzing the lead student characters going by the paradigm set in this introduction.

2.2 Career Choices: The Conflict between Desire and Parental Expectations

One of the hallmarks of the *Fidelity: Identity vs. Role Confusion* stage in the development of human beings is the identification, by an individual, of the roles they would like to play in the adult world. This identification of prospective adult roles is characterized by making career choices and becoming committed to them, and/or experiencing role confusion (uncertainty about which role to play when adulthood sets in).

During these years, as evident in **Tahidi High**, parents would mostly want to have influence on what their children should be in future. Sometimes these parental expectations concerning the direction of their children's lives are too strong that children eventually surrender to them. This is followed either by the children's identity achievement (resolving their crisis and beginning of

commitment to one career choice) or passive acceptance of the parental model of role identification.

The case of Banjo, a form two boy in Tahidi High School, best illustrates this. Banjo decides to join the school cricket team partly because of his intention to win over Shish, a form three girl, so that she can be his girlfriend. Soon after, the tennis coach, Teacher Okello realizes that Banjo is truly talented and could shape his future through playing tennis. Later on, Banjo's mother gets to know that he has started playing tennis instead of concentrating fully on his studies. His mother goes to school to settle the matter, with her mind already made up that Banjo must stop playing tennis and give an undivided concentration to his studies.

Going by the ideas advanced by Erikson, in the absence of parental influence and interference, in which case the teenager will get enough time and space to experiment, it is given that they most certainly will eventually emerge from this crisis with a firmer sense of identity and emotional awareness. Banjo's mother denies him this space and time. Despite Okello's counsel that tennis is important to Banjo, and that it can in fact give him a career, Banjo's mother insists that her son's career lies in academics. Before walking away in a sore mood, she declares with a sobering note of finality:

His father and I have decided that he has to stop participating in tennis and concentrate on his studies. Banjo's career will be determined by his passing in exams and then we will take him to a university abroad. And that is final!

It is at this point that the paradox of the belief that students make career choices dawns upon the audience: some of the career choices that students make in school are in actual sense an extension of the parental domineering attitude which begins way back at home. This attitude eventually forces children to fit into the straitjacket patterns, which their parents dictate for them. The eventual consequence is; the students end up adopting identities that their parents approve of, and not their own.

The appropriately paradoxical impact of this overbearing parental attitude is soon realized when Mule steps up to take the place left by Banjo in the school tennis team and ends up winning a scholarship abroad. The Television Drama presents this irony of expectations to enable the audience see that parents will not necessarily lead their children to a desirably successful future just because they insist on making career choices for them.

It is Mule who through tennis, a game Banjo is withdrawn from by his mother, is able to secure a scholarship. He goes on to study in the same place where Banjo's parents had wanted to take him after completion of studies in Tahidi High school. At the announcement of Mule's success, Banjo looks on clearly disappointed. He must rue the missed opportunity as Mule celebrates after winning the scholarship for playing a game that Banjo's mother had determinedly forced him out of. Mule becomes the victim in this situation. Little wonder he becomes withdrawn and reserved in his later days in Tahidi High School. The audience begins to see less of him in the succeeding episodes. This can be read as a strategy to enhance the negative impact of the ironic twist of fortune to Mule.

2.3 “To be with or not to be with?”: Quest for Affiliation and Belonging

The search for affiliation, which boldly emerges out of Tahidi High, is one of the ways in which the teenagers’ quest for identity is expressed. All the lead student characters in the Television drama desire to have an attachment to either one other student (sometimes more than one student) or other people outside of the teenage bracket. The first kind of these relationships that stands out is the relationship between students of the opposite sex. Looking at this, it becomes clear that the teenagers are living during a stage characterized by one of the salient characteristics of their teenage identity crisis: Search for Sexual Identity.

Once this opposite-sex attachment is established, or seems to have been, we see the teenagers involved going to great lengths to protect the resultant identification. It is because of this reason that the territorialism earlier mentioned manifests itself. From the scene at the basketball court, Jean-Joyce complains that lately Frankie has been acting as if every boy in school belongs to her. From this statement, the understanding is that Jean-Joyce believes Frankie may take away Ray from her.

To Jean-Joyce, Ray is her boyfriend and thus part of her territory, which she feels entitled to protect. This state of affairs is true about her just as it is about other girls and boys that have friends of the opposite sex. To prove her possession, she spends most of the time tagging Ray’s shirt around. Of course this is aimed at making the rest of the girls aware that she is the owner of the ‘territory’. That territory is in this case Ray’s person.

Sometimes the search for what can be called opposite-sex affiliation is met by hostility from the target individual. Banjo, obviously desirous of fitting in the category of the famed boys who have girlfriends in the school, approaches Shish. The latter, more than clearly, tells him off that she is not his type. Not willing to give up just as yet, Banjo exhibits a certain tenacity of purpose to an extent of appearing desperate. Paired with Banjo's failure to fit in Shish's company is the latter's objective to identify with those she considers to be of her type.

At this point in time, it is realized that Banjo's objective of joining the school's tennis team – albeit in part - is to get a chance to be close enough to Shish who is also a member of the team. Teacher Okello, the tennis coach realizes this and at one time asks Banjo. Although Banjo does not readily admit it, all indications point to the fact that he suffers from a certain obsession regarding Shish. Having realized this, Okello counsels Banjo after tactfully asking his opinion on who is the better player between Stella, another member of the school tennis team, and Shish:

Okello: Between Shish and Stella, who is better?

Banjo: I think Shish

Okello: Why?

Banjo: She is strong ... yeah, she is strong.

Okello: And she has long legs? Let me give you some advice, stick to what you know. This girl, she has become an addiction to you. Very dangerous, I tell you my friend. Stick to tennis. It will take you somewhere.

This exchange, together with the paralinguistic features that accompany it, portray the vague manner in which Banjo describes Shish above can point to the obsession he has with the girl

These opposite-sex-affiliations are not permanent. As it is shown in **Tahidi High**, they are short-lived and tempered with jealous and shows of pride (pride especially depending on who in the association perceives they hold the higher stakes). Loyalties change almost unpredictably. On the day of the school's opening day, and two days after the students' drunken party, Ray complains to Jean-Joyce saying the latter has not been giving him the deserved attention as her boyfriend:

Ray: Jean-Joyce, why did you have to do that to me at the gate? Snobbing like that in front of other guys?

Jean: What? Listen, if you have your domes (personal problems), please don't involve me.

Ray: Jean-Joyce, me I have been thinking, our relationship is hitting the rocks.

Jean: So you are noticing? Huh! (to Mule) hey, is that Mule? You have such a sexy body.

Ray: You see? We are busy talking about You are busy looking at another jamaa.

Jean: Oh! Like I am not supposed to do what you do? Remember over the holidays you were busy katiyaring (seducing) Shish. Mule ...

The urge to even the score being high as it so often is amongst teenagers – and indeed as it usually is even among other age groups, partners in these relationships will tend towards the idea of revenging against the perceived or real misdeeds of their counterparts in the relationship. From the above altercation, Jean-Joyce wants to make Ray aware that her behavior is a result of his conduct. She in fact wants him to become jealous. Apparently, Jean-Joyce appears to understand the concept of reverse psychology and seems intent on making Ray feel guilty so that he can become even more committed to her.

Immediately after the above exchange, Jean-Joyce walks away, leaving Ray standing alone, and in practiced wiles, drifts towards Mule to go and talk to him. Though it may seem a move meant to evoke jealousy in Ray, Jean-Joyce slowly begins drifting away from Ray, towards Mule. At this point it should be understood that Mule has no designs to get into a relationship with her.

This is the nature of the temporary teenage flirtation as evidenced in **Tahidi High**; jealousy, quest for revenge and feelings of self-importance. These are elements that illustrate utter disregard for what the opposite party in the relationship may feel. Jean-Joyce's seeming intent to replace Ray with Mule, which is in actual understanding a design to make Ray more loyal, inspires a conflict between the two boys.

Ray: Mule, stay away from Jean-Joyce.

Mule: Ray mzeiya, sikiza. Mimi sijisikii na huyo dame. Wewe unajisikia na dame na hata yeye hakutaki. (Man, Ray, listen to me; I have no interest in Jean-Joyce. You want that girl but she is not interested in you) In fact you will be doing me a favour by getting her off my back.

The above case sets forth the audience towards the understanding of the fact that rejection, which is more often encountered by boys, is not only directed towards them. The teenage female characters too have their share of frustrations as they struggle to fit within the dictates of the Tahidi High School mould by zealously seeking boyfriends. The targeted boyfriends sometimes reject the girls as it happens between Mule and Jean-Joyce.

Though by episodes far between, it is shown that every time a new boy arrives at the school, scrambles emerge amongst the girls with most of them aiming at being the first to secure a relationship with the new boy in school. This happens with both Mule and OJ. When Mule arrives at the school, Frankie and Mary bid to win him over. For Mule's case, it has more to do with his appearance to them as mysterious because of his bias towards Sheng, than with anything else. Mule somehow fascinates the girls. Seemingly, it would appear prestigious to girls in high-cost secondary schools in Kenya to have a boyfriend (Mule) who speaks Sheng', comes from the ghetto but is bright and has a certain assertive aspect.

Jean-Joyce and Mary are some of the girls whose advances Mule rejects. From a slightly different perspective, such boys should really be mysterious and attractive to girls who perceive themselves as high-class, arguably because of their socio-economic status consciousness. As a consequence of the wealth of their parents, Jean-Joyce and Mary might naturally be expected to show flashes of pride and indicate feelings of apartness. We can argue that the girls want to 'love' such boys for the reason that, to them, such boys represent an extraordinary kind of poor boys who have the ability to pass examinations and match the ambitions of the perceived high-class individuals.

2.3.1 Feeling of Otherness vis-à-vis the Fear of Alienation

In retrospect, the adult characters who react against the elopement of Ray and Jean-Joyce do not seem to realise that there is a shared loyalty among the students in their engagements with each other. To these teenagers, this loyalty to each other is what creates the sense of sameness among them. Issues of what is appropriate cease to be a consideration in such cases where otherness is at stake.

This sense of sameness is evident when both Frankie and Shish sympathise with Jean-Joyce on learning that she is a single-parent child, her mother having left her father when she was still an infant. They identify with Jean-Joyce as being one of their kind, despite the bitter rivalry and a significant measure of hatred that exists between her and them. Amongst teenagers, in the face of the realization of a problem that is specific to teenagers, even some rivalries pale into insignificance. Following her seeming elopement with Ray, Jean-Joyce is suspended and taken to rehabilitation by her father. For the first time, Shish and Frankie wish her well in her absence and

hope that the counseling she is undergoing will lessen her burden after being depressed by her father's rejection of the relationship with Ray.

A postulation explaining Mule's fear of being alienated from fellow students, which is inevitable when he reveals Jean-Joyce's hideout, can be found in the experience of other characters. Some of the students in **Tahidi High** have tasted of the effects of alienation and none of them would like to be a victim again. A case in point is Kirio. His conduct in school is at some point linked to the discrimination he faces at home. A peer counseling session with Frankie reveals that Kirio's molestation of other students is a form of release. He has been a victim of paternal alienation. This reality comes out of his revelation of the way his step father treats him. He complains of physical beating from the stepfather who does not treat his own biological children in the same manner.

Another character who once experiences the unfavourable feeling of being out of place is Habakkuk. He dreads the possibility that he is not fitting in fully with the other boys in his school generally, and his class particularly. This fear, not just in Habakkuk, but in other teenagers of his age as well, oftentimes leads to delinquency. Habakkuk steals a Disc Man (a handheld digital music player) so that he also can own one like most boys in his class. He is especially under pressure because his father is also the Deputy Principal of Tahidi High School and Habakkuk is aware his father is more economically endowed than the parents of most boys who have most things that Habakkuk lacks:

I asked you to buy me a disc man and you refused. Whenever I ask anything from you, you say it is useless. All my friends have disc mans except me; they have good mobile phones except me. Their parents give them good pocket money and you don't give me anything. Yet we are richer than them. I even can't go out with

my friends because I don't have 50 Cent and G-Unit clothes like them. I look like a chokoraa in front of them.

Then this being the case, that theft is a way of calling upon the attention of his father to provide him with what his heart desires. When confronted by his father who unfortunately prefers a hard-line stance to an understanding one, he speaks out his mind in the above words.

2.4 The 'Absence' of Home

Most times, the desire to feel wanted makes some teenagers go beyond the limits of the audience's expectations. In the adventurous world of the teenagers, the talk of the impossible therefore becomes a matter that should be treated with caution. Teenagers, apparently, can do just about anything in their craving to belong with the opposite sex. This craving is motivated by a lack of belonging at home. This case is exemplified when, after taking advantage of a school camping trip to sneak, Ray goes into hiding with Jean-Joyce with the help of Kirio.

Enabled by the vast economic capabilities their parents' money can provide, the trio rent a high-cost house in which Ray and Jean-Joyce live with indications typical of people who are practically married. Upon being found, Jean-Joyce's outburst to her father demonstrates the lengths to which school going teenagers are ready to go if only to protect their relationships with those of the opposite sex.

Daddy, stop interfering with my life. I love Ray. Please Dr. Mutiso, tell my dad to stop interfering with my life, or else I am gonna kill myself.

In her peculiar case, it is the lack of parental attention at home that pushes her to these lengths in order to belong. Jean-Joyce would also like to enjoy the warmth of companionship that comes from associating with family, especially parents, just like any other teenager would. Unfortunately for her, she has only her father, perennially busy in business, as her parent. As

earlier observed, the teenage years are characterized by such crisis and confusion as must require them to belong with others to get warmth and, more importantly, direction.

Unfortunately for her, she is torn between identifying with the ordained order of being obedient in school, and embarking on her quest to belong with others. In an attempt to resolve her dilemma, which is in other words an effort to resolve her identity crisis, she is not afraid to break a few regulations both at school and at home. That is why she has no qualms about escaping to a hideout with Ray. She describes him as the only human being who really loves her and cares for her feelings. It might even appear that Jean-Joyce finds the father-figure that she lacks at home in Ray.

Jean-Joyce's father mistakenly thinks that the comfort which money can afford is enough to fulfill the emotional needs of her daughter and therefore provides nothing else to ensure her all-rounded development. Jean-Joyce enjoys comforts such as being taken to an expensive salon, given pizza from home for lunch at school, and being driven to school. But there is every indication that she lacks attention from her father who, worse, is a single parent. In one case, she complains to her father when he says he is so busy to drive her to a party: However unimportant her demand/complain is: "people don't even know who my father is; they think my father is the driver!", it should reveal a deep-seated emotional lack. Later on, the above complain appears a harbinger for more misconduct from her.

Moments after Jean-Joyce and Ray have been dug out from their hideout in a rich neighbourhood, a conversation between her father, Andrew, and Teacher Hamida reveals the

motivations behind the girl's escapades. From this conversation, it becomes evident that Jean-Joyce's father has obviously misunderstood the role of a responsible parent:

Andrew: I give her everything she wants. I buy her the best gifts. I am even planning to take her on a trip to Paris.

Hamida: It is true you do that. But have you ever wondered what else you haven't given her?

Andrew: What?

Hamida: Time! Your daughter is calling out: "Hey daddy I am here!"

Andrew: I don't have a lot of time. I am a very busy man.

From this conversation, we can establish that Jean-Joyce is symbolic of those unfortunate children whose parents never get to admit the fact that failure by their children to adjust to required social order and demands, stems from their (parents's) own failings. One of these failings is not finding time for their children.

2.5 Trickster-figure Boys: The Bad-Boy Syndrome

The arrival of OJ at Tahidi High School and his subsequent relationships with the girl students provides another dimension to the nature of relationships between boys and girls in the school. These relationships are representative of the kind of relationships that one would find anywhere else in Kenya among teenagers of the same age. The one relationship that is clearly realised upon his entry into the school is between him and Tanya.

A fundamental issue arises from the interaction between these two characters: the attraction of girls to the image of the "bad boy". Girls in Tahidi High School are seen to desire the wayward boys more than to the straightforward ones. Another character who becomes a victim of OJ's

“bad boy” conduct is Vero. While talking to Maryanne, she wonders why she is attracted to OJ in spite of having seen how dishonest the latter is. Maryanne offers insight into this matter:

Vero: Why can't he be a gentleman like Andy? Why doesn't he change?

Maryanne: If he did that (changed), he would lose your attraction to him. My dear girl, the 'bad boy' in him is playing havoc in you. You just have to accept that.

Further to that, the seeming abandoning of the chase of a girl by a boy is seen to work in the reverse, making the girl to desire the boy even more.

OJ becomes famous for double-dealing and ‘discarding’ girlfriends once they fall into his trap. In fact at one point he accepts to *use* Vero to assist Freddie win the supremacy battle between him and Andy. He has absolutely nothing to gain from it and does it only for the fun of it. Freddie says that Andy does not deserve a girlfriend like Vero and urges OJ to bid for her and spoil it for Andy. At first, OJ is opposed to the idea but changes his mind when Freddie reveals to him the adventure in the prospect of dumping her shortly after winning her over from Andy. In effect, the audience therefore sees the manner in which girls may be used by boys who claim to be their boyfriends. This often happens in the process of boys settling supremacy scores amongst themselves.

Freddie: OJ, that loser does not deserve a chick like Vero. Wewe humuonagi vile yeye hukaa dwanzi? (Don't you ever see how he looks like an idiot?)

OJ: Una suggest ni do? (What do you suggest I do?)

Freddie: Mwahi! (Go for her!) And I will help you.

OJ: But I am not interested in her.

Freddie: It does not matter. Just play her for some while halafu umdump. The important thing is to get her from Andy.

OJ: (Musing): Yenyewe. I think that will be fun. Nimu hunt halafu kakiiva, nikasaare cold-blood. (Seriously, I should get then later leave her in cold-blood)

Freedie: That's my guy. That loser needs to be taught a lesson or two.
OJ: Tuna need strategy.
Freddie: Drawing board.

Bad boys like OJ, who are strategic enough to realise the influence of the principle of reverse psychology, take advantage of the situation and put on more of an enhanced identity of a “bad boy”. It even appears that some boys become “bad boys” deliberately with the intention of attracting a category of girls who readily get attracted to boys who advertently paint themselves as villains. True to the above reality, Vero submits to the advances by OJ and as Becky explains, it is actualised that part of the reason why she accepts OJ is his not-so-straight character.

Tanya: I don't think so. That chick looks too level-headed. And who doesn't know OJ is a player?
Becky: Don't you know that the bad boys always get the good chicks?

The bad boys are considered both heroes among fellow boys, and an attraction to the girls. While a girl may feel embarrassed when revelations of intimate involvement come up, the boy, on the contrary, gets cheered by fellow boys who view him as one who has made a breakthrough. Surprisingly, even the girls more and more begin to view the errant boy as an enticing target in their relationship escapades. On the afternoon when OJ and Stella are caught kissing in one of the classrooms, OJ ends up triumphantly when the incident is revealed to other students by Teacher Ngatia.

Perhaps Ngatia would have earlier imagined that both OJ and Stella would receive their fair share of humiliation and embarrassment before he reveals the incident. It is only Stella who loses in the affair as OJ receives the “more fire” cheers of encouragement from fellow boys. Even

those boys who would not do what OJ does, maybe more out of fear than out of being commanding of morality, identify with him. Psychologically, they get satisfaction because OJ is some kind of a trickster, who on their behalf accomplishes something they would have loved to do yet they cannot do it either because they are afraid, or because their personality does not give them the resources to accomplish what they view as a remarkable achievement.

2.6 Identification with the Order of Society

Some affiliations are however pragmatic and are formed not out of the desire to be part of a group or be with one another, but purely for reasons of expediency. Once the aims of the affiliation become fulfilled, the alliance ceases to exist. This can be said of the sort of political alliance between Charlie and Sonny, both of whom vie to become head boy and head girl respectively. This is an alliance formed because of political reasons and is in every way similar to alliances formed in the adult political world.

Mark and Shish enter into another such alliance. These two sets of affiliation are symptomatic of political alliances. Even among teenagers, as it is among adults, alliances of this kind are based upon practical reasons rather than moral considerations. This should serve as one of the pointers to the proposition that teenage years are a mere prelude to the adult years and therefore teenage behaviour is not far from the conduct of adults, mostly here, in relation to politics. Even at their age, these students have accepted the order of things in society and have taken their side by identifying with it.

The alliance between Mark and Shish, both of whom aspire to become head boy and head girl respectively, reveals the level to which expediency can take teenagers, and in a sense show how eager children are at picking lessons from adults around them. Mark, though still a student, appears to have fully mastered the crafty art that politics has become in contemporary Kenya. As he speaks, the audience gets it that even school children know only too well that it is this craftiness that separates the successful from the unsuccessful in Kenyan politics. Apart from it being identification with each other because of a shared aim, there is an extended identification with certain political ideas and practices. That such ideas and practices may be immoral is not the matter; what matters is their aim to become student leaders. To them, this end justifies the means they use to get there.

To win the bid, Mark and Shish must sit down and draft a strategy to take them through. Some of the suggestions that Shish makes are indeed naïve but they suffice to illustrate the students' identification with, and indeed adoption of, what goes on behind the scenes in most political power struggles. Shish gives various suggestions, ranging from bribing students and kidnapping their opponents (however impractical this is), to producing fake ballot papers and throwing Sonny's desk in the swimming pool to make her abandon the bid to become head girl. Mark recommends the last option with a statement to back the idea:

The idea of throwing her desk into the pool, is great! You know girl, you watch too many movies....That is how MPs get back to parliament. Use violence and dirty tricks and then cover all the tracks. We might as well follow their example: play politics. You know politics is dirty... and tough.

The clenching of fists and the determined look on his face that accompanies these words signifies just what a tough decision it is they are making by doing the wrong which they must do

to win the election. Even though the two realize that what they are plotting to do is illegitimate, they also understand that it is one of the most realistic means of accomplishing their desired intents. Besides being a sign of the students' identification with the filthy, yet the practical, the statements of intentions by Shish and Mark are also the Television Drama's veiled jab at the political class. In her typically sarcastic though light fashion, Shish says:

First, we throw her desk into the swimming pool. And then, we will smile at the people. And they won't even have a clue we did it!

The Kenyan teenager's knowledge of the propaganda machinery that underlies political contests is also elevated. Shish orchestrates a smear campaign to discredit other contestants and hold them to relief as immoral, hence unfit to be student leaders. She is actually the author and distributor of a letter and leaflets alleging that Sonny and Charlie are sleeping together.

We know that you two are sleeping together. That is why you are campaigning together to be head boy and head girl.

She wants the student community to believe that the alliance between Charlie and Sonny is not just one to help them meet their leadership ambitions, but that it stems from a more horrid sexual association. It takes Charlie's keen mind to notice that Shish is playing propaganda to scuttle their ambitions to become head boy and head girl. This is realization he makes clear to Sonny when she is just about to quit the contest.

Although the Television Drama does not directly and intrusively castigate such unscrupulous behavior, the author's suggestion on such matters becomes creatively and spontaneously realized

when both Shish and Mark lose in the election. This is the spirit of poetic justice that runs across all the incidents that smack of deliberate misconduct in **Tahidi High**.

2.7 The plague of Naiveté

Oftentimes, the search for an identity is characterized by naivety that is typical of youths living the years of the Identity vs. Role Confusion Identity Crisis. The choices made by the student characters exhibit this phenomenon. Sometimes it is only when it is already too late that some of the teenagers discover that they took the wrong turning and affiliated themselves with groups or persons they otherwise should not have been with. Once, while on a school camping trip, Kirio assists Ray and Jean-Joyce escape to a hideout in a house they have rented. It is only after they have stayed in their hideout for days that Kirio realizes that he made a terrible mistake and that in fact he does not fit in a scenario he helped create - where Jean-Joyce and Ray are practically married.

When the scene in the house of the hideout begins, Kirio is discovered in a tense attitude illustrating the seriousness with which he makes the discovery that he may be arrested for kidnapping Jean-Joyce and abetting crime by assisting Ray and Jean-Joyce to elope. He declares that he is moving out of the house. His regret is accompanied by the complaint that he does not see how he fits in a set up whereby Ray and Jean-Joyce are virtually married. He gets torn between remaining loyal to his friends and accepting the truth of the matter that a mistake has been made and that it needs to be righted.

Jean-Joyce's protest against the intention by Kirio "to chicken out" reveals the height of naive idealism. With unsurprising sarcasm and naiveté, the last of which is characteristic of teenage years, she says: *Now King Kong, you are chickening out? They can never find us here!*

Jean-Joyce here alludes to a fictional monster which resembles a gorilla. This creature featured for the first time in the film *King Kong* (1933). This fictitious character is known for its huge size, strength and bravery, features that Kirio is understood by other students to possess.

This should be seen as unrealistic a statement as it actually is. Suddenly, Jean-Joyce seems to think that the world is so big that they can never be found even as she knows full well that already a few days earlier, Mule had met Ray who told him where they were hiding.

Still on this same matter, most of the students take a naïve stand. Mule is one of them. Despite his intelligence, he is the first one to be in possession of the knowledge on the whereabouts of Kirio, Jean-Joyce and Ray and vows never to reveal this information. Fortunately, he happens to tell his uncle Omosh who insists on forwarding the matter to the Principal Dr. Mutiso, much to Mule's disappointment. Mule's argument is a simplistic one as it is naïve. He wants the information to be concealed because should it be revealed that he is the one who gave the information, he knows he will lose his friendship with the three escapees as well as his respect among the students who he believes will consider him no less than a traitor. However, his intention to keep the escapade a secret does not negate the fact that he is certainly sure what he is doing is wrong:

Hapa ni vigumu kupata friends, na manze ukisemahii story utakuwa Umeniseti (It is very difficult to make friends here. And please, if you blow up that story you will have betrayed me). It is all about honour.

This is naïveté because he puts what he calls respect among fellow students before the need to assist the school and parents find the missing students. This nature of teenagers is elevated further when Omosh, an adult who appreciates the seriousness of the matter decides to reveal the information.

This revelation leads to the ambush that Dr. Mutiso and Jean-Joyce's father make on the hideout. To other students who have the same mindset as Mule, yet they still deny their knowledge of the matter, Teacher Hamida says:

If you knew and never said anything, you are guilty. Lakini kama unaendelea kukana (If you are still denying), then you are nasty!

2.8 Teenagers and Responsibility

Personal growth and the evidence of individual initiative are some of the fundamental issues in human growth and development that are symptomatic of teenage years. During teenage years, those teenagers who are beginning to make a commitment to certain identities and roles they would like to play in society begin to show signs of consciousness in relation to issues affecting them and the society they live in. Frankie is the embodiment of this evidence of personal initiative and growth which begins to blossom in precocious school-going teenagers.

Seeing the need for counseling services in Tahidi High School, Frankie initiates the idea of forming a peer counseling club. She approaches teacher Chebby and requests her to become the club patron after explaining to her what she proposes to be the role of the club in the school.

Her precocious nature has afforded her the capacity to realize that a student-centered approach to solving students' problems is the best way forward. The club is eventually formed with support from Chebby who appreciates the level of industry and initiative in Frankie telling her: "*That is very mature of you*".

The success of the group soon becomes a reality when the first client to be counseled presents remarkable change. Kirio, depressed, and lacking an understanding outlet for his problems, walks out of Ngatia's History class one afternoon. Unlike Ngatia who compares the brooding Kirio to Marco Polo – a European explorer, Frankie, because of her understanding of a shared teenage identity and of common problems, follows him out. On pretext that she is going to the washrooms, she runs after Kirio and convinces him to sit down for a chat. A one-on-one chat reveals the physical abuse he faces at home. Kirio does not identify with the rest of their family because of his stepfather. His identity crisis is laid bare when he says of him: "*He hates me because I am not his. My brothers and sisters are his.*"

The result of the talk is that finally Frankie manages to convince Kirio to go back to class, after which he apologizes to Ngatia. From this scenario, we can conclude that part of the solution to teenage identity problems and indiscipline lies in the society's ability to be understanding and its appreciation of the teenage situation. Sometimes, they are not the often elusive wholesome solutions that are needed but rather, an outlet for the pent-up feelings. In Kirio's case, the intense pent-up emotions are an effect of a blend between physical and verbal abuse from his stepfather. As Frankie helps to demonstrate, what teenagers need times of emotional turmoil is a reliable

form of release, and not criticism. It is also seen that teenagers can indeed take a responsibility in tackling their own or others' identity crises.

In this fashion, **Tahidi High** has succeeded in demonstrating that undesirable action is not the only trait that school-going teenagers are capable of. Given time and space, the youth can adopt and make a commitment to an identity that allows their sense of enterprise and ingenuity to thrive. In other words, teenagers like being given a chance to be responsible in matters relating to their welfare. This is the kind of a teenager that Frankie is.

The foregoing is proof of a clear sense of initiative in socially conscious teenagers. A critical look at the rest of the students would reveal that sometimes in groups or individually, students can be very innovative. One morning, OJ brings to school news of a primary school child in his neighbourhood. Reportedly, he has dropped out of school because parents his cannot afford school uniform. OJ initiates a proposal to raise money from fellow students to help buy school uniform for the disadvantaged child.

When other students are told of the purpose of the money, they join OJ in raising money from the students, workers and teachers. Teacher Kirimi helps them realize that instead of raising money to help only one child, they could come up with a way of raising money to help many needy children. Once more, at this point, the role of the teacher in appreciating and shaping a sense of responsibility in the students is seen to be critical. Because of Kirimi's suggestions, more ideas come up from the students. They are these ideas that lead them towards organizing a

talents show and a beauty contest in the school with the objective of raising money to assist a bigger number of children in their outreach.

A sense of unity of purpose which is worthy of note emerges during this occasion as it does in several other cases **Tahidi High**. As the students work together in a social cause, it is important to realize once again how teenagers discard their rivalries and disagreements in the face of calamity or a problem facing one of them. This is, however, not to say that the rivalries and disagreements at this point in their lives are minor; they are indeed to them serious but not serious enough to stand in the way of a social cause.

2.9 Role Modeling: The Role of Adults in Teenage Identity Crises

2.9.1 The Preoccupation with Celebrity Status

By the time children get into the teen years, they normally would already have started a process of identification with those people they look up to in deciding future roles in their later lives. According to the Encarta Dictionary (2009), a role model is a worthy person who is an example to other people. Students in **Tahidi High** are not left behind in this all important process of looking up to the people they would like to emulate. However, not every teenager in Tahidi High School chooses a model worthy of being copied. There are going to be cases looked at in this section, which are a reflection of misguided choosing of role models.

First to be realized is the identification with those people that the students consider celebrities. These include performing artistes like musicians and, beauty pageants (models). When the idea to raise money for needy children, and later for the peer counseling club comes up, the first

suggestion that all students agree upon is to have a musician to grace the occasion. They believe that the presence of local contemporary musicians, Rufftone, Nameless and Jua Cali will attract a bigger audience, thus, more money will be realized. After discussions, it is decided that Rufftone is to be invited.

The student community is upbeat in the wake of the good news that Rufftone is coming to Tahidi High School to perform. Nearly all students are eager to give the best impression to the artiste, who they consider their celebrity. The girls spruce themselves up because each one of them would like Rufftone to view her in a favourable light. The stage gets set for supremacy battles especially between girls. Consider the dialogue below. The girls engage in this conversation, each practicing the feminine wiles that are supposed to catch the attention of the musician. Attempts to win over those of the opposite sex are hereby seen as a trait characteristic of the vanity that typifies the nature of girls in the teenage years.

Mary: Will he notice me?

Debra: Wait until I wear my bikini. He won't be looking anywhere else!

Shish: By the way, he is my friend!

Desirous of impressing on the day of the show, on the eve of the performance, the girls start practicing the catwalk even during class time. Together with this aspiration to impress Rufftone, is paired the desire of the girls to bear the identity tag of a beauty queen or a model. Meeting these high objectives often leads to cheating amongst teenagers just as it does happen with Tahidi High School students. Debra is caught attempting to bribe a judge so that she can be voted Miss Tahidi. On other hand, Shish secretly slices Stella's costume so she can get rid of her competition. Debra is disqualified while Shish loses to Stella. At this point, it is necessary to recall a statement already made earlier on. It is in the spirit of poetic justice that both Debra and

Shish lose. The Television Drama is in essence educating the youth, albeit in a subtle way, on the virtue of honesty and hard work if they should like to attain their ambitions.

During teenage years, girls' preoccupation with the ideals of beauty reaches its peak. At this time many girls, as it is revealed in **Tahidi High**, harbour the ambition of becoming a beauty queen. The identity of 'the beautiful' then becomes an achievement girls would like to accomplish. For some girls becomes an obsession. Stella, on the days soon after the beauty contest, becomes a victim of the opportunistic OJ because of her ambition to become a model. The smooth talker he is, he manages to impress it upon Stella that she is so beautiful that she deserves to become a beauty queen on the national stage. OJ also tells her that he has the necessary connections to facilitate the fulfillment of her ambitions. With the promise that he will call the Miss Kenya organizers and link her up, Stella seems to readily fall for OJ. It is a consequence of OJ's persuasion that Stella and OJ are found kissing in a classroom on the same afternoon that Stella leads one side of a school debate in advocating for abstinence. This should signify the sacrifice that girls are willing to make if only to attain the tag of 'the beautiful'.

The boys in the school also have their part in the identification with those they consider celebrities and icons. This explains why Habakkuk complains to his father that he does not buy him 50Cent and G-Unit clothes so that he can be like other boys in the school. It therefore goes without saying that most boys in the school don clothes with the labels of the Black American rap artist. In the same manner, girls in Tahidi High School strive to identify with, and ape, the mannerisms and appearance of those people considered to be celebrities by teenage perception.

The presence of a person they consider a celebrity is marked by euphoria and excitement amongst teenagers, sometimes leading to serious mishaps. In Tahidi High School, this is seen when Rufftone finally shows up at the time when the students are just about to despair that he won't come. The rupture that is witnessed at the time of his performance is testimony to the level to which teenagers appreciate and view their celebrities as iconic figures. Because of the resultant jubilation, even the sore losers of the beauty contest soon forget their losses and join other students in the acclamation of the artistic superiority of their music icon, Rufftone.

2.9.2 The Role of Adults in Modeling Teenagers

There are, however, cases of wrong choice of role model to identify with. In the case of school going teenagers, some of those mistakenly selected as role models may be parents, relatives, teachers or other school workers. This is epitomized in Tahidi High School. In most cases, this happens because those influential people in the immediate environment of the teenagers may fail to espouse and show them the best values. The adoption of smoking and drinking by students can therefore be linked to the fact that they see their own teachers smoking and drunk. To a certain extent, the students start to believe that smoking and drinking is a classy affair and therefore reserved for independent people.

Jean-Joyce once says that she feels like smoking every time she smells Teacher Ngatia smoking. This may then be used to support the view that some of the smokers in the school like OJ, Habakkuk, Kirio, Shish, Jean-Joyce, Freddie and Kirio may have been influenced and gradually driven into addiction by Ngatia. Even those considered to be celebrities oftentimes become paragons of undesirable role modeling. Although a celebrity, in the expected sense of the word,

would be read as somebody with positive influences within and without the environment in which they live, cases in **Tahidi High** indicate a certain mistaking of what celebrity is. In the world of teenagers, a celebrity is anybody popular. To many teenagers, as shown in the Television Drama, it matters little whether the same person holds traits that are worth imitating. It is against this background that it should be said that Shish is indeed a victim of this kind of undesirable role modeling. This is so, arguing by her own statement that she “feels like one of those Hollywood stars” when she smokes.

Looked at from the perspective that parents can provide negative role modeling, Freddie’s case is even a more piteous one. He has been driven into drugs by influences from both at home and at school. His father, a successful businessman, is addicted to alcohol. He also has no qualms about buying his school going son alcohol. Worse, when once Freddie is sent away from school because he comes while drunk, his father returns him to school even more drunk than Freddie. Both of them can be seen swigging inside their car in the school compound. Surprisingly, indeed ironically, Freddie’s school mates envy him saying that he has a successful father; a role model to look up to.

One of the students, Ayok, first of all spitefully looks at the antics of Freddie’s drunken father who even insults teachers calling them stupid and despising them for wearing cheap secondhand clothes. That is before he is told of how rich Freddie’s father is, a fact upon which he changes his attitude towards him. He suddenly begins to admire his success, to an extent of remarking: *“Freddie must be very proud of him. He has a father who inspires him.”*

Ayok's statement is followed by a rejoinder from Maryanne who holds her aunt in high esteem as her role model. Maryanne says that she looks up to her as her role model because of a number of reasons. Defending her choice, she says that her aunt is a young successful lady who has excelled academically. She has a Masters Degree and a well-paying job. These things, Maryanne says, have enabled her to live an independent life: "partying through the night and returning home only when she wants". Maryanne declares that she aspires to be like her aunt once she is a holder of a National Identity Card, which signifies becoming an adult and an entry into independent adult life. The cases of Maryanne and Freddie bring to the fore one of the most important questions that emerge from the fabric of **Tahidi High**. What constitutes a role model? Does the level of one's education and economic endowments automatically qualify one as a role model? The answer to these questions is 'yes', unfortunately, for most students.

The environmental (cultural) factors that cause role confusion in the lives of children are, together with the above instances, revealed to start much earlier in the lives of children. It is only a few that are lucky to get other people in their societies and families upon whom they can model their future roles. Teacher Ngatia's daughter, though not a member of the Tahidi High School, can be used to advance the point that teenagers begin getting mixed up early in their lives, and may finally ape wrong role models as a consequence. For her case, it is her mother who stands up for her and ensures that she does not get muddled up in the negative influences of her father. The daughter is said to have called her father "a useless drunkard".

Taking cue from the above paragraph, the environment in which the teenagers live does not, on the contrary, absolutely lack people who can provide positive modeling for them. Kibunja, a

member of the subordinate staff in Tahidi High School tells Freddie and a few other students a story of his uncle who he holds as his role model. Kibunja's uncle is British-educated and a holder of a PhD but, as Kibunja says, he is humble and not a drunkard. He gives the students this story to counter Ayok's view that Freddie must be proud of his father, yet the same father drunkenly portrays the contrary.

Another positive influence that counsels students on the importance of thinking critically when identifying with people as role models is Teacher Kirimi. While neither antagonizing Freddie and his father, nor expressing his irritation at having been called a stupid teacher by Freddie's father, he proves to be the voice of reason insofar as guiding the students in the choice of role models. According to Kirimi, a role model should be a person with whom another person identifies not just because of their achievements in life, but because of their enduring qualities of humility, morality and a sense of purpose in life. It is from the words of Kibunja and Kirimi that the students are much more likely to come up with a concrete recipe for coming up with inspiring figures as role models.

Sometimes young people may seek affiliation with people or groups they ought not to, not because of their own doing, but because adults may have a role in this flawed identification. In this regard, the role of teachers in determining who the students identify with and in which manner is examined.

A group of form three students finds Miss Tulele, a new teacher, difficult to respect and keep decent distance from. This is specifically because the students see no difference between

themselves and her in respect of her mode of dressing, her mannerisms and her profuse expression of emotion. The failure by teachers to adhere to a certain minimum standard of expectations can therefore lead to general misconduct, particularly seen in the way the students relate to the teacher.

Miss Tulele dresses in a manner that does not keep safe distance from the romantic imagination of the students, especially the boys. The audience, and indeed Miss Tulele and those of her kind, may lack the moral authority to blame such students, knowing well that curiosity and a sense of adventure affects teenagers.

These particular students pick a love letter written by Teacher Kilunda, addressed to Miss Tulele. Kilunda sneaks the letter into Tulele's books fearing to approach her directly. Form three students pick and read the letter when it drops in class without Tulele's knowledge. Later, when teacher Kilunda in a huff goes to punish them because they cannot give Tulele cooperation, he finds the students already armed with knowledge that is going to protect them against punishment.

Teacher Kilunda knows they can easily reveal the details of the letter and expose him to ridicule. They actually mock him singing a love song when he goes to class and threatens them with severe punishment. Of particular thrill to the teenagers is the opening line in the letter in which Kilunda says that "the sun started shining when you (Miss Tulele) came here to Tahidi High School." Consequently, they see parallels between the experiences and conduct of their teachers

and liken them to their own. It is by this process that the line between the adults becomes blurred and even disappears.

As the episode ends, the students consider themselves in possession of information that puts them in a position to be able to make demands, just as they would make demands to their age mates. They send three representatives to Miss Tulele and three more go to face Mr. Kilunda.

They are those who go to face Tulele that reveal the idea that their inappropriate identification with her, to the extent of viewing her as a potential girlfriend, is a result of her own conduct. Led by Maryanne, they read Miss Tulele what they refer to as “*modus vivendi*” (The Rules of Coexistence). Firstly, they demand that she begins to show them the respect they deserve even if she sees them only as students. Secondly, they commend on her dressing which they term too revealing for them to fail to notice. Besides being a distraction to them in class, Miss Tulele’s mode of dressing stands accused for triggering students’ emotional interest in her. Joni sums up this important revelation with his weighty comment: *We are after our age mates, but if you give us reasons to undersize you, then you should not blame us!*

It is clear by this engagement in dialogue that the students blame Miss Tulele for making some of them imagine that they could get into an intimate a relationship with her or even marry her. One of the students gives a hint of the presence of this kind of imagination in an English class. When asked to form a question, Dan, blurts out: “*Will you marry me?*” Although this may appear an innocent answer to the question, it is actually an expression of a hidden motive among the boys.

Upon being asked if she understands the terms of their demands, Miss Tulele states: “*We have an agreement.*” The students then walk out of the staffroom having triumphed in a battle they take to Miss Tulele. They can be said to have finally resolved the matter that has been disturbing both them and Miss. Tulele. On the other side, Kilunda also reaches an uneasy agreement with the students who reject his punishment retorting that they will not accept to be punished because of his girlfriend, Miss Tulele.

There is yet further evidence of the significant role played by adults, in this case teachers, in enhancing identity crises in teenagers. This is related to the level of closeness and frequency of interaction between students and teachers. Seemingly, some students in secondary school take longer than expected have not decided which roles or careers they aspire to take up in future. Such students take advantage of the positions or responsibilities of the teachers to posture as those who genuinely need direction in role identification. In reality, their intention is just to get close enough before making their intentions clearly known. Teacher Okello, a games teacher and Dorcas, a student expose such a scenario.

Dorcas approaches Mr. Okello expressing her desire to learn tennis. Soon after, she changes her mind and tells Okello that her initial intention was not in fact to learn tennis but to be taught Mathematics. When asked why she does not understand the subject when it is taught in class, she vaguely says that she does not concentrate in class and adds that the other teachers do not know how to teach the subject. She knows that Mr. Okello does not even teach Mathematics. Even more surprising, is the fact that Okello agrees to help her in the subject despite having no proven

expertise in the field. It is this step by the teacher that encourages Dorcas to draft a love letter addressed to Okello. Although most of the letter is actually humourously incomprehensible because of the girl's intent to impress, it nevertheless suffices to show her intentions:

Dear Mr. Okello. How do you preponderate under the present atmospheric cosmosity? I am just fine, though the symptoms of nature discriminate me from seeing all the..."

According to Teacher Ngatia, more in Okello's character leads to the kind of response exhibited by this girl, and perhaps a few more other girls:

Ngatia: When there is a trip, you wear your most expensive cologne; you wear your most fashionable tracksuits. The results being you come hugging the girls after winning... I have also noticed that you pretend to give that girl tennis lessons. You know what I know you know, don't you?

Okello: That is crap! But ... I would rather spend my money buying expensive cologne and fashionable tracksuits than on alcohol.

What is noticeable here is that Okello does not dispute the validity of Ngatia's accusations but rather, chooses to be defensive and insulting. This attitude is a clear indication of his contribution to the mental conflict within the girls with regard to how they ought to relate to their male teachers.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter is significant to the spirit of this study. This is for the principal reason that it discusses the concept of identity in the lead student characters in the television drama. While summing up this chapter, is importance to emphasize that Identity Crisis being the most prevalent dilemma in the lives of teenagers, is significantly discussed hereby and demonstrated to be the thread that holds the rest of the study together. Stated in other words, by understanding

the characters' dilemmas of belonging, it was possible to appreciate why the school setting fits them, and how their language use is manifested, and seen appropriate. Put otherwise, the chapters on Setting and Language are complemented by this chapter.

One of the primary objectives of this chapter, which it has endeavoured to fulfill, is the exposition of the various dilemmas that youths face when it comes to choosing the positions they wish to take in their adulthood. The characters under study being teenagers, it should forthwith be said that the chapter has indeed made considerable attempts to subject the issue of role confusion to analysis. This has taken the shape of an exploration into the confusions that teenagers face as they experiment with the possibilities of finding the suitable roles they can play when their days of school end.

Further to the above, this section of the study has aimed at revealing how parental influence plays so much into the minds of teenagers so that, unlike Erikson's proposition, they do not make choices that are fitting to themselves, but rather, those that conform to the wishes of their parents, relatives and guardians. It seems a little absurd that, sadly, those youths who have made sound choices either by serious thought or otherwise, see them rejected by those who by family ties are influential. Even as this happens, what is not left to lie unattended by this study is the welcome realization by the youth that they have a role to play. This is epitomized by Frankie.

Second to one of the primary aims of this chapter stated above, a considerable attempt to explore the various relationships in **Tahidi High's** groupings and alliances has been made. The aforementioned groupings allude to the alliances and affiliations witnessed among the students in

Tahidi High. The relationships observed which point to searches of identity are: “boy-boy”, “boy-girl”, and “student-other”. The student-other relations are those between students and other people that are not students. These include parents, relatives and teachers.

The most prominent of the above are boy-girl affiliations. The age of the characters (students) has imposed this undertaking upon this research. At this time in the lives of the students being studied, no other relationships can more prominent than the cross-sexual ones. In the course of studying these relationships, their nature, purpose and consequence have been detailed. The territorialism, jealousy, hostility, rejection, naïve idealism and desperation that inadvertently arise from such relationships make this section serve its purpose of making the study fuller in its attempt to determine the personality of the students in **Tahidi High.**

Again, the study would have left part of the objectives unfulfilled without a reading into the teenagers’ quest for belonging. The students’ overwhelming desire to ascertain where they belong, or their concerted efforts to maintain loyalties where they think they belong come to the fore here. However, it is only where loyalties are sought so determinedly that the same loyalties become so easily betrayed.

Finally, the belief of this chapter lies in the hypothetical view that role modeling, an integral part of the teenage search for identity has been addressed with deserved attention. This has been done particularly because role modeling is considered one of the conceptions deemed clearly manifest in the television drama. Consequently, this chapter has gathered how either rightly or wrongly students choose their role models. Importantly, the authoritative voice of adults (parents,

relatives and teachers) in either helping resolve or complicate this dilemma, it is hoped, has emerged as it should within the fabric of this chapter. How setting plays a role in characterizing the student characters is taken care of in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Setting: The School as a Shaper of the Student Characters

3.1 Introduction

Setting refers to the whole environment surrounding the events and experiences in a work of art.

This includes the place where the actions and events in a work of art happen, and the time during which actions and events occur. Truby (2007) has defined setting as the story world of a work of fiction. Hence, it extends to cover the social-cultural environment of the work. Besides, the historical and ideological aspects of the time are fundamental constituents of setting.

This chapter investigates how the above mentioned components of setting have been used by the author(s) to contribute towards the realization of a wholesome student image in Tahidi High. To begin with, the chapter gives a brief room for the analysis of the home setting. This will be done by looking at the homes of three of the lead characters. This is important to enable understand students' personality in the Television Drama. This was made necessary because by looking at some of the students in their homes, establishing the relationship between students' personality and their family backgrounds was made easily achievable.

The appropriateness of the school setting in creating realistic student characters forms an important part of this chapter. By looking at the students' particular conduct in school, it will be possible to view the students as an independent lot of humanity, different from adults in various respects. Indeed, later in this chapter, proof will then be found that teenagers within the school are not victims of other social realities such as tribalism.

Lastly, this chapter gives attention to the investigation of how the youths understand emerging and contemporary social realities and their response to such realities. Among the issues to be discussed in this regard are HIV/AIDS, gender and the politics of feminism and social stratification, which results from difference in socio-economic status.

By looking at the foregoing, this chapter focuses its emphasis on showing that setting forms an important part of in shaping the image of the main student characters in the Television Drama.

3.2 Home as a Prelude to the School Setting

Tahidi High is a Television Drama set in a high-cost secondary school – Tahidi High School.

The Television Drama is named after the school of its setting. As the very first episode selected for this study begins, the Tahidi High School students are on holiday and it is the last weekend before the opening of the school upon the beginning of a new year. This first scene is important principally because it gives the viewers the glimpse into the background of the Tahidi High School students. When the first set of students presented are on the basketball court; a court situated in a rich neighbourhood, the audience can easily tell that they are kids from well-to-do families. A look around reveals a car parked nearby. From the car, loud RNB music is playing. The car has been brought to the basketball court by one of the boys, Mark. He most certainly has taken his father's car.

Dissimilar to the above case, some of the students of the school come from poor families. Mule is the prime representative of this category of students. He is a student who is going to continue with his studies as a new student in Tahidi High School, having been given the chance by virtue

of winning a scholarship. He has been born and bred in Kibera, a low-income residential area in Nairobi. His uncle and guardian, Omosh, is self-employed in the informal 'jua kali' sector. We later learn that Omosh is the closest to a parent that Mule has. As the second episode begins, Mule is seen in the company of his uncle on a shopping outing in town preparing for the opening of the school.

An argument is going on between them with regard to the quality of shopping and the price of shoes that Mule needs for school. This exposes the wide gap in socioeconomic status which exists between Mule and the other students seen in scene one. Already here, the tensions in Mule begin to be visible because he is aware he is going to a school whose children come from rich families and therefore would like to measure up to the standards. They move from one shop to another, in all of these cases failing to agree on the type and price of shoes.

Finally, Mule's uncle dictates that the shopping will be done at Gikomba market, an open air market in Nairobi where secondhand items cost much lesser. Mule gets frustrated while his uncle gets more conservative, arguing that there is not enough money to buy the items that Mule needs for the beginning of his student life in Tahidi High School. At this point, it is needless to say that Mule will therefore provide a stark contrast to the other students by fact of coming from a humble background.

These sobering disparities in class and the attendant difference in economic power will later come to find appropriate ground in school where they will be played. In that relation hence, the scenes of students out of school are important in that they serve to illustrate the difference in

socio-economic backgrounds of the Tahidi High School students. Consequently, by the time the viewers see the students in school, they will be able to appreciate the conflicts and tensions among the students to a fuller extent. This is because they will already have been given the benefit of prior information by seeing the students in their distinct homes and neighbourhoods.

It is important to mention at this stage another significant part played by the scene at the basketball court. Here, the audience will witness the foreshadowing of territorialism in the boy-girl relationships which will become more manifest in Tahidi High School. Each of the girls would love to protect her romantic relationship with the boys. The atmosphere of underlying love battles, which are to later become more pronounced, is enhanced by a contemporary RnB track which all through the scene is overheard playing in the background: 'Everyone Falls in Love Sometimes'.

The four girls, Shish, Mary, Jean-Joyce and Frankie come to the court dressed in revealing attire, meant most definitely to attract the attention of the boys. Jean-Joyce gets openly jealous when she tells Frankie that she, (Frankie), thinks that every boy in school is hers. Even from this first scene, the production does not want to waste time. The production seems intent on approaching what is the main topic in the Television Drama with immediate urgency. From this point, it begins to become evident that Tahidi High School, like many other mixed secondary schools in Kenya, is not just an educational centre but also a rendezvous for the boy-girl relationships which are typical of the teenage years. It also starts to dawn on the audience that the students treasure these relationships to an extent that these relationships may appear more important than their studies.

From the day-out playing basketball, the audience is moved to the households of some of the students. The two households we are taken are those of the influential main characters: Jean-Joyce, Mary and Ray. The choice of these households is critical because these are the characters that most clearly illustrate the affluence which largely dictates the behaviour of the students, not just at home, but also, and importantly so, at school. With the kind of economic power of parents witnessed in these homesteads normally comes enormous freedom and liberties granted to the children. These massive liberties are played out clearly when the students decide to have a party and go out for shopping in preparation for it.

The students head to the supermarket in Mark's father's car and the only items on their shopping list are alcoholic drinks. Even at their age, it appears reasonable to conclude that they have been given too much money than they need. This should be a fact if the expensive brands of wine they buy are anything to go by. In Jean-Joyce's household, the audience sees her father giving her permission to attend a party with her friends. He in fact drives her to the venue of the party, giving only a tame order that she must be back by eleven at night. To him this might appear a reasonable hour, but to an objective audience familiar with the Kenyan time, the idea communicated is that there is not a reasonably strict code of conduct governing such a young girl's life.

The logical reason for the enormous freedom that granted to children from families with a high socio-economic status is not particularly difficult to arrive at. The children's parents being rich and having satisfied their main needs, seem to have decided, consciously or otherwise, that

entertainment for their children, even unsupervised, is one among the important set of the next level of family needs. Perhaps they even believe it is incumbent upon them to satisfy these needs in such profuse ways.

3.3 Shift to School: A Strategy for Realistic Characterization

The decision to situate the action of the Television Drama in a secondary school can be considered to be indicative of the producer's desire to not only portray a credible image of secondary school students in their interaction with the opposite sex, but also their (producer's) realization that the Identity Crisis in young people begins in their teen years; a time when they are in secondary school. In view of that possibility, any other setting would not have resulted in the varied socio-economic conflicts, teenage crises and the difference alliances among students, all of which are manifest in **Tahidi High**. In that light, it is therefore important to recognize the relevance of the school setting.

Furthermore, the school is situated in an urban area. This decidedly urban setting also plays a crucial role in creating the particular wider setting desired by the producer of the Television Drama. It can be argued that the production aims at creating an atmosphere in which students from different ethnic cultures converge and interact. This study has determined that the main reason for using the urban setting is cultural. The urban setting is a melting pot for different cultures. Rather than any other setting, it is selected to demonstrate the case that issues affecting the youth, and those over which they most conflict, are oftentimes far removed from the issues that adults grapple with. One of these issues is ethnicity. As it becomes abundantly clear, it is not one of the problems bedeviling students in Tahidi High School.

More specifically put, the urban setting in general, and school setting in particular, have managed to establish one possible reality: school going youth in urban areas are not victims of the ethnic conflicts that are affecting other members of society. This seeming demolition of even the slightest conception that there may be a problem of ethnicity in urban schools could be considered idealistic. It is nevertheless a way of saying that the pertinent issues affecting the youth are unique to them. Some of these issues are going to be the object of this research in the succeeding chapters.

Like any other successful Television Drama, **Tahidi High** has proved an effort on the side of the producer to ensure credibility in terms of characterization. The student characters have been portrayed realistically and this is partly because of the choice of an urban setting where credibility in terms of the imaging these characters can be attested to in view of the language they speak. There are two codes identifiable as codes of communication among the students of Tahidi High School.

They are, firstly, the Kiswahili-English slang known as 'Sheng' and secondly, a fusion of Kiswahili and Sheng words into English. In this last code, English is realised more dominantly than Kiswahili and Sheng. In fact the Sheng and Kiswahili words are sort of Anglicized (made to sound English) by speakers when they speak a fusion of English and Kiswahili. While the first code, Sheng, is used mostly by students from low socio-economic backgrounds like Mule, and very rarely by those from rich backgrounds, the second code, characterized by fusion of Kiswahili or Sheng into English, is mostly used by rich students. The causes and implications of

this difference in the choice of language by students will be detailed later in this chapter. At this stage, suffice it to say that the two codes of language, which significantly characterize the student characters in **Tahidi High**, would not have been found more predominant in any setting, other than the urban one.

3.4 The School and Carrying on of Adult Types

As it is, the production has succeeded in setting the students in an environment in which their behaviour and thinking can be seen as a representation of the adult world around them. To the author(s), the kind of the secondary school image that emerges from the Television Drama is a reflection of the larger and complex image of the society itself, in general, and the image of adults in society in particular.

To start with, the production posits the drug abuse in youths with drug abuse by both parents and teachers. Before the audience is taken to the students' drunken party, it is treated to a confrontation between Teacher Ngatia and the new Tahidi High School Principal, Dr. Mutiso. Ngatia is discovered clearly drunk and defends himself that being drunk has got no negative effect on his job because the students pass his subject, History. There is not much surprise therefore when students stage a drinking party on their last weekend prior to opening.

By so doing, the students really appear to have started fitting into the conventional social pattern surrounding them. Jean-Joyce confesses to this influence. She once says that every time she sees Teacher Ngatia smoking, she feels like smoking. She later starts to smoke and sets smoking as

one of the preconditions before attending classes. This means that the influence from Teacher Ngatia has finally driven her into addiction.

Sometimes, this aping of adult conduct is highlighted by blatant irony in the questioning statements and critical demeanour from the same adults, or other adults. Apparently, those adults, in this case teachers, who smoke openly criticize their students when they turn to smoking too. This blatant irony is actualised when the same Ngatia admonishes the students who copy his habit:

Ngatia: *Who taught you to smoke Jean-Joyce?*

Mark: *But you are always smoking in the school compound, sir?*

Ngatia: *Don't talk to me like that; I am your teacher, not your age mate!*

Jean-Joyce is not alone. Others like Mark and Kirio have also fallen victim to the somewhat corrupting behavior of Ngatia. The two boys are caught on the morning of the school opening day smoking by Teacher Hamida. In the characteristic fashion of the youth denying even the obvious, when asked about the confiscated cigarettes, Mark says: "They are not mine. I have never even touched a cigarette."

Within the surrounding of the youth, especially teenagers, there is often a negative, but silent, voice of authority from the adults which adventurous teenagers find appealing and would like to explore. The three students mentioned above find smoking an adventurous affair after observing Ngatia, one of their teachers do it. In a sense, the doing of certain unacceptable actions by adults within the environment of teenagers speaks louder than words and may sanction the latter to do the same things.

However, in the school setting there is the presence of adult foil in the shape of role model teachers who counter negative influence from other teachers of Ngatia's type. In the case of **Tahidi High**, the counter to negative modeling comes in the form of a female teacher, Hamida. In relation to the smoking incident, she lets Ngatia know that he should feel responsible for the addiction of students to cigarette smoking. In her criticism, she also clarifies the concept of secondary smoking, by which Jean-Joyce gets addicted.

The presence of such positive modeling in school is seen to be responsible for the shaping of such characters like Mule. Despite most boys his age taking to smoking, he remains focused on his studies. He has assimilated the positive values that school has to offer, and these have elevated him to some level of morality from which he gets the vantage point to observe the waywardness in adults like Ngatia, while appreciating them whenever he sees admirable qualities in them. Few days after Ngatia stops smoking, he says: *"I would just like to tell you that you are looking good. You look healthier, and you are not coughing a lot. Is it true you stopped smoking?"*

Although Ngatia does not answer Mule verbally, the satisfied smile and the knowing look he gives Mule are signs telling enough of one who understands that he is finally contributing positively to the nurturing of his students.

At this point then we see another important contribution of the school setting. Depending on how it is viewed and used, the school can be both a place for the nurturing of positive values in youth and a place where juvenile delinquents can be produced and be eventually spilled into the society

outside of school. Whenever these two conflicting roles of the school have been posited in **Tahidi High**, the episodes have been made to end with an emphasis on the positive values. It is this kind of ending of episodes that we see in Mule's compliment of Ngatia above.

The students drinking party is the revelation of what the result of parents being easily duped by the supposed innocence of their children can be. It also plays out the failure by parents to take full responsibility of their children, while at the same time expecting the school to do the job they have failed to do. The craze of students being driven mad by beer unfolds while back home, Jean-Joyce's father and Ray's mother wait upon the return of their children from what they think is "just a party" in Abigail's own words. In fact Abigail, Ray's mother, when asked by Jean-Joyce's father says that her children can take care of themselves perfectly well.

However, even among the students, we have the naïve and too trusting types. Those unsuspecting students who may have thought that what was going on is just a party meet the "trickster" youth among the partying students. When Sonny and her friend show up at the party, Mark – on the pretext of giving them soda - mixes alcohol with their soda. The two girls realize that what they have been given by Mark tastes different but they still go on to take it. Worse, after Mark answers them: *"It tastes different because it is soda. May be you should be taking the other stuff; beer."*

Moments later, one of the girls is seen with Mark drunk and seemingly ready to give in to more of his trickery. In view of the foregoing, it can be stated that the naïveté noticed among some of the students is an extension of the naïveté of their parents. It is only when it gets very late that

Abigail and Jean-Joyce's father begin to get concerned. While on their way to search for their children, both even state that they are sure their children would never touch alcohol.

What is not lost on the viewer is the trading of blame between the two parents with either of them saying that the others child is to blame for whatever wrong that may happen. The implication here is that most parents find it better to find somebody else to blame for the misconduct of their children. When it is not the teacher to blame, then it is someone else and in this case, another parent. Caught in the middle of the blame game is the teacher. When teachers Hamida and Macharia get to know of the students' party and rush to try and sort out the mess, they are coincidentally found at the party by Dr. Mutiso. He immediately accuses them for encouraging students to drink by their presence.

The school setting provides a perfect ground for the Television Drama to demonstrate how parents abdicate their childrearing responsibilities and expect teachers to do almost everything for their children, except financial sustenance. The result is the ever-increasing number of students who have lost direction. The lack of parental attention to the social issues affecting their children and the failure to track their academic work are best exhibited in school. It may seem as if the rich parents in Tahidi High school have concluded that all that their children need is money and other provisions that can easily be acquired using money. As a result, their children are calling for their parents' attention in various ways. These ways are mostly disastrous. Some of the ways are the failure to perform in school and engaging in misconduct.

Responding to one of such cases, Teacher Ngatia gets concerned about Mark's deteriorating performance in school. An inquiry by Ngatia reveals that Mark's father is almost always out of the country on business trips. As a consequence, he does not monitor his child's performance in school. Left on his own, Mark turns into a wayward student, which can be viewed as a call for attention. While teacher Hamida is in class, Mark mimics her mannerisms instead of paying attention to what she is teaching. When she gets caught and is taken to the staffroom for punishment, the following is part of the exchange that takes place.

Ngatia: Your father, what does he say about your performance? You used to be number one. How come he doesn't sign your report cards these days?
Mark: My father is always out of the country.

In the face of such parental negligence, the teacher is made to step into the shoes of the parent.

The behavior of students in masses is one of the aspects of general societal conduct that are enacted in the microcosm of society that Tahidi High School is. Generally, the Kenyan society has mostly chosen to engage in rowdy protests whenever there have been conflicts between groups of people and institutions. At this point, we continue to realize how students have become a true reflection of the adult world. Rarely has dialogue, a more rational approach towards resolution of disagreement, been employed. This aspect of the conduct of society has definitely found its way into most schools as presented in what happens in **Tahidi High**. A few students who have decided that punishment being given in school is too harsh for them decide to stage a protest instead of seeking consultation with the school administration. Jean-Joyce starts the idea of the protest and all the students on punishment, except Mule, jump onto the bandwagon as if they have been waiting for the idea all along.

In a similar fashion as members of the public outside of school, the protesting students already know that they can use the media to cover their riotous protest. This shows that being keen observers of society, the students have known the ways in which the media can either be used constructively or misused. Without the school as a venue for us to see that this knowledge is with the youths, no other place would have otherwise been more appropriate. The riot ends in the dismissal of several students, the innocent Mule being one of them. The statement being made here is that there will always be victims of circumstance during riotous attempts to resolve conflicts in school and in the rest of the society as well.

3.5 Standing on the Frontline: The Voice of Students on HIV/AIDS

Being a contemporary Television Drama, Tahidi High, with its suitable school setting, offers noticeable insights into how teenagers respond to the current issues affecting them. Any work of art featuring the youth as the main dramatis personae would be incomplete without enacting the response and place of youths, especially teenagers, with regard to HIV/AIDS. The school becomes the best place for the drama to reveal the voice of the teenagers, amongst their peers, on matters relating to the scourge.

Where older people would have used different methods to educate them on prevention of the HIV/AIDS scourge, the teenage students use symbolic and subtle, yet forceful means of passing across the same message. This implication of the need to involve teenagers in combating HIV/AIDS is significant considering that the teenagers constitute arguably the largest section of the audience that watches Tahidi High. Vero giving OJ an apple wrapped in a polythene bag is

symbolic. OJ takes the apple, unwraps it, and proceeds to eat it “greedily” before complaining that she should not have given her an apple wrapped in a polythene bag.

*Joni: You should have unwrapped the apple before you offered it to me!
I hate ‘jualas’(polythene)*

There is a different response when Wendy also hands Andy an apple wrapped in a polythene bag.

Wendy: Here you are Andy. You shouldn't miss the taste of these sweet apples.

Andy accepts the apple but he does not unwrap it to eat.

*Andy: Thanks Wendy! But I won't eat it. Not until I wash it.
Vero: That's my guy! I think Andy has a lesson or two to teach OJ.
These are dangerous times. One has to be careful.
OJ: Damn it! This apple has a worm in it.*

It is implied in this conversation that the students are talking about the need to be careful in order to avoid contracting HIV. The polythene bag, in Sheng referred to as ‘juala’ by OJ, represents a condom while the apple means sexual offers that may look appealing on the outside yet inside lie horrors yet untold. OJ's desire to be given the apple without the wrapping alludes to the insistence to have sexual intercourse without using any protection. From this interaction, the students give fellow teenagers two alternatives to help them avoid contracting the virus: they can either abstain, symbolized by Andy's refusal to eat the apple until it is washed, or use protection. What comes out from the conversation most importantly of all is the voice of the two girls. This voice is summed up in Vero's warning to OJ, and indeed all boys, to be careful.

The symbolism exhibited above is extended up to the classroom during a Literature class later on the same day. Coincidentally, the lesson of the day is “Symbolism in Literature”. The importance that arises from this two instances is the reason that the audience is able to see that youth, especially teenagers learn better when put in real life situations. This works better rather than adopting the preachy strategy by which teenagers are simply told to be careful.

By use of school setting, **Tahidi High** succeeds in revealing to the audience that school-going teenagers possess sufficient knowledge on the issue of HIV/AIDS and are keen to use such knowledge to educate others of their age. In retrospect, the viewer is warned that some teenagers may not be as knowledgeable as they may appear to be as regards emerging social issues that affect them. Their rare but surprising ignorance on the issue HIV/AIDS is yet a sign that there are so many other issues about which the school going teenagers are ignorant. The matter of stigma and the response of the students to it emerges from one of the episodes. Together with this comes the role of education in informing the youth on HIV/AIDS, its effects in society and discouraging stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.

Shish leads fellow students in believing, without any proof, that Mose is HIV positive and that he actually infected Lisa with the disease. The students in Mose’s class begin segregating him and the viewer begins to see him walking alone. These rumours are later dispelled and amount to nothing more than of misinformation and misconceived judgment which are sometimes prevalent amongst teenagers.

The school with its varied categories of people always steps in to educate the school going teenagers on matters relating to HIV/AIDS. This is the role that Teacher Meiposi takes up when he insists to the students that one has to be tested twice with the two tests far between to ascertain their HIV status. He also impresses upon them the importance of knowing one's status. The school setting here plays the role of putting the student characters in circumstances within which the audience can fully appreciate their understanding and response to the critical social issue that HIV/AIDS is.

3.6 The School and Politics of Gender and Power Balancing

The fact of being in a school sets apart students from the influence of adults at home. Without the said adult presence and its influence, the minds of these teenagers are free to reflect upon matters in their environment in the teenagers' own way. Left alone, in this manner, the Tahidi High School students are comfortable to demonstrate their understanding and response to the currently unfolding debate on the power relations between men and women in society. The debate among the students and specifically between male and female students is coloured by the same acrimony and passion that characterises such debates among adults. There is every characteristic of the adult view of gender in the teenagers' appreciation of this debate, complete with the viewing of the opposite gender as "the other". In fact, existing good relations between the girls and the boys pale into insignificance once arguments on gender take place.

The epitome of such acrimonious arguments is realised one morning when students are in their school bus travelling to school. During the debate on leadership, Mule is supposed to have remarked that women make harsh policies when they ascend to leadership. This, according to

Mule, disadvantages and marginalises men. It is debatable whether Mule makes this comment innocently, and merely as his contribution to a discussion on leadership or if consciously or unconsciously aims to irritate the girls.

Frankie, at this point in time very influential among the girls in the school, finds Mule's remarks unacceptable and soon after that complains. Openly irritated, she reacts with passion interpreting Mule to have meant that women can never make good leaders. After her passionate tirade to Mule, an obviously disappointed Frankie storms off, leaving Mule trying to explain what exactly he meant. From this scenario, a number of issues emerge.

Principal among the issues is the realisation that in matters relating to the balance of power between the genders, there arises an alignment towards the corresponding side of the gender divide, regardless of the substance of the argument. As earlier advanced, other cross-sexual alliances and affiliations are disregarded as each individual begins seeing their own gender as that which must be defended against subjugation by "the other." At this point, it is necessary to clarify that Frankie is Mule's girlfriend. The standoff between Mule and Frankie is used by the author(s) specifically to indicate that in gender debates, it often matters not how people of the opposite sex may be close. The near-intimate relationship between the two characters notwithstanding, we see Frankie walk out on him after calling him a chauvinist. The least that would be expected between them is open disagreement in front of other students.

For the first time since Mule's arrival in Tahidi High School, he finds himself on the same side with Mark. This is a character whose interaction with Mule has never hitherto got better than

verbal abuse. Seemingly enjoying the disagreement between Mule and Frankie, and clearly savouring the apparent irritation of the girls, he moves towards Mule and encourages him to engage more in such debates. Besides, Mark's unusual siding with Mule despite the inconsistencies between the characters can be read as the ganging up of 'men' against perceived threat of the opposition from 'women'.

Mark: I think it is a topic we need to be discussing every now and then. I mean, just to spice life up.

Mule: Yeah. And get the women moving away from us.

Another issue that gets manifested in this case is the manner in which the passions resulting from gender imbalance can lie latent and unrevealed, even in teenagers, until a debate triggers them. Frankie's misinterpretation of Mule's comment is revealing towards this realisation.

To understand Frankie's protest, an allusion to the Gikuyu legend of Wangu Wa Makeri in the Gikuyu mythology is necessary. According to the legend, Wangu Wa Makeri was the first and last Gikuyu woman leader hitherto. It is re-counted that she ruled with an iron fist, much to the chagrin and disadvantage of men. She reduced men's role in the Gikuyu society of old to servitude. Men did women's chores and most times those who failed to carry out their designated responsibilities were whipped by women. Fed up with the status of affairs, men successfully conspired and made all women pregnant at the same time. When women became indisposed, thus the legend says, men took over and swore to ensure that never would women ever rise to the position of power and influence.

Feminists have argued that the legend of Wangu Wa Makeri, like others of such kind created in patriarchal setups, is a creation of men meant to frustrate the efforts by women to take up their

deserved position in leadership. Frankie, either consciously or otherwise, seems to be aware of this alleged design by men. Going by view of her past conduct and personality in the school, it can be assumed that she possesses the intelligence and sensibilities to realize oppressive tendencies when she sees them. That furious protest, therefore, is an indication of the length to which enlightened females are prepared to go to enhance their position in society.

3.7 Class and Social Stratification: “Carrying Economics and Status to the Classroom”

Class refers to the arrangement of people or groups of people in society which is determined by cultural and economic factors. It is the ranking of people in society according to Socio-Economic Status. This section of the study intends to look at how social inequalities, both real and imagined have been actualized in Tahidi High. As earlier stated, episodes set in school provide an appropriate venue for the continuation of the class conflicts evident in the rest of society outside of schools. Although sometimes in a subtle way, the production allows the author(s) to illustrate the presence of class struggles, even amongst school going youths. In no other place would the issue of class among teenagers be more evident than in school.

Punishment, for instance, can be accepted or rejected by a student depending on how much the student is assured of support from their parents. Some students have learnt that their parents, because of feelings of economic superiority and high statuses, cannot stand them being given manual punishment. This is chiefly because the parents consider manual punishment too low for their children. To such parents, the issue raised to the effect that manual punishment is harsh is a mere scapegoat. It is the knowledge of this parental attitude that makes the rich kids like Mary, Jean-Joyce, Frankie and Ray refuse to cut grass as part of the punishment given by Dr. Mutiso.

Mule on the other hand appreciates his poor background and is willing to slash so that he can stay out of trouble. As expected, the students get suspended and have got to bring parents. Although not very surprising considering the parents the audience encountered starting from the students' homes, it is not expected that Jean-Joyce's father will show up in school and fail to discuss the indiscipline from his daughter saying that he has no time. Worse still, he gives his daughter money to go to the saloon.

From this case, it is evident that difference in Socio-Economic status is indeed an issue among school-going teenagers. What is more, it is a cause of other problems in secondary schools. Rich parents, suitably represented by Jean-Joyce's father (Andrew), through their actions seem to reward wrongdoing instead of supporting the school administration in disciplining their children. With this kind of display, it is safe to state that one of manifestations of class in secondary schools is indiscipline.

Arguing by the statements from some of the students, it might appear to them that when their parents pay a lot of money as their school fees, they are exempting them from punishment. They indeed act as if parents are buying them impunity. The punishment scene helps to reveal this. Jean-Joyce says that she will not slash because **Tahidi High** is not the only school. The implication is that her father would easily afford to take her to another school. She soon adds that her father does not pay forty thousand shillings every term in fees for her "to do shoddy work like slashing."

There is a feeling of self-sufficiency that has apparently been created amongst students with rich parents. As a consequence, this state causes such students to think that they already have what they need in life: money, the comfort of home and other trappings that come with the wealth of their parents. It is this comfort zone that such students do not want to leave by going through the struggles in their school work seriously. There are some students who even have the ability to lend others money in school. Shish is an example. She once lends Chemmi money but later altercations ensue when the latter fails to pay up within the agreed two weeks.

Shish: So now you found your mouth? I'm not a bank! You come to me crying all over coz you couldn't even afford to buy...

Chemmi: Please Shish...

Shish: I want my money by break time or everyone in the whole school will know what that money was for.

Later when the same Chemmi goes to borrow more money from Joni, the latter is surprised and wonders why her parents would not give her enough pocket money. When Chemmi tells her that she is normally given only one hundred shillings for a week, he thinks that is a huge joke compared to his rate of two thousand shillings a week. Further to this, a check to find Shish's stolen money reveals that she still has twenty thousand shillings in her desk. With that kind of money, seriousness in academics lessens with each additional shilling. Afforded huge sums of money, teenagers end up thinking that they don't have any more to look for. This can be a credible demonstration to show why some students lack seriousness in their classwork.

Apart from creating inequalities, the presence of rich students in the school creates a favourable atmosphere for the thriving of the opportunistic individuals like Joni. Knowing how much

Chemmi needs the money; he seizes the opportunity and proposes a date as one of the conditions for him to lend her the money:

Joni: I ... look; you give a date, I give you the money.
Chemmi: What?
Joni: Yeah. You know how I feel about you... scratch my back, I scratch yours... I don't mean it in a bad way but...

What is more surprising is the fact that Chemmi is astonished at Joni's bluntness; even candidness. In effect, by this instance **Tahidi High** successfully highlights the opportunistic, yet pragmatic nature with which teenagers have learnt to handle issues relating to inter-sexual relationships. Besides, this is one of the ways in which the teenagers' copying of the economic opportunism in the larger society becomes revealed.

There is, in addition, a disapproving revelation by Tembo of the manner in which parents abdicate their responsibility of sparing time to be with their children so that they can attend to their emotional needs. In their absence, parents seem to wrongfully expect money to be their substitute. This is always followed by disastrous results arguing by the ever-increasing number of their children that turn to drugs and other forms of misconduct for company. These are the teenagers' means of expressing their lack of parental attention. Tembo says that most parents bribe their children so that they don't demand time with them. This scenario is one of the explanations of the socio-economic inequalities in school.

Contrary to Jean-Joyce's experiences, when Mule's uncle, Omosh, brings Mule back from suspension, he does the exact opposite of what Jean-Joyce's father does. He violently whips Mule with a belt inside Miss Shah's office, leaving the new principal scandalized. To the less

economically endowed parents or guardians like Omosh, education must be taken very seriously because it offers the best opportunity for them and their children to rise from poverty. Students from poor families, represented by Mule, consider it that one of the priorities that education is supposed to serve helping them climb the Socio-Economic ranks.

Before bringing his nephew back, his talk to him shows his disappointment. Omosh is concerned that because of indiscipline, Mule may not achieve the expectation of being the first in their family to go to university. That is why wrongdoing in school must be punished by the poorer parents so that the rare chance afforded by education to evade poverty does not become a lost course. The delight that both Omosh and Mule show, when the latter wins a scholarship to go abroad for studies, is testimony of how important education is to the poor people.

There is a sense in which there is apparent taking of sides in the in these class tensions, even on the part of teachers. Dr. Mutiso's reception of Mule in his office shows this to a significant extent. The fact that Mule comes in with a Rasta necklace and wrist badge does not necessarily point to the fact that he is a spoilt kid. The latent issue may be that Dr. Mule, like other characters who reside in advantaged residential areas, seems to have believed that students from low-income residential areas like Kibera are bound to be indisciplined and unruly, traits resulting from their poor backgrounds and its attendant difficult life.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has engaged in demonstrating how setting in **Tahidi High** has been used as a means of presenting the personality of the lead student characters. The contribution of home, the wider

urban setting and the specific and main school setting in highlighting the personality of students, therefore, have been the objects of this chapter.

The home setting was briefly examined mainly because for the sake of this Television Drama, it serves as the precursor of what the viewer observes later. This was done with the objective of allowing the realization that a view of 'home' is important in helping those who invest in studying **Tahidi High** appreciate more fully why students act the way they do at school. The possible conclusion arising out of this is that behaviour at school is then seen as an extension of what the students do even at home.

Secondly, the suitability of the chosen setting was attested to with regard to how it has enabled to author(s) of **Tahidi High** succeed in the realistic painting of the portrait of the student characters. Here, more specifically, the role of language, found only in the chosen setting, was analysed. As a consequence, it was possible to notice that language within the setting has made the student characters be seen as uniquely themselves and by some distance removed from the prevalent tribal divisions in the adult world outside of school.

In addition, this section of the study deemed it important to discuss the response of school-going teenagers to emerging and contemporary realities in **Tahidi High**. This involved looking at the students' understanding of HIV/AIDS and their role in spreading knowledge about it. Another social reality looked at in this respect is the politics of gender. The eventual result of this discussion was pointing out both the conforming and the dissenting voices that are always paired in debates about power balancing between men and women. It is the hope of the study that it

emerged clearly that whether one conforms to, or resists the society's prescriptions on gender is dependent on which side of the gender divide one is.

Finally, this chapter made an attempt to show the school as a suitable environment in which the students' versions of socio-economic class tensions are revealed. The devil of socio-economic class consciousness has not stuck with the adults alone; it has caught up with the youth and indeed their young age and inexperience makes it worse than it is in adults. A reading of this will show how social stratification which stems from different statuses and economic abilities is pronounced even among students in Kenyan secondary schools. In the process, the unfortunate discovery is that students start to look at themselves and others in terms of what their parents and families can afford. Whoever one associates with, or respects is indeed hinged on the fact of whether one is a "have" or a "have-not".

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Language for Imaging the Characters

4.1 Introduction

This chapter endeavours to examine the discourse of students in Tahidi High and reveal how such usage of language contributes to the emergence of the students' nature and identity in the television drama. Bearing in mind the fact that, to a significant extent, teenage language springs from certain socio-cultural influences, this section of the study will also interrogate the mutual relationship between the language of the students and exposure to emerging and contemporary cultures.

The language of the teenage students can be said to be a kind of secret code; a sort of a badge that both gives them a sense of identity, and makes them feel empowered. Therefore, part of this chapter will involve citing cases of language use among the teenagers which point to their desire to set themselves apart. Further, a distinction will be made between usage of language by girls as opposed to usage by boys. That teenage language in Tahidi High conforms to the characteristics of language generally used by teenagers in society is a fact that will eventually emerge from this chapter of the study.

One of the issues that become apparent during the teenage years is the quest by the youth to be independent of the rest of the society. This sort of delineation takes in part linguistic identification. Teenagers tend to set themselves apart by adopting modes of expression that are distinctly their own. It is even justifiable to say that teenage modes of expression represent a kind of reaction by the youth against the established norms and conduct. The student characters in the

television drama speak the way they do because of an inherent desire to have their own identity. In **Tahidi High**, this search of identity partly takes the form of linguistic expression.

Tahidi High is a Kenyan television drama. It is therefore important to look at how language has been used to make the Television Drama a distinctly Kenyan work. The use of Sheng and 'Kenyanised English' not only contributes to the credibility of **Tahidi High** as being Kenyan, but also makes characters authentic. Kenyanised English is used here to refer to English spoken in Kenya but with the phonetic and syntactic features peculiar to Kenya. The discourse of student characters will be examined to see how the use of Sheng and kenyanised English contributes to presentation of realistic characters.

4.2 Language as Class: Instrument of Protest and Survival

Language in **Tahidi High** can be interpreted as a tool of expression by which characters under study facilitate their quest for freedom; a form of protest and as a means of affirming identity. The television drama is characterized by language that seems to portray the students' desire to be free from both parental and institutional demands on language. As said earlier in this work, two modes of expression can be identified in the Television Drama: the first is the use of the slang, Sheng, and the other, the use of a blend of English and Kiswahili with a slightly more emphasis on English.

The character who, in the clearest possible manner, illustrates the use of 'Sheng' in **Tahidi High** is Mule. He arrives at Tahidi High School, a new student on a scholarship. As earlier observed, he has been born and brought up in Kibera, a low income residential area in Nairobi. Kibera is a

place where ‘Sheng’ is the language spoken not just by the youth but by nearly every resident as well. Ignorant of this fact, the new principal Dr. Mutiso insists: “*In this school we speak English. Queen’s grammatically correct English. Not this rude language out there on the streets.*”

The researcher recognizes how the language policy is an integral part in the success of any school. Therefore, realizing this temptation to see Dr. Mutiso’s statement as part of the fulfillment of his duty as the school’s principal, another possibility can still be deduced from his statement above. There appears to be an attempt by the educated; those who think of themselves as enlightened yet are brainwashed, to dictate a certain linguistic code upon the rest of the population. As if to protest against such impositions, and indeed prove that it is not possible to shed of an identity that he has had all his life, Mule still responds to the principal in even more pronounced Sheng. When asking to be given back his necklace, which Dr. Mutiso has confiscated, he says: “*Lakini si unipe tu hizo vitu niweke kwa poke? (Why don't you give me those things I put in my pocket?)*”

This response may seem to be merely a reply in a language which one best understands to be used for verbal exchanges. However, from it we can infer an important point about Mule’s state of mind. The response can be seen as a form of protest by Mule, representative of other teenagers, against a language that confines them within a sort of a strait jacket of strict code of communication. It is not just a protest against Dr. Mutiso who refers to ‘Sheng’ as “*a rude language out there in the streets*”; it is also a refusal to fit in the confining social specifications of language. To Mule, ‘Sheng’ is a mode of expression he has grown up with and would neither

readily relinquish it nor allow it to be insulted by Dr. Mule who to him is the epitome of the institutional endeavour to deny him a medium of exchange that he fully identifies with.

On his first reporting to Tahidi High School, Mule is cautioned by Dr. Mutiso. This caution may have contributed to the frame of mind that he assumes in the school. It might not only have contributed to his attitude towards the school and towards fellow students, but to his language use as well: *“Don’t get mixed up with these rich indisciplined children in this school.”*

Being a child from a very humble background, this statement from the school principal may have been interpreted by Mule, and indeed by the audience, as a warning to Mule that he has a class battle to fight. In his case, he uses language as a principal weapon to fight that battle. It ought to be remembered that Dr. Mutiso before speaking the above words first asks Mule if he smokes bhang. Combined with the warning to be wary of the rich children in the school, Mule becomes antagonized from the start and does not expect to find many who are of his social standing in the school. To survive in such a scenario, he sticks to Sheng hoping that it should set him apart and, perhaps put him beyond unnecessary interference from other students.

The issue of social inequalities becomes more pronounced when Mule finally goes to class. The actualization of Dr. Mutiso’s warning does not help matters much. When he tells his new classmates that he is from Kibera, the following exchange ensues:

Kirio: Where do you come from?

Mule: Kibich.

Kirio: What!?

Mule: Kibera mzee!

*Mark: Are you sure you are not lost or something? How does a boy
From Kibera find his way into this school?*

Kirio: Kibera is a name we give to our kennels back home.

It is important to note that in the above discourse, statements by Kirio and Mark, the 'rich kids' the principal warns Mule of, are in Standard English, the kind that Dr. Mutiso calls "Queens grammatically correct English". In addition to the two students being openly surprised that a student from such a poor residential area as Kibera could find a place in a high cost school, their Standard English sets them apart from Mule, at least at this particular point in the Television Drama. Seemingly, the students - through their language - are showing Mule how different and higher than him they are in terms of the social statuses of their families.

The rich students attempt to use language as a tool of bullying, oppressing and subjugating Mule into submission. The assertive individual he is, he also shows them that he has a code of communication that he is very comfortable with and is in fact proud to be identified with as part of his social being. By extension, this language use should be seen as his contribution to the veiled class struggle he finds in the school. In his response to the above insults, there is also a clear attack on the high-socio economic class for what is apparently its despise of others who are of low socio-economic standing. Mule tells Mark and Kirio off saying that he is not going to tolerate scorn from the rich class of students: "*Hebu sareana na mimi. Mimi usiniletee ubabi.*" *Leave me alone. I won't take your well-to-do attitude.*

The physical confrontation between Mule and Kirio, which follows the above verbal altercation, is just but a continuation of the battle that Mule had earlier started using language as his weapon. In addition, the fight can be interpreted to mean the quest for survival by the low class teenager in a stratified society. This quest is also evident in Mule's hardiness and in his assertive nature.

Despite his low status economically, he holds his head high and in several cases exhibits an irritable disposition that eventually sees him adapt to life in Tahidi High School. Because of his intelligence, he later comes to wield some significant influence among fellow students. There is little wonder; therefore, when within a short time of being in the school, almost every girl in the school comes to harbour the ambition of winning over Mule to herself.

Although Mule is a bright student, at least as proven by the scholarship he wins to be admitted to Tahidi High School, he feels that English for ordinary exchanges that occur outside classroom is not necessary. He is comfortable speaking in Sheng because it reminds him of who he is. The one thing that he is clearly not ashamed of is asserting who he is. One of his classmates, Mary, finds Mule an intriguing character and sets out to find out who the new student is exactly. It is during the dialogue between Mule and Mary that it emerges clearly that he takes Sheng as something part of him; an identity that he is not willing to betray.

It should indeed be said that Mule experiences a kind of a culture shock when he arrives at the school and finds all students speaking English. Knowing that he is segregated from the rest of the students, he finds refuge in speaking Sheng each time he gets a chance to. Mostly, he is seen sitting alone during his first few days in Tahidi High School. Mary, having noticed his loneliness goes to him and offers friendship but an unwilling Mule seizes this opportunity to state to her that he is not comfortable in the company of his fellow students because, unlike him, they pride in speaking English.

“Hapa kila mtu ni mlami, lakini mimi kingoso haijawahi niingia.”
(Here everybody speaks English. For me, I have never been comfortable with English.)

Mule turns down Mary's request to be taught Sheng because to him that language is not just something to be learnt to whet the appetite of curiosity but rather, it is a culture. He seems to consider that it is impossible for Mary to fully appreciate Sheng even if she were taught, especially considering the fact that having lived all her life in an affluent neighbourhood, she has never spoken Sheng. Upon this ground, Mary's offer of friendship to Mule is met with rejection. The reason for the rejection is found in Mule's reply to a grounds man, Wepukhulu who tells Mule that Mary is interested in him: *Mimi mamanzi walami sipendangi (I don't fancy English speaking girls)*

Mule's robust and resilient character is more emphatically revealed in his use of Sheng than it would otherwise have been revealed had he used any other language. To facilitate this revelation, the television drama enacts a punishment scene moments after Mule, Kirio and Ray have fought. Together with the hardy nature that is portrayed of him, courtesy of this scene, emerges the realization that he is also a realistic teenager. He is completely in touch with reality concerning his position in the socio-economic stratification. In a way therefore, Sheng is a language that talks of Mule's humble background. His knowledge of his background is a realization that makes him more determined to succeed.

As it were, no persuasion of any nature can make Mule advertently involve himself in conduct that should only jeopardize his chances of rising up the social ladder through education. Using his language of preference, he makes it clear to fellow students that he is determined to ensure that he utilizes his time in school to uplift himself socio-economically. Upon being incited by fellow students to boycott punishment, he states bluntly:

“Kama nyinyi niwa-softi, tieni zii. Mimi sitaki noma zingine na mtu. Kwa hivyo kila mtu adu kenye anataka” (If you fellows are too weak, you can boycott the punishment. I don't want to get into more problems. Let everybody do what they feel is right for them)

Later on other students plan to stage a demonstration in school. Mule promptly rejects all invitation to take part.

Mary: *Why are you such a coward? Unaogopa?*

Mule: *Nyinyi mnatoka rich families; mimi ni msee wa ghetto. Mukimaliza sijui masomo ya hapa mutapelekwa majuu. Mimi nikimaliza nitaenda tu huko ghetto. Kwa hivyo mimi vile nimepata hii scholarship, roho safi, nyinyi wacheni nisome. (You fellows come from rich families; I come from the ghetto. When you finish your studies here, you will be taken abroad; I will go back to the ghetto. Now that I have this scholarship, please, don't interfere with my studies.)*

4.3 Sheng and the Story of the Kenyan Secondary School Student

In addition to contributing to plausible characterisation, the use of Sheng also helps the production achieve the objective of addressing, more specifically, the target audience which is mainly a teenage one. Additionally, these teenagers are also secondary school students. Like the student characters in **Tahidi High**, a big number of teenagers, especially those living in urban areas also speak Sheng. However, Sheng is a code that has in modern day Kenya spread up to schools in rural areas. This would then imply that secondary school students in rural areas are not left behind in this appreciation of **Tahidi High**.

The experiences of the student characters being similar to those of fellow teenagers around the country, the author(s) are in effect calling for the attention of the teenager viewers by use of

Sheng. Put otherwise, Sheng as a mode of expression appeals more to the school-going youth than it does to other ages of the viewing population. This would naturally be the reason why teenagers are by far the most attracted to the audience.

Sheng as a register draws its body of words from Kiswahili and English. Besides, Sheng is greatly influenced by other Kenyan languages including Gikuyu, Kamba and Dholuo. Importantly therefore, the heavy presence of Sheng in **Tahidi High** demarcates the television drama as Kenyan and enhances the specificity of setting. Even to a new viewer, there can be no doubt that the Television Drama is Kenyan, portraying the happenings and experiences involving students as the principal characters in a Kenyan secondary school. Consider the following statement by Mule:

“Kama nyinyi niwa-softi, tieni zii. Mimi sitaki noma zingine na mtu. Kwa hivyo kila mtu adu kenye anataka” (“If you fellows are too weak, you can boycott the punishment. I don’t want to get into more problems. Let everybody do what they feel is right for them”)

The language used above will without doubt be most popular with teenagers living in urban areas than with any other age groups. However, with the narrowing gap between urban and rural experiences noticed in the recent times, even some of the teenagers in rural secondary schools speak the same code. In that case therefore, this study can conclude that Sheng as a code is used to aptly characterize the students in the Television Drama.

One of the salient features of Sheng is its fast-evolving nature. This is a mode of expression that admits words into its repertoire, while at the same time letting words out from its corpus very

rapidly. This tendency of Sheng as evidenced in **Tahidi High** can be related to the teenage stage. At this time in the life of teenagers, changes – psychological and physical - are fast and life moves forward as rapidly as the language they speak changes.

4.3.1 Kenyanized English

Attendant to the use of Sheng, **Tahidi High** provides evidence of the presence of linguistic features that can be said to be typical of Kenyan English. These features relate to intonation, grammar and neologism (formation of new words). Although it will not be possible to indicate proof of pronunciation deviation with regard to intonation, evidence of deviation in grammar and morphology shall be attested to.

Hudson-Ettle (1990) compares Kenyan English and Standard British English. The result of this study is the knowledge that there are significant differences between Kenyan English and the Standard British English. Hudson-Ettle states that these differences result from the deviation of Kenyan version of English from the Standard British English. According to Hudson-Ettle (1990) these deviations relate to the expansion of the progressive aspect of the stative verbs, non-count nouns in plural form, use of the definite and indefinite articles and the usage of prepositions. In addition, Kachru (1982:46) also lists similar characteristics of grammatical deviation in ‘African varieties of English’. This view is also held by and Schmied (1991: 64)

Although Hudson-Ettle (1990) and Kachru (1982) studied written language in Kenyan newspapers, Daily nation, Kenya Times and The East African Standard, ideas from their work can be used to give insight in the study of language in television drama. Their ideas can indeed lead to the conclusion that there is a version of English peculiar to Kenya. The evidence of it can

be seen in the Kenyanisation of English in **Tahidi High**. Notice the words and expressions in bold in the discourse below:

- Jean: What? Listen, if you have your **domes** (personal problems), please don't involve me.*
- Ray: Jean-Joyce, **me I have been thinking**, our relationship is hitting the rocks.*
- Jean: So you are noticing? Huh! (to Mule) hey, is that Mule? You have such a sexy body.*
- Ray: You see? We are busy talking about You are busy looking at another **jamaa** (guy).*
- Jean: Oh! Like I am not supposed to do what you do? Remember over the holidays you were busy **katiyaring** (seducing) Shish. Mule*

The discourse realized above will no doubt be identifiable as distinctly Kenyan. This language use, hence, is one of the means by which **Tahidi High** presents credible Kenyan teenagers.

4.4 Influence of Western Popular Culture on Teenage Language

Looked at from a different perspective, influences of Western pop culture are clearly revealed in the resultant discourse as students interact with each other. The manifestation of this is the use of language characteristic of the speech of American Pop and Rap music artists. Importantly, such language use occurs only in the cases of student-to-student exchange. This occurrence motivates the realization that this is another special code of communication that exists amongst teenagers. The simplicity with which they communicate with each other is aided by the understanding and realization that the language they speak is a shared code.

Besides, there is general consensus which springs from a common desire to speak like the American pop and rap music artists who the teenagers admire. Here, again, the discourse of teenagers in the school should be looked at as a uniting factor. In speaking it, the youth relay a

general acceptance of “who they are” and what they appreciate in the world in which they live. To them, the world has become interconnected by art, especially by music, leading to the narrowing of the cultural gaps. Consequently, to the teenagers in Tahidi High School, the differences between the values of teenagers living for instance in America with their own values continue to diminish.

4.5 Language for Gender Delineation

Lakoff Robin (1975) and Bakan (1995), while contributing to The Study of Online Language Use by Teenagers, write about the differences between the communication patterns of male and female teenagers. Their studies find space in the process of interpreting the discourse of student characters in the television drama under study. According to the two scholars, teenage male and female communication actually correspond the patterns of adult male and female communication respectively. According to the above scholars, male speech is characterized by active, agentive aspects. In other words, language in men is reflective of activities or actions more than speech in women. To put it more simply, with language, men ‘do’ more things than women.

Secondly, as stipulated in Lakoff (1975) and Bakan (1995), and indeed as it emerges in Tahidi High, speech by males is characterized by verbosity and the assertiveness which society has cultured men to acquire. This same verbosity and assertiveness are much limited in female speech. Further statements from scholars have been made to augment the above findings. Savicki (1996) contends that in their speech, men are impersonal, fact-oriented and less concerned with politeness. He adds that profanities in speech are much more widely realized with men than they are with women. With this in mind, it is now understood that in their expansion of individual

influence and affirmation of individuality, the boys in **Tahidi High** are just but conforming, albeit maybe unconsciously, to the influence of traditional gender roles on language. That is what we see when we hear them speak near-profanities like: “shit”, “what the hell” and “I don’t give a damn”

On the other hand, language by females, which is almost diametrically opposed to the discourse of males, is marked by emotional expressiveness, the effort to focus on the needs of others and communal consideration Bakan (1966). Their language is appreciative and co-operative. In this same fashion, the language of female teenagers, unlike that of their male counterparts, in the television drama under study, will be seen to be marked by less, or in most cases, no profanities and obscenities at all.

All the scholars mentioned in the foregoing also attest to the fact that females are shyer and portray some lack of self-confidence in their discourse to the extent that there is indication of lack of commitment to strong opinion. Besides the above, a keen audience of **Tahidi High** will notice such discourse among the girls in Tahidi High school. They will be found to use such non-committal words and expressions as “kinda”, “it is like” and “I am like”(sic)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has strived to give evidence to back up the proposition that language plays an important role in characterizing students in **Tahidi High**. The application of language for protest, and as part of the struggle to survive in the economically stratified society was examined. Through the Mule’s character, the determination for survival and affirmation of identity find

their expression through the medium of language. Proof was found that the Television Drama is a credibly Kenyan work that relays the experiences of the Kenyan secondary school student. For this to be done realistically, language is used. This is why Sheng, Kiswahili and Kenyanised English find their way into the drama.

Despite the above localization of language, this section of the study also sheds light on how student characters are to some extent products of the Western popular culture. This, the study made clear, is a realization based on the existence influences from Western (especially American) Popular culture with regard to language.

Finally, the chapter briefly looked at how language in **Tahidi High** has been used to characterize male and female students as those having been cultured differently by society.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

This research project set out to examine the portrayal of the student characters in **Tahidi High**, a contemporary Kenyan Television Drama. In this regard, it was the object of the study to look at how setting has contributed to the portrait of the student characters. The main focus was on the school setting. The home setting, however, was looked at as a precursor to the school setting. Further, looking at the home setting briefly was necessary because it helped the study relate the two settings and see each of them as an extension of the other. By so doing, setting was found to contribute to the portrayal of student characters as being in constant search for an identity.

Besides, an interrogation of the use of language in the Television Drama was also crucial to enable a fuller appreciation of the image of the Kenyan secondary school student. Through this interrogation, it was possible to arrive at the realization that **Tahidi High**, and importantly the characters, are credibly Kenyan because of the linguistic peculiarities in the Television Drama. Considering the centrality of language in characterization, Ngara (1982), a study of language greatly enabled understanding of identity crisis in teenagers. Generally, the main characters were found to use language not only as a means of affirming who they are, but also as a way of revealing their desires and aspirations.

A qualitative research approach was adopted in resolving the problem that was the object of the study. Primary data was collected after the analysis of the written scripts and video CDs. The last were watched and where necessary transcribed to facilitate easier collection of primary data.

Because of the reason that the Television Drama still went on air during the time of the study, latest performances were watched and allowed to shape the researcher's thinking. Even though some of these episodes were outside the scope of the study, they were crucial in establishing some of the work's salient features in characterization. Secondary data was also collected to augment the primary data. Library research was undertaken to get references in the area of media studies, film and television drama. Given the upcoming nature of film studies in Kenya, the internet was consulted to collect additional information available in online journals and publications.

To facilitate the interpretation of the collected data, two conceptual frameworks were chosen. The theory of stylistics went into the study to look at both the deviant and conforming features of style in **Tahidi High**. In line with Mugubi (2002), creative fashioning of language to suit the period, genre, theme and purpose of the author(s) was attested to. Put otherwise, one of the aspects that emerged is the idiosyncratic use of language in the Television Drama. In this case, reference is being made specifically to the use of Sheng and Kenyanised English.

These codes of language were found to have an influence on the kind of identity that the student characters are seen to espouse. Direction was gained from the work of Ngara (1982) who emphasizes the centrality of language over other aspects of literature namely: plot, characterization, theme and setting. Ngara states that there is interrelationship between plot, characterization, themes and setting. His views therefore informed the manner in which the study sought to reveal that the character and identity of student characters were presented using language and setting.

Discourse analysis as a framework of literary criticism found room as the second conceptual framework in the study to complement stylistic criticism approach. Considering its emphasis on examining language in context, it was complementary to the theory of stylistics. Discourse analysis as a literary criticism approach came in to explain the language of student characters and its implications on the image of the characters that emerges out of the Television Drama. Additionally, this approach to interpretation enabled the study to reveal the symbolic meaning of language by paying attention to the relationship between symbols, signs and referents.

Chapter two of this project entailed an examination of the identity crisis among the selected main student characters. Basing upon the ideas of psychologist Erik Erikson, it was stated that the teenage years present the greatest crisis hitherto in the life of teenagers. All the students in the Television Drama are teenagers. A study of characterization would therefore have been incomplete without an investigation of the dilemmas of the student teenagers. The quest for affiliation, the fear of alienation, responsibility and role taking, naïve idealism and role modeling are some of the issues attendant to teenage identity crisis that were discussed as a consequence.

With respect to affiliation and the search for a sexual identity, the social conduct of the teenage boy was also identified. In this connection, the 'bad boy syndrome' was one of the seminal aspects of the secondary school teenage identity that the research sought to allow the reader to realize. In the course of this crisis, role modeling stands as one of the central issues. According to Erikson, teenagers can successfully resolve their identity crisis if left alone. In this regard, the chapter showed how adults, especially parents, can interfere with the process of role identification in their children.

Chapter three represents another of the key aims this study. In this section, the suitability of setting in the imaging of student characters was established. In this conclusion, it is important to recall a statement earlier made to the effect that the school setting puts students separate and at a distant from the rest of the society. It indeed puts them in a venue where they can act naturally amongst those of their age. The chapter, however, begins with the acknowledgement that school as a setting is to some level an extension of home in the case of students. As it were, this chapter reveals how setting enables students to be seen separately and as independent of other character types. It is in this isolation of setting that the students' appreciation of social phenomena such as leadership and politics, Socio-Economic Class and HIV/AIDS has been realized.

Significantly, the school setting was seen to be a location; a stage upon which the realistic presentation of the school pupil development is acted out. It is in this apartness that the students' understanding of contemporary social issues can be effectively. We see them engage in debates about gender, power, and socio-economic class. This enables the research to conclude that when left alone, even teenagers engage in the complex and controversial debates of the current times.

In chapter four, language was looked at as character. Put otherwise, the research began by hypothesizing that language plays a very important role in revealing of characters. Throughout the chapter, language was increasingly seen as an expression of identity and explained as such. By extension, language was also treated as an instrument of protest and survival. The role of language in bringing out the image of a typical Kenyan secondary school student was also highlighted. This was done by showing how deviation in language, marked clearly by the use of

Sheng and kenyanised English, exposes a secondary school student who bears no other national identity except that of a Kenyan secondary school teenager.

5.2 Conclusion

The researcher deems the study a success. This is in view of the fact that the objectives stated at the beginning of the study were met using the methodology and theoretical framework proposed. It has been possible to examine the personality of the secondary school student. Indeed, the results of this study can be useful in making recommendations to the society and the managers of educational institutions. Parents and teachers can actually be directed to make informed direction based upon the findings of the research. For instance, it has been possible to look into the possible reasons of student conduct and/or misconduct.

In addition, the researcher hopes that this study will inspire more scholarly work on locally produced television dramas because of their definite relevance to society. By so doing, the academic world will not only realize the social relevance of such works but also their artistic richness as well. That television drama is should become more and more an important area of study in literary circles is a fact that needs no gainsaying.

5.3 Recommendations

In spite of the fact that the objectives of this research project were met, openings into further study in the area of television drama can be identified. This research is a stylistic appreciation of character. However, it is clear that the study has not gone into details to show how the other elements of film and television drama have been used in **Tahidi High**. It did not indeed look at

how the said technical elements facilitate the portrayal of the student characters in the work. Such details can become the object of future studies.

Because of the limited scope of this study, it was not possible to look at how features like camera angles and distances, lighting and sound effects have been used to ensure the success of **Tahidi High**. These are issues that can and should be given scholarly attention. It is the presumption of this study that examination of the above-mentioned technical aspects of film and television drama production will lead to better understanding of not just **Tahidi High**, but other works in the same genre as well.

Further, it may be of scholarly significance to look at characters in the Television Drama as historical realities. All the character types and not just student characters in **Tahidi High** can be viewed as a result of the historical and contemporary socio-cultural forces surrounding them. This study's main preoccupation was to enable the appreciation of student characters. Besides, limiting itself to issues of how setting and language contribute to the understanding of the characters' image, the study largely ignored the other sets of characters. Scholars might be interested in studying teacher characters, the non-teaching staff, or generally, adult characters and see how their character may be a consequence of the prevailing social realities.

Finally, it is worthy to emphasize once more that the genre of television drama has not been given the deserved scholarly attention. Further study in the field will not only enhance the understanding of the significance of television drama but also uphold such works as important literary works in their own right.

6.0 Bibliography

- Abrams, B. & Ian, B. et al (Eds) (2001): *Studying Film*. London: Arnold.
- Appleyard, S.J. (1991): *Becoming a Reader; The experience of Fiction from Childhood to Adulthood*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Atkinson, J. Maxwell and Heritage, John (eds) (1984). *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carter, R. (1982): *Language and Literature: An introductory reader in Stylistics*. George Allen &Uwin: London.
- Drew, Paul and Heritage, John. (1993). *Talk at Work: Interaction in Institutional Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bettetini, G. (1973): *The British Television Drama in the 1980s*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Brandt, G. (Ed) (1993): *The Language and Technique of the Film*. Monton: The Hague.
- Cubitt, S. (1993): *Videography: Video media as Art and Culture*. Macmillan: London.
- Diang'a, R. (2007): *A History of the Kenyan Film: The Evolving Image of The African*. Kenyatta University Press: Nairobi.
- Erikson, E.H. (1970): *Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth*: International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 51, 11-22.
- Marcia, J. E. (1966): *Development and validation of ego identity statuses*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3, 551-558.
- Marcia, J. E. (1976): *Identity six years after: A follow-up study*: Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 5, 145-160.
- Marcia, J. E. (1980): *Identity in adolescence*. In J. Adelson (Ed.), Handbook of Adolescent Psychology. New York: Wiley.
- Enfield, N. J. and Stivers, Tanya. (2007). *Person Reference in Interaction: Linguistic, Cultural and Social Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fiske, J. & Hartley, J. (1978): *Reading Television*. Routledge: London.
- Giannetti, L. (1990): *Understanding Movies* (5th Ed). Prentice Hall: New Jersey

- Gillespie, M. (1995): *Television, Ethnicity and cultural change*. London: Routledge.
- Halloran, J. (Ed) (1970): *Effects of Television*. Panther books: London.
- Hawthorn, J. (1987) *Unlocking the Text; Fundamental Issues in Literary Theory*. Edward Arnold: London.
- Heritage, J. (1984). *Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lembo, R. (2000): *Thinking Through Television*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Marris, P. & Sue, T. (1996): *Media Studies: A Reader*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.
- Mugubi, J. (2005) *Literary Style*. Kenyatta University Press: Nairobi.
- Ngara, E. (1982): *Stylistic Criticism and the African Novel; A study of Language, Art and Content of African Fiction*. Heinemann: London.
- Peer, W.V. (1986): *stylistics and Psychology: Investigations in Foregrounding*. Croom Helm Ltd: Kent.
- Rifkin, B. (1994): *Semiotics of Narration in Film and Prose Fiction; Case Studies of 'Scarecrow' and 'My Friend Ivan Lapshim'*. New York: Peter Lang Inc.
- Truby, J. (2007): *Anatomy of a Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller*. Faber and Faber, Inc.: New York.
- Vivian, J. (1999): *The Media of Mass Communication*. Allyn & Bacon: Massachusetts.
- Wellek, R. & Austin, W. (1949): *Theory of Literature*. Penguin Books: London.
- Middlesex. Bradford, R. (1997): *Stylistics*. Routledge: London.

INTERNET SOURCES

www.about.com

www.eastafricapress.net

www.encarta.com

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Observation Checklist for “Identity”

1. Is there evidence of quest for identity and belonging in **Tahidi High**?
2. What are some of the ways in which the characters strive to belong?
3. How have the students tried to prepare themselves for adult roles?
4. Are there cases of desired images that may not be desirable?
5. Do adult characters in **Tahidi High** play any role in shaping the identities of student characters?

7.2 Appendix 2: Observation Checklist for “Setting”

1. Has setting been limited or extended?
2. What is the role of setting in shaping identity?
3. Is there a relationship between setting and the image of student characters?
4. Are there issues that would have been left out had setting been different?

7.3 Appendix 3: Observation Checklist for “Language.”

1. Is there difference in register between the language of student characters and that of other characters?
2. What are some of the different codes of speech identifiable?
3. Are there any noticeable linguistic deviations?

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY