

**MISE-EN-SCENE IN SERIAL DRAMA EDUTAINMENT: A CASE OF SETTING IN
SIRI, A LOCALLY PRODUCED ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION SERIAL DRAMA
INKENYA**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented to any other university or college for an award of a degree.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Mr & Mrs Gitimu and my dear son Jabali Gitimu Simon.

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My gratitude goes to God for allowing me come this far in my studies and career. His grace has been sufficient for me.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Edutainment (Combination of two words education and entertainment). The ability to provide educational learning

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS -Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

E-E- Entertainment Education

FP- Family planning

HIV-Human Immunodeficiency Virus

MTCT- Mother To Child Transmission

PMTCT- Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission

PSI- Population Services International

SCT- Social Cognitive Theory

VCT – Voluntary Counseling and Testing

ABSTRACT

With the growth of entertainment education (E-E) serial dramas worldwide and the extensive evaluation research on their impacts on the audience, techniques employed during their production have received a short shrift in E-E research. One of the most noticeable techniques in a serial drama production is the *mise-en-scene* technique and this study examines the role of *setting* an element of *mise-en-scene* in a serial drama edutainment. In this study, it is argued that in the hands of skilled E-E producers, setting and objects placed on the set (*Props*) becomes a concrete vehicle for impacting on an E-E serial drama edutainment. By viewing setting both as an entity and a symbol as well, *SIRI* a locally produced serial drama in Kenya was studied with the objectives to; 1. Identify the functions of setting on the plot 2. Examine the relationship between setting and characterization and 3. Examine the contribution of setting in the realization of emerging themes. Systematic data gathering consisted of watching the drama to identify how the directors employed setting to effect on the plot, characterization and emerging themes. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which revolves around the process of learning directly related to the observation of models formed the theoretical basis for the study. Data obtained was examined and analyzed in line with the study objectives. The study found that setting is part of the material fabric of a serial drama edutainment. Enlivened by the actors presence, charged by the dialogue and quickened in the audience imagination setting and objects placed on the set take on a life of their own as they weave in and out of a dramas action impacting on an E-E serial dramas edutainment. The study also resulted in useful findings for film critics, producers and health communicators.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Entertainment education (E-E) serial dramas have become a popular TV genre used to educate viewers on various social issues. As a mass entertainer, serial dramas are endowed with a special ability to provide educational learning by providing the ground, the support, the language, the characters and the symbolic system in which instructions can make sense (Singhal & Lozano 1993). The historical roots of serial dramas in educating viewers date back to 1969, when the highly popular Peruvian *telenovela*, *Simplemente Maria*, was broadcast (Singhal & Obregon, 1999). The story was about a young woman who learns to sew and lifts herself out of poverty by sewing for a living. After watching the program, many women signed up to sewing classes and tried to emulate her (Singhal & Obregon, 1999). This unveiled the potential of serial drama edutainment and today the serial drama format is consciously used to provide plotlines embedded with information that raise awareness and promote safer alternatives crucial in changing high-risk behaviors such as; HIV/ AIDS, reproductive health, and sustainable rural livelihoods among others issues.

Bringing to life an E-E serial drama requires the careful integration of many aspects; research, scripting, production, evaluation among other aspects in order to succeed as a behaviour communication tool. This quest for social change and education not only requires information on the issues being discussed or presented to the viewer but it also requires imagination and skills. To purposefully embed health issues/pro-social messages on the story line of serial dramas, effective E-E serial drama requires skillful producers, creative directors and writers who can design and embed pro-social messages onto the story lines of serial dramas and convey

educational content and positive values in an entertaining manner. Production techniques are the features used by filmmakers to make a serial drama interesting and unique. Even those who seek to inform and educate know that they need to be entertaining if the audience is to remain interested and continue viewing (Bouman, 1998). In the hands of producers, directors and writers of E-E serial dramas is a range of production techniques such as *Mise-en-scene*, *Cinematography*, *Sound*, and *Editing* among others that they can choose which to use and how to manipulate them in order to present a narrative through the medium. These techniques endow on the drama the special ability to provide educational learning by providing the language and the symbolic system in which instructions can be made. In addition, by looking at these production techniques closely, the viewer gains better understanding of how the drama has been produced in order to present elements like themes, characters, settings, and plot among others.

One of the most noticeable of these techniques in production is the *mise-en-scene* technique. *Mise-en-scene* is a French word that refers to ‘what appears on a shot’ and made up of elements such as *setting*, *props*, *character movement*, *costumes*, *colour* and *lighting*. Of all production techniques, *mise-en-scene* is the one that viewers notice most. After watching a serial drama, we may not recall the camera angles or the camera movements, the transitions or the off-screen sound. But we do remember the *costumes*, the *settings*, in other words many of our most vivid memories of watching a moving image stems from its *mise-en-scene* as each of one of its elements on its own and in combination influences the viewer’s experiences of a story.

While thinking and writing on *mise-en-scene* in film helped the study of film achieve its maturity (Gibbs, 2002) study of *mise-en-scene* and its ability to provide educational learning is not conventional in E-E research. This research examines the functions of *setting* an element of

mise-en-scene on *SIRI* a locally produced serial drama in Kenya to identify how *setting* impacts on the plot, characterization and its contribution towards emerging themes in the drama.

1.2 *SIRI*

In 2008, Population Service International (PSI) Kenya -an international social marketing organization developed '*SIRI*' (Swahili for secret) an entertainment education TV serial drama targeting women of reproductive age (18-49 years), with men of the same age group being a secondary target. The E-E program contains 46 episode 'soap opera' that were aired between 2009 and 2011 and broadcasted on Citizen TV one of Kenyan local TV station. *SIRI* tells the story about people from a fictitious town (Majani town) whose actions are motivated by traded secrets, endless temptations, gullibility, deceit, selfish interests, frustrated dreams, authority and power. The program consists of a series of stories and characters that address essential messages on HIV Testing and Counseling (HTC), Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), Family Planning (FP) as well as Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

The idea behind *SIRI* was borne from the need to develop a tool that would address these issues in an entertaining way. While responding to an interview with Marketing Africa magazine (Nov, 2010), Alison Ngibuini the executive producer with the production firm AL IS ON productions that won the pitch to produced the serial drama says that the idea was to communicate social issues without 'preaching down' the issues to the viewers. Ngibuini adds the serial drama was created with the goal of increasing demand and use of reproductive health services provided by the ministry of health at the district and community level as well as lead to an increase in the number of both rural and urban women of reproductive age who are able to make informed choices on their reproductive health (Ngibuini in press, 2010).

1.3 Statement of the problem

Within any given socio-cultural context, there are structural barriers that can impede the effectiveness of mass media messages (Tichenor, Donohue & Olien 1973; Viswanath & Finnegan 1995). With their special ability to provide the language and the symbolic system in which instructions can be made, production techniques employed to tailor pro-social messages to the viewer can also become structural limitation or structural enhancers of a serial drama edutainment. However, many theoretical investigations in E-E research focus on measuring a drama's effectiveness in changing audience behaviour while largely ignoring the textual analysis of the same dramas to identify how techniques employed during production may have enhanced or mitigated its edutainment. One of the most noticeable of this production techniques is the *mise-en-scene* technique and to fill this gap in E-E research, this study conducted a textual analysis on *SIRI* a locally produced serial drama in Kenya, to identify how *setting*, an element of *mise-en-scene* technique effects on the plot, characterization and its contribution towards the realization of emerging themes. This analysis shifts the focus of entertainment education research from measuring a serial drama effects on audience, to analyzing ways in which techniques employed during production enhance or mitigates a serial drama's edutainment.

1.4 Objectives

Objectives for the study were to:

1. Identify the functions of *setting* on the plot in *SIRI*.
2. Examine the relationship between *setting* and characterization in *SIRI*.
3. Examine the contribution of *setting* in the realization of emerging themes in *SIRI*.

1.5 Research questions

The following questions guided the study

1. How does *setting* merge into the plot of *SIRI*?
2. To what extent does *setting* aid characterization in *SIRI*?
3. Can *setting* be said to contribute to the realization of emerging themes in *SIRI*?

1.6 Guiding Assumptions

1. *Setting* can become one with the plot in *SIRI*.
2. *Setting* can enhance characterization in *SIRI*.
3. *Setting* can contribute to the realization of emerging themes in *SIRI*

1.7 Justification for the study

To entertain the audience is the aim of all program makers and even those who seek to inform and educate need to be entertaining in the widest sense if the audience is to remain interested and continue viewing (Bouman, 1998). If viewers do not appreciate the edutainment formula they will stop watching and become less receptive to the message. The drama must therefore be sufficiently gratifying. Entertainment education research can thus benefit from the analysis of the *mise-en-scene* technique as a strategy to determine how a media production fulfills the dual role of entertainment and education.

Within any given socio-cultural context, there are important structural barriers that can impede the effectiveness of mass media messages (Tichenor, Donohue & Olien 1973; Viswanath & Finnegan 1995). With its special ability to provide the language and the symbolic system in which instructions can be made, *mis-en-scene* technique can also become a structural limitation of a serial drama edutainment. E-E research can thus benefit from the analysis of *mise-en-scene*

techniques as a strategy to determine how a media production conveys educational themes, describes character or makes a program interesting.

This study also contributes to the academic criticism of film in the country. The study anticipation is to illuminate that an understanding of the *mise-en-scene* element of *setting*, can help in designing effective and captivating entertainment education serial dramas. The researcher hopes that findings of this study will be useful to media professionals, health communicators as well as researchers who are all still facing the challenge of exploring new ways of designing and embedding health messages on the story lines of films and serial dramas.

1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

The study recognized that there are several locally produced entertainment education serial dramas produced in Kenya such as; *TUSHAURIANE*, *MAKUTANO JUNCTION*, *THE TEAM* and *SHUGA* among others. However the study chose to use *SIRI* as a sample of the many. *SIRI* has several themes arising from the plot however the study focused on themes of HIV/AIDS and FP as a sample of the many health themes incorporated in E-E interventions.

This study does not ignore the substance of other production techniques such as *cinematography*, and *editing* among others and the role they play in any given production. However, the study considers *mise-en-scene* as the most important technique since the filmmaker relies on what is placed in the shot. The study also recognizes that *Mise-en-scene* technique has various elements such as *setting* and *props*, *costumes*, *acting*, *colour* and *lighting* among others. However, this study centers on *setting* and considers the set as the most important aspect of *mise-en-scene* since it houses all the other elements. The study also acknowledges the significance that *props* provide for the set and includes the analysis of *props* in the study. Through this case study, I will argue

that in the hands of skilled E-E producers, *setting* and *props* becomes a concrete vehicle for embedding health themes by viewing *setting* and *props* both as an entity and a symbol as well.

1.9 Review of Related Literature.

This section reviews literature related to the study with an aim to highlight the field of entertainment education, and then shift the focus to *mise-en-scene*. The literature review begins with a definition of entertainment education and offers a brief overview of its history and practice in TV serial dramas. This is followed by a discussion on the *mise-en-scene* technique to elucidate the utility of the technique and its implication in production and further discuss *setting* as an aspect *mise-en-scene*.

1.9.1 Entertainment Education

Media research has proven that viewing certain media can significantly increase the likelihood of behavioral change (Bandura, 1997; Kincaid, 2002; Singhal & Rogers, 2004). With this understanding, entertainment in different formats has been incorporated in the puzzle for achieving the goal of social change. This is by embedding educational content onto the entertainment media, thus creating an educational entertainment media, often referred to as 'entertainment education'. Entertainment education (E-E), as defined by Singhal and Rogers (2004) is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate in order to increase audience members knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms and change overt behavior. This methodology is based on social cognitive theory (Petraglia, 2007) which revolves around the process of learning directly correlated to the observation of models and highlights the perception that

observing certain mass media productions can cause viewers to modify their behaviour and beliefs.

The use of entertainment as a vehicle for education has existed for millennia in the form of fables parables and myths that promoted social change. Communities would share stories and community members would learn from them. However, the expression ‘entertainment education’ is commonly used in describing any education which uses entertainment to attract and maintain an audience, while incorporating purposeful educational messages (Tuftte, 2001). The E-E strategy grew to counter two undesirable trends in contemporary mass media programming namely; ‘entertainment degradation’ and ‘boredom education’ (Singhal & Rogers 1999, Singhal & Brown 1999). Entertainment degradation refers to a situation where a message is degraded (for instance, through sex and violence) in order to increase its entertainment attraction hence achieve higher audience ratings and greater profits while boredom education is where more emphasis is put on the education aspect to the point that the audience members are put off (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). The entertainment education strategy thus provides mass media programming the opportunity to communicate pro social issues without either degrading the message to attract an audience or ‘preached down’ messages to the point of putting off the audience. The strategy offers mass media programming an opportunity to be not only socially responsible, but also entertaining and profitable.

Whereas there are different mass mediums used for educating masses, the use of TV for entertainment and socialization continues to be a primary source of social influence around the world (Edgerton, 2007). Television audiences have expanded tremendously in countries across the world (Singhal & Lozano, 1993) and for many people television has become an integral part of daily life, and is used to gratify different needs, varying from the need for information, to

social interaction, and entertainment. In terms of coverage, TV has the ability to reach a wide geographic area than single films that offer selective viewing. Thus more and more we see the development of television programs in which education and entertainment are combined; comedies, music videos, drama serials and game show among others. This programming reaches large sections of the public, and can be a promising vehicle for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

More than any other format, the serial drama is commonly used to educate audiences on a wide range of social issues (Singhal & Rogers 1988). A serial drama can be defined as a television program that rely on a continuing plot, normally more than one, that unfolds in a sequential episode by episode fashion (Fiske, 1999). According to Fiske, this nature of serial drama gives it an advantage over documentaries or single episode dramas since it allows the audience to form bonds with the characters as the plot unfolds. E-E in television serial drama was pioneered in 1969 by a Mexican by the name Miguel Sabido (Singhal & Obregon, 1999). The catalyst for him was *Simplemente Maria*, a story where a young woman learns to sew and lifts herself out of poverty by sewing for a living. After watching the program, many women signed up to sewing classes and tried to emulate her (Singhal & Obregon, 1999). Sabido combined communication theory with pro-health/education messages to educate people all over Latin America on issues relating to family planning, literacy among other topics (Singhal & Obregon, 1999). With the success of the *telenovelas*, Sabido hosted a workshop in Mexico for international participants seeking to create E-E programs. During the workshop plans were developed to create E-E programs in different countries for both radio and television (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). The workshop inspired among others; Indian soap opera *HUM LOG* (we people) as well as Kenya's first soap opera; *'TUSHAURIANE'* (let's discuss it), that was aired in the 1980's dealing with

issues of sexual responsibility and family planning (Muchiri, 1989; Muroki, 1989). Although no comprehensive evaluation was carried out on *TUSHAURIANE*, the program's popularity made it a model for other African E-E soap operas (Ukadike, 1991).

With this unveiled potential of E-E serial drama, various groups now consciously engage in creating stories with themes addressing critical health and social issues and embedding them on top TV dramas. For example, the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication in Johannesburg, South Africa (Usdin, Singhal, Shongwe, Goldstein & Shabalala, 2004), *GREY'S ANATOMY* a TV drama which provides information about medications available for people with HIV/AIDS that can significantly reduce the risk of passing the disease to a child (Rideout, 2008). CBS Broadcasting in Atlanta also introduced HIV/AIDS to the storyline of its daytime drama *THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL* in August 2001 (Rogers, Singhal & Thombre, 2004). Likewise, Kenya has seen an increase in E-E productions such as *MAKUTANO JUNCTION* a television drama series, produced by the Midiae Trust and broadcast in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania and covers information on reproductive health, education, and sustainable rural livelihoods in an informative and entertaining manner. *THE TEAM* which was also created for the same purpose to both educate and entertain after the 2007 post- election violence that rocked Kenya after the disputed general elections, among others.

Creating E-E serials require the careful incorporation of many elements such as planning, research, production and evaluation. Even with proper planning, research on the issues being produced and a good script (narrative), how this will be packaged and presented to the audience on the screen is very fundamental and can enhance or mitigate a drama's effectiveness in contributing to social change. Production techniques are what makes a program entertaining. And the goal of all program producers is to entertain, even those who seek to inform and educate

know that they need to be entertaining in the widest sense if the viewer is to remain interested and continue viewing (Bouman, 1998). In the hands of producers, directors and writers of E-E serial dramas is a range of film production techniques such as *Mise-en-scene*, *Cinematography*, *Sound*, and *Editing* among others that they can choose which to use and how to manipulate them in order to present a narrative through the medium. However, there is no particular formula for either embedding themes, describing characters or even driving a plot. Production techniques endow on the drama the special ability to provide educational learning by providing the language, and the symbolic system in which themes can be embedded or characters described. By looking at these production techniques closely the viewer gains better understanding of how the drama has been produced in order to present elements like; themes, characters, settings, and plot among others.

Analyzing production techniques employed during production is however not conventional in E-E research. Much theoretical investigations conducted on E-E initiatives are geared towards measuring audience effects which does not include the analysis of production techniques and their edutainment potential and probably whether they enhanced or mitigated an E-E initiative effectiveness in behaviour change. For instance, in a study namely; *Promoting HIV/AIDS Prevention through Dramatic Film: Responses from Eastern Africa* (2005) by William J. Brown, Steven Kiruswa, and Benson P. Fraser conducted in Kenya and Tanzania; two films were produced for each of the countries. In Kenya, the project commenced early 2003 and was completed by the end of the year, resulting in a 67 minute dramatic film titled, *RED CARD: SAMMY'S FINAL MATCH*. The plot of the story centers on the life of a star soccer player, Sammy Masumbuko, who plays in the military soccer league in Kenya. Sammy contracts HIV through his promiscuous life style and eventually dies of AIDS during the course of the film. The

effects of *RED CARD: SAMMY'S FINAL MATCH*, on viewers were studied at six military bases in Kenya. In Tanzania, *AIDS: THE HIDDEN ENEMY* production commenced in 2001, and was completed in 2002. This was followed by a summative research that was conducted at the end of year 2002. *AIDS: THE HIDDEN ENEMY* is a dramatic story about two close friends in the Tanzania military and the dramatic events that unfold when one of the men becomes HIV positive and develops AIDS. The film was distributed to 300 military bases in Tanzania and implemented into the military's health education programs. Although the two studies carried out in Kenya and Tanzania were proven to be a success in effecting change in the target group, the two studies did not look at aspects of production that enhanced the films to be successful as a behaviour communication tool. Another study named *Television as a Health Educator: A Case Study of Grey's Anatomy* conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation documents the enormous potential of popular entertainment television to serve as a health educator (Rideout, 2008). According to the study, a very large proportion of viewers absorbed the information that was provided in *GREY'S ANATOMY*, and many of them had retained that knowledge six weeks later. However, the study did not include an analysis of production techniques and how they may have enhanced the drama edutainment

Even with proper planning, research on the issues being produced and a good script (narrative), how this will be packaged and presented to the audience on the screen is very fundamental and can enhance or mitigate a drama's effectiveness in contributing to social change. Since E-E productions are produced with a purpose, they require more time, resources and expertise in terms of a creative team of writers and directors who can be able to produce captivating story lines. In the hands of these producers, directors, artists etc of E-E serial dramas are a range of techniques that they can choose which to use and how to manipulate them and greatly influence

the structure and meaning of a drama and create the desired response from the audience. For instance, Sabido's methodology of production incorporated many production elements that he organized to create a desired response from the viewer. Although just mentioned, Singhal, Rogers & Brown (1993) note that Sabido created a specific production system for his telenovelas which incorporated; *melodrama, characters, actors, dialogues, location, staging, props, music, costumes, make-up, pacing, camera-shots, broadcasting time, frequency and editing*. Just like Sabido, directors of E-E serial dramas can choose from a range of techniques and creatively manipulate them in order to present a narrative through the medium.

One of the most noticeable techniques in film production that the creative team of an E-E intervention can choose from is the *mise-en-scene* technique (*Lighting, costumes, props, camera movements, and setting* are all part of *mise-en-scene*), which is the substance of this study. Not ignoring the role of other production techniques employed in creating effective E-E serials, this study is concerned with the *mise-en-scene* technique and specifically the element of *setting*. This following section thus gives an overview of the *mise-en scene* technique as used in serial drama production and discusses the contextual use of *setting*.

1.9.2 Setting as a visual element (*Mise-en-scene*)

Mise-en-scene is a concept central to a developed understanding of film. Thinking and writing on *mise-en-scene* in cinema helped the study of film achieve its maturity (Gibbs, 2002). Initially, the term *mise-en-scene* was developed in relation to theatre but found its way to film production employed to mean “placing within a shot”. Filmmakers and TV producers have borrowed the term and have extended the meaning to suggest the control the director has over the visual elements within the film image. While the differences between film production and television

used to be quite clear, TV's come a long way and today the lines are completely blurred. Whether you are involved in TV or film production, the program making principles, equipment and techniques used can be virtually identical (Millerson, 1991). These film production techniques though developed for film are now also used in producing several TV genres. Thus the *mise-en-scene* technique acquires its relevance in the production of TV serial drama.

Four aspects of *mise-en-scene* which overlap the physical art of the theatre are *setting*, *costume*, *lighting* and *movement of figures* (Bordwell & Thompson, 2001). However in filmmaking, different authors have different views on what constitute the technique. David Bordwell's and Kristin Thompson's text, *Film Art* (2001) states that *mise-en-scene* covers elements namely; *setting* (including *props* and *decor*), *costumes*, *actors' performance*, *lighting* and *colour* and also looks at these elements in relation to *time* and *space*. Bruce Kawins definition (1992) includes; choice of *film stock* (black and white or colour), *aspect ratio*, *camera placement* and *movement*, and *sound* environment (Kawin, 1992). Despite the different views on what constitutes *mise-en-scene*, directors and film scholars alike recognize the technique as an essential part of filmmaking.

The concept of *mise-en-scene* considers the director as the artist responsible for a production (Gibbs, 2002). This is in the relation that *mise-en-scene* encompasses the areas of decision making for which the director is responsible. The control of the various elements provides the director with an opportunity to stage events as every element of *mise-en-scene* influences the viewer's experience of the story (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2005). It is the director's selection and arrangement of aspects of *mise-en-scene* that gives him control of visual elements necessary to effective filming. The director's role is not only to co-ordinate the contributions of the different artists collaborating in a film but to fuse the different elements into one organic unity to bring

about the realization of what had been envisioned. Staging the event for the camera, the director exhibits craft and creativity as he uses this aspect of *mise-en-scene*.

The contextual use of any *setting* is important to interpreting *mise-en-scene* (Prommmagiore & Wallis, 2004). This study considers *setting* as the most important aspect of *mise-en-scene* since it houses all the other elements (*character, lighting, costumes* etc) it however does not ignore the essence of other elements in a production. The question of where to shoot depends largely on the intentions of the director regarding on what he/she desires to achieve or communicate. The director can use already existing locales and/or shoot in a studio. The first may result in a more natural effect, whereas the second option gives the director more control over the *setting*. Whether selected or constructed, real or bizarre, *setting* functions variously to orient viewers, to contribute dramatic impact, and to add meaning to the film's narrative. The primary function of *setting* is to establish time and place as well as to introduce ideas and themes and create the mood (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2005). Bordwell and Thompson (2001) add that, the overall design of *setting* can shape how we understand the story action; a green countryside will suggest a story line or a conflict that is different from a city *setting*. In this case, the usual characteristic of *setting* can suggest meaning and response from the viewer or even stand for implied ideas. In this case, *setting* can come to the forefront not only as a container for human events but also to dynamically enter the narrative action.

We cannot however account for the *setting* vitality without reference to objects placed on it (*props*), thus, the study acknowledges the inter-textual significance that the *prop* provides in the set. According to Rabinger (2008), the striking visual approach is generated by the *setting* and set dressing; *props*. The term *props*, short for 'property', refer to movable objects within the set, specifically those which take on a significant function within the story. *Props* are more than

simply ‘things’ which are used to dress the set: they may serve as iconographic demonstrations in a drama and can shape how we understand the story action. How and where they are placed in the *setting* is crucial as they can serve to create a certain atmosphere, and even function as symbols and motifs in order to transport meaning or establish parallels between scenes (Bordwell & Thompson, 2001). Objects placed on the scene may also serve to strengthen the effects of the *setting* by making the environment that the action is taking place more convincing. For instance; a bottle of prescription medicine with a name or a chart hanging on a hospital scene may strengthen the *setting* making it convincing. Further to making the *setting* realistic, the same objects can add another layer of meaning to the idea being communicated. According to Gibbs (2002), *props* can collect and produce meaning through repeated usage hence develop association throughout the narrative thus play a more active function. When a *prop* assumes such roles it is referred to as a motif (Bordwell & Thompson 2001). For example, the same bottle of prescription medicine shown early in a film may be used, for instance, to kill a patient. The repeated usage of the *prop* (medicine bottle), provides real causal relationships between otherwise seemingly coincidental events.

Sometimes elements considered as individual aspects of *mise-en-scene* may take up as *props* in a film or drama. For instance, some *costumes* may function as a *prop* upon which a film’s unity may rest. *Costumes* worn by the characters do not just relate to characters that wear them but also relate to the audiences who watch them. In many cases *costumes* are usually coordinated with the character to help create an actor’s character thus reinforcing the drama’s narrative and thematic patterns. *Costumes* however can overwrap to be *props* by integrating with the *setting*; for instance, sunglasses, a knife, a gun, a cane, or a pipe—may be a *prop* derived from *costume* and

can become significant in the ongoing action as the *prop's* reoccurrence contributes to viewer's application of the events taking place in a serial drama.

As an entertainment education (E-E) serial drama draws upon complex codes in order to convince their audiences, *setting* and *props* can be used to convince the audience that the story world is realistic or appropriate to a particular situation in order to create a desired response from the viewer. However, how production techniques such as *mise-en-scene* contribute to the dual role of entertainment and education has received a short shift in E-E research. It is then critical to examine how *setting* can enhance the performance of a serial drama in realizing the dual role of entertainment and education. This following section reviews theory that informed the study.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura (1986) Social Cognitive Theory formed the theoretical and analytical foundation for this study. Social cognitive theory (SCT) revolves around the process of learning directly correlated to the observation of models. The concept of SCT is a principle notion of media research. It is the basis for researching media effects on viewers because it highlights the perception that observing certain mass media productions can cause viewers to modify their behaviour and beliefs. Modeling and observational learning are two primary concepts of SCT. Modeling refers to a symbolic model portrayed via mass-mediated communications such as television, video and film (Paek et al., 2009), and observational learning refers to the acquirement of new behaviour demonstrated by a model (Harris, 2005). Through modeling and observational learning, people can learn behaviour and the consequences of behaviour.

Bandura's concept proposes several circumstances that increase the possibility viewers will adopt behaviour. One of these concepts is that viewers are more likely to adopt behaviour

performed by attractive characters than the behaviour of unattractive characters (Moriarty & Harrison, 2008). This is not so much the physical attractiveness of a character but how well information about a character is conveyed directly (direct characterization) by telling the audience the personality of a character or indirectly (indirect Characterization) by showing things that reveal the personality of a character. Personal efficacy is also a relevant concept linked to SCT (Smith et al., 2007; Petraglia et al., 2007). Personal efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), is a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required and this concept is linked to the reality of the modeled behaviour. Social cognitive theory suggests that if viewers perceive a situation and/or behaviour as unrealistic, they are not likely to adopt behaviour (Bandura 2002, 2004, Barbosa, 2005). For instance situations that are farfetched will reduce personal efficacy while situations that are more common and realistic will increase personal efficacy. Towards realism, SCT acknowledges the symbolizing capability of mass media. Bandura (2001) notes that; through symbols, people give meaning, form and continuity to their experience. Thus symbolization provides human with a powerful tool for comprehending their environment. According to S. Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur (1976) as cited by Bandura (2001) the more peoples images of reality depend upon the media symbolic environment, the greater is its social impact (Bandura, 2001). SCT is thus fundamental to this study and especially for its universal applicability across mass media studies. The main task of SCT in this study was to develop a theoretical framework that explains how *setting* can enhance or mitigate a dramas edutainment potential.

1.11 Methodology

The goal of this research was to examine *mise-en-scene* aspect of *setting* on an entertainment education serial drama, where *SIRI* was studied as a single case. This section summarizes the methodology employed in the study.

1.11.1 Research Design

For the purpose of this study, I conducted a qualitative textual analysis of *SIRI* a locally produced serial drama in Kenya. According to Jensen and Jankowski (1991), textual analysis can be a useful research tool that can be used to draw out meaning through interpretation of one or more texts, including serial dramas as used in this study. In this textual analysis, the researcher looked out for the effects of *setting* on plot, characterization and its contribution towards emerging themes.

1.11.2 Population and Sampling

SIRI was selected as the case suitable for the study from a population of other locally produced entertainment education serial dramas in the country; *TUSHAURIANE*, *MAKUTANO JUNCTION*, *THE TEAM* and *SHUGA* for its thematic consistency throughout the episodes.

1.11.3 Data collection

The study begun with collecting *SIRI* season one (with twelve episodes) from Population Services International (PSI) which commissioned the production. Each of the episodes has a running time of approximately twenty five minutes and is divided into two ACTS by a commercial break. The researcher first watched each episode without engaging in any detailed analysis in order to grasp the essence of the drama. The Systematic data gathering consisted of repeatedly watching the drama to identify how the directors employed *setting* and *props* in the

drama. The study looked at each of the elements and watched out how each is used by the director and how it effects on plot, characterization and emerging themes.

1.11.4 Ethical considerations.

Graphical information (pictures) used in the study were directly derived from the DVDs provided by PSI and with the permission from the organization. The pictures were captured using screen capture software “Snap it 3.7” a free screen capture software download from Cnet.Com. The pictures were derived purposely for the study and not for personal and commercial gain and they remain to be the property of the producers. To serve the study, the pictures are used to illustrate the *set* and objects placed on the set. Further the graphical information is used to illustrate characters as perceived in the plot and not as they are in real life.

1.11.5 Data Analysis, Interpretation and presentation.

Data obtained was examined and analyzed qualitatively in line with the study objectives and tested with the proposed assumptions. This entailed analyzing the facts and information gathered through watching *SIRI* as well as secondary information gathered through review of relevant literature. Social cognitive theory was applied during the interpretation of the data obtained. SCT explains the edutainment potential of the *mise-en-scene* element under study (setting). While the patterns identified may be universal, interpretation of the culturally specific repertoire in the drama is based on the researcher’s experiences, values and attitudes shaped by the Kenyan society.

The method of presentation is discursive however; pictures are used where necessary to further illustrate the functions of *setting* on the drama. This dissertation is divided into five sections and while this first chapter offers an introduction, subsequent portions of this dissertation are

followed by chapters 2 – 5. Chapter 2 identifies the function of *setting* on the plot. Chapter 3 looks at *setting* and its effect on characterization followed by Chapter 4, which focuses on the contribution of *setting* to emerging themes. Finally, chapter 5 is dedicated to a discussion of findings and provides a summary answer to the research questions posed in the study along with a discussion of the significance of the findings and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

MERGING OF SETTING AND PLOT

2.1 Introduction

Narrative styles in fiction works have two basic categories, the plot (*Syuzhet*) and the story (*Fabula*), (Prammagiore and Wallis 2005). While a story consists elements that are explicitly presented on the screen as well as those that are implied or that we infer to have happened but are not explicitly presented on the screen (Barsam, 2004), the segments of the story displayed to the audience through the combination of picture and sound is the plot, and each of these segments must stand in logical and meaningful to what went before and must lead to what follows.

A plot is devised says Michael Roemer as cited by Rabiger (2008) “to manipulate, entertain, move and surprise the audience. There are many aspects that go into the creation of a good plot and filmmakers exploit different styles and techniques to display the story to the audience; *setting*, actors, costumes, sound, lighting among others. Obviously, the plot of a drama is never presented in a vacuum but always against the background of specific scenery and often the *setting* which corresponds with what is going on in the story world. In fiction, *setting* is considered one of the fundamental components. The contextual use of any *setting* is important to interpreting the plot of a serial drama it is thus the task of this chapter to identify the functions of *setting* on the plot of *SIRI*.

2.2 *SIRI* – Plot Overview

The plot of *SIRI* was designed around two major intersecting stories each centered on an educational purpose. The first story centers on HIV/AIDS. Events of this story begin to unfold

after Mr. Majani receives news about the death of Suleiman; a fore man at his Majani tea firm. Suleiman's death raises concern about the number of workers dying of HIV/AIDS. Consequently Mr. Majani declares compulsory HIV testing for all his workers. Rita (Mr. Majani's wife) is however against the compulsory HIV testing citing it a violation of workers' rights. She proposes instead, for Mr. Majani to hold a road show at the firm in order to give workers an opportunity to test at their own will. Mr. Majani however, is adamant on holding the show at his firm until his son Bob suggests that if he (Mr. Majani) does not want the show to take place at the firm, he can take the show to the people. Mr. Majani accepts the idea and the road show is held at the Majani village.

Meanwhile Tom the firm manager at Majani tea firm and his wife Beth are expecting a child. Being pregnant, Beth keeps on insisting on Tom the need for the couple to visit the clinic for HIV testing which Tom keeps eluding. The plot presents a marriage on the rocks with Beth trying numerous means to hold it together however with Tom refusing to test even at the road show Beth gives up and leaves her matrimonial home. With intervention from Pastor Tobias, Beth returns back to her house and Tom agrees to HIV testing. The test results show discordance where Beth tests HIV positive and Tom tests HIV negative. Furious Tom decides to leave his wife Beth who in turn is devastated by the outcome of the test and the betrayal by Tom. Dr. Phoebe pays Beth a visit at her home and finds Beth depressed with an untidy house and self. However Dr. Phoebe is able to convince Beth that despite her HIV status she can live a normal life as well as raise a healthy child. Beth re-corrects herself and begins to put her house in order and when Tom comes back begging for forgiveness, he finds Beth already living positive.

The second story centers on family planning (FP). The major story line revolves around the lives of Martha and Isaiah who together have five children (girls), and Martha is pregnant with her

sixth child. The plot presents a family struggling with poverty associated with lack of family planning. Martha and Isaiah are members of a religious sect and despite the large family which they are struggling to raise; Isaiah insists that Martha should bear him three sons. On one of the working days, Martha faints in the tea fields and on being rushed to the clinic she loses her child. This really upsets Isaiah first because Martha was rushed to the clinic which is against his religious beliefs, and second because under the care of the doctors and nurses at the clinic, Martha loses her son. After her recovery Wilmina gives Martha a pack of used family planning pills. Later Isaiah finds the pills and he submits the whole family to days of prayers and fasting. Eli a close friend to Isaiah tries to talk him out of it but Isaiah is adamant. Eli reports the matter to chief Zomba who comes and rescues Martha and the children. Martha is taken to the clinic where she consults with sister Immaculate and she is advised not to conceive again until her body is healthy enough. She is given condoms to take to Isaiah but when given the condoms, Isaiah furiously throws them away. Martha courageously faces him and insists its time he considered a family planning method since she is not ready to die and leave her children suffering.

The drama carries several other minor plots that feed onto the major plots. One of these stories is that of Wilmina and her husband Jack that feeds onto the plot on HIV/AIDS. Jack lives in Nairobi where he contracts the HIV virus. Eventually Jack dies and rumour has it that he died of HIV/AIDS. Wilmina decides to go to the clinic and test however, she cowards and eventually does not test. The plot on FP is also fed by a minor story that revolves around Truphosa and Musembi. The plot begins as Truphosa is vomiting outside her house as Musembi looks on. This results to a confrontation outside their house as Musembi demands to know if Truphosa is pregnant. Musembi insists that they cannot be able to raise three children. After their

confrontation, Truphosa consults with Haminda and Joy respectively while at the tea fields on the possibilities of being pregnant when still under the pill. Truphosa is advised to visit the clinic by both Haminda and Joy respectively. At the clinic, sister immaculate recommends that Truphosa should change her FP method and takes her through other methods she can choose from.

2.3 Merging of *Setting* and Plot

The question of where to shoot a drama depends largely on the intentions of the director regarding on what he/she desires to achieve or communicate. In *SIRI* the director used already existing locales. This resulted in a more natural effect that endows the drama with a realistic and life-like style. As a geographical place, Majani town suggests a typical Kenya town; a rural town with individuals of different social and economic status. In the first episode, the viewer is introduced to different *settings* where the greater part of the serial drama takes place; this is Majani tea firm, and the homes of several of the major characters. Later in subsequent episodes the audience becomes familiar with other *settings* such as the clinic, local bar, chiefs camp and church.

One major function of *setting* in the drama is to provide a backdrop or a container for events of the story to unfold. Through specific locations that are realistic for the action taking place. *Setting* gives characters an avenue to meet and dialogue depicting both time and place where the events of the story are taking place. The drama largely takes place at the Majani tea firm. Tea is one of Kenya's cash crops grown in part of the central and rift valley region. The fields are mainly large and greenly and Majani tea firm is presented as a place of vivid green and rich golden sun (**Fig 2.0**) and enters the plot of the drama by giving workers an avenue to meet and dialogue as they go on with their daily activities (**Fig2.1, Fig 2.2**).



Fig 2.0: Long view of Majani tea firm
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.1: Haminda listens into a conversation by Joy and Martha not pictured at Majani tea fields. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.2: Male workers; Musembi, Paul, Rege and Macos discussing the death of Suleiman at Majani firm. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Majani tea firm also supports the dramas verbatim of traded secrets (*SIRI*). The word *SIRI* is Swahili for secrets and it is at this fields where workers meet and dialogue and eventually trade their secrets. With the advice given and depending on the decisions made and actions taken, the plot unfolds. Fig 2.3 to Fig 2.6 illustrates a minor story of Truphosa and her husband Musembi presented in episode three. The story begins as Truphosa is vomiting outside her house. Musembi (her husband) is concerned that she may be pregnant. To begin with, the confrontation between the couple takes place outside their house as Musembi insists that they cannot raise three children. In subsequent events that largely take place at the tea firm, Truphosa consults with Haminda and Joy respectively (**Fig 2.4, Fig 2.5**) on the possibility of one being pregnant while

still under the daily pill. From the two friends (Haminda and Joy) Truphosa is advised to visit the clinic. At the end of this story we see Truphosa at the Majani clinic consulting with sister Immaculate (Fig 2.6) and later at home telling Musembi the doctor's recommendation.



Fig 2.3: Musembi and Truphosa outside their house: Musembi concerned if Truphosa is pregnant. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.4: Haminda and Truphosa in the tea fields. Haminda is concerned that Truphosa could be pregnant. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.5: Truphosa confides in Joy the possibility of one being pregnant while still on the pill. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.6: Truphosa laughs when sister Immaculate offers her a condom to use with her husband. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Setting as depicted by these scenes initiates a main backdrop through specific locations that are realistic for the action taking place and also supports the serial drama verbatim of traded secrets where characters meet and in the course of their daily activity trade their secrets.

The significance of *setting* however goes beyond that of providing a backdrop. According to Frensham (2003) a story must also have a specific *setting* or a smaller world for the audience to understand it. *SIRI* offers multiple plots that unfold in a sequential episode by episode fashion. To take the audience from one story to another, the physical details of *setting* becomes visual emblems where audience associate the homes of several of the major characters with specific events taking place in the drama. Largely each plot (including minor plots) is set in the confines of the main characters homes. **Fig 2.9, Fig 2.10** represents the home of Martha and Isaiah a *setting* linked to the plot on FP. The narrative describes a family that is really struggling to make ends meet and follows the various crises that can follow due to lack of family planning. **Fig 2.7, Fig 2.8** presents the home of Mr. Majani (owner Majani tea firm) and linked to the plot on HIV/AIDS. Through associating the physical details of different sets with particular events in the drama, *setting* gives the viewer a better sense of the story where the audience is able to identify changes in plotlines as well as understand the circumstances in which the events of the story are taking place.

We cannot account for the power of *setting* without making reference to objects placed on the *setting* (*props*). An important function of *props* to the plot of *SIRI* is that objects placed on the set make the scene or *setting* where the action is taking place realistic. Mr. Majanis house (**Fig 2.8**) with the elegant furniture and decor is realistic for his big house (**Fig 2.7**). If Martha's house (**Fig 2.9, Fig 2.10**) had such furniture and decor, the *setting* would not be realistic and would be in opposition to the plot. These sets and objects placed on them are thus planned to fit the conditions of the plot. Other *settings* such as the chief's office (**Fig 2.11**), the clinic (**Fig 2.12**) are also decked out with *props* that make these scenes realistic for the action taking place.



Fig 2.7: Mr. Majanis House (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.8: Interior view of Mr Majanis House.
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.9: Martha outside her house
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.10: Interior view of Isaihs House as isaih takes his wife through a session of prayers
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.11: Interior view of Chief Zomba's Office
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.12: Interior view Majani Clinic during a women's seminar (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

As any other technique *mise-en-scene* is a system of signs and SCT recognizes the symbolic capabilities of mass media. According to Bandura (2001), through these symbols people give meaning, form and continuity to their experience. As a system of signs *Setting* and *props* also come together to produce meaning either by encouraging some meanings or interpretations for the viewer and discouraging others. Visual signs have multiple identities that can stem from cultural beliefs, traditions and even superstitions. In episode two, Jack meets Mzee Bakari a soothsayer (**Fig 2.14**) and is informed that there are some evil spirits (dark cloud) surrounding him. The dark cloud (**Fig 2.13**) is used in the serial drama as a metaphor in the message making process by putting across the superstition associated with HIV AIDS.



Fig 2.13 Dark cloud referred to by Mzee Bakari to communicate the impending bad news (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 2.14: Jack consultinwith Mzee Bakari (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

A metaphor refers to communicating by analogy (Berger, 1933). Unlike the simile which uses *like* or *as* (Berger, 1933), metaphors are based on identities where one thing equals another. While Rain clouds are a common weather event, as a visual sign the dark cloud is used in the serial drama to be interpreted as a metaphor of impending bad news (HIV infection). *SIRI* does not show Jacks life in Nairobi and it is until Moffat moves to Nairobi that we get to know that Jack is HIV positive. In the visual sense, the drama uses the dark cloud predicted by Mzee Bakari as a visual sign that provoke culturally significant meaning in the mind of the viewer.

Although this particular *setting* (**Fig 2.14**) does not seem culturally appropriate for the events taking place, it offers a simple background that concentrates the viewer on the characters and their actions/dialogue. The weather phenomenon (Dark Cloud **Fig 2.13**) on the other hand rouses a culturally significant meaning in the mind of the viewer.

From these discussions, the director's selection of the various *settings* corresponds with what is going on in the story world. *Setting* and *props* merge together to form a well-conceived unity in the plot. The *mise-en-scene* element not only provides a backdrop for events of the story to unfold but fused together, these seemingly disparate elements create a unified whole by offering a simple background that concentrates the viewer to characters and their actions while also giving the viewer a better sense of the story. This is consistent with SCT that behavior change will not take place simply by including a desired messaging in the plot but audiences must identify with the storylines of which they are engaged (Bandura 2001, 2002, 2004). So while the *plot* and *setting* have entirely different meanings, they both merge and effect on the plot of *SIRI* for they determine the way a story is to be told, and the intended effect it should have on the viewer. After plot, the most intuitively important aspect of a story concerns the characters. The following chapter analyses the utility of *setting* on characterization.

CHAPTER 3

SETTING AND CHARACTERIZATION

3.1 Introduction

The essence of the entertainment education strategy is to use mass media characters as models of behavior for influencing people towards social change (Bouman,1998). This is grounded on the concept of social cognitive theory that characters act as models through which audience learn not only behaviour but also consequences of behaviour (Bandura, 2001, 2002, 2004). This positions the media as an important source of information since from observing characters in a film, serial drama and other forms of mass media, audiences acquire knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes.

Characters can be defined as fictional individual within a larger imaginary situation (Kress, 2005). Particularly when enacted by an actor in the theatre or film (serial drama), characters involve the illusion of being a human person (Parvis, 1998). One of the most striking components of a TV serial drama is that many of the same characters reappear each week and viewers are drawn to these characters as they are interested in how they develop; how they cope with various obstacles week after week, season after season. The art of creating these characters and conveying information about them (characterization) is fundamental. This information about characters can be conveyed directly (direct characterization) by telling the audience the personality of a character or indirectly (indirect Characterization) by showing things that reveal the personality of a character. From what is shown the audience can infer meaning and infer more about a character without learning from what is said in dialogue.

In deed characters are never placed in a vacuum but are placed within a *setting*. Where a character lives, his or her surroundings can contribute significantly to the meaning produced; a

characters home, work place, where he or she hangs out, can all tell the viewer more about a character. It is the task of this chapter to explore how *setting* conveys information about characters in *SIRI*. The chapter goes further and looks at *setting* and the identification of positive, negative and transitional models (characters) necessary in observational learning in E-E serial dramas.

3.2 Utility of Setting in Characterization

SIRI, has an extensive cast of characters, each of whom tries to makes a contribution to the plot. The plot of *SIRI* inevitably centers on character; character choices, desires and traits, with characters overcoming obstacles arising from within themselves and/or from other characters. As each event of the plot happens, the character grows a little to be able to cope with that event, and equally as the character grows in strength, they push the plot forward by overcoming obstacles and being proactive towards seeking individual goals.

In the first episode, the viewer is introduced to majority of the characters and many of the same characters reappear in each episode thus viewers get a chance to see how their favourite characters develop and cope with various obstacles week after week. More of what a viewer gets to know about majority of the characters in *SIRI* is through what characters say about themselves and what others say about them. For instance, in the first episode the viewer gets to know that the reason why Martha has so many children is because she is following instructions from her husband Isaiah; who will not allow her take up a family planning method. However there are scenic connotations associated with particular *settings* that allows for the drama to convey information about characters.

Extensively, *SIRI* uses *setting* to portray different sets of characters in terms of who they are by taking up symbolic significance that is brought out through their individual surroundings. These connotations are mainly developed through the size and nature of various *settings* and the characters they represent. Mr. Majani house (**Fig 3.0**) is big and elegant and presents the character even before they have appeared as rich and powerful with good taste and great personality. The *setting* is parallel to the essence of the character found within; Mr. Majani, His wife Rita and son Bob. Objects placed on this *setting* not only function to make it realistic but also take up symbolic significance to describe the essence of the character found within.



Fig 3.0: Exterior view of Mr. Majani House
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.1: An interior view of Mr. Majani house adorned with elegant furniture and decor
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Adorned with elegant furniture and decor (**Fig 3.1**), the set stresses the productiveness of his (Mr.Majani) endeavors and the pleasant life he can afford to give his family. Ultimately, Rita finds the social contrast between her family and that of her employees so appalling that she does not hesitate to remind Tabu, one of her employee of their difference in social class when she discovers her relationship with Bob. Rita invites Tabu to her home and explains that her desire as Bob's mother is that Bob should marry a woman of his own class. In this case, *setting* and *props* act as a symbol of her (Rita) family's status and taste and are used to amplify her character.

Martha's and Isaiah's residence is also parallel to the essence of the characters they represent. Martha is one of the workers at the Majani tea firm and her *setting* depicts Martha's reality as different from what we see in scenes representing Mr. Majani's family. The opening scenes of episode one as Martha fetches water from a river and walks to her home clearly suggests to the viewer her social class and poverty. Kenya is home to several different ethnic groups, each with different customs. Some communities have explored modern housing while some still live a very traditional lifestyle; thatch and mud homes. While Signs have different meaning in different social and cultural contexts (Lemke, 1990), the size and nature of Martha and Isaiah's house (**Fig 3.2, Fig 3.3**) is a symbolic demonstration that emphasizes the economic and social status of the family. Arguably, the rest of the Majani residents presented in the drama do not live on mud thatched houses. Although it seems ironical that her mud thatched house sits on a place of vivid green and rich golden sun (**Fig 3.2**), the drama draws upon these codes (size and nature of the house) to convince the viewer of the family's social and economic status.



Fig 3.2: Exterior view of Isaihs House
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.3: Interior view of Marthas House
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Other than describing characters through their surrounding, characters' actions and the nature of their actions are further determined and made possible by objects on the set. An important object

to this effect is Isaiah's bible (**Fig 3.4, Fig 3.5**). The bible begins as just an object in the drama but as the drama progresses; the bible becomes a contextualized *prop*. Contextual *props* acquire meaning according to their changing place in a narrative (Corrigan & White 2012). Although the bible is a representation of Isaiah faith, it is symbolic of his family's entrapment that is made possible by religion and represented through the object. For Martha, the bible becomes the symbol for her reality as it mirrors the view that religion captures and imprisons individuals. The *prop's* reoccurrence throughout the drama contributes to viewer's application of the serial drama and provides a vehicle for the audience to understand the victim's entrapment, as well as understand Isaiah when he subjects his family to tough measures such as fasting. Characterization of this kind attains a unique richness of detail as it emphasizes the performers and gives them relevance. In these scenes, *setting and props* plays a key role in amplifying the characters of both Martha and Isaiah by providing a whole array of meanings beyond what is shown. This kind of association adds levels of complexity to the characters extending the abilities of the audience to identify with them.



Fig 3.4: Isaih takes Martha through a cession of prayers (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.5: Isaiah scolds Martha over leaving the children alone at home. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Characters' psychological implications are further made possible by *setting*. The dullness in Wilminas house after the death of Jack (**Fig 3.6**) makes it almost black in appearance and this

blackness reflects the mood of sorrow within the house. Beth's psychological implications after she tests HIV positive is also clearly brought out through the set. When Phoebe pays her a visit, we see in the *setting*; the cooking and washing area full of dirty utensil. To stress this further, Beth appears in the set wearing drab clothes, un-kept hair with no makeup (**Fig 3.7, Fig 3.8**).



Fig 3.6: Wilmina is helped out of her house after the death of Jack (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.7: Beth's untidy Kitchen (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.8: Beth and Phoebe clearing the mess in Beth's Kitchen (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.9: Beth cleaning up her house as Tom Begs for forgiveness. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

By integrating with *props* and *costumes*, *setting* emphasizes Beth's psychological status. She tells Phoebe her disappointment and lack of desire to continue living. However, after being encouraged and reassured that despite her HIV status she can achieve her dreams as well as have

a healthy child, Beth results to a change in attitude which is also brought through her physical surrounding. In subsequent scenes, for example (**Fig 3.8 Fig 3.9**) we see Beth cleaning up her house. The symbolic realism creates an emotional effect which mirrors her change in attitude. This is done to enhance the intensity of her character and emotions.

Based on these results, it appears as though *SIRI* has been successful at using *setting* to describe characters and make known their personalities through both *setting* and *props*. Social cognitive theory proposes several circumstances that increase the possibility that viewers will adopt behaviour observed from characters. One of these concepts is that viewers are more likely to adopt behaviour performed by attractive characters than behaviour of unattractive characters (Moriarty & Harrison, 2008). This is not so much the physical attractiveness of a model but how well the characters traits have been developed and made known to the audience. By describing characters economic and social status as well as their personalities and psychological conditions through their physical surroundings, the viewer can identify with some characters, their values, ideals, and attitudes. Characters identified through their physical surroundings such as Beth and Martha remain relevant throughout the drama. As popular characters in the drama, they teach the viewer that they have the ability to change their behaviour (increased self-efficacy) and that their changed behaviour will lead to positive results (outcome expectancy). SCT suggests that if viewers perceive a situation and/or behaviour as unrealistic, they are not likely to adopt behaviour (Bandura 2002, 2004, Barbosa, 2005). Personal efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), is a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required and this concept is linked to the reality of the modeled behaviour. While situations that are farfetched will reduce personal efficacy and those that are more common and realistic will increase personal efficacy, *Setting* gives a causal structure and unity of purpose in the drama and if understood this

causal structure provides a lesson for the viewer. However not all characters can be said to be identified through this unique link. Many characters and especially minor characters appear less characterized through their physical surroundings to the point of losing their essence in the drama. *SIRI* could address this issue by getting rid of unnecessary characters that make little or no contribution to the plot.

3.3 Setting and the identification of positive, negative and transitional models

The purpose of entertainment education serial drama is to facilitate social change through observational learning. Observational learning refers to the acquirement of new behaviour demonstrated by a model (Harris, 2005). In E-E initiatives, characters act as models through which audience learn not only behaviour but also consequences of behaviour (Bandura, 2001, 2002, 2004) and due to the ability of humans to think symbolically, the art of creating characters and conveying information about them is fundamental in facilitating effective observational learning. E-E programs typically include three types of characters from which audience members can learn: positive role models who support a pro-social value, negative role models who reject this value and transitional models who change from negative to positive models over the course of the serial or program (Singhal & Rogers 1999). It would be interesting to research more in-depth the identification process of these models by the viewer. In other words what elements in the serial drama guide the viewer in identifying a character as positive, negative or transitional? This section task is to make out how *setting* guides the viewer in the identification of positive, negative and transitional models in *SIRI*.

In the initial exposition, in which we experience characters in *SIRI*, their goals, their motives and other essential facts are presented to the viewer. For instance the viewer gets to know that Mr. Majani's goal is to have his workers tested in order to curb the rising number of workers dying of

HIV/AIDS and Beth's goal is to have herself and Tom her husband tested in order to take care of their unborn child. Through *setting* and also through various objects presented on the set which we cannot ignore, a viewer is guided to identify positions various characters hold in the educational message. For instance, Beth's continued appearance at the Majani clinic brings her as a positive character and as supportive to the educational message being presented; prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV virus. After Beth tests HIV positive, though at first psychologically tortured by the results, she decides to accept her status. This positive change is brought out through her *setting* (home) where she embarks on cleaning up the mess that had accumulated (**Fig 3.9**). Beth is presented as a positive mother figure in the drama. Her character is very popular and is one of the central characters with a lot of broadcast time on the show. For many episodes, her central role in the program is to showcase how to be a positive mother who cares for her unborn child.

While Beth wants' so much to reach her goal, she is faced with difficulty getting to it as Tom her husband refuses to visit the clinic for testing. When Dr. Alai recommends that Beth should visit the clinic with Tom for testing; it is in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations that encourage couple HIV testing (WHO, 2002, 2003). The guidelines are based on the assumption that couple testing would help increase spousal support for women to use PMTCT services and create opportunities for secondary prevention by counseling both men and women about HIV, as well as increase the uptake of testing (Walque, 2007 as cited in Larsson et al., 2010). However, taking the initial step to test is always a challenge to many even in *settings* in which voluntary counseling and testing is routinely offered for PMTCT, the number of people who avail themselves for these services remains low in many countries (WHO, 2005). Tom's continued refusal to join Beth for testing both at the clinic and at the road show

clearly describes him as a negative character in the ongoing educational theme. His negative behaviour is also brought out by his appearance at the local bar with Njoki (**Fig 3.10**) which put him at a high risk of both contracting HIV/AIDS and infecting his wife Beth and their unborn child. Consequently when Beth tests HIV positive he results to leaving his matrimonial home instead of showing his love and support. Hysterically Beth begs him not to leave (**Fig 3.11**) but he still packs his suitcase and leaves anyway. Tom's negative behavior is not only entertaining and but also an accurate depiction of what is going on in the society.



Fig 3.10: Tom and Njoki at the local bar
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.11: Beth begging Tom not to leave her after testing HIV positive
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

The transitional character identified in the plot on HIV/AIDS is Wilmina. After the death of Jack and rumour has it that he could have died of HIV/AIDS, she is advised by Esther to visit the clinic and test if only to be sure. She courageously gets herself to the clinic to test but after consulting with sister immaculate, Wilmina cowards to test. By the last episode season one we still do not know the consequence of her action. However her visit to the clinic and failure to test presents her as a transitional character who fails to adopt a positive behaviour.

In the plot on FP, negative characters face the due consequences of their actions. According to the E-E methodology of Miguel Sabido, negative role models are punished for failure to adopt

positive behaviour (Singhal & Brown, 1999). This is supported by sets representing Martha and Isaiah. The drama presents Isaiah as a negative role model. In the course of the serial drama we find Isaiah rejecting to take up positive values that relate to FP. For instance, after coming across the pills Martha was using he subjects his entire family to days of prayers and fasting. In another instance where Martha offers him a condom (**Fig 3.13**) given at the clinic, Isaiah furiously throws it away. The pills and the condom take up as *props* in the serial drama and Isaiah's continued denial to accept them present him as a negative character that refuses to accept the educational theme. According to SCT, the social learning process is reinforced by the learner's observations of the consequences of the modeled behaviour (Vaughan & Rogers, 2000). The consequence of Isaiah's decisions is brought about through the size and nature of his *setting*. Where he and his family are living in a dilapidated condition and he cannot feed his family. From the *setting*, a viewer is able to observe the consequences of Isaiah's modeled behaviour.



Fig 3.12: Martha accepts pills offered by Wilmina
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 3.13: Martha presents Isaiah with a condom
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

While Isaiah's refusal to accept the condom or the pills regard him as a negative character, the same objects project Martha a character who sits in middle and in the course of the drama she gradually starts to accept the educational message. Although it is not recommended to share FP

pills, Martha takes FP pills given by Wilmina (**Fig 3.12**). Her acceptance to begin a FP method though without the consent of her husband indicates her gradual change which is further seen where she courageously presents a condom to Isaiah (**Fig 3.13**). When Isaiah seems adamant to accept the idea of taking up a FP method, Martha looks him straight into his eyes and recommends its time he start thinking about FP since she is not ready to die and leave her children suffering. In this particular scene Martha exercises cognitive modeling since as a model; she verbalizes her thoughts while demonstrating a cognitive process. In the beginning of the drama, Martha is neither consistently positive nor consistently negative. However in the course of the drama, Martha evolves into an empowered, knowledgeable, and positive character. These dynamic transition projects Martha as the most identifiable role models for audience members. Ideally *setting* supports the messages verbatim that the modeling characters are facing and the viewer can be able to internalize these challenges, apply them to their own lives and come up with solutions.

This discussions lead to show that *setting* can guide a viewer in the identification of characters and the position they hold in the educational message. It is also important to note that many of the female characters are portrayed either as positive, independent and confident individuals while male models are portrayed as negative and irresponsible. Perhaps *SIRI* could address this inequity by creating a more balanced number of positive and negative female and male characters. This following chapter looks at setting and its contribution towards emerging themes.

CHAPTER 4

SETTING AND EMERGING THEMES

4.1 Introduction

Not all serial dramas are designed to promote social change but *SIRI* was deliberately designed to promote social change by embedding health related themes. The most common contemporary understanding of a theme is an idea or concept that is central to a story, which can often be summed in a single word (e.g. love, death etc). A theme can also be described in terms of a moral, or message, or lesson that the viewer can gain from a story. In designing an entertainment-education *serial drama* first, a central theme is decided upon based upon a needs assessment survey of the target audience (Singhal, Rogers & Brown, 1993) for example HIV/AIDS. Ethics related to this central theme are then derived; for example, HIV testing, family harmony, spousal communication and PMTCT among others (Singhal, Rongers & Brown, 1993). These values are then defended by characters in the course of the drama.

SIRI provides plotlines embedded with information that raise awareness and promote safer alternatives crucial in changing high-risk behaviors related to HIV and family planning. The HIV/ AIDS scourge is a major public health issue of today as the number of people dying of HIV/AIDS raises concern all over the world. According to the AIDS Epidemic Update (2011) from the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), as of December 2010 an estimated 34 million people were living with HIV. The rate of new infections is also alarming as containing the incidence of new infections continues to be a challenging task worldwide. HIV/AIDS has affected individuals and devastated communities globally and it is indeed hard to find any group not affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to Brown, Kiruswa and Fraser (2005) the pandemic not only touches the lives of those infected, but it also impacts the

lives of virtually every one, posing multiple challenges and serious threats to human society in general.

In many countries, HIV programs are integrated with FP in order to improve efficiency since unprotected sex may lead to STIs, HIV, and unintended pregnancies. Clearly, this creates opportunities to better enhance HIV/AIDS programs' ability to link with FP efforts and prevent unintended pregnancies. However on itself FP is also a major health and economic issue. In just over four decades, Kenya's population has increased in size, from 10.9 million in 1969 to an estimated 40 million people today (The Kenya population data sheet, 2011). This is attributed to declined mortality rates and increased births rates. Where decline mortality rates is an achievement, increased birth rates on the other hand is both a health risk and an economic problem. While Most women welcome pregnancy and childbirth, the risks of illness and death associated with these events are very high. For this reason women are recommended to give their bodies enough time to regain health after giving birth and before conceiving again. Spacing childbearing has been found to result in healthier infants with lower risks of low-birth weight, nutritional deficiencies, and infant death (Cleland et al., 2007) thus FP greatly increases rates of childhood survival. Governments around the world are focused on combating poverty and achieving a range of health and development goals, by encouraging the take up of Family planning.

With the desire to affect such high risk behaviour through embedding themes on the plot lines of serial dramas, there is no single formula for getting themes into a script and onto the screen. E-E producers and directors must find out the best way to bring out an idea or concept that is central to a story. Whereas there are different ways that a filmmaker can to bring out themes, the utility

of *setting* on emerging themes of HIV/AIDS and Family Planning (FP) is the contractual obligation of this chapter. .

4.2 Utility of Setting on Emerging themes: HIV/AIDS

The argument on HIV/AIDS begins with the death of Suleiman, a fore man at Majani tea firm. Suleiman's death raises concern on the increased number of workers at Majani tea firm, who had died of HIV/AIDS in the past one year. A concern of Mr. Majani on the number of people dying on his firm is also a global concern. The number of people dying of HIV/AIDS is alarming across the globe as most people with HIV are unaware of their HIV status. Scaling up HIV testing is a critical step for HIV/AIDS prevention. Concerned about this high rate of death, Mr. Majani declares a compulsory HIV test for all his workers and asks Tom his firm manager to organize and ensure every employee at Majani firm tests. The debate on HIV testing is debated on different grounds. First the drama presents mandatory HIV testing is as a violation of human rights. According to UNAIDS/WHO policy statement on HIV testing, the conditions of the '3 Cs', advocated since the HIV test became available in 1985, continue to be founding principles for the conduct of HIV testing of individuals. Such testing of individuals must be: confidential, be accompanied by counseling, and only be conducted with informed consent of the individual (UNAIDS/WHO, 2004), this meaning that the conditions under which people undergo HIV testing must be anchored in a human rights approach which protects their human rights. However, when Mr. Majani declares compulsory testing for his workers, he clearly fails to consider their rights to testing.

With mandatory testing doubling up as a violation of workers' rights, other options can be explored to have workers tested. Convinced there is a better way to avoid mandatory testing, subsequent events in the drama show Rita (Mr. Majanis wife) trying to convince Mr. Majani to

conduct a road show at the firm and give workers an opportunity to test at their own will. Road shows have been used to institute HIV education and encourage client-initiated HIV testing. Road show mixes entertainment like talent shows and dance, with life skills activities that demonstrates various aspects of the disease such as prevention. When Mr. Majani finally agrees to take the show to the people, the combination of education and entertainment at the road show makes learning about HIV/AIDS a more engaging experience, and offers a ground for personal-initiated HIV testing for the Majani workers to learn their HIV status through voluntary counseling and testing. *Setting* at the road show is consistent with the idea of voluntary HIV testing and the need to offer client initiated testing as workers get a chance to test at their own will. Through song dance and engaging the community in the road show (**Fig 4.1**), several workers including other Majani residents take the initiative to test (**Fig 4.0**).



Fig 4.0: At the road show: Sister Immaculate addressing Majani residents waiting to test for HIV virus. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 4.1: Guest performer Susan Owiyo performing her song Ukimwi mbaya (AIDS is bad) at the road show with actor Lucy Wangui (Vioja Mahakamani) (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

The debate on HIV testing is also debated on the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS. On knowing their HIV status, many couples would want to avoid becoming pregnant. PMTCT reduces the number of AIDS orphans, whose life chances are seriously diminished because they have lost a parent, particularly the mother. With no home

testing kits, health institutions and VCT centers are considered best suited for offering PMTCT services. *Setting* at Majani clinic (**Fig 4.2**) is consistent with this argument. In order to increase access to HIV testing and counseling it is necessary to raise awareness of the accessibility of services and of the benefits of individuals knowing their HIV status. While the set acts as a container for the events taking place, the hospital *setting* (**Fig 4.2, Fig 4.3**) of the serial lent itself well to the realities of dealing with HIV testing of patients and their families thus scaling up HIV testing as a critical step for PMTCT.



Fig 4. 2: Majani Clinic (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 4.3: Beth and Tom during a HIV test at Majani clinic. (Courtesy *SIRI* DVD Episode 11)

Setting also raises the role of the male partner in reproductive issues and his involvement in PMTCT. This is debated via the physical distance between Jack and his wife Wilmina and Tom's appearance at the local bar with Njoki. Jack in Nairobi while wife Wilmina is in the village corresponds with many Kenyans who migrate to the town area to look for employment. This culture of keeping the families apart encourages men to seek sexual partners outside of marriage and results in high levels of prostitution. Through *setting* such as the bar (**Fig 4.4**) where Tom meets with Njoki and the physical distance between Jack and Wilmina, the viewer can infer the role of the male partner in PMTCT; where acts of infidelity and couple distance can cause

serious implications; it puts the male partner at the risk of contracting HIV as well as the risk of infecting his wife with the virus. Eventually Beth tests positive (although Tom tested negative) and Jack dies of HIV putting Wilmina at risk (although she did not go through with the test).



Fig 4.4 Tom and Njoki at a local bar (Courtesy PSI, *SIRA* DVD)

SIRA raises condoms as a key component in the fight against HIV/AIDS that an individual can choose at different times in their lives to reduce their risks of sexual exposure to HIV. As the search for new preventive technologies such as HIV vaccines continues to make progress, the condom is the single, most efficient, available technology to reduce the sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. As a *prop*, the condoms have been significantly used in the drama and recommend in helping prevent new infections. According to family planning saves lives report (2009) the consistent and correct use of condoms can significantly reduce the rate of new HIV infections. Moraa insists on Paul that the only way they can engage sexually is if he gets condoms. In subsequent scenes in the drama, Adze finds a TRUST condom wrapper in the tea fields (**Fig 4.5**) as nearby Paul and Moraa have sex (**Fig 4.6**).



Fig 4.5: Adze holds up a condom wrapper
(Courtesy SIRI DVD Episode 3)



Fig 4.6: Paul and Moraa after being found by adze having sex in the fields. (Courtesy SIRI DVD Episode 3)

In these scenes, the condom is used to emphasize the position that the woman holds in the prevention and/or fight of the HIV/AIDS scourge. *SIRI* argues that the woman has as much right and will to determine what pattern of sexual life she wishes to engage in. She has a right to determine what affects her own health and how it should be attended to. With the help of condom, the drama argues that women can now, on behalf of themselves, fight for what should accrue to them, and are therefore indispensable in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Testing HIV positive is among a few things that can strike fear in our hearts. Because of the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS; many people do not wish to know their status. Notification of a positive HIV test result can profoundly affect a woman's psychological and physical well-being (Abercrombie, 1996). After Tom and Beth finally test, the results show discordance where Beth tests positive and Tom tests negative, these results dumbfound the couple as illustrated in **Fig 4.7** and **Fig 4.8**.



Fig 4.7: Tom's reaction to HIV test result
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 4.8: Beth's reaction to HIV test results
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

On realizing that one is HIV positive, adjusting to this new life may be an emotional road. The drama does not reveal Beth's psychological condition after Tom leaves until when Phoebe comes to visit. Through *setting* (**Fig 3.7**), the drama shows Beth's psychological implications caused by learning she is HIV positive as well as the lack of support from her husband Tom. Through the *setting* (dirty kitchen area) the audience can believe that she did undergo psychological changes that caused her to result to her untidy house and self. *Setting* and objects placed on the set makes the situation look common and realistic as they create her world as anyone else would be and feel in real life after testing HIV positive, a world where nothing else matters. Through *setting*, *SIRI* goes ahead to raise the argument that despite testing HIV positive a woman can live a positive life and raise a negative child. We later see through the *setting* (**Fig 4.9**) Beth's transformation after being encouraged by Phoebe that she can live a positive life as well as raise a negative child. The now clean home depicts Beth's psychological transformation and when Tom comes back to beg for forgiveness, he finds Beth already living positive with her status.



Fig 4.9: Beth cleaning up her house as Tom begs for forgiveness
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Through *setting* *SIRI* provides some applicable information regarding HIV/AIDS; Testing, prevention, role of both male and female partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS and the possibility of living a positive life after testing HIV positive. However this chapter also identifies that the serial drama fails to include *props* crucial in to significant action taking. The drama fails to include the HIV testing kit as a *prop* both at the clinic and at the road show thus the audiences are forced to assume, without having to witness it. Many times in a film or drama, the audience remembers what they saw rather than what they heard. Thus it is important to tailor *setting* and objects paced on the set in a relevant and credible way. According to SCT tailored communications are viewed as more relevant and credible and are easily remembered (Kreuter, et al 1991). A test kit for HIV is useful for the early detection and treatment of the virus and could be crucial in improving the quality of life for HIV positive individuals and availing it in the *setting* makes the action taking place more believable. From a treatment perspective, themes cast by the serial drama are mainly provided through dialogue. The serial drama fails to make any use of *props* concerned with medication for HIV/AIDS or PMTCT. Such inadequate information can make it difficult for someone who is infected or not to understand their options

and make an informed choice. Thus excluding some significant *props*, the serial drama partly lost an opportunity to enhance its educational value in regards to HIV/AIDS.

4.3 Utility of setting on emerging Themes: Family Planning

Here the analysis of *setting* on emerging themes of FP is undertaken. The theme of FP is mainly discussed in plots presented by Martha and Truphosa. The two women may have problems that require FP but their realities are different. Martha already has five children and she is pregnant with the sixth child and her husband Isaiah still demands that she bear him three sons. Truphosa on the other hand is uncomfortable with the family planning method she is currently using. From the story she and her husband Musembi had visited the clinic and she had been given birth control pill. However she is vomiting and she is afraid that she could be pregnant.

The first argument cast by *setting* is the economic degradation associated with lack of FP. This argument is brought about by the size and nature of Martha and Isaiah's house. The drama presents the couple living in a thatched mud hut symbolically to represent their economic status which the viewer can attribute to their lack to adopt a family planning method. Secondly, the drama argues that with lack of necessary resources, raising a big family can be stressing. Children are a blessing and are received with delight, however raising a child requires significant amounts of resources and the more the children, the more the resources required. According to Cleland, et al., (2006), homes with many children often become poor and stay poor and also have a tendency to be less educated and receive less nutrition than smaller families might. This debate is clearly brought out in episode one as both Isaiah's family and Mr, Majanis family sit out for breakfast. In **Fig 4.10**, Martha shakes her head when she sees the only remaining flour as she prepares porridge for her family. Comparatively, while Martha is struggling to feed her family (**Fig 4.12**), Mr. Majani household can afford a decent breakfast with tea, bread, juice and

assorted fruits for breakfast (**Fig 4.11**). These objects on the setting (food stuff) support the argument that homes with many children often become poor and stay poor and also have a tendency to receive less nutrition than smaller families might.



Fig 4.10: Martha checks out the remaining flour to make porridge. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 4.11: Majani's family having breakfast (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

There is also the psychological degradation that comes with raising a big family with limited resources. In episode two, Martha is sacked from work and on getting home she finds Isaiah with a new hoe. This torments her psychologically as she gets into the house and begins to cry. She cannot understand how Isaiah would opt to buy a new hoe while there is no food to eat. With the new hoe the drama brings the psychological degradation associated with lack of enough resources to feed a family. From these discussions *SIRI* manages to present the economic and psychological degradation associated with lack of FP through the *mise-en-scene* element of *setting* together with objects on the set.



Fig 4.12: Isaiahs family outside his mud hut having breakfast. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 4.13: Isaiah listens to Martha cry at the background. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Other than the degradation that is associated with lack of FP, *setting* highlights on different barriers that inhibit the uptake of FP. Personal beliefs and values shaped by both culture and religion can inhibit the uptake of FP (Srikanthan & Reid, 2008). Most people especially in Africa believe they are not complete without a boy child in the family. African traditions and some other cultures in the world have always looked at the girl child as a lesser child. Like many other women, Martha is forced to conceive over and over again in order to bear a boy child resulting to a big family that she cannot provide for. Isaiah and Martha's religion does not articulate norms relevant to family planning nor does it communicate compliance. According to McQuillan (2004), religion will affect fertility behaviour when it: (1) articulate norms relevant to fertility; (2) can communicate these values and promote compliance; and (3) is central to the social identity of its followers. Isaiah bible (**Fig 4.14**) is a symbol of the religious bondage that causes Martha not to seek any sort of family planning. Through the bible *SIRI* is able to stress how religion can hinder an individual from making informed decisions concerning their families and health.



Fig 4.14 Isaiah Scolds Martha for leaving the children alone at home
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

The role of the male partner is also crucial in the uptake of in FP. A man can have a positive influence in the uptake of FP as the man is known to be the head of the household and in many cases; women are forced to comply with their decisions. When Isaiah finds the pills Martha received from Wilmina, he not only scolds her (**Fig 4.14**) but also he declares days of prayer and fasting (**Fig 4.15**). Later in the drama where Martha presents him with a condom, he disgustingly throws it away showing no compliance to the idea of family planning. The condom and the daily pills are significant *props* in the theme being cast stressing the role of the male partner in the uptake of a FP method.



Fig 4.15: Isaiah scolds Martha over family planning pills. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)



Fig 4.16 Isaiah take his family through prayers and fasting. (Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

Where there is compliance, there are various options that a woman has in regards to choosing a FP method. Family planning clinics are sources of knowledge for birth spacing and help make known the benefits of spacing births (Gold, et al., 2009). Eager to confirm if she is pregnant, Truphosa visits the clinic to consult with sister immaculate on why she feels nauseous after taking the daily pill. During this visit, Truphosa is taken through the various family planning methods that a woman can choose from.



Fig 4.17: Sister immaculate takes Truphosa through the various family planning options
(Courtesy PSI, *SIRI* DVD)

The hospital *setting* (**Fig 4. 17**) of the serial lent itself well to the realities of dealing with family planning. The *setting* is appropriate for the action taking place and *Props* and decor placed on the scene; various family planning methods and wall posters further play a more active function in the drama in the construction of the theme of family planning and the importance of visiting the clinic for consultation.

Based on these discussions, *setting* and *props* contribute towards emerging themes on family planning. What gives significance to vicarious influence is that observers can acquire lasting attitudes, emotional reactions and behavioral proclivities towards persons, places or things that have been associated with modeled emotional experiences (Bandura 2001). The audience can relate Martha's *setting* as a consequence of not taking up a FP method. While it is the notion of social cognitive theory that tailored communications are viewed as more relevant and credible and are easily remembered (Kreuter, et al 1991), through the aspect of *setting* and *props*, the theme of FP is relevant and credible and one can identify the consequences of modeled behaviour. Various *Settings* corresponds to reality in Kenya and by so doing *SIRI* renders a coherent entertainment education narrative while disseminating FP related information.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The goal of this research was to examine *mise-en-scene* in a serial drama edutainment. This research illuminates how *setting*, an element of *mise-en-scene* enables a serial drama such as *SIRI* to accomplish its edutainment. Bandura's SCT formed the basis for the study and this chapter provides a summary answer to the three research questions in this study. This is followed by a discussion of the *setting* to the work of film critics, health communicators, and film producers and also suggests directions for future research.

5.2 Summary of findings

The first research question sought to identify to what extent *setting* can function on the plot of *SIRI*. It is the findings of this study that *setting* helped craft a drama that accurately fits the Kenyan context. The director's selection of the various *settings* corresponds with what is going on in the story world. The investigation found that *setting* plays a number of functions in the drama. (1) *Setting* provides a place in which the actors move thus physically defining their space as well as gives the characters an avenue to move, interact and trade their secrets. (2) *Setting* is used in the drama to depict changes in plot lines as each plot is set in the confines of the main character home before it is taken to the tea picking fields for further debate. (3) *Setting* further takes up a symbolic stand as a visual sign by calling attention to various elements of *setting* such as weather and the size and nature of the set to suggest to the viewer the circumstances in which the story is taking place. In deed we cannot account for the power of the set without including the inter-textual significance that the *prop* provides in the *setting*. Various *settings* are decked

with objects and decor that make them realistic for the action taking place. However the study also established that *SIRI* includes so many plots and tries to include each plot in every episode resulting to major portions of different stories being omitted from the plot thus the audience are forced to assume, without having to witness it. Though the case where properly conceived functions of *setting* on the plot were identified.

The second research question sought to identify the relationship between *setting* and characterization in *SIRI*. In filming, the process of developing each character is important. This includes; showing the character's appearance, displaying the character's actions, revealing the character's thoughts, letting the character speak, and getting the reactions of others. *SIRI* has a large cast who all try to make a contribution to the drama. Though not all characters are described through *setting*, the study findings are that (1), description of Characters through their surrounding help characters attain a unique richness of detail as it emphasizes the performers and gives them relevance for instance in the case of Martha and Isaiah. (2) Through *setting* or through the environment that a character is put, the audience is able to decipher information about the character for example their psychological implications as well as consequences of behaviour. Such characters appear attractive and can be remembered even after not appearing for some time. (3) *Setting* also contributes to the identification of positive, negative and transitional role models in the drama.

Research questions three sought to identify if *setting* can be said to contribute to the realization of emerging themes. *SIRI* lends itself to be an entertainment education initiative because of the many themes presented throughout the drama, which include HIV/AIDS and FP. This study findings are that; (1) *Setting* was able to convey the Kenyan experience of FP as it captures the emotional, physical and social degradation associated with lack of family planning in the Kenyan

community. This was done through the size and nature of various *settings* and objects placed on the set. (2) *Setting* was also able to raise the argument on the role of the male partner in FP as well as possible barriers that can impede the uptake of FP. (3) One aim of *SIRI* was to encourage the uptake of services offered by the ministry of health and this was well captured in the drama by discouraging sharing of family planning pills and presenting Majani clinic as the best place to seek family planning services and VCT services. This also includes the various family planning methods that a woman can choose from. (4) To some extent *setting* was also able to bring out some themes regarding HIV/AIDS; HIV testing, Prevention, and living positively if tested positive. However, several arguments concerned with HIV/AIDS came out through dialogue. While in general *Setting* provided the backdrop for the unfolding action, the drama omitted *props* that would have made a contribution to the thematic aspect of the serial drama.

5.3 Conclusion

Setting is vital to E-E productions taking the serial drama format. That vitality is the subject of this thesis. This study concludes that *Setting* is an integral part of the whole E-E serial drama production process. This conclusion is also supported by social cognitive theory assertion that if viewers do not find a situation realistic they may not adopt the proposed behaviour (Bandura 2000, 2002, Barbosa 2005). As a technique *mise-en-scene* is a visual sign and viewers according to Bordwell & Thompson (2001) judge *mise-en-scene* by standards of realism. If we are to recover the importance of *setting* in communicating health theme, we must attend to how different *settings* give meaning to actor and produce meaning for the audience. As each producer of a message relies on its recipients for it to function as intended (Kress & Leeuwe, 1996), producers of E-E serial drama must understand the viewer's cultural context so that they may

accurately use relevant elements that will enable craft a drama that communicates the intended message.

Entertainment education serials focus not on events, but on individual personalities. This is because characters act as the models from which audience learn not only behaviour but also consequences of behaviour. Since acting can seem mysterious as characters take us to the world of the film (Barsam, 2004), it is the conclusion of this study that much planning and direction should go into achieving the effects of a performance. Character and *setting* go hand in hand. Just as we are affected by our environment so are the characters we develop. It's important to know where your characters comes from, where they currently live, work, hang out or spends their recreational time. Identified is that characters described through their physical surroundings in *SIRI* remain relevant and are not easily forgotten even if they do not appear on the screen for a while. Since viewers are more likely to adopt behaviour performed by attractive characters than the behaviour of unattractive characters (Moriarty & Harrison, 2008), *setting* can help craft well rounded characters and enhance a serial drama edutainment by indicating character personalities as well as consequences of behaviour.

What gives significance to vicarious influence is that observers can acquire lasting attitudes, emotional reactions and behavioral proclivities towards persons, places or things that have been associated with modeled emotional experiences (Bandura, 2001). In such a serial drama addressing health issues related to HIV/AIDS, *props* such as test kits, HIV medication, condoms should not be tangential but should be both searing visual emblems and vital participants in the action taking place in the *setting*. In the overall serial drama, they should be part of the material fabric of a serial drama. Such *props* when enlivened by the actor's touch, charged by the dialogue, and quickened in the spectator's imagination, they take on a life of their own as they

weave in and out of the drama action. This conclusion is based on SCT that tailored communications are viewed as more relevant and credible and are easily remembered (Kreuter et al; 1991). *Settings* and *props* are thus not just a collection of images; when properly conceived and executed it these elements have the aptitude to express the core meaning of a production; expressing themes, commenting on the performance as well as driving the plot.

5.4 Recommendations

The findings of this study optimistically will be useful to media professionals, health communicators as well as researchers who are all still exploring new ways of designing and embedding health messages on story lines of films and serial dramas. The study hopes to show that *mise-en-scene* can be of significance in a serial dramas edutainment. A discussion of the utility of *mise-en-scene* to the work of film critics, health communicators, and film producers follows.

5.4.1 Recommendations for film critics

For film critics, *mise-en-scene* is a useful technique to form the basis of film commentary. One limitation of the *mise-en-scene* technique is that it varies across cultures and thus it is hard to be generalized across all cultures but can work very well when tailored to suit different cultures. Another limitation with *mise-en-scene* is that what may seem realistic today may look stylized years to come or unrealistic. For this reasons the study of *mise-en-scene* should be made part of E-E research to keep up with the times.

5.4.2 Recommendation for producers

This study also has some significance for producers. Understanding the *mise-en-scene* technique can help craft dramas that can hold and maintain the attention of the audience. Producers do not have to shy away from producing E-E serial drama with the fear of not making profits. With proper narratives and creative use of production techniques such as *mise-en-scene*, producers can add educational topics in the story lines of their productions and reap great profits. In the context of entertainment-education serial drama, conducting such an analysis during the pre-production stage and post production can help producers of entertainment education serial drama determine if aspects such as *setting* and *props* are appropriate throughout the drama. Such an analysis and pre-testing before production can help producers tailor *setting* not only to act as a backdrop for events taking place but also to express the core meaning of a production; expressing themes, commenting on the performance as well as driving the plot.

5.4.3 Recommendations for health communicators

Given the abundance in the use of entertainment education serial drama in Kenya, something must be done to break through the tendency of not using various production techniques to persuade the population to rethink behavior change. To do so means understanding the effect of techniques such as *mise-en-scene* on serial drama toward social change. At the same time, research should be conducted on other techniques such as *cinematography*, *editing* and *sound* among other techniques employed during production. In the ever-changing media environment, researchers should continue to look toward the changing media habits of their audiences and tailor *mise-en-scene* to suit their audience growing and changing needs. Although this study was conducted on a serial drama, the technique is also relevant to film, and other formats

including documentaries. Since this technique can influence meaning produced it is recommendation of this study that an analysis of various *mise-en-scene* aspects be conducted during post exposure research.

5.5 Directions for future research.

This study suggests that more research is needed to understand how best to use production technique in E-E initiatives instead of continually using dialogue to send thematic patterns. This study suggests that more research is needed to understand the edutainment potential of various production techniques. One of the most important contributions of this study is that it acknowledges *setting* as an important element to be considered when producing an entertainment education serial drama and also its analysis should be considered while conducting formative research. None of the *mise-en-scene* elements work alone; they work together complementing each other. It is thus the recommendation of this study that instead of looking at one element at a time a *mise-en-scene* analysis should encompass all other elements; *setting, props, character movement, colour and lighting*. It is the sincere hope of this researcher that more research and resources will be directed towards the productions techniques used when creating E-E productions.

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