

This study is a critical response to the need of having an in depth study of plays presented at the Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival. This Festival, which was started in 1959, has received scanty scholarly attention yet it has provided an important avenue in educating and entertaining Kenyan people. Our study limited itself to the plays presented by the primary schools to the Festival. Primary schools have participated in this Festival from 1980. Using Theory of Children Literature and the Stylistic Approach as the axis of operation, this study was conceived to analyse some of the winning plays presented by the primary schools to the Festival. Five plays were selected and treated to an intensive reading and analysis. The selection was on the basis of availability; thus the first five winning plays we got from the schools were used. The analysis entailed a thorough examination of the plot, use of language, character and characterization as well as the thematic concerns raised in the scripts. While the Stylistic Approach guided the study in the overall stylistic and thematic appreciation of the works, the Theory of Children's Literature was used to create focus on the scripts as children's plays. During the analysis it was found that the selected plays stood the test of literariness. They were imaginatively created and embellished with stylistic devices worth literary attention. At the same time the playwrights tackled issues that affect the contemporary society. However the plays were not written from a child's standpoint as they ought to have been. They tackled issues from an adult's point of view. The language used was found to be too complex for a person whose mental capacity is not fully developed. This study therefore confirms the veracity of the concerns raised in the reports by the adjudicators and rapporteurs of the 2002 and 2003 editions of the Kenya National Schools and Colleges Drama Festivals. The study recommends serious critical appraisals of the plays presented at the Festival because it is a fertile ground from which plays can be published. Scholars of literature and the general reader interested in children's studies will find this study useful in their literary pursuits. Creative writers and publishers of children's literary works may also find the insights in this study useful in their work.