

**THE THEME OF INTEGRITY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: AN ANALYSIS OF  
SELECT CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines how writers of selected children's story books use characters and setting in order to present the theme of integrity. The research examines children's texts co-authored by P.L.O. Lumumba, Rebecca Nandwa, Pius Kidombo, and Vicki Okumu under the 'Integrity Series' by Longhorn Publishers. Through juxtaposing characters who have good and bad character traits, the authors are able to present their views about integrity. The settings also are a means of exploration of the institutions that the characters operate in, so as to establish what moral and immoral behaviour is within the given spaces. This study uses the sociological theory, as proposed by theorist Peter Burke as well as the writer Okot P'Bitek, to analyze, interpret and evaluate the primary texts. Both of these scholars posit that sociological literary criticism helps a reader understand literature in its social context; it analyses social reality. Using the sociological theoretical framework, literature is interpreted from its social function of storing, interpreting and transmitting the values of a given society. Thus this theory helps unearth the writers' views concerning behaviour that represents integrity and the character that does not. The study also relies on the formalist critical approach, as advanced by Vladimir Propp, to analyze, interpret and evaluate the texts. This theory focuses on structural elements of the text, and in the case of this study, elements relating to setting and how it is used to present content. I argue that character traits such as nepotism, hypocrisy, theft, greed, and corruption are vices that are condemned in the texts under study while generosity, honest, kindness; indulging others in good ways are applauded. Both adult and children characters are reprimanded for having negative character traits but are lauded for having positive ones. The institutions that these characters populate have also been analysed so as to determine the manner in which the settings have been used by the characters. The wrong use of the spaces by the characters to engage in vices has been condemned while the good use of these spaces has been extolled.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

One of the critical functions of literature is to give the reader the experience of living through the circumstances that the characters go through. The reader gets an impression of the story and reflects on it. By giving the reader an opportunity to rethink their perspectives of life through the characters, they can develop in one way or another. Children, being in their formative years, are more likely to be influenced by stories they are told or read. Otten (2002) argues that with guidance from parents, and teachers, the books that children read can “help our children to reflect, to decide, to become a principled person” (7). Similarly, Njeru (2013) posits that ‘literature can be used to foster in young adults a sense of responsibility for their actions and feelings. This literature can provide young adults with a means for transcending the problems they encounter as they grow up. It can lead them to a healthy self-awareness’ (2). Thus, according to Njeru, literature can effectively encourage a healthy change in children.

There are myriads of negative influences on children as they grow up today; irresponsibility, dishonesty, and corruption are some of the vices that the world is facing and it is this world in which children have to grow. In most social situations, it is the adults that are engaged in these vices, and the outcome is often splashed in the media for all, including children, to see and read. The children may grow up considering these vices as the norm; thus, it is imperative that they are guided by what is right and wrong. Apart from parental guidance, inculcating values through pointing out the vices and virtuous behaviour within creative works, in children’s formative years is a great way to make them understand the world at an early stage. This is not to suggest that children’s literature or reading stories necessarily and automatically leads to character development. From the book, *Developing Character through Literature*, we are

reminded that “fiction does not intend to teach something specific, such as, being honest pays dividends” (7). Yet, it is easy for many adults to point at creative books that pushed them to rethink their views or perhaps even those that brought about changes in their thought patterns or influenced their character and helped to make them the persons they are today. Overall, the underlying intention of writers who write children’s story books that carry moral messages is the hope that when the children read these stories, they will expand their perspectives of the world and help them understand and distinguish between right and wrong. Even though the children may choose different paths later in life, it goes without saying that those who learn matters integrity at an early are likely to practice it for a long time.

Integrity is a basic moral quality for both children and adults. The term integrity comes from the Latin word ‘integritas’ and refers to something that is ‘undiminished or unimpaired’. (*Classic Latin-English Dictionary: A Latin Dictionary*). It originally referred to virtuous or unblemished character. But according to *Glare’s Oxford Latin Dictionary*, the verb ‘integer’ refers to anything that is ‘whole, complete’ ‘not previously touched, ‘not impaired physically, ‘virgin’, and not violated’.

It seems that anything can be said to possess integrity as long as it is ‘entire’, ‘intact’, ‘unharmd’, ‘untouched’, and ‘unspoilt’. On the other hand, things that are spoilt, harmed, impaired and are worse than they are supposed to be are said to have lost their integrity. Therefore, the original meaning of the term presupposes an ideal condition from which any deviation is not simply a change but an abnormality and deterioration. It is a change for the worse. A thing that has integrity is as good as it can be and cannot be improved. This explains why the Latin term ‘integer’ refers to something that is unaltered and undamaged.

*The Oxford Dictionary* captures a significantly diverse meaning of the term. It defines integrity as “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles” These moral principles may include faithfulness, respect, decency, fidelity, responsibility, respect, living peaceably, caring,



civility, doing one's best as well as a set of other acceptable ethical and moral standards. This will be the working definition for this project.

Even though there may be no universally acceptable ethical and moral standards, integrity demands that one does nothing that will interfere with the rights of others. Character development in children is something that many parents do not agonise over as much as they do academic achievement and other aspirations. Parents often think that children can acquire good character without it being consciously being instilled in them. They believe that children acquire good behaviour naturally. However, studies have shown that there is need to consciously instil positive values in children. Reading of books that inculcate good morals is one way of instilling such values.

Almerico (2014), for example, argues that literature is essential in providing ethical values to the reader. Since reading is an interaction between readers and their texts, this helps them get an idea of what they could do if they are entangled in similar events. This enables them to assess situations facing them and make prompt resolutions. Children like identifying with the protagonists or heroes as their role models. They also prefer recognition with those who have acceptable proper conduct in the society. By nature children are inquisitive. Therefore giving them good literature increases their urge to cultivate moral behaviour. The author of children's literature books hence has an uphill task of crafting good literature that stimulates their minds. This literature is responsive to the demands of their culture which explicitly campaign for practicing of acceptable virtues in the society such as personal integrity. Such literature thereby would build up children's perception and sensitivity to societal happenings. Contemporary children's literature treats contemporary issues in ways that highlight the concerns of children.

Paritas Trivedi (1991) notes that that children's literature ought to pleasure children, given that they have a short attention span. They need literature that captures their imagination and

thoughts. In the process, values such as integrity will be inculcated into them. Price-Mitchell (2017) also posits that children are not born with integrity or related values such as honesty, honour, respect, authenticity, social responsibility, and the courage to stand up for what they believe is right. Instead, children learn these from adults whom they consider their role models, peers, and literature. Allowing children to interact with literature cultivates wisdom in them; it moulds them into maturity. This implies that literature makes it easier for children to understand their personality by empowering them to take a stand on the values they believe in. Because a mature attitude is based on understanding and interest, exposing children to literature enhances this early as they grow. They will display their maturity through tolerance and friendliness to the people around them. This study relies on the beneficial nature of literature in general and children's literature in particular to change perspectives of the young one's on matters integrity. The research focuses on selected children's texts under the 'Integrity Series' by Longhorn Publishers and how issues pertaining to integrity are presented. Moral principles such as honesty and integrity, forgiveness, courage, and self-sacrifice, will be discussed as these are represented by various characters

### **Synopses of the Texts**

This study will focus on texts that include *Tukutu Learns a Lesson*, *Tukutu and the Shopkeeper*, *Tukutu's Red Pinpop*, *Fearless Jumanne*, *Jumanne's Letter*, *Jumanne Meets the President*, *Wema in Hospital*, *Wema and his Friends*, *Wema and Uncle Kasi*, as well as *The Politician*, *Matumaini School*, *The Public officer*. The texts are co-authored by PLO Lumumba, Rebecca Nandwa, Pius Kidombo, and Vicki Okumu. The Tukutu Series has Tukutu, a class one pupil as the protagonist. The first sets of books deal with the growth and character formation and growth trajectory of three children: Tukutu, Jumanne and Wema. The next set of books focuses on institutions within the Kenyan society as well as the key individuals at the centre of these

institutions are in focus. The institutions dealt with are those in which children and adults interact a lot and where matters dealing with integrity are displayed significantly.

The first book, *Tukutu Learns a Lesson*, introduces him as a rude and mean-mannered child who does not respect his parents nor care about his brother Shamte. He does not help around the home despite being on holiday. The text highlights his journey to development by learning his lesson the hard way when his mother peppers the apples that he has been stealing when everyone else is asleep. By the end of the first story, he changes his ways and apologises to his parents for being notoriously stubborn.

In the second book, *Tukutu's Red Pinpop*, we meet a totally changed Tukutu who leads the way in encouraging his friend, Kido to observe personal hygiene by brushing his teeth and avoiding eating sweets. The story also highlights Kido's habit of taking his mother's money without his permission without feeling guilty that he is engaging in theft. The authors use Tukutu's growth from the first book to pass on the lessons he learnt to his friends at school. In the end, Kido changes his ways after understanding that taking his mother's money is actually theft.

The final text on Tukutu, *Tukutu and the Shopkeeper*, covers nepotism and how children are exposed to it from an early age. When Tukutu's mother sends him to Mr Boma's shop to buy sugar and milk, the shopkeeper refuses to sell to him because he is not his relative. Despite selling to the other buyers, he insists that Tukutu has to pay extra if he wants sugar and milk. When Tukutu's mother comes to the shop, she is given the same treatment with Mr Boma being frank and telling her that he only sells to his relatives. However, with the intervention of the neighbours and other buyers, Mr Boma realizes that he could lose all his customers through his acts of nepotism. He changes and promises to be fair to all. The Tukutu stories highlight his

development as a child and exposure to some of the circumstances that breed questionable integrity.

Jumanne's stories also highlight the strength and growth of Jumanne. In *Fearless Jumanne*, the authors introduce her as strong-willed child who does not cow to the whims of the school bullies that she meets at her new school. She resists Matata Bin Mashaka's attempts to threaten and recruit her into her team and successfully shows the other pupils how to cope with such bullies by reporting him to the teachers. The story is a lesson in the beginnings of corruption and impunity where Matata uses his parents' wealth to buy the other pupil's homework. He also threatens them against reporting them to the teachers saying that his parents are influential that the teachers cannot do anything to him. Jumanne's defiance shows that despite coming from a poor family, one can still make a change in the society. In *Jumanne's Letter*, the authors continue to highlight her strong-willed attitude when she takes the initiative to write to the president to tell him about what her family is going through. In her letter, she asks the president to extend a helping hand to her family because they are not different from the other children he has been helping. Joni, Lulu's brother who is a journalist, picks the letter and takes it to the television station where it is read during news hour.

The last text in this series, *Jumanne Meets the President*, is about Jumanne's meeting with the president after he reads the letter. Her good-nature finally pays off when she is invited to the State House alongside her classmates and teachers and she is tasked to choose who travels with her. The story is the culmination of her small efforts and what individual efforts can to bring a change to the society.

The Integrity Series also present Wema's growth in three texts. In *Wema and Uncle Kasi*, Wema is presented as an inquisitive child who does not let things go past him without questions. When his uncle flouts traffic rules and finally bribes a police officer to get off the hook, Wema puts him to task to understand his actions and why the police officer let him go.

Even though he seems innocent and does not understand. He makes his uncle realise his mistake, apologise and promise never to repeat the same.

In *Wema and his Friends*, the story presents him as a brilliant but easily corruptible. His friends convince him to accept toys so that they can copy his homework. This goes on until his mother discovers the toys that he realises he has been doing the wrong thing. His acceptance of his mistakes and apologies also lead to the liberation of his friends who eventually learn to be responsible by doing their homework.

*Wema in Hospital* highlights how negligence in public hospitals affects even children. When Wema falls sick and is rushed t

o the hospital, he is unable to get a quick medical attention because the nurses expect to be paid before they can serve any patient. His father decides to take him to another hospital, but Wema revisits the incident when he recovers and asks his parents to take action against the hospital so that no other patient suffers from their corrupt practices and negligence. Indeed, when they report the matter to the police, the hospital staff are found guilty and asked to change their ways, improving the service delivery at the hospital. These changes are attributed to the intervention of Wema who does not remain silent when he realises there is a problem at the hospital.

Other than having stories that focus on specific individuals, the Integrity Series also focuses on stories that focus on institutions and the characters there. *Matumani Schoolis* presented as a model school for success despite being a school for the poor. Even the rich admire the school

and want their children to learn there. As the name matumaini suggests, it gives hope to the learners through its teachers such as Mr Shine, who is conveniently named so because of his care for the pupils and dedication to ensure they get the best out of the school. Mr Shine leads the school by doing the right thing even in the middle of opposition from the area chief who frames him by planting bhang in his car. However, the truth finally comes out and he is set free.

*The Politician* presents a corrupt, self-confident, and arrogant politician, Mr Tumbo, who thinks that money can buy him everything including people's votes. However, in his campaigns he fails to realise that the citizens are getting wiser and have prepared to teach him a lesson by voting his opponent who leads a less glamorous campaign and remains untainted by corruption. The voters thus use the elections to show their powers over the politicians.

*The Public Officer* is about Afande Matata, a police officer based at the West Post Police Station. The story begins with people marching towards West Post Police Station demanding that the officer has to go. Pupils of Matumaini School rush to witness whatever is going on. Mr. Kipchumba, who is crime investigator, talks with Mr. Manga, the headmaster at Matumaini School explaining the nature of complaints against Matata. He is accused of taking bribes from business people, takes their items and threatens to shoot them if they complain. He also takes bribes from drivers of Public service Vehicles who flout traffic rule.

The story ends with Mr. Manga inviting Mr. Kipchumba to Matumaini School to address the pupils about the evils of crime, parts of contents of the law and rights of a Kenyan citizen. The above stories highlight the issues of integrity from different angles including the perspective of different characters within different settings. The intention of this study is to make an analysis of how the writers have dealt with the said issues of integrity.

## **Statement of the problem**

In our society, integrity matters usually are discussed only about adults. These issues are examined through the media platform. However, writers use integrity in their writing to present their perspectives of how young children can learn correct values. Ngugi (1981) says that it is the values that a people have that are the basis of their collective and individual image of self and their identity since culture is an ideological expression of the totality of their activities. Children in their formative years are influenced by the images formed in their minds in a significant way. Literature that deals with issues of integrity helps affirm their values. The purpose of this study thus is to analyse how writers use setting and characters in the presentation of issues that focus on integrity in the context of children's literature. The study seeks answers for the following questions emerging from the texts under scrutiny: Do children's narratives address key issues dealing with morality? How do children relate with the matters integrity that the narratives present? How do children express themselves in the integrity stories? Answers to these questions will be key in addressing the research problem in focus.

## **Objectives of the study**

This study sets out to achieve the following:

1. To explore how the writers characterize the theme of integrity.
2. To examine how the setting is employed by the authors to advance their plots.

## **Hypotheses**

The study hypothesizes that:

1. The authors use both adult and children characters to present the theme of integrity.
2. The writers employ the settings of the stories to realize their plots and content development.

## **Justification of the Study**

Integrity issues within a nation are as varied and as diverse as the people who inhabit that nation. Books for children are often written based on the idea of forming and building moral and sound character. In many nations, and Kenya is no exception, the problems of uprightness in character within the nation are often viewed as problems of adults. Often, we do not think of children as being at the center of these problems. Secondly, these vices occur within institutions in which children are key players. The books selected for this study are designed in such a way that they put both the adults and children at the center of challenges that come about as a result of bad values and poor character development as exemplified within institutions in the society. This study is justified by the fact that it is inclusive in its attempt to analyze the nature of the vices emanating from poor moral behavior, especially in how both adults and children can deal with these challenges.

Moreover, Kenya is currently facing a severe lack of integrity, which is primarily manifested in various levels of the country's leadership. Corruption and the moral degradation that come with the absence of integrity is cancer that threatens the national values that we claim to uphold. In fact, the country is at a point where it is nearly normal to be corrupt and in lack of integrity. The prevalence of corruption, nepotism, and related vices directly affect the growth of any nation negatively and affect the morality of young children. This study examines the effectiveness of children's stories in as tools for pointing out such vices and with the hope of changing perspectives of the readers. We intend to show that as in other methods of passing information that influences children like mass media, stories are not inferior. The integrity series is a unique collection of stories, which present the reality of the society and seeks to influence children to follow what is right. They are worth studying given their importance in shaping the future of children and largely that of the nation.



## **Literature Review**

This literature review looks at how other scholars and theorists have captured matters of integrity in children's stories. The section begins with a discussion of works on the concept of integrity outside the text and how various authors have used portrayed it in their works. Informational narratives are an essential part of children's literature and ways for young people to understand and appreciate their world and those who share it with them. They educate and socialize children on acceptable mannerisms in the society.

This study aims at demonstrating how writers of children's stories use setting and characters to present issues of integrity in their works. Obi et al. (2010) opines that "children's literature is often aimed at teaching moral lessons. His opinion is informed by the fact that literature shapes the character of children (34). The study of literature for children enhances their social awareness, which in this context means to have a comprehensive knowledge of the people around them. It is the practical understanding of other people's perspectives, and this can only be based on understanding and appreciation of oneself and of one's own culture' (22). However, it is worth noting that readers are not passive assimilators of textual information but actively construct meaning by applying their prior knowledge of the content of the text. Therefore, this means that readers interpret texts differently. Obi et al argue for the change in attitude and mannerisms, which come as a result of embracing literature.

Obi et al. has further has observed that "literature is used to produce a comprehensive awareness of other people." (11). For children, it prepares them for what we want them to be in the future. Therefore, exposing them to texts that present moral values, we want them to adapt to be responsible in the future. Children's literature, therefore, needs a continual review to be sure the young ones are learning the right things. Critics and educators should appraise the books and recommend what is best for children. This will enhance respect for oneself and

for others among the readers since adults have given the books a clean bill of health. Having children's texts that talk about integrity to children is one way of involving them in the national conversation and encouraging them to take a stand. The hope here is to have the literature influence and transform them positively. This study agrees with Obi's argument that reading of literature for young children is to help them understand their individuality consciously; such texts assist in developing in young children, the ability to choose and consciously defend values in life. However, whereas Obi's work focuses on how the child reader responds to books that teach moral values, this study analyses the manner in which writers present these values by focusing on the role played by both adult and children characters within specific settings.

Odaga (1985) posits that literature that has been written for children should not be a mediocre material but should be able to please them, stimulate their imagination, build up their sensitivity to all kinds of experiences, develop their perceptive powers, and help them to grow up in a cultural environment responsive to African and international world. Odaga argues that literature awakens in children their environmental and cultural responses. She contends that writing about integrity in children's literature awakens their moral judgment, which then enables them to respond towards others consciously. This study has analyzed the selected texts as a way of unearthing how characters, within institutions, respond to experiences that shape their moral character.

In yet another contribution to children's literature in Kenya, Odaga (2005) argues that in most Kenyan communities, storytelling is used to teach certain values. She adds that art itself is not a monopoly of a group of people or certain individuals; anyone can have the opportunity, and the platform to educate through storytelling sessions. At an early age, children are exposed to such storytelling sessions whereby the audience is entertained or educated on their culture. Both the storyteller and the audience may benefit through improving their knowledge of their language and culture. This study has acknowledged the fact that stories has far reaching impact

in shaping the values that children learn and as a result, the study analyses what these values and vices are and how characters, within settings, deal with them.

Brooks (1995) posits that literature plays the role of strengthening the formation of values and feelings of solidarity, equity and firmly establishes the qualities of tolerance, compassion, sharing, caring, civic responsibility and ability to resolve conflicts through non-violent means and critical awareness. One consciously values oneself and others and portrays qualities of humanity. Children's books are tools among others in achieving this goal. The books play essential roles in meeting their particular needs. For example, generally, children's literature creates a unique world into which the child will go willingly and actively. Specifically, these texts foster reading habits in children to provide pleasure entertainment and enhance their educational development. Brooks posits that children's literature cultivates the formation of values of unity. From the foregoing, it is clear that literature is a unique art that presents behaviour that people see as good or bad and which children are expected to emulate or reject, respectively.

Helen Mwanzi (1982) argues that literature is crucial to the mental, psychological and social development of a child. It stimulates children's imagination and sharpens their awareness of the world around them. These essential social functions make literature a vital tool for the process of socialization. It is a means of gaining a more in-depth understanding of other people's culture, which can serve as a basis for building better understanding between communities and even nations. It is through literature that one also discovers that other people have the same thought and feelings as theirs. Children love books that reflect their perceptions of the world in which there are characters with which they can identify. They read stories about other children; those that deal with youthful problems and those concerning their forbearers and how these problems are solved. Such literature influences the child that reads them, giving him or her a chance to enjoy new impressions and receive new ideas, which will illuminate

how they live with the people around them. The child can gain something permanent that can never be taken away. Mwanzi clearly indicates that values are culturally determined. In fact children's perceptions are moulded within these cultural perspectives. This study has analysed the issues pertaining to integrity within selected texts that have been written with the Kenyan cultural context in mind.

Almerico (2014) posits that 'good literature with character-development themes has the power to develop, shape, and reinforce dispositions essential for instilling in students important core ethical values.' (3) He argues that creating character-themed lessons that combine high-quality appropriate children's literature with effective literature is important. Teachers should, therefore, find books that will teach character and literacy concepts to children. This demonstrates the importance of good literature in enhancing character growth among children. Almerico further argues that character education is important for character development in children. He asserts that the goal of character education is to help students to become responsible, respectful contributing members of the society. He says that the characters children meet in a book can have a profound influence on them almost as strong of an impact as that of real people they know and meet. Reading character-themed books with and to children will help them absorb and develop the values of strong character. He examines the issue of character development through character education, showing the importance of teaching values to children. Whereas character formation is an important aspect of reading stories, this study focused on the values that have been presented in the selected texts through characterization and setting.

Trivedi (1991) highlights the cognitive and aesthetic function of literature. She undertakes to find out the role of imagery in contemporary children's literature about the impression of the young reader. In her study of the concept of imagery in children's literature in Kenya as a factor, which is involved in changing the reader's values and outlook in life, she argues that

young readers are motivated to emulate positive images, unlike the negative ones that they recognized but ended up rejecting them. This study has focused on analysing of the negative and positive behaviour presented in selected children's books.

Githiora (1979) investigates how the children's worldview is formed and how it is shaped and influenced by ideas derived from literature. She examines the relevance of some of the children's literature by analysing the images projected in them, outlining that certain images in children's stories give the attitudes and the worldview of the writers. These ideas are capable of shaping the value concept of the young readers because they provide an avenue to argue that writers have a direct impact on the outlook of the young reader through their literature. This leads to the information, which is beneficial to children in all societies and of the age bracket. Values shaped by the images in children enable them to be people of integrity in the society. Githiora's view of literature as a major influence of children's values is an important observation. However, this study has undertaken the basics of analysing the values that have been presented in the selected children's storybooks in relation to characterization and setting.

Rahim (2012) acknowledges that there are some ways that one might morally educate a child. He states that presenting to children stories with moral lessons to elicit favourable behaviour and discourage unfavourable behaviour is one of the ways. He advocates for using moral stories in teaching whether it is among parents, teachers or any person given a responsibility to do so to inculcate attitudes of tolerance, to stimulate courage, gratitude, and responsibility. He further argues that children need to exercise their reasoning and stories seem to create that space for them. He bases his argument on the fact that stories are essential in the child's social development and intellectual growth. Children benefit from stories in attaining social attitudes in early childhood. This research has undertaken to analyse how the settings of stories and characterization have been used to present the theme of integrity.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study uses sociological, literary theories to analyze, interpret and evaluate the primary texts. The rise of sociological, literary criticism is associated with a twentieth-century theorist Burke. Sociological, literary criticism seeks to understand literature in its social context; it analyses social reality. According to Burke, works of art, including literature are “strategic naming of situations” that allows a reader to understand better and “gain a sort of control” over societal happenings through the work of art (542).

Okot P. Bitek (1973) holds the view that ‘literature is a living art and that the best literature never fails to make a profound effect on the society.’ This study examines the relationship between characters and their social representation. The theory is useful for the study in analyzing the settings and the characters' behaviour in response to societal expectation. Under the sociological theoretical framework, literature is interpreted from its social function of storing, interpreting and transmitting the values of a given society.

The study also relies on the formalist critical approach to analyze, interpret and evaluate the texts. This, in turn, has been guided by the objective of discovering the stylistic choices the writers use to pass their message to children intending to transform them. This theory focuses on structural elements of a work of art such as language, structure and the underlying tone the writer uses. This theoretical framework also focuses on the literariness of a text. Vladimir Propp is one of the major proponents of the formalist school of thought, leading the Russian formalists.

New Criticism is another branch of formalism whose significant proponents include Ivor Armstrong Richards, T. S. Eliot, Allen Tate and Cleanth Brooks among others. New Criticism's major argument is that art should exist for art's sake. This study is interested in the stylistic elements that the authors use to create characters and settings in their works. The formalists are interested in reading a text closely with the intention of evaluating it independently.

Ivor Armstrong Richards' argument that theory of criticism must offer both a theory of ‘value’ and theory of communication will guide the analysis of the primary texts in this study. We will use this theory to scrutinize the text with the aim of finding out how the authors use the characterization and setting to bring out the question of integrity.

## **Methodology**

The study set out to investigate how the authors of the twelve selected texts construct characters and utilize setting to advance their plot and bring out their message of integrity. The study relied on a close reading of the primary texts and paying attention to how the authors pass on the messages that they hope will inculcate integrity in children. The study also engaged in extensive reading of secondary texts so as to get insights into the nature of morality based children books.

The study used the formalist theory to unravel the narrative techniques that the author uses to depict the characters and the setting of the stories in the developing the moral values in the society. Understanding the authors' characterization and their manipulation of the setting was useful in understanding the theme of integrity. The sociological, literary criticism was useful in this study in understanding the concept of integrity. The theory was helpful in the study in analyzing the social significance of the story, especially concerning matters of morality in the society.

## **Scope and limitation**

This study is limited to the examination of how authors' use characterization and settings in order to present the theme of integrity. The books in focus are: *Tukutu and the Shopkeeper*, *Tukutu's Red Pinpop*, *Tukutu Learns a Lesson*, *Fearless Jumanne*, *Jumanne's Letter*, *Jumanne Meets the President*, *Wema in Hospital*, *Wema and his Friends*, *Wema and Uncle Kasi*, *The Public Officer*, *The Politician*, and *Matumaini School*.

## **Chapter Outline**

Chapter one introduces the study, discussing the statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis, justification of the study, a review of related literature, methodology, theoretical framework and scope and limitation for the research.



Chapter two examines how characters have been used to present thematic concerns as depicted in the primary texts; *The Integrity Series*, which is a collection of 12 children's stories. Using characterization as an apt way of understanding of themes is essential in clarifying about matters of integrity. As the child dwells in and wonders at the lives lived in the story, they come to know themselves and the world and begin to see that world as something over which they might exercise some control in the characters projected.

Chapter three discusses the use of setting as a literary technique by authors of the texts in the integrity series. The setting of a story is a means of exploration of the world, helping the child to understand principles of morality within given spaces. They assist the child in confirming, to illuminate and to extend their own life experiences in a way that gives them power over certain circumstances.

The last chapter is a conclusion of the study in which the findings are presented and suggestions for future studies are done.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHARACTERIZATION AND INTEGRITY

#### Introduction

This chapter delves into how the authors of the primary texts within “The Integrity Series” use characterization to present the theme of integrity. It focuses on the behaviour of both the adult and children characters and establishes the traits that the writers believe are virtues and which ones are vices. In so doing, the children are encouraged to emulate the virtues and reject the vices.

Like any work of fiction, characters are the drivers of the plot; their actions determine the direction that a story takes and how it impacts the reader. In the primary texts that this study focuses on, the authors of the texts, Lumumba et al., similarly use characterization to advance their plots and pass on the values of integrity to the children. Through child characters, the writers can demonstrate that moral values and matters integrity are transmitted through different media besides children copying them from adults. The texts within “The Integrity Series” present corruption in a simple yet precise manner that children can easily understand. Children are part of the critical institutions that are riddled with corruption in Kenya. In fact, it through these institutions and what going on in them that children learn about what is moral and what is not. For instance, in schools, children are supposed to learn essential life skills and social ethics. A lack of integrity in such places threatens their upbringing by exposing them to corrupt practices as the norm. In these institutions, children are supposed to look up to grownups as they learn to embrace what is right and shun those things considered wrong in the society. They are taught that they have a right to report those engaging bad practices to the law enforcers or relevant authorities within their institutions.

The texts in this study depict children as capable of recognizing and resisting corruption. They are presented as people with emotions and needs just like the grownups. Their position should not be undermined in any way the adults who are supposed to take care of them; they should be given the space to express themselves and learn what values to uphold and what to reject. They should encourage them to talk about their worries and assist them in finding solutions. It is a sign of insincerity and negligence to try to silence children as they try to talk about their fears and what they are passionate about.

In “The Integrity Series”, parents or guardians are portrayed as bearing the greatest responsibility in educating children on right and wrong. Their job is to provide and fast-track the socialization of the children, which is essential even after they reach school-attendance age. Teachers at school also play a significant role in the lives of the children as they emphasize the moral values that the children are required to uphold. They also discourage vices that children may take up as soon as they detect them. This is sometimes achieved through guidance, counseling or even through punishment. Therefore, the society in which children are socialized becomes a mirror through which they reflect upon their behaviours and learn new things. It is understood that children are inquisitive by nature; they will always want to know more about everything that takes place around them. Moreover, they always feel indebted to the adults who take care of them and often do their best to be good. Thus, the adults are charged with the responsibility of bringing the children in an upright manner that prepares them for the future leadership of the country.

### **Child Characters as Agents against Impunity**

This section discusses the role that children can play in the changing the perspective of their peers in school on matters of integrity. I look at the characterization in three texts in “The Integrity Series” where Jumanne is the major character. Her courage and fearlessness bring

into focus some of the moral questions that the country is grappling with and are crucial to understanding this study's core objectives. I read her character as what the authors consider the ideal pupil whom they would want their young readers to emulate in their effort at inculcating integrity in children. I also look at how the authors present the other characters that she interact with and examine how their portrayal help the authors in advancing their themes of integrity and morality.

In *Fearless Jumanne*, Jumanne who is a class three pupil at Busara primary school represents the idea of courage in children by standing up for what she believes is right. While the pupils in her new school seem to be intimidated by Matata bin Mashaka, she feels that she has a role to play in changing their perception of what is right. When all her classmates are silent when Mashaka bullies them, she stands up to him and influences how Mashaka relates with other pupils as well. She is the only one who refuses to accept gifts from him and denies him an opportunity to copy her homework as others had been doing willingly. Mashaka resorts to laziness because he comes from a wealthy family and uses gifts to manipulate his classmates. He also threatens the other children that reporting him to teachers would not work out because his father is rich and the teachers themselves are afraid of punishing him.

The authors' portrayal of Mashaka as a lazy and indolent child who wants to benefit from the hardwork of others brings into focus how children are exposed to matters integrity at an early age. At class three, Mashaka wants to have his way easily through gifts and threats and claims to be untouchable because of the strong connections that he enjoys within the school. He even allies loyalists, pupils who intend to tap into his fame and enjoy the goodies that he brings to school in exchange for their homework. He warns his classmates against reporting him to teachers saying that, "whoever will report me..." (3). The incomplete threat leaves the pupils guessing the consequences of reporting Mashaka would be. Some of them fear that he would beat them up while others do not want to be left out when brings gifts to school as well as an

opportunity to have the rare ride on his bike. However, when Jumanne comes to Busara, Mashaka does not know how to handle a pupil from a poor background who refuses gifts and stands up to his actions. He promises his loyalists that Jumanne would soon join his team because he feels he is irresistible. He says, “We can bet. If she falls into my trap, you will do my homework for a whole week. If she does not, I will give you a packet of sweets. He was sure he would win the bet” (9). The excerpt presents the other pupils as being aware of the fact that Mashaka uses his father’s wealth to trap them so that they can help him overcome his laziness. The fact that they are unable to stand up to him reflect the indifference in the Kenyan society today where citizens do not talk openly or point out corrupt practices if they are benefiting.

However, it turns out in the end that while he may be rich, his classmates have not realized how weak and vulnerable he could be if they stood up to him. Therefore, a single act of courage from Jumanne saves all of them from the terror that Mashaka had been reigning over them. This instance aims at teaching children to stand up and speak against injustices even if their friends consider their decisions unpopular. It calls on the children to stand for what is right even if it means being the only one to talk. Eventually, other people will see the effort and the sense in it and join the fight.

Characterization in the text is deliberate, Lumumba et al. creates the character of Matata bin Mashaka to represent a troublesome pupil who terrorizes his classmates. When Mashaka teases Jumanne for having a funny name, teacher Maarifa informs him that it is his name that is unique and befitting to his behaviour by telling him that, “You should be ashamed of yourself. Do you ever stop to think what your name means? Matata bin Mashaka? Has anybody teased you for having such a name? How would you feel if someone called you Trouble son of Trouble?” (5). Mashaka’s troublesome nature is only contained by Jumanne’s courage who does not bow to his whims. Teacher Maarifa is also conveniently mentioned given that ‘maarifa’ is a Swahili

word for wisdom or good counsel. Indeed, she lets Mashaka understand that his name has more meaning than he thinks which even though silences him, does not change him instantly.

Given the text is set in Kakamega County, one would expect, as it is common in other texts, that the characters would have names identifiable with the communities that reside in the county. However, the authors present with characters whose names cannot be directly associated with a tribe. While the intention may not necessarily be clear, it is evident that one of their goals is to encourage co-existence amongst Kenyan communities that are divided continuously along tribal lines, primarily due to politics. Indeed some of the names of the characters do not make sense but serve their purpose effectively. Like Mashaka wonders, a name like ‘Jumanne Sande’ does not make sense and can be loosely translated to ‘Tuesday Sunday.’ Nevertheless, the authors’ intention of cutting across the tribal spectrum with their messages of integrity are realised in this way.

Because this is a children’s text, the authors choose to limit the number of characters they use to give their readers an easy time understanding and internalizing the story. The book has Mashaka, Jumanne, Teacher Maarifa, Teacher Agnes, Lulu, and Lena. They are the characters who drive the direction of the story and serve to make the plot sensible to the children. The lesser the number of the characters in a text, the easier it is for pupils to read, remember and relate with individual actions within the story. The authors use this strategy to help the readers of “The Integrity Series” to get the theme of integrity in the text and impact them effectively.

In another text, *Jumanne’s Letter*, the courageous Jumanne resolves to write a letter to the president about her situation and those of other poor people in the country. In the story, she is not ashamed of her name and says that she no longer feels insulted when people call her ‘Tuesday Sunday’ because she finds it funny. Her focus in the story is to get the message across to the president of their plight and to find a way of succeeding in school. The fact that she does

not care about what people say about her name anymore brings into focus the question of the 'last name' and vulnerability to poverty. She tells the president in her letter that, "I am writing to ask for your help. You can help the way you helped that little girl from a slum. She had recited a funny poem..." (10). These lines imply that Jumanne is imploring the president to extend his kindness across the nation. One's background or last name should not be an issue when it comes to getting government services.

Like in the previous text, Jumanne has to contend with classmates who mock her situation to the point that she does not feel like continuing her studies. Lulu, whose mother works in a hospital and urges them to buy her grandmother's medicine from a chemist, is one of the pupils who lead in mocking her. This is beside the fact that the two families seem close enough because Lulu's brother is the one who takes Jumanne's letter and gives it the exposure she wanted on TV. Lulu's mother appears to be one of the corrupt public servants who Jumanne complains about to the president. She says, "They said she had to take medicine for her sickness. Imagine the hospital had no medicine! Mama Lulu told us to buy it from a shop called a chemist. We left the hospital sad because we had no money. Mr. President, can you imagine a sick old person without medicine?" (9) From the excerpt, the reader can deduce two things; first, Jumanne wishes to bring to the attention of the president the disappointment that the wretched lot of his country undergo when they go to hospitals and find no drugs. They also have no money to buy drugs anywhere else. It is a call on the president to come to the aid of poor by ensuring that there is sufficient supply of drugs to help the likes of Jumanne's grandmother whose premature death from sickness would derail her granddaughter's dreams for the future. Secondly, the fact that Mama Lulu, an employee of a public hospital, tells Jumanne and her grandmother to buy drugs from a chemist may also imply that drugs that are meant for the public hospitals and rechanneled to private facilities and sold for profit.

Moreover, Jumanne also informs the president of his representative on the ground, the chief, who refuses to give them food support from the government until they give him something. Jumanne's question to the president that, "He said we must first give him something. Can we beg for food if we have something to give?" (9). Summarises the frustrations that the poor of the country undergo. Being the president's official representative at the grassroots, the chief fails to implement the government's agenda, which may have good intentions by demanding bribes to give foodstuff to the poor. Through the letter, Jumanne calls on the president to save them from the chief. It is ridiculous to those in positions of authority who misuse their positions to demand bribes at the expense of working for the people.

The narrator presents Jumanne's single act of courage as having influenced her classmates. The story ends with the lines, "From that day nobody dared tease Jumanne. Some pupils copied her behaviour. They refused to be bullied by anybody. "They fought for their rights" (17). The story ends with an instructive tone; the reader should not tease one another about their poverty situations. It is also a call on the children to emulate Jumanne's courage and fight for better representation from their leaders. The authors' message to children is that they can only win the battle against poverty and lousy leadership by speaking out. The text, thus, gives prominence to children as agents in the search for fighting corruption.

In a sequel to *Jumanne's Letter*, Lumumba et al. further present her courage when she finally meets the president at the State House. The story, *Jumanne Meets the President*, brings up some issues that the authors would want children to learn and emulate. To begin with, it encourages children to continue doing what is right even when no one is noticing. Through Jumanne's initiative, her schoolmates also get to go on the journey to meeting the president. It is also payback time for the pupils who had been mocking her but wanted to be on the trip like Kido. He misses out because Jumanne insists that he had never apologized for mocking her family's poverty as Mashaka did. Again, Jumanne displays her unmatched honesty and integrity when



she refuses to accept gifts from students who wanted to be on the trip. She responds to some of their requests by saying that, “You are just pretenders. I know you are doing this just to be on the trip” (7).

While visiting the president is undoubtedly an unforgettable experience for the young pupils, the authors also expose the fault in the country’s system of governance. While Jumanne wrote the letter while thinking of her situation and other low-income families like hers, the authors do not reveal what the president does to change the situation across the country. The narrator says that “The president...promised to pay her school fees up to the university...he also said grandma would be taken to a good hospital. He would pay for her treatment. The president also promised to build a house for them. He would make sure they had food and other needs. The president also promised to punish the bad chief” (18). While the story ends with the line that “it was the best day in Jumanne’s life,” the authors seem to overlook the reason she had set out to write the letter in the first place.

The question that the reader is left to ask is whether helping a single family would address whatever Jumanne had indicated in her letter. For me, it is a disappointment in part to Jumanne who has given every indication that she cares for all. The best way the government should have addressed her plight and that of her lot is to work with policymakers to ensure that children from needy families got education and food up to the university level. Moreover, to ensure that sick, old women like Jumanne’s grandmother get proper medical care, the president should have a change in healthcare policy for the elderly.

Nevertheless, Lumumba et al. seem to portray the reality of the Kenyan situation where getting government services is selective at many levels. One has to shout about a problem to be heard, and when they are listened to, their problems are addressed individually so that they can be silent. This is a level of cronyism, which is also an illustration of lack of integrity in the national

leadership. The fact that the authors glorify this kind of solution at the expense of policy changes, to a large extent, derails their efforts of teaching integrity in children. It also works against the character of Jumanne whom they have portrayed as upright and selfless all along. While the day could have been the best for on a personal level because of the promises the president had given, the authors ought to show how the president was going to address the situation of other pupils in Jumanne's situation. In fact, even those who accompanied her on the trip only benefit by having a two-day holiday at the State House.

Jumanne's grandmother in the three texts is portrayed as the epitome of kindness for the care and hope that she gives her granddaughter. Jumanne tells her friend, Lena how her grandmother has been supporting her ever since her mother died. She says in Jumanne's Letter that, "Without my grandma, I am sure I would be a Chokoraa. She cooks my meals. She asks relatives to help her pay my fees. "Grandma is an angel" (2). She dreams that one day she will be able to help her grandmother get better medical attention. The grandmother is presented by the authors as one of the adults that children should look up to for teachings on integrity. In part, Jumanne's character can be attributed to her closeness to her grandmother who teaches her on the right and wrong. Therefore, the authors, while rooting for reading as a way of teaching integrity in children, also recognizes the critical role that the old play in showing children the right direction. It is a call for them to be close to the elderly members of their families for teachings that will go a long way in moulding their characters.

Teachers and the friendships that the children develop while at school determine how they turn out as adults. When Jumanne joins Busara primary school, she finds a network of pupils who are bound into following Mashaka for small favours and the fear that he could beat them up. A child growing up in such an environment and within such a group has no sense of integrity and will grow up knowing that they have to pay something to others to get what they want when they are not supposed to. The story is a call for children to mind the company they keep while

at school or anywhere else they mingle. Jumanne chooses Lena as her friend and confidante, who goes ahead to introduce her to their family. Through their friendship, Lena's mother can provide medicine that her grandmother direly needs.

The teachers are portrayed as the pillars to the pupils in their efforts at forming their own identities. Teacher Maarifais conveniently named for the guidance she gives her students. She comes in to make Jumanne feel right about her name and feel a sense of belonging. There is also Teacher Agnes whom Jumanne grows fond of. When Mashaka threatens to teach her a lesson, she tells him she would report him to teacher Agnes. The teacher, thus, embodies a sense of trust for the pupils. They have grown to believe that they can go to her whenever they have problems with fellow pupils or personal issues. For instance, she intervenes when Mashaka teases Jumanne and compels him to apologize to her and the entire class.

Allowing bullies at various levels of learning is one of the ways children develop wrong behaviours and members of the society who lack integrity. The authors do not give them a space to thrive in Busara primary. Using Jumanne's outspokenness and teacher Agnes, Mashaka's growing reign of terror is contained before it goes full-blown. The authors present bullies as children from wealthy families who feel they have their future all worked out by their parents. Thus, they are lazy and do not care about their school work. According to Kristen (2007), bullying is not a simple phenomenon, but a widespread and severe problem that must be addressed. It is not just oppressive, but it is a threat to lives of young children.

Through Jumanne's outspokenness against bullying, she can liberate the pupils in her school and open their eyes to injustices against them by anyone. Through her, the authors advocate for an end to the culture of silence in schools in instances of bullying. Both teachers and pupils should be vigilant and speak out against such acts no matter how powerful the perpetrators may think they are. Teachers are supposed to intervene by counseling the bullies and making them

understanding its effects on them as well. Teacher Agnesis used to bringing this out especially when she talks to Mashaka against mistreating other pupils. She helps him to understand that the force behind his behaviour is an arrogance that comes from the notion that his parents are wealthy and untouchable. When he asks his classmates for forgiveness, he becomes a different person who is obedient and respectful to all.

### **Influence of Adult Characters in Children's Texts**

This section examines the role that adult characters play in influencing the readers on matters of integrity. The study focuses on three texts in "The Integrity Series"; *Wema and his Friends*, *Wema and Uncle Kasi*, and *Wema in Hospital*. I investigate how the authors create the adult characters and how they relate to the children within the story. Such analysis aims at explaining or unravelling how the adults not only impact how children grow up but also how the children help them in changing their perceptions about the world. As we have discussed in the above section, children learn a lot through questioning and observing what adults do. Therefore, the adults have to be careful how they relate with the young ones to be sure that they do not contradict their teachings.

In *Wema and Uncle Kasi*, the authors highlight the corruption menace in the transport sector and the role that the citizens can play. Uncle Kasi, who is highly revered by Wema and his family members drives past the lawfully allowed speed, risking the lives of those aboard his car. He argues that he is not driving fast enough because the car can go faster than that. He demonstrates his irresponsibility when he repeats the same on their way back from the market despite Wema's mother imploring him to check on the speed of the car. When the police stop him, Wema and his mother think that he is in trouble and could go to jail, but he bribes the officer and goes without a charge. For him, you can 'talk nicely' to the police officer so that you avoid the charges that come with reckless driving. The character of Wema's father is

presented to bring out the corrupt drivers on the Kenyan roads who feel it is okay to bribe the police and escape charges. The authors use him to contrast the role that adults are supposed to play in moulding children by inculcating integrity into them. Whereas Wema's mother talks Uncle Kasi from over speeding, he does not heed her advice immediately.

Wema, who remains in the car once her mother and her friend alight, puts Uncle Kasi to task by asking him questions on his encounter with the police. He begins by asking him why the police stopped him, although he already knows his uncle was driving past the acceptable speed. His question seems to evoke a sense of guilt in his uncle whose answer that, "I was driving at a dangerous speed" gives Wema the impetus to go on with his interrogation. He again asks, "I saw you giving him money. Why did you give him the money?" (17) Wema, at class two, already understands that there are things that one is supposed to buy with money. However, he seems to find it difficult that a reckless driver who is stopped by the police has to part with some money to go free. His uncle's answer that; "I did not want to get arrested" makes Wema another cynical question, which deepens his uncle's guilt. He asks, "So drivers who do not give money get arrested?" The question reveals the flaw in a justice system that allows traffic offenders with money to bend the rules and escape punishment, which makes them likely to commit another similar crime in the future hoping to go free without a charge.

Wema remembers what his mother had said about bad drivers that, "...they give money to traffic policemen. They do this so that they are not arrested. They continue driving badly and cause road accidents. Is that true? Wema asked again. He looked into Uncle Kasi's eyes" (19). He is bent on making Uncle Wema feel that while he has been a bad driver both ways, he has also bought his way out of police custody, which makes his position as a role model questionable. While the adult character is supposed to be the mentor, here it is Wema making his uncle realize and apologize for his mistakes. His uncle accepts and says that "All that you have said is true, Wema. By driving too fast, I was breaking a traffic rule. I could have caused

an accident. We would have been hurt. “I was also wrong in giving that policeman money to avoid arrest” (20). His realization of his mistake and confession of wrongdoing sensitizes the child readers that it is not only wrong to engage in such practices, but also that they should speak out whenever adults participate in them. By speaking out, they will be making the adults realize they are making a mistake as well as risking the lives of everyone aboard.

Again, Lumumba et al. conveniently name Uncle Kasi to suit his behaviours. ‘Kasi’ is a Swahili word for speed, which means the character’s name could be loosely translated into English to mean ‘Uncle Speed.’ He cares about how fast his car can move at the expense of the people aboard his car. Wema, on the other hand could mean ‘good deeds,’ which he is trying to urge his uncle to follow. Therefore, the texts present a contrast of roles with the child character being more instructive than the adult. When they part, Wema reminds his uncle to remember all the traffic rules so that he does not have to face arrest again. From the story, Wema’s character is used to inform the reader that there would be no bribery in the transport sector if all drivers were aware of and obeyed the traffic rules since most of them pay bribes so that they avoid arrests.

Uncle Kasi is surprised that Wema knows about the corruption and the names that the fraudulent use for it; *kitu kidogo*. He admits and adds that “Yes, what I gave the policeman is sometimes called *kitukidogo*, *chai*, *sabuni*, and many other names” (21). Wema’s knowledge of corruption and the names adults use to cover makes him a major character in influencing children to grow up with integrity. The authors then, succeed in manipulating characterization to achieve their objectives.

In another text, *Wema in Hospital*, the authors again bring into focus Wema’s strong and courageous character against the adults. While his parents are portrayed as caring in their family roles, they seem to be unable to raise their voices against corrupt practices in public

institutions. When Wema falls sick, and they take him to Pewa hospital, they meet officials who are reluctant to serving patients who refuse to pay bribes. A nurse at the counter is busy reading a newspaper while Wema's father tries to get her attention so that Wema can get quick medical attention. Wema's father recognizes that something is wrong when the nurse takes too long to call them into the doctor's room while a young girl who pays the nurse some money is allowed to see the doctor instantly. It is then that he discovers that, "Something is not right in this hospital" (10) and decides that they need to go to another hospital. Indeed, when they visit Rehema Hospital, the contrast is there, Wemais attended to quickly and with a lot of care from two nurses who rush her to the doctor.

After Wema gets well, he again displays his questioning nature by asking why he was not treated at Pewa hospital where he was first taken. Once he understands what happened at the hospital, he gets concerned and asks his parents todo something about the hospital. While the father only says that there was an act of corruption that he witnessed, he does not take an action that would help the other patients that go to the hospital. Wema, on the other hand, asks him what they should do to help other patients who may be too poor to pay bribes to be served. The parents do not respond, they remain quiet and do not know what to do (13). Wema suggests that, "Why don't we report the nurses and doctors to the police?" (13) Even then, his parents expresseddoubts about whether the police would believe their report thinking that maybe they do not care. Even though they finally report the issue, the incident portrays the adult characters as complacent to corruption either because they have lost hope and thinks everyone is corrupt and would not care about any report on corruption. The authors resort to the young Wema to show that there is the need to try reporting cases of corruption or negligence of duties without assuming that no action would be taken.

Their decision to report the corrupt nurses and doctors; proves to be a step in the search for fairness. The corruption level at the hospital was almost going out of hand, and their

intervention saved thousands of patients who go to the hospital. Wema's father says that "The nurses and the doctors only talked and laughed among themselves as people waited on the benches. Others read books and newspapers while others played with their mobile phones" (15). All these take place while patients are in pain and on the floor of the facility. Wema adds that "I heard children crying, I also saw the sick on the floor" (15). These reflect some of the things that go on in some of the public hospitals in the country, which the authors want the children to observe and speak against. In the text, the authors again make a call against the culture of silence; they seem to suggest that if the adults are not ready to talk, let the children speak up and be the agents of change.

In *Wema and his Friends*, the theme of integrity is brought out through the intervention of adults. Wema, who is a brilliant pupil, finds himself in a close friendship with Rongo, Saidi, and Zembe who do not like working hard and do not take their schoolwork seriously. In fact, they are also conveniently named to fit their roles with 'Rongo' being a Swahili word for lies while 'Zembe' being a Swahili word for laziness. They manipulate Wema, whose name can be translated into "one whose deeds are right or good", to let them copy his homework in exchange for toys. They realize that Wema likes toys and use them as the bait to get him to agree to their requests. Zembe tells Wema that, "You will be getting a toy from us every week" while Rongo adds that, "Yes, Wema. You know you are our friend. People should give their friends nice things" (8).

Corruption starts with one of the parties doing some research and finding out what their targets need most. With the adults, it is mostly money or material gains. However, with Wema, he likes toys and finds the irresistible even though he has a feeling it is not right to let others copy his homework. The notion that he loses nothing by letting them copy his work and receiving toys makes him feel that it is okay to be corrupt. However, if allowed to grow up with this belief, he could upgrade to bigger things other than the toys. Wema is portrayed here as less



courageous and unable to say no to friends with the wrong influence. He does not report his friends. He is afraid of annoying them and wants to keep the toys. He is already influenced by them and has accepted to compromise his good behaviours. Here is where the intervention of the adult characters serves to inculcate integrity in the young readers. When his mother realizes that he has three toys in his room, which she did not buy him, she asks him where he got them from, and he opens up to her and tells the truth.

The dialogue between Wema and his mother reveals the influence that she has on him as he accepts to change his behaviour. He returns the toys to his friends and stops giving them his homework to copy. He confesses to his teacher, Mrs. Makini, what he has been doing for the past three weeks. The authors stress on his honesty in accepting his mistakes and apologizing as a way of showing the young readers the right path to follow whenever they find themselves in situations where their peers try to influence them into doing the wrong things. His confession also serves to help his friends who get warnings against copying other pupils' work. They begin working hard and their performances improve significantly. The authors again blend Wema's character with those of adults as a worthy intervention in helping children uphold their integrity. His influence as a character is crucial to the authors in their objective of advancing an integrity-themed plot.

Moreover, the three texts where Wema is the major character reflect the state of the current Kenyan society where citizens are unable to get services without paying bribes. The authors use Wema as an instructive tool to the children on what is right and wrong about working with the corrupt. By mixing with the adult characters, the authors provide an important contrast that if the grown-ups fail in their roles as the children's mentors on matters of integrity, then the young ones should show them the way. The stories in this series abhor silence as a tool for fighting corruption and poor service delivery. By putting the adults in the texts to task about

their silence about issues or irresponsibility, Wema is the ideal character that the authors want the child reader to emulate.

### **Characters Changing or Retaining Character Traits**

This section examines how Lumumba et al. present how characters change or retain good or bad character traits. The section focuses on *Tukutu Learns a Lesson*, *Tukutu's Red Pinpop*, and *Tukutu and the Shopkeeper*. The texts present a sense of growth in the major character, Tukutu growing from a notorious child to a responsible and sensible in the third text in the series. It thus investigates how the authors' portrayal of the characters is in any way representative of the contemporary Kenyan society. The chapter also details the manner in which characters retain negative behaviour. In so doing, the section details how characters either grow towards a culture of integrity or how they remain unchanged.

In *Tukutu Learns a Lesson*, we are introduced to a class one pupil who is selfish and greedy. He does not help his parents despite being on holiday as his brother Shamte does. He argues "...this is my time to rest. I do not want to get dirty and tired" (1). While his mother implores him that nobody likes lazy people, he does not change his ways and does not help his brother in cleaning the compound. He is conveniently Tukutu to reflect his rudebehaviour and selfishness. When their father buys the two of them a ball to share, he refuses to share it with his brother Shamte and keeps it for himself, saying it is lost. He steals apples when everyone else is asleep and does not want to see his brother happy. His parents come in to control his behaviours by setting a trap with the apples that he had developed a routine for stealing. The fact that Tukutu falls for the trap that his mother had set is meant to teach children that no matter how smart they may think they are, their parents will always outsmart and teach them a lesson in integrity.

In *Tukutu's Red Pinpop*, the authors choose to retain his name despite his changed attitude towards life and selflessness. In the story, he helps his friend Kido to understand the importance of his dental hygiene by all means including threatening to report him to the teacher. His portrayal in the story, while is supposed to be a sequel of the earlier narrative, contradicts his role and undermines the role that characterization is supposed to play in helping children to understand and interpret stories.

The authors use Mr. Boma in *Tukutu and the Shopkeeper* to highlight nepotism and its effects. His name 'Boma' means home, which also represents his perspective in business that he only sells at normal prices to his relatives; the rest should pay more to get services from him. In the story, Tukutu becomes a victim of the shopkeeper's discrimination when he refuses to sell to him. The shopkeeper explains to him and his mother that he will only sell to them if they pay more. Until the other buyers refuse to buy from his shop for practicing nepotism, Mr. Boma feels it is right to favour only his relatives. Nevertheless, when he realizes he will be losing his customers, he promises to change. Mr. Boma's character is used by the authors to show the young readers that being unfair to other people while favouring others only hurts the person practicing it in the end as it narrows their worldview and network.

In "The Integrity Series", we also encounter a police officer, Afande Matata who is a trained officer. Afande is a title used in the East African countries to refer to police officers. While Matata, as an Afande, is supposed to be a symbol of authority that people should look up to, he takes bribes and does not care about the people he is supposed to work for. His name, 'Afande Matata,' denotes a troublesome police officer whom the authors use to teach children the role of public servants. His character is meant to demonstrate to the child readers the importance of taking their jobs seriously. He is the type of the civil servants that the texts in the series frown upon with the hope sensitizing children on this immoral behaviour. Matata takes bribes and lets traffic offenders go without a charge, which encourages the drivers to continue committing the

crimes. This endangers the lives of other passengers. Thus, the children are taught that by disobeying traffic laws and paying bribes to go free or by allowing the illicit sale of alcohol, they are making the entire society suffer mostly.

Afande Matata represents government officials who abuse their offices instead of maintaining law and order. The authors of the story, *The Public Officer*, allow school children to witness protesters demand the expulsion of Matata from the police force. The incident exposes the children towards an understanding of how to speak out in instances of corruption. They thus learn that peaceful demonstration is an efficient way of seeking change and demanding that public servants be responsible.

Conversely, the authors present Mr. Smart as an honest and intelligent man who loves children and discusses Matata's demeanor with them. Through him, the authors inform the children about what people who lack integrity do with their authority. For instance, Mr. Smart says that Matata bullied business people to give him nice clothes, shoes, blankets, sheets and even mattresses. He also got furniture, a television and music system by pretending that he would pay for them later. When asked him to pay, he threatened to shoot the business people. They are thus intimidated into silence for fear of death.

In *Matumaini School*, the authors portray the chief's two sons, Steve and Sam, as bullies. They abuse other children whenever they are out of the presence of the teacher by calling them *chokoraas*(street children) and bragging that teachers can do nothing to them. When Tina threatens to report their behaviour, Sam says that his father, who is a chief, can beat everybody in that school. Steve and Sam do not change even when teacher Agnes warns them against their manners. They show as much indiscipline as their father who despises teachers. This clearly is an indication that adults, especially parents, have a great influence on their children. Bullying harms innocent individuals physically, emotionally and psychologically. When it happens to

children, the victim could undergo serious harm, unless quick action is taken to restore them. It is as a major issue of concern in the Kenyan context. Bullying usually includes the act of intimidating a weaker person to make them do things unwillingly. A bully would use their position or physical strength to extort money or whatever item they need from the weaker person.

Steve and Sam enjoy harassing their classmates and seeing them suffer. Through them, the authors highlight the dangers of bullying and the need for children to live with each other peacefully in school. Bullying, when left unchecked, can result in physical injuries that can affect the victim's health. Harassing the other pupils and referring to them as *chokoraasis* a form of verbal abuse, which can affect the children emotionally and destabilize their performance at school. This psychological pain on the abused can lead to low self-esteem, which the victims can carry into their adult lives. By the end of the story, Steve and Sam have not changed. This in effect means that bullying as a vice will continue to hurt those who are bullied.

*In The Politician*, the authors use Mr. Tumbo to highlight the consequences of greed by politicians. He is running for a public office but promises things that he cannot deliver. Moreover, he bribes the electorate by giving them cash, and other goodies to endear himself to them. He represents the politicians who abuse their offices then return to the voters to seek re-election, but since they have nothing to show, they resort to buying them with the public money that they steal. He thrives on lying to the people and slandering other candidates who are the people's favorite. Voters are seemingly aware of his actions and complain that he disappeared with their Harambee money, which was supposed to help orphans. Instead, he used the money to build his house.

Mr. Tumbo's name befits his character. His big stomach is satirized by the narrator as the beneficiary from the public cash that he is entrusted with. The stomach is a sign of greed and selfishness, the reservoir of all that is meant for the people. He leaves the voters with promises and handouts and leaves them to survive by their means until the next elections when he returns with similar pledges. The children are exposed to the politicians' actions to sensitize them on what good leadership entails. A leader does not have to campaign in an expensive entourage or wear costly attire to get their votes. In fact, the authors link the kind of extravagance that Mr. Tumbo displays to corruption and abuse of public office.

In the story, children are exposed to the heated political campaigns by the two rival camps so that they can have a comparison of the characters of politicians with whom people are supposed to elect into office. Mr. Tumbo is contrasted with Mr. Mustaarabu who epitomizes the good character of honesty and humility among politicians. He conducts his campaigns as he seeks to be elected into office peacefully and respects his competitors. He also promises only the things he is sure of accomplishing. In his campaigns, he tells his people that he will not promise them heaven on earth. However, he promises that if people vote for him, he will try his best to improve their welfare. His name, 'Mustaarabu,' is a Swahili word that could be translated to mean good manners, which is supposed to stress to the young readers the importance of good behaviour for those seeking public office. As voters, they should also go for leaders who display honesty and uprightness.

In *Tumaini School*, we encounter the immoral Chief Manamba who shamelessly takes his children to a school meant for the poor and the orphans but refuses to pay school fees. The head teacher is pinned by the chief at a corner, as the chief makes a demand that his children should be admitted at Tumaini School. He disrespects and disregards the headmaster's authority and later frames him by placing bhang in his office. After the headmaster is arraigned in court, Manamba again bribes some witnesses to ensure he is sent to jail. He uses his wealth and power

to try influencing the process of justice by having the headmaster charged unjustly. Being an adult whose children are supposed to look up to, the author uses his character to highlight the negligence of some parents who expect their children to get a proper education while they do not respect the teachers with whom they entrust them.

In *Matumaini School*, Mr. Manga the head teacher is depicted as an honest and a loving teacher. The pupils also nickname him Mr. Shine because he encourages them and the members of staff to shine in everything they do. When Maria, a class four girl, is asked by a journalist what she would like to be when she grows up, she says, “I want to be like Mr. Shine and take care of the poor and unfortunate in the society.” The authors use Mr Shine as the perfect role model that teachers ought to be to their pupils. Besides, he is the head teacher of one of the best performing schools in the county due to his love for pupils and the influence he has on them. When the national examinations results are released the school leads, he tells the journalists that his secret to success is, “We are one big family that love and respect each other. Everyone from the cleaners, matron, watchman, teachers and pupils does his or her work well.”

Mr. Manga’s honest character is further displayed when the chief frames him for allegedly possessing drugs in his office. He is confident and composed in the courtroom and does not show any signs that he is shaken. The incident is meant to show the young readers that when they are honest and display integrity in all instances, they can withstand the machinations of the corrupt who would want to destroy them.

## **Conclusion**

The authors of the texts in “The Integrity Series” use characterization as a tool for advancing the themes of integrity and morality. The dangers of corruption, greed, nepotism, dishonesty and other negative traits are presented through both adult and children characters. The characters are condemned for having such traits and in some cases they are punished for such behaviour. Also, by strategically creating and naming characters to match their roles, the authors succeed in passing on the messages in the form instructions to the children on what they are supposed to and how to live with the adults. Kenya, being a country that is riddled with corruption and impunity, the authors resort to creating names that signify things that children know. Some of the names are days of the week while others are actions or deeds. The names Tukutu, Wema, Boma or Mashaka, are Swahili words for various actions related to integrity, which means the authors use these names on their central characters to make it easier to identify the negative as well as positive traits. The theme of integrity is thus captured not just in the character traits of the characters by also symbolically through naming.



## CHAPTER THREE

### REPRESENTATION OF SPACES AND INTEGRITY

#### Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined how the authors use characterization as a tool to advance their plots and the theme of integrity. Other than presenting the negative and positive character traits that shape integrity, the chapter also investigates how the authors name and situate characters conveniently so as to advance the intended values. In this chapter, we examine how the authors of the texts within “The Integrity Series” manipulate the setting of the stories to advance the plots and effectively highlight the theme of integrity.

The setting is a crucial component of writing that every writer of works of fiction has to consider seriously. It is the time and place where an author situates a work of fiction. Ron Rozelle posits that “even though good writing is not entirely dependent on the setting, a writer of fiction would be paving the way to miserable failure if he did not create, using every tool at his disposal, the most clearly depicted time and place he could come up with” (1). To tell a story conclusively the setting has to play a role in inspiring and imposing the critical message of the text. The authors of the texts under this study rely on the settings that children can identify with to teach them matters of integrity. We discuss some of the spaces that the authors use as epicentres of identity formation for the children and how the texts use them to advance the plots. The spaces that this study focuses on include, home, school, and the other public spaces where children come face-to-face with impunity as a way of making them distinguish between what is right and wrong.

While the home provides comfort, familiarity and a sense of sanctuary, sometimes it is the place where the child first experiences pain and a site of nostalgia. The other unknown territories beyond the domestic sphere are the children’s sources of learning or fear, but also

offer them the possibility for adventure on their own. By leaving home to these spaces, the child begins a journey that symbolizes the onset of their personal development and growth.

### **Home as the Root of a Child's Character Formation**

The authors use the home as an important space for the growth of the children within the stories. They portray families spending time together as an important value of building strong family values for the children. In *Wema and Friends* and *Wema in Hospital*, Wema's family is presented as one that is closely-knit. His mother is close to him and continuously checks in on him to find if there is anything wrong. It is through her closeness to Wema that he discovers when he is accepting toys from his friends to let them copy his homework. She takes the initiative to correct him by showing him that it is wrong to receive gifts and help others in their laziness. The mother is given prominence as the child's first teacher, moulding him into an upright child as she prepares to go to a school where there are children from diverse backgrounds.

In the Tukutu series, the stories demonstrate the need for effective communication in the family as a way of instilling in children integrity. In *Tukutu Learns a Lesson*, the mother seems to be the only one trying to talk Tukutu out of his bad behaviour while the father is distant. The father only comes in after Tukutu has been caught stealing the apples and even then, he does little to guide him back to good morals. Barton (2014) argues that the family is the cradle of learning. Nonetheless, it is at home that Tukutu learns to care for the people around him and be responsible while at home. The home becomes the foundation for the onset of his growth and maturity to accept others as human beings.

The parents and guardians in the stories within "The Integrity Series" play a critical role in teaching the children matters of integrity. According to Sweat (2008), a home is a family living together and where children are given the basic lessons of life and everything that else about

life. She asserts that the home is a rich ground for enhancing a wholesome development and growth of a child since this is where the first lessons in values of life are taught. Duffy (1995) echoes Sweat's assertions and observes that a home is a strong support system that enables a child to grow and to explore the world. It provides the child with a peaceful environment to experiment with various issues and embrace those that resonate with their inner beliefs or which they are guided to consider as positive. From the home setting, children learn to give more love if they expect to get it back.

In *Tukutu learns a lesson*, the authors set the story in August when children in Kenya, are mostly on their holidays. This is the period when parents are supposed to spend time with their children and teach them morals that they want them to grow up with. This is also the time when children are supposed to help their parents at home, but we meet Tukutu who feels it is his time to rest and refuses to participate in cleaning the compound. Being set on a bright day, the authors are giving the child characters a perfect setting to choose either to play or to help their parents clean the compound. Tukutu, as his name which is translated to mischievous suggests, chooses play over work, unlike his brother, Shamte, who chooses to help his mum. Shamte is used to contrast Tukutu's attitude towards work and his behaviour in general. He is the ideal child that the authors want the children reading the stories to emulate while at home.

The authors further uses Tukutu to show children how not to live at home with their siblings. Through him, they warn against greed and selfishness. When Tukutu's father buys the two boys a ball to share, Tukutu feels that the ball should belong to him. He says that his father should buy another one for Shamte. In fact, he goes ahead to hide the ball so that he can use it alone. His acts of greed and selfishness are further highlighted when he sneaks into the kitchen to steal mangoes. The authors aim to instil in children honesty by sharing whatever the family brings home for everyone to use. By eating all the apples at night and refusing to take responsibility, Tukutu is beginning to develop tendencies of impunity and need to be stopped

before it becomes full-blown. His mother's intervention by setting a trap that nets him when he goes stealing underscores the role that the home setting plays in inculcating integrity in children. It is the first place the child learns to take responsibility for his or her actions.

The fact that Tukutu wakes up at night to steal the apples brings into focus the time setting and its link to integrity. Because he steals in darkness, Tukutu hopes that his actions are covered, and no one can find out. Moreover, the apple thief remains a mystery until his mother counters with an equally clever strategy. Darkness here is used to symbolise the time when most morally corrupt people commit atrocities because they believe they will not be found out. It reflects what happens on the national stage where a few people squander the public resources in the secrecy of their private spaces and hope that nobody will ask them to account for whatever is lost. The incident teaches the young readers to be careful because every act of impunity they commit will finally become known as Tukutu is soon discovered and punished.

Tukutu's mother is presented as loving and caring. She makes the home a place where her children can find joy and learn as much as they can. She wakes up early and prepares the breakfast for the whole family. Even when she suspects something is wrong with Tukutu's behaviour, she takes her time before taking action. She first gives him space to change out of his will by observing what his elder brother does. She only acts when she notices that Tukutu's behaviour is getting out of hand. Tukutu's father is presented as authoritative. When mum tells him that the apples he brought home are missing, he goes and asks the boys whether they know of who could be stealing their apples. He asserts his authority by telling the two boys that he knows what is going on around the house and that one of them must have stolen the apples, thus, punishes the two of them to the delight of Tukutu. His portrayal as a responsible man makes the home friendly and a learning environment for the children.

When Tukutu finally becomes a good boy, he begins to appreciate his brother Shamte and even goes on errands for his mother. In *Tukutu and the Shopkeeper*, he is the one who discovers that there is something wrong when his friend gets milk from the same shop where he is told has no milk. He takes the initiative to inform his mother who then takes action. This is a lesson in nepotism where the child begins to realise that some people favour those who are related to them more than others. By being the victim, in this case, Tukutu continues to learn the importance of inclusion and the authors extend the lesson to the children who read the book as well. They have to be fair to everyone if they expect the same treatment from them.

Jumanne displays strong influence that proper upbringing from home has on a child. Being an orphan who lives with her sickly grandmother, the authors portray her humble background as a substantial ground for lessons in integrity. With the guidance of her grandmother, she grows up to be an outspoken girl whenever she feels something is not right. Even though at some point she feels that her background inhibits her proper learning, the humility with which she handles the people around her, is a lesson that the authors would want the children to emulate. She stands up to Mashaka who comes from a rich family and uses his father's wealth to intimidate his classmates. Jumanne, on the other hand, has torn uniforms sometimes goes to school with no pens or books.

Nevertheless, she performs much better than everyone else in the class does, becoming a darling to the teachers. Moreover, her sick grandmother needs medicine, and they have to rely on her friend, Lena's family to get the drugs. Her good morals, courage, and value for friendship endear her to many, which see her letter reach the president. Through her courage, the head of state promises to make her enjoy what the rich children enjoy by ensuring she lives in a proper place.

## **School as a Centre of Character Formation**

School is the second point in a child's journey to growth and identity formation. Here, the child is exposed to diversity regarding people, ideas, and beliefs. They begin to make choices, which they hope will be useful for their well-being and encounter teachers who will act as their parents away from home. The school setting, thus, is a ground where matters of integrity can be passed on to the children or if left unchecked, can begin to practice corruption and other acts of impunity. The school setting makes a mature adult out of the child that the parents send to them. The impact and impressions from the lessons learnt in school have great impact on the children because they transform them into people who begin to understand whatever is going on around them.

At school, the teachers act as the law keepers whom the children dread their wrath. This helps the teachers in their attempts at teaching the children good morals and integrity. When there is a need for punishment, they have to step up and admonish the children with bad manners as a warning to the rest who may want to follow the same path. They play the corrective role, showing the children the right path in life. In fact, school life sees most students emulating their teachers. For instance, in Matumaini School, the pupils love their teacher Mr. Shine due to his uprightness and the influence he has over them. He encourages them to shine in everything that they and indeed, they follow his ways. This is perhaps the best example of the school setting as a centre for identity formation where children are taught to be responsible as they grow into adults. Mr. Shine exposes them to politicians like Mr. Tumbo and Mr. Mustaarabu to give them an idea of the civic role they will have to play at some point. While it is obvious that the children enjoy the pomp that Mr. Tumbo's campaign entourage is, Mr. Shine helps them to understand the importance of humility in leadership. They realize this when Mr. Mustaarabu wins the seat with a landslide despite his simple campaigns.

The school, which is a special school for the poor is clean and leads in the national examination. It is built through the effort of the members of the society who saw the need to come together to support the education of the underprivileged children. It makes a perfect environment for the children to learn to be responsible and care for other human beings. The facilities within the school are meant to foster togetherness and a spirit of sharing because they have to use the same playing ground and other facilities. Given the care that the school gives its pupils, the young learners find it a conducive environment to grow and learn more about the world. The authors, thus, use Matumaini School as a model, which even though is not very rich, caters to the needs of every child.

Mr. Manga is portrayed as the ideal school head who leads by example. He upholds high levels of integrity, which he encourages his pupils to follow. He advocates for discipline, good performance, and tidiness. He is always smart, tidy and well mannered. He is shown to be respectful, polite and loving to all people. He is equally firm and never entertains nonsense from anybody. These make it easier for the pupils to emulate him in everything that he does, which is why they nickname him Mr. Shine.

When pupils at Matumaini School are interviewed by journalists about what they like about their school, they confess that they like everything. The school appears on the local TV and viewers marvel at its excellence. The area chief also desires that his sons could be part of the school that shines. He thus seeks their admission from Mr. Manga. The challenge, however, with the two sons of chief Manamba, Sam and Steve are that they are dirty, stubborn and rebellious. They prove to be a test of Mr. Manga's integrity, especially when he has to punish them.

The incident with chief Manamba's children highlights the failure of the home setting as the first point of identity formation and learning of matters integrity and the intervention of the

school. While the chief fails to teach his children on hygiene, the school insists that they have to be clean at all times. The poor upbringing from home by Sam and Steve brings an antagonistic relationship between the chief and the head teacher who insists that the children have to follow the school regulations. Even though the chief attempts to frame the headmaster and takes him to court, the triumph of honesty is a lesson to the young readers that when they uphold integrity, nothing can shake their belief.

The setting in *Wema and his Friends* alternates between home and school. The authors aim at balancing the influence of both settings on Wema, and he uses the lessons to change things around him. The reader first encounters Wema while he is in class two at Fahari primary school. He wakes up early and prepares himself for school. He normally reaches school before his friends and reads his storybook. He also goes through his homework checking any mistakes. He is portrayed as a child with a high sense of responsibility both at home and at school.

Teacher Makini is the typical strict teacher who ensures that every child completes his or her homework and presents it for marking. This way, she inculcates a sense of responsibility in every pupil. She gives the pupils a friendly environment to learn new skills. When Wema's mother discovers that he has been showing his homework to his lazy friends in exchange for toys, she admonishes him and asks him to apologise to teacher Makini. This highlights the sync that should be between the home-school spaces in a child's growth. The two centres of identity formation have to work out for the child to receive a wholesome growth and development.

Wema's friends are the typical associations that the school setting may bring to a child when there is no home-school sync. They are lazy and have already known that they can buy their way out of school assignments. By studying Wema and realizing that he likes toys, they already understand that for one to have his or her way, they have to practice a bit of corruption. Even



though they have everything they need to perform well, they still find it difficult to their homework and feel the need to bribe Wema so that they can copy his homework.

In *Tukutu's Red Pinpop*, the setting is mostly at school, although with flashbacks of scenes from home. At the start of the book, we encounter two boys, Tukutu and Kido, who attend Springs Academy. While Tukutu is well-groomed and trained on matters hygiene, his friend Kido does not feel the need to take care of himself. He eats many sweets from his mother and confesses that he will not be caught. Tukutu summons the lessons in integrity that he has learnt at home and tries to change his friend. When Kido is adamant about changing his behaviours, he reports him to the teacher who ensures Kido changes. Tukutu's parents uphold integrity; his dad gives him only one red Pinpop (a type of lollipop) on Sundays. Moreover, the red Pinpop does not come automatically; he is always reminded that he has to behave well, to get the sweet.

The school gives the pupils an opportunity to discuss the political campaigns they witnessed the previous day when they are at the dining hall. The marketplace becomes an extension of the school. This is presented when the headmaster allows pupils to move from the school to the marketplace to listen to different contestants. They are interested in terms like bribery, corruption, and hypocrisy. As Mheshimiwa Mstaarabu's convoy passes at the gate, they realize that he does not arrive in pomp and style as MrTumbo did. He is riding on one of the three old pick-ups in his convoy. He is also wearing a Kaunda suit, which is locally available. This disappoints the pupils because they have been socialized into believing that the election set up should have flamboyant politicians. The marketplace allows for the contrast in character of politicians to be observed. A handful of men and women are praising Mstaarabu for his courage and honesty. The meeting ends in peace as Mstaarabu promises people that he would fight for their rights. The election setting becomes a space for observing the character traits of various politicians. It presents both flamboyant and humble politicians. It also creates a learning

process, where the pupils get to understand matters of voting, free and fair elections and taking complaints to court in case of lack of satisfaction with the results.

The story *The Public Officer* is set on a Friday morning when the pupils are busy with their daily routines. However, their peace is disrupted by the noise coming from the main road by demonstrators who call for the sacking of Mr. Matata, a police officer at West Post police station who is accused of receiving bribes from business people. The setting exposes the pupils to another form of agitation, which is to agitate for the rights by holding peaceful demonstrations. At school, Mr. Manga assembles all the pupils in the hall and invites Mr. Kipchumba to talk to the pupils about matters of crime, integrity, and their rights as Kenyan citizens.

In *Fearless Jumanne*, which is set in Busara primary school in Kakamega County, we encounter Matata bin Mashaka whom the authors use to portray the school setting as space where students begin to practice impunity. He comes from a wealthy family and always carries goodies, which he uses to bribe other students to do his homework. He blackmails other pupils into doing his whims intimidating them that his parents are rich and nothing will happen to him even if reported to the teachers. His father's wealth and the fact that he can use it to manipulate his classmates make him lazy and unable to perform his class duties.

He bribes his friends by offering them his bike to ride at break time or showing them his phone. Mashaka thus can manipulate his friends and mislead them in the end if left unchecked. When a new pupil joins class three yellow, which is Mashaka's class, she refuses to join Mashaka and his friends. The setting presents Jumanne as the ideal pupil who is supposed to stand up to bad morals from their classmates.

Mashaka responds to Jumanne's stance through insults of her background, which makes the setting a strong learning ground on how children should relate with their peers. When Teacher

Agnes calls Mashaka to her office and told that his behaviour would be reported to his parents, he realizes that severe punishment would be administered to him by his father. This shows that he has been playing with the other pupils' fear of him all along. He knows his father would punish him if reported and would not want him to get a word about his unbecoming behaviours.

The school setting gives Jumanne a space for engagement with the president through letter writing. This boosts her confidence and encourages the readers to take action whenever something is wrong. It also provides a space for the pupil to vent their frustration to someone who is in a position of authority and can offer help. In *Jumanne's Letter*, Jumanne's boldness is a lesson in honesty and hard work. Her intervention changes her immediate society and makes her a darling of everyone.

The visit to the State House is a learning opportunity that the students revel. Besides getting a chance for a one-on-one meeting with the president, they learn more about the country's leadership. However, the setting also presents the reader with the notion that the pupils have to meet the president face-to-face or any of their leaders for their problems to be addressed. It is a precedent that the authors seem to marvel instead of condemning. The leadership should come up with policies that can cut across every part of the country without every pupil traveling to the State House.

The school is therefore portrayed as a centre of diversity in many aspects. First, it gives the children the space to learn from their peers good morals that they can carry on to the society. Here, we see characters changing their behaviours and adopting new ones to fit within their new environment. Secondly, the authors also portray the school space as the point where children lose their morals if they are left unchecked. We meet children from wealthy parents who have become small gods and are recruiting followers to their small 'kingdoms.'

Nevertheless, it is a self-correcting space because no badbehaviour goes undetected by either the teachers or pupils and left to continue.

### **Situating Character Development Centres of Learning Beyond Home and School**

The stories in the Integrity Series also highlight some of the spaces beyond home and school where children come face to face with acts of impunity, which are supposed to provide lessons to the readers. Some of these spaces include public places like hospitals, on the road and when the children are sent to the shops.

In *Wema and Uncle Kasi*, the setting is between the home and the market. However, the centre of the story is on the road. As they drive to the market, Uncle Kasi knowingly violates traffic rules. The dialogue between the occupants in Uncle Kasi's car highlights the dangers of driving fast. Nyota and Wema relate to other accidents they saw in the media in flashbacks. Wema remembers something he saw on the TV. He saw a car fall into a river, but fortunately, nobody was hurt. Nyota also says that he saw on TV a bus that had overturned because the driver had been speeding.

Even though Wema's mother asks him to slow down, he repeats the same on their way home is stopped by a traffic police officer. The fact that he is not charged like any other traffic offender after paying a bribe makes Wema ask questions that his uncle find difficult to answer. Wema does not seem to understand why his uncle would pay to get his freedom when the officer saw him overspeed. The setting is strategically used by the authors to highlight the scourge of corruption on the Kenyan roads. It exposes the child to what happens on the highways and the change that their little intervention can bring. Through Wema's questions to his uncle, he changes and promises to obey the traffic rules.

At the hospital, Wema takes action, which his parents are reluctant to take; for fear that the police officers may not care. When the hospital staff are engaging in bribery to serve the public,

Wema's father resorts to taking him to another hospital; his solution to what is going on is only to avoid the hospital. However, when Wema recovers, he remembers that he was not treated at the Pewa hospital and asks what went wrong. He insists that they have to do something about the hospital if they want to help other patients who go there. His intervention makes the police to take action against the corrupt hospital staff. The setting is a place to which the children can relate. Bringing in questions of corruption when a child is sick and needs quick medical attention, appeals to their emotions to realize the effects of corruption. Wema's bravery to speak encourages them further to speak out.

In *Tukutu and the Shopkeeper*, the authors again use space and routines that children are familiar. Parents always send their children to buy items at the shops. Therefore, when Tukutu's mother sends him to the shop but he cannot get the milk because he is not Mr. Boma's relative, the reader joins Tukutu in wondering why a businessperson who wants profits would be that mean. The story exposes the child to the dangers of nepotism. By the neighbourhood deciding to boycott Boma's shop, he realizes that he will be on the losing end. The child, thus, learns that when they choose to serve only their relatives, they will lose more than they gain.

By allowing children to witness political campaigns by two rival camps, the authors, through Mr. Shine exposes them to the important civic duties that they will have to perform when they grow up. The authors present two candidates with different traits. On the one hand, Mr. Tumbo is a corrupt and greedy Member of Parliament who uses public funds to buy votes for re-election despite not performing his role in his first term. He makes unrealistic promises and talks ill of his main challenger. On the other hand, Mr. Mustaarabu is a humbler man who leads a lean campaign and makes realistic promises to the electorate. He says that he cannot promise heaven on earth when he is sure he cannot deliver. The authors give the children an opportunity to make a choice between the two candidates and most of them go for Mr. Tumbo because of his flashy and extravagant campaign entourage. By making him lose, the authors seem to pass

a message to the young minds that integrity does not have to come in a flashy lifestyle. Mr. Mustaarabu's humble demeanour is elevated as the ideal for political leaders who will not steal from the public to finance their extravagant lifestyles. Thus, the rally settings prepare the children for the civic duties they will have to perform when they reach the voting age.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter examines how the authors utilize setting of the stories to advance their plots and present the theme of integrity. The stories revolve around two major spaces; home and school, which are a child's first contact. It has been noted that the two spaces can make or break a child. Without proper family guidance at home, the child is likely to carry on his or her bad behaviour behaviours to the public. Often this bad behaviour is displayed when the child joins school. Nevertheless, from the analysis of the texts under this study, the two settings complement each other in the growth and development of a child. Where there is a lapse at home, the school steps in to teach the child good morals and to encourage them to grow up with integrity. The authors also select other spaces that the child readers can identify with such as a hospital, shop, and the road/car. The vices displayed in these spaces include: dishonesty, impunity, corruption, nepotism and hypocrisy. By exposing the dangers of immoral behaviour that takes place within these spaces, the authors hope to teach the child how to behave or not behave in such spaces.

## CONCLUSION

The study set out to examine how authors have used characterization and setting to present the theme of integrity. The study examined how the two elements are critical to the authors' morality-themed stories, which they hope will influence the child reader positively. The study relies on twelve select texts within "The Integrity Series", due to their focus on matters integrity and the fact that their target audience is the young children whose character they hope to mould.

The study hypothesized that children's books use both adult and children characters to advocate for behaviour that is wholesome and which displays integrity and behaviour that does not portray this integrity. Both the adult characters as well as the children are, on one hand, cast as role models and on the other hand presented as not living up to the expected behaviour. However, the adult characters are condemned even more because they are expected to have behaviour that the children can emulate since they are the grownups. The authors use them to show the readers that when there is a lack of guidance from an adult, the children can ape their bad behaviour. In the texts, however, the writers also present children as being alert to bad behaviour displayed by adults. We see children putting adults to the task, questioning their actions and reminding them to abide by the law. Through such child characters, the authors seem to give the children a voice against impunity and acts of corruption, which thrive when everyone is silent. For example, through children characters like Wema, Jumanne and Tukutu the authors encourage children to be the change agents in their societies. The authors give the child a voice as the change agent that the society needs. The writers also use the names of characters-Wema, Mashaka, Tukutu- to symbolically present either a vice or good behaviour.

The other objective of the study was to find out how the authors manipulate the settings of the stories in "The Integrity Series" to advance the theme of integrity. I hypothesised that the authors manipulate the settings to make their target readers understand how institutions can be

used positively for the wellbeing of all people, especially children, and how they can be manipulated by people to advance their selfish and corrupt agenda. The negative behaviour demonstrated at home, at school, at the shops and on the roads and market spaces is discouraged.

In the stories in this series, the major child characters' families are highlighted as crucial in determining how they relate with their peers outside. Jumanne, who lives with her grandmother, for instance, does not have much at home. Thus, the only thing that her grandmother gives her is hope and encouragement. Her family situation contrasts that of Mashaka who comes from a wealthy family and uses his wealthy background to bully his classmates. One would ask whether it is coincidental that most bullies in schools come from affluent families. The authors seem to suggest that, often, when children have everything at home and are left to run things on their own or have poor role models at home, they often develop behaviours that will later put them in problems in other institutions, especially in the schools. The authors, therefore, use the family settings to encourage readers to look up to the family as the first place they build their image, identity and learn more about their culture.

School is the second point of identity formation that the authors present as crucial in children's growth. Here, they meet different people who may be subscribing to varying sets of beliefs from theirs. It is the first place where the child encounters diversity in people and viewpoints. While the children are supposed to learn a lot by interacting with their peers, the authors use some of the child characters to warn children against joining groups or making friends with pupils who may make them change for the worse. We also find out that at school, pupils begin to engage in matters of corruption from as early as class one. We encounter the likes of Wema who are bribed with toys to let the other lazy boys copy his work.



Similarly, Mashaka bribes his way through class assignments and issues threats to those who refuse to let him copy their assignments. That he blackmails his classmates against reporting because his father is powerful, highlights the scourge of dishonesty in the Kenyan society today where the leadership of the country is riddled with cronyism and disregard for the law. Authors use a character from a poor background to stand up to Mashaka's excesses teaching the young readers that it does not matter how little their fight against impunity might be; they only need to speak out.

The research demonstrates the importance of children's texts in instilling integrity in children. By reading these texts, the young ones are not only entertained but also get inspired to live the lives that the major character lead. Moreover, all the texts in this series end with a section on 'Integrity Focus' where the authors advise the readers on what they should take away from the text about integrity. They are instructive and encouraging statements that can be likened to parental guidance. For instance, when the authors end with a statement such as 'the truth cannot be hidden' as something the reader should learn from the story, the child is encouraged to tell the truth in all situations; both at home and in school. Thus, these texts also help the children to understand themselves better as well as the people around them. One can only develop integrity when they know what they stand for as well as respecting what their peers believe. In essence, it fosters coexistent among children from an early age as they mature into adulthood. Through these texts then, the child readers get to understand and embrace humanity.

A reading of the texts in this series also reveals that children's literature provides an avenue for introducing thought-provoking explorations of mature issues which encourage readers to examine, with the assistance of adults, critical societal and individual situations of a variety of perspectives. This makes the reader experience challenging conditions, which ignite creativity in them as well. Explorations of moral dilemmas in children will develop critical thinking abilities. By examining these dilemmas at the community level, they can then make decisions

from a more balanced and solidified moral stance. Their explorations can help them identify societal weaknesses and provide them opportunities to develop ideas to help combat some of the pressures that contribute to morally unacceptable choices. It provides a voice for the child through which, they can find answers to life challenging truths and worries. Children's literature is made valuable not only by its artistry but also by its relevance in instilling the correct behaviour in children.

The study discovers that the primary texts in "The Integrity Series" live up to their expectations by the manner in which the authors manipulate setting and characterization to attempt influencing children to grow up with integrity. The texts come at a time when the country is riddled with corruption scandals at various levels of leadership, which nearly makes it normal to be corrupt. Inculcating integrity in Kenyan children at an earlier age is an important project that writers need to undertake. It would also be worth noting that the writers paint the image of the country's leadership and how they handle the status of people. The texts are manuals or sets of instructions that children are supposed to revisit and look up to if they want to live an upright life.

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