

**THE INFLUENCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS IN THE FORMATION AND
TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY:
A CASE STUDY OF THE SELECTED KAYOLE ONE FILMS.**

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree in any other University.

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Approval

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to:

The Lord, for Life and Talent

My parents John Masea Ogero

and

Penina Nyarangi Ogero

For their unending love and care

and

My husband Boaz, for listening and interceding.

Sons Austin and Kevin, for putting a smile

On my face at all

times.

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Abstract

Societies/individuals create their own reality through a specific space they occupy at a certain time. The concept of reality implies an interspace between person and context. This could be described as hybrid that is, the mixing or intermingling of different contexts. This study has therefore interrogated the influence of visual effects and how they enhance the formation and transformation of the performer(s) identity as far as the object and the target audience is concerned.

The research has employed qualitative research methods including interviews (group and in-depth personal interviews) and intense library research. The research has noted that the voice of the child is an effective tool in presenting ideas in the Kayole One films. Again, film production and audience reception are inextricably linked in the process of determining ideas around the (in) visibility of cultural representations.

The research has noted that a character on stage forms and transforms through visual effects and that these effects in turn enhance the realization of a film's aesthetic appeal especially when performed by children. The research also notes that there is a great disparity in terms of reception and perception between children and adult audiences. Therefore, audience reception and perception are crucial for evaluating the transformation process in the film. Also, visual effects, with the inclusion of visual techniques are what make a film different from other literary genres like the novel, plays, and poetry and such effects enhance the aesthetic value of film.

The research has concluded that a performer's identity, through role play, is in continuous transformation within the same film and from one film to another. This change in personality, otherwise defined as identity transformation, is greatly enhanced by the magical fantasies and technical infusions which are termed as visual effects.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INFLUENCE OF VISUAL EFFECTS IN THE FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE SELECTED KAYOLE ONE FILMS.

1.0 INTRODUCTION: The Kayole One Film Project.

The origin of the Kayole one film project can be directly linked to the Kenya school and colleges film festival. The before mentioned film festival is origin can directly be traced from a work of research entitled *Modes and codes: An Examination of performance by and for youth in Kenya*. The researcher theme was on HIV /AIDS and it was submitted for a PHD degree at the University of Leeds in 2009. The compressive chapter in the research dealt with a long-drawn-out performance project at Kayole One primary school in Nairobi Eastlands area.

The Kayole one project began as a stage performance by children who were interested in performance. The Kayole One children interested in activities such as handling cameras, editing, script writing and acting basically developed the activity into a film project. Consequently they started to invent performances and with the help of experts, produced videos of music *Mtoto wa Afrika*, narratives like *Nyamgondtho*, *Simbi* ‘The Rainmaker’ and *Lwanda Mawe*, story dances like *Mbekho* and other shot films. Among the entire production by the children, one of the most celebrated productions was a low budget film titled *Bridge on Fire*. This famous film was screened on QTV and MNET between 2010 and 2013. Its production involved students from various levels that are university, secondary and primary school learners. In essence, the film is the story of girl in form two. The girl named Malaika, is pregnant at the beginning of the story. This condition affects Malaika’s personality and in turn transforms her identity from a school-girl to a girl in the family situation. The quest and whether she should abort, or not, forms the bulk of the story as the ambivalence constructs the driving force of the plot.

The film’s popularity can be attributed to its theme and style of performance. The theme is both entertaining and educating. In September 2009 the then director of quality Assurance, Mr. Enos Oyaya, agreed that *Bridge on Fire* is worth screening in several schools the then Eastern

province. This was majorly for edutainment and to also aide in guidance and counseling. The initial plan was to show the film to four schools, that is, one school in every district in Kitui, Embu, Machakos, and Meru. However, this was not the case as the films popularity demanded for it to be screened in twelve schools and infact seven other shows had to be cancelled since KCSE exam were beginning. In every school where the film was screened, a number of students anticipated to be involved in film production just like the students they watched in the film. Therefore, a report was written and sent to the Ministry of Education on this unexpected success. This marked the beginning of film in schools.

According to one of the organizers of the project, Simon Peter Otieno, a debate on permitting schools to begin producing films began in 2008 when the executive secretary Mr. Patrick Khaemba asked the participants to think about “what next” after the drama festivals. This was then followed by an extensive consultation and thereafter an informal brain –storming meeting was held on 20th August 2011 at Kayole one primary school. The meeting was well attended and represented. The following year, the University of Nairobi availed funds for an induction workshop at YMCA for teachers of drama. The workshop was attended by 43 teachers from all over the country. The outcome of this workshop was tremendous such that the expectation was that in 2012 the school would manage to show at least eight films. This was on the contrary since 2012 saw thirty seven films screened at Kakamega High (this was the venue of the National Drama Festival).

This response by schools planted the seed of film in schools. In August 2012, Mr. Hassan Mwinyipembe, the director quality Assurance, launched the school, colleges and University of Nairobi. This function was attended by the National Executive committee led by Mr. Solomon K. Chokera, the chairperson .During the same year; the University of Nairobi facilitated a one-week trainer’s workshop at the Kenya science campus. In this workshop, teachers were taught aspects of film production including DVD authority, sound capturing, Camera operation, and video editing.

The cabinet secretary, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, has supported the initiative of the film production in schools and has even promised continued cooperation between the ministry of education and

the University of Nairobi to oversee the success of the film festival. In 2013 there were seventy nine films screened and in August the same year the University of Nairobi facilitated two consultative workshops, one for the regional film coordinators and another for teachers who produced films.

The growth of film can be ascribed to the cooperation, hard work, and enthusiasm of producers, directors, and the learners involved. This explains why today there are regional, county and sub-county coordinators in film that greatly assist in the growth of the film genre right from the grassroots. Hence, film in Kenya is slowly but steadily gaining prominence and with sponsors coming on board, the film fraternity is looking at quite a bright future.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The narrative voice in a work of art plays an important part in the understanding of the text because the narrator is the central focus in any piece of work. In literary tradition the child narrator is considered credible owing to his/her sense of innocence and purity. The child as a performer is a deliberate act by the producers of film and script writers to ensure the message is driven home. Moreover, the social, economic, and political hardships have contributed to shaping an African Child. Due to such difficulties, the children are forced to take parental/adult responsibilities at an early age and to even take care of their young ones economically, socially, and emotionally.

Academic research on film has been scantily done within the Kenyan literary circles. Infact, one of the researches was presented for a PhD degree at the university of Leeds in 2009 and it was titled; *Of Modes and Codes: An Examination of Performance By and For Youth in Kenya on HIV/AIDS*. Another research done in this field is in Kenyatta University and it deals with issues of performance and adaptation. However, little attention has been given to the study of visual effects in film. The research done in this study is motivated by the notion that visual effects enhance the identity forming process as they most often than not change an individual character while on stage and also influences the viewers of the films. In this study therefore, I have interrogated the influence of visual effects and how they enhance the formation and transformation of identity as far as the object and the target audience is concerned. My focus is

how the visual effects employed enhance the realization of meaning by the child performers and the audience (consumers of the materials). Hence the voice of the child narrator and how it brings about the formation and transformation of identity as well as the vision of the adult script writer has been analyzed and the disparity discussed.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

This research intends to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify how a performer's identity forms and transforms through visual effects in the selected films;
- ii. To examine the extent to which the visual effects enhance the realization of meaning in children's films;
- iii. To find out the disparity in terms of reception/perception between children and adult audiences.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

In this project, I am working on the following assumptions:

- i. Visual effects influence the performer's identity formation in the selected films;
- ii. The visual effects enhance the realization of the film's meaning especially when the film is performed by children;
- iii. There is a great disparity in terms of reception and perception between children and adult audiences.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

In histories, films are marked as worth mentioning for one reason or another for instance, influence, aesthetics, significance, and typicality. Films are not only marked for historio-geographical reasons whereby every causal explanation invariably privileges particular linkages or conjunctions but for practical reasons as well.

In the dance story *Mbekho*, the child protagonist rejects the rural space(s) and all its evils (represented by the uncle's wickedness) and relocates to the urban space. For most people

therefore, experiencing the city also implies creating a range of representation that express the difference in vocabularies of modernity. The traditional maps of urban living and stories of the street are in continual dispute. In the film an overflow of media images and narratives coexist with historical events like in the story *Lwanda Mawe*, architectural constructions, personalized memories, and lived experiences.

The girl heads to the unknown. It is fear that makes the audience members empathise with the narrator(s). The fear of urban spaces is tied to the usual threats of rape, violence and kidnaps. It is such an uneasy terrain that defines the transformation of the narrator's identity from a village girl to a city dweller. In an interview with Mrs. Mugo, she informs that the children's reality back in the slums defines their identities and this even affects their performance on stage. This is emphasized in the journal *Identity and Identity Formation*. The writer notes that pauses in the conversation, redundancy, noises, and the presence of the interviewer or the vision of the filming camera emphasizes that the spectator is viewing a film in the making. It is this emergence of urban lifestyles and forms of identity that surpass local and national boundaries but also allows narratives and images to circulate.

Film is a conspicuously new phenomenon in African literary studies and East Africa to be precise. This is because film studies have not been taken seriously by many scholars. Owing to this fact, film criticism in this region is almost absent within the Kenyan film circles (except for the 2008 training that was done by the Goethe Institute on film criticism). The major factor that has hindered the film industry in Kenya is the attitude that goes with the entire field: that film is a part-time activity that only intends to entertain. For one, film studies have never been taken seriously and some scholars would argue against its contribution to the literary world. Again, the (dis)connect between film and criticism in the Kenyan film sector and the failure to define it as film has equally contributed to its slow growth in the country. The Kenyan film industry is still finding its way. I strongly agree with Njeri Kihang'ah, an entertainment writer for the Daily Nation, a leading national Kenyan newspaper, who addressed the current state of film in Kenya:

Kenya has played home to documentaries and short films rather than feature films. It's hard to believe that despite having a 60-year exposure

to local shots, we still lag behind Egypt, South Africa, and of course Nigeria in film production (2008.para.7)

I feel that this research gives new criticism on Kenyan film since this is one of the few academic researches to be done on the Kayole film project. The choice of the Kayole One films is due to their authenticity as the employment of the local dialect in the films emphasizes its African originality. The Kayole One films are universal in nature and that creates the possibility that the issues addressed in the film may have actually energized the script writer into composing it. Also, the film was produced recently and it addresses the contemporary societal issues which impact on the daily lives of both children and adult such as poverty, the plight of orphaned children, and the pain of rejection.

Moreover, apart from the entertainment role, the films also teach. The film *Sango* by the Kayole children for instance plays the role of entertainment as well as the didactic function. The film revolves around a young boy's predicament in regard to forgiveness. The story unfolds when the young boy has travelled to his village during the school holidays. While in the village, the boy it. Consequently, the boy cannot find peace after that incident. The injured boy keeps haunting him wherever he goes. In fact, while in the city, the image of the boy keeps appearing and reappearing until the young boy cannot contain it anymore. He decides to share his ordeal with other family members and to resolve this; the boy is forced to travel back to the village to ask for forgiveness. He is forgiven. The film therefore emphasizes on the power of repentance.

Film studies in Africa and Kenya in particular is a recent phenomenon. The term "African Cinema" may refer to the film production in Africa after independence. Some of the countries in North Africa established a national film industry much earlier and are, by and large, related to West Asian cinema. Most often than not, African cinema also includes directors from the local as well as the Africans in the Diaspora. During the colonial era, Africa was represented exclusively by Western film makers. The African continent at the time was misrepresented: an exotic land devoid of history and/or culture. Some of the films produced then include: the jungle epic such as *Tarzan* and *The African Queen*, and various adaptations of H. Rider Haggard's 1885 novel titled, *King Solomon's Mines*. In the French colonies Africans were, by law, not permitted to

make films of their own. The ban was known as the “Larval Decree”. The ban stunted the growth of film in Africa since the African could not express himself politically, culturally, and artistically. A French ethnographic filmmaker, Jean Rouch, has been criticized by both French and African audiences. His control visual films like *Jaguar* (1953). *Moi unnoir* (1958), among others were not explicitly anti-colonial Africa and gave a new voice to Africans through film. One literary writer and critic Sembene Ousmane accused Jean Rouch as someone who looks at Africans “as if they are insects”.

Since most of the films at the time were largely racist in nature, African filmmakers of the time like Sembene Ousmane, Safi Naye, Oumato Ganda, to name a few, saw filmmaking as an important political tool for re-creating the farmished image of Africa. The role of the African filmmaker is often compared to that of the traditional griots. Like them, their task is to express and reflect communal experiences. Hence, patterns of African oral literature often recur in African films. It has been greatly influenced by traditions from other continents such as Brazilian Cinema *Navo* and the theatre of Bertolt Brecht and the Italian neorealism.

The cinema of Kenya refers to the film industry of Kenya that is, the films often relate the conditions of the people and poverty in the main cities of Kenya and although a very small industry by Western comparison, Kenya has produced films since the early 1950’s when *Men against the Sun* was filmed in 1952. Unlike other countries which mostly produced documentary films often relating the conditions of the people and poverty in the main cities of Kenya, featured films on technology production have increased in the country. They include: *Dangerous Affair*, *Project Daddy*, and *Money and Cross* by Njeri Karago, *Malooned* by Bob Nyanja. *From a whisper* by Wanuri Kahio and *Jitu* films like *Mob Dol*, *RZ security*, *Zainabu Rudi Nyumbani*, *Chasing Moses*, *Selfish Me*, *My wife and her Guru* and Banned horror film *Ottoh and the Blood bath*. Numerous short fictions are also on the increase such as *Ras star* by Wanuri Kahiu, by Kenya – based/ Indian film director Ravneet Sippy Chadha, among others.

Other low budget independent filmmakers using digital technology to shoot their films and sell them locally have emerged as Riverwood. Through the Riverwood industry (originally River-Road), the attention of those mainstream TV stations and pan-African broadcasters has been

captured and this has generally improved the state of film in Kenya. For instance, Mburu Kimani's *The Race* earned and awarded at the Kalasha Awards (Kenya's TV and film Awards) for the best Riverwood film. Other films in this genre include Simiyu Barasa's *Toto Millionaire* (2000) and other many vernacular films like *Kihenjo* and *Machangi*.

The disparity between the object (the child performer) and the target (the adult audience) is an important element in the analysis of films by children. In the presentation of their world, the language employed is honest, sincere, and real. The rise of such films by children performers is also seen in award-winning plays like *First Drop* by the Kayole primary school children in Nairobi. For instance, in the dance story entitled *Mbekho* the Kayole One children revolve around the challenges faced by orphaned children in urban spaces.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

My task in this project is threefold; to show how character forms and transforms in film via the visual effects. Secondly, I argue that the authenticity of the selected films is effectively achieved when the performance is by children since the child narrator is considered innocent and truthful. My third task is to reconcile the first two assertions by demonstrating how the child's voice is an effective tool for enhancing the film's aesthetic appeal.

In this project I have focused on the films by the Kayole One children entitled: *Rainmaker*, *Mbekho*, *Lwanda Mawe*, *Nyamgondho*, and *Mtoto wa Afrika* as representative of the contemporary film (s) in the African scenario and Kenya in particular. To back up my evidence, I have referred to a few selected films by Kenya primary school children like the Lions' school, Elimu Academy, and Naikara Primary School. I have also referred to the local television series like *Machachari* so as to compare the child as a narrating agent in the films.

My focus is on the children performers and protagonists in these films. I have focused my analysis on the visual effects that pervade these films and their contribution to the formation and transformation of identity. Again, I have set to finding out the disparity in terms of reception/perception of the films selected between the children audience and the adult audience.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The interaction between space and the individual is almost obvious in films and other literary genres. In fact, several writers and critics agree on this notion. Hall (in Mongia, 1997:110) posits that the position (place) occupied by a person in space and time (context) affects the identity of a person at that specific moment in time. It should be noted however that this identity is not static since it keeps changing. Hence, according to Hall, ‘identity is a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.’ This assertion is reiterated by other poets and critics like Arnaud (as quoted by Bachelard, 1964:137), who claims, ‘I am the space where I am,’ while Zlogar goes ahead to point out that, ‘man at once affects the space around him while simultaneously being affected by that space,’ Adesanni (2002:73) asserts that there is no such thing as ‘neutral space’ since human beings who occupy that space generate a “spatial matrix”.

Dorian-Smith, Gunner, and Nutall (1996:3) elaborate on the earlier mentioned perspectives by asserting that space is “a focus for the formation of identity and that the notion of space can be regarded as a “multidimensional entity”, which encompasses psychological, personal, social, philosophical, cultural, and physical dimensions. A change in the perception of identity has also brought about the recognition of proximities between various fields of study, such as anthropology, architecture, and social history (Low and Chambers 1989:91), as well as psychology, philosophy, cultural studies, and literature, which are all concerned with identity and identity formation.

The use of the child’s voice in the Kayole films enhances the identity formation process. This is because the sense of innocence and inexperience of a child creates credibility in a piece of work. The 17th century philosopher John Locke in his theory of *tabula rasa* proposes that the mind is a clean slate at birth and it is only through experience that knowledge is written onto the slate. Hence, according to Locke, a child is an inexperienced being. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke asserts:

Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper void of all characters, without any ideas. How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast

store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has pointed on it with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, from experience (311).

The above quotation emphasizes the sense of naivety and inexperience of young children so that when the children narrate their experiences (representing other children's experiences in the slums), we realize this innocent nature of children. This is seen in the child's description of war in Africa, famine, parental irresponsibility due to alcoholism, and poverty in general. These narrations by children evoke feelings of sympathy and empathy in the viewer(s).

In order to analyze the role of the narrator in the Kayole one films, it is important to trace the development of the film industry in the global scene. This knowledge will assist in determining the presence or absence of a narrator in the Kayole film. The very first technological precursor of film is the pinhole camera. This was followed by the more advanced camera obscura. The advanced camera obscura was first described in detail by Alhazen in his *Book of Optics*. In this type of camera, light is inverted through a small hole or lens from outside, and projected onto a surface or screen. Hence through the use of camera obscura, it was possible to project a moving image, but there was no means of recording the image for later reviewing.

The history of film began in the late 1880's. It was during this period that the first movie camera was invented. Motion pictures were initially exhibited as carnival novelty and this advanced to one of the most vital tools of communication and entertainment, and mass media in the 20th and even into the 21st century. However, most films before 1930 were silent.

During the silent era, there were technical difficulties in synchronizing images with sound. Edison's efforts to create a sound film system were thwarted until the later years when he produced *The Jazz Singer* in 1927. Emphasis was laid in motion picture films to be produced without sound. However, in order to enhance the viewer's experience, the silent films were accompanied by live musicians and at times sound effects and / or even commentary spoken by the showman or projectionist. It is until 1923 that such technical problems were resolved. However, before then, most countries used intertitles to provide dialogue and narration for the film, thereby dispensing with narrators. In Japanese cinema, human narration remained popular

throughout the silent era.

There was a monumental production that was released in 1915 entitled *The Photo-drama of Creation* and it lasted eight hours. This was a non-commercial attempt to combine the motion picture with a combination of slides and an attempt to synchronize the resulting moving picture with audio. The resulting film included hand-painted slides as well as other previously used techniques. There was the need to play the audio while the film was played with a projector. Between 1895 to 1906, the motion pictures show the cinema moving from a novelty to an established large-scale entertainment industry. The films represent a movement from films that are made by one person with a few assistants, towards films several minutes long consisting of several shots, which were made by large companies in something like industrial conditions.

The most successful motion picture company in the United States was called the American Mutoscope company. This was initially set up to exploit peep-show type films using designs by W.K.L. Dickson after he left the Edison Company in 1895. From 1896 there was continuous litigation in the United States over the patents covering the basic mechanisms that made motion pictures possible.

Film production in the United States mostly established a long-term presence in the new century. In France, the Lumier Company set cameramen all around the world from 1896 onwards to shoot films. These films were exhibited locally by the cameramen and then sent back to the company factory in Lyon to make prints for sale. By 1901, there were about a thousand of these films which were mostly actualities. The very first successful permanent theatre showing only films was *The Nickelodeon*. It was opened in Pittsburg in 1905.

However, initially, films were mostly shown as novelties in special venues, but the main methods of exhibition quickly became either as an item on the programmes of variety theatres that they took around the country towns. "Single Frame animation" or "Object animation" was done by exposing the film one frame at a time, and moving the letters a little bit towards their final position between each exposure. The most remarkable animation of the time was in 1906 when Albert Edward Smith and James Stuart Blackton took the next step. Their work, entitled, *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* shows what appears to be cartoon drawings of people moving from one post to another and it is done for the most part of this film. The moving of jointed cut-

outs of the figures frame by frame between the exposures creates the entire film. There is another short section of the film however, where things are made to appear to move by altering the drawings themselves from frame to frame. This is how the standard animated cartoons have since been made up to today.

The way that films were made at the time was quite different as compared to how they are made now. To make up a film of more than one shot was led by films of *The Life of Jesus Christ* in France in 1897. This was preceded by a film of *The Passion Play* staged early in the Czech town of Horitz (1897). This was filmed by Americans for exhibition outside the German speaking world and it was thereafter presented in special venues, (not as continuous film) but a film with the separate scenes interspersed with a lecture, lantern slides, and live choral numbers to increase the running time of the spectacle to about 90 minutes.

Robert W. Paul's *Come Along, Do!* (1898) is attributed to the beginning of real film continuity. Film continuity is described as the movement of action in a film from one sequence into another. In the film stated above, an old couple is outside an art exhibition and follows other people inside through the door. But in the second sequence, the audience is shown what they do inside. Moreover, in 1899, George Albert Smith made *The Kiss in the Tunnel*. This multi-shot film started with a shot from a "Phantom Ride" at the point at which the train goes into a tunnel, and continues with the action on a set representing the interior of a railway carriage, where a man steals a kiss from a woman, and then cuts back to the phantom ride shot when the train comes out of the tunnel. This idea was followed up by other filmmakers and this is the basis of film construction, or film language or film grammar. Edwin Porter is regarded as the best known filmmaker of the time.

In 1900, continuity of action across successive shots was established by George Albert Smith and James Williamson, the former made *Seen through the Telescope* while the latter made *Attack on a China Mission Station*. G.A. Smith further developed the ideas of breaking a scene shot taken from different camera positions over the next couple of years. On the other hand, James Williamson concentrated on making films that were taking action from one place shown in one shot to the next shown in another shot in films like *Shot Thief! And Fire!* made in 1901, among others.

In 1907, there were about 4,000 small “Nickelodeon” cinemas in the United States. The films were shown with the accompaniment of music provided for by a pianist or other musicians. By around 1910, the actors in American films, who up to this point had been anonymous, began to receive screen credit, and the way to the creation of film stars was opened.

With the worldwide film boom, more countries now joined Britain, the United States, and France in film production. In Italy, production was spread over several centers, with Turin production required by the nickelodeon boom, extra artificial lighting was used more and in the film studios to supplement diffuse sunlight and hence increase the hours that film could be shot during the day. The major sources employed were modified arc lights made for street lighting. These were either hung on battens suspended in front of the actors from the roof or mounted in groups on floor stands. The addition of a metal reflector round the arc source directed a very broad sweep of light in the desired direction. During the 1960s Sembene Ousmane produced many French- and Wolof- language films and became “the father” of African cinema. The “Hollywood” model was on the other hand challenged by many filmmakers in Latin America. The resultant film was “Third-class Cinema” in contrast to Hollywood and the European auteur cinema.

Narration in film has as its two major components current aesthetic concepts and technical means at the time of production. During the silent era (silent movies) that is from 1895 onwards, movies not only lacked the verbal expression, but also narrative structures beyond the stringing together of stage effects, sensationalist trick scenes and tableaux. At the time, what was considered a striking narrative device was the act of showing these scenes within a framed space and against the common law of temporal continuity. However, in the entire sense, these movies were still very much indebted to the 19th century apparatus in which the process of seeing as a perceptual and meteoric element was closely connected with pre-cinematic spatial and bodily experiences (Elsaesser 1990:3)

Following this, the early “cinema of Attractions” (Gunning 1986) gradually made way for “narrativization” (233). This was between 1907 to around 1913. This was achieved via the process of structural organization of cinematic signifiers and the “creation of a self- enclosed diegetic universe” (233). The aftermath, initiated by David Wark Griffith was an “institutional mode of representation”, also referred to as “classical narration.”(Schweinitz 1999:74)

The role of the film's discourse was to create a coherence of vision without any jerks in space or time or dissonant and disruptive elements in the process of viewing. The basic trajectory of the classical Hollywood ideal involves establishing cause-effect logic, a precise subject-object relation, and a cohesive effect of visual and auditive perception that intends at providing the story with an organic meaning, regardless of how different the shots which are sliced together might be. According to Chatman, a "seamless" and consecutive style serves to hide "all marks of artifice" (1990:54) and hence to give the narrative the appearance of a natural observing position. Therefore, the "real" of the film is founded at least as much in the real image quality of its photography. In fact, it is the system of representation that shows analogies to the viewer's capacity to merge visual impressions with a "story".

During the immediate post-war years, the cinematic industry was threatened by television; hence the increasing popularity of the medium meant that some film theatres had to close down. Therefore, modernist cinema and non-colonial art films (after 1945), repudiate the hegemonistic story regime of classical Hollywood cinema. This was done by laying open the conditions of artificiality and mediality or sometimes by employing strategies not as an empathetic but as an alienating factor of storytelling. Therefore, they disrupt the narrative continuum and convert the principle of succession into a specific simultaneity by means of iteration, frequency, and dislocation of the traditional modes of temporal and spatial representation.

Modern cinema also made possible the flash-forward as the cinematography equivalent to that of the prolepsis and non-linear collage elements, or broke with the narrative convention of character continuity for instance when a central protagonist disappears in the course of events.

Post classical cinema, responding to growing globalization in its worldwide distribution and reception, enhances the aesthetics of visual and auditory effects by means of computerized cutting techniques, digitalization, and a strategy of immediacy that signals a shift from linear discourse to a renewed interest in spectacular incidents. There has been a rise in the documentary film as a commercial genre perhaps for the first time. Films such as *March of the Penguins* and Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* and *Fahrenheit 9/11* have been quite a success. In 2001, the *Harry Potter* film series began and by the time it ended in 2011, it had become the highest-grossing film franchise of all time.

The increasing globalization of cinema during this decade, with foreign-language films gaining popularity in English-speaking markets has greatly contributed to the growth of the film industry. The notable films include: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Mandarin), *Amelie* (French), *Lagaan* (Hindi-Urdu), *The Passion of Christ* (Aramaic), *Spirited Away* (Japanese), among others.

The major contentious issue in film narratology concerns the role of the narrating agency (otherwise referred to as the narrator) as an instrument of narrative mediation. This reveals the limits of literary narrativity when applied to film studies on one hand and on the other hand reflects the difficulty of specifying the process of narration. Hence, the general proposition/claim that there is no narrative without a narrator poses certain challenges especially when applied to narration in feature films.

Despite the fact that almost all of such films (many of them adaptations from literature) concern themselves with storytelling and can therefore be categorized in a specific narrative medium, their unique mode of peculiar merging of spatiotemporal elements distinguish them from those forms of narrativity that are specifically language based.

Narration in film must deal with both the representational realism of its images and its technical devices so as to integrate time and space, image and sound, depending on the effect that is intended: emotional and / or artistic. To evoke a sense of “real”, film creates a spatiotemporal continuum whose components can be separated for heuristic purposes. According to Ingarden, “in their ‘succession and mutual blending’ images let chronologically extended events appear in their full concrete sequentially. ([1931] 1972:344). Thus the organized combination (which is temporal) of visual and acoustic signs corresponds to the unmediated rendering of space, albeit on a two-dimensional screen.

The inherent dialectic of film is well explained by Lothe in *Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Lothe asserts that the realization of a positioned space lies in movement, which imposes a temporal vector upon the spatial dimension. Another scholar Panotsky in *Die ideologischen Vorlauffer des Rolls-Royce_Kuhlers_ and Still and medium in Film* describes the result as ‘a speeding up of space’ and a “spatialization of time” (1937). The above assertions rightly capture why film is considered the medium that appears very close to our mimetic registration of the real world and at the same time deviating from real-life experience by its manifold means of establishing a

‘second world’ of fantasy, dream, and wish fulfillment.

Does film pose a narrator or does it narrate itself? This question has stirred heated arguments among literary and film scholars. Many different terminologies and theoretical constructs have been introduced in order to overcome the logical impasse of having a narration without a narrator. (Volker1999:48) refers to the narrating agency as ‘camera eye’, ‘first degree narrator’, ‘primary narrative agency’ whereas Black (1986:4,22) refers to that voice in film as “ultimate narrational agency”, or “supra-narrator”. Tomasulo (1986:46) refers to the narrator in film as “organizing consciousness”, “heterodiegetic narrator” while Fulton refers to the same as “heterodiegetic camera” in a metaphoric sense. Schlickers (1997:6) describes the narrator in the film as “invisible observer” and this is also the case with Bordwell (1985:9-10). Hence, the effacement of the narrator and the general idea that film seems to “narrate itself” is in contrast to the impression that all visual and auditive modes impart an authorial presence or an ‘enunciator’ however impersonal. In all the above definitions of the narrating agency in film, there is the existence of some overall control of visual and sonic registers with the camera as an intermediary of visual and acoustic information.

The invisible observer theory maintains the view that it is the camera that narrates. The term ‘camera style’ was even coined by the French director Alexandre Astruc to mean the camera that narrates. This idea receives a lot of reactions from other scholars (writers and critics). For one, Deleyto in *Focalization in Film Narrative* rejects these assertions by drawing a parallel between narrator that is, who speaks? And focalizer that is, who sees? For Deleyto, he does not allow the external focalizer the option of taking the position of the camera like Bordwell does. Deleyto posits:

Whereas in the novel the two kinds of focalization (internal/ external) alternate, in film several internal and external focalizers can appear Simultaneously at different points inside or outside the frame, all contributing to the development of tension between subjectivity and objectivity.(217)

Deleyto’s argument here concerns the objective presentation of the external narration so as to make internal processes both understandable and visible. In the film *Lwanda, the Man of Stone*, the children’s voices narrating are complemented via dramatization so that the audience is able to

visualize the events unfolding. Hence, the internal processes of both narrators are realized via performance. In the film, the target audience is children. They even respond to the narrator's call of, *Story! Story!* And they respond accordingly to the song which goes like: *Lwanda ni nani?* And they answer; *Lwanda Mawe...*The audience's psyche is realized through other paralinguistic strategies. Sometimes, in voice-over narration, the auditive and figural representation of the narrator is done away with in favor of the virtual position of an impersonal narrative instance. There are few films that have been done in a way that they construct events 'through the eyes' of the main character. In the film, the creation of an unmediated presence by means of internal ocularization makes the viewer suddenly aware of the impersonal and subjectless apparatus of the camera and this exiles them from the character instead of drawing them into the reality of the character. Hence, the principle of suspension of disbelief is totally crippled.

Various scholars have attempted a definition of the film narrator within their respective spheres of expertise. According to Seymour Chatman, (1990: 134), "the narrator in film is a composite of a large and complex variety of communicating devices that constitute the notion of implied author." Chatman's (1990: 135) complex cinematic narrator through both the auditory and visual channels identifies the three kinds of auditory channels of voices, noise and music. Chatman also takes into account the point of origin of sounds, whether on screen or off screen. There are two very vital aspects when looking at the visual channels: the nature and the treatment of the image. For one, the nature of the image depends on whether it is an actor, a location, or a prop.

The appearance and performance of the actor contributes to the image. Therefore, the performance aspect enhances the kinesics channel into play. Secondly, the treatment of the image depends on cinematography which includes color, lighting, camera, edition and mise-en-scene, whereas the contribution of the camera consists of aspects such as distance, angle, and movement. Editing includes types (fade, straight, etc) and rhythm. All these elements narrate a story in film on various levels. In the film, *Lwanda Mawe*, narration is enhanced by elements such as intense sounding, lighting (dark and light) and the visual effects. In the introduction, there is the merge of verbal and non-verbal cues. The tonal variation when the narrators call on the audience is spectacular. The narrators call, "Story! Story!" and the children respond appropriately. However, when they mention 'Lwanda, the man of stone', the filmic elements

take the centre stage. There is the sound of drums to show the mighty nature of Lwanda, the physical spaces are also engulfed by a mixture of black, white, and brown color. There is also the presence of white smoke in the center stage to imply anxiety or pending danger.

Bordwell and Thompson (1993: 79) posits that film narration may also utilize a narrator who is some specific agent purporting to be telling the story. In film, the actual voice over links the film with the literary narrator, which make the human agent of narration vital in the films by the Kayole One children. In the film *Nyamgondho*, we witness the girl narrating the story of *Nyamgondho*, son of Ombare. This is narrative that exists in the African oral literature and hence the film goes a notch higher in re-telling the story. This is what Brian Ott and Cameron Walter in *Intertextuality: Interpretive Practice and Textual Strategy* define as creative appropriation. This is a stylistic device in which one text appropriates and integrates a fragment of another text and actually reproduces a portion of the original text. With the inclusion of visual editing and audio mixing, the audience effectively relates the events in the narrative. Moreover, other filmic techniques like costumes, song, color, and dance make the story more realistic and interesting. However, it would be impossible to efficiently narrate the story without the human agent of narration in film.

One of the interesting aspect is the fact that the narrator is also a character who inhabits or is active in the plot itself and who is usually referred to as the first person narrator. Bruner (In Brockmeier & Carbough, 2001:27) refers this form of narration autobiographic. In the film *Mbekho*, the girl takes both the objective and the subjective position. At one level the girl is the victim that is, she is orphaned, rejected by the uncle, goes to the city and becomes a street urchin but through some miracle, she is taken to school by well wishers. At another level, the girl is a participant in the film and assumes the roles of an observer.

There are various levels of narration in film. Traditionally, events are narrated after they have happened in film. This type of narration is referred to as ulterior narration. However, the highest level of narration is the extradiegetic level and the immediate subordinate level is the diegetic level. Chatman's idea of narration is still anchored in literary theory (Booth and Todorov), seeing the visual concreteness of cinema as it's basic mark of distinction from literature, Branigan and

Bordwell abandon straight away the idea of the cinematic narrator or a narrative voice. The two scholars hold that the construct of the narrator is wrapped up in the activity of narration itself which is performed on various levels. According to Bordwell (1985: 62), “to give every film a narrator or implied author is to indulge in endomorphic fiction.” Celestino Deleyto in *Focalization in Film Narrative* poses: ‘who is the narrator in a film text?’ He argues out his point by giving live examples. He says:

In films like *Rebecca* (1940) *Duel in the Sun* (1946) or *Double Indemnity* (1940), there are clearly voice-over narrator, who may be character-bound (*Rebecca* , *Double Indemnity*)or external (*Duel in the Sun*). In the case of many silent films or some sound films like *Gone with the Wind* (1939) or *Arsenal* and *The Old Lace* (1944), the inter titles fulfill the function of the narrator (P. 162).

The author as an “essential subject” who is in possession of psychological properties or of a human voice is replaced by the notion of narration. Narration in this paper is understood as a process or activity in comparison to narrative and which is defined as “the organization of a set of cues for the construction of a story but no sender.

Stories are essential elements throughout our lives since they are the tools that enhance the understanding of us. Owing to this fact, people have managed to tell stories through different mediums for instance, film, television plays, poems, novels, and music. By creating, telling and hearing stories, people (we) work towards understanding our selves and others (McAdams 2000: Mishler, 1986: Murray, 2003). Hence, the process of telling or narrating needs the narrator.

Children posses an admirable ability to construct stories that help them understands themselves. In the analysis of basic components of a narrative like agents, purpose, action, setting and description in the kayole one films, one realizes the value of employing the child’s voice. The protagonists in the stories are children. In the dramatized dance *Mbekho*, the girl narrates her life experience through time. Time as a factor in this case enhances the realization and creation of identity. The narrator’s lived/experienced time and the chronological time play an important role in narrative fiction as well as exposing the audience to the process of formation and transformation of the girl’s identity.

The stories about the children's experiences enable them to make meaning of their past actions, anticipate future results, and assess themselves in the present moment. Hence, a narrative in film can be described as a selective and subjective form of recounting previous experiences (not precise). This is evident in the films: *Lwanda*, *The Man of Stone*, *The Rainmaker*, and *Nyamgondtho*. These narratives shape the way we remember events, our beliefs about what is important to ourselves are therefore shapes and forms identity. In essence, narratives represent fragments of experiences and also fragments of our "selves".

According to Deleyto in the text *Focalization in film Narrative*, 'narratology is the study of narrative texts in general; not only novels.' There are other ways of presenting a story, from the narrative to the cartoon stripe. Some of such forms, according to Deleyto, "do not use the written or spoken word as their only means of expression. Indeed in some cases, spoken or written is not used at all as is the case in some paintings which clearly convey a narrative, or in certain silent films. (P. 161-162). In fact the assertion in this case is that it is through cinema, television, and video that most stories are told today; not through other literary genres like novels. In this project, I consider Mieke Bal's view that narratology has proved an efficient tool of analysis especially when it is consistently applied to film texts or film narratives.

Mieke Bal (1985: 5) bases her analysis of a narrative text on a three layer distinction. One is the *Fibula* which she defines as series of logically and chronological related events that are experienced or caused by actions. Two is story that is, a *fibula* that is presented in a certain manner and a story can be shared by different narrative texts. In this level, the analysis tends to vary depending on the nature of the language signs of which it is composed. Hence following this analysis, the assumption we make is that the analysis of focalization (that belong to the story layer) could be effectively applied to a film text, together with character, space, and time manipulation. *Fibula* and story are more abstract notions that do not openly appear in a narrative text. It is only the visual signs and /or the linguistic signs which are only there to be seen, that form a text. Therefore just like character and space, focalization is also narrated in the text.

In the analysis of the child narrator in the kayole one films, several questions came up during the research. The revolving question was:” who is the narrator in the films? This is owing to the fact that the activity of narration (the task of the narrator) does not appear throughout the text but only intermittently, sometimes not at all, as is the case in some painting which clearly convey a narrative or in certain silent films.

According to some scholars, a film does not necessarily need a film narrator. Deleyto argues that a film narrative does not need the existence of an explicit narrator (as this agent is defined by theories of the novel), for the activity of narration to take place. (p. 163). Another scholar, Branigan (1984: 40) says, “in film the narrator is not necessarily a biological person, not even a somehow identifiable agent like in the novel, but a symbolic activity: the activity of narration (1984: 40). It is the same symbolic activity that brings us forth to the question of implied author. However, Branigan redefines narration as, “a set of frames within larger frames leading to a frame which cannot itself be framed within the boundary of the text – an unavoidable and implicit omniscient which may now be called ‘effaced’ (1984: 71)

The camera has often been used as the equivalent of the narrator in film .Many classical theoreticians like V. S Pudovkin and Karel Resiz and Gavin Miller hold on to this view. Branigan uses the concept of the camera as he regards the terms as being closer to the role of the narrator. He defines ‘camera’ as a construct of the spectator ‘and a ‘hypothesis about space’ (1984: 54). Hence the camera functions by defining the position of the invisible observer that could be an identifiable agent that seems to be the origin of narration in film. The concept of the camera can be extended to account for editing devices. Hence the invisible but identifiable narrator would be able not only to present the space contained in the frame, but would change from one shot to another when it is necessary for the development of the narrative. This is evident in the film *Mtoto wa Afrika*.

Besides editing devices and the position of the camera, there exist in a film text a group of elements that come under the general terms of mise- en -scene, that is, the staging of the events in front of the camera. The mise – en – scene elements counters that a film narrative works in a similar way to a play. According to theories of drama, there is no narration in a play

representation. There is a story and, therefore, a *fibula*: but that story is not narrated but represented by means of actors and a dramatic space, with a certain relationship [with the audience. (p. 164).

Deleyto defines film at a textual level as, “a mixture of narration and representation “He goes ahead and explains that:

Narration performed by a voice –over or on screen explicit narrator or a metaphoric activity whose origin is the camera, does not cover all the textual activities that appear in a film. The *mise en – scene* of a film, a term which can only metaphorically be applied to the novel, falls outside narration. Because there is no way of including the *mise – en – scene* code within the concept of film narration, there is no point any more in identifying the camera with the narrator.

Deleyto’s argument is that there is no point in identifying the camera with the narrator but it preferable to keep the term narrator with the same status to that of the narrator in prose function. . Deleyto rejects the idea that the camera narrates due to the fact that the activity of the camera is so distinct from that of the narrator despite the fact that it is obviously textual in the sense that it produces visual signs.

Mieke Bal defines focalization as, “the relationship between the ‘vision’, the agent that sees and that which is seen”. (1985: 104). Hence focalization is textual in a film text. In a nutshell, the narrator’s role in a film is performed by both the narrator and the focalist. And in this project, I am working on the assumption that in film, there is narration, representation and focalization. Moreover, since narratology seems to be more applicable to novels (a theory of the novel), then the question of formation and transformation of identity in the Kayole one films seeks to include studies of subjectivity in film texts.

Studies of subjectivity in film have been ignored and emphasis has always been on the visual aspects in film. Many scholars have attempted a description of subjectivity in film. Mitry (1963), Kawin (1978) and Branigan (1984) suggest various levels of subjective images. Mitry suggests the typical mental image, the subjective shot, the semi – subjective shot, the imaginary sequences and the memory image (1965: 61 – 79, 107 -116, 136 – 140, 403 – 406) Kawin’s idea is based on

subjective camera, point of view, mind-screen and self consciousness (1978: 1990) while Branigan lists six forms of subjectivity that is: perception, projection, reflection, point of view, flashback, and mental process (1984: 79). According to Deleyto, the above classification has several shortcomings. Deleyto persists:

Mitry only thinks in terms of the shot, although film theory has for a long time rejected the idea that the shot was the equivalent unit of the word in human language. He has , the refuse, no use for eye line materials, shot/ reverse shoots , etc, Kawin seems to mix different levels of generalization: subjective camera seems much more specific, for example, than self – consciousness, which could include the other three. Branigan firmly bases his system on the position of the camera etc.

Deleyto's criticism therefore concludes that the very relationship underlying objectivity and subjectivity in film falls outside the scope of the three scholars above mentioned. His argument is that the general specific study of the issue of visual subjectivity can be approached from a more abstract and less taxonomical stand point in the film genre. This is made possible by analyzing subjectivity in film. Subjectivity can be external or internal. (p. 167). This occurs when there are several focalizes (internal and external) on different points of the frame. Deleyto adds that, "it is through the study of the relationship between all these different agents, their possible position on the frame, and the relationship between them, that the study of focalization can contribute to the analysis of subjectivity in firm. (p. 167)

This normally occurs when the focaliser takes the position of the camera and it is only an alternation in the position of the camera that leads to the change in the position of the focaliser. However, in the split screen, it is possible for the focaliser to occupy several positions at the same time. In *Mbekho*, we witness the split screen technology towards the end of the film (resolution) in this case, there is a kind of supreme position (that is, a multiplicity of vantage points for the external focalisers) In this instance four events unfold at the same time, the protagonist is calling her uncle, some children (including the narrator are dancing happily, the teacher is hugging the narrator, and finally, there is a snapshot of the girl smiling). The lighting in this particular point is even brighter to symbolize a sense hope and rejuvenation.

Narratology has been conceived from its earliest days on as a project that transcends other disciplines and media. In 1964, Claude Bremond indicated:

(Story) is independent of the techniques that bear it long. It may be transposed from one to another medium without losing its essential properties: the subject of a story may serve as argument for a ballet that of a novel can be transposed to stage or screen; one can recount in words a film to someone who has not seen it. These are words we read, images we see, gestures we decipher, but through them, it is story that we follow, and it could be the same story. (Quoted from Chatman 1978: 20)

Richard A. Posner in an article *Legal Narratology* defines a narrative as a true or functional account of a sequence of events unfolding in time. The events being invented, selected, emphasized, or arranged in such a way as to explain, inform, or edit. Another scholar Brooks in his introduction, paraphrasing Aristotle posits that, “most stories have beginnings, middles and ends and must be so constructed that the mind of the listener, VIEWER (emphasis mine) or the readers (can) take in the relation of beginning, middle and in the end see the end as entailed by a process: (p. 17).

Narrativity can be even in purely instrumental musical works, and it even constitutes a defining factor for musical romanticism. Several critics have presented their divergent views on the presence or absence of narration in music. The major objection to the narratological approach to music is represented by three scholars Carolyn Abbate, Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Peter Kivy. Carolyn Abbate (1989 – 1991) questions the issue of narrativity in music. She claims that there is a major problem of narrativity in music on the basis of the lack of past tense in the genre. Her major point of contention is that the literary narrative typically depends on the past tense in order to distinguish the present telling of a story from the past action that is being reported.

Nattiez (1990) is concerned with the issue of plot. He argues that in order for music to qualify as narrative, it must represent as story either in the real world or in a verbal medium. Despite the fact that his argument rests on the assumption that music is essentially abstract and therefore necessarily non-referential alone need not find this problematic in terms of musical plots. Musical events are real events and they raise and sometimes translate real expectations in the

listener.

Peter Kivy (2002 p. 8) strongly rejects to the possibility of musical narratives on the grounds that he finds it hard to reconcile the inherent use of repetition in common musical forms with the absurdity of such repetitions in a story. The argument in this project is that, together with literary content, a musical work can satisfy the two requirements of narrative that transcend the artistic medium: voice and plot. According to him, "“plot is established in nineteenth centuries by the definition of character through articulation of action through harmonic pattern of stability, rising, climax, resolution and denouncement.” (66).

The narrative persona, otherwise referred to as voice is created in various ways. He/she at times embodied in musical forms but most often than not, can be verbal cues in musical behavior surrounding the performance and hearing of a work, or in reception. This project therefore seeks to investigate the means and techniques by which the kayole one music *Mtoto wa Afrika* is able to enact plot and also give a suggestion on how listeners have encountered the narrative voice in musical works.

The argument by the three scholars (Kivy, Abbate and Nattiez) that there is no narrative in music has been responded to by William Kinderman (1992: 141-144). Kinderman takes issue with the fact that the abovementioned scholars do not provide a clear definition of narrative. In the analysis of the music of Beethoven entitled *Piano Sonata*, Kinderman highlights the effect that allows such music to “transcend a linear temporal succession.” This discussion partially answers Kivy’s question on *repetition*. Moreover, kinderman insists on understanding of musical narrative unencumbered by the peculiar constraint of any literary medium.

Wemer Wolof (2002) notes that; narrativity in music may be a bit problematic due to the issue of non-referentiality. However, he does not find this sufficient to disregard musical works as narratives. Abbate’s view that “literary theories of narrative suggest ways in which music cannot narrate” (1989: 228) is not really supported in this discussion since in this project, we focus on narratives that are not defined purely by literary theories.

Plot is expressed in music. Plot is present in any action where characters become involved in a sequence of events in which tension arises and is resolved. *Mtoto wa Afrika* begins with a movement that establishes a home key or tonic. Then, the music modulates rising into another key that creates a heightening tension in this instance, exposition (the setting up of the movement's fundamental opposition). A more or less extended period of harmonic instability also referred to as development, eventually leads to a moment of climatic anticipation. The reform of the tonic consequently provides harmonic resolution, restoring stability.

Musicological narratology also seeks insight beyond the work itself. The coordination between the different themes, the harmonic events, and the respective character motivates the harmonic progress of the music. Kinderman identifies the major themes in music as the following:

i) Opening themes

This is the point of creating anticipation at the beginning of the action these themes are mostly fragmentary and open ended or even unsettled in character. In essence, opening themes are external to the harmonic plan and are consequently not involved in the plot.

ii) Principal themes

They are responsible for establishing the tonic key of the movement both at the beginning and at the moment of resolution. At this point, the themes are strongly rhythmic and bold in character.

iii) Transition themes

They destabilize the key and move towards the contrast key.

iv) Secondary themes

These themes are associated with the secondary key that serves to stabilize the secondary key and to contrast with the character of the principle theme. Such themes are lyrical and long breathed.

v) Closing themes

They are formulaic and predictable in character

vi) Posits

Plot is not an exclusive property of literature or even of verbal media: it belongs equally to music and not merely a kind of borrowing from literature into music that requires us to translate musical characters and action into quasi – literary ones. Indeed, plot itself might properly be regarded as the quintessential enlightenment way of conceiving experiences manifesting itself either in literature or in music – or in any other form – a principle that transcend medium (69)

The themes in *Mtoto wa Afrika* are a fusion of the abovementioned themes. In fact, the patterns are relatively formulaic and this repetition ensures emphasis. In a nutshell, the voicing of the child causes a transformation of identity in both the young and the old audience members. This transformation is enhanced by the employment of visual effects.

Film has become an entity in itself. In fact film draws a section from the traditional literature proper. In essence, the basis of film is literary but the process of actualization is purely technical. This explains why film enables the consumer to conceptualize whatever the intended message/ theme was. For instance, a film like *Nyamgondho* cannot be fully understood or related via word of mouth. The effect will be quite minimal as compared to when it is performed on stage. This is owing to the fact that in film, the cameraman and director helps one conceptualize. This is made possible due to the inclusion of sounds, lighting, décor, color, among other elements of performance. Thereby, in film, there is a way in which the cameraman, the light technician, the costumes designer, the choreographer, among others, makes film enjoyable.

Film can be described as a largely hybrid, syncretistic, and multimedia form of aesthetic communication which bears quite a number of generic features that are tied to the history and the various capacities of its narrative constituents. According to Deleyto, "It is through cinema, television, and not through novels that most stories are told nowadays." (1996:218). Hence, film can claim to be a legitimate successor and/or competitor of fictional literature since it is capable of "employing complex subject constructions, developing parallels in the fibula, enacting changes in any given action, accentuating details, etc." (Ejzenbaum 1990:116). In fact, Ejzenbaum claims that Charles Dickens's narrative art anticipated the method of his own montage of parallel scenes. Moreover, it is a fact that film represents a contracted form of individual and social

development and it has the additional advantage of visual codes that enhance interpretation. Also, film is a universal art form that can be shared by millions of people (both literate and illiterate) at the same time. This is owing to the fact that both the educated and the uneducated can watch and appreciate a film for its own sake. One member may actually enjoy the aesthetic bit whereas another audience member may be sympathetic to the theme of the particular film.

The importance of narration in film cannot be overemphasized. The general proposition that there is no narration without a narrator poses particular difficulties when applied to narration in feature films. Despite the fact that almost all of these films, many of them adaptations from literature, abound in storytelling capacities, they still belong to a predominantly narrative medium. According to Johann N. Schmidt, “their specific mode of plurimedial presentation and their peculiar blending of temporal and spatial elements set them apart from forms of narratives that are principally language based and Bordwell posits, ”The narratological inventory, when applied to cinema, is likely to incorporate and combine a large number of ‘co-creative techniques ’constructing the story world for specific effects” (Bordwell 1985; 12) and creating an overall meaning only in their totality. The absence of a narrative subject is to be compensated for by the construction of a “visual narrative instance.” (Deleyto 1996:219; Kuhn 2009) mediating the paradigms of overtly cinematographic devices for instance, elements relating to camera, sound, and editing, the *mise-en-scène*(arranging and composing the scene in front of the camera),and a distinctly filmic focalization.

Film operates on grounds of literature. Looking at the genres of film as in, narration, dance, and music, there is a story being narrated. Metz states that, ” film is not “a language” but another kind of semiotic system with articulations of its own.” (Chatman 1990:124). Therefore some of the equivalences between literary and filmic narrative can be quite convincing because many other parallels must necessarily abstract from a number of diverse principles of aesthetic organization before stating similarities in the perception of literature and film. The main features of narrative strategies in literature can also be found in film although the characteristics of these strategies differ significantly.

Film making (also referred to as film production in the academic context) is the process of making a film. It involves a number of distinct stages that include an initial story, idea or commission through scriptwriting, casting, shooting, editing, and screening the finished product before an audience that may result in a film release and exhibition. The process of film production takes place in many places around the world and in a range of social, economic, and political contexts, and using a variety of technologies and cinematic techniques. Typically, it involves a large number of people, and can take from a few months to several years to complete.

In this project I have worked on the assumption that film is a performance on stage. The audience gives an immediate reaction to the performance on stage. In fact, one scholar, Scholes, postulates, “every performance of a play, even by the same actors, represents a different realization of its possibilities and no single performance can fully realize all its possibilities.” (Scholes 17). However, once a performance is conducted, it ceases to exist in one’s memory.

Children’s literature as a concept is defined by Ian Davis in *Literature for Children* as literature exclusively about children. For him it refers majorly to stories, folk tales, poetry, drama, and rhymes, basically created for children that are for infants, toddlers, and the young people as the target audience. This type of literature is essentially written for children and it rests on three criteria; whether the heroes are children or teenagers, the theme (the ideas, relationships), and language (simple or complex). This kind of literature is produced largely with a child’s interest and needs in mind. It is a kind of literature that deals honestly with children, and portrays these issues candidly and in a medium to which they can respond to with imagination and pleasure. For example, the play by the Lion’s School children dwells on the effect(s) of drug and substance abuse coupled with issues of parental responsibility and/or irresponsibility. These themes are rightly captured since, in essence, the humorous play is able to impact positively on the child because though laughable, the message is simple and clear: alcohol is fatal to any person’s health.

Literature is an art: It is the artistic point of view that is, the artist’s transformation of ideas and notions that enhances creativity in a work of art. The playwright/scriptwriter is aware of the

mind, psychology, and understanding of the child. This kind of literature fosters creativity in children and also requires simple ideas and relationships. Moreover, the language employed needs to be simple and clear so as to meet the children's psychological developmental needs. Books are written to meet the needs of children, such needs are: the children's mental health, security, to love and be loved, to achieve the need to know, and the need for aesthetic satisfaction. The elements of performance can be identified and appropriated in written scripts and applied to a stage rendition. The importance of performance is literary examined and this is also stamped by Okot P' Bitek in his view on the essence of literature from an African perspective. He posits:

Literature is the communication and sharing of deeply felt emotions – the aim of a literary activity must be to ensure that there is communication between the singer and the audience, between the story teller and its hearers- let the people sing and attend theatres for the joy of it. (1)

According to Okot, African Literature finds its true spirit (life and spirit) in performance. Therefore, trying to divorce African Literature from performance is an exercise in futility.

Film seems to be more adaptable to our contemporary world of multiculturalism and globalization. Also, it does not limit its accessibility for a specific reader audience. Maya Deren (as quoted by Gianneti, 1982) highlights a film's extra-ordinary range of expression by describing it as follows:

It has in common with the plastic arts the fact that it is a visual composition projected on a two dimensional surface; with dance, that it can deal in the arrangement of movement; with theatre, that it can create a dramatic intensity of events; with music, that it can compose in rhythms and phrases of time and can be attended by song and instruments ;with poetry, that it can juxtapose images ;with literature generally, that it can encompass in its sound track the abstractions available only to language.(6)

Through the visual effects, the audience is able to witness the way in which characters form, transform, and create their different identities via fiction.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project has heavily borrowed from three film literary theories. These are: Narratology, semiotics film theory and the reception theory. However, tenets of other film and literary theories like intertextuality have been employed in the research project.

Narratology implies the analysis of the narrative space in the different texts/symbolic constructions. Predominant scholars in this field of study are Sal (1985, 2001) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983). As this study has focused on manifestations of identity formation and transformation in the films from Kayole Primary School, narratological precepts have featured as the dominant theoretical underpinning of the study. The way (space and time/context) in which a *tabula* or story is told (the plot) forms the core element in constructing or forming identity. In addition to the plot, the influence of characters that move through and are affected by the events of the plot is an important factor to bear in mind. This means that specific characters with certain character traits will react in a certain way when faced with certain events in the plot. Sal (1985:120) states that the identity of the narrator affects the character of the text, because the narrator influences the way in which the story is told. Focalization, a kind of prism through which the story is represented, also has an influence on the character of the text. Sal (2001) develops visual narratology from this concept. Therefore it can be deduced that the narratological components mentioned above, which also include time (phenomenological, cosmological, "Aktzeit" and Cultural "zeit") are of particular importance in regard to identity as a "textual reality".

My focus on this research is how characters form and transform in film and whether the visual effects contribute to the realization of a film's aesthetic appeal. For instance, the main character in the story dance entitled *Mbekho* encounters various contexts that shape and at other instances distort her personality. The girl is seen transforming from a village girl to an urban girl, from a street urchin into a school going child and so on. Moreover, emphasis will be placed on individual identity and its interaction with context as represented and depicted in the various films. Semiotics approach is a useful in the analysis of the films. Bluestone (1957:1) sees literature (the novel), as "the concept of the mental image", while the film is seen as "the precept

of the visual image.”The identity of the film is manifested in the symbolic space of a perceptual and presentational form of the visual medium. The emphasis is placed on symbolic spaces that are found in the films. Hall (2001:10) perceives the representation of identity as a symbolic space embodying ideas, concepts, and emotions, as well as transmitted and fully interpreted meaning. Hence it can be deduced that the symbolic spaces of the film create a representation of identity embodying a society’s ideas, concepts, and emotions. Furthermore, the mental and visual images created from events in space and time (symbolic spaces) form a narrative or *fibula*.

The term intertextuality was previously coined by Julia Kristeva. However, the concept was developed from Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of dialogism (Landwehr,2002:2).According to one scholar, Todorov (1984:x),the dialogical principle of Bakhtin’s studies focuses on the sign systems interaction with its social situation. Hence, according to Bakhtin (in Todorov, 1984:97) the concept of intertextuality is captured by words as: ‘Life is dialogical by its very nature. To live means to engage in dialogue’ In this research the term dialogism (which originates from the form utterance (parole) will be used to mean the dialogue between the sender (that is, the performer) and the receiver (the audience).Bakhtin refers to these two quarters as ‘speakers’ and ‘listener’(Todorov,1984:97).

Julia Kristeva lays emphasis on how a text is composed of other texts (consciously or unconsciously).In *Desire in Language: A semiotic Approach to Literature Art* (1980:15),Kristeva defines intertextuality as “the transposition of one or more systems of signs, into another accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position”. Hence, this implies the interweaving of different texts so as to establish a new text.

Hoffer Gosselin (in Plottle, 1978:29) describes intertextuality as the “multiplicity of sources” that provides the stimuli for the “host text”. Hence, the idea here is that the continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of texts contribute to the formation of textual identity.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study is majorly qualitative. This entailed screening the Kayole One films to an audience. This process was done at two levels. one, the children of between Kindergarten and class three were exposed to the videos and two, the films were shown to secondary school students. This was done so as the reception and response of the audience members to the film could be established .Using the qualitative research methods, I have concluded that the members of an audience react to the Kayole One films in totally different ways. The following methods have been employed to ascertain whether the audience reception is uniquely an individual phenomenon: group interviews and in depth personal interviews. The before mentioned methods have been employed to ensure a close correspondence between the film and the perceived reality of the audience.

I have also examined works that deal with the film production process ,film making, anatomy of film, the history of film in Africa in general and Kenya in particular and in other parts the world. Dissertation and theses that are related to the study of film have been an insight into the nature of the film genre.

CHAPTER OUTLINES

The Influence of Visual Effects in the Formation and Transformation of Identity: A Case Study of the Selected Kayole One Films.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction:Background to the study

This chapter introduces the research and the films to be researched on, that is, the Kayole One films, paying close attention to the selected films and the contribution of visual effects to the process of identity formation. It gives a background to the growth and development of the film genre both globally and locally (in Africa) in the context of visual effects and its relevance in identity formation. It also introduces the child's voice and its impact in narration in film and this is with emphasis on the selected films. The research goes a notch higher by comparing the Kayole Films with the local television series *Machachari* so as to situate the issue of the language of children in place. This chapter gives a general introduction to the research, the scope and limitations of the study as well as the theoretical frameworks which guide this project.

CHAPTER TWO

Textual Analysis: The Contribution of Child Performers

This chapter gives a preview of the selected films and demonstrates that the employment of the child narrator adequately enhances thematic concerns in the Kayole One films. The voicing of the child: sincere, innocent and credible, is analyzed. It concludes by noting that the film has used the child's point of view to demonstrate how the voice of the child has become a vehicle to transport the child from a position of victimhood to an active agent in the crisis facing the society. The narrative voice being that of the child rightly captures the essence of this particular work of art and especially in the message *Mbekho*, begging. I intend to bring out the relevance of the child narrator in the selected films by the Kayole primary school children.

CHAPTER THREE

The (dis)parity of Reception and Perception: A Critique of the Object/ the Target audience

There is a great disparity in terms of reception between the child performer who is the child narrator and the script writer who is an adult. In this chapter, I intend to explore the principle of suspension of disbelief and how it works out to bring about the difference in perception and reception in the child performer and target audience who may be children or adults.

CHAPTER FOUR

Formation and Transformation of Identity: An Analysis of Visual Effects

The place of visual effects in film cannot be underestimated. Such effects otherwise referred to as special effects contribute to making a film more realistic and attractive. Moreover, visual effects enhance the narration process since in film; the audience is able to get information not by necessarily hearing the message relayed but by also viewing it.

CONCLUSION

This is a general overview of the research with a focus on the major conclusions arrived at as well as suggestions on future research in this area. The research highlights the impact of the child in forming identities. The visual effects are a major concern hence in chapter three the research focuses on the (dis)parity in terms of reception and perception brought about by visual effects between the child audience and the adult audience. Finally, the final chapter addresses the place of visual effects in film and its impact on the formation and transformation of identity.

CHAPTER TWO

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHILD PERFORMER'S

2.1 OVERVIEW

While the previous chapter has introduced the focus of this study and the objectives aimed at, this chapter will examine the influence of the child's voice in selected films. The methodological approach in this project is heavily based on the Brockmeier model. This model merges several theories towards the contribution of formation and transformation of identity in literary genres in general and in this case, the Kayole one films. Also, the major tenets of Mieke Bal's theory of narratology have been merged in the analysis of how the child narrators enhance formation and transformation of identity in the Kayole films entitled: *Mtoto wa Afrika*, *Mbekho*, *Rainmaker*, *Nyamgondho*, and *Lwanda Mawe*. The notion of identity formation and transformation in this project is based on the idea that an individual is defined by the specific space that s/he occupies at a certain time. On the other hand, the progression of time involves the change that entails constant adaptations to context in the formation of social or collective identity. Consequently, the interaction of the individual with his/her context also shapes this very context.

2.2 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF CHILD PERFORMER'S

In our habitual ways of seeing, we generally select information that agrees with how we want to see the world and screen out almost everything that might interfere with our constructs. This selective seeing or selective perception is like selective exposure to information. Once the audience member (s) have made up their minds about something, we seem to expose ourselves mostly to those messages that are in agreement with our existing views and attitudes, ignoring those messages that would upset our deeply held beliefs.

However, the visual effects enhance an audiences' perception of events in a film. For instance, the foregrounding of certain people, objects or activities makes it almost impossible for the viewer to ignore it. In the film *Mtoto wa Afrika* the use of the dark pink colour for casting enhances the performance. The pink colour creates an atmosphere of warmth and love and it even emphasizes the messages of hope and the will to move on despite the challenges that the

African child experiences at home.

The presence of a refugee camp at the background and the fire is an indication of a continuous state of apathy that pervades the psyche of the performer. These two aspects create the desired effect: that there is unrest. This is most probably caused by war as the phrase *Vita vitakoma* is repeated severally. This repetition and slow motion create certain intensity and in fact makes the audience “see well” how the events unfold in the story. The prominence of the pink colour in the film is also symbolic. Colour, according to Herbert Zettl, is described as a property of light not of objects or liquids; it is light that has been divided into one at mere visible light waves by an object” (53) Colours influence our emotions and perceptions in specific way. This is because certain colours seem warmer than others; some appear closer or more distant. Rudolf Arnheim, a famous perception psychologist and art theorist, suggests that “it is not the main colour that determines the warm /cold effect but rather the colour of the slight deviation from the main hue “(65). The informational function of colour is to tell us more about an event than would be possible without colour. Colour can symbolize life, hate and faith. However, such symbolic associations are subject to people’s habits, values, myths and traditions, which vary considerably from culture to culture and from period to period.

Certain lighting, colours and common types of music can have an immediate emotional effect on one. These features mostly influence our rational faculties and thereby play a big role in establishing an aesthetic context. Traditionally, in the film *Mtoto wa Afrika* the expectation will be that the performance be adorned in black. However, the film’s aim is not to spell doom but rather to pass a message of hope and the aspect of “grass will grow”. The performers are dressed in different ways. At the onset, the girls are in long pink dresses but as the film progresses we encounter two boys dressed in warrior like costumes. This symbolizes the theme of war in Africa which has been a menace to many nations across the continent. The background itself is black. Black colour in the African belief system is a symbol of doom/ death. Hence the choice of black juxtaposed with a few huts at the backdrop shows there is no life. This aspect of a deserted homestead communicates a dense message to the audience. The effects of war are innumerable. There are houses burning, presence of child soldiers, desert like vegetation and a refugee camp. All these visual effects enhance the general theme of the song *Mtoto wa Afrika*. That is, the plight

of an African child born and raised in a civil strife state/ environment

Music is one of the most direct ways of establishing a certain mood. Music can make us cry or laugh, feel happy or sad. It seems to directly attack our emotions without first filtering the information through our rational facilities. The musicology *Mtoto wa Afrika* narrates the experiences of a child in a troubled state. It says, *vita vitakoma Njaa itaisha baba atawacha pombe, shule utaenda*. The underlying message here is that this child is supposed to enjoy. However, as the music progresses, its energy also intensifies. The other nonliteral sounds, such as electronic hisses, whistles, and whines provide or increase the aesthetic energy of a scene. The sound effects acts as an energizing element.

The high energy of an African dance is primarily dictated and communicated by pounding drums. In fact, this also happened among the Greece. When the long Greek plays threatened to lose energy and the audiences' attention despite the tragic battles of gods and mortals, the flute players were summoned on-stage to keep the performance moving. This can also be seen evidenced in the *Kayole One Films*. As the film progresses the mood changes from sad to happy mood. This can be illustrated by the infusion of the yellow and blue colors at the background which replace the black color. It is at this point that we see the society being shaken to reality as the child is initiated into the school system and even reconciles with the uncle through the help of the teacher. In this instance, the society picks up its role and the film therefore plays both the entertainment, counseling and education role. The protagonist consequently experiences an identity transformation as her personality is influenced positively.

Basically, the primary function in talking to someone is to communicate certain information. One's behaviour exerts considerable influence on how a specific message is received. It definitely makes a difference to the message recipient whether a performer smiles or frowns when extending the familiar how-do-you-do greeting. The performer on stage is the communication medium and he/she becomes part of the structuring of the message: This is emphasized by a communication scholar Marshall Miluban who proclaimed that "the medium is the message." This restatement implies that the medium (television or film), occupies a vital position in distributing and shaping the message.

The Kayole One Films play both the edutainment and the counseling role. In the dance story *Mbekho* the girl narrator seems to be directly addressing the audience members at the beginning and up to the end of the dance. The girls' spoken word is much more efficient in advancing the story. This direct address makes the audience members' active dialogue partners, even though the dialogue is one sided. The live structure of the image of the street girl provides the immediacy necessary for such personal dialogue since this conversation is one - sided and it also takes place in the most familiar surrounding (our homes) and it carries a high degree of intimacy. It is this intimacy that is preserved throughout the narration of the girl's ordeal that connects the viewer to the performer right from the beginning to the end of the film. Hence the emotional response elicited by audience members is that of both sympathy and empathy.

According to Herbert Zettl in, *Sight Sound Motion Applied Media Aesthetics*. "Light is essential to life". It is necessary for most things to grow. It is the key element of visual perception, and orients us in space and time. It also affects our emotions. Light is the signal that our eyes receives and our brain translates into perceptions. When we look at our surrounding, we receive a multitude and/ or variety of light reflections. Each reflection has certain degree of light intensity and the complexity of colours. Daytime lighting is bright and nighttime lighting is less so. A daytime scene needs a great amount of all around light with everything brightly illuminated (and including the background). Nighttime lighting needs more specific and more selective fast -fall off illumination. He adds that lighting is the deliberate control of light and shadows to fulfill specific aesthetic objectives relating, to outer and inner orientation. He goes a head and points out that:

The key light is the principal source of illumination. It reveals the basic shape of the object or event. The back light separates the figure from the background and provides sparkle. The fill light controls fall off. In an expended lighting setup, there are three additional light sources. The side light comes from the side of the object acting as an additional fill light and providing contour. The kicker, which comes from the back, is usually from below and off to one side. The kicker is an extension of the back light and forms the object from below what the backlight can reach. The background light or set light illuminates the background, which can be an actual set of an interest or some kind of backdrop. (P37-

The fact that some scenes are shot during the day whereas some are at night is an indication of the struggles that the street children undergo throughout their lives.

Narration can be on-or-off- camera. It is another efficient method of supplying additional information. The narrative usually describes a screen event or bridges various gaps on the continuity of an event. The on-and off camera narration is evident in the three selected films. *Lwanda Mawe, Nyamgondtho, and Simbi, The Rainmaker*. The voice of the child has been employed in narrating these famous narratives. The narratives are famous in the sense that they have been extracted from the oral literary tradition and hence the infusion of technical effects is what makes them change form. The employment of the child's narrative voice is an important element. This is owing to the fact that children possess an admirable ability to construct stories that help understand themselves.

In the analysis of basic components of a narrative title such as agents purpose, action setting and description in the Kayole one films, one realizes the value of employing the child's voice. The protagonists in the films are children. In the story dance titled *Mbekho*; the girl narrates her life experience through time. According to Rimmon –Kenan (1983) “the way (space and time) forms the core element in constructing or forming identity , Hence time as a factor in this case enhances the realization and creation of identity. The narrator's lived /experienced time and the chronological time play an important role in narrator fiction as well as exposing the audience to the process of formation and transformation of the girl's identity. Through narration, the girl's identity is almost obvious to every audience member. This can be illustrated by the girl's general state: her dress code. The film is a critic to the society in general and family in particular. The girl has lost her parents and the plot thickens as she cannot find a guardian to accommodate her not to talk of love her. The film brings about the question of how children brought up in dysfunctional homes end up as social misfits due to the negligence of the existing adult world.

The presence of the dumpsite at the beginning of the film “*Mbekho*” communicates a message about the setting of this particular film. The film is set in Dandora Slum, Eastlands (Nairobi). The girl's plight as an orphaned street child is emphasized by the presence of graveyards abandoned hut. The fire burning also symbolizes impending danger. Fire in the traditional sense

is a symbol of destruction /turmoil/danger. The same fire spreads from the background and the performers are seen to be burned on the faces. This can be understood to imply that the danger that these street children are exposed to is not actually a fairy tale but a reality. At one point in the film, the city is juxtaposed with the slum. This is to give a snap shot of the complexities and the futility of life such that there are always good things and bad things in life.

The stories about the children's experiences enable them to make meaning of their past actions, anticipate future results, and assess themselves in the present moment. Hence, a narrative in film can be described as a selective and subjective form of recounting previous experiences. This is evident in the films: *Lwanda*, *The Man of Stone*, *The Rainmaker*, and *Nyamgondtho*. These narratives shape the way we remember events, our beliefs about what is important to ourselves are therefore shapes and forms identity. In essence, narratives represent fragments of experiences and also fragments of our "selves".

Children possess an admirable ability to construct stories that help them understand themselves. In the analysis of basic components of a narrative such as agents, purpose, action, setting and description in the Kayole One Films, one realizes the value of employing the child's voice. The protagonists in the stories are children. In the story dance *Mbekho*, the girl narrates her life experience through time. Time as a factor in this case enhances the realization and creation of identity. The narrator's lived/experienced time and the chronological time play an important role in narrative fiction as well as exposing the audience to the process of formation and transformation of the girl's identity.

2.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the effectiveness of the voice of the child in defining a character's identity in film. From the discussion, this section has observed that owing to the child's innocence and inexperience, the themes narrated in the selected films of Kayole are greatly enhanced. Therefore, the chapter concludes that the child's voice is the best tool for identity formation and transformation. The next chapter will explore the disparity of reception and perception between children and adult audience.

CHAPTER THREE

THE (DIS) PARITY OF RECEPTION AND PERCEPTION: A CRITIQUE OF THE OBJECT/TARGET AUDIENCE

3.1 OVERVIEW

While the previous chapter has explored how the voice of the child enhances the formation and transformation of identity, this chapter seeks to explore the difference witnessed when the film is experienced by either the children or the adult audience. With close analysis of visual effects employed in the Kayole films and the language of children in works of art, I intend to interrogate how the children performers receive and perceive the content of the films and how this reception and perception contributes to the formation and transformation of the children's identities. Again, I set out to find out the emotional response (or any other response) elicited by the audience (children and adults) after watching the films and analyze how the reactions (if any) contribute to the identity forming process. Lastly, I will reconcile the disparity (if any) between the object and the target audience and assess its relevance in character formation and transformation. The point of departure in this chapter will be on the theory of intertextuality and the reception theory in reference to the Kayole films.

3.2 THE (DIS) PARITY OF RECEPTION AND PERCEPTION: A CRITIQUE OF THE OBJECT/TARGET AUDIENCE

According to Richard Sennett in *The Fall of Public Man: Strangers in Disguise: Role- Play Beyond Identity in Anarchic Film Comedy*

.....a city is a human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet. For this definition to hold true the settlement has to have a large, heterogeneous population; the population has to be packed together rather densely; market exchanges among the population must make this dense, diverse mass interact. In this milieu of strangers whose lives touch there is a problem of audience akin to the problem of audience an actor faces in the theatre.

(p.6)

This chapter concerns itself with the way in which the identity formation is influenced by reception and perception of the filmic material by both the object and the target audience. An interrogation into the interactions involved in the entire process of creating and making meaning in film will be the major point of departure. Hence, my task in this section is twofold (a) the interactions occurring between the artist and the object of art during the creative process (b) the interactions occurring between the spectator and the work of art during the process of making meaning. In essence, the abovementioned processes are referred to as a system of communication or rather a sort language that emerges between the object and the target audience that is, the artist (child performer) and the adult audience.

In contemporary media scholarship, the concept of intertextuality is used to describe both the interpretive practice of audiences and a stylistic device that is consciously employed by producers of media. I will heavily borrow from the three major distinctive intertextual strategies that are: creative appropriation, parodic allusion, and self-reflective reference. According to literary theorists such as: Derrida (1976), Roland Barthes (1988), and Kristeva (1986a, 1986b), “active audiences usually create their ‘own’ meaning after reading a particular text.” The question that this project seeks to answer is; “how do audiences use the above mentioned intertextual strategies to define their identities and order their experience?”

Several scholars have given an insight into the ways in which audiences consciously or unconsciously ascribe meaning to texts (either literary or filmic). One television critic, John Fiske, uses the term intertextuality to describe how audiences unconsciously create meaning by utilizing their vast knowledge of cultural codes learned from other texts to read a particular text. For instance, an audience that has read the narrative of *Nyamgondho* or *Lwanda Magere* or even the narrative of Simbi, *the Rainmaker*, is in a better position to understand the same stories adapted to film and therefore create meaning(s). Hence, according to Fiske, (1987, 1989), intertextuality is a postmodern sensibility shared by audiences, a reading formation that conceives of texts as fragments in a larger web of textuality. Fiske posits:

The theory of intertextuality proposes that any one text is necessarily read in relationship to others and a range of textual knowledge is brought to bear upon it. These relations do not take the form of specific allusions from one text to another, and there is no need for

readers to be familiar with specific texts to read intertextuality. (1987, p.108).

The lingering question therefore is: who creates texts? Roland Barthes, in describing intertextuality argues that audiences, not authors write/construct. He says:

We know now a text is not a line of words releasing a single “theological” meaning (the ‘message’ of the author- God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centers of culture...[A text] is made up of multiple writings drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, and contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not as was hitherto said, the author, (1988:146-148).

Other scholars as Morson have even classified literary figures like parody and allusion as “intertextual utterances.’ (p.108-9). Parodic allusion describes a stylistic device in which one text incorporates a caricature of another, most often, popular cultural text. In most instances the parodic text imitates prominent factors of the ‘original’ text and incorporates those features as part of its textuality. During this process, the audience is transformed into the site of critical commentary: they are judged worthy by the text and subsequently themselves if they possess sufficient cultural knowledge to recognize popular references. This is the case with films like, *Nyamgodtho*, *the Rainmaker*, and *Lwanda Mawe*. The theme underlying these films has been in existence in the literary world. Therefore, some members watching the films could readily relate the textual narrative with the filmic narrative. Hence, the audience is in a position to give his/her criticism based on how the film (adaptation) has succeeded in representing the reality of the original text.

Film narratives impact on the behavior of the audience. In fact, the theory of film has sufficiently explained how confrontation leads to emotional response, cognitive reorientation, and character change within a film. This can either be in reality or in the fictional sense. The fundamental question is: when watching a film, what is the intention? Is it education or entertainment? If the core purpose is for entertainment, then what makes a film different from other types of communication? Is it its ability to persuade and educate? Other people will argue that the ability

of entertainment to hold attention and provide enjoyment is the distinguishable feature of films. This is debatable. In this project, the guiding principle is that what makes a film enjoyable is interaction that is, relationships and emotions involved. It is these relationships and emotions that subsequently influence the behavioral response of the audience. A film becomes effective since once confrontation and emotion result to emotional change, and, by analogy, the change in real-life perceptions, and then characters are in essence formed and transformed.

The contextual and narrative aspects in film are a major factor in character change. While watching the musical *Mtoto wa Afrika*, children are able to get this sense of hope and a future towards the end of the song. The song itself is lullaby like. There is some element of sonority as the better part of the song is hummed not sung. This causes a soothing effect to both the children performers and the target audience. This was clearly established since the first time I played the song in my home. In the house I live in, there are two children aged four and eight. These children were able to grasp the song (especially the chorus) which is repetitive the first time they encountered it. On closer analysis, I realized that the younger child kept humming the tune throughout the day. This is a typical illustration of how films impact on children. The young child may not have really gotten the gist of the song but the sounding must have impressed him. This inspired me into taking the film to a nearby primary school called Kapsabet Township. Surprisingly, after watching the film most children could readily sing it. Another observation was the dancing style. The style is very slow and rhythmical and the use of costumes which brighten the film creates a sense of happiness. The pink color symbolizes love and this fuses very well with the theme.

To entertain, a film must have a captivating story. Most of the Kayole one films address themes that are very close to the hearts of children. This does not however imply that the adult audience will not appreciate the text. Children are very close to their parents' hearts (and also other adult members of the society). This explains why both the young and the old sympathize with the street children in the film *Mbekho*. The key elements in any film are: characters, plot/action, thoughts, verbal expression/language, music/song, and spectacle. Characters in film affect audiences to the extent that audiences empathize with them – understand their point of view, feel what they feel, anticipate their next move, and sympathize with what happens to them.

However, these perceptions are not obvious. This is owing to the fact that some members of the audience will sympathize and even empathize with *Nyamgondtho*, the son of Ombare for one, being born poor, working tirelessly with no success (fruits for his labor, and eventually losing all his wealth. However, other members of the audience will laugh at *Nyamgondtho*'s gullibility since according to them, *Nyamgondtho* should not have forgotten where he came from to the extent of mistreating the same woman who had brought forth his fortune.

While watching a film, the members of the audience are affected in several ways. To begin with, when they identify with members/characters in a film they will be inclined to support their actions and even their words. Also when their emotions are involved, they tend to sympathize. Again, each member of the audience identifies with a certain character more closely than other characters. This explains why some people will identify with the narrator (the girl) in *Mbekho* while some will identify with the teacher who rescues the girl from the street and all its possibilities, yet again some people will tend to identify with the uncle's unfeeling/callous nature. Moreover, members of the audience are affected once they understand the causal structure of the story and this is the case especially in audiences who understand the moral lesson from the story. For instance, in *the Rainmaker*, the chief (out of sheer alcoholism) stubbornly chases the woman away not knowing that she is, Simbi, *the Rainmaker*. Hence, once audiences realize the moral lesson that is, selfishness is bad, they tend to identify with the old woman and some will even hold the generous girl who runs after the woman and gives her some food to eat close to their hearts. Lastly, members of the audience are affected when they perceive an element of character change. When, in *Mbekho* the uncle transforms from his hardheaded nature to the point of being apologetic, people begin to appreciate his forgiving attitude. It is such changes that impact on the audience.

Character change is the essence of film. There exists a logical order to the events in a film. The protagonist and his/her goal serve as the major premise while the antagonist and other obstacles serve as the minor promise, and together, they lead to the film's conclusion and cause the emotional response in the audience. In order to provide dramatic force, both the protagonists have to cross paths and confront each other at cross purposes. (Hicks,1999). After the initial exposition (in which the setting, the characters, their goals and motives, and other essential facts,

are introduced) the characters confront each other and devise ways to overcome the obstacles and threats that they pose to one another. Hence, confrontation is climactic. In *Mbekho*, the plot creates an ascending dramatic tension which culminates in a climax before a resolution is reached and the story is concluded. This is seen in *Mbekho* where at the beginning the girl is pleading with her uncle who stubbornly refuses to fend for her. This is now the point where conflict arises. This propels the story forward as the girl resorts to travelling to town to try and survive on her own. Life in the streets in town becomes unbearable: the pangs of hunger, the long, cold nights, the harsh weather and the general rejection by the public. This is what leads the girl to the next event. Her quest for education makes her hang around the school gate and fortunately, one of the pupils whispers about the girl to the teacher. The teacher empathizes and together with her colleagues, they help the girl get the necessary items to continue her formal schooling. The girl is so happy. The climax in the story is when, with pressure from her teachers, the girl calls her uncle and they both reconcile. The resolution is reached as the girl agrees to go back home.

Convergence theory applies to any information that is shared, including the content of a drama that is shared by members of an audience. It is until audience members are exposed to contradictory information that might reverse the convergence process that we expect audience members to converge toward a common point of view reached by the characters in a film. Therefore, the greater the degree of the audience's emotional involvement and identification with characters in film, the greater the degree of cultural, cognitive, and behavioral convergence and the greater the degree of behavioral change. The role of perception plays an important role in the interpretation made by a film audience. It should however be noted that a film audience implies more than one viewer, but yet again a film can also be viewed by only one person at a specific time for example home video. Also, character formation and transformation in a film is not universally perceived by audiences. One audience member may be seeing a kind of different transformation whereas another member does not. For instance, George Bluestone in an essay *From Novels to Film* demonstrates this transformation of character from a viewer's point of view. He posits:

When I first see Gelsomena in Lastrada, I see her as a stranger, as a girl with certain physical disposition, that without a name or a known history. However, once I identify

her as a character, with a particular relation to other characters, I am able to include information about her post in the familiar figure which now appears before me. I do not have to renew my attention at every moment. Familiarity becomes a means of referring to the past, and this past reference fuses into the ensemble into the present Gelsomena. The spatial image of Gelsomena which I see toward the end of the film includes, in its total structure, the knowledge that she has talked to the fool and returned to Zampano. In referential sense, the firstness is built in (298).

The above excerpt emphasizes the fact that during the process of watching a film, audiences, in one way or another, get to understand the characters more and more. For instance, the first time the children of *Kapsabet Township* watched the film *Mbekho*, they did not immediately give their reactions on which character(s) they identified with. However, later on the response gotten was different. Most of the children tended to love and appreciate the girl-narrator especially when she transforms from a street urchin to a school-going child. Therefore, viewers can hold multiple positions towards a film text once they internalized the material film in a similar way. In this case, the differences in race, gender, religion, and other identifying factors do not matter.

This project agrees that there is a narrator in the films of Kayole. In this case, the narrators are children who have been used as an object to represent the ideas of the scriptwriters. Moreover, the voicing of the children in this case employs the use of the language of children which is innocent, truthful, and therefore to a large extent believable. Indeed, even in the literary world today, most writers have engaged the child's voice to tell their stories. This is owing to the reliability and sincerity of children and in essence the hearts of most of people are drawn closer to the themes addressed. In the lullaby like song entitled *Mtoto wa Afrika*, the children narrate the experiences of an African child. Through the visual elements, the messages received by the audience are diverse. Although the children do not verbally mention the issues like: post-election violence, the question of children soldiers in Africa, among others, we (audience) are able to see these. At the background, the film narrates itself and at this point, it is agreed that the "camera narrates." There is a snapshot of people living in tents, the state of poverty in Africa demonstrated by the two huts (very dark) and children dressed in the army regalia. The presence of fire throughout the film implies the state of things in the continent: that is, Africa is burning.

However, the child's voice gives a sense of future and a hope. Through song and dance, the phrases like, *Mtoto wa Afrika*, usilie; Njaa itakoma; vita vitaisha; baba atawacha pombe; shule utaenda;" gives the reader [the viewer] a sense of hope and a new beginning. Through voice-over narration, the children comfort the 'African child' and in this sense, the African child is a symbol of anyone inhabiting Africa. Towards the end of the film, we witness the use of more light that illuminates the children's faces. The idea of lights in darkness in the background shows that there are new possibilities for the African child. The smiles on the children's faces represent the sense of hope and therefore a transformation of identity from a suffering sad child to a happy child. The children narrators preach the gospel that people need not despair since Africa has much more to offer the "children of the post-colony."

The film *Mbekho* possesses the girl as the main protagonist. Right from the onset, the audience's attraction is on the young girl who narrates her experiences through time. She categorically 'remembers' how her parents died, the rejection she encounters by both family (uncle) and the other people close to her. Through the voice-over narration, the viewer automatically gets to know her story and some audience members sympathize and even empathize with her. However, she is not the only narrator; the entire group is involved in the act of narration both passively and actively. By playing the role of street children and joining in the singing, the children participate in the act of narration. Through them, the viewer gets to understand the life of street children. It is the language of the children that draws the viewer close to the narrator(s). The language is sincere and innocent and it leads to emotional response in the audience. Hence, my stand is that by narrating their experiences, the children are also narrating to themselves. This is also the view by other filmic scholars. Turner Victor in *The Anthropology of Performance* underscores the fact that performances are self reflexive .He posits:

If man is a sapient animal, a tool making animal, a self-making animal, a symbol-using animal, he is, no less, a performing animal, *Homo Performans*, not in the sense, perhaps, that a circus animal may be a performing animal, but in the sense that man is a self-performing animal-his performances are, in a way, *reflexive*, in performing he reveals himself to himself. This can be in two ways: the actor may come to **know himself better through acting or enactment** (Emphasis mine) or one set of human beings may come to know themselves better through observing

and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another set of human beings. (13)

Hence, in this case, reflexivity can be singular via enactment in a social context such that the child performers are their own audiences and when they clinch the story of *The Rainmaker* by stating, "Selfishness is Bad.", they are equally passing the message to themselves.

The other three films: *Nyamgondtho*, *the Rainmaker*, and *Lwanda Mawe* are what one would define as typical narratives. The structure of *Lwanda Mawe* for instance adopts the structure of oral narratives where the story telling session follows or adheres to a certain order. Right from the beginning, the child narrates (the two boys) alert the audience (the children seated) that it is time to hear their story when they call "story' story". When the story ends, there is the denouement as the children posit that the stone that *Lwanda* transformed into can be seen up to today. However, the narrators' narration is enhanced by other filmic elements like, light, color, décor, and even the sounding system. For instance, the sound varies according to the circumstances. When there is an element of fear, the drumming becomes intense. Hence, by other children joining in the performance, (both verbally and non-verbally) they qualify as narrators. Therefore, the film possesses multiple narrators that are: the two protagonists, and the entire team of the children performers.

In *Nyamgondtho*, there is inclusion of song in narration. The narration is enhanced by visual effects such as the lake, the boat, and the castle. The major narrator, the girl who narrates the film from the beginning to the end, is the major protagonist in the film. In essence, words create "images" in the mind that have "inner meaning", whereas film images create "inner meanings in the mind. The multiplicity of the child narrators serve to add to the formation and transformation of identity as the children role play. At one point, one character transforms from a very rich to an extremely poor man. The role of visual effects in film cannot be overemphasized. According to George Bluestone in his essay *From Novels into Film* asserts that the reception and perception of filmic material is enhanced by the inclusion of visual effects in a film. He states:

Dreams and memories exist nowhere but in the individual consciousness, cannot be adequately represent in spatial terms(space and time) or rather, the film, having only arrangements of space to work with, cannot render thought, for the moment

thought is externalized, it is no longer thought. The film, by arranging external time for our VISUAL PERCEPTION (Emphasis mine), or by presenting as with dialogue, can lead us to infer thought. But it cannot show us thought directly. It can show us character's thinking, feeling, and speaking, but it cannot show us their thoughts and feelings. A film is not a thought; it is perceived. (p. 292-293)

In the traditional film narrative, the viewer is presented with the illusion that he/she is physically present in that world of fantasy. Moreover, the viewer is made to witness events and characters that are involved in the story (that world). In essence, witnesses cannot participate in events; they are observers and can therefore not manage to commend their movements and views. It is therefore the role of film's narration to dictate what the viewers see, how they see it, and when they see it. It is the "seeing" that lead to emotional response in a film. In fact, interest is the core emotion in the act of film viewing. This is owing to the fact that interest is the desire to watch and actively anticipate further developments in the expectation of a reward. Hence, the film's control of the viewer's perceptions of events results in specific feelings on the part of the audience towards certain characters and/or events. Thereby, what determines the emotions of the viewers are the events themselves and the attitudes coloring such events. Hence, the basis of empathic emotion lies in the understanding of the significance of events for a character. On the other hand, non-empathic emotion results from the abstraction from their meaning to characters. However, the major empathic emotion in film viewing is empathy.

During to the filmic transmission process, there is human interaction taking place. In the Kayole films, the artist is the child composer; the object is the film itself that is: *Mtoto wa Afrika*, *Mbekho*, *Nyamgondtho*, *Lwanda Mawe* and *Rainmaker*. The second subject is the target audience/viewers who may be composed of both children and adult audience. The academic disclosure of this section is majorly situated within several academic disciplines: representation, audience reception studies, and intertextuality.

Reception theory has been accepted and acknowledged as an important method of analyzing how audiences experience and interpret films. This is owing to the fact that this theory is concerned with uncovering how actual spectators interact with films. The classical film theories that were

developed in the 1960s and 1970s (for instance, formalist, structuralism, psychoanalytic, auterist, and Marxist theories) argue that the text is the site of meaning. Most of these theories are majorly concerned with how viewers are affected by films. However, the kinds of audiences they describe are made up of idealized, homogenous spectators who all react to films in a similar way. In this case, the differences in race, gender, religion and other identifying factors do not matter.

Film audiences react to how characters and events have been represented. For instance, after watching *Mtoto wa Afrika*, an audience's reaction to the iconic images of war, disease, famine, misery caused by alcoholism, and exotic landscapes before and after the viewing automatically changes. This explains why the film critic and theorist Richard Dyer argues that "...anything represented is the means by which we think and feel about that thing, by which we apprehend it." (*The Matter of Images*, xiii). As a result, these portrayals have implications in terms of the kinds of memory and consciousness engendered. Catallin Brylla posits:

Film and cultural theorists have explored and discussed the various racist ideologies and negative cultural representations of African people in different media by Western anthropologists, ethnographers, and filmmakers. For instance, Nigerian Novelist and poet Chinua Achebe examines the way in which Africa is portrayed in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* "as the other world", the antithesis of Europe, and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality. (783)

Hence, an audience watching Conrad's filmic adaptation gets the image of Africans as "funny little savages", backward and ape-like creatures. A film like *Mtoto wa Afrika* seeks to redefine identities of African children as there is some sense of hope that the viewer gets towards the end of the film. This is symbolically captured by the use of lighting. When the scene gets more hopeful, the lights become brighter to imply a brighter day/time.

The core methodological inputs that will be employed in the analysis of the six films are "audience reception" and "representation." Various scholars define the term representations according to their various spheres or expertise. For instance, Richard Dyer argues that, "representation signifies how one group perceives members of another and that this perception

informs the way in which the former-sees the latter.” For instance, this parallel could be in terms of how audience members perceive the Kayole Children and how this perception informs the formation and transformation of identity. On the other hand, Daniel Chandler states that “representations that become familiar through constant reuse start to feel natural and unmediated and can even shape what we accept as the only reality.” (p.100-102). In essence, the two scholars’ view on representation emphasizes the value of representation not just as a phenomenon but also as a methodology for scholarly research in production practices and audience hermeneutics. In this project, the term re-presentation is used to mean to give or to show something again with the actors being conscious of themselves (as actors) and also being conscious of their target audience.

In a film, there is always a kind of relationship threatened to be created between the performers and the target audience. Lisse refers to this “audience-text” relationship by proposing the establishment of identification and subjectivity within the text. Murray Smith’s model also provides a realistic approach for examining the way in which film employs both narrative and aesthetic cues to construct character identification. Consequently, it is character identification that leads to emotional response in the audience as “the audience members empathize with the screen subjects”. (p.34-35). Smith distinguishes between three levels of gradual identification by audiences: alignment, recognition and allegiance. (39)

Catalin Brylla in *The Politics of Representation and Audience Reception: Alternative Visions of Africa* posits that recognition involves the continuous visual perception of the human body, especially those body parts that evolution conditioned to use for individual identification, such as the face, hair, and hands.

In this respect therefore, recognition can be extended to the visual emphasis of costume and body artifacts, which are quasi-extensions of one’s body. In the Kayole films, there is freedom in terms of language. The children narrate their experiences in English, Swahili, and Luhya. Also, in some of the films, there is use of subtitles as in *Mbekho* whereas most of them employ the voice-over techniques like *Lwanda Mawe*, *Nyamgondtho*, and *the Rainmaker*. These techniques allow the audience to aurally recognize the characters in the films. In fact, Ngugi wa Thiong’o

asserts that, “within the larger project of decolonizing African people speaking their own language, African cinema has taken again the stride in rejecting the neo-colonial that African people can express themselves only in foreign languages.” (p.95-96). In the film *Mbekho*, there is the use of Swahili and Luhya. Right from the title *Mbekho* meaning, help me: to the end of the film, the non-natives only get to understand the message of the film through the subtitles. Moreover, the Swahili words are not standard but have been given what I would refer to as “ethnic inflections” for instance, “nipatiako, nisaidiako” to pass the message to the audience. According to Smith, this first stage of recognition does not in any way involve empathy or identification. However, it is an automatic phenomenological experience that renders the viewer receptive to alignment and allegiance.

Alignment, according to Smith’s model, is the second stage that enhances the viewer’s access to the screen character. A difference in ‘spatial attachment’ that is, the physical space around characters and the audience’s perception of it, and ‘subjective access,’ that is, access to the character’s psychological state (p.41). Maurice Merleau- Ponty redefines the issue of space by deconstructing it into the dialectical relationship between “bodily space,” (the semantic experience of the subject evoked by a specific physical space, and objective space,” the primordial awareness of that space is to achieve a sense of orientation, both of which are essential for human perception (p.125-16). In the Kayole films, this spatial experience of screen characters is transposed onto the viewing experience of the audience. When *the Rainmaker* unfolds, there is the use of wide shots to establish an important “supporting point” for the viewer’s geographical understanding of the objective space. At the same time, close-ups are used in almost all narrations in the film. When the boy narrator is (re)telling the story of *The Rainmaker*, the viewer can notice the very fine details about the boy as the camera completely focuses on particular shots to fill the screen. Also, visual motifs of surfaces and texture through close-ups end up in recreating the bodily space of the characters. Laura Marks refers to this as the “haptically charged surface such as the close-up of any conspicuous and interesting texture”

The eyes in a film function as organs of touch that allow the hepatic images (according to Laura Marks) appeal to a more complex multisensory perception. Hence, Brylla adds, “it is exactly this conditioned viewing experience of subjective micro-content and objective macro-context that

makes the audience not only “recognize”, but also “feel” characters and their spatial surroundings.” (.31) In the film *Mbekho* the children’s eyes portray their inside fears and anxiety. At some point, they tend to widen their eyes in horror and such a scene impacts on the audience as they (viewers) share/empathize with the young children in the streets who have had to contend with harsh climate (especially the long cold nights) the lack of basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) and above all the lack of a sense of belonging.

Subjective access, an element in the alignment stage, allows the audience into the psyche of the character(s). The way an audience receives and perceives an idea contributes to the formation of identity. The shooting and editing effects for example, slow motion, reflects the emotional condition of a specific character at that point of becoming. When the girl protagonist in *Mbekho* resolves to leaving the village for town, we are given a picture of the girl boarding a vehicle. In this instance, there is use of slow motion when the girl gets into the bus. Also, the sounding of the entire film changes completely. Hence, the drumming and the entire musicality serve as an indicator of a change in setting (i.e. from rural to urban)

Another way of reflecting the emotional states of subjects of a certain time in a film narration is the use of flashback. For instance, in the narration in *Mbekho*, the girl narrator, through memory, narrates her lived experiences. During the process of narration, those past events are captured in camera using the visual effects. Again, another technique for creating “subjective access” is depicting and juxtaposing different identities from the same individual, thus subverting the idea of the “monochromatic character of the French and British anthropological traditions.” (Jules – Rosette, (p. 951). For instance, in *Lwanda Mawe*, the narrators in the film are the two boys and the rest of the children are the target audience (and they are actively involved in the narration process as they engage in singing, and even respond to the call). However, as the story/plot advances, the children shift from being the audience to being the narrators. Hence, through the inclusion of visual effects like dress and other props, the children have formed and transformed their identities such that one girl acts as the new wife of Lwanda and she is responsible for the downfall of the famous hero.

Another instance can be demonstrated by juxtaposing two scenes of the same character in the story the dance story *Mbekho*. The girl narrator who acts as a soloist in the dance at first is an orphan in the village. In the next scene, the same girl transforms from a villager into a street urchin. Then, the third episode transforms the girl from a street child to a school going child. In fact, the girl has acquired a sense of belonging as she now has a family in school: her teachers and fellow pupils. This (re) birth of a new identity is emphasized by the notion of forgiveness and/or reconciliation as is evidently perceived by the girl and her uncle. Towards the end of the film, the uncle and his niece are talking over the telephone and this action impacts on the audience's reception and perception of the film text.

The presentation of binary oppositions in a film enables the audience to cross-reference certain events in the film(s). For example, *Nyamgondtho* is at the beginning presented as an extremely poor peasant. However, this luck comes and he fishes out a sea goddess who brings him fortune; he becomes extremely wealthy. Through the visual effects, the audience visualizes *Nyamgondtho's* properties: herds of cattle and goats, a castle, and several children. Towards the end of the film, *Nyamgondtho* loses all his wealth. This is because he acquires wealth and starts abusing the very source of his wealth. Therefore, the audience gets direct access to "two" subjectivities.

Alliance is the last stage of Smith's audience identification stage. Alliance refers to the moral and ideological evaluation of the character on the screen. The various themes addressed in the six films of Kayole Primary resonate beyond the socio-cultural and geographical contexts of the children. In the film *Mbekho* the children represent the reality faced employed re-present perspectives that move beyond the familiar mainstream of misery and despair. This explains why most of the films end in a happy tone. For example, the story dance *Mbekho* ends with the orphaned girl acquiring not only formal schooling but also a sense of belonging. She feels at home with people to love and be loved. Also, she manages to reunite with her uncle and for this; the story ends in a happy tone. Also, in the musical *Mtoto wa Afrika*, there is a new hope for the African child. The visual effects enhance the realization of this assertion since what the viewer perceives in the beginning and what is evidenced towards the end of the film are completely different.

The notion of agency is also visible in the representation of the children's memories. Tahoma Gabriel describes the function of memory as it "does something else besides telling us how we got here from there: it reminds us of the causes of difference between popular memory and official versions of history." This official history "privileges the written word of the text ...it claims a "centre" which continuously marginalizes others." (p.53) Therefore, the scenes in which children recount narratives is a form of oral history. The story of Lwanda Magere, *Simbi: the Rainmaker*, and Nyamgondtho, son of Ombare can be traced back in African oral society. Hence, with the inclusion of visual effects, the aesthetic value of these films is enhanced.

The visual cues employed in the films enhance the identity formation process with emphasis on identities of the children born and raised in the slums. Hence, the children express a strong sense of collective dynamism, survival strategies, and their desire to assume other identities such as street children, old men and women, kings, elders, brides and grooms, among others.

The film's strategy of using iconic images and understanding their meaning by showing them as natural elements of the mis-en-scene reduces the artificiality of a deliberate authorship. Brylla posits:

The omission of self-referential symbolism creates a coherent digenesis in which the spectator can be immersed without authorial barriers. In addition, by eschewing over-stylization and using a subjective point of view, the films' narrative structures and aesthetics pursue an epistemology that strictly relates to the subjects' experiences and emotional states. There is hardly any instance of deliberately concealed information to create the effect of "suspense" or "surprise. (p.162).

Hence, on the part of the audience, the sense of defamiliarization is prevented by reducing the authorial point of view. Thereby, the characters become authors in their own right. In the films: *Lwanda Mawe*, *Nyamgondtho*, and *The Rainmaker*, the narrators are children. In an interview with Simon Peter Otieno, I gathered that these films are actually composed by the children themselves. The only time the adult's voice comes in is during the editorial controls and related issues.

The stories of the Kayole children and the visual effects employed indicate a passage of time from morning to evening through sunset/sunrise shots and morning/night shots as diegetic visual cues are employed in the *the Rainmaker* and *Nyamgondtho*. The larger time compressions are smoothed with text or montage sequences that fill the diegetic gaps.

The Kayole films are aimed at a mainstream audience. This is evident as the film does not employ visual effects specifically for a suitable niche audience. Whether a person from the American, Asian, Japanese, African, or any other dissent watches the film, the interpretation of the visual effects is likely to be meaningful. For instance, the water/lake motif symbolizes life or rather rebirth. Hence, when *Nyamgondtho* is made rich by a sea goddess, we associate his good tidings to the lake/water. However, it turns out to be paradoxical that the same lake “sinks” his wealth and he is transformed back to poverty.

In the Kayole films, every character is given the voice to define and redefine their identity and also to reveal their new (acquired) identities, whether realistic or idealized, personal or collective, in private or public spaces.

3.3 SUMMARY

The children’s identity shifts from one level to another via visual effects within the tangible specificities of their surroundings. Therefore, the fabric of Kayole children’s lived experience and memories is woven in specific images and spaces over time. Film production and audience reception are inextricably linked in the process of determining ideas around the (in) visibility of cultural representations. The implications for audience reception and perception are crucial for evaluating the transformation process in the film. The question: where and how do these images reach a wider audience calls for further research. The next chapter will interrogate the contribution of visual effects in the formation and transformation of identities in the Kayole films.

CHAPTER FOUR

FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY: AN ANALYSIS OF VISUAL EFFECTS

4.1 OVERVIEW

The previous chapters have explored the influence of the child narrator in the Kayole Films as well as the differences in terms of reception and perception of the filmic material when narrated by a child and presented to children and adult audiences. This chapter analyses the visual effects in the Kayole One films and the contribution of such effects in the identity forming process. The point of departure will be the theory of semiotics which concerns itself with the signs and sign systems in film. An analysis of the visual effects witnessed in the films and their influence on formation and transformation of identity will be discussed basing on Mieke Bal's (2001:53) visual narratology. Moreover, suggestions for further research will be proposed.

4.2 FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY: AN ANALYSIS OF VISUAL EFFECTS

This chapter concerns itself with the process of formation and transformation of identity of characters in the Kayole one films. The major focus of interpretation will be based on visual interpretation as formulated by Mieke Bal. Together with Mieke Bal's (2001:53) visual narratology; the analysis will further delve into the semiotic interpretation of the visual codes and techniques used in film. Focus on visual images including kinesic, visual and auditory elements and the technical devices featuring in film will be the point of departure in the discussion of this section.

Film as become a major form in which stories are told. According to Deleyto," (It) is through cinema, television, and video, and not through novels that most stories are 'told' nowadays."(1996:218).Hence, film can claim to be a legitimate successor of fictional literature as long as it is capable of "employing complex subject constructions, developing parallels in the fibula, enacting changes of any given action, accentuating details e.t.c" (Ejxenbaum 1990:116)

There had been early attempts at defining film exclusively along the lines of visualization. This approach was largely aimed at legitimizing film exclusively as an art form that was largely independent of the established arts. However, it can be argued that the conventional separation of showing and 'telling' and/or of seeing and 'reading' does not do justice to the plurimedial organization of cinema. The extraction of meaning from any film can be greatly attributed to the visual track of the film. Hence Bal's idea of visual narratology will be an important concept in this discussion. Visual narratology refers to that linguistic and visual text (in this case the written script and the film itself). The aforementioned genres can be both described as narrative fiction. According to Lothe (200: viii), both the film and the novel are made up of narratives hence they ought to be seen as different genres of narrative fiction.

In this project, I am taking the term fiction to mean the imaginative, the invented, the fanciful, which are the opposite of fact. Film is regarded as a representation of narrative material. Therefore, if this is the case, the question of functionality and the relations between text and reality has to be taken into consideration. The fictional nature of narrative fiction is explored by Ricoeur (1984: 64). Ricoeur concentrates on his second moment of mimesis. A point in case here is that it imitates reality since it represents a discourse 'as if 'it were true. Ricoeur's assertion may not be absolutely true but can be accepted as the case to some extent. When on stage, the actors sometimes act in a similar way they would have acted when faced with a similar context and from a certain perspective in reality. Therefore, a text can be seen as a distorted mirror image, not as the image itself. Toolan (2001:206) describes narrative fiction as never being 'without contexts which both shape and come to be shaped by the story that is told or heard'. A narratological analysis of the film will show that the narrative elements that create identity and identity formation in the script also appear in the film text although in a transformed form.

Film simulates reality; this is owing to the fact that films share elements of story that are founded on reality. Films are based on reality hence can be regarded as representations of reality through linguistic and filmic (visual, auditory, and linguistic) signs, therefore, a semiotic study will enable/enhance an investigation of the socio-cultural codes that underlie the films to be studied.

Film is analyzed according to five basic narratological factors that are based on Mieke Bal's (1985:13-150) analysis of narrative texts: character, temporal relations, space, focalization, and

narrator. The four aspects of plot are temporal relations, character, space, and focalization whereas the narrator is linked to the text. In this project, my focus will be on Bal's visual narratology and the central concept will be focalization.

Visual narratology has at its heart one concept: focalization. Bal analyses and interprets images in paintings and films in terms of who sees (the focaliser) and what is seen (the focalized object). The view on context according to Bal is:

The work of art is recognized as not only reflecting its context but mediating it, reflecting upon it ; and the work is understood as not simply passive with regard to the cultural forces that have shaped it, but active –it produces its own range of social effects, it acts upon its surrounding world.(p.5)

Bal defines a work of art as an occasion for repeated performances that depends on its specific context(s). Her analysis of the concept of focalization also gave rise to her perspective on context. This input also led Bal (2001:41-42) to believe that narratives ought to be considered as discursive modes that affects all semiotic objects to varying degrees. Bal underscores the value of focalization as she states, “focalization helps disperse the encompassing gaze of the viewer/reader, who, ‘distracted’ by what happens, vision-wise, within the story ,can no longer pretend to take it in ,as in one Augenblick.’ The use of the term focalization is used in the more technical sense .Bal (2001:47-48) highlights the value of focalization in regard to the issue of time and space in connection to memory ,which she sees as an act of vision of the past ,but which is an act situated in the memory's present as well. Bal (2001:54) considers the act or event of focalization as the interpretation of the ‘world of action’ since focalization makes the content subjective when seen through the eyes of the focalizer.

A semiotic approach is used for a more detailed analysis of the visual effects of narrative that is, the visual representation of narrative material and their significance in the representation of a social system .This study will focus on the film images in the Kayole One films. The argument will be enriched from Mieke Bal's (2001) in *Looking in: the Art of Viewing* where eight steps are identified .In step one the elements (characters, objects, and milieu) in the film are identified .In step two, the focus is on identifying the focalizer. The third step involves identifying the focalized object. Step four determines how attention is focused, while step five shows what the

focalized object reveals and tells about the focaliser. In step six the relationship that is suggested between the focaliser and focalised object is revealed .Step seven determines the kind of seeing that is at stake in the image or still .The very last step determines what event of story is being mediated by the image or still.

In this study I intend to marry the definitions of semiotics according to various scholars. Each scholar defines the term semiotics according to his/her expertise and the various definitions help shade more light on the connection between literary and filmic studies and subsequently in the examination of the formation and transformation of identity in the Kayole one films.

Kindem (1997;65) views semiotics as a descriptive science that can describe the probable sources of meaning in general ,but it cannot predict what meaning will be conveyed in a specific context by specific sign for a specific individual. Another scholar, Eco,(1984:226) explains, ‘the semiotic universe is a virtuality which can give the impression of reality’ while Scholes (1982; x) perceives semiotics as ‘the study of codes and media, (therefore) semiotics must take an interest in ideology, in socio-economic structures, in psychoanalysis, in poetics, and in the theory of discourse.’

Other scholars have taken interest in the ways in which signs operate and function. An American philosopher namely Pierce devised his own system and named it semiotics. The pertinent aspects that merge in his signification are the sign, its objects, and its interpretant. In fact, one scholar, Tomaseli (1980:10) argues that this system is based on the triadic and not the dyadic nature of the sign, which encompasses the relationship between the signifier and the signified, as well as the mind of the interpreter. Pierce describes the interaction between the sign, its object, and its interpretant as:

A sign stands for something to the idea which it produces or modifies...for that which it stands for is called its object that which it conveys, its meaning; and the idea to which it gives rise, its interpretant.

The relationship between Pierce’s and Saussure’s idea concerning the signifier and the signified is evident. According to Saussure ,there is a general science of signs that influences life on all levels and this science is referred to as semiology .Saussure goes further to state that a linguistic

sign is perceived to consist of a sound image or a written substitute and a concept .This sound image is referred to as a signifier (signifiant) and the concept is called the signified (signifie).He further postulates that the process of generating meaning as hearing a sound image and connecting it to concept ,which is then recognized as a word or sign (saussure 1960:114).He further comes up with two concepts: langue, that is the system that governs this process, and parole, that is the individual act of communication.

Moreover, Robey (in Jefferson & Robey, 1995:46) posits, all forms of social and cultural life are seen to be governed by systems of signs which are either linguistic or analogous to those of language. This assertion follows Saussure's concept on semiology.

The distinction between saussure's and Pierce's idea on semiotics is that Pierce emphasizes the idea of the interpretant of the sign .Pierce goes further to identify three kinds of interpretants in his work ,namely ,the immediate ,the dynamical and, the final. According to Tomaseli (1980:17-190,the immediate interpretant can be seen as the logical potential of a sign to be interpreted; the dynamic interpretant refers to the actual effect produced by a sign on its interpreter ;whereas the final interpretation refers to a community's interpretation that argues on the laws which regulate the effects of the sign.

Pierce further developed taxonomy of various classes of signs .These various classes were largely based on his notion of phaneroscopy. Phanecrosopy developed three parts-phenomenology, logic, and metaphysics. However, phenomenology has largely been employed as it is directly perceived by the senses .Pierce defines the concept of the phaneron (1995; 74) and posits;

Phaneroscopy is the description of the phaneron, and by the phaneron I mean the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not.(p.74)

According to Pierce, the phaneron is a collection or bundle of signs which consequently forms the context .This is similar to Saussure's concept of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic nature of the sign since in both, context is formed by a combination of certain chosen signs.

The assertion in this project is that film does not consist of only one system, but of a system of

signs that incorporates many other systems that can be identified in them, but it is perceived to be part of the system of signs which governs the film. Metz argues that film is not 'a language' but another kind of semiotic system with articulations of its own (Chatman 1990;124). Christian Metz (in Mast & Cohen,1985:164) believes that a film can consist of a language without a langue (language system /systems of signs). Metz (1979:288) contends that, 'a cinema is not a system, but contains several of them' .This view is motivated by Chaudhuri (1986; 18-22), a theatre scholar concerned with the semiotics of theatre who sees the theatre system as a 'system of systems''.

The theatre presents a whole universe of signs, signs belonging, in other social contexts, to separate semiotic systems. Thus the theoretical semiotic system appears to be a composite, heterogenous system, made up of several homogenous subsystems. Theatre semiotics, consequently, must draw on other fields of semiotics (such as linguistics, paralinguistic, kinesis, proxemics, iconology and musicology) and furthermore, it must study the rules governing the interaction of these subsystems in the theatre. (22)

Film and theatre are related in that both mediums share a great many similar features .However, film goes a notch higher since it entails the addition of camera and its effects.

Jacobson's communication model (lodge 1988:35) is a useful point of departure the analysis of semiotic systems and has influenced many other thinkers. In film, the addresser changes into the film team, that is, the director and the scriptwriter. On the other hand, the addressee will change into an amplified audience .The context here refers to the relevant circumstances as a bundle of signs in various combination of space and time, providing connotative subtext meaning and not denotative meaning. The message itself is an interpretation of the visual text or the film itself, while the context will refer to the relevant circumstances as a bundle of signs in various combinations of space and time, providing connotative subtext meaning instead of denotative meaning. The code implies that this particular systems of signs governs the understanding of a film .The physical channel is the film, which is the connection between the film under leadership of the director and the film audience.

Other scholars also recognize that signifiers are subject to the cultural codes through which they are read as signifieds. This is related to Pierce's idea of the symbol that is bound culturally. Eco (1976; 297-298) indicates how sign production releases social forces and how these forces as a system of signs become culture, with extra referential independence. According to Tomaselli (1980:8) a code is defined as follows: "A basic system of signs employed in a particular medium is called a code." Codes and sub codes are familiar terms used in film studies to describe the different ways in which a message can be related. In this research the terms langue and code will be used interchangeably since they have more or less the same signification.

However, the major point of departure will be on the spatial aspects of semiotics by Pierce. The incorporation of more literature oriented approach and the filmic approach will be employed in exploring the identity formation and transformation in the Kayole one films via visual effects.

Visual effects can be described as those processes by which imagery is created and /or manipulated outside the context of a live action shot. The process creating such effects entails the integration of live action footage and also the created imagery so as to create environments that are as close to reality as possible. The real effects are most often than not dangerous, expensive, impractical or simply impossible to capture on film. With the advent of computer generated technology, that is affordable and employs user friendly animation and compositing software, it has become easy for the independent filmmaker to acquire computer generated imagery.

The visual effects in film enable the visual description of the interrelationship within the physical space and consequently creates a visual perception of what is implied in the narrative description. They can be divided into four namely; Models, Matte paintings and stills, live-action effects and digital animation models. Models include; miniature sets and models, stop motion animation, and animatronics. Matte paintings and stills include ;digital or traditional paintings or photographs (these serve as background plates for keyed elements); Digital animation including ;modeling ,lighting ,computer graphics ,texturing, rigging ,animating and rendering computer generated 3D characters, digital sets, and background. The Live-action effects include, keying actors or models through green screening and blue screening. The digital effects are those processes by which imagery is created and/or manipulated with or from photographic assets. These effects majorly involve the integration of still photography and computer generated

imagery (CGI) in order to create environments that look realistic but would be dangerous, costly, or simply impossible to capture in camera. The visual effects are generally divided into two broad categories. Those associated with the still photography, and the other effects associated with motion film production.

Visual effects are evident in the Kayole One Films. Such features are most often than not an integral component to a film's or story's appeal. Despite the fact that most films complete the work of visual effects during post production, such a process ought to be well-planned and choreographed in the pre-production and production stage. The disparity between visual effects and special effects is in terms of when and how they are executed. The visual effects are primarily executed during the post –production stage and it involves the use of multiple tools and technologies as in graphic design, modeling, animation and similar software whereas special effects are made on set as car chases, explosions, and so on.

Animation, otherwise called disambiguation is practiced with the aim of creating an illusion of movement. It is the interpolation of frames over a finite period of time. In the selected films by Kayole children, the concept of animation is evident.

Chroma key compositing is a special effect that normally occurs during post-production. It entails layering two images or video streams together based on color hues (chroma range). This technique of enhancing the visual aspects has been heavily employed in many fields to remove a background from the subject or a photo or a video and specifically in news casting, motion pictures, and video games. This technique is mostly used in video production and post-production since a color range in the top layer is made transparent revealing another image behind.

The visual effects in music enable the song to transcend the audio to the visual (that is from spoken to visual imagery). In *Mtoto wa Afrika*, the audience rightly captures the message of the song with the help of such visual effects. When the song starts, we see a refugee camp at the background. This picture communicates to the viewer that there are displaced people and the fact that the children's narration (through song) suggests the same, and then I can authoritatively conclude that the tents at the background are not for camping (by tourists) or related events but

they inhabit internally displaced people. This displacement has been caused by war in Africa as the children sing: *vita vitakoma*.

Also, fire has been used as a visual effect in the song. This symbolizes the state of the African continent (it is burning). The social and economic condition of the African continent is that marauded by poverty, famine, hunger, war, among other ills. The dilapidated housing systems at the background show the poverty levels in Africa caused by people's irresponsibility. The song goes, *Njaa Itakoma, baba atawacha pombe, shule utaenda vazi utapata*. Hence, the children are giving the rest of the people a sense of a future and a hope.

Framing in film is an effective visual effect that helps in situating scenes within various contexts. In the song, rectangular framing is used to symbolize protection or defense. The children feel that all is not lost and they continue to hope for a better Africa. At one point, the window frame connotes the idea that the child is divorcing himself/herself from the troubles experienced in Africa. In the film, the children are enclosed in frames of various shapes in several instances. Moreover, there is the use of fade-in, fade out as a visual effect as the children kind of appear and re-appear at the same time.

The audience has also been used as a visual effect. At one point, the rest of the pupils are at the background while the performers are on stage performing. Thereby, the use of such an effect implies that this is the condition of all the children born and raised in the slums of Africa. Hence, the fore grounded children re-present the rest of the children's stories. Hence the performers act as a tool for representation.

Visual effects enable the viewer to situate a text in spatio-temporal terms. The temporal relations of a film indicate that a memorable moment in time can affect a character's identity by setting in motion a chain of events that confine, restricts, and excludes other possibilities. Within the spatial sense, the film *Mtoto wa Afrika* is set in Africa. The map of Africa acts as visual effect and enables the audience to situate the film's setting. The setting sun at the beginning symbolizes the state of apathy in the African nation state. This is emphasized by other effects such as the military tanker, fire, and, child-soldiers. Also, color as a visual effect enhances meaning. Visual

effect employed in the Kayole films could not exist without the input of colour. According to Izod (1991: 46) colour plays an important role in affecting the way the audience reacts to what it sees. Reynerson (1970: 106) also indicates this fact when he claims that color has emotional effects and that all human beings form associations with colours. They may not be identical but the common associations are:

In western society for instance, red tends to be associated with life, blood, vigor, love, violence; blue with coolness, placidity, valor, honesty, strength, yellow is associated with growing things, life, fertility; and purple with nobility and sacrifice

The selection of shots helps to analyze the scenes of moving pictures that are being created. What and how much is seen by the “audience” is important

In the film, the black color propels the image of Africa as a dark continent. However, towards the end of the film, the viewer witnesses a sense of possibilities. The darkness shifts to brightness and the visual images are brighter. There is the use of the yellow color to show that there is an element of hope in darkness. The use of color is also vital as it translates into what actually goes on stage and what is in the character’s mind. The use of black and white colors can therefore be said to be the narrator’s psychological state. In essence, the children, through visual effects remember their experiences. The film highlights that the process of identity formation is subjective and the entire process is dependent on a person’s or a character’s “memory of it.”

The physical place in a film is mostly created by visual description. This description is enhanced by the inclusion of effects of narration. Hence, an exploration into the subsystems or codes working within the system of films enables one to determine the aspects that make transformation possible. In the story dance *Mbekho*, the first image seen is the garbage site. In the site, there is a passing lorry with some people on top. This scene is an effect that introduces and prepares the audience on what to anticipate in the film. Also, the garbage site situates the setting of the film that is, the slums of Kayole. The home of the narrator is also evidently portrayed as deserted and engulfed by poverty. At the backdrop there are huts, graves, and the use of black color symbolizes a sense of doom. Also, while the girl is narrating her experiences, there are some black dots that run across her face to symbolize the perforation of the life of the girl.

Visual effects enable access to places or things that would otherwise be dangerous or inaccessible. In the story-dance, the vehicle is a visual effect that implies the transformation of the girl from the rural to the urban. In fact, the narrator does not explicitly state which town she is going to but through visual enhancements, the audience understands the town itself. In this case, the presence of famous buildings in the city of Nairobi like the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) enable audience members who are not familiar with Kayole estate to place it within Nairobi. By showing the garbage site immediately after the scene showing the city, the film juxtaposes the best and the worst part of the city via visual effects.

Visual effects most often than not are symbolic or rather have an impact in film. In this research, the visual effects are considered as signs and sign systems in film. The argument I am presenting in this case is that sign systems function entirely on the level of Peirce's icon, interpreted in terms of index and symbol depending on the interpretation. The interaction of these systems with one another and with time is of prime concern. My major focus is on the culmination of a bundle of signs in space and time that creates meaning in the identity formation. For instance, lighting, and rain in the film *Mbekho* symbolizes the trouble that these orphaned children have to contend with. They do not have a place to call home and this forces them to sleep outside. In the film, framing is used severally. At one point, the four frames enable the omniscient observer to have a glimpse of four events at the same time. Also, overlapping is a visual effect employed in this case as one picture moves over the other and in a way makes the film attractive. Other visual effects include trees, the sun and color (both yellow and purple).

The Rainmaker uses various visual effects to pass across the message/theme. These visual effects enable/enhance identity formation in the film. For example, the parallel shown between the chief's hut and the generous woman's hut communicates the economic power of the people in this society. The dilapidated housing system of the poor woman does not define her identity. Morally speaking, her identity is defined by her generosity and goodwill. However, the chief and his crew are rich but cruel. The other visual effect is the red color at the background symbolizing danger: that *The Rainmaker* is a powerful creature and also that the events narrated in the film are worth fearing.

There is also the use of the color purple to show royalty. Other visual effects like the cliff, lightning, moving clouds, are important as they strengthen the narrative by adding onto the narrator non-verbally. The vanishing of the rainmaker is also an effect that implies that really, *The Rainmaker* was a mysterious character. Other effects that enhance the pastoral setting are: trees, the rain, and soil. Another major visual effect is the idea of the floods. In the narration, the boy narrator mentions the floods. This is rightly captured in the film as the entire village is submerged and the only surviving creature is the woman on top of the cliff.

The film *Nyamgondtho* heavily relies on narration (voice-over narration) as well as the use of sub-titles. The use of black and white colour in some scenes implies that the film's success heavily relies on the memory of the narrator. From the onset, we are shown boats and people rowing their boats while at the same time listening to the narrative. The use of other visual effects enhances the idea of nature like the land, trees, and the sun. The identity of *Nyamgondtho* is formed and transformed through the use of visual effects. At the beginning, the picture seen is that of a man dressed in tatters and living in a dilapidated house beside the lake. Later on, through visual enhancement, he is seen fishing the ugly woman from the lake and this becomes the source of his wealth. The affluent lifestyle of *Nyamgondtho* is suggested by visual effects as there are pictures of many animals (cows, goats, and sheep), children, and a castle at the background. In fact, the flames that burn endlessly at the background symbolize affluence. This scene and the next juxtapose the image of the sun. In the former, the sun is rising to symbolize the beginning of good tidings: *Nyamgondtho* becomes rich, and it is evident in the way he adorns himself and other villagers even prostrate before him. However, later on, due to *Nyamgondtho*'s ungratefulness, the sun is visualized setting and even the trees are withered; this symbolizes the end of affluence and the beginning of trouble. The purple background changes into black to show the state of doom and apathy. The climax of this film is reinforced by visual effects such as, moving clouds, sinking of the castle into the lake, the extinguishing of the fire in front of the castle, and the image of *Nyamgondtho* as a stripped off individual. The very memorable visual effect is the scene where *Nyamgondtho* transforms into a tree and the narrator posits: "That tree can be seen up to today." This story emphasizes the idea of intertextuality with the notion that in creative appropriation, one text appropriates and integrates a portion of another text.

According to Branigan, focalization, “involves a character neither speaking (narrating, reporting, communicating) nor acting (focusing, focused by) but rather understanding something through seeing or hearing it.” He goes ahead and explains that, “the concept of focalization allows us to understand that a character in a narrative film, may be the focus of the action, but he may also be “the source of our knowledge” of that action. The character may become either a high level narrator or a low level focalizer.”

The film *Lwanda Mawe*, the picture of the full moon at night introduces the film. This visual effect can be interpreted in two senses. One, in the African traditional society, narratives were typically told at night around the fireplace (this effect is seen in the film as the children are seated around a bonfire). Two, the full moon symbolizes the time setting: the story/events are taking place at night. The use of black color spells doom right from the beginning. Traditionally, the black colour is suggestive of evil. Moreover, the several huts are an indication of the patriarchal nature of the society in which the story originated from. Right at the center of the homestead, the viewer visualizes a granary meaning this is a home of plenty. On closer analysis, I realized that there was variation in terms of the sizes of the huts. Hence, the biggest hut situates where the story is narrated from. In essence, the visual effects employed in the introduction enable the viewer to situate the film in spatio-temporal terms.

In drawing a parallel between the film and the novel, I would assert that the films to a large extent, presents whereas a novel describes. Hence, while the novel uses several words to capture an event, the film will employ visual effects to do the narration. In the film, the black colour in the background suggests the lack of peace in the region. It is hell. There is war (continuous) between the people of Lwanda and the Lang’o. Through visual effects, the children acquire a new identity. They change their costumes and transform from the audience members to warriors in the story. In this case therefore, the children are both observers and participants in the film. The picture of *Lwanda Mawe* is presented to the viewer in fragments that is: the head, the middle part, and the legs. Another vital effect is the ghost-like creature at the background painted in red. This symbolizes the belief system(s) of the African people-the belief in supernatural beings in the African cosmology. Alongside this, the placement of the forest at the background is an

indication of the setting (rural area) and the warriors running across imply that the army was big enough and that some more are hidden in the forest. While the characters are dancing on stage, there is a superimposition of the character Lwanda Mawe. This is done essentially to remind the audience that he is the major figure in the story. Other visual effects include the mist to symbolize the people of the highlands, framing which allows the viewer to traverse the psyche of the characters, blood symbolizes life, and the spiraling pink colour symbolizing the compassion felt toward Lwanda Mawe. The children sing, “Pole Lwanda, wewe si tisho, siri twaijua”. Finally, through embossing, the figure of Lwanda transforms into a stone. Therefore, visual effects enhance the formation of the hero Lwanda (dressed/adorned in a warrior’s regalia) and the transformation of the same hero into a stone.

The visual effect in film contributes to a large extent how humans make sense of the world they inhabit as well as their identities. Brockmeir and Harre (in Brockmeir, 2001:40) emphasize this view by stating:

As far as human affairs are concerned, it is above all through narrative that we make sense of the wider, more differentiated, and more complex texts and contexts of our experience. (p.40)

In film, the words are transformed into pictures, exposition into action, and resolution into mind. Therefore, film concretizes the images that would otherwise be abstract in literature. Again, film focuses on symbols or signs which suggest themes. These signs are open to interpretation by the audience. For instance, the symbol of the lake in Nyamgondtho acquires multiple interpretations by members of an audience. During the research, some audience members attributed the lake to wealth, a giver of life, and related interpretations whereas some members associated the lake with death or evil. Hence, film enhances meaning as it omits sub-plots and consequently the process of assigning meaning improves tremendously. The question of assigning meaning subscribes to Ferdinand de Saussure’s notion of arbitrariness. The symbol of the lake for instance may be given an interpretation which may not be necessarily true. This is owing to the fact that there is no natural connection to the object. The link or connection is by association of ideas or habitual connection. The interpretation may be conventional and culture bound (Easthope, 1994: 2-4; Lapsley Westlake, 1991: 35 – 36; Tomaseli, 1980: 14 – 15).

Peirce's second trichotomy of signs sub-divides signs into iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs (Peirce, 1955: 104 – 115 & Tomaseli, 1980: 13 – 14). An icon is a sign that resembles the object. This is because it has some physical quality or configuration of qualities that are shared with the object. For example, the lake (due to presence of water) may symbolize life. Symbolic signs are seen as arbitrary whereby, there is no natural connection between a sign and the signified since the connection is by association of ideas or habitual connection. An index on the other hand looks at the causal relationship with its object. In this case, signs are seen as the effect of the object because it forces the attention to the particular object without really describing it. In this research therefore, Peirce's (1955:104 – 105) terminologies icon, index and symbol are used as points of reference.

Visual effect in film (in this case the selected Kayole films) are enabled by visual techniques of colour, lighting, décor, make up, props, shots and camera angles. Such effects create fairly tale-like picture. This can be evidenced in the film *Lwanda Mawe*. Also, these visual techniques (lighting, *film noir*, and colour) enhance the visualization of narrative strategies employed in works of literature. A film scholar, Cook (1985:94) describes *film noir* visual techniques as:

'Low-key lighting' which eschews softening filters and gauzes and "opposes light and darkness, hiding faces, rooms, urban landscapes, and by extension, motivations and true character in shadow and darkness. The night scenes integral to *film noir*...the high contrast and jet black.

The stories narrated in the Kayole film offer a sort of literary perspective on narration that is created by using voice-over narration techniques and the use of sub-titles. The film operates from the visual images on the screen which are interpreted perceptually and then conceptually by the audience and consequently leads to signification (the interpretation by the viewer). The films explore the processes of the formation and transformation of identity. They maintain the objective: to make the audience experience different perceptions of reality. Moreover, social contexts play a role in the perceptions of identity and identity formation.

The auditory codes in film include: dialogue, sound effects, dialectal use of language, and sound effects. Each of the above codes enhances the realization of meaning in a film text. Dialogue maybe analyzed in terms of register and intonation that is implied in representation and

description. Also, it is an indicator of character, social hierarchies, and social conduct. The sound effects contribute to the general impression that is made by the film text. The sound effects help to establish an atmosphere or create a convincing illusion of reality for instance, in the film *Lwanda Mawe* the events unfold with dogs barking. Another code is the use of background music in the films. The music strengthens the atmosphere of a specific scene of the film as a whole. Music can also be used to manipulate the audience since some melodic patterns or some music types are sometimes associated with certain conflicts or specific characters. The dialectal code presents the geographical and class constraints in the description or the representation of speech. Through visual effects, the four auditory codes described enable the identity forming process as characters are transformed from one scene to the next.

From the discussion above, it is evident that the place of visual effects in film cannot be underestimated. This is because it is through such effects that a film is said to be narrating itself.

4.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has paid close attention to the visual effects present in the selected Kayole films and has also given each of them an interpretation. The research therefore authoritatively concludes that visual effects, with the inclusion of visual techniques, are what make a film different from other literary genres like the novel, plays, and poetry. Visual effects enhance the aesthetic value of film.

CONCLUSION

This research has analyzed the effects of visual effects in the process of formation and transformation of identity in the selected Kayole One Films. The project has investigated how individuals define their realities which consequently lead to their identity formation. The point of departure was the selected films of Kayole One Primary that is: *Mbekho*, *Mtoto wa Afrika*, *Nyamgondtho*, *Lwanda Mawe*, and *the Rainmaker*. The disparity in terms of reception between children and adult audience has also been interrogated. Finally an analysis of visual effects has been conducted and their effect on the identity formation and transformation process interrogated.

The research has noted that film as a tool for cultural expression provides a unique window for a people to showcase their unique creativity, cultural attributes, inventiveness and their flora and fauna. In other countries like India and Nigeria, films which have been produced over the last 20 years have received critical acclaim all over towards the world. By so doing, such nations expose and share their beliefs, culture, and experiences to other communities around the globe. As noted by the critics, it is true that film has an extraordinary capacity to expand our reality. For instance, while on stage, the Kayole One children, through role play, will take on a different identity and that space occupied at that time makes their world. Therefore, their identity at that time is majorly defined by the space that they occupy at that particular time.

The uniqueness of the voice of the child in film has been explored and its significance analyzed. It has been observed that the child's voice is a credible tool in film and in other works of literature. This is owing to the fact that the child is honest and innocent and this makes the work credible. The filmic material does not have a uniform impact on audiences. Sometimes, people may be inclined to appreciate a film due to their social, economic, and political inclinations. Age is also an important factor that influences how an audience receives and perceives a film. Both the child audience and the adult audience were exposed to the films. I observed that there is a great disparity in reception and perception of the film between the child audience and the adult audience. Finally, an analysis of the visual effects in the selected Kayole films was done. I sought to investigate the role of visual effects in the formation and transformation of identity. In

this regard, I found out that visual effects are at the core of film. In fact, they are what make a film aesthetic.

The research has noted that film(s) has different meanings for different people. The entire team otherwise called the stakeholders see film through different perspectives. For producers and financiers, it is a source of good earnings, for artists and directors, it is just a form of art, for the masses, it may be a form of entertainment. Whatever cinema may mean to different people, it is no doubt an art form which can entertain and educate.

As audience members view the films, they undergo an emotional involvement in the course of events and the roles of various characters. In an aesthetically told story, audiences start off as spectators but they become transformed to be emotionally involved in the story to the extent that they share the joys, sorrows, fears, hopes, triumphs and despair of their actors. The language of the actors and their style of speaking leave a lasting impression on the spectators.

Films provide a mirror to our lives since during movie viewing; the viewer reflects the aspirations, hopes, contradictions and transactions of society. During the process of watching, the viewer is so engrossed with the story that he/she targets the real world and he/she becomes a part of the story. This intimacy, naturally, has a lasting impression on the mind of the viewer and will even play a role in shaping and moulding the viewers life because the performers most often than not become the role models especially for the younger generations.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1.0. How would you define the Kayole One Film project?
- 2.0. How many films in total have you produced since the project started?
- 3.0. What, in your opinion, is the most successful film by the Kayole children?
- 4.0. As a trainer, who would you say is the composer of these films?
- 5.0. Have you made an attempt in following up your students after their primary school education? If yes, would you say their talent in acting is nurtured as they climb the academic ladder?
- 6.0. While watching the children perform, what effect do those performances have on you as: a) a member of the audience and b) as a trainer.
- 7.0. In your own assessment would you say that the child performers are psychologically affected by the content of the film(s)? And if so, like in which film(s)?
- 8.0. In most of the films witnessed by the Kayole, one primary school children, we benefit from very vivid visual effects incorporated. How do you manage to shoot the films bearing in mind the financial aspects/technicalities involved?
- 9.0. What, in your own opinion, would you say the act of participating in this process (dramatizing) do to the children?
- 10.0. Where do you see film in next ten years in this country?
- 11.0. The films that have been produced so far, have they economically impacted on the lives of the participants? If yes, how?

MBEKHO

I am very tired of my people×3

Eeh eheee

Death has taken my parents

Why me?

Rejected by my people

My people

My uncle you reject me

My people

My teachers have not helped me

My people

My church has not helped me

My people

Death has taken my people

Why me?

Rejected by my people

Uncle! Uncle!

What have I done?

That you reject me ×3

When my father lived

You came to visit us×2

Death has taken my parents

Why me?

Uncle I am going to town

I am taking a bus to town

I will look for a house in town

I will look for a school in town

I will meet other children in town×2

Give me

The language of the town

Give me

The language of hunger

Give me

The language of children

Give me I beg×2

It is cold

There is hunger

I do not goto school

There is hunger

Give me books

Give me pens

It is cold

There is hunger

I do not go to school

There is hunger

We told our teachers×3

We told our teachers×3

Their teachers

They told their teachers×2

Their teachers

(Took me school)

Their teacher took me school×2

(Took me school) ×2

I am happy at school×3

My dear niece came back home

Forgive me my mistake×2

I beg, I beg×2

Uncle, uncle it is alright

(it is alright)

I will return, I will return home

To live, to live with you unite

The Rainmaker

*It was the end of a
Beautiful harvest
And the people of simbi were happy
Nyasaye had smiled upon them
And every villager had harvest their
food from the shamba.*

*The chief gave a part of thanks giving
At his home
For all to attend
There was plenty of beer for the
Elders to drink*

*There was a plenty of food to be
Eaten at the party
There was rice, fish, big mountains of ugali
Meat, and even sukumaki..*

*In the evening of the of the day of party
An old woman was seen
Walking towards the chiefs house*

*She was dressed in black
And looked so poor
But the chief was so drunk
That he started insulting her*

*Go
You don't know even how to dress for a party*

Go

*You old woman
And never come back.*

*The old woman felt so sad
And waked away from the party
As she was walking away from the party
One of the women who were
Cooking at the party
Ran and caught up next*

*She welcomed her to her humble home
And gave her something to eat
Little did she know that she was feeding, Simbi, the rain maker*

*Simbi was so grateful
And asked the kind lady
To accompany her to a nearby hill
As they reached the top of the hill
Simbi started singing strange songs
(Ululations)*

*AS she was singing the strange songs
The clouds started to gather
(Ululations and lighthening)*

*Soon, it started to rain
It rained, and rained
Until the whole village was
Submerged under water*

*Luckily, the kind lady was saved
We should always be kind, kindness is good*

Nyamgondtho

Out in the distance caves and valleys

On the shores Lolwe the great lake

There lived a man

His name was my, the son of Ombare

Nyamgondtho wa Ombare×2

Mvuvi maskini×2

Nyamgondtho was a poor fisherman

Ladies and gentlemen

He was also not lucky.

Every time he went fishing, he could return with

Little or no fish

Nyamgondtho wa Ombare ×2

Mvuvi maskini×2

One day nya took his nets and went fishing

He threw his nets into the water,

And as usual the nets caught nothing

He threw the net again

And this time the net caught something

Something big!

He pulled it up happily!

But alas!

It was an ugly woman!

Nyamgondtho wanted to throw her back into the water

But the woman of the lake begged him not to...

'Please don't throw me back into the water'

'I will serve you well'

Nyamgondtho took pity on her

And took her home

All of a sudden, Nyamgondtho had many goats,

Sheep and cows

All the villagers and elders respected him

Siku moja akivua, alivua mwanamke×2

Mwanamke sura mbaya×2

Alitaka kumrudisha

Mwanamke baharini×2

Mwanamke kamsihi usinirudishe majini×2

Nyamgondtho kakubali kampeleka nyumbani×2

Mara boma ya Nyamgondtho yote ikabadilika×2

One day Nyamgondtho went drinking and

Came home drunk

He asked for food, but the woman of

The lake told him to wait as she warmed it for him.

Nyamgondtho started insulting her

This thing I fished from the lake

Is too lazy!

The woman of the lake was sad

She got out of the hut and

Headed straight to the lake

And as she walked towards the lake

all goats, sheep and cows followed her

*Nyamgondtho begged her not to go,
But it was too late*

She disappeared into the water

*And eventually, Nyamgondtho turned into tree
And that tree can be seen even today*

*Because he was selfish,
Selfishness is bad*

*Nyamgontho alikosa kurudisha shukrani×2
Ndio maana Mali yake yote ikatokomea×2*

Lwanda mawe

Children of Ki! ×3 Aho

Story! Story!

Story come×2

Once upon a time

Among the Luos of Kano plains

There lived a man called Lwanda

“The man of stone”

He was an invincible warrior

Whom the Lango greatly feared

This was because

No spear or arrow

Could penetrate his skin

He could not be killed

Hu! hu! hu!

Eeh

Lwanda ni nani?

Lwanda mawe

(Lwanda the stone) ×2

The Lango failed to kill Lwanda

However hard they tried

Lwanda killed

Many of their warriors

The elders called a meeting

To discuss the threat of Lwanda

Lwanda ni nani?

Lwanda mawe

(Lwanda the stone) ×2

The elders found a solution

Nyalang'o ×2

The most beautiful girl

Among Lwanda

Was the solution

They would offer as a bride

In an exchange for peace to Lwanda

But she also had a secret mission

To discover

The secret

Of Lwanda

“The man of stone”

Mikayi!

The first wife of Lwanda

Was not happy

She feared the daughters

Of her people's enemy

She feared for her husband

And her people

But her fears were dismissed

She wept in pain!

(Weeping)

(Song)

Nyalang'o was a loving dutiful wife

She became so loving

That Lwanda forgot his other wives

She became his favorite wife

And won his total love

*One day, Lwanda became sick,
Nyalang'o discovered the secret of Lwanda
The secret of the shadow
Was revealed
She sneaked and ran back to her people*

*Siri Ni gani
(What is the secret?)
Siri kivuli
(The secret is the shadow)×2
Pole Lwanda (sorry Lwanda)
Wewe si tisho (you are not a threat)
Siri twaijua (we have a discovered it)
Tumeigundua (we know the secret)
Siri twaijua (we know the secret)*

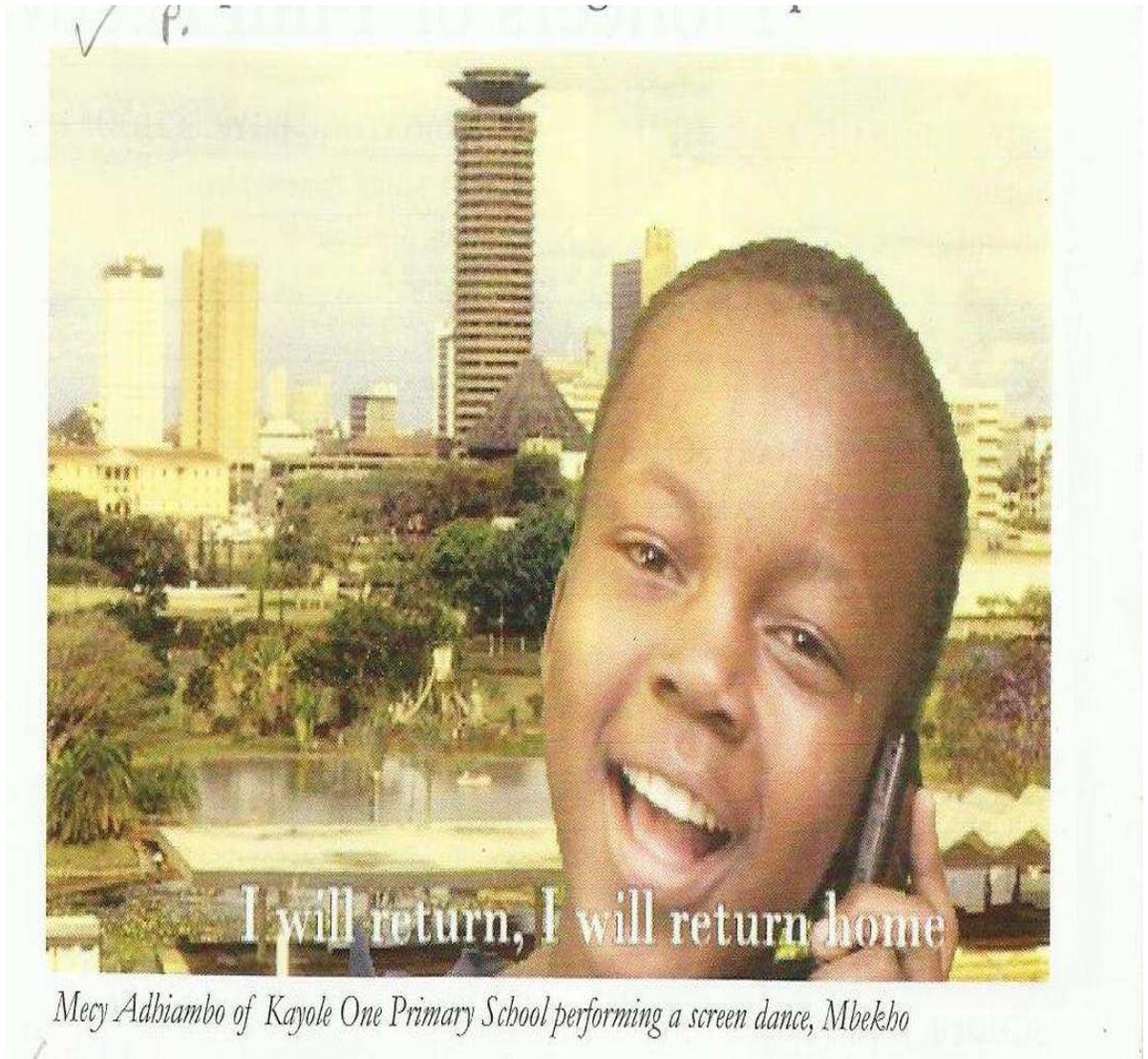
*The Lang'o started another war
Lwanda's shadow
Was speared in battle*

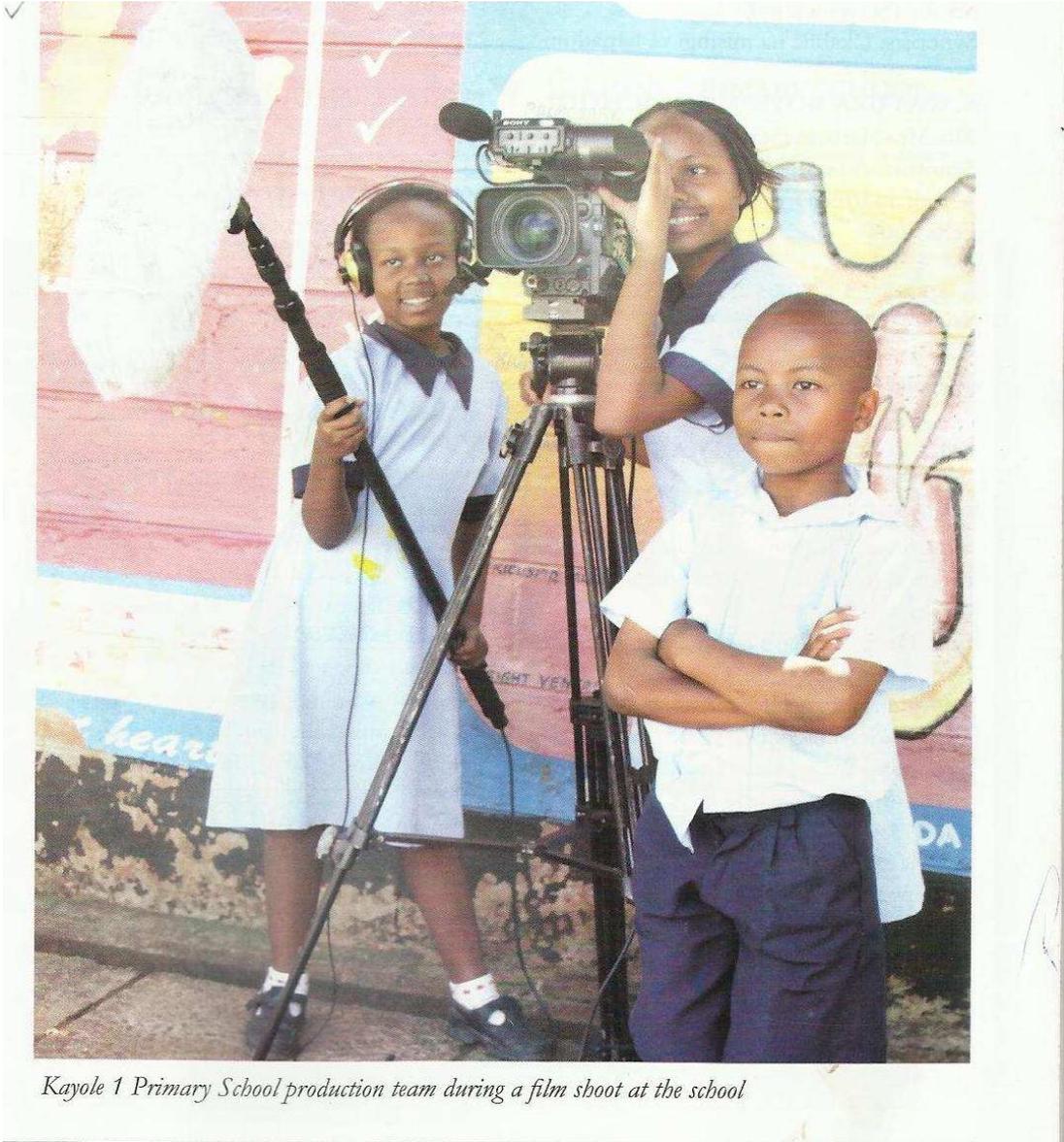
*He felt down and formed into a stone
His enemies fled in fear.*

*The stone can still be seen in the
Village of Kamigere/in the Kano plains)*

*That was the sad story of Lwanda,
The man of stone!*

APPENDIX





Kayole 1 Primary School production team during a film shoot at the school