

# FILM AS A STRATEGY FOR ADVOCATING FOR SOCIO-CULTURAL DIVERSITY, TOLERANCE AND PEACE: A CASE OF KENYA

By John Mugubi

## Abstract

*Utilizing the Kenyan Film space, this paper investigates the use of Film as a strategy for championing cultural diversity, peace and reconciliation in the aftermath or amidst conflict. Arguing from the post of view that as a visual art, film borrows from and indeed reflects real life, this paper purposively sampled films signify a call for peace, reconciliation and cultural diversity amidst ethnic and religious conflict and most importantly, following Kenya's 2007/2008 post-election violence. Four films have been selected for this study: Wale Watu, Pieces for Peace, Trail of Misery Angles of my Face. Occasionally, the paper illustrates from Nairobi Half Life as a form of juxtaposition. The use of qualitative research design enabled an in-depth understanding of the performance-texts which were segmented and analyzed in terms of actors (characters) and productions techniques. This study is founded on two theories: one, aspects of Performance Theory as propounded, largely, by Richard Schechner and, secondly, J.L Austin's Speech Act Theory. Common to these two theories is the concept of performativity. While the former provided a schema for segmenting the performance-texts for purposes of analysis, the latter's notion that utterances perform actions was instrumental in evaluating film dialogue about healing, reconciliation, tolerance and cultural diversity. Performance analysis applied to texts selected in this study returned a result that the actors stirred critical consciousness among the spectators through their manipulation of voice, body and environmental factors. This paper aims at evolving a practical framework for the evaluation of how dramatic craftsmanship of the themes of violence, intolerance and conflict in the four selected films operate to interpret the Kenyan social, cultural, economic and political experiences. A framework of this nature will provide us with grounds upon which we can make objective deductions and substantive statements about Kenyan Films in this regard. The paper succinctly examines the external and internal processes operating in the characters in the given film texts and the strategies the authors employ to bring out these internal processes. Such an analysis is crucial in the evaluation of the relationship between an aspect of form; character, and content in the Kenyan film. The paper looks at characters in the four selected films from a socio-political perspective. In this regard, the paper looks at the film makers as committed artists, guided by the belief that any committed art is inseparable from political and social realities in its function. This paper looks at the film makers' use of film as a vehicle of evaluating society and for enunciating their visions for their societies.*