



# National University of Science and Technology

Think in Other Terms



TELEVISION AND IDENTITY: FOCUS ON THE REPRESENTATION OF GAYS IN  
*GENERATIONS* AND ITS IMPACT ON SHAPING GAY IDENTITY

BY

LIFAQANE NARE

(N0125261H)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Science Degree  
in Journalism and Media Studies

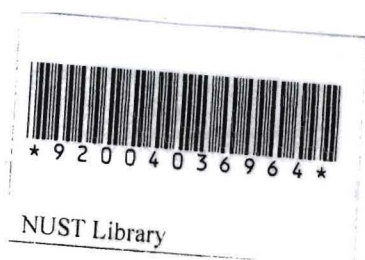
**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE**

**YEAR: 2014**

**Supervisor: Prof B. K. Sibanda**

LIBRARY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY P.O. BOX 167, BULAWAYO ZIMBABWE		
DATE	ACCESSION	CLASS No
24/10/14	14/597	



## ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the impact of television in shaping gay identity. It is a result of a case study of young people's interaction with the soap *Generations* and a critical discourse analysis of some of the episodes dealing with the gay storyline. It particularly focused on the representation of gay men in the soap *Generations* and, further, how gay young people interact with these images and representations of the gay lifestyle in the soap and make meanings out of them. The findings suggest that young people do interact with the soap and make meanings out of the way gay men are represented in the soap. This is juxtaposed against their lived experiences and used as part of a socialisation process within their environment. The representation theory showed how gay men are stereotyped on the soap and how the discourse is structured from the view of the heterosexual elites. Symbolic annihilation helped show how the invisibility of gay people on television impacts on the socialisation of gay young people and how it impacts on their identity making their communities invisible. The media effects and multiculturalism theories provided a framework through which the interaction of the respondents with the soap could be viewed to examine how audiences derive meanings from the soap.

Zimbabwe is a closed community when it comes to discussing issues of homosexuality. However, from discussions with both gay and heterosexual respondents, it is clear that *Generations* has opened up public space as a referral point from which the subject can be explored. The representation of gay people in the soap is still stereotypical and impacts on young gay people conforming to what the majority in the community view as acceptable behaviour. Although this is the case, the soap does impact in the shaping of gay identity as for most young gay people, this is the only point of reference they have in the media on interaction between gay black males in a cultural context almost similar to their own.

Key words: gay, homosexual, representation, soap, television, *Generations*