

**DISABILITY REPRESENTATION IN SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN CHISHONA
NOVELS AND PLAYS**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Loveness Hapanyengwi, declare that:

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Signed by Loveness Hapanyengwi

Date: 29/12/2021

As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this thesis for submission.

.....
Dr Nicholas Nyika

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband Oswald Hapanyengwi whose love, encouragement and support helped me to sail through, my daughter Nyashadzaishe, my two sons Oswald junior and Ben Bernard, my parents Mr. M. M. Sami and Mrs. I. Sami.

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ABSTRACT

The issue of disability is a bone of contention in Zimbabwe and worldwide. People with disabilities (PWD) are looked down upon and are always viewed with a negative eye. Attempts have been made at both the international and national levels to address this problem. Internationally, Zimbabwe is a state party to the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPWD) (2006). The convention is an attempt by the United Nations (UN) to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. Locally the government of Zimbabwe in its constitution of (2013, p.10) section 83 recognises the worthiness of persons with disabilities and as such calls for their protection and dignity. Despite these efforts, nothing has come to fruition as no significant change has been realised people with disabilities continue to be marginalised. Literature has a role to play in shaping attitudes and perceptions towards disability in society and as such, there is a need to look at what it communicates about disability in case it could be a contributory factor. This study explores the depiction of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays with a view to answering the following questions. (i) How is disability represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*? (ii) What factors explain the selected ChiShona novel and play authors' perception of, and attitudes towards disability? and (iii) Why do ChiShona writers create characters with a disability? The study used *Vumunhu/ Unhu/ Ubuntu* as its Theoretical framework realising that *Vumunhu* places value on respect for human life and dignity. Hence the study sought to find out if authors recognise the worthiness of characters with disabilities as human beings in their depiction of such characters. The study sought to find out if artists create characters with disabilities with due respect and dignity as any other characters. In an effort to answer the above questions the study adopted literary analysis as a research methodology which encompassed document analysis, critical discourse analysis as well as the translation method as research methods. The research established that disability is underrepresented in most of the studied texts. This underrepresentation is reflected in the limited number of texts that discuss disability and the inadequate fictional space that is accorded characters with disabilities in the studied texts. Another major finding of the study is that the depiction of disability is largely negative and derogatory terms are used to address those with disabilities in most of the texts, an indication that the majority of authors' depiction of disability is not in line with the principles of *Vumunhu*. The study demonstrated that disability and characters with disabilities are included in literary works as a literary device which contributes to the negative depiction of disability. The study also concluded that most authors parade abuses and ill-treatment of persons with disabilities without offering solutions to the abuses something which defeats their purpose of writing. The study mainly recommends that the ChiShona language that is used with regard to disabilities should be revised. Old ChiShona terms that communicate negative attitudes towards disabilities should be discarded and new terms that promote positive attitudes and that reflect respect in line with *Vumunhu* should be coined to replace the derogatory ones. To this end all policies on disability should be implemented absolutely and measures should be put in place to ensure that all published literary works that articulate disability issues promote positive attitudes towards disability and that characters with disabilities are accorded due respect.

Keywords: Disability, Representation, Persons with disabilities, Marginalisation, Discrimination, Stigmatisation, Literary analysis, Critical discourse analysis, *Vumunhu*, Othering.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CRPWD	Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DSPD	Division for Social Policy and Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NASCOH	National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped
PWD	People/Persons with Disabilities
SL	Source Language
TABs	Temporarily Able Bodied
TL	Target Language
UNCRPWD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction to the Chapter

To put into perspective the subject of discussion in this thesis, the chapter presents the background to the study, the research problem, the aim of the research, the research objectives, questions and justification as well as the delimitations, limitations, the thesis outline and the conclusion.

1.1 Background

People with disabilities have been viewed with a negative eye since time immemorial. According to Kisanji (1995), history shows that people with disabilities have been marginalised worldwide. In the same vein, Choruma (2006) argues that in Zimbabwe, those born with disabilities have been killed, abandoned to die and condemned to permanent exclusion. Choruma describes persons with disabilities as *The Forgotten Tribe*, an indication that they are sidelined in life. Mapimhidze (2013) in the *Daily News* of 20 June 2013 responding to Choruma's *The Forgotten Tribe* raises the question, "What will happen to the Forgotten Tribe?" In the article, Mapimhidze declares that disability has never been a top agenda of the Zimbabwean government. Consequently, in agreement with Mapimhidze, Choruma (2006) contends that people with disabilities have continued to be marginalised and exploited.

However, it has to be acknowledged that attempts have been made both internationally and nationally to improve the status of persons with disabilities. Internationally, the United Nations (UN) came up with the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) while locally, the Government of Zimbabwe made provisions for persons with disabilities in the nation's 2013 Constitution. It is noteworthy that despite these instruments, people with disabilities continue to face discrimination in almost all spheres of life. Besides being abused and exploited by society they are denied access to education, employment and are even expected not to marry. Thus, the issue of disability is a bone of contention in Zimbabwe, as pointed out by (Choruma, 2006). It is an issue that is denied adequate attention as reflected in the paucity of ChiShona novels and plays that highlight the plight of people with disabilities.

Indeed, according to Rubin and Watson (1987), the issue of disability is less recognised than any other issue and is usually discussed in the forum of minority concerns. They also observed that, in literature, many writers and publishers have attempted to do away with gender, racial and ethnic stereotyping from children's literature because it has been observed that these kinds of biases impact negatively on and can limit the growth and development of children. Likewise, bias and stereotypes also characterise disability in literature and societies. These continue unabated acting as a hindrance to the acquisition of positive perceptions of disability among people. This stems from the circumstance that not much effort has been put into curbing such practices.

In Zimbabwe, it is common to read newspaper articles on children born with disabilities having been abandoned by their parents. In most cases, it is the father who abandons the child and the home after the arrival of a baby with a disability. In society, most people have a tendency of staring at people with disabilities thereby making it appear as if they are less human. Referring to the awkward reactions people display upon seeing persons with disabilities, Garland-Thomson (2009) differentiates between the starrer and the staree. Indeed Garland-Thomson theorised that staring is a meaning making processes that casts the starrer as showing that there is something wrong with the staree that is worth the stare. White (1988) explains that the way people without disabilities stare at those with disabilities suggests "What is wrong with you?" Such corollaries suggest people with disabilities are regarded as a strange sub-group. This stance is contrary to the principles of *Vumunhu*.

According to White (1988) when talking to someone with a disability people usually focus on their disability, making the person uncomfortable, yet those with disabilities do not find their disabilities as a subject for reflection as they see themselves as human beings who should be respected by all in line with *Vumunhu*. They just want to be who they are. Mostert (2016, p. 11) further argues:

It is difficult for people with disabilities to get employment, they struggle and when they get the job they face discrimination, abuse and marginalisation by workmates and those in charge who believe that an employee with a disability is automatically less capable and less productive.

The above excerpt affirms that persons with disabilities are confronted with employability and ill-treatment in the job-market and workplace respectively. In this case, people regard disability as inability. So, people with disabilities are marginalised and discriminated against.

Even children with disabilities face similar challenges. Some of them are sent to special schools which alienate them from society. Such schools perpetuate the notion that children with disabilities cannot learn and live among their peers in mainstream schools. This, therefore, reveals that disability is characterised by stigma and discrimination that forecloses the participative space for people, including children, with disabilities.

Generally, people have low expectations with regards to the potential ability of children with disabilities, and as such, they are denied access to education. When they enroll in mainstream schools, they face discrimination, abuse and stigmatisation from their colleagues who perceive them as odd. Thus, again, disability is equated to inability. This is a problem that influences negative perceptions towards persons with disabilities who in turn are considered a burden (Mostert, 2016). Rohwerder (2018) attributes this negative attitude to misconceptions about causes of disabilities that emanate from cultural or religious beliefs. The Biblical and Shona belief that disability is a curse or a result of sin instills negative attitudes towards those with disabilities. They are detested in society. This reveals that there is a critical need for researches that address this yawning awareness gap which is the thrust, discussed within the literary matrix, of the current study. The Division of Social Policy and Development (DSPD), (2016) posits that such misconceptions are in most cases strengthened by ill-informed and oblivious media coverage that disseminate negative opinions. This shows that a pejorative or derogative media reportage is damaging, hence, the need for researches that recast the media image of persons with disability as the case with the present study which does this within the literary scope. Informed by the concept of *Vumunhu*, the present study proceeds from the premise that people with disabilities need to be regarded as part of the community rather than as a weird sub-group. It is therefore cogent that the present study dissects ChiShona novels and plays as media. This spurred the current study focusing on the depiction of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays.

People with disabilities are part of every society; they mix and mingle with mainstream society. The existence of this interaction calls for awareness of appropriate language to be used by each and every member of society. Gillson (2009) and Brown (2017) call for appropriate language to be used when talking to and about people with disabilities. Language use is important in the disability scope for it can impact negatively on attitudes and perceptions towards disability and persons with disabilities. This research, therefore, assessed how ChiShona literary narratives use language in their works and determine what attitudes

are communicated by the type of language they use. In everyday life, derogatory terms like *chirema* (a lame person), *bofu* (a blind person), *musope/* (an albino), *benzi* (mentally ill person), *chimandionerepi* (short person) and *mupengo* (*mentally ill* person) are used to address those living with disabilities. These terms appear normal and proper as they are used in everyday life. However, such terms are deleterious and they should be avoided as they attach disapproving and discouraging labels to persons with disabilities who will be viewed as the different “other”. The derogatory terms contribute to isolating, stigmatising and making those with disabilities psychologically suffer. This can make them bitter people. These negative terms are responsible for the stigma and marginalisation that persons with disabilities encounter in their everyday life.

Generally, negative perceptions of persons with disabilities have been promoted by the medical and traditional (moral/religious) models of disability (Shava, 2008). On the other hand, the social model provides an example of attempts to tackle the challenges of people with disabilities. To explain this I briefly discuss the medical model and the social model as these and other models are discussed in more detail in chapter 2. The medical model views persons with disabilities as people who are ill and different from the rest of society. The assumption related to this view is that persons with disabilities require medical treatment. Furthermore, from the medical perspective, disability is “a problem that belongs to the individual with a disability” (Leicester University, 2015, p. 2). This conception treats disability as a particularised distress. In explaining this model the University of Leicester (2015, p. 2) says:

For example, if a wheelchair using student is unable to get into a building because of some steps, the medical model would suggest that this is because of the wheelchair, rather than the steps which suggests a problem in the individual with a disability.

This is the source of their discrimination. As a result, persons with disabilities are unable to participate in the mainstream spaces. Thus, according to the medical model an individual is to blame for their disability and as such nothing is done to address or lessen the plight of the affected individual. All that this points to is that the medical model regards disability as an individual problem which needs medical treatment and nothing else.

Using the example of steps above, the social model of disability would regard the steps [the environment] as the problem, the disabling barrier. From the social perspective, “it is society that disables people through designing everything to meet the needs of the majority of people

who are not disabled” (University of Leicester, 2015, p. 3). This conception blames the authorities responsible for designing environmental spaces. For this reason, Hannon (2018, p. 27) explains:

This social model of disability approach suggests that the root of disability lies in a failure by the environment to allow someone to function to his or her full capacity as much as in any functional impairment that the person may have.

What this points to is that according to the social model society is responsible for disabling people. This being the case, environmental barriers should be removed to enable persons with disabilities to function to their full capacity. The above environmental inadequacies limit persons with disabilities to perform comfortably. Hence, from the social model, there is a lot that society can do to mitigate or do away with some of the disabling barriers. The social model makes it the responsibility of society rather than the person with a disability to remove all possible barriers.

From the points raised in the preceding paragraphs, it is clear that the social model of disability is a more inclusive and proactive approach to disability as measures should be put in place to ensure that persons with disabilities are not disadvantaged. The current study proceeds on the basis of the possibility that literary writers are informed by these two diverging models. Hence, the need to interrogate and establish what ChiShona novel and play artists communicate about disability and what attitudes are conveyed by such portrayals as well as whether they lead to the perception of the person with a disability or the environment as a problem. *Vumunhu* sees the environment as the source of the problem. The proceeding section presents the research problem that triggered the emergence to this study.

From the preceding discussion the study occupies the interface between literature and disability. It approaches and conceptualises literature as medium for dissecting and discussing the disability literary imaginings. *Vumunhu* philosophical framework provides the theoretical lens for analysing the themes and characters with disabilities in the novels and plays that were engaged in this study. The study emerged from the realisation that literature has an impact on the lives of the readers. Indeed, Achebe (cited in Muwati, 2009) discusses the idea of the writer of literature as a teacher. Therefore, the current study interrogated how literature influences readers in relation to the portrayal of disability.

1.2 The research problem

Persons with disabilities as the different ‘other’ continue to be marginalised in Zimbabwean society, a society that cherishes *Vumunhu*. This marginalisation could be a result of misconceptions, prejudice and lack of awareness of the causes of disabilities as well as how to respond to those who are considered as different. This study, therefore, sought to interrogate how ChiShona literature writers represent disability in their literary works as literature has the potential to influence society’s attitudes and perceptions towards persons with disabilities who are the different ‘other’. Indeed, Garland-Thomson (2009) argues that narratives perform cultural work as they shape our “understandings of raw unorganised experience, giving it coherent meaning and making it accessible to us through story” (“Shape Structures Story” 122).” The key question that arises then is: What is the nature of the representation of disability in ChiShona novels and plays and how may we explain it?

1.3 Aim of the study

This study aims to explore the representation of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu* in order to recast approaches to disability in diverse spheres of life.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the above aim the objectives of the study are to:

1. Describe and explain how disability is represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*;
2. Explain factors that shape ChiShona literary writers’ perception of disability and determine their attitudes towards disability; and
3. Establish why ChiShona literary writers create characters with disabilities.

1.5 Research Questions

Related to the objectives are the following research questions:

1. How is disability represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*?
2. What factors explain the selected ChiShona novel and play authors’ perceptions of, and attitudes towards disability?
3. Why do ChiShona literary writers create characters with disabilities in their works?

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study obtains its significance in that it contributes to a budding body of knowledge that provides the literary mediation of disability in bolstering the imaginative appreciation of international conventions and national policies on disability. Zimbabwe is a state party to The Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPWD) (2006) which was signed and ratified by United Nations member countries. The Convention is an attempt by the UN to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities fostering a departure:

From viewing persons with disabilities as ‘objects’ of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as ‘subjects’ with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

In this context, the CRPWD is in line with the dictates of the philosophy of *Vumunhu* which informs this study. This philosophy places emphasis on respect for every human being regardless of their condition. Thus, among other things the CRPWD lays emphasis on the rights of people with disabilities to marry provided they are of marriageable age, to have access to education and employment without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. Like all human beings, they are entitled to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. At a national level, the Zimbabwean Constitution (2013, p. 10) recognises the worthiness of persons with disabilities and provides for the protection and dignity of all people including those living with disabilities, especially “their right to be treated with respect and dignity”. The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013, p. 10) urges all institutions to “minimise the disadvantages suffered” by persons with disabilities. However, despite all the efforts to curb discrimination of persons with disabilities people with disabilities continue to be discriminated against in almost all spheres of life. The current study taps its importance in that it explores how disability is portrayed in selected ChiShona literary texts because literature is one medium for mediating and communicating societal attitudes towards disability.

Authors of literary works write stories that have characters with disabilities and by so doing they depict disability in various ways and have the potential to shape readers’ perceptions and attitudes towards disabilities. Indeed, Garland-Thomson (1997, p, 10) observes:

Literary conventions even further mediate experience that the wider cultural matrix, including literature itself, has already informed. If we accept the convention that fiction has some mimetic relationship to life, , we grant it power to further shape our

perceptions of the world, especially regarding situation about which we have little direct knowledge.

Thus, authors' depiction of characters with disabilities should be constructive in order for it to yield positive results that ensure the realisation of social justice and equality with regard to persons with disabilities. However, persons with disabilities are discriminated against by mainstream society and this discrimination is reflected in literature. In this regard, Banik (2016, p. 201) reflecting on the impact of literature on society has this to say:

Even though disabled people have the legal right to survive in the least restricted environment in society along with those without disability as equals, that hardly is the case. Social justice and equality cannot be assured unless teachers of literature like us address those issues of misinformation and misrepresentation. That needs to be done by discussing and explaining the symbolism of disability and deconstructing the moralistic meanings assigned to it. Otherwise, individuals with a physical impairment will hold us equally culpable in restricting them in the pursuit of their right to live, work, obtain education and survive.

The above excerpt explains the dire need to carry out this study in that while there is good will and policies are put in place to curb discrimination there is a need to look for other possible avenues like literature that might be responsible for promoting discrimination of persons with disabilities through the way they present characters with disabilities. The excerpt points out that goodwill and legislation may not be enough. There is a need for multipronged approach to confronting and addressing issues of disabilities. Hence the call for academics to seriously interrogate the misinformation and misrepresentations that may exist in literature and advise stakeholders accordingly. This calls for good literature that would eradicate misinformation and misrepresentation of people with disabilities. This presents the scope of this research which is to interrogate the representation of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays in order to increase the understanding of how disability in its various forms is depicted in relation to marriage, employment, education as well as social status of those with disabilities. In her seminal work in disability studies, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*, Garland-Thomson (1997, p. 5) observed that representation "attaches meaning to bodies". She further argued that disability should be taken within the same context as gender, race and sexuality which are all socially constructed. The study seeks to contribute to the awareness of disability issues within the context of the framework that informs this study.

Just as there is the UNCRPWD and the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), Brown (2017) argues that there are laws that guard against discrimination against people with disabilities. However, the existence of these laws does not guarantee the end of this discrimination and it is not automatic that one day discrimination will disappear. Brown (2017) observes that despite these laws, people living with disabilities continue to be discriminated against with reference to employment, education, marriage and in other spheres of life. This is mainly because society supports the participation of people in the mainstream while excluding those with disabilities. Attitudes cannot be changed by laws only and within a short space of time. The literary criticism become a viable medium of (re)shaping societal attitudes because of its imaginative attributes that appeal to people's imaginings. Interrogating literature and reflecting on what it communicates about disability can go a long way in curbing negativity towards disability thereby addressing the plight of people with disabilities.

By conducting research that is grounded in the literary exegesis of disability issues the current study enlightens society about the real situation of people living with disabilities, their needs and challenges. Indeed, Peta (2017) and Brown (2017) are of the idea that no one is protected from disability and as Garland -Thompson (2014, para. 9) says "most of us will move in and out of disability in our lifetime, through illness, injury, or due to old age. "This shows why it is important to be knowledgeable about disability because anyone can submit to disability at any time. Such knowledge is crucial in curbing discrimination against those with disabilities as well as ensuring that persons with disabilities are accepted as equals with all other people. In the same vein, Simon (2013, p. 1) articulates that disability activists call those who are not mentally or physically challenged, "The temporarily able bodied" or TABs. This is their way of reminding people that disability is a permeable state, anyone can move in or leave it at any time (2013, p. 1). A good example of what is being said here is that old age can lead to disability. This serves to show that this study is important to every human being because human bodies are all likely to submit to disability. Thus, promoting positive attitudes towards disability results in individuals becoming courteous to persons with disabilities and conscious of how best to interact with them.

A study on the representation of disability in selected ChiShona literary texts is in line with Article 8 number 2 part (c) of the CRPD which encourages all organs of the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the purpose of the present Convention. Given that ChiShona novels and plays are media, the study is important in that it exposes and

assesses the portrayal of disability in ChiShona literary texts as this portrayal is essential for the analysis of existing trends as well as advice on the constructive depiction of disability. This is necessary because literature is powerful in (re)shaping the perceptions and minds of people. In schools, adolescents learn about human experiences including the experiences encountered by those living with disabilities through studying literature. Given the negative attitude society has towards disability, a study of the depiction of disability in ChiShona literary texts is long overdue. This is so because in their study of ChiShona literary texts children as well as other consumers of ChiShona literature encounter disability issues in the texts and this has an impact on the lives of these people with regards to how they perceive disability as well as how they treat persons with disabilities. The way writers portray disability can negatively or positively influence reader's perceptions of disability. Thus, literary works on disability should aim at imparting positive attitudes towards disability.

Thus, a study of the portrayal of disability in ChiShona literary texts is a contribution towards addressing negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Such a study assists in understanding society and the relationships that exist at all levels with regard to disability. This understanding together with our own experiences will help in mapping the way forward in an effort to promote positive perceptions and attitudes towards disability. Adomat (2014) reports that research established that literature that discusses characters that live with disabilities has the potential to widen readers' understanding and perceptions about those who live with a disability. In his exploration of disability in children's literature, Adomat (2014) argues that the minds and perceptions of individuals can be shaped positively if the disability is represented in a positive way. If represented negatively, people's mindsets will also be shaped negatively. A study on the portrayal of disability in selected ChiShona literary texts gives room to the understanding of the Shona people, their beliefs, relationships, families and experiences concerning disability. Such comprehension is crucial in mapping the way forward thereby making the world a comfortable place to live for everyone. Thus, examining the depiction of disability in ChiShona literature broadens societal understanding of disability and gives room for dismissing misinformation and misrepresentations thereby promoting positive perceptions about disability.

Studying the depiction of disability in selected ChiShona literature is also significant in the sense that most of what is known about disability was learnt through literature and there is a need to reflect on the lessons learnt in order to produce better stories about disability. This is

essential because negative attitudes about disability have adverse effects on all aspects of the lives of people with disabilities including the ability to access education, employment, to choose where to live, who to marry, and to move freely. Hence, a study about disability representation in selected ChiShona literary texts is imperative under such circumstances.

The main reason why people fail to accept people with disabilities is a lack of awareness and understanding about disability and misconceptions about disability. On the other hand, the issue of disability is less recognised than the other issues and is usually discussed in the forum of marginal issues. I remember sometime back when I mentioned my intention to study the depiction of disability in ChiShona literary texts, colleagues were quick to dismiss my topic. They alleged the topic was not interesting and advised me to look for something interesting. Thus, they demonstrated negative attitudes towards the topic and the impression created by such a response is that disability issues are not worth studying because they are not interesting. They are not alone in such a type of thinking; a lot more people look down upon disability and do not consider disability as a serious subject that is worthy of research. This being the prevailing situation I found it more befitting to embark on this research in order to understand how disability is depicted in ChiShona literature since as already noted, literature plays an important role in forming perceptions and attitudes of readers on disability.

While the UNCRPWD (2013) advises on raising awareness throughout society including at the family level this awareness maybe at cross purpose with the literature that society is exposed to. This research assisted in examining what consumers of ChiShona literature are exposed to. Novels and plays are part of the media that society is exposed to, and it is within these texts that they are exposed to disability issues. Therefore, I saw it fit to explore disability representation in these texts. This was necessary because it is one thing to call for awareness campaigns on disability issues and another thing to expose society to literature that promotes these awareness campaigns. In line with this idea, Moore (1984) argues that the potential for effecting change in avoidance of the people with disabilities by people lies in literature dealing with a disability. Such literature varies from picture books to adult fiction and as such, can be employed in altering attitudes. However, in order to impart positive attitudes, such literature should be free from stereotypical characters that send negative images, images that are not constructive. Thus, there is a need for literature to be positive when portraying disability and this can be achieved through examining selected ChiShona novels and plays and establish what they communicate about disability in case the texts are

responsible for portraying negative attitudes, the outcome of such a study goes a long way in evading negative attitudes towards disability.

Research on disability has the potential to improve understanding of the most essential aspects of the human condition namely the diversity of minds and bodies. Throughout people's lives societies have had, will have contact with those living with disabilities and people may submit to a disability, hence the need to be more informed about this diversity in order to live in harmony and a humane world as per the dictates of *Vumunhu*.

The study is of benefit to all consumers of ChiShona literature. The findings mirror a positive approach in articulating disability issues in these literary works. Publishers of ChiShona literary works can also benefit in that they get enlightened on what to publish with regard to disability. They can censor literature that deals with disability and ensure such literature promotes positive attitudes towards disability. Such an exercise ensures readers being exposed to literature that promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities and as such compelled to be proactive in their interaction with those who have disabilities. In fact, the study is of value to every individual disability or not.

1.7 Definition of terms

Disability

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (1986) defines disability as any constraints or lack of ability to perform an activity in a way or within a range considered normal for a human being. The ChiShona synonym for disability is *urema* which implies a physical, intellectual or emotional challenge as, for example, having a physical disability, sterility, slurred speech, blindness.

ChiShona literature

For the purposes of this study ChiShona literature refers to ChiShona literary works like novels, plays, oral art forms such as oral literature, taboos, and proverbs,

1.8 Limitations of Study

Some texts are out of print especially novels and plays. But this was addressed by using libraries and the National Archives of Zimbabwe which receives copies of all publications

produced in Zimbabwe. The study involved translation which is a complex process and as such, translating the source language (ChiShona) to the target language (English) was problematic especially when it came to ChiShona cultural concepts and literary devices. This was solved by employing different translation theories as outlined in chapter three to counteract the problem.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This study focused on the depiction of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays that discuss disability. The ChiShona novels and plays that were used are those that have characters with disabilities and those that have a disability as a theme. Other books and documents that discuss disability were also consulted. The study is a literary analysis, a study that deals with fiction in form of ChiShona novels and plays. Being a literary analysis the study used document analysis, critical discourse analysis as well as the translation method to translate excerpts from the studied literary texts from ChiShona, the source language, to English the target language.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study is structured into seven chapters. The first chapter is introductory and provides the context of the whole study. As such, it is made up of the introduction, the background to the study, the discussion of the research problem, the presentation of the aim, objectives and research questions guiding the study. It also has an exposition on the justification for the study, defining central terms used in the study, limitations of the study and delimitations and ends with the organisation of the study. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework that guides the research and the review of literature related to the study. This is the literature on issues related to disability but chiefly as it is reflected in literary works. The literature that is explored reflects on issues of disability at the international, continental and national levels. The review of literature also provides reflections on ideas that shade light on disability in literary works as well as methodologies used by other authors which are useful to this study.

The third chapter covers the research methodology. The research methodology revolves around the analysis of the literary text. It is largely based on literary analysis comprised of document analysis, critical discourse analysis and the translation method. Data were generated through reading texts by authors whose novels have characters with disabilities.

The nature of the study is such that data collection and analysis were interactive processes. Chapters four, five and six focus on data presentation, interpretation and analysis structured according to research questions and objectives of the study. The data was generated from ChiShona selected literary texts. The structure of the chapters was based on themes that emerged from the data. It was also determined by the research questions and objectives of the study. The seventh chapter engages a summary of the whole study, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the context of the study explaining the background to the study, the research problem, the aim of the study, the research question, the objectives as well as the justification of the study. The chapter further presented the limitations of the study, delimitations as well as the organisation or thesis outline. The following chapter focuses on literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that is related to the research topic and discusses the theoretical framework to create the context of the review process. The literature review includes a definition of terms and the theory of disability. While the area of study is the ChiShona novel and play as well as disability representation, the review of literature helps engage authors who have researched on the two genres and those who have researched on disability. Thus, the chapter reviews ChiShona oral literature and contemporary studies on disability by both African scholars and Western scholars. It also discusses the historical background of disability as preparatory work for a discussion on how the Shona people treated those with disabilities. Shona beliefs and perspectives as well as the biblical view on disability are discussed to establish their stance on disability since they influence ChiShona writers' perspectives on disability. I read a lot of ChiShona literature scanning for works that had characters with disabilities. That I focused on the texts I did demonstrates the paucity of ChiShona novels and plays that have characters with disabilities post 2000. I examined what are regarded as seminal works in ChiShona literature. In the review of literature in this chapter I adopt a funnel approach where it begins with a discussion of western literature, African literature and Zimbabwean literature on disability and persons with disabilities. However, before the funnel approach I first explain what a literature review entails and discuss why it is necessary to have this section.

Ridley (2008, p.24) argues that the chapter on literature review provides an extensive examination of the literature accessible for any given research question. In agreement, Magwa and Magwa (2015, p. 36) regard literature review as “an objective and critical summary of published research literature relevant to a topic under consideration for research”. Tuckman (1994) and Mouton (2002) regard literature reviews as articles which report and synthesise work done in a study over a period. The three definitions suggest that a literature review can be done focusing on the research questions or on the research topic. The approach one takes is likely to bring a difference in the organisation and presentation of the chapter. According to Ridley (2008) the literature review chapter can have the research questions of the study as its subheadings while the other approach may or may not involve the use of themes as sub-headings. Nevertheless, the research questions are always part and

parcel of the literature review. In this study, therefore, a review of literature informed the research about what has been covered by other researchers with regards to disability and the ChiShona novel and play adopting a funnel approach, starting with western literature, African and then Zimbabwean literature. This enabled the research to establish gaps that exist from previous research and be able to arrive at the possible point of departure. This further ensured that the study did not duplicate work by other researchers. This is in line with Welman, Kruger, and Mitchel's (2005) counsel that review of literature is critical in providing important facts and historical background information on the area of study. This is vital because disability studies is a field that is situated in a context that has a history. Looking at the history of any subject provides trends that paved way for the present situation.

A literature review is also important in that it creates familiarity with current thinking and research on a specific topic and may substantiate future research into a previously overlooked or understudied area (Magwa & Magwa, 2015). Thus, through a literature review, the present study gives credit to those who have laid the groundwork. The discussion starts with an examination of the theoretical framework guiding the study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Grant and Asanloo (2017, p. 12) liken a theoretical framework to a "blueprint" of a house. The blueprint is the guide to builders. They argue:

The drawing permits the foundation of the home to be built, and it dictates the overall floor plan of rooms, the flow of plumbing, electrical, and mechanical systems—even the direction in which the house will face. Like housing construction, much critical thinking and planning must be put into developing a blueprint for the dissertation.

In a similar way, the theoretical framework is the plan that guides this study. With the above view of a theoretical framework, this study adopted *Vumunhu (Ubuntu)* as the theoretical framework that directs the discussion and analysis of specific ChiShona literary texts' thematic perspectives and characterisation on disability. In choosing *Vumunhu* as a theoretical framework, the study follows the example of Ndiweni (2008) who used it in her study of good corporate governance and ethics in Southern Africa and Khoza (2012) who used it in exploring interpersonal relationships and leadership. Furthermore, this study follows Furusa's (cited in Wasosa, 2014, p. 69) advice that since theories are "grounded in particular cultures and therefore products of these cultures, it does not help the Black Zimbabwean (African) literary critics to rely on theories that are not African in origin".

While *Vumunhu* has been discussed as an African philosophy (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Makuvaza, 2014; Ramose, 1999; Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Tutu, 1999), in this study it is taken as a theoretical perspective that emphasises the connectedness of human beings. *Vumunhu* insists that a person's humanity (being) evolves and is expressed through relationships with others. The identity of an individual is found in the community to which they belong. Hence, “*kuva munhu, ndevamwe vanhu*”/ “*munhu munhu nevamwe vanhu*”/ “*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*”/ all aptly expressed in English by Mbiti (1989, p. 106) as “I’m because we are, since we are, therefore, I am”. In other words, human beings develop their identity as they interact with others, naming the world including themselves in communion with one another. Through participation, interdependence, communion, the individual’s being, and identity are confirmed. Samkange and Samkange (1980) reinforce that *Unhu* is the thoughtfulness one individual gives to another, courtesy, consideration and friendliness in relationships amongst people. Tutu (1999, p. 34) points out that if someone possesses *Ubuntu*, it means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. The above views suggest that *Vumunhu* enables people to consider each other as human beings who require and deserve respect as well as enjoying a mutual understanding amongst themselves. *Vumunhu* encourages people to approach each other with love, respect, peace and a shared sense of belonging. The concept of *Vumunhu* consequently also implies that if people are treated well, they are likely to perform better. As a theory in research, therefore *Vumunhu* requires reflection on how the individual’s identity is either confirmed or denied through participation in society, naming the world or being named as in the case of persons with disabilities. This study, therefore, looks at how authors of selected ChiShona novels and plays portray disability and characters with disabilities in their works within the context of *Vumunhu*.

2.3 Definition of terms

For the purposes of this study, definitions of terms, disability, disability representation, marginalisation and ‘othering’ are provided in this section. These terms have been defined and used by other scholars in research. It is not proper to assume that the use of these terms in the current research does warrant a common agreement with regards to how these terms have been used before. It is therefore imperative to define these terms and clarify what these terms mean in the context of this research.

2.3.1 Disability Representation

In this study, defining disability creates the context of the discussion on disability representation in selected ChiShona novels and plays. The WHO (2001, p. 20) defines disability as, “any constraints or lack of ability to perform an activity in a way or within a range considered normal for a human being”. According to the WHO, disability has three dimensions, which are impairments in a person’s body structure or function or mental functioning, activity limitation (individual) and participation (societal) restriction (WHO, 2001, p. 219). Loss of a leg or an arm, blindness and loss of the sense of hearing are examples of impairment while activity limitation includes difficulty in walking, seeing and hearing. Participation restriction involves individuals encountering difficulties with participation in any aspect of life as discrimination in education, employment or transportation. According to the WHO (ibid, p. 20), the understanding of disability has moved from a “medical” perspective to a “social” perspective, which emphasises the interaction between an individual’s health condition or impairment and several factors in the environment. This development is a result of progress in disability studies. What this suggests is that society is responsible for the disablement of persons with disabilities by creating environments that are disabling (further engaged in section 2.4.1.4). As such, disability is now considered a human rights issue as articulated in the UNCRPD (2006)

Closely aligned to the WHO definition is the one given by the National Disability Survey of Zimbabwe (Department of Social Services, 1982, p. 2), where disability is a physical or mental condition, which makes it difficult for the person concerned to fulfill his or her normal role in society. These disabilities include visual, hearing, mental or speech functional disability obstructing the person from participating at an equal level with other members of society in activities that are open to other members of society. This inhibition gives rise to physical and social barriers. According to Choruma (2006), disability is a result of biological damage to a part of the body that results in a person having impairment; individuals with disabilities are further impaired by factors within their environments.

An analysis of the above definitions of disability reveals common aspects in the definitions and these are a condition of the body or mind, limitation of a person’s ability to do certain activities and restriction of a person’s interaction with the environment. I now seek to discuss representation to facilitate the elaboration of disability representation.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines representation as the description, depiction or portrayal of something in a particular way. This suggests that the terms ‘depiction’ and ‘portrayal’ are synonyms of representation. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary cited by Hall (1997, p. 16) suggests two relevant meanings for the word representation:

To represent something is to describe or to depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination, to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or the senses, for example, this picture represents the murder of Abel by Cain. To represent also means to symbolise, stand for, to be a specimen of or to substitute, as in the sentence, In Christianity, the cross represents the suffering of Christ.

To Hall (1997) representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. For Hall the relationship between concepts and language enables us to refer to the real world of objects, people or events or imaginary worlds, fictional objects, people and events. According to Hall (1997), there are two systems of representation, which are the mental representation of objects, people and events, which we carry in our heads and language. These mental representations are used to interpret the world meaningfully. Meaning then is determined by concepts and images formed in our minds. Hall (1997) further argues that people of the same culture share the same conceptual maps, and this enables them to interpret the world in an almost similar way. Besides a shared conceptual map, which in this context is culture, people must also have access to a shared language, which is the second system of representation in the process of constructing meaning. To Hall (1997) the shared conceptual map needs to be translated into a common language so that concepts and ideas can be linked with spoken or written words, sounds and images in order to produce meaning. In the context of this study, ChiShona authors present the ChiShona conceptual maps albeit from their own positions. They make available the concepts they are using in writing about the Shona people in their novels and plays. They open up the Shona mind to the readers through the characters they create and the language they use to describe people with disabilities.

From the above discussion, bringing disability and representation together, disability representation then refers to the social construction of disability as described, depicted, portrayed or represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays. It is how writers of these literary works use their mental representation of disability through language to produce meaning about disability. It is through disability representation that the concept of ‘othering’ emerges in the selected literary works.

2.3.2 Marginalisation and Othering of People Living with Disabilities

According to Jasing (2016), marginalisation is sometimes referred to as social exclusion which is the downgrading or the demotion of certain individuals. Marginalisation is a word that describes human tendencies of excluding certain people from the mainstream of society's activities. Thus, marginalized people are those who are outside the system that protects and integrates people. For example, people with disabilities are a typical example of marginalized communities. People who are marginalised are side-lined, ignored, excluded or neglected socially, economically and politically. They are stigmatized and the public generally has negative attitudes towards them.

What all this points to is that the marginalisation of people with disabilities is a major human problem that challenges the essence of humanity. The framework of *Vumunhu* proceeds on the premise that while in every society the individual cumulatively precedes society and society is made up of individuals, individuals are embedded in society. Thus, it is important that the individual is not discriminated against because it is through the relationships that we enter with others that enable the shaping of our identities. However, marginality characterises the experiences of many people globally. In many cases, the problems faced by people with disabilities are viewed as of their own making or as attached to their condition. The phenomenon is naturalized and is viewed not as a socially constructed reality but something inherent in their condition and this is known as "blaming the victim" (Ryan, 1976, p. xiii). Blaming the victim is contrary to the framework of *Vumunhu* whose focus is the restoration of human dignity for all people. It is critical to note that blaming the victim, which is a manifestation of marginalisation, can be perpetuated by the manner in which individuals or groups are represented in literary texts. It, therefore, becomes important to look at how selected ChiShona novels and plays engage this issue of representation of persons with disabilities.

Closely related to the concept of marginalisation is the idea of 'othering' which can be traced to Hegel (as cited in Sims, 2009), a German philosopher. According to Brons (2015, p. 69) Hegel suggests that self-consciousness sees the 'other' as both self and not-self. "Self-consciousness does not see the Other as another essential human being but sees itself in the Other and on the other hand self-identity originates in the exclusion of every Other outside itself and that Other is not essential and is not-self" (Brons, 2015, p. 69). Building on this notion, Beauvoir (1949) introduced the concept of the 'other' as a term that contrasts with or is in opposition to "the self" (cited in Brons, 2015, p. 69). The term, 'the other' or 'othering'

denotes the other human as different from the self. The 'other' is defined by the state of being different from and unfamiliar to the social identity of a person and the identity of the self. For Beauvoir, put differently, 'otherness' is determined by a person's nonconformity to and with social norms of society (Sims, 2009, p. 152). 'Otherness' is also manifested in political exclusion imposed either by the state or by social institutions. Thus, the condition of 'otherness' alienates the person labeled as the 'other'. The alienation is from the centre of society and one is placed at the periphery of society or being marginalised.

The idea of the 'other' was further developed by Said (1978, p. 2) who notes that as a term it is commonly used with an intention to marginalise other minority groups on the basis that their culture is different and considered a threat to the entire society. Said insists that 'otherness' is all about the distribution of power as evidenced when the West colonised the East (Said, 1978). In this context, the Easterners were regarded as 'the other' and regarded as inferior to the Westerners who regarded themselves as the "self". Being inferior, the 'other' could be colonized and dominated. Thus, the concept of the 'other' refers to the other party as being inferior in relation to the one that describes and defines being human. The major weakness of the notion of the 'other' lies in the fact that whenever the 'other' is being judged emphasis is on what differentiates and not on what connects (Brons, 2015, p. 76). For example, when the Europeans colonised Zimbabwe the blacks of Zimbabwe were regarded as inferior because of their skin colour, appearance, 'backwardness' in terms of civilization and their culture which was considered primitive.' Thus, the blacks of Zimbabwe were regarded as the 'other' and in this context the whites regarded themselves as the 'self'. What this means is that 'othering' discriminates people, it divides people into two groups the superior (the self) and the inferior (the other). The 'self' in most cases is the dominant group and the 'other' is a minority group which is relegated to the periphery of society (Staszac, 2008). Within the context of the present study, people with disabilities as the different other are excluded and displaced from the social group to the margins of society where mainstream social norms do not apply to them for being the 'other'. Thus, people with disabilities are considered as the 'other' and as the 'out-group'. Living with disabilities suggests that they are deviating from the norm and as a result, they are relegated to the margins of society. 'Otherness' is created by a principle that allows individuals to be classified into two hierarchical groups which are 'them' and 'us'. The 'other' is the "out-group" and is only logical as a group because of its opposition to the group and its lack of identity (Brons, 2015, p. 76). From the above definitions, marginalisation and othering are closely related concepts

that highlight the plight of persons with disabilities. This, therefore, justifies the need to interrogate the representation and descriptions of persons with disabilities in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu* and the interplay of marginalization, and ‘othering’.

2.4 Theory of disability

Scholars have over the years developed models to unpack and work with disabilities. These models influenced perceptions and attitudes of society towards persons with disabilities. As a result, within the context of the theorising about disability, several models evolved to explain disability. There is a need to be acquainted with these models in order to understand the representation of disability in selected works of fiction. These models shade light on the depiction, description and representation as well as the marginalisation and ‘othering’ of people with disabilities.

2.4.1 Models of Disability

Given the complexity of issues related to disability scholars have tried to explain it using different theories or models that have shaped people’s perceptions on disability (Retief & Letsosa, 2018). In shaping the identity of people with disabilities, some of the models unfortunately reinforced prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities as the different ‘other’. While there are several models of disability (Retief & Letsosa, 2018), for purposes of this study, this research discusses the moral model, the medical model, the social model, and the human rights model, which are the most common explanations of disability. It is important to note that these models are instances of ‘othering’ as they posit people with disabilities as the different ‘other’.

2.4.1.1 The Traditional, Religious or Moral model

The moral model, also known as the traditional, or the religious model is regarded by Retief and Letsosa (2018) as the oldest model presenting disability as punishment for sin or retribution by divine forces. This punishment was believed to be inflicted on individuals for a sin or sins committed by the individual with disabilities, their parents or their ancestors. Consequently, the model is associated with shame, guilt and punishment. Shava (2008) argues that the moral model being dependent on culture and religion is not based on scientific knowledge. Henderson and Bryan (2017) argue that the moral model has contributed immensely to the marginalisation of people with disabilities. This model reinforced the

thinking that disability is a result of failing to adhere to certain morals and/ or religious proclamations that warn people against engaging in certain uncouth behaviour. Because of this, forms of disability like blindness, lameness, chronic illness, mental illness and deafness have been identified as consequences of sin or evil. God is portrayed as being responsible for inflicting disability on sinners (Filat, 2011; Otieno, 2009). Often cited in relation to this is Deuteronomy 28 verse 20 that says, “The lord will smite you with madness and with bewilderment of heart” (Filat, 2011, para. 3). Furthermore, in John 3 verses 1 to 3 on seeing a blind person one of the disciples of Jesus Christ asked, “Rabbi, who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?” This reading of the *New Testament* leads Grant (1997) to suggest that the healing stories of Jesus are clear proof of the moral deficiency of people with disabilities. When Jesus was restoring sight to the blind, he would first allude to the forgiveness of sins and then proceed to restore sight. Otieno (2009) labels this among his three theological themes as “conflating disability with sin”. This conception of disability made disability an individual or a family problem. Such thinking immensely contributed to ‘othering’ and marginalisation of people with disabilities.

Another dimension of the moral model portrays disability as “a test of faith whereby ‘individuals or families are specially selected by God to receive a disability and are given the opportunity to redeem themselves through endurance, resilience and piety’ (Retief & Letsosa, 2018, p. 2). In most cases, “an individual is considered as passing the test if they are healed miraculously”. If one is not healed, they are blamed for lacking faith in God (Retief & Letsosa, 2018, p. 2). Again, this type of thinking has contributed to negative attitudes towards people with disabilities.

Black (cited in Retief & Letsosa, 2018, p. 2) gives another version of the moral model by explaining that the challenges that are encountered by people with disabilities “are perceived as a God-given opportunity for character development”. This reasoning concerns the development of character qualities such as courage, patience and perseverance. The assumption is that this is God’s plan for people with disabilities. Consequently, these people are considered blessed as they have the chance to learn vital life lessons, which those without disabilities will never experience. In this context, disability is not a curse but a test, which needs to be endured. While this appears to be a positive portrayal, it can still result in negative perceptions as the individuals are still viewed as being under special circumstances. This is akin to Otieno’s (2009, para. 7) second theological theme of ‘virtuous suffering’ based

on the experiences of Christ on the Cross which views disability as honourable suffering that must be tolerated. However, Christ became disabled on the Cross, a sign that dispels “the taboo that encourages physical avoidance of disabilities” (Stanley, 2019, p.15). Eiesland (1994) is arguing that the disablement of Christ is a call to stop the marginalisation and segregation against people with disabilities. Christ opted to identify with the poor and persons with disabilities challenging society and the church to accept and integrate persons with disabilities. A superficial understanding of this theme leads one to view it as encouraging passive acceptance of social barriers for the sake of obedience to God; yet, Eiesland (1994) approaches it from liberation theology that seeks to improve the welfare of all vulnerable members of society. In other words, it can still be viewed as stigmatising persons with disabilities.

The moral model also explains why people with disabilities are not welcomed and why in extreme cases babies born with disabilities were disowned, dumped, neglected or killed as the community or family was at a loss as to how to accept the individuals who are the different ‘other’, born out of sin (Anderson, 2013).. This model is prevalent in cultures that believe in God or gods. In such societies, people with disabilities face stiff discrimination and marginalisation as the different ‘other’. The moral model has instilled self-hatred on the part of people with disabilities as they, unfortunately, view themselves as cursed individuals. Thus, religion and culture created this position, which has caused harm to the lives of people with disabilities in the sense that they have been marginalised and have developed self-hatred on their part, which is contrary to *Vumunhu*.

Otieno’s third theological theme in Eiesland (1994, p. 90) tries to rescue the religious model as it presents all people as created in the divine image of God. Otieno (2009, para. 8) describes this theme as viewing persons with disabilities as “cases of charity”. However, Eiesland (1994) argues that Christ being crucified on the Cross showed that the “person’s physical status as the able and disabled body” is immaterial (cited in Stanley, 2019, p. 16). Eiesland (paraphrased in Stanley, 2019, p.18) therefore argues that Jesus Christ, as the disabled God on the Cross, represents people from all nations, whether abled or disabled, and “gives people hope, integrity, and dignity in the face of the physical mutilation of injustice and ritual bodily degradation, exclusion, and marginalisation”. What persons with disabilities require therefore is more than mere charity, it is being accepted as complete beings as reflected in Christ. This is in line with the theory of *Vumunhu*. What people with disabilities

require is empowerment for full social, economic, political and spiritual participation in line with the theory of *Vumunhu*.

2.4.1.2 The medical model

In addition to the moral model, there is also the medical model, also known as the individual model or personal tragedy model (Retief & Letsosa, 2018). This model views disability as a medical condition that exists in an individual and that requires a medical solution. Instead of focusing on the real causes of the exclusion and disablement of people with disabilities, the medical model resorts to finding medically-based interventions. This model, because of its tendency of viewing people with disabilities as people who need medical assistance contributes to the discrimination and marginalisation of people with disabilities. This is a wrong conception because people with disabilities are not sick people and their condition cannot be labeled as a daily health problem. Indeed, Retief and Letsosa (2018) argue that negative labels associated with people with disabilities can be traced to the medical model and such labels include the use of words like the retarded, the crippled and the lame. The medical model reinforces the notion that people with disabilities are not of equal status with those without disabilities. The model considers those without disabilities as superior to those living with disabilities who are viewed as the different 'other'. The different 'other' was isolated by creating rehabilitation centres that also served as homes for people with disabilities. This isolation showed that people with disabilities were not treated with respect. In other words, the way they were treated is not in line with *Vumunhu*. Confining people with disabilities to institutions violates their rights as persons. They should not be confined to these centres, which are like prisons. As individuals, their identity is confirmed as they relate with everyone else. This interpretation gave rise to the human rights model which is informed by disability studies

2.4.1.3 The human rights model

This third perspective views disability as a human rights issue. The model informed by developments in disability studies lays emphasis on the dignity of people with disabilities. Based on research, this model recognises that people with disabilities while they appear different need civil human rights, economic human rights, political human rights, as well as social and cultural human rights. The human rights model also recognises the pain and suffering that is experienced by people with disabilities as the different 'other' and at the same time appreciates this suffering and pain. This model shows interest in improving the lives of people with disabilities (Wendell, 1996: Retief & Letsosa, 2018) so that they move

from the fringes of marginalisation and ‘othering’. This model is in line with the theory of *Vumunhu* as it gives precedence to the human rights of individuals as members of society. The only challenge is that the rights are claimed against society. Related to the human rights model is another perspective, the social model of disability which is also a result of disability studies.

2.4.1.4 The social model

The fourth model is the social model, which views disability as a socially constructed phenomenon (Wendell, 1996; Retief & Letsosa, 2018). Retief and Letsosa (2018) assert that Oliver (1981), someone with a disability, an activist, who was an academic specialising in special education, coined the term social model in response to the limitations of the medical model. The model emphasises the distinction between the two words impairment and disability. In this model, impairment refers to the actual attributes that affect a person like an inability to see or hear. Disability refers to the restrictions caused by society through its failure to address the needs of persons with impairments. The social model presents society as responsible for creating disability by failing to address the environmental factors that disable people. This is in line with the WHO definition of disability discussed under section 2.3.1

Retief and Letsosa (2018) argue that unlike the medical model, the social model views disability not as a consequence of impairment but as a subsequent failure by society to consider the individual different needs of people with disabilities and its failure to remove obstacles that surround them. These obstacles include an inaccessible education system, discrimination in the workplace, inaccessible public buildings and a transport system that is not user friendly. Thus, people with disabilities do not have access to the same opportunities as the mainstream because of their condition. Consequently, a meaningful solution resides in societal change and not at individuals through rehabilitation as suggested by the medical model.

Peta (2017) points out that most literature on disability is from the West yet people in African countries do not share the same understanding or experiences of disability with those in the West. However, she salutes the development of the social model from the traditional and medical model to a new socially focused terrain. Nevertheless, she laments that the model occurred in a Western context and as a result, it fails to address African problems that are

associated with disability thereby perpetuating the marginalization of people with disabilities as the different 'other'. This is echoed by Shava (2008) who maintains that the West imposed the models of disability on Africa. Peta (2017) is of the opinion that the social model of disability was designed, created and endorsed by theorists from the West who live in urban settings. Thus, the social model is ideal for urban dwellers only, but it contributes to the marginalization of the different 'other' in rural settings in Africa. Hence she argues;

Whilst I embrace the emancipatory and participatory tenets of the social model, I question its applicability in the African context particularly in rural settings. The rural settings of Africa are typical of unpaved roads, mountains, sand, hills, rough ground and mud, yet the social model lays emphasis on staircases, something that may not be basic for those with disabilities in rural African settings (Peta, 2017).

Thus, Peta questions the social model's emphasis on environmental barriers and its avoidance of cultural beliefs. This implies that in Africa disability issues cannot be effectively dealt with without addressing the issues of cultural beliefs. Kisanji (1995) and Shava (2008) share the same view that societies have different ways of understanding disability and this understanding is in most cases influenced by their cultural belief systems. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that a people's cultural belief system be considered when addressing challenges encountered by people with disabilities. An example is that of proverbs which are known to be indicative of a community's experiences thereby showing an understanding of a society's attitudes towards disability. It is best to adopt the theory of *Vumunhu* to address challenges that are encountered by people with disabilities. Having discussed models of disability, I proceed to review literature that engages disability.

2.5 The Literature and Disability

The discussion of literature and disability in this section adopts a funnel approach starting with global literature, African literature and finally Zimbabwean literature. Kisanji (1995) posits that worldwide disability has been viewed with a negative eye, for example, the Greeks are known for abandoning their babies with a disability on hill sides and the Chinese had a culture of drowning their babies with disabilities in rivers. The Spartans had laws that permitted the killing of children born with a disability and Nero Commodus killed people with physical disabilities. Thomas (cited in Wa Munyi, 2012, para. 4) posits that Christians of the 16th century like Luther and Calvin believed that evil spirits haunted persons with mental and physical disabilities. Martin Luther authorized the killing of babies with disabilities because he regarded them as a manifestation of the devil. Thus, religious leaders of the time exposed people with disabilities to mental and physical pain as a way of eliminating the evil

spirits. English Eugenicists killed people with disabilities under the influence of the evolution theory of the survival of the fittest (Kisanji, 1995). Hitler with his Nazi Euthanasia programme ordered the assassination of all those with disabilities because he believed that they could not make any meaningful contribution to society (Kisanji, 1995).

2.5.1 Global Literature on Disability

On global literature and disability, this section discusses the views of Garland-Thomson (1997), Vidali, (2010), Boylan, (1991) Adomat (2014), Rubin and Watson (1987), Biklen and Bogdan (1977), Moore (1984), Banik (2016), Lyer (2007), Kench (2014), DePoy and Gilson (2008), White (1988), Filat (2011), and Eiesland (1994) Garland-Thomson (1997, p. 5) in her book, *Extraordinary Bodies* says while the book interrogates the manner in which representation attaches meaning to bodies, her aim was to:

alter the terms and expand our understanding of the cultural construction of bodies and identity by reframing ‘disability’ as another culture bound, physically justified difference to consider along with race, gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality.

The intention was to bring into “critical conversation” involving the deconstruction of race, gender and sexuality issues related to disability. Garland -Thomson (1997, p. 19) argues that there are “many parallels that exist between the social meanings attributed to female bodies and those assigned to disabled bodies”. She interrogates literary works and their representation of persons with disability to “unravel the complexities of identity production within the social narratives of bodily differences” (p.5). She argues that society viewed the disfigured body as a paradigm of the culturally deviant. This emanates from the fact that there are bodily figures that are viewed as normate (the ideal, able-bodied figure) and others that are viewed as deviant (the different other/ with disability - elsewhere Garland-Thomson uses the term ‘misfit’). In explaining this she says, normate “designates the social figure through which people can represent themselves as definitive human being” (p.8). She engages how disability works in culture and the nexus between the discourse on disability, gender, race and sexuality leading to othering of the marginalised. She challenges the conception that able-bodiedness and disability are self-evident physical conditions. These are social constructions. She explains:

I show that disability is a representation, a cultural interpretation of physical transformation or configuration, and a comparison of bodies that structures social relations and institutions. Disability , then, is the attribution of corporeal deviance – not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do” (p. 6).

Disability like gender, race and sexuality is determined by power relations. Garland-Thomson challenges the general dichotomisation between able-bodied and disabled arguing that

ultimately they are culturally determined. Physical differences on their own do not imply superiority or inferiority. These relations are socially determined, that is disability is not disabling. Social expectations and social relations are what create disablement. This is precisely why the present study engages ChiShona novels and plays as embodiments of perceptions arising from society and passed in literary forms. This manner of reasoning by Garland-Thomson (1997) is in line with the theoretical frame work of *Vumunhu* which enjoins society to reflect on what it means to be truly human and then establish perceptions that promote human welfare. Garland-Thomson's (1997, p. 9) work forces me to question the representation of persons with disability in the selected ChiShona novels and plays, for example, why main characters generally "almost never have physical disabilities". Her discussion of the gap between representation and reality calls for caution as I explore how and why authors of ChiShona novels and plays create characters with disability. Furthermore, Garland-Thomson's (1997, p. 49) discussion of hierarchies of disabilities calls for keen analysis of how different disabilities are presented in the selected ChiShona novels and plays. The present study does not go beyond novels and plays as Garland-Thomson did when she looked at freak shows and how disability comes out in these works. Closely related to Garland-Thomson's reasoning is Vidali (2010) whose paper I now engage.

Vidali (2010) interrogates George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's theories of cognitive metaphors and metaphor acquisition concluding that they are ableist. She suggests "a new approach to metaphor that includes disabled bodies and experiences". She therefore develops a "disability approach to metaphors" that challenges the metaphor 'knowing is seeing' "which represents blindness as misunderstanding and disorder, while seeing is knowledge and coherence" (Vidali, 2010, p. 34). She also notes that disability metaphors regardless of who is writing can have negative results. She was particularly interested in metaphors because they "create and reinforce certain attitudes and beliefs" (2010, p.35). In Lakoff and Johnson's theories, the body generates metaphors, but the body they are referring to is the 'normal' body without disability. They therefore exclude the disabled bodies and their experiences. As it is the bodies that generate metaphors and metaphor acquisition, posture determines normality. For example, "we have bodies and we stand erect" equals normal. "Bend" equals disabled body. Since the disabled bodies cannot generate knowledge they have to acquire it from normal bodies. Indeed, Vidali (2010, p. 39) says:

I am dissatisfied with an approach to metaphors that assumes that the building blocks of language are formed by able bodies and are transferred to those with disabilities by

contagious contact. People with disabilities, and their bodily experiences, also inform how metaphors are created and used. She therefore comes up with what she calls "a disability approach to metaphors" arguing that knowledge is not dependent of the physical body, the ableist body is not the only channel of knowledge creation. In other words, seeing is not necessary to knowing. Knowing is not rooted in visual experience or seeing. This also means blindness is not synonymous with ignorance. 'Knowing is seeing' metaphor damages the visually impaired since they do not see. It is exclusionist. It also excludes other ways of knowing. It excludes people with cognitive or learning disabilities from knowing.

Vidali (2010) makes references to a number of characters with disabilities from western literature as she makes her case for a disability approach to metaphor. She also engages authors with disabilities who often are constrained by the vocabulary they find in society to express their thoughts. She argues that language on disability must run away from confining itself to "bodily ways of knowing and interacting" to include "visual, aural, spatial, emotional, kinesthetic, or social ways of knowing" (Vidali, p.47). In other words there is need to go beyond relying on 'seeing'. Vidali (2010, p.48) argues that, "disability communities must actively challenge ableist models and reclaim disability metaphors". Change in language (metaphor) use "can facilitate change and awareness, most immediately in our own communities". This she calls "reclaiming of disability metaphors". Metaphors need to be "reclaimed, rearticulated, and sen[d] back into the world" (p. 48). There is need to creatively reinterpret and reclaim disability metaphors. Vidali (p.51) says, "a disability approach [to knowing] must incorporate the diverse ways we 'see' knowledge and what that knowledge might mean".

Metaphors on disability are socially created. Vidali (2010) challenges the notion that disability metaphors exist outside those with disabilities. She advocates reclaiming these metaphors so that they do not result in disablement. There is need for the acceptance of multiple ways of knowing accessible to human beings so that no body is denied access to knowledge whether seeing or not.

Boylan, (1991) argues that women with disabilities in western society face a double handicap, they are discriminated against simply because they are women and having a disability complicates this prejudice. The stigma of disability with its myth and fears

increases their isolation for they are not expected to marry. Boylan's work is of significance to this study in that it highlights challenges experienced by women with disabilities. His insights are useful as the current study examines how women with disabilities are depicted in selected literary works. Since literature mirrors society, the present study elaborates more on Boylan's work by way of confirming or disconfirming his findings with regard to women with disabilities through describing how female characters with disabilities are portrayed in the selected literary works. As literature shapes the attitudes and perceptions of readers, it is important to discuss children's literature as the vehicle through which children are introduced to society's values, attitudes and perceptions. What children read has a lasting impact on their adult lives.

Adomat (2014) and Rubin and Watson (1987) studied issues of disability in children's literature in a western context. They believe that children develop their understanding of disability from reading literature in which society's attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes are portrayed. Adomat (2014) is also of the view that literature has the potential to under-represent disability and that it is through the discussion of literature that all children are able to connect books to their lives and gain several experiences on labels and biases with regards to disability. Rubin and Watson (1987, para.1) in their article *Disability Bias in Children's Literature* explain that some writers and publishers:

have taken steps to eradicate racial and ethnic stereotyping in children's literature as well as eliminating the restrictive effects of sex-role stereotyping. Several writers have attempted to remove negative effects concerning age and class (Rubin & Watson 1987, para.1).

This development emanated from the realisation that these biases are a hindrance to the growth and development of children. Contrariwise, bias and stereotyping based on disability have not been recognised, yet they hinder "the growth and development of children" (Rubin & Watson (1987, para 1). Rubin and Watson (1987, para. 1) call for "a comprehensive re-evaluation of the language and the literary style used in children's literature" to reduce negative perception of people with disabilities as the different 'other', which results in their marginalisation. The current study builds on their study as it extends to a comprehensive evaluation of adult literature. Biklen and Bogdan (1977) also explored the issue of children's literature.

Biklen and Bogdan (1977) present an analysis of children's literature as it relates to the portrayal of people with disabilities in western societies. They noted that there is bias against

people with disabilities in English children's literature. In their study, they came up with ten stereotypes associated with the portrayal of people with disabilities. Among these ten stereotypes are disabled person as:

Pitiable and pathetic; object of violence; sinister and/ or evil; atmosphere; super crip; laughable; his/her own worst-and-only-enemy; burden; non-sexual; and incapable of fully participating in everyday life (Biklen & Bogdan, 1977, pp. 6-9).

These descriptions found in English children's literature present people with disabilities as incomplete human beings. In addition to Biklen and Bogdan (1977), another Western writer on the depiction of disability in children's literature in western societies is Moore (1984).

Moore (1984) looked at the depiction of disability in books and Basals in English literature. According to Moore, (1984, p. 274) disability is adequately represented in the two genres and she points out that there is stereotyping by way of ascribing evil characters to persons with disabilities, but other characters are depicted realistically (Moore, 1984). She mentions that although the majority of characters with disabilities in contemporary literature are bad some books and basals contain positive descriptions of persons with disabilities. In such literature, the weaknesses and strengths of these characters are revealed concurrently. Moore suggests that the literature that should be exposed to children should not promote stereotyping of characters and she outlines criteria for selecting literature for readers (Moore, 1984). Moore (1984, p, 278) further recommends that change in avoidance of those people with disabilities by those without disabilities lies in the production of "books and basals dealing with disablements". Picture books and adult books can be used to alter attitudes provided they do not convey negative images of people with disabilities as the different 'other' (Moore, 1984). The current research considers Moore, (1984), Adomat (2014), Rubin and Watson (1987), and Biklen and Bogdan (1977's studies as important to this enquiry as they point to the critical role children's literature plays in shaping the perception of disability. In Shona culture, the equivalent of children's literature came in the form of folktales and taboos, which were orally transmitted. These two forms of orature are discussed in sections 2.5.2.1, and 2.5.3.2 to establish how disability is portrayed and whether this was in line with *Vumunhu*.

Banik (2016), studied the representation of disabled characters in western classical literature written by both people with disabilities and those without disabilities. He found out that literature by people without disabilities belittles characters with disabilities by way of denying them main roles and adequate fictional space. The fictional space accorded to

characters with disabilities is not at par with that of people without disabilities. Disability is portrayed negatively in the sense that characters with disabilities are portrayed as evil. For Banik (2016), it is only in literature written by authors with disabilities that disability is depicted positively. This bias is indicative of the deliberate unfairness against those people with disabilities by those without disabilities. The significance of Banik's study in relation to the current research is that the study insinuates that disability is an issue that needs attention hence the need to carry out this study. Another author who looked at the depiction of disability in western literature is Lyer (2007).

Lyer (2007) discusses the depiction of intellectual disability in fictional literature and notes that first-person narratives are quite rare because very few people have the first-hand experience of knowing or living with persons with intellectual disabilities. Despite this, most people hold an ambiguous image of what a person with an intellectual disability looks like resulting in part, from how they are depicted in fiction and the media. Discussing the same issue Kench (2014) explored writing disability in fiction exposing the complex nature of writing characters that are different from one's own background. He suggests that even when one has a disability it is not easy to write about disability because there is no one way to disability. Characters in a text will always have different experiences and backgrounds from that of the writer. Lyer (2007) and Kench (2014)'s works are important in that they provide insights into the complex nature of writing about characters with mental disabilities and other forms of disability. Thus, there is a need to approach texts cautiously considering that authors who have disabilities or not, when writing about characters with disabilities rely on assumed knowledge and how they are depicted in fiction and the media for they do not have first-hand experience with regards to mental disability and other forms of disability. Lyer (2007) and Kench (2014) remind us that writing about disability can be a process that promotes 'othering' of persons with disability leading to their marginalisation, a situation that is contrary to *Vumunhu*.

Appreciating the power of language DePoy and Gilson (2008) advocate using appropriate language whenever we are talking about disability or people with disabilities. They suggest the idea of putting the individual first before the disability as in 'people with disabilities' and not 'disabled people', people who are blind or people with low vision and not the blind or blind people (DePoy, & Gilson, 2008, p. 23). For someone who cannot hear it is better to address him or her as a person who is deaf or someone who suffers from hearing loss. For

those who are paralysed, it is more respectful to address them as people with mobility problems or as people who use wheelchairs and not to say the crippled or wheelchair bound. For DePoy and Gilson (2008) addressing people with disabilities in this manner is vital as it is respectful and empowering due to its emphasis on the individual than on the disability. Thus, they are calling for respect for people with disabilities using appropriate language or terms that do not belittle them. This practice is referred to as *people first*; an idea that promotes the principles of *Vumunhu* among people and an idea that guides this study. This should be the case because attitudes are communicated through language. The use of improper language can be destructive as it is one of the factors that contribute to stereotypes associated with people with disabilities.

White (1988), an author with blindness, in his book *Understanding Social Issues about Disabled People* argues that the highest need of people with disabilities is to be regarded in the same way as everybody else but not at the expense of denying their disabilities. Their dream is to be able to go where other people go and use the same facilities that they use. White laments that most facilities have been designed with an average person in mind and are not suitable for those with disabilities. He also mentions that people with disabilities argue that addressing their plight regarding access to buildings and other areas of concern would benefit everyone. He rejects special schools and encourages mainstream schools to ensure that those with disabilities are exposed to more subjects and a wide range of out-of-school activities something children with disabilities would benefit from immensely. Employment and marriage are the other areas of concern he mentions. He remarks that it is very difficult to persuade employers to employ people with disabilities yet employing them would reduce their stigma and marginalisation.

To White (1988) finding a partner is a nightmare for people with disabilities. This is worsened by mobility problems, and the fact that people with disabilities have physical characteristics which other people find weird. Like Banik (2016) White advocates for the social model of disability. The study by White is particularly important because it provides insights into problems encountered by people with disabilities in western societies and is also informative about the actual needs and feelings of people with disabilities with regards to their disabilities. As White is writing from experience, as a blind person he has first-hand information about disability. The social model advocated by White is close to the theoretical

framework of *Vumunhu* that guides this study as I have indicated when discussing different models on disability.

Quayson's (2007) book, *Aesthetic Nervousness* discusses the representation of physical disability in works from Africa, Europe and North America. His interest is in exposing the thematic and textual instabilities that are hidden under the surface of literary representation, hence the title, *Aesthetic Nervousness*. In his explanation of aesthetic nervousness he says when persons with disabilities are characterised in a text, that appearance creates crises in the manner of the representation. The crisis is with reference to how the character in the text will be seen? Can the disability be genuinely represented? Davis (2007, para. 3) says "The final part is the crisis of reading, in which readers will find that the disabled character poses problems for aesthetic reception" as the unconscious anxiety and moral disquiet experienced by the able bodied on encountering persons with disability assumes new forms in literature and literary discourse. The able bodied, through this encounter are reminded that the state of their bodies is temporary and provisional, and that it is society that defines being normal. For Quayson it is important to be aware of the widespread nature of disability in literature and to seek to understand it. That is why he presents a study of the representation of physical disability through an exploration and engagement of the works of Samuel Beckett, Toni Morrison, Wole Soyinka, and J. M. Coetzee. Like representations of violence, pain, and the sacred, Quayson considers how disability affects interpersonal relationships and forces the character and the reader to take an ethical stance. At times unintentionally obscuring their true hardships, the disabled are also used to represent social suffering. This is reflected in Mabasa's *Mapenzi* which is discussed in Chapter 4.

Lipenga (2014) reflecting on literature on disability, notes the dominance of western perspective creating the impression that there are no other voices worth engaging on disability. It was therefore his intention to widen the space on disability studies by adding voices from non-western perspective, specifically voices from Africa. These are the voices I now explore beginning with Lipenga's thrust.

2.5.2 Africa Literature on Disability

Central to Lipenga's (2014, p. ii) research is the concept of narrative enablement which he defines as "a property that texts have for enabling the recognition of disability by the reader

or viewer". The texts create "enabling spaces and discourses" highlighting conditions of disability in literature. Lipenga (2014, p. 7) argues, "Additionally, enablement comes about in the very act of telling the story (by both the characters and the authors), as a form of agency, acquiring a voice and making a claim for recognition". He attempts to "expand the theoretical base of current literary disability studies, which consists of ideas formed from a narrow epistemic archive" noting that the field of disability studies relies mostly on western texts (Ibid). He therefore seeks to cast the light on texts from other parts of the world and in so doing widen the literary and epistemic base of disability studies thereby suggesting "alternative ways of understanding disablement on the African continent and globally" (Lipenga, 2014, p. ii). Indeed Lipenga (2014, p. 2) argues, "It is my personal voice against assumptions that there are no worthwhile literary representations of disability outside the Western World". This he views as "the amputation of African texts from literary disability studies" (Lipenga, 2014, p. 6). His focus was on literary works that did not relegate disability to the periphery of the plot. Lipenga (2014) just like Garland-Thomson (1997) argues that disability is socially constructed through social attitudes. While Garland-Thomson explores the interplay between disability and gender, Lipenga (2014, p. ii) engages "the intersection that the texts draw between disability and masculinity". He also engages the issue of violence as "a major causative and amplifying force in relation to disablement in colonial and postcolonial African contexts" (Lipenga, 2014, p. 62). In line with Lipenga's (2014) argument the present research is adding to non-western voices on disability in literature focusing on Zimbabwean novels and plays and using the lens of an African theoretical framework, that of *Vumunhu*. In line with the funnel approach I therefore engage African scholars' engagement with disability beginning with Eide, Khupe and Mannan (2014).

Eide, Khupe and Mannan (2014) in their article *Disability and Indigenous Knowledge* cite several negative beliefs associated with disability such as that disability is viewed as something contagious. The Shona believe that those with disabilities are not expected to share utensils with those without disabilities. Once a cup, spoon, or plate has been used by someone with a disability, the item cannot be used by any other person. However, this is typical of particular forms of disability like leprosy and epilepsy. The reason behind the belief in non-sharing of utensils is influenced by the negative attitudes towards disability and the fear of disability based on ignorance.

Furthermore, Eide et al. (2014) claim that people with disabilities are believed to be the natural host of evil spirits therefore incurable diseases like HIV and AIDS must be deposited into people with disabilities through different forms of rituals. One such ritual is the one that requires someone with an incurable disease like HIV and AIDS to have sexual intercourse with a girl or woman with a disability. The belief is that after such a ritual, the disease will go away, or the disease will be deposited in the person with disabilities. There is also the belief that bad luck, disease or bad spirit can be secretly transferred through a gift to someone with a disability (Eide et al, 2014, para. 24).

Eide et al. (2014) further assert that traditional healers are known to prepare charms that can protect criminals from arrest and prosecution using roots, urine and faeces from a person who is blind. Such beliefs are indicative of negative attitudes associated with blindness that contribute immensely to the abuse and marginalisation of people with disabilities. According to Eid et al (2014, para. 25), in Zimbabwe, the best traditional healer with the “most dangerous traditional medicines, charms including talisman must be someone with a disability” and such individuals are believed to be providers of bad luck charms only and are not capable of providing lucky charms. With such beliefs, persons with disabilities continue to be stigmatised and marginalised in Africa.

In line with the traditional model discussed above, Bjorn (1990 cited in Wa Munyi, 2012, para. 13) noted that in countries like Kenya and Zimbabwe a child born with a disability is a “symbol of a curse befalling the whole family”. Such a child is considered a humiliation that is believed to bring bad luck to the whole family and as a result, a baby with a disability is not welcome. According to Ogechi and Ruto (2002, p. 65), the wicked deeds of an individual or family member are believed to lead to the birth of a child with a disability.

Despite the negative attitudes towards disability, history also shows positive attitudes towards disability, for example, in 2650 BC, Egypt acknowledged problems encountered by those living with blindness and started to create jobs for them in order to alleviate their problems (Kisanji, 1995, p. 48). Egypt earned itself the title, *The Country of the Blind* because of the gesture it had shown to those living with blindness. According to Anang (cited in Kisanji, 1995, p. 48), due to this fame, Pythagoras was motivated to visit Egypt and he embarked on studying eye diseases. This positively influenced public attitudes towards people with blindness and other disabilities. Miles (1983 cited in Kisanji, 1995, p. 48) reports that

Belgium started taking care of the mentally challenged in 5th Century BC and India introduced the use of artificial eyes in the 6th Century BC. Kisanji (1995, p. 49) suggests that inclusive education is not a modern idea but something that was introduced in Austria in 1810 by Kleine and by that time focus was directed at assisting teachers on how to handle children who were blind in the classroom. Thus, worldwide, attitudes towards disability have been a mixture of disapproval as well as acceptance as shown by the above brief history. In line with this Machingura (2013) echoes that many scholars agree that the perception of Zimbabweans on persons with disabilities follows the same trends. In Zimbabwe, discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion of people with disabilities are still prevalent.

As we have seen at the beginning of this section, Lipenga (2014) argues that literary texts are important as they reflect and at the same time shape society's attitudes and perceptions towards disability. He argues that while texts reflect societal attitudes, they can help transform society's views and attitudes towards disability as well. He uses his study to counter the silence on representations of disability in the non-Western societies with specific focus on the African – context. I follow Lipenga's (2014) work in that I look at selected ChiShona novels and plays. The difference is that he also looks at African films and memoirs. I now focus the discussion on disability in Zimbabwe.

2.5.3 History of the ChiShona novel

A discussion of the development of ChiShona literature provides the context of the research on the portrayal of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays. It reveals the forces that motivated and restricted authors in the exploration of themes that provide plots for their novels. This then enables me to develop an appreciation of the themes engaged by the authors and the techniques they used in their works. I begin the discussion by engaging scholars who have commented on Zimbabwean literature. Such scholars include Kahari (1990), Chiwome (1996), Muwati (2009), Chinyowa (2007), Ngara (1984), Zinyemba (1986), Chigidi (1998), Moyana (2006), Gaidzanwa (1985), Vambe (2006), Tatira (2010), Shava (2008) and Chimedza and Peters (2001)

Kahari (1990) examines the development of the ChiShona novel from 1890 to 1984. He postulates that the period from 1890 to 1954 saw the development of the ChiShona orthography and this period produced a situation where there was literacy without literature as they were busy developing the orthography. To Kahari the history of the ChiShona writing

falls into three stages namely the identification of the phonemes in 1890; the period of the new orthography in 1931; and 1954, which was a period of consolidation and imaginative writing. Kahari's (1990) study focuses on the quantitative and qualitative growth of the ChiShona novel from 1956 when the first novel, *Feso* was published. Kahari argues that the first ChiShona fiction writers were trained as teachers at different mission stations, a position supported by Chiwome (1996). These first writers were influenced by oral narratives, Bible stories and Western literature. The first novel *Feso* which Kahari (1990) calls a romance demonstrated the flexibility of the ChiShona language as a medium of communication. Kahari explains that literature has a double aspect; there is literature that uses language for the purposes of imitation in the making of fiction, and that there is literature that uses language in an aesthetic manner that draws attention to itself as a medium of imitation and communication. He argues that not all literature is fiction; an example is a biography, which though at times complex, generally records a life history from the writer's point of view.

Kahari (1990) explains that fiction creates life as it should, could or might be. Events in imaginative literature could be believable or unbelievable, possible or impossible. According to Kahari, this is the nature of the ChiShona novel and this is so because of its strong link with oral traditional literature that will be discussed in Sections 2.5.3.1 and 2.5.3.2. Kahari is however criticized by Gondo and Gondo (2018, p. 78) for being among those African scholars who brought "European and Western literary traditions, tastes, views and values" to bear on African literature. Notwithstanding, Kahari's work is of significance to this study in that it provides information on the nature of the ChiShona novel, its development and common themes. Kahari's (1990) idea that the ChiShona novel has a strong link with oral tradition shows that ChiShona writers are influenced by their culture. This compelled me to research more into the Shona people's culture concerning disability in order to understand the authors' position on disability in the studied literary works.

In his effort to explain foreign influence in modern narratives Kahari (1990) theorises that the myths in *Karikoga Gumi Remiseve* are existent in the Bible. He argues that ChiShona folktales demonstrate themes where the disadvantaged and the physically small triumph over the bully. In folktales, the disadvantaged include persons living with disabilities a position supported by Chigidi, (1988) and Fortune, (1988). Kahari claims that Karikoga and Benyumundiro's fight (in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, 1958) resembles the biblical fight between David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17 v 42-50) whereby due to supernatural powers

bestowed by God the diminutive triumphs. The tiny Karikoga triumphs over the gigantic Benyumundiro. In addition to the existence of biblical myth in the ChiShona novel Kahari (1990) posits that there is another foreign influence in the novel *Karumekangu* (1970) with regards to the depiction of disability. In the novel, a character with a disability is a failure which is contrary to the depiction of disability in oral literature especially folktales as in Section 2.5.3.1 where the despised, the tiny representing those with disabilities are exalted. While Kahari explains in passing the link between oral literature and the ChiShona novel concerning the theme of disability and the impact of foreign influence in *Karumekangu*, this study makes a comprehensive exploration of disability representation in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*.

Kahari (1990) further suggests that the main objective of the Literature Bureau established by the colonial regime was to encourage, assist and advise local writers in ChiShona to develop stories that have characters that interact in typical situations in more precise geographical environments. This is unlike in the past where there was vague generalisation like, “In a faraway country there lived a poor widow and her ten beautiful daughters...” The ChiShona novel now has rural or urban settings or both and, in most cases, the rural settings contrast with urban settings, the rural settings representing the African traditions and urban settings signifying the disintegration of the family. Kahari’s position that there is a foreign influence in the ChiShona novel is instrumental in understanding divergent views with regard to disability representation in the selected literary works which may depart from *Vumunhu* which promotes African values of respect for persons.

In the *Novels of Patrick Chakaipa*, Kahari (1972) classifies ChiShona novels into three groups, which are: the Old World Novels, the Intermediate, and the New World Novels. Kahari mentions disability when he discusses Muchaneta and Matamba’s blindness but attributes their blindness to their reckless life styles and as such were punishment for abandoning their partners. This reasoning shows the influence of Christianity on the author, Chakaipa. Kahari asserts that Chakaipa (1981) in *Garandichauya* attempts to explain disability by suggesting that man is responsible for his actions. The thrust of this study is to go beyond this analysis engaging the lens of *Vumunhu* to understand why authors included characters with disabilities in the novels and plays they produced.

Building on Kahari's work Chiwome (1996) examined the history of the ChiShona novel and the factors that influenced its development. He scrutinises ChiShona literature that was produced between 1956 when *Feso* was published, up to 1980 when Zimbabwe attained political independence. In other words, he builds on Kahari's work. To Chiwome, this period was marred by colonisation as well as suppression of African literature. Chiwome uses the socio-historical approach to bring out the meaning of literature or fiction. In doing this, he is motivated by the need to understand the reasons behind ChiShona writers' bias for certain genres of fiction and the conditions under which writers arose. He also explored why most writers were priests, Christian converts as well as classroom practitioners in colonial schools. An exploration of these traits paved way for an explanation of factors that shaped the form and content of the ChiShona novel.

Unlike Kahari (1972; 1990), Chiwome (1996) sees the suppression of African literature facilitated through the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, a government board that was responsible for the publication of African literature that was produced in the colonial era. While Kahari does not associate the Literature Bureau with the suppression of African literature, for Chiwome its main objective was to promote the production of African literature and at the same time ensuring that such literature remained native and out of politics. This position is buttressed by Wa Thiongo (1987, p. 69) who argues:

In Rhodesia, the Literature Bureau would not publish an African novel which had but religious themes and sociological themes which were free from politics.

This view is further supported by Veit-Wild who quoted the Secretary for Education in 1977 saying:

I wish to stress the function of the Bureau is to provide popular reading material, as an adjunct to education, not to propagate political views. Proponents of the latter type of material have a ready access to international publishers (cited in Mapara, 2007, p. 25)

Thus, the Literature Bureau determined the type and quality of African literature that was to be produced. Chiwome theorises that had it not been for the Literature Bureau writers could have produced literature that articulated issues to do with colonialism and the war. But with the Literature Bureau in existence, this was not possible because it monitored the content of the fiction in order to make sure that no protest fiction was published. Primorac (cited in Mapara, 2007, p. 25) argues that the Bureau restricted African writers to "love, crime and family intrigue". Chiwome (1996b) extends his criticism of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau to poetry where he views the works it produced as products of poets alienated from their own

culture as they had to follow the dictates of the Bureau. Chiwome, therefore, castigates the Rhodesia Literature Bureau's negative influence in the development of ChiShona literature. Muwati (2009) concurs that the Rhodesia Literature Bureau contributed to the underdevelopment of indigenous African literature in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, missionary influence aided the production of literature that was moralistic from priests and classroom practitioners like Patrick Chakaipa.

Chiwome's work is particularly important to the present study as it reinforces the view that novels do not come from the artist's expertise only or the writer's mind alone. Several unacknowledged forces contribute to the shape, subject and form of literature (Chiwome, 1996a). With regards to disability representation in selected ChiShona novels and plays, I draw from Chiwome's works that authors write from different backgrounds, perspectives and beliefs and as such their works are shaped by these attributes as well. Furthermore, authors make use of what exists around them, which includes their everyday experiences, and the beliefs of their communities, hence, these factors are very important. They need to be considered when analysing disability representation in the selected novels and plays. Kahari and Chiwome's works have been criticised by Muwati (2009, p. 16) who argues that, "Some of their seemingly all-embracing titles generate the impression that the respective researchers offer a comprehensive coverage of Zimbabwean literature". This is typical of titles like *A Critical History of the Shona Novel* by Chiwome, *The Rise of the Shona Novel* by Kahari and *Aspects of the Shona Novel* by Kahari. Muwati's (2009) point is that the titles are deceiving such that someone interested in understanding disability issues in Zimbabwean literature will be shocked to find that nothing significant is written in these works. While these works have their own weaknesses, they are essential in this study because they explain the foundation, the nature, the development and purpose of the ChiShona novel and play as well as providing useful insights with regards to innovation and creativity in the ChiShona literature.

Muwati (2009) further examines the interface between history and fiction. He focuses on historical fiction on the Zimbabwean liberation war written in ChiShona, IsiNdebele and English after the attainment of Zimbabwean independence in the early 1980s. He explores how the black Zimbabweans made sense of their experiences regarding the war of liberation. Thus, he illustrates that this historical fiction is largely in favour of the expectations of the state or it tended to support the state by viewing history, nation and nationalism positively. Muwati refers to disability when he observes that while English fiction articulates the

subsequent psychological impairments inflicted by war experiences, ChiShona and IsiNdebele fiction focuses on material challenges only and is silent about the psychological impairments inflicted by the war. Muwati further suggests that English fiction writers who bring out the psychological effects of the liberation war are former combatants who had first-hand experience in the war. Muwati's study is relevant here in the sense that it raises some critical insights regarding the place and status of mental disability in ChiShona and IsiNdebele fiction that articulate the liberation war. He brings out the impact of the authors' experiences in the production of literary works. He also provides an explanation to the shortfalls that exist in some novels. However, despite Muwati writing about the war, something that inflicts disability, he only refers to disability in passing while this study takes a more comprehensive approach in handling disability issues articulated in selected ChiShona literary works and engages authors' depiction of disability from the perspective of *Vumunhu*.

Chinyowa (2007) looked at the development of the ChiShona drama from 1968 when the first play *Ndakambokuyambira* was published. He focused on the literary innovation as well as the thematic approaches used within the genre. Chinyowa argues that just like the ChiShona novel the ChiShona play dramatists emulated the folktale with regards to the themes they used in their plays. Dramatists did not make an effort to engage problems faced by Africans during the colonial experience since the settlers dictated on what was supposed to be written, something which Zinyemba (1986) does not allude to. Thus, while the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau in 1954 assisted in the promotion of indigenous literature it made sure the literature which was produced was apolitical. Chinyowa (2007, p. 189) argues that "the qualitative literary strides that have been taken are a result of the different social and historical circumstances which influenced the ideological visions of the pre- and post-independence dramatists". Thus, drama in its initial stages started as an emulation of the folktale and was mediated by colonial censorship, missionary Christianity and westernisation. The end of colonialism ushered in a new era when dramatists sought to address the effects of colonialism in which the symptoms and not the causes of African suffering were addressed. It is only after independence that playwrights probed sensitive issues like land and corruption among other things. Chinyowa's work is important to my study in that it provides background information about the genesis and development of the ChiShona drama which is instrumental in my analysis of the selected plays.

Ngara (1984) in his book defined drama and described the form and structure of a play as well as giving details on how to teach drama in Africa. Ngara's major weakness is his thrust on the teaching of English drama in an environment where literature on ChiShona drama is scarce. The examples of English plays that he cites in the context of Africa sound as if there is no ChiShona Literature in form of plays in Africa. He fails to acknowledge the existence of African literature. However, his work is instrumental to my study in that it informs that besides providing entertainment drama is critical in human life in that it gives people a unique opportunity to enact the human interpretation of the cosmos and to portray humanity's struggle with the forces of nature. Thus through drama people sought to understand their existence by means of symbolic characters and actions and this is necessitated by the fact that drama appeals to a group of people or a community and is often an expression of communal beliefs. This is the argument advanced by this study when it seeks to establish disability representation in selected plays. Ngara's work is also essential in that it justifies this study as well as enhancing my understanding of the genre.

Zinyemba's (1986) *Zimbabwean Drama: A Study of Shona and English Plays* looks at the growth and development of drama in Zimbabwe, its genesis, influence and its relevance to the lives and experiences of the people of Zimbabwe. His work is an analytical study of the prominent plays published in ChiShona from the time of Chidyausiku's *Ndakambokuyambira* (I warned you) in (1968). Zinyemba posits that traditional rituals, ceremonies and other observances taught the dramatists the concept of role playing. Zinyemba argues that Christianity and the general western influence shaped the ChiShona play. However, the title of the book is misleading in that it suggests the book is a comprehensive coverage of the Zimbabwean plays yet the author does not discuss all the ChiShona plays. Although Zinyemba does not discuss disability that features in two of the plays that he discusses which are part of this research he acknowledges that drama is relevant to the lives and experiences of the people it is written for which explains why this study is focusing on disability representation in selected ChiShona plays. Zinyemba's work is important to my study as it provides information on the historical growth of the ChiShona drama as well as the factors that influenced this growth. This assists in addressing the third research question in this study. Although his focus is not on disability his analysis of *Inongova Njakenjake* (Each man does his / her own thing, 1980) and *Ndinodawo Mwana* (I also Need a Baby, 1983) is instrumental in providing an in-depth understanding of the plays I engage in this study.

Unlike Zinyemba (1986), Chigidi (1998) explores aspects of the ChiShona play concluding that these aspects are not different from those of the ChiShona novel. He further explores the similarities and differences of the two genres. While Zinyemba looked at the ChiShona and English plays Chigidi categorised the ChiShona plays into three groupings, the comedy, the farce and tragedy. Chigidi's work is important to my study in that it provides an in-depth understanding of the ChiShona play as well as shading light on the purpose of drama which assists in analysing the selected literary plays. The play *Babamunini Francis* which Zinyemba categorises under tragedy or farce Chigidi classifies it as a comedy or farce. This confirms the divergent views that exist in literature. When analysing literature authors come out with different views. It is these different views that this study engages as they shade light on my findings with regards to the portrayal of disability in the selected plays.

Moyana's (2006) discussion focuses on gender matters in selected ChiShona novels. She interrogates some female authors' engagement with issues that are challenging to women and how the female character develops. Moyana discusses the abuses of women in *Zviuya Zviri Mberi* by Simango (1974), *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* by Mukonoweshuro (1983), *Ndakagara Ndazviona* by Mukonoweshuro (1995) and *Richave Dzerevende* by Hove (1998). Moyana theorises that the ChiShona novel can be understood from the Marxist point of view, which lays emphasis on the need to satisfy material life. In the novels under discussion women characters struggle to satisfy material life. Moyana explores social inequalities that exist between males and females, which include the profiteering of men at the expense of women. She also explains that this exploitation is not only by men against women, but that women also exploit fellow women.

Moyana's (2006) work is significant to the current research in that it illuminates some of the reasons why people abuse one another. She shows that this is because they will be striving to satisfy material needs. With regards to disability representation in selected ChiShona novels and plays, Marxists theory assists in the understanding of disability issues encountered in these literary works. The idea that human beings exploit one another in their quest to satisfy material life explains the stigma and abuses that people with disabilities encounter. The general assumption is that people with disabilities cannot contribute financially to the wellbeing of the family, hence they are a burden (Kimbasa 2016). Also, because of the quest to satisfy material life people with disabilities are sometimes abused, as society is tempted to profiteer from them. This understanding is beneficial to the current study whose focus is to

appreciate disability issues in literary works. Because her thrust is on gender issues, Moyana (2006) is silent about disability issues that emerge in *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* (1983). One would have expected Moyana to apply Marxism to analyse how disability contributed to the disintegration of the family in *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* when Soromoni lost an arm in a road accident. Thus, this study addresses disability issues that have been side-lined for a long time, yet they are complex issues, that need attention.

On her part, Gaidzanwa (1985) looked at the images of women in Zimbabwean novels and plays, an area of study targeted by this research. She used document analysis, a research method I employ. She studied the ChiShona, IsiNdebele and English novels from a feminist point of view. In her findings, Gaidzanwa found male dominance as the cause of the negative depiction of women. She accuses male writers of portraying women in negative ways. She explains that creative writing perpetuates and depicts a certain and partial view of reality. Writers portray certain norms, values and customs, which they consider important. This implies that norms, values and customs that are not deemed as important are likely to be denigrated. Thus, writers promote values and norms depending on their understanding of life, or their beliefs determine how they portray issues. In this regard, Gaidzanwa's work is significant to the current work. It points to the need for me to be acquainted with the biography of authors and the ChiShona attitudes and beliefs about disability in order to understand how disability is depicted in the selected literary texts. In discussing the images of women in *Rurimi Inyoka* by Kuimba (1976), Gaidzanwa makes reference to the ChiShona superstition on the causes of barrenness. She explains how Simon's mother, acted against Shona customs in her effort to solve her son's childless marriage. Because her thrust was on images of women, she does not discuss the depiction of barrenness in the novel. Likewise, in *Garandichauya* by Chakaipa (1981) Gaidzanwa alludes to Matamba's blindness but does not discuss its portrayal. The same happens when she discusses the novel *Makunun'unu Maodzamoyo* by Mungoshi (1977). She is silent about mental disability that wreaked three characters in the novel. While Gaidzanwa used a foreign theory to determine images of women in ChiShona, IsiNdebele and English literary works in Zimbabwe this study uses *Vumunhu*, an African theory to address disability issues articulated in ChiShona literary works in an African context.

Another author who looked at women's representation in African literature is Vambe (2006) when he explores the fictional representation of women in two of Mukonoweshuro's novels,

which are, *Ndakagara Ndazviona* (1990) and *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* (1983). He explains that ChiShona traditional culture has prescribed roles for women which expects them to behave in definite ways. Vambe (2006) posits that Mukonoweshuro disputes these male sanctioned stereotypes and in her works has young women who disregard patriarchy. Vambe's analysis is important in that it provides some insights into the idea that writers do not always conform to what exists in society. They at times go against the norm to communicate changes in people's mindsets that come along with time and foreign influence. In relation to disability representation in selected ChiShona novels and plays it is vital to know that authors may conform to Shona beliefs and attitudes towards disability, or go against the beliefs in their portrayal of disability depending on their awareness of the changing reality. This shades light on why authors create characters with disabilities in their works. This research, therefore, explores disputed issues with regards to disability within the context of *Vumunhu*. Having discussed Vambe's exploration of the representation of women in two of Mukonoweshuro's novels, I now proceed to discuss Tatira's (2010) reflections on the institution of marriage among the Shona.

Tatira (2010) examines the Shona marriage institution as it is depicted in the ChiShona novel from the pre-colonial period, the colonial period to post-independence period. He explores and analyses how ChiShona novel writers depict marriage within the stated periods. Like Chiwome, Tatira argues that writers of ChiShona novels were influenced by socio-historical factors in their portrayal of the ChiShona marriage. Novels that cover the above-stipulated time were written under the influence of Western education, Christianity, the Literature Bureau and Western values. Thus, Tatira did not merely rely on the written text but had to consider the socio-historical environment under which the texts were written. For Tatira (2010), these influences distorted the ChiShona marriage institution. His study is particularly important to the present research because it provides insights regarding the socio-historical environment of the studied period, useful for interpreting events in literary works that were written within the stipulated period. Thus, in examining disability representation in selected ChiShona literary texts, the history of disability, Shona beliefs, attitudes and perspectives towards disability are going to be considered in order to come up with a comprehensive depiction of disability in ChiShona selected literary works. They assist me to explain factors that shaped ChiShona writers' perceptions of disability. However, in his endeavour to explain the depiction of marriage in *Makunun'unu Maodzamoyo* by Mungoshi (1970) Tatira is silent about the theme of disability that is prominent in the novel. One would expect Tatira to

comment on the impact of disability on Tendai's marriage. Nevertheless, he does not because disability was not his thrust. The current research addresses this often marginalised theme of disability. I now proceed to discuss two works that are based on experiences of disability in Zimbabwe, that is, Shava (2008) and Chimedza and Peters (2001).

Shava (2008) blames colonisation and globalisation for the imposition of Western-inspired models of disability on those living with disabilities. He posits that in imposing these models, Zimbabwean cultural values and beliefs were disregarded and that the models were introduced on the assumption that they were a developmental initiative, yet the same models had been strongly shunned in Western societies. As a result, the models contributed to the oppression and marginalisation of persons with disabilities. Thus, Shava (2008) highlights the concerns of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe and he recommends the adoption of a social model of disability in order to address their concerns. Shava's quest for the elevation of people with disabilities is in line with the thrust of this study and the theoretical framework of *Vumunhu* that guides this study. It is also important to note that as a person with disability, Shava was quite aware of the marginalisation of persons with disabilities and how they are treated as the different 'other' in society

Chimedza and Peters (2001) in *Disability and Special Needs Education in an African Context* narrate the challenges faced by people living with disabilities in education through the experiences of Liana and Magama, Zimbabwean women with physical disabilities. While Chimedza and Peters base their discussion on real life experiences of persons living with disabilities, this study discusses disability representation in ChiShona literary works. At the same time, Peters as a person with a disability might have been reflecting on her own experiences as well. Chimedza and Peters' discussion provides insights as I engage the perceptions of ChiShona authors on disabilities.

From the current study's observation emanating from the consideration of authors discussed in this section, disability as a theme has been side-lined and it is high time that it should be addressed for it is a problem that exists in society. The way disability is depicted, its absence, its presence and its frequency in the selected texts are communicative or indicative of society's and the authors' attitudes towards disability. However, this has to be understood in historical context, hence the need to go to the roots.

2.5.3.1 The ChiShona Folktale and Disability

Folktales predate the ChiShona novel. According to Hodza (1980), folktales are traditional customs, beliefs and didactic tales that were taught to young children during the evenings as a way of introducing them to Shona beliefs and values thereby teaching them culture. A storyteller (*sarungano*) who in most cases was an old woman passed on these folktales from generation to generation verbally (Chigidi 1988). Consequently, folktales were an important component of the curriculum for the Shona youngsters as they learnt many aspects of life through folktales.

Kahari (1986) observes that there is a close link between folktales and the ChiShona novel since the latter developed from the folktale. A number of these folktales had disability as a theme. Folktales provided a curriculum that prepared children for their adult life as it exposed them to Shona views, perceptions, cultural beliefs and moral values (Makamure, 2017). The main purpose of this curriculum was to nurture a complete human being who possessed *Vumunhu*. In the ChiShona language, the word *Vumunhu* denotes a good character. When the Shona say a particular person has *Vumunhu*, they mean the person is humane, considerate, empathetic, ethical, tolerant, sympathetic, loves others, humble and values others and when they say one is not human or does not possess *Vumunhu* they mean the person has a bad character. In this context, folktales inculcated *Vumunhu* among the Shona people. One of the themes found in these folktales is acceptance of persons with disabilities. The traditional folktales accepted and accommodated disability as evidenced by the inclusion of characters with disabilities in these folktales. Chakamba et al (1987) have highlighted the inclusion of disability in folktales as a theme by explaining that:

Rimwe dingindira rinowanzowanikwa mungano nderekuti vanhu vane mumhu mudiki, vadiki, zvirema, vasingaoni, nherera, shirikadzi nevarombo vanofanira kuti vabudirire. (Another theme that features most in these folktales is that people with small stature, the young, those with a disability, the blind, orphans, widows and the poor should be triumphant in life.

Indeed, from the works he studied, Fortune (1988) presents the view that the assumption is that these people should prosper in everything they do because God is always with them, loves them most and is always ready to help them in their times of need. It emerges from the tales that if anyone does well to the despised people God will bless him or her, God blesses those living with disabilities, widows, orphans, and the wanderer, or the travelers. Thus, one is justified in concluding that this was how positive attitudes towards people with disabilities

were cultivated. It was therefore interesting in this study to establish whether ChiShona novels and play writers adhered to this positive portrayal of people with disabilities.

To show that the Shona people did not discriminate against those with disabilities, Fortune (1988, p. ii) says, “*Ngano* show that there was no cult of violence or worship of strength for its own sake. Shona culture must have been a superior culture of a peace-loving people.” The inclusion of persons with disabilities in folktales indicates the peaceful and loving attitude that existed among the Shona people. Unlike Fortune, Makamure (2017) contends that the traditional folktales displayed two views about disability, a positive view that accepted and accommodated disability and a negative view that shunned and rejected disability. This sounds true from a superficial analysis of the tales, but a deeper examination reveals that folktales targeted and continue to target encouraging positive attitudes towards people with disabilities as reflected in the tales in appendices 1 and 2.

As already noted from Fortune (1988) and Makamure (2017), the sole purpose of having folktales with characters with disabilities was to; acknowledge people with disabilities as human, discourage discrimination of people with disabilities and encourage positive perception towards people with disabilities. However, the folktales show that characters with disabilities are shunned and rejected by society, an attitude that folktales with a disability as a theme seek to address. In other words, folktales narrate what naturally exists in real life thereby trying to fix the problem by encouraging positive attitudes. Fortune (1988) narrates one such folktale, *Chinyamapezi*. In the folktale *Chinyamapezi*, the character Chinyamapezi (one with scabies) has a disability and is despised by people. He competes with persons without disabilities who regarded him as unfit to compete with them. Despite their denigrating attitude Chinyamapezi triumphs over them. This is what folk tales intended to do by exalting persons with disabilities to avoid their marginalisation (See Appendix 1).

In another folktale *Vakomana vaishanduka kuita shumba* (Boys who could transform themselves into lions) there is a young boy with a disability who was despised by his sisters because of his disability. He eventually saved his sisters from lions (the sisters’ boyfriends) that wanted to kill the girls after failing to catch a prey. Again, the despised is being exalted as a hero in this folktale (See Appendix 2), a theme also discussed by Chigidi (2009) and Makamure (2017).

According to Kahari (1990), Chigidi (2009) and Makamure (2017), in other folktales, the young, trivial animals like the hare, the frog, and the tortoise represent people with disabilities and the giant animals represent people without disabilities. In other words, the despised species are seen to be carrying out huge tasks, tasks that the giants fail to do. In times of struggle, the despised animals would save the animal kingdom as evidenced in the folktale *Tsuro nedzimwe mhuka* (The Hare and other animals) (Fortune, 1980). In the folktale during a serious drought, all the big animals tried in vain to dig a well. When it was time for the tortoise to dig the well in search of water he dug for a while and some water started to come out from underground. This did not go down well with the Elephant who did not consider it normal for a small despised animal to be able to accomplish big tasks. Thus, the Elephant could not allow the tortoise to triumph over him. The Elephant took over the digging, but no water came out. When the tortoise took over it dug until there was enough water for the animal kingdom. It was the tortoise again who managed to apprehend the Hare who refused to join others in the digging venture but was now stealing and abusing the water. All the other big animals had failed to apprehend the Hare.

Thus, folktales are loaded with a cultural, moral and religious motifs that “taught children to respect all of God’s creations irrespective of age, looks” or disabilities (Makamure, 2017, p. 37). Above all, it was believed that a good attitude to the despised and those with disabilities would result in one receiving blessings from God while doing evil would result in the disablement of the evil doer, their children or their relatives (Chigidi, 1988). What this also shows is that while no one would like to develop a disability, where it occurs, it needs acceptance. Thus, in folktales persons with disabilities would triumph over those without disabilities. The fact that the despised and those with disabilities would come out victorious in all their adventures is an indication that the Shona children’s literature (folktales in particular) encouraged positive attitudes towards disability; they encouraged the spirit of *Vumunhu*, which requires respect for all people regardless of their physical condition. In other words, folktales were against the marginalisation of people with disabilities.

The above cited folktales encouraged positive attitudes towards disability, an attitude that accepted and accommodated disability and at the same time discouraging discrimination against those with disabilities. In the folktales cited above opportunity was given to everyone to do what they can, a sign that the Shona people believe that disability is not inability. The inclusion of characters with disabilities and those without is meant to acknowledge the

inclusion of people with disabilities in society and to show that in spite of their disabilities people with disabilities could do something which those without disabilities cannot do (Makamure, 2017, p. 42). Folktales, therefore, inculcated the values of *Vumunhu* in young children.

A closer look at the above folktales and others not cited here shows the acknowledgement of the existence of negativity towards disability in Shona society. However, it is prudent to point out that the existence of these negatives does not override the sole purpose of the folktales that was and still is to promote positive attitudes as well as to encourage people to accept persons with disabilities. What is also clear is that the folktales were a means to counter negative attitudes towards people with disabilities within the context of *Vumunhu*. Having reviewed literature that discusses the portrayal of disability in ChiShona folktales, I now proceed to discuss literature on ChiShona taboos and disability.

2.5.3.2 Shona taboos and disability

In addition to folktales, views and perspectives of the Shona people about disability are also enshrined in ChiShona taboos. Rose and Tilstone (2005) contend that beliefs in taboos are not easy to stamp out, as they easily become the preserved opinions and attitudes of society. Indeed, Tatira (2000) argues that taboos are Shona people's moral codes designed to monitor human actions and shape their attitudes. Similarly, Gelfand (1979) refers to taboos as avoidance rules because they coerce young children to avoid undesirable behaviours. Tatira (2005) further maintains that it is through these taboos that people are aware of good qualities to inculcate in the young and those that are to be avoided. Thus, ChiShona taboos were meant to help to maintain social order in that they instilled fear against deviating from the norm, which would result in misfortunes like illnesses, disability or death. While there are various taboos among the Shona people, for the purposes of this study I am going to look at those taboos that relate to disability and subsequently the attitudes and perceptions they fostered in the Shona people.

As already indicated, one of the misfortunes that would befall those who failed to conform to the stipulated behaviour described in ChiShona taboos was disability. The result of the use of taboos this way was that it promoted discrimination against people with disabilities. In using fear of disability, the Shona unintentionally expressed and cultivated negative attitudes towards disability and considered people with disabilities as the different "other". That is why

Makamure (2017) argues that threats of disability as punishment for transgressing against taboos were caused by the disapproval of the condition of disability. Just as will be observed in the discussion of proverbs, the Shona obeyed taboos because of fear of disability. Thus, taboos promoted adherence to the Shona moral code at the expense of people with disabilities. For some taboos that contribute towards and perpetuate negative perceptions about disability and the marginalisation of persons with disabilities (see Appendix 3).

However, it needs to be noted that while it would appear that, the central message in taboos was that one should avoid actions that would lead to disability; the real motive was to cultivate good moral standards among young people. Ill-treatment of people with disabilities was believed to bring bad luck to the wrongdoers. Imitating those with disabilities was regarded as inhuman. Through such taboos, people were coerced into respecting people with disabilities and at the same time, they were discouraged from belittling fellow humans. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the same taboos are responsible for the negative perceptions and beliefs that make people view people with disabilities with suspicion because it is generally held that such misfortunes are related to certain actions or non-actions by parents or family members of the affected persons. The taboos suggest that disability is contagious in that anyone who laughs at someone with a disability or who imitates the way a person who is lame walks would acquire some form of disability. The moral threats are meant to ensure that people are discouraged from looking down upon those living with disabilities. Consideration is also for the person with a disability so that their dignity is maintained. However, few taboos are negative, which appear to have no moral values at all. A good example of one such taboo is *Ukagara nechirema unoita nhodzera* (If you stay with a person with a disability you are likely to be like them) (Tatira, 2005).

Among the Shona people, marriage is expected to produce children, failure of which brings many problems to the couple involved. A family without children is regarded as incomplete. Even today, families go to great lengths to ensure that a childless couple conceives, to the extent that it is regarded as a shame to have no children of one's own. Thus, failing to conceive or being sterile is a disability that is regarded to be a humiliation. That is why failure to conform to several taboos was viewed as punishable by impotence or barrenness. For taboos that are associated with barrenness and impotence (see Appendix 4).

It is also taboo to have sexual relations with a relative. If one is involved in a sexual relationship with a relative, they will give birth to a baby with a disability (Chigidi, 2009). Chigidi is also of the opinion that some stories are crafted on the assumption that one of the causes of disability is incest. A good example is what happens in *Mwana Waamai* by Mujajati (2006) discussed in Chapter 4. Indeed, in this regard, the Shona are right. Scientifically a limited gene pool results in children with disabilities. While this is true, such stories are likely to yield negative attitudes towards disability and people with disabilities. Chigidi (2009) posits that taboos that threaten disability as punishment for failing to conform to certain norms contribute immensely to the negative attitudes that are associated with disability thereby negating the principles of *Vumunhu*.

The idea of using disability as some form of punishment is negative and discriminative for it shows that disability is something that is detested by society. In simple terms, the taboo, *ukapfira musope unozvara musope* implies that it is neither normal nor good to be an albino and that people detest *usope*. This taboo implies that no one should give birth to an albino under normal circumstances. Whoever is not going to spit upon the sight of an albino will not do so out of respect or appreciation of albinos but out of fear of giving birth to an albino. Thus, people will conform to the above taboo not because they have respect for albinos but because of mere fear of bearing albinos, neither will they recognise the worthiness of albinos as human beings. Such an attitude is contrary to the principles of *Vumunhu*, which guides this study. The fear of disability itself is negative. It shows that the Shona people detested disability, and this is the reason why they chose to use it to enforce conformity and ensure that the rules are observed in full. However, while these taboos show that disability is disapproved among the Shona people it is also interesting to note that the taboos address the issue of inclusivity of people with disabilities. Through these taboos, society is reminded of the existence of people with disabilities (Makamure, 2017; Tatira, 2005) and that they are required to be respected in the context of *Vumunhu*. This discussion shows that in relation to disability, taboos are a double edged sword and depends on who uses it.

2.5.3.3 The ChiShona proverb and disability

Sande (2019, p. 4) argues that the Shona people “do not explicitly define disability”; they “describe who PWD are in their society”. But the discussion of taboos above can be viewed as some form of explanation. Thus, in order to shade more light on what disability is among the Shona people, we need to examine their proverbs and establish what they communicate

about disability. I agree with Kisanji (1995, p. 51), who after examining Tanzanian proverbs in relation to disability concluded that an examination of proverbs in various regions might yield patterns of attitudes and views in studied communities. This is the case because in African countries proverbs constitute a powerful linguistic device for the shaping of moral consciousness, attitudes, opinion and beliefs (Kisanji, 1995, p. 51). Heeding his call, the present study adopts the same approach to establish what ChiShona proverbs communicate or suggest about disability and people with disabilities.

Scholars have defined proverbs differently with some focusing on their linguistic structure and others concentrating on their social function. For the purposes of this study, I am going to consider definitions that focus on the social functions of proverbs, as this is what reveals the attitudes and perceptions of the users of these proverbs towards disability. Chimhundu (1980, p. 37) argues that the main function of proverbs in African society has been clearly articulated as follows:

In the passage of the race through many years of happiness and misery, of joy and sorrow, the people accumulate more and more experience and this vast store of experience tends to affect their outlook and regulate their behaviour as a social unit. Some models of conduct are embodied in proverbs, which serve the purpose of instructing the younger generations to serve as reminders to the old who have shown negligence in their observance of the rules of conduct expected in society.

This agrees with Hamutyinei and Plannger (1974), who view proverbs as reflections on a people's philosophy, hence, the argument that there is a proverb for each situation. This is because proverbs are based on proven and acknowledged social truths.

The above reflections show that proverbs are reflective of a people's philosophy; they express a common truth that is accepted by all members of a society and guarantee family steadiness and sustenance. Relating proverbs to a disability, Kisanji (1995, p. 57) views proverbs as raw material for understanding disability arguing that, "The main function of a proverb is to generalise a community's experience or to cope with a situation as it arises, by regarding it in the light of something which has occurred before". Building on this reasoning it can be argued that since society's understanding of disability is manifested through its proverbs, ChiShona proverbs that articulate disability assist in understanding the Shona people's perception of disability. In line with this view, Kisanji (1995) says society has different ways of understanding disability, influenced at most by their cultural belief systems.

As an example, within African contexts, proverbs generalise a community's experiences, thereby providing an understanding of attitudes of society towards disability.

However, just like in the case of taboos, it appears that the use by the Shona of proverbs that refer to disability was a way of accommodating and protecting people with disabilities. A closer look at ChiShona proverbs shows that the proverbs are positive as well as negative as evidenced by the following analysis, which is going to start by looking at proverbs that encourage positive attitudes.

The proverb, *seka urema wafa* (You dare laugh at disability after you have died or thou shall not laugh at someone with a disability) encourages positive attitudes towards disability. It encourages the Shona to accept people with disabilities by discouraging looking down upon them. This way it upholds the principles of *Vumunhu* for it emphasises that no one should laugh at someone with a disability. The proverb clearly indicates that no one is immune to disability; anyone anytime can succumb to disability hence the need not to laugh at persons with disabilities (Peta 2017; Brown 2017). However, the proverb is like a double-edged knife as it is taken heed of out of fear of the consequences associated with laughing at someone living with a disability and not out of respect for humanity. Its literary meaning is that if one laughs at someone with a disability, they, their children or their relatives may be inflicted with some form of disability. While the proverb seeks to reinforce positive attitudes towards disability in the sense that it discourages shunning persons with disabilities, its use betrays underlying negative perceptions about disability.

Benzi rakareva hondo (A person with a mental disability warned people of approaching danger or war) is another proverb that promotes positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. This proverb suggests that both those without disability and those with disabilities have a role to play in society as evidenced by the person with mental illness who warned people of impending danger. Those that heeded the warning saved themselves and those that did not heed the warning because they were sceptical of the messenger perished. Hence, everyone has a role to play in society and no one is useless despite a disability. This is a warning not to ignore what persons with disabilities may have to say. The proverb encourages inclusivity and acknowledges that disability is not inability.

Another proverb is, *Chirema ndochine zano chinotamba chakazembera madziro* (A person who is crippled is innovative for he or she dances while leaning against the wall). This proverb encourages positive attitudes towards those living with disabilities that they are not useless and that they are innovative in life and are at times able to overcome their disabilities when the need arises. The proverb also encourages inclusivity and acknowledges that disability is not inability. People with disabilities in their varied conditions can effectively use the environment to accomplish their wishes or agendas. The proverb portrays people with disabilities as people who can tap from the environment around them for survival thereby encouraging positive attitudes towards people with disabilities (Makamure, 2017). The proverb also acknowledges innovativeness that exists in people with disabilities, that they are creative in life and that they have innate survival skills.

The proverb *kuziva benzi kuswera naro* (To know someone's mental disability you must interact with them) encourages accommodation and inclusion of people with disabilities. The proverb communicates the need to interact with persons living with disabilities in order to understand them and to know their plight and their needs. The proverb further discourages labelling people with disabilities or being dismissive without taking time to understand them. In developing a deeper understanding of the individual, one then develops an appreciation of and respect for their humanity.

Another ChiShona proverb that seeks to develop positive attitudes towards disability is, *Ane benzi ndeane rake kudzana unopururudza* (Anyone related to a person with mental disability is likely to applaud his/her dances). The proverb encourages acceptance of people with disabilities and that people should be prepared to appreciate works they do no matter how insignificant they may appear. In addition, all human beings need to be appreciated. The proverb also suggests that disability is not inability. It encourages the acceptance of persons living with disabilities.

The above proverbs are positive towards disability and these proverbs among the Shona people are used as moral sanctions to avoid marginalisation of persons with disabilities in society (Masaka & Chemhuru 2011). They were and are still intended to develop positive perceptions of persons with disabilities. Their use by authors may point to the author's positive perception of disability.

While the above proverbs applaud and exalt persons with disabilities I now discuss proverbs that appear negative about disability. Indeed, Ebenso, et al. (2012) view such proverbs as accepted sayings with ugly truth advising how to act and live. They further argue that proverbs that articulate disability in a negative way strive to bring out people's negative perspectives on disability that is a reality in society. The proverb, *Bofu harimemi hunza* (A blind man cannot inspect a game pit) portrays a blind man as someone who is not able to do certain chores done by persons without disabilities due to their blindness. The proverb reinforces the idea that disability is inability. The proverb is like a warning that a blind person should not be given full responsibility for certain tasks for such persons cannot be relied upon due to their disabilities, which is viewed as a hindrance. At the same time, it encourages knowing appropriate tasks for persons with disabilities taking into consideration their condition. Thus, the proverb is not entirely negative, but a call to caution when assigning tasks to persons with disabilities.

Another proverb that seems to reinforce negative attitudes towards disability is, *kune chirema hakuna rufu*, which literally means, it is better to have a baby with a disability than to have a stillborn. It can also be interpreted to mean that people cannot mourn over the birth of someone with a disability. While it appears to reinforce positive attitudes towards disability, the proverb is derogatory of disability for it equates the birth of someone with a disability with death. It can be translated as 'half a loaf is better than nothing', something that has to be accepted simply because there is nothing better. Similarly, *Ukaridzira bofu ngoma kana rotamba rinokutsika* is a proverb which does not promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Literally, it means if you beat drums for a person who is blind, because they cannot see, in dancing, they will bump into you/step on your toes. The proverb suggests that disability is a burden and accommodating someone with a disability is creating problems for oneself. Therefore, persons with disabilities are not to be entertained. This is contrary to the principles of *Vumunhu*.

The proverb, *Benzi ibenzi kunyarirapa sei muvhamu hauperi* (No matter how a mentally impaired person is treated the mental illness will not go away completely) suggests that intellectual disability cannot be easily treated. Treatment will not result in complete healing; traits of mental illness will remain visible. The affected person will always be unpredictable. This proverb is negative towards persons with disabilities in the sense that it attaches a permanent label to the affected individual by claiming that even after treatment one will still

be considered as mentally ill. It calls for caution based on a lack of trust when dealing with someone who has had a mental illness.

Another proverb, *Kudya nebofu muriwo ndewako wese* (When sharing a meal with a person who is blind one is at liberty to eat all the pieces of meat) is a proverb that instils negative perceptions about disability. The literal meaning of this proverb is that when sharing a meal with someone who is blind the one who is not blind is at an advantage over his or her blind companion in the sense that the one who is blind is not aware of the quantity of food and so is easily taken advantage of. The proverb suggests it is a disadvantage to be blind and that people with disabilities are prone to abuse and can be easily taken advantage of. The proverb does not show high regard for people who are blind; instead, it undermines their status. It reinforces negative perceptions and tolerates exploitation of persons with disabilities. This is contrary to the principles of *Vumunhu*.

The proverb, *Bofu rikati ndinokurova rinenge rine charakatsika* (When a blind person threatens to hit someone, they will be having a secret weapon) suggests an inability to defend themselves and their dependence on the able bodied on the part of the visually impaired persons. It also suggests that people with disabilities are not self-reliant and that they depend on other people, which is why this group of people is shunned and considered as the different 'other' by society in real life. They are a burden since they are dependent on other people. However, it can also be a warning against exploiting persons with disabilities.

In the case of the proverb, *Kuita kwechirema kuvanza urema hwacho* (It is the habit of someone with disability to disguise his or her disability) the suggestion is that there is no pride in disability. Those with disabilities are not at liberty to expose their disabilities, they try to conceal their disabilities and the proverb suggests that this behaviour is typical of people with disabilities. They appear to have no pride or self-esteem. People with disabilities are therefore presented as dishonest and lacking pride in who they are. Such people would not normally be trusted.

All the above seven proverbs are negative about disability. The issue here is that the literal meanings of these proverbs tend to downgrade people with disabilities. Such proverbs promote the marginalisation of persons with disabilities. Masaka and Chemhuru (2011) lament that embracing such ChiShona philosophy does not give room to the reduction of

stigmatization of persons with disabilities and change of attitudes towards persons with disabilities is not guaranteed by the use of such proverbs. Commenting on the meanings of these proverbs Makamure (2017) says, the proverbs are negatives which are intended to promote positives that are meant to discourage disregard of people with disabilities for they acknowledge the existence of people living with disabilities and remind the public of their existence and the need to accommodate and accept them in society. They are positive negatives.

While proverbs send positive and negative messages about people with disabilities; this study explores how disability is depicted in the selected literary works. The above analysis of ChiShona proverbs assists in understanding the depiction of disability in selected literary works. . I now proceed to discuss the history of disability.

2.6 History of Disability Providing the Context

It is necessary to give a brief history on disability as a way of contextualising the discussion of disability representation in ChiShona novels and plays. It is interesting to note that Zimbabwe is not in any way different from the world trends concerning perceptions of disability. Generally, there has been a limited social acceptance of people with disabilities by their families particularly the fathers and paternal relatives and the communities they reside in (Choruma, 2006). As observed in Section 2.5.3.2, since time immemorial in Zimbabwe, the birth of a child with a disability was viewed as a taboo that was believed to bring bad omen to the family and as a result, those born with disabilities were killed. In most cases, the disability of the baby was usually blamed on the mother and in certain cases, bearing a baby with a disability would result in divorce.

Kisanji (1995) highlighted that in Zimbabwe and Tanzania people with disabilities experienced a mixture of attitudes that include both persecution and tolerance. However, the tolerance has been paternalistic as people with disabilities were viewed as incapable of making meaningful independent decisions. Choruma, (2006) confirms that just as is the case worldwide, in Zimbabwe people with disabilities have been ridiculed, killed, abandoned to die and condemned to permanent exclusion. Dzingisai's case cited in the NASCOH (June 21, 2007) is a true testimony of the killing and the abandonment of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe.

In 1915, Dzingisai was born blind and his mother refused to have him killed, as was the practice by that time. Due to drought and poverty, Dzingisai's father could not fend for his family and at the same time could not come to terms with Dzingisai's blindness. He then ordered his wife to drown Dzingisai in the Tokwe River, a tradition similar to that practiced by the Chinese (Anang, 1992 cited in Kisanji, 1995, p. 47). The wife disobeyed her husband and instead approached Reverend Hugo of the Dutch Reformed Church at Chivi mission for assistance. Reverend Hugo asked his wife if she could take in Dzingisai and look after him. Margret agreed and she then started work on uplifting the blind and those with other forms of disabilities at Chivi mission in Masvingo. Another story is that of Tsamwa (tchick) a deaf child who was assisted by a Miss Smuts in 1940s at Pamushana Mission by enrolling him in school for formal education. Tsamwa was treated as an outcast and Miss Smuts saved him from the unfavourable environment by enrolling him into formal education.

The two stories are evidence of the missionaries' intervention in the plight of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe. These two stories clearly illustrate the plight of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe since time immemorial and the stories are not different from how other nations worldwide treated those with disabilities. The stories show that disability was extremely detested as is expressed in the names that were given to the two boys. The name Dzingisai which literary means (to cast away evil spirits) carries negative connotations. It implies disapproval of the birth of a baby with a disability, that the birth of the boy was a curse and not welcome. The name suggests that the family was supposed to perform some rituals to ensure evil spirits that caused the birth of a child with a disability are cleansed. The name Tsamwa (tchick) or curse expresses the bitterness and disapproval that came because of the birth of the baby with a disability. The name expresses intense dislike of the baby on the part of the parents.

Chimedza and Peters (2000) are of the view that disability is equated to inability. In the past, the family was responsible for taking care of their own members who had disabilities but with the advent of modernisation and its economic hardships situations have changed. Changing ways of living have affected the extended family such that members are more focused on their own survival than looking after those with disabilities. Chimedza and Peters (2001) posit that there is the perpetuation of discrimination of people with disabilities. Due to economic hardships those with disabilities are left unattended and sometimes they are locked in houses or institutions. One example is that reported by Thomas Reuters Foundation of

May 31, 2019 entitled *Out of Sight out of Mind, Zimbabwe Locks up its Disabled*. In the article, Ndumiso Ngwenya a leper spent his entire life in isolation under strict lock and key. Family members claimed that it was for his own good since he could not work it was best to keep him in and feed him. They also cited family stigmatisation by neighbours who associated Ndumiso's disability with witchcraft. Surprisingly the Ndebele name Ndumiso is a positive name that means praise. Chimedza and Peters' assertion above does not correspond to facts in the sense that in the past, persons with disabilities were neglected, abandoned or killed, which called for the intervention of missionaries. Rehabilitation and community care services that exist in Zimbabwe today are signs of the development of positive attitudes towards disability although the practice does not uphold the principles of *Vumunhu*.

Nyamanhindi (2017) provides the case of another victim, Onai (a name that means to see what has happened) who was born blind and deaf. People believed that God cursed her. She spent most of her time locked in a house. She was isolated from her siblings who attended school. Her name Onai is significant in that, it shows that the parents were not happy with having a blind baby; they expected a baby with no disability. Hence, the name Onai is a protest that the girl should not have been blind. The locking of people with disabilities in homes and institutions is said to be rampant in Zimbabwe due to long standing beliefs that they bring bad luck or practice witchcraft. Thus, Moyo (2019) argues that a vast number of children with disabilities have been shut away from the public, denied education and withdrawn from school. Chimedza and Peters (2001) narrate the case of Laina who after succumbing to disability her father did not accept that his child acquired a disability. To him, it was shameful to have a child with a disability. He advised his wife to place Laina in an orphanage run by missionaries. The mother refused and she was divorced. Ranga Mupindu in Chimedza and Peters, (2001, p. 147) gives a testimony:

I was taken up to a mountain and I was left overnight on the mountain on my own. They were to collect me the following morning. Traditional rituals were performed. It was expected that was the only way of helping me out. It was very terrible.

These examples show the Shona people's negative attitudes towards disability.

This study establishes how disability is depicted in ChiShona literature particularly the ChiShona novel and play. The study is undertaken in the context of *Vumunhu*. In the next section, I discuss the beliefs and perspectives of the Shona people on disability. These are the

beliefs and perspectives that the authors, whose literary works I analyse in this study could have been exposed to, which, in turn, informed their works.

2.7 Beliefs and perspectives of the Shona people on disability

The African Child Policy Forum (2014) cites common beliefs about the causes of childhood disability as sin or promiscuity of the mother, an ancestral curse or demonic possession. Beliefs differ depending on how disability was acquired. Someone born with a physical disability is likely to experience greater bias than a person who later in life acquires disability through an accident and those who acquire a disability during military service are likely to be honoured provided it is a physical disability (Makamure, 2017). With mental disabilities, things are different. Disability in this form is always associated with sin or evil spirits.

Among the Shona people, apart from taboos, folktales and proverbs discussed above, several beliefs have contributed to negative attitudes and discrimination against people with disabilities. In Zimbabwe numerous mythical beliefs are associated with disability; an example is that of a general belief that a pregnant woman should not look at a disabled person for doing so will result in her giving birth to a baby with a disability. Hence, pregnant women according to Shona custom are required to spit on their tummies if they meet someone with a disability in order to avoid giving birth to a baby with a disability (Shava, 2008). Chimedza and Peters (2001) narrate how one head of a certain school dismissed a woman who wanted her child with a disability to be enrolled in school. The head shouted at the woman saying:

Are you crazy? That a disabled child very deformed... In this school, I have twelve female teachers who are of childbearing age. Now suppose they get married and they get pregnant and they see your child each day all twelve of them will give birth to babies with disabilities. How will I explain myself? It will be on my conscience that I admitted your child and caused the disability of children of the twelve teachers. (Chimedza & Peters, 2001 p. 143)

Such beliefs result in negative attitudes towards people living with disabilities. Such attitudes and behaviour are against the principles of *Vumunhu*.

Chimhenga and Musarurwa (2011) argue that the birth of a child with a disability is not welcome for it brings a lot of emotional stress to family members because of the stigma associated with such a condition. Zindi (1977) and Kisanji (1995) explain this in terms of the tendency of associating disability with evil and witchcraft. This negative belief leads to limited social acceptance of children with disabilities especially by the father, paternal

relatives as well as the local community who in most cases blame the mother. Thus, Shava (2008) and Choruma observed that families are often divided by the birth of a baby with a disability often leading to divorce.

The general assumption among the Shona people is that any woman who gives birth to a baby with a disability is associated with sin, which can be either prostitution, witchcraft or other evil activity. Hartley et al. (2005) (cited in Makamure, 2017, p. 31) argue that having sexual intercourse during pregnancy was taboo and was believed to cause the child to be born with a disability. Thus, the man and his relatives in most cases disown the baby with a disability especially when there is no family history of disability. Therefore, in most cases children with disabilities are raised by single mothers, the mothers get divorced after giving birth to children with disabilities. Such negative attitudes towards disability are a result of misunderstandings and lack of knowledge about disability and its causes that exist among Shona people (Choruma, 2006). Choruma further asserts that disability is still an issue surrounded by myths and as such, persons with disabilities continue to be marginalised and treated as different others in society.

According to Gelfand (1973), in Shona thought, the good man (*munhu chaiye*) is the normal person, Garland-Thomson's normate and he owes his normality to his parents, but mainly to his spirit elders who are the ancestors (*vadzimu*). The Shona people strongly believe in ancestors who are the deceased relatives that act as guardian spirits for the living members. The responsibility of the ancestors is to watch over the living members in their everyday lives. As guardians of the family tradition, the ancestors provide fortune as well as punishing those that break accepted traditions (Taringa, 2006). Thus, they act as intermediaries between God and man. Anyone who disrespects the spirit elders may become cursed and rendered abnormal in some way or other when spirit elders remove their protecting influence (Gelfand, 1973). This assertion suggests that in Shona thought, disability can be punishment for failing to respect spirit elders and that having a disability is abnormal and that someone with a disability is not normal. Despite saying this, Gelfand (1973) acknowledges that it is not true to say that the normal is good and the abnormal is bad. However, the challenge is that society cannot fully benefit from those it considers abnormal, for example in Shona thought a person who fails to conceive is viewed as having a disability and is considered abnormal for they cannot fulfill a basic social duty of reproduction.

According to Gelfand (1973), this inability is not always attributed to the influence of spirits but may come because of an act of God that is like madness or the affliction of one with speech impairment. In relation to the above Bourdillon (1987, p. 178) says, “A barren woman or a woman whose children die young is often suspected of witchcraft because witches are known to be fond of eating human flesh especially that of children.” Therefore, people suspect that the barren woman or a woman whose children die young deliberately kills them for purposes of witchcraft. Thus, the barren woman is considered as being responsible for her disability, the belief is she feeds on the babies before they are born. Such beliefs play a big role in influencing negative attitudes about those who are barren.

Choruma (2006), Shava (2008) and Mupedziswa (1988) allude to several beliefs on the causes of disability. Firstly, the Shona people associate disability with witchcraft. This means that they believe disability is a result of witchcraft, and witches, evil spirits or enemies inflict disability on individuals. Makamure (2017, p. 23) asserts that disability is blamed on “jealous witches who do not want to see certain families having able-bodied children”. In line with this view Shava (2008), Chimedza and Peters (2000) and Kisanji (1995) proclaim that since time immemorial disability was viewed as a form of punishment by some ancestral spirits (*vadzimu*) unhappy with the family or a result of bewitchment by family enemies. This follows the traditional/ religious/ or moral model of disability discussed earlier in this chapter. This has contributed to negative attitudes towards people with disabilities and has resulted in their marginalisation.

Makamure (2017) says among the Shona there are three types of disability (in the Shona language, disability is called *Urema*). The first type of disability is that one has from birth (*urema hwekuzvarwa nahwo*). This type of disability is a result of God's work. The assumption is that God is the creator and so he is responsible for all creation disability or not. However, this belief is in most cases accompanied by the superstition that God brings disability to human beings as punishment for their evil deeds committed by parents or elders of someone born with a disability (Choruma, 2008). The second type of disability is that which is believed to be a result of witchcraft. This is a disability that comes after one has been bewitched which is known as *urema hwekuroiwa*. Evil spirits witches and enemies are held responsible for this type of disability. *Urema hwekukuvara* (disability because of injury) is the third type of disability. In most cases, this type of disability is a result of accidents. In this context, evil spirits may also be held responsible for the accidents. As already pointed

out, among the Shona people *urema hwekukuvvara* (disability caused by accident) is often not as discriminated against as *urema hwekuzvarwa nahwo*. One who acquires disability as a result of an accident is likely to face less discrimination than one who was born with a disability (Makamure, 2017). The argument is that no one is expected to be born with a disability, anyone born with a disability is abnormal hence there is a reason for that. However, this is going to be interrogated in this study.

The analysis of the ChiShona types of disability by Makamure (2017) leads us to the conclusion that according to the Shona people disability is caused by witchcraft, accidents or God at times inflicts disability on human beings. Thus, Makamure (2017) and Choruma (2003) agree on the causes of disability as perceived by the Shona people. This discussion shows that the Shona people largely hold negative beliefs about disability. Because of the negative beliefs people tend to stare at people with disabilities, they express horror, anxiety, distaste, hostility, and they show denigrating behaviour towards people with disabilities (Shava, 2008). These negative attitudes further handicap people with disabilities and eventually they are discriminated against, isolated and regarded as the different 'other' who are marginalised.

In Shona traditional belief, there are burial and post burial rituals and rites that are performed when an individual dies. However, if a person with a disability dies, these post burial rituals and rites are not performed for fear that conducting these ceremonies will bring back the bad spirit (bad because of the disability) that was attached to the dead person (Eide et al, 2014). As if this is not enough all the dead man's possessions will be buried together with the dead man. This is done to ensure that there is no contamination from the dead man's residue. Such a scenario paints a very negative attitude towards disability. The impression created by such myths and beliefs is that nothing good can come out of disability and this way people with disabilities continue to be marginalised and viewed as the different 'other'. This is contrary to *Vumunhu* which requires respect for all people regardless of their physical or mental status.

2.8 Forms of Disability

Given that among the thrusts of this research is explaining how disability is represented in ChiShona novels and plays as well as ChiShona writers' perceptions of disability, I deem it necessary to discuss forms in which disability manifests itself. This puts into perspective the

discussion of different forms of disability that emerge from ChiShona novels and plays, and the perceptions held by the authors of these literary works.

In his discussion of disability, Makamure (2017, p. 30) identifies seven forms recognised among the Shona. These include *upofu* (blindness); *mbeveve* (inability to talk but can produce sound) *chimumumu* (inability to talk and cannot produce any sound); *matsi* (cannot hear but can talk), *mhetamakumbo* (crippled – unable to use limbs); *kurwara nepfungwa*, *upengo* or *upenzi* (mental illness). *Kurwara nepfungwa*, *upengo* and *upenzi* are conditions that affect an individual's ability to reason. Mental illness is a form of disability where someone who has been living a normal life develops an illness that causes him or her to behave in unpredictable and 'unreasonable' ways (White, 1988). Another form of disability is *usope* (albinism). Someone with *usope* is called *musope* (albino) and the noun *musope* portrays a wrong notion about albinism. The prefix /mu-/ suggests albinism is a race yet it is only a condition (Sande 2019). Other terms that mean the same as albino are *jwechwe*, which is from the *Ndau* dialect, *murungudunhu*, *murungudondo*, *ngau* or *gufu*. All these terms are negative, they are sarcastic and are meant to reduce or downgrade the status of those living with albinism. For instance, *murungudunhu* and *murungudondo* suggest a false white man or an artificial white man. This shows lack of respect for the person with albinism.

The intensity of disability determines one's acceptance or rejection in Shona society. Those who can contribute to communal activities are likely to be accepted more than those who are not able to contribute something. Those that are not able to contribute meaningfully are looked down upon by society and are regarded as abnormal (Makamure, 2014). While Makamure (2017) discusses seven forms of disability as highlighted above I am going to add *ngomwa* (barrenness and impotence) to the list. Impotence is being sterile, and barrenness is failing to conceive. Chataika (cited in Lipenga, 2014, p. 16) is of the view that definitions of disability depend on a country's perspective on disability. In Zimbabwe and some African countries, impotence and barrenness are forms of disability (Gelfand, 1973; Lipenga, 2014).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter defined terms and reviewed literature that is related to the research topic. The chapter looked at *Vumunhu* as a theoretical framework that guides this study as well as theories and models that explain disability. In reviewing the literature that is related to this

study, the chapter adopted a funnel approach in discussing contemporary studies on disability by Western scholars, African scholars and Zimbabwean scholars as well as the historical background of disability. The chapter further examined beliefs and perspectives of the Shona people concerning disability as these shade light on how the Shona peoples view and handle disability. The ChiShona folktales and taboos as children's literature were reviewed to explain what they communicate about disability. Proverbs as an aspect of language were discussed to explore what they communicate about disability. While the Shona people encourage positive attitudes towards disability, negative attitudes are prevalent among them as conveyed /communicated in the ChiShona proverbs and taboos. These negative attitudes emanate from the Shona people's beliefs and perspectives about disability. The next chapter is going to dwell on the research methods used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter reviewed literature related to this study which is on the representation of disability in ChiShona novels and plays. Its focus was on establishing what existing literature on the representation of people with disabilities covered. The intention was to enable me to locate this study in existing bodies of knowledge. The discussion enabled the current study to identify a research gap in ChiShona literature and disability studies. This chapter on research methodology maps out the data gathering technics, methods of data analysis and sampling procedures used. The chapter outlines the research methods used to respond to the research objectives and research questions underpinning this study. In terms of chronological presentation, the discussion starts with an engagement of the meaning of literary analysis, proceeding to document analysis, critical discourse analysis, translation which encompasses definition as well as types of translation, and finally, the option for literal translation ending with the conclusion. The chapter explains literary analysis as the most appropriate approach given that the content that needs to be interrogated is in ChiShona novels and plays. By virtue of this study being a literary analysis, this chapter argues that document analysis, critical discourse analysis and the translation method are the best methods to use in this study as, through the analysis and interpretation of texts, they yield the views on how disability is represented in ChiShona novels, and plays, factors that shape the attitudes of these authors towards disability and also reveal why these authors employ characters with disabilities in their works. The methods were ideal for data gathering, data interpretation and analysis as they engaged the literary texts that are discussed in this study. Literary analysis, therefore, enabled the study to unpack the contents of the texts in a manner that highlighted the treatment of disability issues and persons with disabilities and determine whether this was in line with the theoretical framework of *Vumunhu* which guided this study. *Vumunhu* was therefore the lens through which the sources were examined.

3.2 Understanding Literary analysis

This study is a literary analysis research which means it is research that has to do with letters and involves a discussion of texts. Henry (2016, para.1) posits that “a literary analysis is an opinion-based type of essay that makes a point about a work of literature” which in this

context are ChiShona novels and ChiShona plays that articulate disability. He goes on to argue, “Typically, a literary analysis makes a point about a literary work, then supports that point by discussing the work’s [literary] elements” such as ‘irony, symbolism, point of view’, main themes and implied ideas that may not be within the literature itself” (ibid, para. 1). Analysing these literature elements will result in forming opinions about a literature text. Thus, through literary analysis, this study developed opinions about disability representation in the selected ChiShona novels and plays that were analysed. This involved reading and analysing the selected ChiShona novels and plays in order to form an opinion about what they communicated about disability. The texts were then used to support the formed or established opinions. The study then presented the opinions from these literary works as well as supporting them with evidence from the primary sources which in this context are selected ChiShona novels and plays and secondary sources which are books or articles that discuss the primary sources. In doing so, this study presents an argument about how and why authors of the above-mentioned texts handle or present disability. What all this means is that a literary analysis goes beyond what is found in the primary source, (or what is found in the selected ChiShona novels and plays about disability). Biscontini, (2019) explains that primary sources are merely the beginning meant to bolster an inferred opinion. Accordingly, literary analysis focuses on teasing out novel insights from a text.

As argued above, the thrust of literary analysis is to transcend what is written in a piece of literature text. Indeed, Stolyarov II (2005, para. 6) discussing literary analysis says:

The three-pronged purpose of literary analysis [is]—to discover the author’s basic premises, to attain individual value from the literary work, and to derive from it knowledge concerning the universal human condition.

In this way, literary analysis enables me “to fully grasp the core abstractions which an author has bestowed upon his work” (Stolyarov II, 2005, para. 1). By engaging literary analysis, the study interrogated why a piece of literature was written. Informed by Stolyarov (2005) this study was aware that as authors produce literary works, they present a set of premises, and are guided by a set of assumptions that underlie their work. They use the work of literature as a means to communicate the premises and the conclusions therefrom to their readers (Stolyarov II, 2005). Moreover, usually, authors when writing have their own reasons for the manner they present their works. Therefore, through engaging in literary analysis, which involves “a deliberate, targeted, rational treatment of the text” (Stolyarov II, 2005, para 6) this study established selected ChiShona authors’ choices and significance of their work. Through literary analysis, the current study developed arguments based on the authors’ use of

ChiShona language. The artists' texts were used to defend the formed arguments. The advantage of literary analysis was that the study was made to reflect on how and why selected ChiShona novels and plays were written and this enabled me to explore deeper into these literary texts by examining and evaluating aspects of the texts in order to get a better understanding of what the authors intended to communicate (Biscontinini, 2019). Thus, literary analysis in this study brought new ideas about disability that may not be explicitly articulated in the selected ChiShona literary works.

Having defined literary analysis and clarifying what it involves, it was imperative for the study to spell out the research methods that go hand in hand with literary analysis. This research used document analysis, critical discourse analysis and the translation method. In literary analysis, data collection, data analysis/interpretation and data presentation were not distinct stages, the three stages occurred concurrently. As I was collecting data, I was also analysing it as well as giving meaning to disability representation that manifested in the selected ChiShona novels and plays. It was within the context of literary analysis that this research engaged in document analysis as a research method for data collection.

3.2.1 Document Analysis

The nature of this study's primary sources as dictated by the research objectives and research questions which require an exploration of literary text (the selected ChiShona novels and plays) which are documents compelled me to use document analysis. Document analysis was seen as one of the most appropriate methods to be used in carrying out literature-based research. In this research document analysis was used as a primary method of data collection. Selected ChiShona novels and plays that articulate disability were read. In this context document analysis yielded quotations or excerpts that were analysed to deduce meaning from disability issues articulated in the mentioned ChiShona texts. Thus, together with the selected ChiShona novels and plays secondary sources like newspaper articles, official documents, press releases, radio and television programmes, scripts, public records and books are catered for in document analysis (Bowen, 2009). The purpose of these secondary sources was to elaborate on disability issues raised in the primary sources. Thus, in line with Bowen (2009) who argues that when data is brought together from many sources there is more trustworthiness in findings, data from primary sources were triangulated with data from secondary sources to ensure the credibility of findings.

Document analysis is a form of research in which documents are analysed and interpreted as I derive and try to make sense of available documents. Bowen (2009, p. 27) explains document analysis as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic ... material”. In this study, this research method required that documents in the form of primary (ChiShona novels and Plays) and secondary sources be examined and interpreted in order to bring out the meanings attached to disability issues, gain some understanding of how characters with disabilities were represented and why they were depicted that way by the authors of ChiShona novels and plays. The procedure entailed finding, selecting, appraising and synthesising data on disability and characters with disabilities contained in primary and secondary documents. As a research method document analysis was used to “examine specific documents in detail”, in this case, ChiShona novels and plays. The study took heed of and agreed with Hard, Lee, and Dockett, (2018, p. 6) who argue that, approaches “to document analysis generally attend to the content of documents—such as the words, images, ideas or patterns contained therein”. These were thoroughly engaged in this study.

In agreement with Hard, Lee and Dockett (2018), Bowen, (2009, p. 28) argues that document analysis yields data extracts, that are subsequently structured into main themes and “case examples specifically through content analysis”. Its focus is on the “presence of specific words or phrases”, identification of “key terms and their frequency of use” (Hard, Lee, & Dockett, 2018, p. 6). Given that document analysis does not involve the use of questionnaires, interviews or human subjects, I was the key research instrument. I was aware that document analysis is “both reflective and cyclical, encouraging flexibility in ‘locating, identifying, retrieving and analysing’ documents and supporting movement between each of these phases in the ‘search for contexts, underlying meanings, patterns, and processes’” (Hard, Lee, & Dockett, 2018, p. 6). It was this flexibility and development of meaning from texts that convinced me that document analysis was one of the best approaches to engage in this study.

Furthermore, document analysis was a research method that I found to be efficient and effective in gathering data because some of the ChiShona novels and plays as well as commentaries on disability were readily available and easy to access. The documents were manageable and in line with Bowen’s (2009) contention, I found that document analysis was far more cost-effective and less time-consuming than other methods that would have involved

human subjects. Documents, such as ChiShona novels and plays were a constant data source that were read and reviewed several times and they remained unchanged. This means that documents such as novels and plays are reliable sources of information as they cannot be influenced by the researcher or the research process (Bowen, 2009). Documents already contained data and my task was simply to choose what was usable to the present study, information was already there, and I took it as it was and there were no chances that it could be altered.

However, I was aware of Bowen's (2009) caution that there are certain points to consider when utilising document analysis. These included the fact that documents were produced with different agendas from that of the researcher and because of this they may lack detail and at times detail may be inadequate to address research questions and objectives of the study. Thus, I was cognisant that documents required analytical skills whenever one is using them to cater for such challenges. However, as is argued by Bowen (2009) with these points in mind, the advantages of document analysis overshadowed the number of challenges that may arise in its use.

The initial task in using document analysis was to look for ChiShona novels and plays that have characters with disabilities or that had a disability as a theme. This means that I had to engage in extensive reading in order to identify and come up with the relevant sample of these texts. The first task, therefore, was to identify authors whose works are regarded as authoritative and trend-setting in ChiShona literature. These are works that are likely to have a lasting impact on society. For example, I began by reading summaries of novels that were written by Kahari (1995). I also read novels and plays written by Chidyausiku (1970), Runyowa (1974), Chakaipa (1963), Kuimba (1976), Mungoshi (1980), as well as Mabasa (2000a & b). This was done to identify those works that articulate disability. This initially entailed even reading ChiShona texts that had no themes related to disability. Therefore, as I read, I noted down the presence of characters with disabilities in the identified ChiShona novels and plays as well as taking note of whether characters with disabilities appear as major or minor characters. The exercise also involved scrutinising how often characters with disabilities appeared in these ChiShona texts, their fictional space as well as noting how they interacted with other characters that do not have disabilities as well as considering which gender was mostly ascribed to characters with disabilities or which feature more frequently in these texts.

After a meaningful selection of a sample of ChiShona novels and plays that articulate disability I then engaged in intensive reading of the texts. As I read I took note of the authors' attitudes towards disability and characters with disabilities by way of analysing names and roles that are given to characters with disabilities. I also ascertained why authors include characters with disabilities in their works which in this context are selected ChiShona novels and plays. I also took cognisance of the self-esteem of characters with disabilities in the studied ChiShona novels and plays as well as paying attention to how disability is depicted in the selected literary works.

After an intensive reading of the selected ChiShona novels and plays that articulate disability, I then began to analyse them one by one, by way of picking up phrases, sentences, metaphors, themes and any other expression that gave or suggested meaning to a disability. These excerpts were thoroughly examined or analysed for meaning in relation to disability. The meanings from the extracted excerpts were collected as data. Patterns in the collected data were checked and they were coded into themes which were then used to address the research questions. The patterns were coded in line with the research questions and these were used to present the argument with regards to disability representation in selected ChiShona novels and plays and how the representation related to *Vumunhu*. Document analysis together with critical discourse analysis was employed to give meaning to the extracted excerpts.

3.2.2 Critical Discourse analysis

From the onset, it is important to note that Gee (2001, p. 1) regards discourse analysis as both:

a theory and a method for studying how the details of language get recruited, 'on site,' to 'pull off' specific social activities and social identities (memberships in various social groups, cultures, and institutions).

As a method, critical discourse analysis facilitates an enthusiastic evaluation of what is meant when language is used to describe and explain phenomena. Fairclough, (1995, p.132) describes the agenda for discourse analysis as:

To systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, (b) wider and social-cultural structures, relations and processes to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggle over power.

Therefore, texts and language communication are considered in their social context. They are both shaped and informed by wider processes within society. I was compelled by this interplay between texts and language and the social context to examine the depiction of disability and characters with disability in ChiShona novels and plays taking into consideration that authors often write in the context of their social experiences.

In a similar argument to the one proposed by Fairclough, (1995) above, Vaara (2015, para. 6) presents critical discourse analysis as a methodological approach that, “allows one to examine the constitutive role that discourses play in contemporary society.” He further argues that because its origins lie in applied linguistics, it stresses the pivotal role of texts and their analysis more than other approaches. Critical discourse analysis as explained by Vaara (2015, para. 6):

sees discourse as both socially conditioned and socially constitutive. It is this latter ‘constructive’ or ‘per-formative’ effect of discourse that makes it a central object of study for social science. Accordingly, language not only reflects ‘reality’ but is the very means of constructing and reproducing the world as we experience it.

Critical discourse analysis was therefore vital in this study which focuses on the scrutiny of the language used by authors of selected ChiShona novels and plays with regards to disability. Through critical discourse analysis I became aware that texts are products of authors influenced by society, but the same authors also influence society through those who read and whose opinions are influenced by the texts (Van Dijk, 1998). Thus, as a research method critical discourse analysis enabled me to bring out the views and perspectives on disability by authors as they are shaped by society as well as showing how these views influence readers of these particular texts. Critical discourse analysis became essential in this study as it, “aims at revealing taken-for-granted assumptions on social, societal, political and economic spheres, and examines power relationships between various kinds of discourses and actors” (Vaara, 2015, para. 7). Van Dijk (1998, p. 467) posits that critical discourse analysis concentrates “primarily on social problems”. More importantly, it, “attempts to make visible social phenomena that often pass unnoticed” (Vaara, 2015, para. 8) just as this study seeks to expose views on disability that often go unnoticed in selected ChiShona novels and plays. Indeed, in his discussion of critical discourse analysis as a research tool, Janks (1997, p. 329) says critical discourse analysis is concerned with questions such as:

How is the text positioned, and how is it positioning the reader? Whose interests are served with this positioning? Whose interests are negated? What are the consequences of this positioning?

Janks (1997, p. 26) goes on to argue, “Where analysis seeks to understand how discourse is implicated in relations of power, it is called critical discourse analysis.” This is confirmed by Van Dijk (1998, p. 252) when he argues that critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse concerned with “the way social power, abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context”. The importance of the use of critical discourse analysis in this study lies in that it coheres with *Vumunhu* when it seeks to “understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 252). Furthermore, the subject of this research fits very well into the three dimensions of discourse analysis as explicated by Fairclough (cited in Janks, 1997, p. 329) which are:

1. the object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts);
2. the process by which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects; and
3. the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes.

According to Fairclough (cited in Janks, 1997, p. 329) critical discourse analysis comprises of three different levels of analysis, which are related to the three dimensions, that is:

1. text analysis (description),
2. processing analysis (interpretation), and
3. Social analysis (explanation).

The advantage of Fairclough’s approach is that an author can use any or all these three entry points in the analysis of texts. Indeed, Janks (1997, p. 329) argues:

It does not matter which kind of analysis one begins with if in the end they are all included and are shown to be mutually explanatory. It is in the interconnections that the analyst finds the interesting patterns and disjunctions that need to be described, interpreted and explained.

Thus, this study was guided by the perspective of *Vumunhu*. I noted that critical discourse analysis does not view texts as neutral but as having certain orientation or ideology, the latter being, to use Van Dijk’s (1998, p. 8 cited in Vaara, 2015, para 7) views the “basis of the social representations shared by members of a group”. Vaara (2015) points out that as a methodology, critical discourse analysis points out that we cannot comprehend discourses and specific texts without engaging the socio-historical and other contexts. In other words, critical discourse analysis calls for a holistic approach to textual analysis. For this study, this was important as it meant analysing texts from the perspective of *Vumunhu* trying to

understand how and why authors of selected ChiShona novels and plays presented disability and people with disabilities in the manner they did given their contexts.

Indeed, Vaara (2015, para 10) argues:

All CDA scholars also underscore the importance of intertextuality that is seeing specific texts or communications as parts of longer chains of texts. In simple terms, this means that the meaning created in a particular discursive act can hardly be understood without a consideration of what ‘common knowledge’ is or what has been said before. This issue of intertextuality is also related to the broader question of interdiscursivity, that is how specific discourse and genres are interlinked and constitute particular ‘orders-of-discourse’ that is ensembles of relationships between discourses in particular social contexts. These orders-of- discourse can be seen as the discursive reflections of social order, and thus help to understand the discursive aspects of social structures.

This, therefore, meant that in this study various selected texts had to be compared as they were analysed to establish common knowledge. In terms of appropriate empirical materials for critical discourse analysis, Vaara points to any kind of textual materials such as speeches, documents, conversations, and media texts. For this study, the bulk of the texts that constitute primary sources were in the ChiShona language. This, therefore, made it imperative for me to also use the translation method in this study since the language of presentation is English.

3.2.3 The translation method

As the research is grounded in selected ChiShona novels and plays that articulate disability, the literature analysed was authored in the ChiShona language. Data presentation and analysis entailed the use of quotations that were extracted from these ChiShona novels and plays. Such a scenario compelled me to employ some translation methods and procedures to make sense of these quotations translated from the source language text which is ChiShona to the target language text which is English. (A source language is a language you are translating from and a target language is a language you are translating into) (Stacey, 2014, para. 3). This was in accordance with Newmark (1988b, p. 81) who outlined the difference between translation methods and translation procedures as follows, “While translation methods relate to whole texts translation procedures are used for sentences and smaller units of language.” This study therefore engaged both the translation methods and translation procedures. However, it was imperative that I explained the translation methods, principles and procedures so as to justify the options adopted in this thesis. The discussion also included the limitations of translation. The first task, therefore, was to define the word translation.

3.2.3.1 What is translation?

Newmark (1988, p. 5) defines translation as “rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text”. According to Nida and Taber (1982, p.12) translation is defined as reproducing in the target language “the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style”. For Bassnett (1991, p. 2) translation is rendering of a source-language text into a target language text so as to ensure that first and foremost:

the surface meaning of the two languages will be approximately similar and secondly that the structures of the source language will be preserved as closely as possible but not so loosely that the target language structures will be seriously distorted.

Another definition is by Hartman and Stock (1976, p. 242) who in the *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* state, “Translation is a process or result of converting information from one language into another.” Hartman and Stock go on to explain that translation aims to reproduce as accurately as possible all the grammatical and lexical features of the source language by finding equivalents in the target language and at the same time all factual information contained in the source language text must be retained in the translation. It was this faithful rendition of the source message that convinced me that the translation method was also appropriate for this study as it enabled the maintenance of the meaning intended by the authors of ChiShona novels and plays discussed in this study.

Thus, Hartman and Stock (1976), Bassnett (1991) and Nida and Taber (1982) agree with regards to the definition of the word translation. Definitions by these authors emphasise translation as entailing the maintenance of form and meaning as reflected in the source-language text. What this means is that after reading and understanding a text or a quotation in a source language text which in this case are ChiShona novels and plays, I had to understand what the source text writer desired to put across, then had to convert the source language text into English the target language in such a manner that the form and meaning in the source language text were preserved and that the equivalent impression as in the source language text was maintained in the target language. Thus, the interpretation was such that it carried meaning to the target language in a way the source language writer planned it to be in the source-language text. Thus, there was a need to maintain a sense of balance between

renditions from the source language to the target language (Bassnet, 1991). Balance between form and meaning should be created. To ensure balance existed after translating a quotation I asked myself if the product of my translation was what the source language says and whether the meaning in the target language text was similar to that of the source language text and whether the translation made sense to the target language reader. For Stacey (2014) translation is intricate as languages manifest the values, heritage and thinking of communities that originated them and this differs greatly from culture to culture. Stacey further explains that translation goes beyond replacing words using context and cultural understanding. It is a complex process in which the human brain decodes the import of words, and phrases in a sentence and attempt to establish the precise encoding in the target language. According to Ordudari (2010) achieving balance is not easy due to cultural differences obtaining across different communities or cultural groupings. Concerning this argument, Ordudari (2010, para. 1) argues:

If languages were just a classification for a set of general or universal concepts it would be easy to translate from any source language to a target language. Furthermore, under the circumstances, the process of learning a second language could be much easy than it actually is.

Ordudari (2010) further elucidates that the differences between the source language and the target language and the differences in their cultures render translation a real challenge. He cites form, meaning, style, literary devices such as proverbs and idioms as problematic factors in translation. The major challenge is that it is not always possible to have equivalence in the target language, hence, the idea of a loss and gain in translation.

In support of his position Ordudari, (2010, para. 2) cites Culler who believes that languages are not taxonomies and conceptions of two languages may be completely different as every language speaks and classifies the world differently. Furthermore, languages do not just label these categories, they articulate their own. From what Culler says, it can be concluded that one of the troublesome problems of translation is the differences among languages, the greater the disparity between the source language and the target language, the tougher it is to render from a source language to a target language. This is typical of translations from ChiShona to English. It was challenging to translate figurative speech, proverbs, idioms, other parts of speech as well as other literary devices. It was in this context that I saw it necessary to discuss the translation method and procedures that I employed in this study.

It is important to note that the problem with translation emanates from the fact that languages are developed to express certain cultures and these cultures in most cases may not share the same images, values or philosophy. Given such a scenario, balance is not easy to strike because anything that is altered in the translation process can tip the scale in the direction of either the source language or a target language. The result is a loss or gain in the translation product. A gain in translation occurs when the translator uses a stylistic device in the target language, a device that did not exist in the source-language text. A loss exists when the target text fails to capture the stylistic device used in the source language text. About this notion, Nida (1975), posits that all translations involve loss of information, the addition of information and twisting of information. This leads me to the discussion of the notion of equivalence in translation.

3.2.3.2 The Idea of Equivalence in Translation

Yinhua (2014, p. 169) posits that translation is “a kind of cross-linguistic, cross-cultural, and cross-social communication” whose thrust is to attain similarity between the source language text and the target language text. To Stacey (2014), to achieve equivalence, one needs to familiarise themselves with both cultures. Furthermore, equivalence calls for a profound comprehension of the two and as well as the language, something which is not easy. Thus, in the translation process, the translator should try his level best to convey all the contents of the source text into the target text. To Yinhua, translation equivalence is a requirement as well as a guiding principle of translation. Equivalence is a necessity in translation because it is implied in all the definitions of translation that have been given at the beginning of this section. In line with this notion Snell-Hornby (1988) argues that definitions of the translation may be considered as variations of the concept of equivalence in translation and this suggests that equivalence is a requirement in translation. Nida and Taber (1982) posit that since time immemorial translation assisted those who did not know a foreign language to understand source texts. Thus, translation means communication and as such to ensure effective communication equivalence should be achieved. However, the concept of equivalence in translation cannot be viewed as meaning sameness. Equivalence in translation holds a different meaning. Yinhua (2011, p. 169) posits that from a philosophical perspective there are no totally identical things. In relation to this notion, Nida (1986, p. 60) says:

There are no two stones alike, no flowers the same and no two identical people. Although the structures of the DNA in the nucleus of their cells may be the same, such persons nevertheless differ as a result of certain developmental factors. No two sounds are exactly alike, and even the same person pronouncing the same words will

never utter them in an absolutely identical manner... No two words in any two languages are absolutely identical in meaning. As for the entire text, it is simply impossible to transfer all the messages of the original text into the target text.

This suggests that in nature, no two words in any two languages are absolutely identical in meaning. By nature, each language is unique in terms of phonology, grammar, vocabulary, ways of indicating experiences and each language reflects its own culture. Therefore, any translation contains a certain degree of loss or alteration of the meaning of the source language text (Newmark, 1981, p. 7). Thus, outright sameness of meaning between the source text and the target text is neither possible nor attainable (Yinhua, 2011). Broeck (cited in Panou, 2013, p.3) questions the possibility of measuring the equivalent effect when no texts can have similar outcomes or can produce similar responses in two dissimilar cultures in varied periods.

Yinhua (2011, p. 169) additionally contends that the idea of equivalence in translation is sometimes misrepresented by equating equivalence in translation to sameness. He explains that this is why some scholars reject its validity and necessity. Jacobson (1959 /2000, p. 114) addressing the controversial issue of equivalence in meaning between words in different languages suggests that there can be no full equivalence between two words. By saying this he is not claiming that translation is impossible but identifies the differences in the structure and vocabulary of languages.

To explain the validity of equivalence in translation, theorists came up with different types of equivalence that can be achieved in translation. Nida (1964, p. 159) suggests two types of equivalence, “formal” and “dynamic” equivalence. In formal equivalence the target texts resemble the source text very closely both in form and content whilst dynamic equivalence message in the source language is conveyed to the target text as naturally as conceivable.

Newmark (1981, p. 39) substitutes Nida’s (1982) terms of formal and dynamic equivalence with “semantic” and “communicative” translations. According to Newmark (ibid) semantic translation focuses on meaning whilst communicative translation focuses on effect. Semantic translation aims at maintaining and retaining the characteristics of the source text as much as possible. Communicative translation is interested in the needs of the readers and tries to satisfy them as much as they would if they had read the original text.

In order to justify the need for translation equivalence, one needs to understand the exact meaning of the word equivalence in translation. Yinhu, (2011, p. 169) says while in mathematics, “equivalence indicates a relationship of absolute equality that involves guaranteed reversibility”, as a word in the general vocabulary of English, it means – “of similar significance”. This means that the word equivalence as it is used in the English language generally as a common expression (Yinhua, 2011). In translation, equivalence cannot be understood in its mathematical sense, it can only be understood in its sense as a general word. Firth (cited in Yinhu, 2011, p. 169) confirms this assertion. Mathematical equivalence is not what is sought in translation especially when considering that translation involves two languages and that each language has its own uniqueness in “phonology, grammar, vocabulary”, ways of representing meaning and that language reflects culture.

Nida (1986) argues that any translation is capable of losing or distorting the meaning of the source language text. Thus, it is difficult to achieve complete sameness between a source-language text and the target language text. All that this points to is that equivalence in translation should not be taken to mean sameness; neither should it be understood in the Mathematical sense. Equivalence in translation should be regarded as a kind of resemblance that can be attained at “different linguistic levels and different degrees” (Yinhua, 2011, p. 169). Thus, equivalence to a certain extent or of certain degrees should be achieved in translation. Without it the translated text cannot be regarded as a successful translation of the original text. Accordingly, equivalence is a basic requirement and a necessity in translation and is the main problem of translation practice (Cartford, 1965, p. 21)

Thus, Newmark (1988) explains that the overriding purpose of any translation is to achieve equivalence which is to produce some understanding that is as close as possible on the readers of the translation as that attained by the readers of the original. This means that translation is possible but the translation product may not have a similar result as the original. According to Newmark (1981, p. 48) “equivalence effect” is the desired outcome “rather than the aim of any translation”. This suggests that absolute equivalence is not possible where a huge cultural gap exists between the source language text and (a) if the purpose of the SL text is to affect and the TL translation is to inform (or vice versa); (b) if there is a pronounced cultural gap between the SL and the TL text

Newmark (1988, p. 6) posits that while an acceptable interpretation is always conceivable, a good translator will not be content with a translation product, which implies that a translation can always be improved. For the present discussion, this implies that my translations of ChiShona excerpts from the selected ChiShona novels and plays to English may not be perfect, they can as well be improved because in translation good translators are never contented with their translations, they are always eager to extend their knowledge and improve their expressions or their translation products (Newmark, 1988). But I did my best to provide translations that are as close as possible to the original texts.

Nida (1964) argues that a translation should aim to make sense, maintain the spirit and character of the original text, possess an accepted and easy form of expression and elicit a comparable response. To Nida, these are the four basic requirements of translation and as a whole, they suggest that there should be some form of equivalence in meaning between the source language text and the target language text. For Pym (2010), there is nothing like a perfect equivalence between languages, equivalence is always assumed. Panou (2013, p. 5) posits that despite its shortcomings “equivalence is still one of the key definitory axes of translation since it functions as a reminder of the main problems a translator encounters during the process of translation”.

Jacobson (1966) and Newmark (1988) explain that at times meaning and form may be critical and in such cases, meaning must have priority over form or style. Nida (1964) expresses the same view that generally, translators take the same position that when there is no satisfactory translation meaning must have primacy over form or style. This was exactly what this study did whenever it encountered translation difficulties of this nature especially translation of culture-specific aspects. Some authors identify and describe different types of translation. These are what the chapter now proceeds to discuss.

3.2.3.3 Types of translation

Jacobson (1959, p. 234) describes three kinds of translation which are ‘intralingual’, ‘interlingual’ and ‘intersemiotic’. Intralingual translation is translation within the same language where the translator resorts to rewording and paraphrasing. The rewording can be from one dialect to another or from slang to literary language. Intersemiotic translation is a translation between sign systems and it involves changing from one type of sign or symbol to another and this can be from verbal to nonverbal or vice versa. Interlingual translation is a

translation between two languages and in this case, it was a translation from the source language ChiShona to English the target language. Interlingual translation was therefore the type of translation that I employed in this research.

Cartford (1965, p. 21) proposes two types of translations, which are “total or full translation” and “partial translation”. In total translation, the whole text is translated, and this means that every part of the source text is replaced by the target text material. In partial translation some parts of the source text are not translated, they are simply extracted and merged into the target text (Cartford, 1965, p. 21). I engaged partial translation in the present research for the aim was not whole texts but excerpts that provided the required data. Situations determined which type of translation was employed, for example, as I was translating the ChiShona quotations, names of characters and places were not translated because the norm is names of people and those of places cannot be translated hence partial translation in such situations came into play. With regards to this notion, Newmark (cited in Ordudari, 2010 p. 14) suggests that “normally, people’s first names and surnames are transferred, thus preserving nationality and assuming that their names have no connotations in the text”. Leppihalme (cited in Ordudari, 2010, p. 79) argues that when one considers retention of name, one can use the name as such, adding some guidance and can use the name with detailed explanations. For the present discussion, the names of characters were not translated but the contextual meaning of the names was explicated as a way of analysing disability representations in the literary works.

According to Larson (1998, p. 17), there are two main types of translation and these are “form-based translation” and “meaning-based translation”. The form-based translation attempts to follow the form of a source-language text and this type is known as a literal translation. The meaning-based translation makes every effort to communicate the meaning of the receptor language and this type of translation is called idiomatic translation. However, Larson explains that it is not easy to constantly translate idiomatically. There is room for a translator to express some parts of a translation in a natural form and another part literal translation may be employed. Thus, the two types of translations explicated by Larson (1988) were engaged in this research. Literal translation together with idiomatic translation was employed in this research because as Larson has indicated the two complement each other since form and meaning are the core elements of translation. This is echoed by Bassnett (1991) and Hartman and Stock (1976, p. 242) who say in order to have a meaningful translation product or to achieve balance in translation form and meaning should be catered

for. Maintaining form in translation is facilitated by the use of literal translation and as such, I move on to discuss literal translation. In opting for literal translation I was informed by Newmark's (1988, p. 76) observation that:

Literal translation is the first step in translation, and a good translator abandons a literal version only when it is plainly inexact or, in the case of a vocative or informative text, badly written.

3.2.3.4 Literal Translation

In this research, literal translation was used. Literal translation is a type of translation that caters to the form of the source language text. Literal translation is also known as direct translation or word-for-word translation. Ordudari, (2007, para. 13) presents literary translation as the process in which “the source language grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest target language equivalence but lexical words are translated singly out of context”. This type of translation is meant to ease the understanding of the reader for they will be able to follow the relationship between the source language text and the target language text. According to Newmark (1988, p. 69), “Literal translation ranges from one word to one word, ... group to group, ... collocation to collocation,... clause to clause ... sentence to sentence”. For Larson, (1988) this type of translation is functional in certain situations but cannot be used constantly. Thus, literal translation cannot be used for the translation of cultural bound concepts like idioms, proverbs, idiophones and figurative speech for it is not effective. This is why I opted to use literal translation in the engagement with ChiShona novels and plays in this study.

Zhongying (1994 cited in Ordudari, 2007, para. 15) posits that in China, it is agreed by many scholars “that one should translate literally, if possible, or appeal to free translation” to achieve an equivalent effect. In fact, Newmark (1988) argues that literal translation is the best for translating texts where the form is as important. UKEssays (November, 2018, para 13) posits that “literal translation is correct and should not be avoided if it secures referential” and reasonable equivalence to the original. Moreover, it is considered “the basic translation procedure both in communicative and semantic translations” (ibid, para.14). However, literal translation should not be used to translate source language general words for which there is no satisfactory one-to-one target language equivalence. It is under such circumstances that the study relied on meaning-based translation, sense to sense or free translation where I merely had to look for the contextual sense in the source language texts which are the novels

and plays under study and then render it to English the target-language text. This was also applicable to culturally specific concepts. In the case of proverbs and idioms, I looked for equivalents in English, the target language. If there was no equivalence in the target language I relied on the sense of an excerpt or adopted the idiomatic translation where the study provided an explanation or description in several words that were guided by the context of an excerpt from the novels and plays under study to ensure the meaning is rendered in the target language (Newmark, 1988b). The advantage of using idiomatic translation is that it gives room for the translation of proverbs and idioms. Munday (cited in Newmark, (1988b, p. 58) suggests that when dealing with proverbs and idioms equivalence is sought at the level of sense, not image and in this research, translation of proverbs and idioms was guided by this idea. By this suggestion, Munday is cognisant of the cultural differences that exist in languages.

Postan (2020, para. 1) posits that the main aim of the theory of translation has been to understand the languages and subject involved and then transfers the information into the target language. According to Postan (*ibid*, para 5), this is in agreement with Doletti who outlined the first theory of translation in 1540. He suggested three basic concepts behind all translations which are guided by the following rules; the translator must:

- comprehend perfectly the source language;
- be knowledgeable in the subject matter; and
- comprehend perfectly the target language (*ibid*, para. 5).

These rules are in agreement with the purpose of translation which is the rendering of the meaning of a document into a target language. If I had restricted myself to the grammar and form of the source language text the result would have been the production of condensed and ambiguous translations.

The current approach to translation theories emphasises that the predominant idea in translation today is to concentrate on content and meaning. Therefore, a thorough understanding of a source-language text is required in order to convey accurate information into the target language. The style of writing may be maintained but what is critical, or the main goal of translation is to transfer information from the source language to the target language. This was also put into consideration during the translation process. Having

discussed the various methods used in the study, the chapter now proceeds to discuss the sampling technique utilised in line with document analysis, critical discourse analysis and the translation method.

3.3 Sampling

Omachi (2017) asserts that in research, a sample is a group of people, objects or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement. Thus, a sample is representative of a larger population. According to the *Centre for Innovation in Research and Teaching*, a researcher cannot collect data from everyone in a population area or community. Therefore, a researcher will gather data from a sample or subset of the population. However, this is typical of an empirical study. The nature of the topic compels me to opt for purposive sampling based on the research questions. In this context the main research question being: *How is disability represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays*, implies as I had already indicated that I had to read several ChiShona novels and plays in order to establish those that articulate disability issues. This agrees with Magwa and Magwa (2017) who are of the view that in purposive sampling the researcher selects the cases to be included in her sample based on her own judgment of their typicality. Thus, I engaged thirteen ChiShona novels and four ChiShona plays that articulate disability as a theme or that have characters with disabilities. Of the thirteen novels, seven are of pre-colonial era and these include *Garandichauya* by Chakaipa (1963), *Karumekangu* by Chidyausiku (1970), *Makunun'unu Maodzamoyo* by Mungoshi (1970), *Pafunge* by Tsodzo (1972), *Kurumwa Nechekuchera* by Runyowa (1974), *Rurimi Inyoka* by Kuimba (1976) and *Chakafukidza Dzmba Matenga* by Mashiri (1977). The other six novels are of the post-independence era and they include *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* by Mukonoweshuro (1983), *Zvaida Kushinga* by Makari (1985), *Mapenzi* by Mabasa (1999), *Mwana Waamai* by Mujajati (2006), *Ndafa Here* by Mabasa (2008) and *Makaitei* by Mavesera (2014). As for the ChiShona plays, they are all post-independence and they are *Inongova Njakanjake* by Mungoshi (1980), *Ruvimbo* by Chingono (1983), *Ndinodawo Mwana* by Nyika (1983) and *Zinyekenyeke* by Mujajati, (2000). Coverage of the pre-colonial era up to the post-independence era is meant to show the problematic nature of the issue of disability as attitudes are not easy to stamp out. However, the number of the ChiShona novels and plays that I worked with was determined by the extent to which gathered data was enough (level of saturation) to ensure that the research objectives and questions were satisfactorily answered (Bowen, 2008). Thus, from these literary texts, I gathered data that was representative of the entire ChiShona novels and plays in Zimbabwe. In this context, sampling was necessary in

the sense that it brought the number of novels and plays to be analysed to a manageable size thereby enhancing the effectiveness and thoroughness of the analysis. Sampling was also important in that it was impractical to study all the ChiShona novels and plays because the scope would be too broad and effective exploration was going to be stifled.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The nature of this study was such that data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. As already pointed out I relied on document analysis, critical discourse analysis and translation. Document analysis was employed in analysing primary sources which in this case are the ChiShona novels and plays which articulate disability issues. The same method was applied when analysing secondary sources like texts on literary criticism, special education books, newspapers and legal documents that deal with disability issues. As Bowen (2009) argues, the analysis of documents includes the coding of content into themes that give shape to discussions in the text. It was the emerging themes that were used to structure the discussion that ensues in this research.

The use of both document analysis and critical discourse analysis was consistent with the sources. The purpose of secondary sources was to elaborate on disability issues raised in the primary sources. Thus, data from primary sources were triangulated with data from secondary sources to ensure the credibility of findings (Bowen, 2009). Critical discourse analysis as a method of data collection was applied when analysing ChiShona novels and plays that articulate disability. Discourse is a broad term which refers to numerous ways in which communication between people is achieved. Critical discourse analysis refers to a serious analysis of written or spoken communication. Critical discourse analysis is a methodology that facilitates an enthusiastic evaluation of what is meant when language is used to describe and explain. The agenda of discourse analysis is;

to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes to investigate how such practices events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggle over power (Fairclough, 1995, p. 132).

Thus texts should always be deliberated on in their social contexts as they both shape and are informed by wider processes within society. Through discourse analysis I engaged in critical reading to identify the author's purpose as well as pinpoint all the main ideas in a text.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research methodology giving a clear indication of the various aspects of literary analysis used in the study. The nature of this study's research objectives and research questions which revolve around the representation of disability in ChiShona novels and plays made it imperative that this research analyse primary and secondary texts. Document analysis was therefore unavoidable. Authors are historical beings located within historical periods and this means that they are more often than not influenced by their cultures and traditions and power relations. This made critical discourse analysis a very suitable tool to understand how and why disability is presented in the manner it is by different authors of ChiShona novels and plays. Given that most of the primary works analysed were written in the ChiShona language, the use of translation was critical to constructing a coherent discussion that fairly interpreted the works of the various authors. It was therefore necessary to discuss the translation method in this chapter. The next chapter focuses on the presentation of findings.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS: HOW IS DISABILITY REPRESENTED IN SELECTED CHISHONA NOVELS AND PLAYS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF *VUMUNHU*?

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses one of the critical research questions: How is disability represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*? In addressing this question, the chapter is divided into 6 sections. Section 4.1 focuses on the depiction of mental disability. Section 4.2 addresses the depiction of blindness while the depiction of speech impairment is discussed in section 4.3. In section 4.4 the discussion focuses on the depiction of disability in relation to marriage while section 4.5 discusses the depiction of barrenness. The chapter then explores the depiction of disability in relation to employment in section 4.6. In analysing, the study first provides a summary of the texts and then proceeds to examine the depiction of disability in these literary texts within the context of *Vumunhu*. Thus, an analysis of the depiction of disability ensues after a brief summary of a particular narrative or play in order to put the discussion into context. In addressing this question the analysis is guided by the theoretical framework of *Vumunhu*. The theory values the worthiness of every human being and calls for humane treatment of all beings regardless of their condition. This being the case the theory is instrumental in my analysis in that as a theory it guides me in assessing and evaluating how disability and characters with disabilities are depicted, how they are made to interact with other characters, how they are treated as human beings as well as noting how authors of the selected literary works confirm the humanity of such characters. As a theoretical framework, the theory of *Vumunhu* is instrumental in considering the depiction of disability against tenets of the theory. Are authors generous, hospitable, friendly, caring, and compassionate in their depiction of disability? The theory is a yardstick that guides me in explaining the depiction of disability in the selected texts. The chapter advances the argument that disability is underrepresented and depicted negatively in the selected literary works. Its depiction is to a large extent contrary to the attributes of *Vumunhu*. Furthermore, the authors fail to recognise the worthiness and dignity of characters with disabilities in their depiction of disability.

4.2 Depiction of Mental Disability

White (1988) defines mental illness as a situation where someone who has been living a normal life develops an illness that causes him or her to behave in unpredictable and perhaps ways considered as irrational by society. Mental illness or insanity is also referred to as “madness” by Viet-Wild (2006). She further explains that the word ‘madness’ has a variety of meanings, it can mean an agitated state of mind freezy, rage, rapture or recklessness. To Natali and Volpone (1980, p. 4) madness denotes a “wide range of experiences and behaviours” and has nowadays “no specific value”. The very notion of madness is transitory and unstable, as it is related to the understanding of a specific cultural historical context (p.5). Indeed Feder (1980) who explored literary representation of madness and characters with madness from ancient Greek myth and tragedy to contemporary poetry, fiction, and drama argues that the representation of madness in literature depends on and reflects the progress in the cultural assumptions and values of society in its understanding of madness, hence the varied representations in literature. Feder (1980, pp. xi-xii) posits that:

The connection among all these [forms of madness] is a concern - however primitive or sophisticated - with mind, with deviation of some norm or thought and feeling, whether as a threat, a challenge or a field of exploration which must yield revelation

Thus, from Feder (1980, pp. 4-5) the depictions of madness in any epoch also:

constitute a history of explorations of the mind in relation to itself, or other human beings, and to social and political institutions. The madman, like other people, does not exist alone. He both reflects and influences those involved with him. He embodies and symbolically transforms the values and aspirations of his family, his tribe, and his society, even if he renounces them, as well as their delusions, cruelty, and violence, even in his inner flight.

With reference, to the present study, this dovetails very well with the role of Hamundigoni in Mabasa (1999), *Mapenzi*.

Building on the above views, for Viet-Wild (2006) all the meanings are significant and they interrelate with each other. She further explains that madness is not making sense, or saying what doesn't have to be taken seriously and this depends on what a given society define as sense and seriousness. Viet-Wild (2006) posits that what constitute mental illness entirely depends on what a given society defines as normal or sane. On this note Chigwedere (2015:25) argues that when studying representation of madness in fiction the most important question should be: What constitute “madness”? She argues that there is no single definition

of “madness” as meaning differs according to the historical, cultural, literary and even individual context in which it is being defined. In her book *Writing Madness* Viet-Wild (2006) argues that many historical and anthropological studies have touched on madness in the context of possession rituals or the treatment of mental illness in African societies. This is typical of the depiction of mental illness in ChiShona novels. ChiShona literary writers dwell on madness as some form of ritual possession and they also try to explain the treatment of mentally ill persons. This study focuses on representation of madness as either an individual state of being or as symptomatic of the socio-political and economic condition in the country. Using the above referred authors’ insights I noted that among the text analysed in this study Mabasa’s *Mapenzi* (1999) is the only text that depicts madness as symptomatic of the socio-political condition in the country. The other novels dwell on madness as an individual state of being. Viet- Wild (2006) argues that there is a relationship between madness and writing but the idea of the relationship between madness and writing has little been explored in ChiShona literary texts. Thus she suggests that there are works written about people who are mentally ill and works that are considered as mad writing, which means there is a difference between madness experienced by a possessed person and the madness of an artist. In Zimbabwean literature written in English Marechera is considered a mad genius. Viet-Wild (2006) cites Kahari who in his description of Marechera as a genius suggests that besides his receptive powers as a writer Marechera has symptoms of ritual possession when he says about Marechera:

Marechera is really a mad writer, with madness being a divine gift from the gods. He is inspired by the spirits and therefore he writes madly it’s some kind of uncontrolled madness which is not appreciated by people who are used to listening to stories that are being censored. For instance in most of his stories he tends to be obscene. (In Maruma film, 1988)

Thus Marechera is considered a mad writer who is inspired by the spirits and writing obscenities is considered a quality of madness in the writer. Mabasa (1999) writes about a mentally ill character and at the same time emulates Marechera’s style of writing (Chirere 1999). Mabasa is also associated with this kind of madness because like Marechera he tends to be obscene in *Mapenzi* and the mentally ill character in the novel can be equated to a genius.

The idea of madness as genius is also discussed by Saunders and Macnaughton (2005:4) who point out that “[m]adness can itself be like a drug that allows the sufferer to experience a kind of creative ‘high.’”. In the collection of essays that explore the relation between literature and madness from the Medieval to the Modern period they further argue that madness occurs when fantasy takes over and disconnects one from reality. There is a thin line between reality and fantasy among authors. Saunders and Macnaughton (2005 relate their discussion to the history of medicine, highlighting the evolution in clinical understandings of and social attitudes to mental illness from the Middle Ages through to the "enlightened" notions of the Eighteenth Century to the development of psychoanalysis. Saunders and Macnaughton (2005, p.6) argue, “Writers as diverse as Shakespeare, Blake, Elliot and Mann employ the image of fragmentation of the mind to reflect the disease or degeneration of society”. Critical to note in this thesis is Mabasa’s creative use of madness which in a way can be equated to genius as he escapes censor for what he says through his character Hamundigoni who castigates the degeneration of society.

Among the ChiShona novels and plays that have characters with mental illness are *Kurumwa Nechekuchera* (Suffering the Consequences) by Runyowa (1974), *Zvaida Kushinga* (You Had to Be Brave) by Makari (1985), *Mwana Waamai* (My Mother’s Child) by Mujajati (2006), *Makunun’unu Maodzamoyo* (Brooding breeds despair) by Mungoshi (1970), and *Mapenzi* (Fools /Mad people) by Mabasa (1999).

The book, *Kurumwa Nechekuchera* is a story about Chokuda who is a second wife in a polygamous marriage with Mandigona. As a second wife, when she got married she received all the attention from her husband. However, as attention is reduced, Chokuda is not satisfied with the love she receives from her husband especially after failing to give him many children. Chokuda has one child while Mandigona has several children. Chokuda assumed this diverted the husband’s attention from her to Mandigona. This shift in affection by the husband from Chokuda to Mandigona affected Chokuda materially; she no longer could afford to provide for her mother sufficiently. Her mother complained that she was no longer receiving adequate foodstuffs from Chokuda. Out of jealousy and the desire for material life Chokuda resolves to harm Mandigona’s children (Choruma 2006, Mupedziswa 1988 and Shava 2008). She connives with her mother Maidei to work against Mandigona. They team up and conspire to harm Mandigona’s children by inflicting them with mental illness, a move they believe would ensure Mandigona loses the husband’s love and attention. Thus, the two

women Chokuda and her mother Maidei approach Chakadini a traditional healer who instructs them to bring the brain of a mentally ill person.

The traditional healer wants to use the brain to prepare a concoction that would inflict mental illness to Mandigona's children; "*Mhini inodiwa apa ibenzi. Ndinoda kusanganisa muti wacho neuropi hwebenzi*" (Runyowa, 1974, p. 46). (An organ that is required here is that of a mentally ill person. I want to mix the herb with the brain of a mentally ill person). The author reveals the superstition that the brain of a mentally ill person can be used to inflict mental illness in people. This belief may be threatening to the lives of those with mental illness. Persons with mental illness are prone to abuse and may be killed for ritual purposes. Thus, the two women poison Gudza the mentally ill character. They open his skull and collect his brain, which they put in a gourd as per Chakadini's instruction. The traditional healer then uses Gudza's brain to prepare the concoction that he gives to the two women together with some stringent conditions. He warns the women that failure to adhere to the rules would result in them becoming mentally ill. This is to safeguard himself against the consequences of murder. As a traditional healer, he is quite aware of the concept of avenging spirits, so he does not want to be held responsible. Gudza is killed for ritual purposes; this is a result of superstition that exists in society. Indeed there is no respect for those in Gudza's condition, their lives can be easily terminated.

As per Chokuda and Maidei's plan Mandigona's children become, mentally ill one after the other but in no time Chokuda's only child becomes mentally ill as well and starts to imitate what Gudza used to do. Chokuda's mother follows suit. The impression created here is that while mental illness can be a result of bewitchment (Choruma 2006; Mupedziswa 1988; Shava, 2008) it can also be a result of retribution for sins committed or can be the works of avenging spirits. When Mandigona's sons are bewitched, they become mentally ill and readers sympathise with the young boys and their mother. This sympathy emanates from the fact that Chakadini inflicts mental illness on innocent souls and in this context, disability is depicted as resulting from bewitchment and as such calls for sympathy. When Chokuda's son and Maidei become mentally ill, they imitate what Gudza used to do something that shows avenging spirits are in action. On this note, the author communicates that human blood should not be tampered with, in spirit Gudza fights back and the perpetrators are exposed. Gudza's spirit causes turmoil among those who took his life. This exposes Maidei and her mother as it becomes obvious that they murdered Gudza. Ironically Chokuda is not directly

affected; her son pays for her atrocity. A child is punished for his mother's transgressions (Makamure, 2017) and as such the mother is hurt most. This way the author shows the worthiness of persons with mental illness as human beings, that their life is equally important which is in line with the principles of *Vumunhu*. This time readers despise, shun and ridicule the culprits. Thus, in this context, the perpetrators are paying for their sins. Thus, by presenting mental illness as a result of punishment for evil the author is portraying mental disability negatively. The author creates the perception that mental illness is a result of evil. Such a negative portrayal of mental illness can influence readers to think that the mentally ill are responsible for their predicament. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in the narrative the depiction of mental illness, which results from bewitchment, manifests differently from that which is a result of revenge or punishment for sins. The negative depiction of mental illness does not encourage the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstream. It perpetuates the stigmatisation and marginalisation of persons with mental illness and justifies why they are regarded as the different 'other'.

In the same narrative, Runyowa further paints a negative picture of mental disability by the way he describes Gudza, "... *muhuro maigara muine chuma chaaiti akapiwa nasekuru vake vaimbova n'anga*" (Runyowa, 1974, p. 29) (... around his neck, he used to wear beads that he claimed were from his uncle who was once a traditional healer). This has negative connotations regarding Gudza's mental illness for it suggests that the beads were an evil talisman and that Gudza was cursed. The beads from an uncle who was a traditional healer may be an explanation to Gudza's condition given that Chakadini a traditional healer inflicts people with mental illness. Thus, it can be surmised that Gudza's condition could be a result of the retribution of sins committed by his uncle. The uncle could have passed on the bad augury to Gudza through the beads (Eide, Kupe & Mannon 2024). There is no way this kind of portrayal can influence positive attitudes towards those with mental illness. Indeed, it reinforces the stigmatisation and marginalisation of people with mental illness as the different 'other'. Thus, the author on this note depicts mental illness negatively and does not depart from traditional views discussed in chapter 2.

Runyowa acknowledges that the mentally ill Gudza needed to be respected as a human being. Also when he mentions that mental illness is episodic as in Gudza's case this suggests that persons with disabilities should not be permanently labeled as mentally ill because mental

illness is not a continuous or permanent condition. The following excerpt explains this notion,

Gudza aive nenguva dzaaiita semunhu kwaye kana twake turi kure... Twakamusvikira Gudza aibva angofamba nesango achiti anotsvaka Satani. Kana tusipo aitonyatsotaura semunhu kwaye zvekuti munhu aisamuziva achimunzwa achitaura aisambofungidzira kuti aiva benzi... (Runyowa 1974 p. 47) (Gudza had times when he would behave like someone who was not mentally ill. When Gudza was possessed he would walk through the forest claiming that he is looking for Satan. When he was not possessed he would talk like a normal person such that if someone did not know him he would not suspect that Gudza was mentally ill).

The same notion is also reflected in the following excerpt, *Maita zvenyu vavhimi! Umm...! Mandikanda pane mhamhasi mandisunga mbiradzakondo. Chiregai ndizorore... Moyo yenyu ngaichene. Mondiviga musiire hama dzangu magodo''* (Runyowa, 1974, p. 50) (Thank you hunters! Umm...! You have thrown me in hot soup. Allow me to rest... Rejoice / Let your hearts be pure. When you bury me let my relatives know). Through the excerpt, the author communicates that being mentally ill does not mean that someone is not aware of what is happening around him or her (White, 1988). Gudza is aware that the two women poisoned him, he insults them and instructs them to inform his relatives about his death something the women never did. Thus, persons with mental illness should not be taken for granted, they are conscious of what is happening around them. This is in line with what Foucault (1961) cited in Chigwedere (2015) who identifies a contradictory relationship between “madness” and reason, arguing that the madman though devoid of sense he has more common sense and reasons in more logical ways than those considered normal (Foucault 1961). This may suggest that although “madness” is the negation of reason, there is a visible logic to the disorder, but it becomes “dazzled reason as the discourse of ‘madness’ is constricted by the ordered structure of the language” (Chigwedere, 2015, p. 21).

The reference to Satan (Lucifer) in the above quotation contradicts the Biblical and the ChiShona belief that disability is caused by God (Mupedziswa 1988). This reference to Satan may also be interpreted as connoting that disability is a result of evil powers (Choruma, 2006). Runyowa’s depiction of mental illness is meant to expose the superstition within society about persons with mental illness. Nevertheless in the process, he parades the consequences of this superstitious belief thereby upholding the principles of *Vumunhu* which gives priority to the preservation of human life. The author communicates that persons with

disabilities are equally important as human beings and should be treated with respect, love, care and compassion.

Another novel, *Zvaida Kushinga* by Makari (1985) is a story about the liberation war. The story portrays how the liberation war fighters with the assistance of the masses of Zimbabwe were involved in liberating the country from colonial rule. The setting of the story is Zaka district an area under the Kraal Head Mberikwazvo. Mberikwazvo is a strong supporter of the liberation struggle who is betrayed by his nephew Mawaya. The betrayal leads to the incarceration of Mberikwazvo by the Rhodesian forces. When the liberation fighters are informed about Mberikwazvo's predicament, in retaliation they plan to attack the camp. However, they need to acquaint themselves first with the setup of the camp. Hence, they devised a plan; Tinotonga, one of the liberation war fighters fakes mental illness in order to gain entry into the camp without being interrogated and spy on it. He dresses in dirty torn clothes and enters the camp as a mentally ill vendor selling eggs. As he enters the camp, those in the camp believe that the man approaching them is mentally ill due to his physical appearance and walking step. "*Murume aidzadzarika achiuya kwavari ari mumarengenyane ane katswanda mumaoko...*" (Makari, 1985, p. 31). (A man staggered approaching them in threadbare clothes with a basket in his hands). The author does not directly communicate that this man is mentally ill; his physical appearance, walking manner and his attire suggest that he is mentally ill. The author creates the impression that what is outstanding or noticeable about this man is not his identity but his appearance or the signs of the mental illness suggested by his appearance. The focus is on the mental state of this man and not his identity as a human being. The man has no name; he is simply referred to as *benzi* (fool, a non-being) a typical way of addressing persons with mental illness among the Shona. Upon entering the camp the mentally ill man announces that he is selling eggs but the prisoners who are nearby chase him away and ask him to go to the white people who have the money to buy eggs. Thus, the mentally ill man is denied due respect, he is chased away simply because he is mentally ill and as such he is a nuisance to them. The following description about the mentally ill man by Makari (1985, p. 31) is demeaning:

Benzi charagwinyira haridi kuchiregedza. Iro kana zvaro kumboita shura nekutukwa kuya. Rakazonanga kuVaRungu kuye. VaMberi vakanakidzwa kwazvo nekufamba kwebenzi iri zvokuti vakayeverwa vakatanga kuritevera kuti vaone kuti rainoita sei kuVaRungu. Kana zvaro kumboita hanya nepfuti dzaiva dzakati minini semasvinga ehuni. Rakashevedzera zvaro iyo nguwane yakati dzi mumusoro. (A mentally ill man is not flexible he does not care about insults. He went straight to the Whites. Mr Mberi got fascinated by the way the mentally ill man walked. He was so carried away

that he followed him wanting to see how he was going to behave before the White men. The many guns he saw did not move him. He started shouting with his hat on. Makari's consistent use of the noun *benzi* and the demeaning prefix /ri-/ to refer to the mentally ill character dehumanises and objectifies the mentally ill character, and at the same time reinforces his negative attitude towards mental illness. He presents the mentally ill character as ridiculous, as someone who is not responsible; who does not care and the statement that the mentally ill character shouted with his hat on suggests that the man is not courteous. The author also presents the mentally ill character as entertainment for those who are at the camp. Emphasis is laid on the awkward behaviour of the mentally ill and that he is different, 'the different other'. The following excerpt reinforces this interpretation on the presentation of the person with mental illness:

Zviya zvokuti pakamba kana kuti murungu anotyisa izvozvo ndizvo zvinozivikanwa nemunhu kwaye kwete benzi. Benzi harina makata kana materu. Kwariri zvinhu zvose zvakangofanana, saka mapenzi mazhinji akasimba nokuti haafunganyi (Makari, 1985, p. 31)

(The idea that a camp or a white man is scary is what those who are not mentally ill know. A mentally ill person is not worried about status. To him, all things are the same and this is why people who are mentally ill appear to be physically strong because they do not worry about anything).

This is negative thinking about mentally ill people. In the above excerpt, Makari is dehumanising the character with mental illness by suggesting that he does not reason rationally, is not familiar with the concept of status and that they do not weigh pros and cons of whatever they do. There is also a suggestion that the mentally ill appear physically fit because they do not worry about life. The author fails to acknowledge the humanness and identity of the mentally ill character by failing to address him with a proper name and by using the derogatory noun '*benzi*' to refer to the mentally ill character. The character remains nameless as if he does not exist. Such depiction is destructive especially given the importance of names in Shona culture. The depiction by Makari (1985) only succeeds in reinforcing and perpetuating negative attitudes towards those with mental illness and as such, the author fails to uphold the principles of *Vumunhu* in his depiction of mental illness.

When the fake mentally ill man announces that he is selling eggs, Mashumba remarks, "*Blacky, your eggs are good but you are bloody filthy!*" (Makari, 1985, p. 32). Through this statement, the fake mentally ill character faces double discrimination. Firstly, he is discriminated against for his race as an African. Secondly, the discrimination is based on his condition (mental illness). The phrase "...you are blood filthy" is an insult which shows that

the utterer does not have respect for the addressee because they are mentally ill. Indeed the mentally ill are not accorded due respect in the way they are depicted.

In *Kurumwa Nechekuchera*, Runyowa refers to the mentally ill Gudza as *benzi*, which is a derogatory noun, which belongs to class 5: *Murume uyu wainzi Gudza aiva benzi*” (Runyowa, 1974, p. 29). (This man called Gudza was mentally ill). Similarly, in *Zvaida Kushinga* the term, *benzi*, is used to refer to a liberation war fighter who disguised himself by faking mental illness. The prefix */ri-/* which is used to refer to *benzi* in conjunction with the noun *benzi* implies worthless ugly things. Its use refers to creatures and not human beings. When */ri-/* is used to refer to human beings the aim is to exaggerate the physical structure of an individual and the noun belongs to class /21/. When human beings are prefixed with */ri-/* of noun class 5 as in *benzi* the intention is to ridicule, shun, belittle or despise. Thus, the use of the noun *benzi* and the consistent use of the prefix */ri-/* objectifies the person with mental illness and through its use they are classified as worthless. The impression created by the use of such a term suggests that someone with mental illness is not a complete human being and is different, and regarded as the different “other”, a stance that contradicts the principles of *Vumunhu*, a theory that guides this study. The theory of *Vumunhu*, which forms the framework that guides this study, emphasises that human beings deserve due respect no matter their circumstances, disability or not.

Makari and Runyowa in their narratives reinforce the general Shona belief that disability and in this case, mental illness is a result of witchcraft or a curse (Ozaji, 1991; Makamure, 2017; Mupedziswa, 1988). In *Zvaida Kushinga*, VaMberi remarked “Ivo varoyi vedu imi kupenza mukomana mudiki akadai” (Makari, 1985, p. 31) (Witches are not considerate; they caused mental illness in this young boy). What this statement implies is that the mentally ill were bewitched. Thus, the author conforms to the Shona beliefs concerning witchcraft as a cause of mental illness.

In *Mwana Waamai* by Mujajati (2006), the story centres on Monica and Gamuchirai, two girls who communicate through letters. After completing Grade Seven Gamuchirai proceeds to secondary school. Monica could not as her father, Ruzvidzo claimed he had no money to pay school fees for Monica. Ruzvidzo sexually abuses his daughter Monica. The baby born out of this incest has Downs Syndrome. Out of disappointment and bitterness, Monica names the baby Misodzi (tears). The baby’s name expresses Monica’s disillusionment wreaked by

her father who sexually abused her. In this novel, the author presents Downs Syndrome as a form of disability that results from sin (incest). In doing so, the author conforms to the biblical and Shona traditional beliefs that disability is punishment for sin. This is a negative portrayal because it would appear as if people with this condition are products of incest and such a portrayal justifies the marginalisation of persons with disabilities. Such a position continues to stigmatise and marginalise people with Downs Syndrome. Later on, Ruzvidzo sexually abuses Misodzi and infects her with a sexually transmitted infection. Monica is frustrated by her father's sex abuse and she burns the grass-thatched hut in which Ruzvidzo is sleeping. Ruzvidzo is severely burnt and he becomes blind.

Meanwhile, at school, Gamuchirai is promiscuous, she is in love with Tawanda and an array of other men and she eventually becomes pregnant but is ditched by the man responsible for her pregnancy. She aborts and is hospitalised. Later on, Gamuchirai meets her school time lover Tawanda and they resume their relationship. Gamuchirai lies to Tawanda that she is pregnant and they cohabit as husband and wife. Unfortunately, Gamuchirai fails to conceive and frustrated by her lies Tawanda starts to abuse her. Gamuchirai is traumatised by Tawanda's abuse and she suffers a mental illness and is eventually admitted to Gomo Psychiatric Unit. While this narrative discusses Down's syndrome, blindness, barrenness and mental illness this section focuses on mental illness. Other forms of disability are discussed under sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 respectively.

In *Mwana Waamai*, Mujajati (2006) presents social problems as causes for mental illness, a point also echoed by White (1988). Mujajati engages the medical model in his depiction of mental illness by resorting to rehabilitation or institutionalisation to cure Gamuchirai. "*Pari zvino ari kuGomo Psychiatric Unit kuya kunorapwa vava vava kurwara nepfungwa, Sekuziva kwako anga asinganyatsogarisani zvakanaka nemurume wake...*" (Mujajati, 2006, p. 98) (At present, she is at Gomo Psychiatric Unit where those with mental problems are treated. As you know, she was not in good books with her husband). The above excerpt implies that Gamuchirai's misunderstandings with Tawanda are responsible for her condition. She is not living in harmony with Tawanda and as such, she was traumatised and suffered a mental illness.

Mujajati (2006) portrays mental illness as emanating from psychological stress. Gamuchirai's mother highlights this when she says, "*Iko kuGomo ikoko anogara akasungira zvichira*

padumbu hanzi ndine pamuviri...'' (Mujajati, 2006, p. 98) (At Gomo hospital, she always has pieces of cloth around her waist saying that she is pregnant...). This is an indication that Gamuchirai's mental illness is a result of trauma emanating from her barrenness and perhaps abortion as well. Gamuchirai now has a double disability. She is barren and mentally ill. The impression created here is that Gamuchirai is responsible for her disabilities. The narrative writer gives her past life of prostitution as cause to her double disability. Thus, she is failing to conceive because of her previous experiences with a variety of men such that at one time she had to abort after one of these men duped her. Now that she has decided to settle down with Tawanda she fails to conceive. She worries over it, this anxiety together with Tawanda's abuse traumatises her and she suffers mental illness. Mujajati is reinforcing the Shona belief as well as the biblical view of disability, which emphasise the idea that disability is punishment for sins. His depiction of mental illness is negative and only succeeds in reinforcing negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities who in the end are viewed as the different 'other'. The marginalisation is presented by the author as deserved based on prostitution. However, Mujajati as a remedy for mental illness opts for treatment at the hospital. So, all is not lost, there is hope.

Just as in *Mwana Waamai*, in *Makunununu Maodzamoyo* by Mungoshi (1970) mental illness emerges because of stress accrued from social problems that affected individuals psychologically. The other character who becomes mentally ill out of social problems is Mushayazano in *Makunununu Maodzamoyo*. The story in this novel suggests that Mushayazano is an ailing old man who is in a serious misunderstanding with his wife Chingweru. The name Mushayazano denotes his failure to find a lasting solution to his misunderstandings with his estranged wife Chingweru whose name suggests she is someone who makes a lot of noise by being talkative, someone who is confrontational and domineering. The couple has two daughters Tendai and Monica. Tendai is married and she suffers a mental illness. Mushayazano claims Tendai's mental illness is a result of Chingweru's transgressions. Chingweru insulted her mother and as per Shona custom, she is supposed to appease her dead mother whom she wronged by performing certain rituals '*kutanda botso*' (eliminating bad omen). Chingweru refuses to perform the rituals on the reasoning that performing the ritual is against her Christian beliefs. Thus, in relation to Tendai's mental illness Mashayazano remarks:

Mwana kupenga, kupfeka micheka yamashavi, kubvarura mbasha achifamba ari mushuna pamberi pavanhu pamusana pako iwe usingadi kutanda botso. (Mungoshi,

1974, p. 23), (Our child became mentally ill, clothed in alien spirit regalia, tearing clothes walking naked in front of people simply because you are refusing to appease your dead mother by going through the necessary ritual).

In the excerpt, Mashayazano is attributing Tendai's condition to Chingweru's refusal to appease her dead mother. The punishment is meant to shame someone, Tendai moves around naked. This is disgraceful and it would appear mental illness is a way of reprimanding or exposing someone for her misdemeanour. However, Chingweru has her own side of the story; her dead mother was a witch and is responsible for Tendai's condition. Contrary to Mashayazano's remarks, Chingweru believes that Tendai's illness is a result of her grandmother's witchcraft. On the other hand, Tendai's mother-in-law believes Tendai practices witchcraft or she is from a family that practices witchcraft. Thus, these assertions concur with what Choruma (2006), and Mupedziswa (1988) alluded to as causes of disability. The reason why Tendai's condition is attributed to witchcraft emanates from the Shona traditional belief that witches do not put on clothes when they are on their witchcraft mission. They perform their rituals while naked. Thus, Tendai's behaviour of moving around naked resembles that of a witch on a mission. In the narrative, the author presents mental illness as a complex phenomenon that can be explained differently. This form of disability is presented as caused by witchcraft and as punishment for sins. However, the punishment this time is not directly inflicted on the perpetrator but the perpetrator's offspring and this is typical of what happens in *Kurumwa Nehekuchera*. In the narrative, the author shows controversy regarding the causes of mental illness among the Shona. People have different perspectives about the causes of mental illness and in most cases base their reasoning on the behaviour of the mentally ill person and societal beliefs. Like Mashayazano, Tendai is not accorded adequate fictional space as a mentally ill character in the narrative. Not much is said about her except that she was mentally ill. This approach by the author can be interpreted as a way of shunning disability and failing to respect persons with disabilities by not exploring their life experiences. However, Mungoshi provides healing as a solution to Tendai's illness, an indication that mental illness is not an irreversible condition.

Within the same novel, Chingweru pledges her daughter (Monica) to a local rich young man named Mujubheki without her husband's knowledge. The agreement between Chingweru and Mujubheki is that Mujubheki will provide school fees for Monica. Unfortunately, Monica does not love Mujubheki; she is in love with Timoti. When Chingweru discovers Monica's affair with Timoti she poisons Timoti. Timoti dies but Monica refuses to be Mujubheki's

wife. Mujubheki is heartbroken and he commits suicide. Chingweru's transgressions coupled with Mashayazano's ailing condition stress and traumatise Mushayazano and the old man become mentally ill. In this context, Chingweru's evil-minded and domineering attitude causes Mushayazano's mental illness. His condition worsens and he is admitted to hospital, but later on, absconds. The abscondment is not voluntary but is a manifestation of mental illness. He wanders in the forest and subsequently dies in the forest. At home, Chingweru suffers a mental illness and Tendai, having herself recovered takes care of her.

In the narrative, Mungoshi reveals that stress accrued from marriage problems can be responsible for a mental illness especially if the couple is at crossroads. However, Mungoshi does not give Mushayazano adequate fictional space as a mentally ill character. The author does not explore the life experiences of the mentally ill characters. Once Mashayazano becomes mentally ill, he is isolated in hospital and subsequently dies alone in the forest. It appears as if he cannot continue to exist because he now has a disability. Just like Gudza in *Kurumwa Nechekuchera*, the mentally ill are denied a decent burial. The author is more interested in explaining the possible causes of mental illness as such his depiction of mental illness is meant to explain why and how Mushayazano, Chingweru and Tendai become mentally ill.

In the same narrative, Chingweru is inflicted with mental disability as vengeance for the horrid things she did in her lifetime. She ill-treated her mother by insulting her and refused to appease her through performing rituals as per tradition. Chingweru abuses and ill-treats her husband. She ruthlessly kills Timoti by poisoning him because she prefers Mujubheki as son-in-law. As punishment for her evil character, the author inflicts her with mental illness. Thus, Chingweru's mental illness is a result of her evil character; she is paying for her sins. She is now talking to herself:

Ndakati ini gara apa, iye akati pane mushonga. Ini kundiita muroyi ini (Mungoshi, 1974, p. 105). (I said sit here and they say there is a charm. Accusing me of witchcraft!)

Chingweru's utterances are indicative of her transgressions, she mentions charms and witchcraft. Her mental illness is retribution to her evil deeds. Chingweru is now seeing beasts everywhere:

Dzese idzo ndedzangu, kana dziri mombe ndine matirinhari... (Mungoshi, 1970, p. 106). (All these cattle are mine. when it comes to cattle, I have big and plenty).

This signifies the beasts she should pay for *ngozi* (avenging spirits) for Timoti whom she poisons, Mushayazano for causing psychological stress and his subsequent death and possibly for Mujubheki whom she duped (Kahari, 1990). Thus, the degree of her mental illness is very different from that of her husband Mushayazano and her daughter Tendai. Chingweru is no longer able to use her senses. Due to her condition, it appears as if the cognitive human aspect has been taken away. What now remains are the physical aspects. In protest to Chingweru's condition Tendai laments:

Havo vanongorwerwa rute sepwere. Vanongobvotomoka sevasina pfungwa. Pavadyira ndipo pavanorasira. Hembe haizivi anopfeka. Ndetenge ndichavabatira shamhu. Ipfungwa rudziiko dzakavapenza. (Mungoshi, 1970, p. 105).

(Saliva is always oozing from her mouth like a small child. She cannot speak sense and acts like someone without intelligence. Where she eats is where she defecates. She is no longer aware that she should be dressed up. I am tempted to use a whip on her. What kind of stress disturbed her mind?)

Chingweru is no longer able to control her body. She has lost her reasoning capacity and she is now moving around naked. This kind of behaviour suggests that the reputable aspects of being human have been stripped away in order to expose her. Her condition is horrendous and cannot be compared to that of Mushayazano, Tendai, Gamuchirai in *Mwana Waamai*, and Gudza in *Kurumwa Nechekuchera*. This is mainly because the author wants to communicate the gravity of Chingweru's violations. People with this type of mental illness are the most stigmatised and marginalised mainly because they are not able to make meaningful contributions to life neither can they help themselves (Makamure, 2017; Rohweder, 2018). Neighbours advise Tendai to take Chingweru to a psychiatric centre for her upkeep but Tendai is against the idea, she feels it is not human to abandon her mother and leave her under the care of strangers. Thus, Mungoshi denounces the medical model that isolates people with disabilities in institutions. His stance encourages the inclusion of people with disabilities. The author is in line with the principles of *Vumunhu*, which shun the isolation of persons with mental disabilities and encourages inclusion. In his depiction of mental illness Mungoshi adheres to the principles of *Vumunhu*, he does not use derogatory terms to address the mentally ill. However, dwelling on how characters acquire mental illness reinforces negative attitudes towards mental illness and its victims.

Mungoshi's depiction of mental illness in *Makununu Maodzamoyo* is complex in that he cites trauma, sin, avenging spirits and witchcraft as causes of mental illness. This variation

concurs with the president of Zimbabwe's National Traditional Healer's Association Gordon Chavhunduka's explanation cited in Veit-Wild, (2006, p. 24) as follows:

Firstly there are natural factors such as brain damage, poor brain development and incorrect use of medicines. In the second group of factors responsible for mental illness are psychological factors such as worry, strain, and tension. Related to the second group of factors are the various social agencies that cause illness such as ancestor spirits, angry spirits, witches, alien spirits and sorcerers.

In relation to the works discussed in this section factors related to the second group are mentioned as the cause of mental illness and those in the first group are silent. This may suggest that the first group is a foreign explanation of the causes of mental illness. Thus the last group of factors are considered the dominant causes of madness. What is worth noting in his depiction of mental disability is the variations in the degree of mental illness of the three mentally ill characters in his narrative. Through the differences, one can conclude that Mungoshi like Runyowa in *Kurumwa Nehekuchera* wants to communicate that when mental illness is punishment for sin or a result of avenging spirits the culprit is punished severely and the degree and extent of mental illness are worse than those who acquire mental illness because of bewitchment or psychological trauma. However, such a negative representation of disability explains and confirms the stigma and marginality attached to mental illness as well as reinforcing society's negative attitudes towards disability.

The novel *Mapenzi* by Mabasa (1999) is about Hamundigoni a former Zimbabwe liberation war fighter. Hamundigoni states that he was dismissed from the teaching profession on allegations that he is not mentally stable. However, throughout the narrative, Hamundigoni proclaims that he is not mentally ill but whenever he is annoyed, he proclaims that everyone is mentally ill. He moves from place to place talking about his experiences loudly. Mabasa attributes Hamundigoni's condition to trauma which he experienced during the war. This is likely to be the case given the fact that on a number of occasions Hamundigoni refers to war songs being sung in his head. Thus Mabasa cites trauma as a cause of mental illness. In the narrative, the novelist focuses on the post-independence experiences of the ordinary Zimbabwean. Life after independence is portrayed as chaotic. Liberation war fighters including Hamundigoni are not happy and Hamundigoni has just lost his teaching post. They participated in the liberation war but were not rewarded. Only a few liberation fighters benefitted. The nation is facing challenges like lack of accommodation, unemployment, corruption, poverty, inefficiency at work and bad governance. As presented by Mabasa people indulge in such vices as homosexuality, child abuse, drug abuse, alcoholism, and

prostitution, which lead to HIV and AIDS infections. In the narrative, Hamundigoni is the central character and Mabasa uses him to rebuke society's ills, which he equates to acts of mental illness. (He is the novelist's voice of reason. For this reason, Mabasa, through Teacher Hamundigone, is able to interrogate the crisis with people and crisis in people which Itai Muwati (2009) calls mass neurosis borrowing from the Fanonian tradition of studying human condition using neurological lenses. This is synonymous to what Viet-Wild calls *Madness in the Colony*. Frantz Fanon's theories laid the foundations for analysing the inner self of the colonised and in one of his books *Black Skin White Masks*, presents his analysis of how colonisation and acculturation alienated the blacks from themselves leading to a deep-seated inferiority complex (Viet-Wild, 2006). The cultural alienation that resulted was so traumatizing that Africans suffered otherness and marginalization. Fanon calls this self-alienation the neurosis of the colonial subjects (Viet-Wild, 2006, p. 2). This is the same analysis that Mabasa applies in *Mapenzi* where the people are no longer colonised but there is mass neurosis brought about through the government's failure to manage the economy. Gambahaya and Muwati cited in Mutasa and Muwati (2008, p. 5) argue that:

Mapenzi centers on the mental and physical anguish experienced by Zimbabweans in the 1990s as a result of a failing economy and abuse of political power. The story revolves around Hamundigoni, a mentally traumatised former freedom fighter, who fearlessly blames the government and its failure to manage the economy for the problems that have reduced all characters in the novel to the level of mad or foolish people. These images aptly capture the destitution and desperation of the majority of Zimbabweans from the 1990s and beyond. The writer emphasises the vulnerable condition of his characters without blaming them for their condition, as has been largely the case with other creative writers.

Thus, the above analysis summarises the novel *Mapenzi* in which Mabasa universalizes disability by discussing it in the context of a deranged human condition. Mabasa (1999) argues that post-independence Zimbabwe is chaotic such that everyone appears insane or behaves in ways that can be equated to mental illness. He narrates how people in post-independent Zimbabwe are typical of mentally ill people and discusses how individuals exhibit their mental illness. Mabasa itemizes actions or behaviours that can be interpreted as irrational behaviour.

While MacCaghy (1994) asserts that mental disease is a myth and does not exist, Mabasa (1999) in his novel *Mapenzi* insinuates that everybody possesses some degree of mental illness. What varies is how people exhibit their mental illness; otherwise, all people possess some form of mental illness and they show signs of mental illness at some point in their lives. This is in line with the argument made by Sullivan (1997) that the ability to detect mental

illness is distressingly weak. At times, it is problematic for mental health professionals to detect those with mental illness and those without. Moreover, it is more difficult to separate the actions of mentally healthy people from those who are not. This is Mabasa's point in the novel *Mapenzi* where he presents one character labelled as having mental illness interacting with other characters that do not have the same label. Ironically, the one labelled as having mental illness exhibits behaviour that is saner than those who are known not to have a mental illness.

When Hamundigoni is discharged from his teaching post on the allegations that he is mentally ill, no tests or investigations are done to prove that indeed Hamundigoni is mentally ill. Such decisions are contrary to the attributes of *Vumunhu*. Under normal circumstances, investigations should have been carried out in order to come up with a proper and accurate diagnosis or position. Thus, Mabasa is revealing an anomaly that is existent in society. People often take for granted that too much talk coupled with dirty clothing denotes mental instability or mental illness. Sullivan (1997) proves the power of labelling when he narrates how Rosenham and his associates (1973) carried out a careful observational study of mental institutions. The team used participant observation as a research method. In this type of research, researchers take part in the daily activities and routines of the people under study. As such, Rosenham and his associates faked mental illness. They approached one mental institution and described unclear symptoms. They claimed that they were hearing vague voices that said words like empty and hollow. They were admitted as mentally ill patients. After admission, they started to behave normally and they did not make an extraordinary effort to convince the hospital staff that they were mentally ill. Surprisingly, the hospital staffs were not suspicious. The self-styled patients started writing notes and recording all their observations for their research. Instead of questioning the unusual behaviour displayed by the self-styled patients the hospital staff assumed their behaviour were more signs and symptoms of mental illness and was typical of that of mentally ill people.

The above research shows the power of labelling in mental health institutions and in society. As advocated by interactionists in the labelling theory, once the label is attached people react to the social reality. What shapes behaviour is what people believe to be true. As the pseudo-patients were labelled mentally ill, no one questioned that label. Their behaviour was understood in the context of assuming that they were mentally ill. In this context, normal behaviour was overlooked and interpreted as further symptoms of mental disorder. This is

what is implied in *Mapenzi*. Hamundigoni is labelled mentally ill and all his efforts to convince people that he is not mentally ill are interpreted as further evidence of his mental illness. Through the title of the narrative *Mapenzi*, Mabasa (1999) argues that ultimately, we are all fools. Scheff (as cited in Sullivan, 1984) echoed the same idea. Thus, Mabasa pursues this notion in his novel where several characters indulge in behaviours that are typical of mentally ill people yet they are considered the 'sane'. He argues that people have a tendency of labelling others as mentally ill yet they do worse things than what is done by those they condemn as mentally ill.

In *Mapenzi*, the mentally ill character is used to correct the ills of the nation and encourages the upholding of the principles of *Vumunhu* by circumventing bad practices. Thus, in the novel *Mapenzi* mental illness is not denigrated instead, it is honoured and its presentation surpasses its usual poor presentation as a burdensome affliction that ought to be rooted out to ensure the good health and well-being of society. The author departs from the usual trend of representing the mentally ill as sufferers of wicked forces or as unwanted social deviants. Thus, it can be surmised that in *Mapenzi* madness and genius are synonymous. The mentally ill is presented as the conscience of society.

In the following excerpt, Hamundigoni suggests that he is not mentally ill but he is cognisant of those who are mentally ill. He goes on to enumerate those who behave in weird and improper ways as the mentally ill.

Ini handipengi asi vanopenga ndinovaziva. Vanopenga tinovaziva. Ndevaya vanoti vakarwa hondo ivo vasina kurwa hondo. Ndevanoti vakaona ropa rakawanda ivo vachishanda kutungamirira vanhu. Vanopenga ndevanoona upenzi hwevamwe vasingaoni hwavo. Vanopenga ndevaye vasingadi kutsiurwa kuti vave kuseva kakawandisa vachipedzera vamwe muto. Vanopenga ndini newe Bunny. Tinosekerera mapenzi achimwa muto vamwe vachida kuseva. Vanopenga ndevaya vanobvarura hembe dzavana kuti vasone sutu. Vane tsanga mumaziso, tsanga dzisiri dzaMwari, asi tsanga dzekuona vachitadza kugadzirisa. Iwe unoti ndinopenga, asi ini ndinoti iwe ndiwe unopenga, saka anopenga ndeupi ipapa? (Mabasa, 1999, p. 134).

(I am not mentally ill but the mentally ill I know. The mentally ill we know them. They are those who say they fought in the war when they did not. They are those who say they saw blood in abundance when they work as leaders. The mentally ill are those who see mental illness in other people and fail to recognise their own mental illness. The mentally ill are those who do not want to be advised when they do wrong. The mentally ill are you and I Bunny. We tolerate selfish people who disadvantage others. The mentally ill are those who exploit others and short change them or those who steal from the vulnerable. Those with a blurred vision that is not due to visual

impairment but fails to see and rectify where there is need. You say I am mentally ill but I say you are mentally ill, so who is mentally ill?)

The above quote discourages the idea of labelling others as mentally ill because as mentioned earlier on people have weaknesses that can be equated to mental illness. What they do at times shows that they fail to reason rationally just like what seldom happens to those that are not mentally ill. Mabasa is alluding to the fact that failing to recognise anomalies in society and failing to provide meaningful solutions to these anomalies is as good as being mentally ill. On this note, the author is attacking those in authority that they are as good as mentally ill people because they are corrupt and are failing to do what society expects of them. Therefore, there is nothing strange in the behaviour of those labelled as mentally ill because those who are not mentally ill fail to prove their sanity by correcting society's ills. With this in mind, Mabasa (1999) makes a special effort to show that it is uncalled for to stigmatise those labelled as mentally ill because it is by nature that humans at one-time exhibit signs of mental illness by failing to reason rationally. This notion is well explained by Martel (2001) cited in Chigwedere 2015) who asserts that all living things contain a measure of madness that moves them in strange, sometimes in ways that cannot be explained. This madness can be an advantage as it is part and parcel of the ability to adapt. Without it no species would survive. This assertion is further elaborated by Chigwedere who explains that Martel's assertion suggests that the incongruity of this madness can for example cause one to question the state of being, or upset the norm of a society in which one survives as is done by Mabasa though Hamundigoni.

Throughout the novel, the author uses Hamundigoni to discourage uncouth behaviours, behaviours that can be equated to mental illness. This is his way of appealing to people that they should not look down upon those with mental disabilities and that being mentally ill does not imply that one is not cognisant of what is happening around them. In fact, they may be in a position to reason better than the rest. Clarifying this misconception White (1988) indicates that it is vital to note that because someone is behaving in ways that may appear strange does not mean they are unaware of the way in which they are treated. Sometimes odd behaviour is mistaken to mean that the person has no feelings. Thus, the author is calling for respect for all human beings despite their condition. Human beings should be accorded due respect because what is of value is their humanness as epitomised in *Vumunhu*. Mabasa in this narrative does not condemn mental illness; he explains that there is nothing worth

condemning because every individual at one stage in his or her life is involved in behaviour that may suggest mental illness.

The novel *Mapenzi*, is all about appealing to all people that they should reflect and stop labelling others as mentally ill because all people at one point in their lives exhibit signs of mental illness. No one is perfect and as such we should be accommodative of other people's weaknesses. Indeed according to Mabasa (1999) those regarded as sane indulge in prostitution, child abuse, homosexuality (which he seems to disapprove), corruption, bad governance and all sorts of uncouth behaviour. Mabasa (1999) argues such behaviour is indicative of irrational thinking. Mabasa is a rare ChiShona narrative author who despite exhibiting society's negative attitude towards disability portrays mental illness positively. Thus, he uses disability to rebuke society's ills. The mentally ill are on a mission to dispel negativity towards the mentally ill as well as reminding everyone else of the need to accord due respect to all human beings.

Throughout the narrative, the author continually contrasts the behaviour of Hamundigoni with that of the other characters in the narrative and in all instances, Hamundigoni outshines them all. The author uses this literary device to explain the worthiness of persons with disabilities as human beings as well as illustrating the shortcomings of those considered as sane. The rationale for such a contrast is to discourage discrimination and stigmatisation of persons with mental disabilities. Mabasa (1999) displays a positive attitude towards mental disability. Although he persistently shows society's negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities, he successfully manages to portray mental disability positively a stance that calls for the inclusion of and respect for persons with mental illness in the mainstream. Such a positive portrayal of mental disability yields a positive image of those with mental illness. The author's inclusion of the mentally ill in the narrative is a writing technic meant to expose the ills of society without offending anyone. Through this literary device, the author manages to touch on sensitive issues and to criticise those in power, the government inclusive without being taken to task. To the ordinary person, his glitches are exposed and are made to reflect on them.

It is interesting to note that in *Mapenzi*, Hamundigoni is the central character; he is the main character unlike in other instances where persons with disabilities are minor or peripheral characters who are denied adequate fictional space. In *Mapenzi*, Hamundigoni is dominant

and this shows Mabasa's (1999) positive attitude towards mental disability. The author applauds all activities Hamundigoni does as a mentally ill character for he does them with impunity which no other character can match. Thus, in the context of ChiShona novels Mabasa is exceptional in his positive stance on mental disability. Like Feder (1980) who also discusses the depiction of 'madness' in literature Mabasa clearly shows that mental disability is part of life in human society that really needs to be engaged. Having discussed the depiction of mental disability, I then proceed to discuss how blindness is represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays.

4.2 Depiction of blindness

In this section, the chapter discusses the representation of the visually impaired in the novels, *Zinyekenyeke* (A Loose String/ Weak Link) by Mujajati (1997), *Garandichauya* (*Wait and I will come*) by Chakaipa (1963) and *Mwana waAmai* (My Mother's Child) by Mujajati (2006). In Mujajati's second play *Yorire Ngoma*, in *Zinyekenyeke*¹ (A Loose String) (1997), Munjodzi is head of Batanai Cooperative, a cooperative for people who are blind. Another character, Njonda connives with Munjodzi to divert funds donated to the visually impaired. Njonda denounces the gesture of good will:

Ndiko kutadza kuonaka ikoko. Kupa mapofu \$180 000, vanoitise chii? Bofu nyangwe ukaripa mari yakawanda sei hariregi zvokupemha. Saka zvandaronga apa ndeizvi: mari iyi tichaipa kuBatanai Co-operative ine maform ari apa aya. Sokuziva kwangu iwe Munjodzi ndiwe mukuru mukuru weBatanai Co-operative yemapofu. Saka ndiwe uchaisina apa mari yacho tobva taipinza mugwara remudyirapamwe. Pakadini apa? (Mujajati, 1997, p. 87).

(That is being unreasonable. Giving people who are blind \$180 000, what will they use it for? A blind person even if you give him or her a lot of money, he or she will not stop begging. Therefore, I have devised a plan: this money we will give to Batanai Co-operative, which has these forms. As far as I know, you Munjodzi you are the head of Batanai Co-operative of blind people. Therefore, you are the one who is going to sign here and we share the money. How is it?)

For Njonda giving visually impaired people financial assistance is a waste of resources because they will never stop begging. His question, "... vanoitise chii?" (What will they do with it?), suggests visually impaired people do not deserve the money because they are not productive and as such, they cannot put the money to good use. Begging is what they know

¹ *Zinyekenyeke* is a book by Mujajati. In this book there are two plays, the first one with the title of the book and the second one being *Yorire Ngoma*

best. In this play, the author may be alluding to the fact that those assigned to lead cooperatives of visually impaired people are not themselves visually impaired and this creates challenges of honest representation of the interests of visually impaired people. Those leading these cooperatives are tempted to abuse the money since they do not directly benefit from the funds. According to White (1988), Njonda's line of reasoning is misleading because the reason why people with disabilities beg is that they do not have the means to provide for themselves and society contributed to their plight by denying them education and employment opportunities. The view by Njonda is retrogressive and only succeeds in perpetuating dependence, exploitation of persons with blindness as well as neglecting them. People with this kind of disability need to be empowered, the loan could have gone a long way in assisting people who are blind. Had they been given the money with proper management of the funds surely life would never be the same. But when people take advantage over the disadvantaged indeed they continue to depend on charity. It is best to empower them so they can desert the streets. Through Njonda the author shows that society takes advantage of those with disabilities by stealing what belongs to them. To worsen the situation in the play nothing happens to the perpetrators in connection with the abuse. While Mujajati (1997) manages to highlight the plight of persons with blindness, he does not provide solutions for the abuse suffered by people with blindness. It appears he condones the exploitation of the visually impaired as the perpetrators of the evil scheme are not punished. His attitude is one of indifference to the exploitation of the visually impaired.

In *Garandichauya*, (Wait and I will come) by Chakaipa (1963) Muchaneta² is promiscuous. She dumps her husband in pursuit of Handisumbe a local shopkeeper in the hope that he is better able to provide for her and her mother. Handisumbe divorces his wife and cohabits with Muchaneta. Muchaneta deceives Handisumbe, steals the shop proceeds, and elopes to Gatooma with their domestic worker Zikomu whom she is now in love with. Handisumbe cannot recover the money stolen by Muchaneta. He is imprisoned. In Gatooma, Muchaneta kills Zikomu and later on cohabits with Matamba and she changes her name to Raiza. Matamba abandons his wife and child and clings to Muchaneta. Tsitsi (Matamba's wife) comes to Gatooma in pursuit of Matamba, but Matamba beats her and instructs her to go home and wait for his return (*Garandichauya*). Muchaneta later on dumps Matamba and she

² The name Muchaneta suggests that one day she will not be able to continue with her evil machinations, she will be worn-out or will become incapacitated

hires thugs who blind him. Matamba becomes destitute; he is employed to do a menial job at a farm until an uncle rescues him by taking him back to his wife. Despite Matamba's disability, his wife Tsitsi welcomes him and they live happily ever. Thus Chakaipa's depiction of disability is contrary to Gaidzanwa (1997, p. 33) who refers to Matamba as a dependent and disabled husband. Tsitsi accepts Matamba as the father of her children and does not look down upon him because he now has a disability. Later on, Muchaneta, in old age meets Muchazvirega, her former schoolteacher boyfriend whom she duped during her early days. Muchazvirega beats up Muchaneta severely and plucks out one of her eyes and she becomes partially blind.

One day Handisumbe finds Muchaneta, he entices her and takes her out of town to an isolated place, where he plucks out her remaining eye, cuts off her lips as well as her hands and kills her thereby acting in accordance with the meaning of his name Handisumbe (I do not hesitate). A point to note here is that Handisumbe first disables Muchaneta before killing her, which suggests physical disability is inflicted on people as punishment for their transgressions.

In the narrative, blindness is presented as a punishment for sin. Matamba becomes blind as punishment for deserting his wife and child while Muchaneta becomes blind as punishment for her transgressions; she cheated several men and extorted money from them. One wonders why Handisumbe first had to pluck out Muchaneta's remaining eye cuts off her lips as well as her hands before killing her. On this note, the author regards blindness as something terrible and as such, its infliction on Muchaneta by Handisumbe is meant to shame and cause suffering to Muchaneta. It is as if the author is condemning sight for it is responsible for Muchaneta's wrong doings. Muchaneta should experience suffering before she dies. When these two characters become blind the story ends. Muchaneta is killed after being blinded which may suggest that according to the author there is no meaningful life after blindness. Matamba re-joins his wife and child. The wife welcomed him and they lived happily ever. Thereafter the story line ends as if to suggest that there is nothing meaningful to write about Matamba as a blind person. The narrative writer does not explore the life experiences of Matamba as a blind person. By adhering to the biblical and Shona beliefs, which stress disability as punishment for sins the author conforms to the general stereotyping of persons with disabilities. He is merely confirming that disability is punishment for sins. In line with this kind of depiction Larrissy (2007) posits that blindness in literary works conveys

negativity rather than positivity as the blindness is associated with sin. However, Matamba's blindness may be interpreted as a purification ritual meant to transform his actions into goodness. This is reiterated by Jarnigan (1974, p. 5) who suggests that the theme of blindness as punishment for sin goes hand in hand with the stereotype of blindness as a kind of cleansing ritual, an act that wipes the slate clean and transforms the human character into purity and goodness. Matamba can no longer continue with his immoral activities without sight. Blindness brings unity to the couple who live happily ever after. The attitude of Patrick Chakaipa, as a priest is that repentance must lead to forgiveness.

Similarly, blindness is portrayed as punishment for sin in Mujajati's *Mwana Waamai* (2006). As I pointed out when discussing mental illness in *Mwana Waamai*, Monica is driven into desperation by her father's sexual abuses leading her to burn the grass-thatched hut in which her father Ruzvidzo was sleeping. Ruzvidzo is severely burnt, and he becomes blind. Ruzvidzo is blinded as punishment for his sexual abuses. Once Ruzvidzo is blinded, his story line ends and that is the end of him as a character. As in the case of Patrick Chakaipa, Mujajati creates the impression that there is no meaningful life to report about after blindness. This signifies his negative attitude towards blindness. Such a portrayal of blindness has negative effects on the readers which results in the perpetuation of the stigmatisation and marginalisation of people who are blind. They continue to be regarded as the different 'other' who should be shunned because their condition is associated with sin and as such, they are considered responsible for their condition.

At the end of *Garandichauya* and *Mwana Waamai*, it is as if the three characters are deprived of sight as a way of ensuring that they discontinue their immorality. In the above narratives, once a character becomes blind the story ends, he or she is excluded from the story line. Authors seem to suggest that blindness is synonymous with death. Muchaneta, Ruzvidzo and Matamba are only active before they become blind, once they are blinded they die, become passive or extinct, little or no reference is made to them, which implies the extinction of their lives. Such a depiction can also be taken to mean that blindness is not just a loss of sight but it is also a loss of one's personality, life as well as a 'death' blow to the being of the character which suggests that a blind person cannot be a 'complete human being'. This is also typical of Mujajati's (1997) *Yorire Ngoma* where there is mention of a blind people's cooperative. In the play, nothing is said about the life experiences of these blind people. It

appears as if they exist somewhere outside the play. Indeed people with blindness are denied adequate fictional space in ChiShona literary works.

While authors manage to capture societies negative attitudes towards blindness they fail to explore the life experiences of people who are blind. A meaningful portrayal of people who are blind would aim at exploring their life experiences, exposing their needs as well as addressing their plight. The negative portrayal of blindness does not encourage the inclusion of persons with blindness into the mainstream. Instead, it marginalises and stigmatises them as well as prohibiting society from helping them become self-reliant. Secondly, the negative portrayal of blindness does not assist in addressing the plight of persons with blindness. Thirdly, negative portrayal deprives people with blindness recognition as normal beings and their achievements are not realised as well. The notion that people with blindness are cursed is reinforced and perpetuated yet this notion is destructive to their image. It is critical that people with blindness are depicted just like other characters because what people with blindness need is a positive portrayal that ensures their dignity. Portraying people who are blind as cursed people is retrogressive and inhuman. Such a portrayal is a stereotype which does not uphold the principles of *Vumunhu*, instead, it perpetuates the stigmatisation and marginalisation of those who are blind who continue to be viewed as the different 'other'.

4.3 Depiction of speech disability

Speech disability features in *Pafunge* (Think of it) by Tsodzo (1976), *Makaitei* (What did you do?) by Mavesera (2014), and *Zinyekenyeke* (A Loose String) by Mujajati (1997). The novel *Pafunge* is about Annatoria and Rudo who fall prey to Josiah's machinations. Josiah pretends to be a devoted Christian yet he is the head of a criminal gang in Gweru. He deceives Annatoria, impregnates her and abandons her. Annatoria commits suicide immediately after giving birth to Rudo who grows up an orphan under the care of father Lovedale at Mharapara mission. In an effort to honour her mother's wishes Rudo falls prey to Josiah's tricks; Josiah used the same tricks he used to trap Annatoria to entice Rudo. Rudo gets pregnant and she joins Josiah in Gweru. During their stay, Rudo realises that Josiah is her own father and that he is head of a criminal gang. The gang members pretend to be good and helpful to young girls whom they will, later on, disown after impregnating them.

Michael Gumbo is a member of this gang and he is described as a short boy with a lisp. He has problems pronouncing the ChiShona consonant /-r-/. He would pronounce /-r-/ as /-n-/. Michael meets Rudo at Gweru bus terminus and shows his interest in Rudo but what he says is not typical of someone who is proposing love to a girl. The implication is that because of the lisp Michael is not proficient and cannot communicate meaningfully. Thus, the author's creations ridicules Michael's lisp and his incompetence to communicate his love to Rudo properly. The lisp is an obstacle.

Kuti ndigan'e ndin'i ndega zvin'i kundinetsa. Man'i yokun'ovon'a mukadzi ndinayo. Chete vasikana vacho ndivo vandin'i kushaya. Kun'an'a gota kunonetsa chaizvo... (Tsodzo, 1972, p. 56). (I am finding it difficult to remain single. I have money for bride wealth. Unfortunately, I am failing to find a fiancée. Staying single is difficult.)

In the above excerpt the artist's creations makes fun out of Michael's lisp. In so doing, the artist ridicules speech disability. This is not the proper way of approaching a woman. What Michael is saying suggests that he is ignorant of appropriate ways of approaching the opposite sex. In fact, he is incompetent when it comes to proposing love to girls. Predictably, Rudo cannot comprehend what Michael is saying, there is no communication at all. The lisp is portrayed as a hindrance to effective communication. Michael fails to communicate his love to Rudo. In the ChiShona culture, a boy is expected to parade good communication skills when proposing love to a girl in order to lure the girl into loving him. Unfortunately, Michael fails to do so. His lisp is a hindrance and as such is demeaning to his person. Michael is not able to communicate, attract and impress Rudo and the impression created is that he cannot win a girl's heart given that he has a lisp which is a hindrance to communication.

As Michael is talking to Rudo, some boys nearby assuming Rudo is turning down Michael's proposal ask Michael to give them a chance to talk to Rudo. The following excerpt shows that the author's creations belittles Michael; "*Vamwe vakomana vaviri pavakaona kuti chikomana chechirimi chakanga chiri kurambwa vakabva vasvika vakachikumbira kuti chivatendere kutaura naRudo*" (Tsodzo, 1976, p.56). (Two boys after realising that Rudo is turning down Michael's proposal ask Michael to permit them to talk to Rudo). The author uses the noun prefix /chi-/ of class seven to refer to Michael. This prefix is used to refer to human beings when the intention is to belittle or despise. Thus, in this context, the author is belittling as well as despising Michael simply because he is short and has a lisp. The author refers to Michael as a boy with a lisp as if he does not have a name. This is indicative of his denigrating attitude towards speech disability. It would appear from the narrative that Tsodzo

does not take people with disabilities seriously or he wants to show how those with lips are belittled. He presents them as people who do not deserve due respect. This is not in line with *Vumunhu* that demands respect for all people regardless of their status or condition.

When Michael refuses to comply, the two boys threaten to assault him. Michael challenges them; he fights them and defeats them. On this note Michael as someone with a disability is presented as having super powers, he defeats two boys single-handedly. This is typical of the depiction of persons with disabilities in folktales (Chigidi, 1987; Fortune, 1980; Rubin & Watson, 1987) where the small and the despised animals representing persons with disabilities are triumphant over the huge animals, but this does not add to status as he fails to win over Rudo.

The other novel that discusses speech impairment is *Makaitei?* by Mavesera (2014). In this narrative, the author mainly uses internal monologue to present the story. The story is about an old ailing man by the name Takaendesa. Takaendesa has children who are abroad and some are in Zimbabwe. Among those who are out of the country, none of them is prepared to visit him and give meaningful assistance; they are just good at giving excuses and promising to send financial assistance, which they never do. Thus, the old man is worried over his children's attitude. He has many children but the children are doing nothing to alleviate his predicament hence the title of the novel *Makaitei?* (What role did you play when I was ill?).

In the narrative, Mavesera (2014) mentions the 2008 economic situation in Zimbabwe. She cites how one teacher tasked learners to deliberate on a topic '*Kudzidza hakuna chimuko*' (Education is of no value). During the debate, one learner with a speech disability stands up and starts to sign in support of the topic. While Mavesera on this note acknowledges the idea of inclusive education as she mentions a character with speech disability as learning together with those who can talk, her creations suggest a negative attitude towards speech disability.

In the novel, Mavesera (2014) mostly uses internal monologue to narrate the story but when it comes to this character with speech disability Mavesera fails to engage her/ him meaningfully. Given that the story is presented in form of a monologue one would expect the character who cannot talk to fit perfectly in the narrative such that it would not have been necessary to mention their disabilities. The author reports that the character stood up and started to use sign language to communicate their ideas. "*Panonzi pakasimuka imwe mbeveve*

ikagoninira ichitsigira musoro uyu. Imi!’’ (Mavesera, 2014, p. 15). (It is reported that a character who could not speak stood up and started to communicate in Sign Language in support of the topic). This is surprising in that the literary device used in the narrative best suits the character who cannot talk but the author fails to ensure that she takes advantage of the device to engage the character with speech disability meaningfully. . The author fails to acknowledge that the character with speech disability perfectly fits into the narrative. She fails to engage the character meaningfully. It seems the author’s main thrust is to parade the shortcomings of the character yet in this context; the character could have perfectly fitted well because of the internal monologue used to narrate the story.

Mavesera (2014) shows that she did not seriously consider the depiction of this character with a disability. Her interest is in parading the disability in this character; she does not even ascribe a name to this character; the character is referred to as “*imwewo mbeveve*” (a certain character who could not speak) as if to suggest the character’s identity is not important because of the disability. The author shows her negative attitude towards disability, she does not accord the character due respect when she fails to ascribe a name to the character and when she fails to engage the character meaningfully. The author’s emphasis is on the disability rather than the person. Thus, the depiction of disability in this context is against the principles of *Vumunhu* as the character with a speech disability is considered as different from the rest ‘the different other’.

In *Zinyekenyeke*, by Mujajati (1997) Marufu is a teacher and is married to Susan. The couple has two children Rudo and Charles. Marufu empowers Susan by sending her to school. Upon completion, she is employed as a secretary and now looks down upon Marufu. Marufu stammers. Susan teases, despises and disrespects her husband Marufu because of his stammering. It appears her disrespectful attitude emanates from her negative attitude towards his stammering. She complains about Marufu’s stammering, ‘*Haiwawo ende matauriro ako anondiiriteta sitereki... Ndakakutaurira kare kuti enda kuspeech therapy as haudi*. (Mujajati, 1997, p. 18). (Hey, the way you speak irritates me... I advised you long back to go for speech therapy but you do not want). The author depicts stammering negatively, he suggests stammering is irritating and as such Marufu needs rehabilitation. On this note, the author approaches disability from the medical model where rehabilitation is believed to be a solution to Marufu’s stammering.

Suzen commits adultery with her boss Chimimba. She constantly insults Marufu and absconds at midnight in pursuit of Chimimba. She eventually abandons her home. Suzen shows her lack of respect for her husband by openly mocking the way he speaks through mimicking how he speaks:

Suzan: Kuti i –i-ndiko kuti chiiko He-e-e I –i-i- ka- ka- Ndizvo zvinongogonekwa chete izvozvo.

Marufu: (achinongedzera pawachi) Nda- a- ndati i- i-

Suzan: E-e wati chii Tauraka tinzwe

Marufu: Nda-nda-nda-a

Suzan: Haiwa Handingasoromirira nda- nda-nda- (Anobuda) (Mujajati, 1997, p. 17).

(Suzan: What do you mean when you say i-I what! I-I ka-ka that is all you are able to say.

Marufu: (pointing to a watch) I –a- I said i-i-

Susan: E-e what did you say? Speak so I can hear.

Marufu: I – I –I

Susan: I cannot spend the whole day listening to I-I- I (going out)

Through the above conversation, the author is communicating that stammering is a disgrace; it needs determination, and patience for someone to engage in a meaningful conversation with the affected individual. Imitating the way one speaks is mocking or looking down upon someone. In the excerpt above Suzen suggests Marufu is incompetent as a husband, the statement ‘*Kuti I –I ndiko kuti chiiko He e-e-e I-i-I ka-ka-ka. Ndizvo zvinongogonekwa chete*’ is denigrating, mocks stammering and implies Marufu is useless as a husband because he cannot communicate properly. Suzen walks away from him, an indication of her disrespect. Suzen nicknames Marufu Ka- ka-ka- because of his stammering which again is a disgrace to Marufu’s person. In the play, the author depicts stammering in a negative way and the way he does it is communicative of his negative attitude towards stammering. Chimimba wondered how Suzen got attracted to a man with a speech disability. Suzen explains to Chimimba that Marufu never stammered before their marriage, which may suggest their marriage is responsible for this disability. Suzen’s misdemeanour could be an explanation to Marufu’s stammering.

This section has shown that ChiShona literary writers depict speech disability negatively and that literary writers are interested in exposing the shortcomings of persons with a speech disability, they ridicule and despise speech disability. The next section considers the depiction of disability within the context of marriage.

4.4 Depiction of disability in relation to marriage

The UNCRPD Article 23 (p. 15) states that:

State parties shall take effective and appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities in all matters relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships, on an equal basis with others so as to ensure that: (a) The rights of all persons with disabilities who are of a marriageable age to marry and to found a family on the basis of free and full consent of the intending spouse is recognized.

Thus, the UNCRPD recognises the right of persons with disabilities to marriage. This means persons with disabilities have a legal right to marry whomsoever they wish to get married to. On the same note, Boylan (1991, p. 23) says women living with disabilities have the right to love; the right to marriage, the right to motherhood and the right to personal fulfilment. However, society denies them this legal right. Boylan further explains that men living with disabilities marry and enjoy family life, but in some societies, women living with disabilities are not expected to marry. Families in most cases take the lead in depressing ambitions any woman with a disability may have to realise her purpose. Society usually considers women with disabilities as asexual and this has compelled the seclusion of women with disabilities (Boylan, 1991). Contrary to this view, Shava (2008) posits that men living with disabilities, and who are economically secure, are more likely to get married to women without disabilities. With this background, I explored the depiction of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays in relation to marriage.

The play *Ruvimbo* by Chingono (1980) is about Ruvimbo, a girl in a wheel chair. She is an orphan and is under the care of her uncle, Masenda. She writes a poem expressing her predicament as a woman in a wheel chair, and her desire to have a fiancé. Ruvimbo craves and yearns for a partner as evidenced by her poem;

*Chiiko kugara pakanyika kadiki kudai kanoguma panoguma meso?
Ndarira dzekuzvarwa nadzo dzinomanikidza nekugonya angu makumbo.
Nokunyebudza maziso ndoona vanodana kure uko,
Kwete pano, hapana anosvika.
Idariro rehama chete
Asika ndoda kutamba ngoma nemudiwa
Zvino wangu aripiko anondida
Anotora mutorwa omupingudza nerudo?
Wangu aripiko anondiyemedza
Kwete anondinyebudza rudo,
Anondicheka nzwara nokupisika misodzi,
Anonditarisawo neziso rinodhaka sehwhahwa?
Wangu aripiko wandisingazive?
Rupenyu rune utsinye kwazvo*

Kuomesa tsinga nemidzira yamakumbo angu

Asi ruchiziva harwo chokwadi.

Mudiwa anofambirwa anoshanyirwa

Kure kure uko kuno nerudo

(Chingono, 1980, p. 20).

(Why stay in such a small world like this

Which ends as far as the eye can see

Disability paralysed my legs

Tantalising my eyes, I see those in love far away

Not here, no one approaches me.

It is just a playground for relatives only

However, I want to be intimate with my love / I want to dance to the drums with my love

So my love where is he him who loves me?

Who takes a stranger and changes her into a lover?

Where is mine to spoil me

Not someone with fake love

Someone who cuts my nails and wipes my tears,

Who looks at me with an eye that intoxicates like beer?

Where is my love him whom I do not know?

Life is very cruel

Paralysing the veins of my legs

Yet it knows the truth.

Lovers should visit each other

Far away over there from love.

Thus, through the above poem the author explores the desire by a woman in a wheelchair representing others with physical disabilities to have life partners. The poem challenges the popular assumption that women with disabilities are asexual (Boylan, 1991). Ngoni Tichafa, a radio journalist assists her in broadcasting the poem. Ngoni is touched by the poem and he falls in love with Ruvimbo. Ruvimbo also falls in love with Ngoni. Ngoni is from a rich family. Unfortunately, Ngoni encounters stiff resistance from his parents and elder brother Nhamo when he informs them about his intention to marry Ruvimbo. This resistance is simply because she has a disability and is from a poor family. On the other hand, Ruvimbo's guardians do not believe that Ngoni genuinely loves Ruvimbo. Despite his family's disapproval, Ngoni brings in Ruvimbo for introductions. A feud between Nhamo and Ngoni explodes, Nhamo is adamant that Ngoni should not marry Ruvimbo because she has a physical disability and she is in a wheelchair. Ruvimbo tries to intercede but Nhamo castigates her. Ruvimbo realises that the situation is getting out of hand and she jumps from the wheel chair and confesses that she has no disability.

In the play, the author shows how culture and social status influence people's reactions towards disability. Ruvimbo is the main character and her name serves as the title of the play. The name Ruvimbo means faith. Chingono shows his positive attitude towards disability by ascribing a name with positive connotations to the character with a disability. The name denotes that Ruvimbo should trust that Ngoni loves her and all characters in the play are urged to trust in Ruvimbo and Ngoni's love. However, the play reveals the Shona people's negative attitudes towards marrying a woman with a disability. The author exposes negative attitudes especially within the family institution towards marrying a woman with a disability. When Ngoni informs his parents about his intention to marry Ruvimbo he faces stiff resistance from his parents (Tichafa and Matienga) and his elder brother (Nhamo). They all wonder why Ngoni wants to marry '*chirema*' someone with a physical disability and who uses a wheelchair. Nhamo laughs at the idea of Ngoni marrying someone in a wheelchair and from a poor background. He queries: "*Usataure zvinhu zvisina maturo asi wambodzvuta?*" (Chingono, 1980, p. 2). (Do not say stupid things, have you been drinking?) Nhamo is suggesting that marrying a woman in a wheelchair is nonsensical and is not expected from someone with a sober mind, hence, his question "*Asi wambodzvuta?*" (Have you been drinking?)

Nhamo enquires about Ruvimbo's education and employment status. '*Anoshanda here? ... Akadzidza chii?*'" (Chingono, 1980, p. 2) (Is she employed? How far did she go with her education?) Alas, Ruvimbo is not educated neither is she employed. This is typical of most people with disabilities in real life, in most cases, they are neither educated nor employed. Nhamo's two questions explain the reasons why women living with disabilities are shunned in marriage and why they find it difficult to have life partners. Firstly, their disabilities prohibit them from acquiring education; in most cases, parents are reluctant to send children with disabilities to school on the assumption that they do not have the potential ability and will not attract employers, and at times, the nature of the disability is a hindrance especially when they are from a poor family (Choruma, 2006). The disability may cause mobility problems. Ruvimbo completed grade six only despite the large sum of money that her father left for her, something that suggests that those with disabilities don't need to advance with their education. Without education, unemployment is usually inevitable. However, Ruvimbo is able to perform house chores. Chingono's portrayal of disability agrees with Choruma's (2006) assertion that girls with disabilities are allowed to do menial household chores only.

They are not equipped with adequate life skills, which can affect their relationship with in-laws in the event of getting married.

Consequently, Ruvimbo is not welcome to the Tichafa family. To Ngoni's father, it is taboo and a disgrace for Ngoni to marry someone in a wheelchair. Thus, Tichafa vows to disown Ngoni if he marries Ruvimbo. Tichafa believes his son, from a rich family, cannot marry someone with a disability and from a poor background. He suggests Ngoni changes his identity if he marries Ruvimbo. Such a reaction shows how socio-economic status influences attitudes towards disability (Rohwerder 2018; Zinyemba 1986). Thus, he rebukes Ngoni:

Ngoni unopenga iwe. Unofunga kuti zvonzwika kuti mwana waTichafa akaroora chirema ndinofambira kupi chaizvo? (Chingono, 1980, p. 2) (Ngoni you are mentally ill. Imagine people getting to know that Tichafa's son married a woman in a wheelchair, it is disgraceful).

This negative attitude emanates from the fact that someone with physical disability (*chirema*) is considered useless and in general terms the word '*chirema*' means inability to function or stupidity (Shava, 2008). As we have already argued, language plays a big role in promoting attitudes towards disability and in this context, the noun '*chirema*' ascribed to Ruvimbo's condition promotes negative attitudes towards disability. The ChiShona synonym for disability is *urema* and someone with some form of disability is called '*chirema*', which means a person with any form of physical disability.

Chimhundu (2001) defines *chirema* as:

munhu akaremara muviri kana nhengo, munhu ane dzimwe nhengo dzomuviri dzisina kuumbwa nekumira zvakaenzana. (A maimed person, someone disfigured or someone who does not have normal body parts).

Chirema is a noun in class 7. In the Shona language, nouns in class 7 indicate material objects as in *chipfuko* (sweet beer pot); *chibhokisi* (a small box). Nouns in class 7 can also refer to several illnesses or diseases as *chikosoro* (irritating cough); and *chibhokisi* (smallpox). They can be names of items or small creatures as in *chingwa* (bread); *chitoro* (store); *choto* (fireplace); *chikukwa* (type of worm); *chiva* (puff adder); *chidhanana* (lizard); *chuma* (bead); and *chitsiga* (a stump). None of these nouns refers to human beings. The prefix /*chi-*/ in class 7 is only used to address human beings when the intention is to imply several negative implications, such as partial, imperfect, diminutive, to belittle, or to indicate deformity in some way or other as in *chirema* (maimed), *chifeve* (prostitute), *chirimi* (slurred

speech), *chimumumu* (mute) and *chikumbodai* (physical disability that makes it difficult to walk). In this context /*chi-*/ is derogatory showing that the person has some form of disability or weakness in terms of character (Fortune, 1980).

Nouns like *chikadzi*, *chirume*, *chimunhu* (small or little woman, small or little man or small or little person) are all derogatory and pejorative for they suggest that the person is of small stature or someone who is not worth respecting maybe because of their bad character or their unattractive physical structure or their tiny stature. It is in rare instances that the prefix /*chi-*/ is used positively to address human beings. This analysis leads one to infer that the ChiShona word '*chirema*' used to refer or to address Ruvimbo, other characters with disabilities and other persons with disabilities is derogatory, it is intended to shun, belittle, despise and ridicule Ruvimbo together with those living with disabilities, a noun that shows that such people are less human and useless. It also indicates that someone is not a complete human being or is not normal and lacks something. Such a background explains the stigma attached to those addressed as '*chirema*' and why Ngoni's parents do not want him to marry Ruvimbo.

To Ngoni's mother marrying a woman in a wheelchair is a desperate move and a waste of resources. Tichafa believes marrying someone in a wheelchair is an embarrassment to his family. The supposed embarrassment emanates from culture, which does not approve of marrying a woman with a disability and the notion that it is degrading for someone from a well-to-do family to marry a person with a disability. Ruvimbo's acceptance into the family is problematic because the assumption is that she is not able to perform the various ranges of household chores a woman is expected to perform (Choruma, 2006). This is the case because in the Shona culture a daughter-in-law offers services to her in-laws through doing a variety of household chores, which range from child-bearing, housekeeping, looking after the children, the husband and even taking care of her in-laws. Bride wealth is paid for these services, (Gelfand, 1973) which implies that when the bride has a physical disability; its payment is uncalled for and a mere waste of resources. This is why the Tichafa family does not want Ngoni to take Ruvimbo as a wife. Their assumption is, marrying someone with a disability would mean giving them a burden for they think that instead of Ngoni and them receiving services from Ruvimbo they will be required to offer services to Ruvimbo because of her condition.

Desta (1995) explains that the reason why people with disabilities are detested is that they are considered hopeless and useless. Choruma (2006) posits that people with disabilities are viewed as people who need assistance and this explains why Ruvimbo is not welcome as a daughter-in-law. In this context, Ruvimbo is doubly disadvantaged because of the stigma associated with gender as well as her disability (Rohwerder, 2018). Ruvimbo's disability worsens her position, as a woman in a society with respect to marriage (Choruma, 2006). Her condition is viewed as a hindrance to marriage. The family is also afraid of other myths associated with bringing in someone with a disability into the family especially the general fear that the presence of a person with a disability in a family brings calamity to the family. (Choruma, 2006; Chimhenga & Musarurwa, 2011). Matienga's hopes as a mother in law are shattered hence she laments:

Kana washinga unoti ndinochengetwa nani? Ndaiti dzimwe nguva mukadzi wako ndiye aizondichengeta. Chirema chinondichengeta here mwanangu? (Chingono, 1980, p. 3). If you are determined to marry Ruvimbo who do you think is going to look after me? I thought your wife was going to look after me. Can someone in a wheelchair look after me?).

Her disapproval of Ruvimbo is revealed in the way she interrogates Ngoni over the issue. Her questions are indicative of her anxiety. Through these questions, Ngoni's mother expresses her sadness, disapproval and shattered hopes. Ngoni's mother sees no logic in marrying Ruvimbo, a woman in a wheelchair who is not able to look after her. She expected to be looked after by Ngoni's wife. Now that Ngoni has decided to marry someone with a physical disability her hopes are shattered. Baffled by his mother's negative response Ngoni queries:

Haasi munhu here amai...? Uyu musikana mwana kwaye sokuona kwangu, zvokuva chirema handinei nazvo" (Chingono, 1980, p. 3). (Is she not a human being...This girl is morally upright from my point of view; I do not mind her disability).

This is Chingono's message in the play; people with disabilities are human beings just like anyone else. Humanity is reflected in one's character and not in one's physical condition. Thus, the author adheres to the principles of *Vumunhu* in his depiction of disability.

Ngoni's position confirms White's (1988, p. 36) remarks that in most cases people become sceptical when a man without disability marries a woman with disability:

People sometimes question the motives of able-bodied people who choose disabled partners. Why would he be tied up with a cripple? He must be sorry for her or that he likes people to be dependent on him.

This is exactly what happens in the play, the Masenda are sceptical about Ngoni's love for Ruvimbo, either Ruvimbo informed him about the money her father left for her, or that Ngoni wanted to be recognised by society for doing the unusual (marrying someone in a wheelchair). In the following excerpt, Masenda expresses his doubts when Munarwo comments that Ruvimbo is now of marriageable age. In response, Masenda castigates Munarwo:

Imi munotaura zvenhando. Kanapo akaita mhandara angaite chii? ...Nani? Ndiani angade kuzvitakudza nhamo yakadai? (Chingono, 1980, p. 12) (What you are saying is meaningless. Even if she is of a marriageable age what can she do? By who? Who would want to carry such a burden?)

Masenda's statement is loaded with questions, which show his discontent with Munarwo's view. The consecutive questions are an expression of his utter doubts that Ruvimbo can marry. The questions above suggest that it is not possible for Ruvimbo to get married and that anyone willing to marry her will be seeking trouble for himself. He raises the same sentiments raised by Ngoni's family that marrying a woman in a wheelchair is not practical and is a burden.

The views expressed by the two families confirm what Ras-Work (cited in Boylan 1991, p. 53) asserts:

It is considered somehow shocking that a disabled woman should marry, and families usually are the most vehement in discouraging any aspirations disabled women may have to fulfil a destiny.

Indeed both the Tichafa family and the Masenda family vehemently discourage Ruvimbo and Ngoni from getting married. After her discussion with Masenda, Munarwo warns Ruvimbo about her relationship with Ngoni. She lectures to her about the possible reasons why Ngoni showed interest in her, that Ngoni could have been driven by pity or a desire to seek popularity by marrying someone in a wheelchair. She also explains to her that Masenda is worried about her relationship with Ngoni because Ruvimbo's condition is not conducive to childbearing. Hence, marriage without children is unlikely to last. Thus, Chingono succeeds in presenting a true picture of how disability among the Shona is a deterrent factor in marriage. The Shona culture does not approve of marriage that is not likely to produce children.

At the same time, the author's thrust here is to bring out the idea that humanity surpasses disability and that human beings should be given due respect thus bringing in the idea of *Vumunhu* which encourages embracing all human kind. The author wants to discourage the idea of viewing disability as an impediment or obstacle to marriage. People should see beyond the physical appearances as Ngoni does and value the humanity of the other person's disability or not.

The whole family gangs up against Ngoni for proposing to marry Ruvimbo. When Ngoni wheels in Ruvimbo to introduce her, to his family she is not welcome, a feud erupts and Nhamo insinuates that Ngoni is mentally ill:

Mwana wenyu chirema uyu. Chirema mupfungwa! Hazvishamisi kuona zvirema zvichidana. (Chingono, 1980, p. 33) (Your son has a disability. He is mentally ill! It is not surprising to see those with a disability falling in love).

The above excerpt suggests that Ngoni's desire to marry a woman in a wheelchair is indicative of his inability to reason rationally. The statement implies that no human being under normal circumstances can choose to marry someone in a wheelchair.

A feud develops into a fierce fight of words between Ngoni and his elder brother Nhamo. The intensity of the verbal war between Ngoni and his family compels Ruvimbo to disembark from the wheelchair, standing up and confessing that she is not a 'cripple':

Musashamiswa zvenyu ini handisi chirema. Baba vangu vasati vafa vari muchipatarira vakanditaurira kuti ndakafanira kugara sechirema. Naizvozvo ndakatengerwa bhasikoro iri. Baba vangu vakati ukaona wonyengwa nomukomana uri chirema anokuda zvakaperera. Babamukuru vangu VaMasenda havana zvavanoziva. Nokuti vakazouya kuzonditora kuGwanda kwandaive ndiri nherera ndatove kufamba nebhasikoro iri. Baba vangu vakandityira kwazvo. Hapana chimwe chavaigona asi zano ravo rakunda mari yavakandisiyira. Kashoma kudiwa zvakaperera kana uri chirema. Chiripo kunzwira tsitsi chete. Zviro kwazvo mwana womunhu Ngoni aakufamba ari mumubvuri werufu norudo rwake kwendiri. Ndakavimba nemanzwi ababa vangu ndikazovimbazve nerudo rwandakapiwa naNgoni uyo akanditora sechirema chake (Chingono, 1980, p. 35).

(Do not be surprised I do not have a physical disability. My father before he died when he was in hospital instructed me to live like someone with a physical disability. As such, he bought this wheelchair for me. My father said if you see a boy, proposing love to you while you are in a wheelchair that boy absolutely loves you. My uncle Mr Masenda does not know anything. He came to take me to Gwanda where I was an orphan when I was already using this wheelchair. My father was worried about me. Nothing more could have been done but his plan supersedes the money he left for me. It is rare to be loved absolutely when you have a physical disability. The norm is to be pitied. Surely, the son of man Ngoni is now in danger because of his love for me. I

trusted in the words of my father, I then trusted in Ngoni's love who considered me as his woman in a wheelchair.

Ruvimbo's confession reveals the plight of women with disabilities concerning marriage. They are considered asexual. It is rare for a woman in a wheelchair to be asked for her hand in marriage. The tendency among the Shona people is to feel pity for those with disabilities. Her father's plan to fake disability is an effective device used by the author to ensure that she gets a good husband who truly loves her. At the same time, the device is effective in exposing society's negative attitudes towards marrying a woman in a wheelchair. By ensuring that Ruvimbo rises from the wheelchair, Chingono portrays Ruvimbo as a heroine who proves her worthiness by overcoming her disability. While Chingono portrays disability positively his portrayal is problematic in the sense that firstly, Ruvimbo does not have a disability a false picture of disability is paraded to the readers or audience, Secondly, in the play disability is portrayed as a challenge, which Ruvimbo overcomes in order for those who disapproved her marriage to accept it. When Ruvimbo rises from the wheelchair readers and viewers feel relieved about Ruvimbo when they realise she does not have a disability. Such a scenario creates the impression that one can overcome disability, which is not always true. In the play, Ruvimbo and Ngoni's union is regarded as exceptional yet it should be considered normal. This is stereotyping and is not different from stories that are usually published in Zimbabwean newspapers in which men and women with albinism or any other disability wed with those without disability. The titles of such stories suggest that marriage between someone with a disability and someone without a disability is out of the ordinary. Such marriages attract the media simply because they involve persons with disabilities. While the media make capital out of these marriages, such stories reflect that such unions are not usual and wonder and as such they reinforce negative perceptions. This is the same with those with physical disabilities; they are publicized for being talented or skilled in one way or the other. These stories and the exaggerated language used, in most cases to narrate them suggest that people with disabilities should be commended and considered as heroic for doing the normal which reinforces the idea that they are 'the different other'.

At the end of the play, Ruvimbo has no disability and as such one wonders what the author is communicating. Ngoni does not marry a woman in a wheelchair at the end, which may suggest that the author does not approve of marrying a woman in a wheelchair. This analysis leads to the conclusion that the author advocates for what is enshrined in the UNCRPD

Article (23 p.15) concerning marriage. However, in the process, he captures reality; he communicates the situation on the ground that men do not go for women in wheelchairs. He also clearly brings out that Shona tradition does not encourage one to marry a person with a disability. Thus, men marry women with no disability despite what the UNCRPD encourages.

Chidyausiku (1970) in *Karumekangu* (My Diminutive Husband) also discusses disability in relation to marriage. The novel has one of the main characters as the title of the novel. The novel is all about Chikweya's adventures as a character living with a disability. Chikweya is a cobbler, he has a hump on his back and one of his legs is longer. Chikweya is in love with Sarudzai yet Sarudzai does not love him but pities him. Sarudzai unwittingly misleads Chikweya into believing that she is in love with him by befriending him and even going out with him. Sarudzai confides in her friend Matirasa that she loves Karumekangu and does not love Chikweya. Sarudzai cites Chikweya's disability and menial job as reasons for turning down his proposal. On the other hand, Chikweya is bitter about his condition; he feels inferior and always compares himself with other men. When Chikweya realises that Sarudzai is in love with Karumekangu he is bitter and he confronts Sarudzai about the issue. In response, Sarudzai rebukes Chikweya and tells him that she cannot love him because of his disability. Thus, in the narrative, Chikweya's disability is a hindrance in finding a genuine partner. Sarudzai is cross and she rebukes Chikweya:

Chienda chikweya chomunhu chirumendende, chirume pasina vamwe. Unofunga kuti ndingakuitisei chaizvo iwe chimukumbodai...?'' (Chidyausiku, 1970, p. 27). (Go away you man with physical disability useless man, a man in the absence of other man. I do not have any business with you, a man who cannot walk properly).

Sarudzai insults Chikweya and tells him that he is not man enough and that his disability denies him manhood. The nouns *chikweya*, *chirumendende* and *chimukumbodai* used to address Chikweya are derogatory and connote physical deformity. This is the worst one can say to someone with a disability, as such, Chikweya is hurt, he becomes furious and in a fit of rage, he violently attacks Sarudzai whom he stabs with Karumekangu's knife and disappears. Karumekangu is a suspect but after a thorough investigation, Chikweya is arrested and thrown in jail where he develops heart disease and subsequently dies.

Chidyausiku (1970) shows his negative portrayal of disability by ascribing a name with negative connotations to a character with a disability. The name Chikweya connotes deformity in legs, it implies that one is not able to walk properly or drags his legs or feet

when walking because of a defect, he has. The name Chikweya is derogatory. It mocks both disability and the character with the disability. Throughout the narrative, the derogatory noun '*chirema*' (someone with a physical disability) is used to refer to Chikweya. Chikweya also refers to himself as '*chirema*', which shows how he despises his condition. Thus, the author shows that persons with disabilities are not happy with their condition. The author consistently addresses him as '*chirema*' as well as describing how he walks for example '*...Chikweya akagamhina*' (...Chikweya limped instead of walked) (Chidyausiku, 1970, p. 84). The author reminds readers about Chikweya's disability as well as suggesting that Chikweya cannot walk properly. Thus, Chikweya is not given due respect as a human being, people see his disability and not his person and this reflects society's negative attitudes towards disability. It is also interesting to note that names of characters in the narrative like Sarudzai, Matirasa and Karumekangu all point to disability. Sarudzai (select) means that Sarudzai will choose who to marry Chikweya a man with disability or Karumekangu a young man without disability. Sarudzai jilts Chikweya and the name Matirasa (you have abandoned us) suggests a protest by Chikweya that Sarudzai ditches him. The name Karumekangu (my diminutive husband) approves Karumekangu's wholesomeness since he does not have a disability and as such, Sarudzai prefers him hence he is Sarudzai's future husband. This confirms Chikweya's fears.

In the novel, Chikweya constantly thinks about his disability because he fears losing Sarudzai to other young men especially Karumekangu whom he sees a threat. Chikweya believes that those who are blind are better off in the sense that they do not get attracted to anyone, unlike him who is exposed to beautiful girls whom he cannot enter into a relationship permanently yet Sarudzai flatters Chikweya regarding his condition by saying:

Usazvinetsa nekuti uri chirema. Chii chinoitwa nevamwe chausingagoni kuita (Chidyausiku, 1970, p. 7). (Do not trouble yourself for having a disability. What is it that which others do that you cannot do)?

In essence, this is true because disability is not inability. What is wrong is the fact that the statement is deceiving and is coming from someone who is not genuine; Sarudzai does not regard Chikweya as a real man because of his disability and menial job. The author is showing how society deceives persons with disabilities into making them believe they are accepted as normal human beings yet they are not.

Chidyausiku's (1970) use of a soccer match in which Karumekangu is a participant is symbolic (Kahari, 1975). Sarudzai and Matirasa watch the match and throughout the match, Karumekangu is applauded for his soccer skills. The author's intention is to show a comparison between Chikweya, a young man with a physical disability and Karumekangu's competence in the soccer field; something Chikweya is not capable of doing. Thus, the author's inclusion of the soccer match in the narrative is to show that those with disabilities are inferior and cannot compete with other people. Hence, Karumekangu outshines Chikweya. Such a portrayal of disability is negative in that it does not consider persons with disabilities as equals to those without disabilities and does not uphold the principles of *Vumunhu*, which guide this study.

Whenever Chikweya and Sarudzai go out Sarudzai chooses to dance with other men and Chikweya is not comfortable with this move, he leaves in disgust. He complains that Sarudzai is not happy with his company but enjoys the company of other young men including Karumekangu. Matirasa satirically comments that Chikweya cannot be on the stage dancing because of his disability.

Iwe waimveyesana nani Chikweya zvaasingagoni kutamba somunhu anoti uku rimwe gumbo irefu kudarika rimwe uku nhutwa tuku kumusana? (Chidyausiku, 1970, p. 2). (Whom were you supposed to be dancing with since Chikweya cannot dance for he has one leg, which is longer, and a hump on his back?).

Is it necessary for Matirasa to describe Chikweya's physical appearance or his disability? This is more of an insult. This description shows that Chikweya has odd features that are a hindrance in doing what other young men of his age do on the dancing floor and as such he is different, 'the different other'. Matirasa's question is rhetorical. It needs no answer for it suggests that Chikweya cannot dance publicly because he has odd features, which are weird, and humiliating in public. This explains why Sarudzai does not dance with Chikweya. This is the author's way of depreciating persons with disabilities and showing society's negativity towards disability.

In her conversation with Matirasa, Sarudzai remarks that Chikweya is not the kind of man she can marry particularly because of his disability and menial job:

Unofunga Chikweya ndiye mukomana wekuti ndingamira naye pasvitsa here? Nairo basa rake rokusona shangu iri. Unofunga kuti angava mukomana wandingat nhasi ndawanawo murume chaiye? (Chidyausiku, 1970, p. 5).

(You think Chikweya is the kind of man I can wed? With his job of mending shoes. You think he is a man that I can say today I have found a real husband?).

In the above excerpt, Sarudzai communicates that Chikweya is not a real man who is worth tying the knot with because of his disability and menial job. Her questions show her disapproval of Chikweya as a potential suitor. Thus, the author communicates that people with disabilities have a problem that they possess physical features which other people find odd and upsetting (White, 1988). It seems an ideal man should not have a disability. If he has a disability, he then should have a good job for him to be able to attract women (Shava 2008).

In the narrative, the author manages to show society's negative attitude towards disability and that people with disabilities are ridiculed and are treated as second-class humans. Chidyausiku (1970) depicts disability negatively. He paints a negative picture of disability by creating this narrative. The author is communicating that it is impossible for someone with a disability to attract the opposite sex especially when they are poor. In this context, disability is a manifestation of poverty. In addition, the author communicates that those living with disabilities are people who are not happy because they face stigma and discrimination. Their disabilities are the source of their sorrow. The author also communicates that persons with disabilities envy those without disabilities. Depicting disability negatively reinforces negative attitudes in readers. At the end of the narrative, the author does not provide a solution to the conflict in his narrative, instead, he kills Chikweya and readers fail to understand the purpose of such a narrative. Chikweya is a victim of circumstances and his story line as a character with a disability is resolved with death, a trend associated with stereotypes that exist in Western literature. Portraying disability, this way does not encourage the inclusion of those with disabilities in the mainstream and does not help in addressing their plight. As one of the pioneers in the writing of ChiShona narratives, it appears Chidyausiku did not think much about his depiction of disability or he just emulated stories narrated in Western literature. Kahari (1975, p. 32) confirms this when he says, "There appears to be no theme in the novel apart from that of telling a story for its own sake..." By saying this, Kahari shows that he is not cognisant of the theme of disability in the narrative. Failure to acknowledge disability as a theme in *Karumekangu* is indicative of his negative attitude towards disability or lack of awareness about disability issues given the time when the book was written.

Concerning the plight of those who acquire a disability after marriage McPherson (cited in Boylan (1991, p. 56) articulates, “If a woman succumbs to disability after marriage chances are that her husband will leave her”. This is what happens in Mungoshi’s *Makunun’unu Maodzamoyo* (1970) when Tendai suffers a mental illness her husband marries another wife and her children remain in the custody of the husband. Thus, Mungoshi is showing that mental disability negatively affects marriage. Marriage cannot survive especially when it is the woman who is struck by a mental disability. By the nature of her gender roles, a woman in Tendai’s predicament automatically finds herself irrelevant in the marriage institution since she will no longer be able to attend to children, the husband and the vast household chores she is expected to attend to. Even when Tendai heals she cannot reunite with the husband because of the stigma associated with mental illness and the fact that the husband has remarried. Thus, in the narrative, Tendai is now single and chances of getting married are slim due to the stigma that emanates from her history of mental illness. Thus, Mungoshi manages to highlight the plight of married women who become mentally ill. They lose their husbands, matrimonial home and their children.

As I pointed out earlier on, in Mujajati’s *Zinyekenyeke* (1977), Marufu who is married to Suzen stammers and his wife Suzen is not comfortable with Marufu’s stammering. Because of this, Susan loses respect for Marufu leading to the end of their marriage. Thus, the author in the play depicts disability as responsible for the dissolution of the marriage between Marufu and Susan.

Mabasa’s (2008) *Ndafa Here?* is a story about Watson and Betty who are students at the University of Zimbabwe. Betty withdraws from college when she gets pregnant and she joins Watson’s family. Watson and Betty are blessed with an albino baby girl Sunungurai (disentangle or unravel). The arrival of a baby with albinism is usually associated with evil; some believe the mother could possibly have had intercourse with a ghost (Kisanji, 2001). Due to ignorance, concerning what causes albinism Watson’s family is not comfortable with the birth of Sunungurai an albino; they view her birth as unusual and associate it with evil. They suspect Sunungurai is not Watson’s offspring and that Betty was not faithful to Watson and could have possibly committed adultery. This is not surprising given the fact that in the past children with albinism were killed immediately after birth (Choruma 2006). Given the negative attitudes towards the baby, the name Sunungurai suggests that Betty should disclose whatever evil she committed that resulted in her giving birth to an albino. Betty suffers abuse

at the hands of her in-laws, the abuse is because she is a dependent and that her baby is a disgrace to the family. Watson's mother Mrs. Matanga, protests:

Hauoniwo here kuti pamwe musikana iyeye anogona kunge akaitiswa nhumbu nekamwewo kakomana kasina basa ongoti namata nemwana wangu. Mwana murungudunhu wakamuwonawo kupi? Isu kwedu hakuna isu.'' (Mabasa, 2008, p.). (Can't you see that the girl could have been impregnated by a useless boy and then claim my son is responsible. Where did she get a baby with albinism? We do not have albinos in our family).

The old woman reaches this conclusion because there is no history of albinism in the family. The term *murungudunhu* (fake local white man/ a white man in an African community) used to refer to Sunungurai's condition is derogatory; it connotes a fake white man or a local man who resembles a white man. The same happens in Mavesera's *Makaitai?* (What did you do?) (2014), the denigrating term *Kamurungudunhu* is also used to refer to Chenai. The noun prefix /ka-/ of class 12 denigrates and belittles Chenai.

Watson's brother is not sensitive at all, as he interrogates Betty heartlessly about Sunungurai's condition:

Nhai maiguru, mwana makamuita sei kuti adai? (Mabasa, 2008, p. 43). (By the way, aunt, what did you do to the baby that made her appear like this? / How dare you give birth to this albino?

Commenting on the same excerpt Chirere, (2010) suggests this is the cruelest question in the narrative because nobody ever makes an effort to give birth to an albino. The question is more of an insult and is a cruel accusation. The question suggests Betty is responsible for Sunungurai's condition, that she did something evil. By asking this horrid question, Watson's brother is representing the family's position about Sunungurai's disability. The question also shows their fear of the myths associated with albinos (Peters & Chimedza, 2001; Kisanji, 1995; Wamunyi, 2012). The family hates and blames Betty for giving birth to a baby with albinism and this partly influences Watson to flee to London. He, later on, sends his mother and sister air tickets to travel to London and never bothers about his wife and his daughter Sunungurai. Betty is forced to single-handedly raise Sunungurai and this confirms what Shava (2008) and Choruma (2006) say about women who give birth to children with disabilities who find themselves abandoned by their husbands and have to look after their children on their own.

In the same narrative, a woman identified as Madzimai is cohabiting with a man addressed as Madzibaba who promises to marry her. Madzimai conceives and she gives birth to a baby with a disability, the baby does not have legs. Narrating her predicament Madzimai says:

Mwana akauya asina makumbo, asi dzimwe nhengo dzose dzemuviri akazvarwa dziripo, uye dzinoshanda zvakanaka. Kungoshaya makumbo chete. Madzibaba angu akapenga tichiri kuchipatara chaiko kuti ndakanga ndamunyengedza kuti nhumbu ndeyake...vakabva varamba mwana nemutowo iwoyo zvikanzi kwedu hakuna munhu akadaro...Mwana iyeye akanzi ndewangu ndega. Unozvara mwana asina makumbo kuti yave nyoka here? Unoroya saka wakadya makumbo emwana iyeye achiri mudumbu ... Kana ndichidzoka ndichadzoka kana mwana amera makumbo. (Mabasa, (2008, p. 17). (The baby was born with no limbs, but had all the other organs and they are functional. Madzibaba became cross because the baby had no limbs. While we were still at the hospital, he accused me of deceiving him into believing that he was responsible for my pregnancy. He disowned the baby because there is no history of disability in their family. He denied being the father of the baby. You give birth to a baby without legs as if it's a snake? You are a witch that is why you ate the baby's limbs while the baby was still in the womb... If I am to come back I will come back when the baby develops limbs).

The implication is that giving birth to a baby with a disability is evil and as such, the mother is responsible, and she should explain. Madzibaba denies paternity because there is no history of disability in his family history. He suggests the baby is not human but a reptile because it does not have legs and that it is weird for a human being to give birth to a baby without legs. Disability is associated with witchcraft and as such, Madzibaba is suggesting that Madzimai is a witch who feasted on the baby's limbs. *Madzibaba* disowns the baby; he quits the relationship, the baby and disappears. He vows to come back only when the baby develops legs, an indication that he is not coming back and that he is running away from a problem, the baby with a disability.

Commenting on the plight of babies born with disabilities, Shava (2008) and Choruma (2006) posit that families are often torn apart by the birth of a child with a disability. The two authors observe that children with disabilities habitually come from single parents after their mothers are divorced because they were held responsible for giving birth to a baby with a disability. Giving birth to a baby with a disability is a woman's problem especially in circumstances where there is no history of disability in the father's family. The woman carries the burden of raising the baby single-handedly and this is what happens to Betty and Madzimai. Moreover, the baby is denied paternal love and care. On this note, the artist depicts disability as a burden that is detested and not tolerated by fathers. The author is showing how women shoulder the responsibility of bringing up children with disabilities

single handedly and how fathers disown babies with disabilities. Choruma (2006), Chimhenga and Musarurwa (2011) echo the same sentiments when they reiterate the limited social acceptance of persons with disabilities by the fathers and the paternal relatives as well as the communities they live in. On the same note, Wamunyi (2012) concurs with what happens in the narrative when he explains that a child born with a disability is viewed as a curse to the entire family and community hence their rejection. In the narrative, Madzimai's baby is later taken to St Giles for education and upkeep. Thus, the author finds institutionalisation as a solution to disability. However, isolation of persons with disabilities is inhuman and is against the principles of *Vumunhu*, such representation of disability is negative, and does not uphold the rights of persons with disabilities because persons with disabilities are denied autonomy when confined in institutions and excluded from the larger society. This is one way of discriminating against them. Institutionalisation of persons with disabilities is contrary to Section 83 of the Zimbabwean Constitution that deals with the rights of persons with disabilities, which calls for the involvement of persons with disabilities in a manner that allows them to live with their families and participate in all possible activities.

In *Ndafa Here?* (Am I dead?) Mabasa (2008) manages to capture society's negative attitudes towards disability. Those with disabilities are marginalised and viewed as the different "other". By including persons with disabilities in his works, Mabasa is acknowledging their existence in society. He communicates that a woman can give birth to a baby with a disability even when there is no history of disability in the family. The author exposes the paternal family's negative attitude towards disability. He is more interested in showing that society detests disability and that this emanates from the Shona myths that are associated with disability. Mabasa exposes the superstition associated with giving birth to a baby with a disability. However, he also creates the awareness that there is hope for people who are born with profound disabilities that the community may feel they are ill-prepared to handle. Having discussed the depiction of disability in relation to marriage I now proceed to explore the depiction of sterility in the selected literary works.

4.5 The Depiction of Barrenness

Marriage is an important institution among the Shona people. Its significance is rooted in its function of procreation. When a couple gets married, their marriage should produce children. The bride wealth paid by the husband is for the services that the woman will provide and

among these services, childbearing is the most important one. Gelfand (1973) posits that bride wealth is payment to the wife's father in return for the several children she will bear. Children, especially male children will ensure perpetuation and prosperity of the family and family name. Failure to have children is, therefore, regarded as a disability and a loss to the family since the wife will not be in a position to compensate for the bride wealth. A childless marriage is an indication that either the wife or the husband is barren. A childless marriage is usually a bitter disappointment that results in serious problems among the Shona (Gelfand, 1973).

A childless couple is ridiculed by the entire community. The first step in such circumstances is to establish between the couple who has the problem. In most cases, the woman is blamed. According to the Shona culture a woman's womanhood lies in being able to procreate. When the woman cannot conceive she is an embarrassment to her family who in most cases would arrange that her young sister bear children for her. When the man is sterile, it becomes more complex. This is the case because the assumption is that a man's sterility can easily be detected in childhood upon which corrective measures can be taken or the knowledge will assist in concealing his sterility when he marries. Hence, the family will not be overtaken by events neither will they be caught unaware. A man's sterility is also an embarrassment to himself, to the entire family and the entire community. This is mainly because a man's manhood is believed to be in his capacity to procreate. When confronted with such a situation the family elders resolve to conceal the disability. The subsequent discussion will dwell on how barrenness is depicted in the play *Ndinodawo Mwana* (I also need a Child) by Nyika (1983) and the narrative *Rurimi Inyoka* (A Wagging Tongue) by Kuimba (1976).

Nyika's (1983) play *Ndinodawo Mwana* (I also need a Child) and Kuimba's (1976) *Rurimi Inyoka* (A Wagging Tongue) present barrenness as a form of disability and they explore problems and conflicts that emanate from barrenness. *Ndinodawo Mwana* is an appeal or a prayer request that shows the desire in Chenesai to bear a child. As a woman, Chenesai is expected by society to fulfil her womanhood by bearing children. Chenesai has been married to Chenjerai for six years but they have no children. Confronted with barrenness people do not sit back they seek possible solutions. The couple spent a lot of money seeking modern medical assistance without success. Medical doctors diagnosed Chenjerai as impotent. On the other hand, Chenjerai's elders consult traditional healers who confirm Chenjerai's

impotence. Chenjerai is adamant about the allegation and he refuses to consult traditional healers for treatment.

Thus, Chenjerai does not accept that he is sterile due to the stigma attached to such a disability. Even when later on Chenesai informs him about her pregnancy, he does not doubt or question because that is the ideal thing, his woman should conceive. Nevertheless, Nyika digresses from the traditional knowledge and way of diagnosing sterility in a man. Gelfand (1973) posits that it is the responsibility of the mother or parents to check on the fertility status of their son during childhood such that by the time the child reaches adulthood they would have known his fertility status and at marriage would arrange how he could have children. Chenjerai's grandfather Manyengavana, his father Tigere, and Mucharuza are worried over Chenjerai's childless marriage. What bothers them most is the idea that Chenjerai is sterile.

In line with tradition, the whole family feels humiliated by Chenjerai's sterility. Manyengavana confirms this when he remarks:

Isu zvekushaya mbereko kwake zvava kutinyadzisa. Dunhu rino rese rava kutitendeka kuti tarisai ndivo vakazvara mhanje. Isu tava kutonyara kana pamadoro ... (Nyika, 1983, p. 9). (His sterility is now an embarrassment to us. Everyone in this community is now pointing a finger at us saying look they procreated a sterile man. We feel humiliated at beer parties.)

Manyengavana's remark indicates that society expects them to act accordingly as Chenjerai's elders. The noun *mhanje* (infertile) used to refer to Chenjerai's infertility is demeaning. *Mhanje* is a word that belongs to class 9 and is used to refer to those who are infertile. The same noun is used when referring to animals like cows that cannot produce offsprings, which suggests that the noun is demeaning.

Chenesai is not at peace with the community; she is insulted and ridiculed at a beer party (*jakwara*) at Chimuto village for her barrenness. She is referred to as *mhanje* (sterile person) and the women allege that their fields were not going to be productive because a barren woman (Chenesai) walked through them. This testifies to how society is disrespectful of barren women. Chenesai feels humiliated and traumatised and she complains to Mucharuza about the abuse.

Tete Mucharuza, sekuru Manyengavana and Tigere resolve to resort to the traditional custom of solving the problem known as '*kupindira*' (*Being intimate with a brother's wife for the sake of procreation when the brother is suspected to be sterile*). Referring to these customs Gelfand (1974) posits that this custom comes into play after establishing that the husband is sterile or that his semen appears abnormal and that the failure of the wife to fall pregnant rests with him. Thus, the sterile man's younger brother or nephew is asked to have sexual relations secretly with the sterile man's wife. This is done until the woman conceives. Once she conceives they stop seeing each other until a time when the woman intends to have another baby. This practice would continue until the woman is past the childbearing stage. The custom should be implemented secretly and should never be divulged in case it may destroy the union and cause conflict within the family. Thus, Manyengavana and Mucharuza privately arrange that Chenesai and Chenjerai's young brother Batanai have sexual intercourse privately at Mucharuza's place until Chenesai conceives. Batanai is the ideal person here because he is Chenjerai's only brother.

The major challenge of the custom is that it requires involvement of persons that are capable of containing secrets. However, this is not a sound arrangement because Batanai is not able to contain secrets when drunk. Chenesai alludes to this fact but Mucharuza is adamant, she persists that Batanai is involved. If she conceives, Chenesai should accompany her husband Chenjerai to Harare and would then inform Chenjerai about her pregnancy. The argument is that Chenjerai would assume he is responsible for the pregnancy and since Batanai's blood is the same as Chenjerai's, a child resulting from this arrangement belongs to Chenjerai. Lamentably, a woman's dignity is sacrificed by such practices. The custom does not consider Chenesai's character, it is damaging to her image. Chenesai is forced into the custom against her will. This is done to ensure that Chenesai pays back the bride wealth by bearing children for Chenjerai and Chenjerai has his own children that will take after his name. If the couple succeeds in having children, the couple and the family are protected from society's ridicule as well as concealing Chenjerai's sterility.

The arrangement made by Tigere, Mucharuza and Manyengavana together with Batanai and Chenesai sounds absurd when viewed out of context. Chenesai and Chenjerai have been in marriage for six solid years without children. They desperately need children and the entire family is being ridiculed in the village because of the couple's childless marriage. Chenesai has suffered abuse at the hands of the community. There is need for her to get out of this

situation. Failing to comply with the elders' plan would signal Chenesai's unwillingness to have children and her betrayal to the entire family by exposing Chenjerai's infertility. Due to pressure from the community, Mucharuza, her own desire to have children and the fact that the family elders initiated the idea Chenesai gives in to the idea. She has to cleanse her name, Chenjerai's name and that of the family as suggested by her name by ensuring that she bears children.

The same happens to Batanai; he is not willing to betray his elder brother Chenjerai but is coerced and persuaded and finally gives in to the idea. As suggested by his name, Batanai should cooperate and protect his elder brother from his predicament. Batanai is made to believe that it is the only way to conceal Chenjerai's barrenness and the only way that ensures Chenjerai and Chenesai have children. However, the custom disregards Chenesai and Batanai's conscience and as such does not uphold the principles of *Vumunhu*. The Shona people by devising the *kupindira* custom illustrated the gravity of sterility in man. The need to conceal a man's barrenness is compelled by the status of a man in marriage and the significance of children, which should be a reward to the man for paying bride wealth. A real man should have his own children who will take after him and who will succeed him thereby ensuring prosperity and perpetuation of the family name.

Chenjerai is employed in Harare and Batanai stays in the rural area with his wife. Chenjerai and his wife Chenesai are empowered economically hence, they live a better life than Batanai and his wife who rely on handouts from the two. When Batanai successfully impregnates Chenesai, he begins to despise Chenjerai. Batanai thinks he is providing a better service to Chenjerai than what Chenjerai is providing. Batanai's fertility status becomes his source of pride. When Batanai asks Chenjerai to assist him with an ox plough Chenjerai does not release it immediately but promises to give it to Batanai later after completing a certain portion of his field. This does not go down well with Batanai who thinks Chenjerai is being mean and selfish. Batanai feels exploited, he is concealing Chenjerai's infertility and giving him children yet the same person he is protecting is failing to reciprocate by merely offering an ox plough. Batanai feels Chenjerai is deriding him, thus, Batanai mocks Chenjerai:

Ndingavhairirwa nechirema here ini? (Nyika, 1983, p. 35). (Can I be teased by someone who has a disability who cannot impregnate his wife?)

This statement implies that although Chenjerai is employed in Harare and appears to be living a better life his impotence degrades him. Batanai thinks he is in a better position than

Chenjerai because he does not have a disability. The demeaning noun '*chirema*' used to refer to Chenjerai's sterility stigmatises Chenjerai. Batanai sees himself as the 'Self' and Chenjerai as the 'other'. As the 'Self' Batanai finds pride in being able to do what Chenjerai the 'other' whom he considers, as less human cannot do. Out of disappointment, Batanai carelessly divulges the secret;

Kuvaka imba haugoni, ndini ndinokuvakira, hauzviri, ndini ndakakuitira mwana wamuri kudai kuridzira ngoma. Ehe, isu tiri marombe zvedu asi tiri zvikakera chaizvo.'' (Nyika, 1983, p. 38). (You cannot build a family, I built it for you, you are sterile, and I procreated the child you are celebrating. Yes, we are destitute but we are really powerful).

Batanai violates tradition and custom as he shows unreserved lack of respect for his brother. Thus, the depiction of sterility is degrading and Chenjerai is stripped of his manhood. The statement "*...isu tiri marombe zvedu asi tiri zvikakera*'' implies that although Batanai is not formally employed he is a real man because he made Chenesai pregnant and that Chenjerai is not a real man because he failed to make Chenesai pregnant. In response, Chenjerai is furious and attacks Batanai who continuously insults Chenjerai about his barrenness. Batanai then reports the matter to the chief's court accusing Chenjerai of physically assaulting him.

In the play, the playwright depicts male sterility as the worst form of disability. With other forms of disability, there is a tendency to feel sorry towards the affected individuals. With sterility, things are different; people do not sympathise with sterile men and women. Instead, they are jeered at, ridiculed and not regarded as real men and women. One of the elders at the chief's court mocks Chenjerai:

Iwe chii chinoita kuti ufunge kuti mwana haasi wako? Hausi murume here? (Nyika, 1983, p. 42). (What makes you think the child is not yours? Are you not a man?)

By asking these questions, the elder is showing that he is not sensitive to Chenjerai's plight. The questions are sarcastic in the sense that they are indirectly suggesting that Chenjerai is not a real man because he is impotent. In fact the elder is ridiculing Chenjerai. In response to the sarcastic questions those in attendance laugh, they are laughing at the idea that Chenjerai is sterile, that he is not a real man in the sense that he lacks real manhood he cannot procreate and that somebody had sexual relations with his wife so that he can have children. One wonders if this is a laughing issue. The '*kupindira*' custom is not something new to them, they are aware of it but they are scorning it. Thus, Nyika shows society's negative attitude towards male sterility and this negative attitude justifies the need to conceal this form of disability.

The suggested solution based on custom creates more problems for Chenjerai. At the end of the play, Chenjerai has a double tragedy, he is single and childless, and he suffers humiliation at the chief's court. Chenesai is a victim of circumstances; she is forced against her will to enter into an arrangement she would not have preferred on her own. When Batanai spills the beans, Chenesai is exposed, Chenjerai accuses her of infidelity and those who pushed her into this mess are not able to protect her. Chenjerai divorces her, Batanai will not take her as a wife and she now has a baby but she is not happy.

The meaning of the name Chenjerai unfolds: Manyengavana, Mucharuza and Tigere should have implemented the traditional customs tactfully or, Chenesai and Batanai should not have been pushed into doing what they did not want. Chenjerai should have reasoned and not taken things for granted. The author's message is clear; people should learn to accept disability (barrenness). What is of value in a human being is his or her being. The author's message is that the custom that was effective in addressing sterility problems in males in the past was effective because the people then had the wisdom in ensuring that it was cautiously implemented (Zinyemba 1986). Today the custom may not be effective. Individualism and competition for material life are a hindrance to a successful implementation of the custom. The Tigere family fails to use it effectively; they lost in the battle as denoted by *tete's* name Mucharuza (you will not win). The author disapproves the *kupindira* custom he warns about the possible problems of sticking to tradition. Some customs that used to work in the olden days may not be practical today due to changes brought about by modernisation and in such instances, it is best to accept this form of disability.

Nyika in Ndinodawo Mwana manages to show society's negative attitude towards barrenness and at the same time depict it positively as well as exposing the plight of sterile men and their wives. Barrenness is depicted as a problem that causes suffering to the couple and the family at large. Its concealment is indicative of society's disapproval of the disability. Yet, when it occurs, it has to be accepted.

Mujajati (2006) in *Mwana waamai* and Mungoshi (1980) in *Inongova Njakenjake* in their depiction of barrenness explain why barren women are ridiculed. Gamuchirai in *Mwana waamai* is promiscuous; she is impregnated, aborts and later on fails to conceive. Lucy in *Inongova Njakenjake* is also promiscuous, she aborts several times and eventually, her uterus

is damaged and doctors remove it. Thus, these two authors reinforce the biblical and ChiShona belief that portray disability as retribution for sin. Such depiction of disability suggests that barren women are responsible for their condition and the depiction only succeeds in perpetuating the stigma that is associated with barrenness.

Kuimba (1976) in *Rurimi Inyoka* explores the same theme of barrenness as a form of disability. Illustrating the conflicts and problems that arise due to barrenness, he says:

Maiwe-e zvangu! Kushaya mbereko pakati pavatema! Kushaya mwana! Ndizvo zvisingaitwi izvozvo. Ndimi dzinotanga kupinimidza mukwana dzikange dzichasvuuka nokutaura. Mudzimai anoshaya hama inomusekerera. Ndipo anotanga kuonda kuita karuswa... (Kuimba, 1976, p.10). (Ooh my! Being barren among the blacks! Being childless! That's not what is supposed to be done. Tongues will begin wagging and will be hurt by talking. The woman will be unpopular among the relatives. Then she will start to lose weight and become as thin as grass.)

Kuimba is alluding to the plight of barren women, that their barrenness exposes them to torture by society as the affected individuals suffer psychological abuse. In Kuimba's *Rurimi Inyoka*, Simon marries Vida but Vida fails to conceive. Unlike in *Ndinodawo Mwana*, Vaida and Simon are not troubled by Vida's failure to conceive, they are happily married and this can be attributed to the urban environment in which they are staying.

As seen, customarily, after marriage the bride is expected to conceive. Women, in general, are keen to see signs and symptoms of pregnancy in a newly married bride. When this does not happen to Vida, it becomes worrisome. Relatives would ask those from Harare whether Vida showed any signs and symptoms of pregnancy. Vida's mother is worried upon hearing that her daughter is not pregnant. What bothers her most is the fact that Simon is silent about the issue, he did not complain and as such, she is not sure if her daughter is still loved by her husband. Customarily Simon should have taken the necessary procedures in informing his in-laws about Vaida's predicament.

With this state of affairs, Vaida's mother is not certain about Vida's well-being. She disrespects all the cultural procedures that should be done before meeting her daughter. She does not even inform her husband about her desire to see her daughter. Thus, she secretly meets Vida. To her surprise, she meets a bouncing Vida yet she did not expect her to be in a jovial mood due to her predicament. When she enquires about their decision on having a baby Vida is reminded of her predicament, she cries but reassures her mother that they are happily

married. Vida's mother gives Vida some herbs, which she believes will facilitate conception. The herbs never work. Both mother and daughter are traumatised. In this context, the author depicts barrenness as a worrisome problem that cannot be tolerated but as a problem that should be rectified.

It is until they are in their rural home that Simon and Vida realise they have a serious problem. Madezvipi, Simon's mother hates Vida for being barren. She persuades her husband Tigere, Simon's father to consult a local diviner Mugandani in connection with Simon's childless marriage. The traditional healer claims Vida is at fault and alleges that her former boyfriend cursed her after she broke their marriage promise. Thus barrenness is presented as a result of witchcraft. Vida insists that she never had a boyfriend whom she promised to marry besides Simon and the diviner switches on to another possible explanation. Vida's grandmother was a witch and she cursed Vida for refusing to take after her witchcraft. Thus, she could not protect Vida from her former boyfriend's spell. Vida should accept her grandmother's witchcraft in order for her to be able to bear children. In this context, the woman is blamed for a childless marriage. Madezvipi believes Mugandani and dismisses Tigere's suggestion that Simon could be sterile. Thus, she argues,

Chinotadzisa Simon kubereka chii? Ndini ndakabereka Simoni ini, ndakamurera. Akakura akasimba zvakanwana kwazvo. Chinditaurirai chinomutadzisa kubereka. Ndava mukadzi mukuru ini. Mwanakomana anokura akaremara, asingazobereki ndinotadza here kumuona? (Kuimba, 1976, p. 48). (What can cause sterility in Simon? I am the one who gave birth to Simon. I raised him. He grew up physically fit. Tell me what makes him barren. I am now a mature woman. Can I fail to see a boy child who displays signs of infertility?)

In the above excerpt, Madezvipi shows that as a mother, if Simon was sterile she could have detected her son's sterile status during childhood (Gelfand, 1995) and the implication is that Vida is barren; Simon is not, hence the woman is blamed for a childless marriage. Contrary to Madezvipi's stance, Tigere does not rule out the possibility of Simon being sterile. He argues that Simon could be sterile and could have had experiences that disturbed his reproductive system in adulthood.

Simon does not believe that Vida's grandmother was a witch but out of jealousy, he blames Vida for having an affair before their marriage and claims the affair is now affecting their marriage. Vida pleads with Simon that they consult a medical practitioner who is knowledgeable about human anatomy. She promises to leave Simon if she is barren, a stance

taken by Tafirei Gwaumbu's first wife in *Inongova Njakenjake*. Vida vows that she would never abandon Simon if he were to be found to be barren. The reason why women opt to leave when they fail to bear children is traditional. A woman's major role in marriage is to bear children for her husband and this is how she pays back the bride wealth. The absence of children is a setback. The author in this context portrays women as selfless when it comes to men's barrenness. When women fail to procreate, they accept they would have failed to fulfil their womanhood and as such, they give men the latitude to remarry. Madezvipi is not supportive, she wants to expose Vida and prove to Tigere that Simon is not barren hence; she devises a plan to expose Vida. While Madezvipi despises Vida her fellow woman for failing to conceive, men like Tigere are patient and protect women from abuse by their fellow women. Tigere saves Vida from abuse by Madezvipi and Simon's sister, mai Musindo.

In the narrative, Madezvipi misrepresents the *kupindira* custom. As indicated in *Ndinodawo Mwana*, issues concerning *kupindira* are deliberated by men and women in a man's lineage. Surprisingly in *Rurimi Inyoka* Madezvipi initiates, the custom in an effort to expose Vida and prove to Tigere that Simon is not sterile. Madezvipi causes turmoil and conflict by lying to George that Simon is barren and secretly persuading George to have sexual relations with Vida under the guise that it is a practice in their culture used to solve sterility problems in men. In her effort to lure George into doing what she wants Madezvipi explains to George why it is necessary for a man to have children and how a sterile man is scorned by society. She convinces George in her effort to make him consent to her proposal. Madezvipi justifies why Simon should have children;

Dai baba vake vakafa ndiye anopiwa zita rake. Asi haanawo chokusiya panyika muzita rake iye. Zvinosvonesa. Murume wese asingabereki anosvorwa, nokuzvidzwa nevanhu vose. Ungade here kuti mukoma wako anzarwo? (Kuimba, 1976, p. 52). (If his father dies, he inherits his name. However, he does not have children who will inherit his own name. It is demeaning. Every sterile man is blamed, and belittled by society. Would you want your brother to be treated that way?)

The above quotation reveals why the Shona people resort to the *kupindira* custom. A man should have children in order to facilitate the perpetuation of the family name. It is disgraceful for a man to be known to be sterile.

Madezvipi also approaches Vida, lies to her that Simon is barren and attempts to persuade her to have sexual relations with George in order to have children. She wants to experiment with Vida. Vida vehemently rejects her mother-in-law's suggestion. She exposes Madezvipi's

wicked plan and explains to her that Simon did not mind their childless marriage and that she is going to have Simon's children only, a failure of which she will rather have a childless marriage than commit adultery with George. Vida even threatens to blackmail her mother-in-law if she persists with her wicked plan.

Vida is bold enough to reject intimidation and abuse from her mother-in-law who wants to take advantage of her situation to pursue her machinations. Vida rebukes Madezvipi and shows her how she is misrepresenting the *kupindira* custom;

...mukadzi ega ndiye aicherechedza kuti murume wake akaremara, haabereki vana. Zvino iye mukadzi ndiye aienda kuna tete vomurume achinopopota kuti 'Ko pano ndogarira sadza here? Kumba kwangu hakuna zviriko. Kana riri sadza kumusha kwangu ririkowo. Wanai zvamungaita. Kana pasina ndodzokera zvangu.' Zvino ipapo ndipo anozotsvakirwa mukoma kana munin'ina wemurume kuti amupe vana muruvande. (Kuimba, 1976, p.74). (... The wife is the only person who could tell that her husband is barren, he cannot produce children. As such, she would approach her husband's aunt and complain. 'Can I stay here for *sadza*? My husband is impotent. If I am here for *sadza* at my parent's home *sadza* is also there. Find a solution. If you cannot then I go back to my family'. Then family elders would then look for the husband's older or younger brother who will give her children secretly).

Ironically, while she is busy correcting an anomaly Vida is also exposing herself by indirectly communicating that Simon is not sterile. Thus, in response Madezvipi remarks:

Zvino nhai mwanangu kana uchiti murume wako akasimba uri kurevaka kuti mhosva ndeyako? (Kuimba, 1976, p. 74). (Now, my daughter if you say your husband is not sterile you are implying that you are at fault.)

Madezvipi's response implies barrenness is an offence. Nevertheless, Vida had turned the traditional tables against her mother-in-law. Vida is also quick to rebuke George when he mentions Madezvipi's plot, she threatens to report him to Simon if he persists with the matter. George loves and respects his brother and as such would not want to betray him.

On the other hand, Mai Mashumba and Mai Zipfende are a bad influences to Jane who is Simon's former girlfriend; they mislead her by assuring her that her chances of marrying Simon are high since Vida is barren and they encourage her to seduce Simon. Regrettably, Madezvipi and Jane's mother support the idea. Madezvipi connives with Jane and her mother that Jane should snatch Simon from Vida. Madezvipi vows that Vida will leave her matrimonial home if she is barren. She suggests that Vida goes back to her family in order that they deal with her infertility. If they fail to put in place corrective measures then she

should be divorced and Simon marries Jane. Like in *Ndinodawo Mwana*, the issue of bride wealth is critical; Vida should bear children for Simon as compensation for the bride wealth.

As planned, Jane visits Simon but Simon snubs her. When Simon chases Jane out of his house, Jane is desperate; she resolves to go to Timoti's house a homeboy who had shown interest in her. Timoti is a womaniser, he cohabits with Jane and she conceives. With the influence of Mai Zipfende and Mai Mashumba Timothy refuses to marry Jane. The matter is reported at the chief's court and Timothy publicly refuses to marry Jane. Out of humiliation, Jane commits suicide. The author's message is clear, love is the most important thing in each and every relationship. Children are a product of this love, and they are not a passport to a successful marriage. Timothy and Jane are not barren, Jane is pregnant with Timothy's child but the two are not happy about it. They are not happy because they are not in love. Their end is tragic. Jane commits suicide and Jane's brother Tobias ruthlessly kills Timothy as revenge for ditching Jane.

At the 'jakwara' Simon is lampooned: *Tarisai zviuya zvinotambiswa* (Kuimba, 1976, p. 168). (Look at how a beautiful woman is abused). The implication is failing to make a woman conceive is equated to abusing a woman, a man's manhood is reflected in his ability to make a woman pregnant. Thus, in the narrative both Simon and Vida are regarded as the different 'other' because they fail to do what other couples are capable of doing. Simon lampoons an elder who accuses him of abusing Vida. Simon remarks that the elder is blind since he fails to recognise that Vida is pregnant. All eyes are on Vida. Everyone is happy and they all celebrate that finally, Vida has conceived an indication that the ridiculing of childless couples at beer parties (*jakwara*) although it hurts the affected individuals it served as a corrective measure, meant to encourage childless couples to act upon their barrenness.

Some of the literary works under discussion depict barrenness negatively. Those with this disability are ridiculed by society. The authors successfully capture how the utterances at *Jakwara/ nhimbe* custom served as a corrective measure to childless couples. Although the affected individuals are hurt by the utterances at *jakwara/ nhimbe* ceremony the purpose is to encourage those with childless marriages to put in place corrective measures to ensure that they do the 'normal', that is, have their own children. Among the Shona married couples are not supposed to remain childless. Barrenness is a disability that should be fixed. Simoni sought medical assistance and his problem was addressed hence the author resorts to the

medical model to fix barrenness. While Kuimba and Nyika successfully manage to show the Shona people's negative attitude towards barrenness, they also give the impression that love is the most important thing between two people and children are a product of this love, society should be patient, should not interfere and should learn to accept individuals as human beings disability or not. Disability should not define someone. Contrary to this Mujajati (2006) and Mungoshi (1980) communicate that barrenness is a result of sin. The barren are responsible for their barrenness. This is a negative depiction which justifies the marginalization of the barren.

This is especially so given that though Kuimba and Nyika show that the Shona people hated and despised barrenness and had their ways of overcoming it, the *Kupindira* custom as a solution to male sterility violates the rights and dignity of individuals. The two authors explore the challenges that come along with this custom. Today's people are not well informed about the proper handling of the custom. They lack the necessary wisdom required in handling the custom and as a result, they create more problems for the concerned couples. The custom is also misrepresented when people strive to advance their selfish interests and as such those with fertility problems are abused in the process. It is impossible to implement the custom effectively under such conditions. In such circumstances adherence to the principles of *Vumunhu* is critical. People should learn to accept barrenness. Humanness should be given top priority and being barren or not should not define someone.

4.5 Depiction of disability in relation to employment

The UNCRPD emphasised equal opportunities regarding employment and as such, this section seeks to find out how disability is depicted in selected literary works in relation to employment. I attempt to establish what the selected ChiShona narratives and plays communicate about disability in relation to employment.

In the novel *Mapenzi*, Hamundigoni is dismissed from his teaching post on the allegation that he is teaching outside the syllabus. After his dismissal Hamundigoni attacks, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for unfairly treating him. He complains that the Ministry sacked him without carrying out investigations to validate his mental condition. He believes that the Ministry should have confirmed his mental condition with a psychiatrist. Thus, the Ministry demonstrated inefficiency as it relied on hearsay instead of professionally handling the issue. The author, as a critic of society, is chiding the marginalisation of people

with disabilities concerning employment opportunities. Hamundigoni lampoons his dismissal:

Ho-oo, gara zviye handichisiri ticha! Veduwe! Kusaziva zvakunaitawo! Kusiya vanhu vanopena vasingazivi basa saanaMai Mapuranga vanongodzidzisa zvavo vachikotsira vachidzinga ini, ini ndinodzidzisa ndichishuva kutomira pamusoro petebhuru kuti vana vanyatsoona kuti ndinoitei. Hazvina hazvo basa (Mapenzi, 1999, p. 17).

(By the way, I am no longer a teacher! Hey! Ignorance is misleading! They keep mentally ill people who are not knowledgeable in the profession like Mrs Mapuranga who is a passive teacher and instead they dismiss me yet I am overzealous such that I wish to teach while standing on the table to ensure that learners see what I am doing. It does not matter).

Through Hamundigoni, Mabasa (1999) brings out how people with mental disabilities are discriminated against when it comes to employment opportunities a problem articulated by White (1988) who explains that it is difficult to persuade employers to abandon their biases and to believe that a person with a disability can do a good job. According to White (1988), research has shown that with two equally qualified job applicants one with a disability and the other without, several employers will not even interview one with a disability. This is what Mabasa is trying to reveal. Hamundigoni is a dedicated enthusiastic teacher who produces high pass rates in 'A' level results. He is dismissed from his teaching post on allegations that he is mentally ill and teaches outside the syllabus yet his students performed very well. Regrettably, incompetent teachers like Mrs Mapuranga are not sacked yet cannot perform. Thus, the author ridicules Hamundigoni's dismissal as unjustified and not befitting.

In *Zinyekenyeke*, (A loose String) Mujajati (1997) presents Marufu as a character with slurred speech. Marufu stammers and because of this stammering, his wife questions his competence at work. Mujajati on this note is bringing in the issue of competence regarding employing persons with speech disability as classroom practitioners. Suzen claims that Marufu is incompetent at work when she says:

Haiwa ende matauriro ako anondiiriteta sitereki. Manje unoticha sei iwe usingagoni kutaura so, he-e? Chokwadi kana ivo vana vanofundiswa nezvakadai vari munhamo chokwadi. (Mujajati, 1997, p. 18)

(Hey, the way you speak irritates me. So how do you teach when you are not able to speak? Surely, the children that you teach are in trouble.).

In the above excerpt, Susan complains that she is irritated by the way Marufu speaks and if she as his wife is irritated to that extent she doubts Marufu's competence in the classroom. To Suzen Marufu's speech impairment is a hindrance in carrying out duties perfectly. She

suggests that Marufu cannot be a good classroom practitioner because of his stammering. Instead of facilitating learning, learners are likely to experience problems in understanding the teacher. This suggests that because Marufu has speech impairment he is not fit for a teaching post and creates the impression that people with speech impairment cannot be good classroom practitioners because they are not efficient unless they are rehabilitated.

Chikweya in *Karumekangu* is a person with a physical disability who is not formally employed. Chikweya is a cobbler who is not happy with his menial job. Nevertheless, at least he is self-employed, he is able to mend shoes and survive on mending shoes, which suggests that disability is not inability. However, Chikweya is not happy and comfortable with his condition and menial job. He wishes otherwise. Chikweya detests being a cobbler because being a cobbler is not rewarding, he protests that the job is tedious and menial. More so he does not get much from mending shoes and society looks down upon his menial self-job as well as his disability. Furthermore, Chikweya's disability is a hindrance to finding formal employment and consequently finding a partner. Sarudzai swears that she will not marry Chikweya because he is a cobbler and does not have a decent job. The author is communicating that males with disabilities do not have decent jobs and as such, they find it difficult to have partners. Chikweya admires police officers who are formally employed because they are paid handsomely. He regrets having a disability and laments that if he was a police officer he would be earning a decent salary and would not have problems in attracting the opposite sex. Here the author is communicating that persons with disabilities are not happy with their condition, they envy those without disabilities because they believe they are in a better situation. They blame their social status on their condition. While Chidyausiku highlights the plight of males with physical disabilities, he, on a positive note depicts Chikweya as someone who is able to use his hands in order to earn a living, which suggests that Chikweya can still be employed to do jobs that allow him to use his hands. The author shows that disability is not inability. It is a vicious circle, people with disabilities are denied access to education and as such, they are not employable because they do not have the necessary skills and employers view them as incompetent and as a result, poverty is inevitable to them. The other reason why persons with disabilities are not employable is that they are viewed as dependent, hopeless and useless (Wamunyi, 2012). Thus, disability is linked to poverty and this poverty creates more problems for Chikweya, low social status, low self-esteem and no partner.

Chakaipa's (1963) *Garandichauya* talks of Matamba who after becoming blind becomes destitute and is employed to do a menial job at a farm. At the farm, Matamba is employed to pluck nuts from their stocks. The job is demeaning such that Matamba is rescued from this embarrassing menial job by a relative who upon recognising him sympathises with him and takes him to his rural home. Interestingly if Matamba is able to use his hands to do this menial job the implication is that he is also able to do any other job that requires him to use his hands. This point suggests that persons with disabilities are employable, provided they are tolerated, appreciated and receive adequate education and training.

Akafuratidzwa Moyo (Was Made to Forget) by Mukonoweshuro (1983) is a story about Makandionei who feels her son Svinurai is no longer providing for her needs as he used to do before he got married to Machivei. Makandionei kills Svinurai to ensure that Machivei suffers. She then brainwashes Soromoni, Svinurai's son into believing that Machivei killed Svinurai. Soromoni marries Rusiya and when Machivei visits the couple, she is not welcome at Soromoni's place and Soromoni threatens to kill Machivei. Later on, Soromoni loses an arm in a road accident. After the accident, Soromoni loses his job because of the disability and the disability is now an obstacle in finding employment. Rusiya is not comfortable with a husband who is not employed she abandons him together with the children. Surprisingly, when Soromoni wins a state lottery he embarks on a business venture and his wife comes back. Thus, this concurs with Shava (cited in Choruma, 2006) who suggests that males with disabilities and who are economically empowered are likely to find partners easily. In this context, Rusiya is not evading disability but poverty that comes along with disability when the man loses his job, when he is not employed and no longer employable after submitting to disability. The author manages to explore the relationship between disability and poverty; his point is disability results in loss of employment and once the affected individual is no longer employed and employable poverty is inevitable and this leads to the disintegration of the family.

In *Inongova Njakanjake* Kate like Ruvimbo in *Ruvimbo* is in a wheel chair. While Ruvimbo is able to perform household chores only, Mungoshi further empowers Kate, she is not restricted to household chores only but she is skilled and industrious. Contrary to Choruma's (2006) assertion that girls with disabilities are trained to do menial household chores only Kate is able to sew clothes for sale. She spends most of her time on the machine and her sister Lucy markets and sales the products for her. Business is booming for Kate and Lucy is proud

of Kate and their father Tafi highly commends Kate for her industriousness and encourages her to soldier on. Kate is better off than her idle mother is. Mungoshi on this note paints a positive picture of disability. He succeeds in showing that disability is not inability and that persons with disabilities can be productive through self-employment thereby overcoming challenges they face regarding employment opportunities.

The depiction of disability in *Inongova Njakenjake* is exceptional in that Kate, a girl in a wheelchair is industrious and the most admirable character in terms of her deportment. Mungoshi (1980) manages to evade the stereotyping of persons with disabilities about disability and employment. He depicts Kate as a complete human being who has the same rights, obligations and responsibilities just like those without disabilities. The author is applauded for his efforts in exhibiting that disability is not inability. Such depiction of disability is likely to yield positive results; the positive image portrayed acknowledges the achievements of persons with disabilities as well as equating them with the mainstream, which is in line with *Vumunhu*. Such a depiction implies that persons with disabilities can be employed to do work using other parts of their body or senses that are not affected.

While Mungoshi empowers Kate, Mujajati in *Zinyekenyeke* (1997) in *Yorire Ngoma* fails to provide solutions to the plight of people who are visually impaired who are being exploited. Instead, he reinforces the negative notion that disability is inability. The blind people mentioned in the play are denied the opportunity to empower themselves when a donation to them was diverted for personal use by those responsible for the welfare of those with blindness. Thus, those responsible for the welfare of the blind abuse funds meant for people with blindness. The argument being that as blind people they cannot perform. What they know best is begging. This again is a negative depiction of people with blindness, which is contrary to the dictates of *Vumunhu*.

Mostly, people with disabilities are portrayed as unemployed and unemployable. Grandz (1983) explains why employers are hesitant to employ persons with disabilities. He suggests that employing individuals with disabilities jeopardises productivity, increases the rate of absenteeism and creates more accidents at the work place. Cantor (1996) mentions the ‘unreasonably’ high cost of accommodating people with disabilities. However, through Kate Mungoshi shows that these are myths meant to exclude persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities can be productive given the necessary support and education.

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter 4 sought to address the research question: How is disability represented in the selected ChiShona literary works within the context of *Vumunhu*? The chapter looked at the depiction of mental illness, blindness, and speech disability, the depiction of disability in relation to marriage, the depiction of barrenness and the depiction of disability in relation to employment. This was done to establish how authors of the selected literary works depict disability in relation to *Vumunhu*. From the discussion, I established that disability is underrepresented in most of the texts and most of the authors depict disability negatively. The language that is used to address people with disabilities is not respectful as derogatory terms are used. The negative depiction of disability that manifests in the studied texts is contrary to *Vumunhu* since characters with disabilities are treated as the different ‘other’. Only four authors, Kuimba, Chingono, Mungoshi and Mabasa consistently give a positive portrayal of disability. In the next chapter, I seek to address the following critical research question that this study addresses: Why do ChiShona writers create characters with a disability?

CHAPTER 5

WHY DO CHISHONA WRITERS CREATE CHARACTERS WITH DISABILITIES?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter engages the second critical question in this study: Why do ChiShona writers create characters with a disability? In addressing this question, this chapter engages the dynamics which influence authors' imaginative creation of characters with disabilities, that is, the purpose being served by these characters in the selected ChiShona novels and plays. The chapter establishes if the inclusion of characters with disabilities in selected literary works adheres to the principles of *Vumunhu*. From the selected novels and plays examined in this study, it has been noted that authors create characters with disabilities as a literary device to enable them to achieve their purpose as well as expressing their views. In this context, a literary device is taken to be a technique that writers use to express their ideas and enhance their writing (Reedsyblog, 2021). Reedsyblog, (2021) points out that a literary device is any technique used by the author to help achieve his or her purpose. In these texts, disability as a literary device is used for various reasons as discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Among the authors who use disability as a literary device are Mabasa (1999) in *Mapenzi* (Fools/ Mad People), Makari (1985) in *Zvaida Kushinga* (You Had to Be Brave), Mujajati (1997) in *Zinyekenyeke* (A loose string), Tsodzo (1972) in *Pafunge* (Think of It) and Chingono (1980) in *Ruvimbo* (Faith). However, these literary devices serve different purposes and as such five reasons why authors create characters with disabilities emerged. These reasons are discussed in the sections that follow.

Section 5.2, considers the use of characters with disabilities to critique the ills of society. Section 5.3 focuses on the use of disability as a metaphor or moral symbol. Section 5.4, considers the use of characters with disabilities as entertainment thereby creating humour for the readers. In section 5.5 the author's use of characters with disabilities is meant to highlight and explain the abuse experienced by persons with disabilities in society. Section 5.6 focuses on authors who create characters with disabilities simply to explain how and why people acquire a disability. In all these sections, the didactic aspect is implied. The chapter assesses if the authors' creation of characters with disabilities is sensitive to their being and whether characters with disabilities are accorded due respect. Thus, the chapter shows how such

characters are treated. The chapter advances the argument that characters with disabilities in selected ChiShona novels and plays are basically employed as a literary device as well as parading the shortcomings of these characters. They are also used as instruments to teach moral values as disability is presented as a punishment for sin. Hence their inclusion does not uphold the principles of *Vumunhu*. To a large extent characters with disabilities are not accorded due respect as worthwhile human beings. Their humanity is trivialised as they are merely included in these selected literary works as literary tools and through addressing them with derogatory terms.

5.2 The use of characters with disabilities as a social critique

Deliberating on the functions of madness in literature Barker (2010, p. 5) argues that in some texts the theme of madness is adopted with provocative, informative or politically minded motives. In such texts, authors seek to engage with and at times subvert the dominant cultural, social and media perpetuated public construction of madness. This resonates with the approach taken by Mabasa (1999) in *Mapenzi* (Fools / Mad people), a point well explained by Chirere (2000, p. 3) “One senses that the hazy suggestion that Hamundigoni is mentally unstable is the author’s technique to avoid the open and conscious attack of social vices” (Chirere, 2000, p. 3). The use of mental illness as a literary device in *Mapenzi* is effective as it affords the author the chance to outdo self-censorship that has the tendency to water down and compromise the message in creative works. Thus, Chirere (2000, p. 3) argues Hamundigoni as a mentally ill character has the latitude to critique all works of corruption at all levels, politicians, ministers, the government, professionals, non-professionals, individualism and selfishness in families. Hamundigoni is protected by his role, as a mentally ill character he is able to say things which could be considered offensive. Elaborating on the effectiveness of the use of a character with mental disability as a literary device in *Mapenzi*, Chirere (2000, p. 3) articulates:

Hamundigoni is a wanderer going from place to place - censuring careless speakers, rebuking pretenders and social hypocrites, chiding mean and selfish relatives, criticising the status-quo, singing the latest tunes. He is a man of no fixed abode but you sense that he has a private destination, the - truth!

On this note, mental illness as imaginatively created by Mabasa becomes a means for overcoming all forms of limitations in expressing the suffering of the people. The name Hamundigoni (I am uncontrollable) suggests overwhelming behaviour and speech consistent with protest literature, freedom of speech as well as freedom from blame. This

uncontrollability enables the artist to move around the fear of normalcy and pave way for demand for democracy from below illustrated by the ordinariness of a sacked and disillusioned teacher.

As a mentally ill character, Hamundigoni attacks politicians as a selfish lot. Hamundigoni equates their behaviour to mental illness:

Vanopenga havaperi. Vanopenga vanooneka nehupenzi hwavo kunge vapfanha vari kumafuro vanoti ivo vakwidzwa mumuti kuti vatemhere vari pasi shumha ivo vodyira mumuti vachidonedza matsengwarengwa ... (Mabasa, (1999). p. 134). (The mentally ill are countless. Those who are mentally ill are seen by their stupidity like young boys in the grazing field who after being assisted to climb up a tree so that they can pick some fruits for those on the ground end up feeding themselves and throwing down the remains.)

The attack targets politicians who after pleading with the majority to vote them into power later on despise them and start looting and enriching themselves while the majority languishes in poverty. On this note, Mabasa (1999) is attacking government officials and the populace for their corrupt tendencies. As argued by Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1981) there is a strong relationship between writers and politics, the poet and the politician all trade in words and are all concerned about human beings and their relationships. As such their imaginative works are a reflection of society:

...it's economic structure, its class formation, its conflicts and contradictions, its class power, political and cultural struggles, its structure of values, the conflicts and tensions arising from the antagonism between those which are dying and those which are pointing to the future (Ngugi Wa Thiongo, 1981, p. 73).

Thus Mabasa criticises the social vices existing in the country. This is typical of African independent countries. While Mabasa uses Hamundigoni a mentally ill character to go around the fear of normalcy and demand for democracy Achebe (1983) is blunt in his approach as he overtly accuses Nigeria of corruption and tribalism, his intention was to ensure that Nigerians abandon the corrupt tendencies. On the same note Chinweizu (2015) calls for the abandonment of Nigeria's 1999's constitution which promote corruption. He accuses the ruling elite of corruption, who in order to be voted into power promise to end corruption but once they are on the throne they start looting and impoverishing the public. Chinweizu (2015) accuses the people of Nigeria of complaining about corruption yet they do not put the necessary corrective measures to curb it. In *Mapenzi* (Fools / Mad People) politicians are criticised for being selfish, mean and failing to consider those who facilitated their escalation.

Through Hamundigoni, Mabasa goes an extra mile to warn politicians that they should put to good use the opportunity they have so that at the expiry of their terms they will look back with satisfaction and those they served will not ridicule them but admire them for a job well done. It is generally not easy to attack the government, politicians and ministers but for Mabasa, the task is made easier through his use of a mentally ill character. In his analysis of deviant behaviour in *Mapenzi*, Wasosa (2014) mentions that Mabasa in *Mapenzi* calls for a change in attitude by the political leaders of Zimbabwe in order to do away with oppressive tendencies which have brought poverty and misery to the populace. Thus the ruling elite is held responsible for the suffering of people whose lives have been rendered meaningless. Mutasa and Muwati (2008) echoed the same sentiments when they allude to the fact that *Mapenzi* is the first ChiShona novel to articulate political issues in a blatant manner. In the novel, Mabasa associates the problems faced by independent countries as well as a cluster of *Mapenzi* (Fools / mad people) with the behaviour of some arrogant and irresponsible leaders who because of their selfishness cause economic suffering among the populace.

Mabasa (1999) uses the mentally ill character to expose and condemn corrupt police officers. Hamundigoni says:

Ndakazondorara kuCharge Office uko ndakaona mapurisa achibvutirana mbanje yavaiva vatorera munhu wavaiva vasunga (Mabasa, 1999, p. 27). (I then slept at the Charge Office where I witnessed police officers grabbing dagga they had confiscated from an accused person.)

This is an anomaly. It is behaviour that is not expected of police officers but is happening in real life. Hence, through this mentally ill character, Mabasa seeks to criticise and expose such uncouth behaviour. In *Mapenzi*, the mentally ill character highlights corrupt tendencies that exist in society. In Zimbabwe, it is an offence to be in possession of dagga and to be seen smoking dagga. The reason is that dagga is a dangerous drug. Those who smoke it indulge in violent activities and above all dagga is a health hazard to the smoker. The police officers who should be responsible for law enforcement abuse their authority, instead they indulge in corrupt activities and expose themselves to dangerous substance. Indeed, they behave like people with mental illness who cast aside their rationality. Thus, the author uses a mentally ill character Hamundigoni to critique such corrupt behaviour. The behaviour of the police suggests momentary irrationality which suggests that people should not look down on mentally ill persons because those considered sane can do things that denote a lack of rational thinking. Hence, there is no need to marginalise and stigmatise those who suffer from mental

illness. In the narrative, Mabasa makes the mentally ill character the main protagonist who is tasked to rebuke irrational behaviour exhibited by society. As such, the author adheres to the principles of *Vumunhu* by evading the usual tendency by authors to marginalise mentally ill characters. In *Mapenzi*, the mentally ill is in charge, at the centre and outshines the rest of the characters.

As Hamundigoni goes to the Ministry of Education offices to claim his pension he meets Garanowako a former colleague now a government minister whom he worked with during the liberation war. Despite his efforts to remind Garanowako that they worked together in Mt Darwin, Garanowako ignores Hamundigoni and instructs the guards to take him away from the premises. Indeed the security drag Hamundigoni away. Hamundigoni's physical appearance contributes to this treatment since he is in dirty clothes, a physical state that is associated with the mentally ill. Garanowako assuming that Hamundigoni is mentally ill did not want to be associated with him, which is one way in which persons with mental illness face marginalisation. Nevertheless, ignoring a former colleague simply because one thinks he is mentally ill is contrary to the principles of *Vumunhu* and can be an indication of mental instability as articulated in the following except:

Security yacho yakandisiya ndave kuna Second Street kure nenzvimbo dzisingadiwi mapenzi asi idzo dzizere mapenzi (Mabasa, 1999, p. 20). (The security dragged me up to Second Street. Far away from places where mentally ill people are not wanted yet such places are full of mentally ill people.)

Hamundigoni's statement is satirical; it implies that Garanowako's behaviour is typical of a mentally ill person. Mabasa is presenting Hamundigoni as a mad genius (Viet-Wild, 2006) someone who can reason much better than Garanowako and is much more humane than Garanowako. In this context, refusing to acknowledge a fellow comrade simply because he is mentally ill is inhuman and is typical of someone whose thinking is disturbed. Thus, the name Garanowako (stay with your kin) is a rebuke to his behaviour towards Hamundigoni. The name suggests that Garanowako should not forget those who assisted him to rise; he should be humane and should assist a former comrade in arms. The name Garanowako encourages the inclusion of persons with mental disabilities that they should not be denigrated but should be valued and treated as equal beings. Thus Mabasa imaginatively uses *Upenzi* (foolishness) as his basis for moralizing. *Upenzi* is generally the opposite of *Vumunhu*. It contradicts with the guiding principles informing the *Vumunhu* philosophy. Mabasa interrogates everything on the basis of this opposition of *Upenzi* and *Vumunhu* riding

on the reasoning that a person who deviates from *Vumunhu* ceases to be human. To be human in the imaginative frame of the novel *Mapenzi* is unthinkable outside the purview of *Vumunhu*. Again the attitude exhibited by the former colleague suggests the change of personality by people is contrary to the principles of *Vumunhu* as shaped by status. The name Garanowako expresses the hypocrisy of the people especially in post-colonial society. The name is in line with the ethos of *Vumunhu* which includes collegiality, hospitality, generosity, caring and compassion. Comrade Garanowako, as his name suggests diverges from *Vumunhu*. He is equally mentally ill such that his mental illness cascades to his bodyguards and the geography of the Harare CBD where the city scape demarcated by Second Street is characterised by elitist mental illness. This elitist neurosis rhetorically lampoons the behaviour of the ruling elite who change their personality to advance their selfish individual needs which is contradictory to the expectations of *Vumunhu*. The author uses Hamundigoni to discourage those occupying top positions from looking down upon fellow comrades. After the ill-treatment from Garanowako, Hamundigoni remarks;

Benzi rinoonekwa sei chaizvo iwe usina kutaura nemunhu kuti unzwe kuti anofunga sei? Vanhuka?’’ (Mabasa, 1999, p. 21). (How can one tell that someone is mentally ill when one has not talked with the concerned person in order to establish how he or she thinks? People?)

This suggests that it is proper and human to first interact with someone so that we get to know the state of their mind. In the above excerpt, the author is condemning the often taken-for-granted position that anyone who is vocal and in dirty torn clothes is mentally ill. Thus, judging someone's state of mind by his or her physical appearance is misleading and contradicts the principles of *Vumunhu* which values humanity. The author is discouraging this attitude; *Anopenga uyo, hamuzvione here hembe dzacho nemufambire waari kuita.* (Mabasa, 1999, p. 21). (He is mentally ill, can't you see his attire and his step). What all this points to is that Mabasa uses Hamundigoni, a mentally ill person in contrast with the sane, with the intention of unravelling the weaknesses of those considered sane, weaknesses that can be equated to mental illness. Thus, in *Mapenzi* the inclusion of the mentally ill character is a literary device meant to contrast his behaviour with those who are not mentally ill to expose the flaws in those considered sane. Such a technique is powerful in justifying the humanity in the mentally ill, exposing the feebleness of those considered sane as well as diluting the negative attitudes directed at the mentally ill.

Through Hamundigoni's encounter with Garanowako, Mabasa highlights the plight of several war liberation fighters who, after participating in the liberation struggle, were betrayed and abandoned by their colleagues in government. This ideation is also expressed in Simon Chimbetu's lyric, *Pane Asipo*. The song is a protest to the unequal treatment of people including corrupt tendencies by those in power. In the song Chimbetu points out that the freedom and luxuries prevailing in the country were not celebrated by everyone. The song communicates the need for all people to enjoy the fruits of independence. The lyrics "*Mabiko ataita aya pane vasipo*" (This celebration excludes others) "*Kuguta kwataita uku pane vasina*" (While we are contented some are not) are true testimony to the disillusionment of the ex-combatants. Hamundigoni is standing in for such people (liberation war fighters) who are not employed and who are destitute. Hamundigoni, the mentally ill character is a war liberation fighter who did not benefit from his efforts in contributing towards the liberation war. He laments that he did not receive any recognition or reward for participating in the liberation war for seven years. He only has scars that serve as a reminder of how he contributed to Zimbabwe's independence. Regrettably, his alleged mental illness could be the effects of the liberation war manifesting as trauma that emanated from the horrid experiences of the war. In this context, the government is held responsible for the plight of desperate former freedom fighters like Hamundigoni. Indeed Hamundigoni laments:

Kurwa hondo handina kukanganisa ini. Handina. Ndakarwa kuti tese tiwane, tese tidye, tese tigute – kuti kana toziya, toziya tese, kwete kuti munhu mumwe ndiye anenge achingotambura nokudzvova tsvi." (Mabasa, 1999, p. 140). (I was not wrong by participating in the liberation war. I was not. I fought so that we can all eat; we will all be rewarded – so that if we starve everyone else starves not that one individual benefits unnecessarily).

The repetitive use of the plural collective affix or morpheme /ti-/ suggests the collective efforts made by the diverse people in fighting for the independence of the nation and the participation of the novelist's voice of conscience, Hamundigoni. The repetitive reference to *Handina* (I didn't) is akin to Dixon Chingaira's song *Havana Kukanganisa*, (They did not mess up) though this one sung as flattery for the ruling class. Hamundigoni is blaming bad governance. The system is not fair; it is enriching those at the top while the majority languishes in poverty and it is failing to recognise and reward those who participated in the struggle for independence. This is a cry for the government to correct the inconsistency. It is not easy to attack the government but here the task is made easier by the use of a mentally ill character, Hamundigoni who has the latitude to speak out about the inconsistencies. Under

normal circumstances, such utterances can be offensive but this time no one feels offended because it is coming from a mentally ill person.

On the moral front in *Mapenzi* Mabasa (1999) uses Hamundigoni to condemn homosexuality. In the narrative, the author explains that homosexuality is one way in which people involved show a lack of rational thinking. The young man who was waiting for his boyfriend and later on had a mouth-to-mouth kiss with another man annoys Hamundigoni and he insults the young man for practicing homosexuality. In the Shona culture, homosexuality is viewed as foreign or as abnormal behaviour which may suggest corruption of morals (Shoko, 2010). Wasosa (2014, p. 149) concurs with this view when he mentions that “homosexuality is deviant behaviour as it does not conform to the Shona people’s cultural ethics ... it is abnormal, unexpected and a reflection of mental instability”. In this context, Mabasa insinuates that the young man is mentally unstable. The strange behaviour is equated to mental illness because of its abnormality and weirdness. The mentally ill are condemning homosexuality; this is Mabasa’s way of appealing to society’s conscience. Mabasa presents Hamundigoni, the mentally ill as not practicing homosexuality, he is morally upright and by condemning homosexuality, he depreciates it and the fact that the condemnation is coming from a mentally ill person is effective in trivialising homosexuality. This is the author’s position in relation to homosexuality. However, condemning homosexuality may be equated to othering.

Upon entering Ambassador Hotel, Hamundigoni gets drunk and sleeps. While he is sleeping, thieves steal his wallet. When he finds out that he has been robbed he protests:

Munhu ungatorewo chikwama woshaya nyadzi dzokusiya chitupa, kuti unogozoita inini here? Kana kuti unoti rata rechitupa ringagadzirewo mugomo. Vanhu vanopenga chete. Zvino ungangoba nezvausina basa nazvo, asi kuti ndezveshave kanhi? (Mabasa, 1999, p. 16).

(How does one steal a wallet and does not have the courtesy to leave behind the identity card, or do you think you can become me? Or else you think the scrap material used to make the identity card can make a bucket. People are mentally ill. They steal even the things that are not of any value to them, maybe evil spirits drive them to do so.)

The neurosis of stealing what one does not intend to use presents an ideological stance that exposes abject poverty which freezes and locks the brain to the level of desiring the undesirable. Thievery has gone extreme to the extent that it is characterised by destitution, senselessness, and hopelessness and meaningless of life. Life has become so colossal such

that mental disability becomes an option for expressing their behaviour and attitude towards life. Hamundigoni condemns thieves for stealing things that are not essential to them; he castigates such behaviour and likens it to mental illness. He appeals to the conscience of thieves that they should have the courtesy to leave behind those items that are of no use to them. He claims this is the logical thing to do.

Ironically, the young man who interacts with Hamundigoni in the park mistakenly leaves behind his bag but Hamundigoni (the mentally ill) does not take the bag. He assumes that the young man is going to remember and come back for it. It is thought-provoking to note that the mentally ill character behaves more rationally than the rest of the characters in the novel. Hamundigoni, despite his label, has a conscience. He does not take the young man's bag. He is morally upright and his standard of reasoning and morality is above that of those who steal from him, the very people who are regarded as sane. In the narrative, Hamundigoni is portrayed as genuine and as more human than the rest of the characters in the novel. Above all, he does not cause problems in the narrative. Throughout the novel, Hamundigoni rebukes uncouth behaviour. Mabasa shows that at times it is not easy to discern the mentally ill from the sane because certain people are labelled as mentally ill but behave more rationally than the sane who may do worse than those labelled as mentally ill. Hence, no need to stigmatise and marginalise those with mental illness because everyone at one time behaves in irrational ways.

Mabasa contrasts Hamundigoni the mentally ill character with irresponsible family men in his endeavour to prove that mentally ill people need not be stigmatised because they are better off than people like Sebastian. Sebastian is married to Mai Tanya. He does not buy food for his family and at one time, he sells food items bought by his wife so that he can buy dagga. His nephew Vincent also complains that Sebastian's wife often visits him asking for some food items like mealie meal and sugar for Tanya's porridge and some money to buy freezits (sweetened water in plastic tubes) for reselling. Ironically, Sebastian buys two dresses and a pair of shoes for a prostitute. Out of surprise, Vincent remarks:

Asi chokwadi kupenga kwakadai kuchapera riini? Sekuru Saba vakatengera hure madhirezi maviri nepeya imwe chete yebhutsu. Asi mukadzi wavo ukamuona unototyaka kuti hembe dzake idzi ndedzekunhonga here kana kuti ndedzenhaka (Mabasa, 1999, p. 51).

(Surely, when will this madness end? Uncle Sabastian bought a prostitute two dresses and a pair of shoes. Nevertheless, if you see his wife you will be shocked because she will be in clothes that are not presentable at all).

Indeed Sebastian is presented as behaving irrationally. How can one be so irrational? Opting to buy a prostitute two dresses and a pair of shoes yet his wife does not have decent clothing and above all fails to buy his own family food.

Sebastian abuses his wife to the extent that he brings home a prostitute and asks his wife to surrender their matrimonial bed and linen to him and his prostitute. This is mental torture to the wife who is violated by this disrespect. In this case, Mabasa (1999) framed prostitution within the disability lenses. The prostitute is equally mentally ill. Sebastian then instructs his wife together with his daughter to sleep on the floor while he had what he calls quality time with a prostitute. At one time, he asked Vincent to provide him with a bed so he can be intimate with a prostitute and when Vincent snubbed him, Sebastian and his prostitute sought cover in nearby shrubbery. This is disgracing and it shows the concerned party's lack of *Vumunhu*. In this context, prostitution is the opposite of *Vumunhu*, Mabasa insinuates that the prostitute is mentally ill. Her actions are inhuman and contrary to the attributes of *Vumunhu*, it appears she has no conscience at all somewhat putting to question her sanity. On the other hand, Mai Tanya blames herself for remaining married to Sebastian regardless of his misdemeanour. Sebastian does not come home regularly; he is adulterous, he is not a responsible husband and does not love her. She laments that life with Sebastian is hopeless and that she is only waiting to die. Maintaining such a relationship connotes mental illness. Unfortunately, Sebastian accidentally kills Mai Tanya. One night, coming from the beer hall, upon arrival Sebastian started to call mai Tanya names asking her to open the door and threatening to kill her if she did not comply. Regrettably, mai Tanya is not feeling well so she takes time to open the door. As she moves towards the door, Sebastian kicks the metal door, which ripped mai Tanya's abdomen, and she died on the spot. The author is interrogating such conduct; he equates it to mental illness. Mabasa is equating Sebastian's behaviour to mental illness thereby applauding Hamundigoni who is labelled mentally ill but lives in harmony with others and does not offend anyone. Those who are considered sane cause havoc in society through their misdemeanour, Mabasa questions their rationality. Indeed, they are worse off than those labelled as mentally ill. That being the case there is no need to stigmatise and marginalise those with mental illness when the sane behave worse than the mentally ill.

Hamundigoni rebukes those who indulge in immoral activities, Eddie is Heaven's fiancé, he is not employed and he is staying with Heaven as husband and wife at Heaven's parental home. In the Shona culture, for a husband to permanently stay at his in-laws home is taboo. As Heaven's boyfriend, Eddie has no right to be staying with Heaven at her parental home. Eddie does not appreciate this gesture. He commits adultery under his in-law's roof with the in laws' house maid. Heaven's mother does the unusual; she accepts Eddie in the home and accommodates him. Eddie's deportment is questionable and is not expected under normal circumstances. He is being very unreasonable and the author equates such behaviour to mental illness. In response to such behaviour, Hamundigoni sarcastically says to Heaven:

asi ini kana ndichipenga iwe, mai vako nekakomana kako aka munotoda kuendeswa kuPsychiatric Unit kuGomo. (Mabasa, 1999, p. 83). (... Nevertheless, if I am mentally ill, you, your mother and your boyfriend need to be taken to the Psychiatric Unit at Gomo hospital).

Hamundigoni is insinuating that society fails to identify behaviour that is typical of mental illness. Eddie, Heaven and Heaven's mother behave in ways that are typical of irrational human beings. The readers' minds are forced to explore similar incidents in real life situations as reflected in Shona cultural lores. Culturally, a son-in-law should be responsible for taking care of his in-laws and not vice versa. This is expressed in the ChiShona proverb *mukwasha muonde haupere kudyiwa* (A son in law is a fig tree which perennially provides fruits to the in-laws). There are various expressions like this in various ChiShona linguistic varieties. Heaven's mother exposes her immoral conduct, which suggests her unstable mind. Surprisingly they are all not cognisant of their weird behaviour. Hamundigoni insinuates that he is smart, his mental state is far much better than theirs. Thus, Hamundigoni mocks the trio; he claims he is better because their condition desperately needs rehabilitation.

Mabasa (1999) uses a mentally ill character to attack and rebuke adults who abuse minors. Heaven sexually abuses Reuben, her cousin who is below school-going age. On this note, Mabasa's reasoning is in line with the constitutional provisions on the rights of the child of 11 October 2019 which states that (1) Children shall enjoy special protection and care. Children shall enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with their age and maturity. (2) Children shall be guaranteed special protection from economic, social, physical, mental or other exploitation and abuse. Such protection shall be guaranteed by law. Thus, the author brings out the issue of child sexual abuse, an adult abusing a minor. Heaven is cohabiting with Eddie but she still has the desire to be intimate with her cousin, a minor.

Indeed this connotes an unstable mental state. In agony, Reuben narrates how this abuse occurred:

Zviri kurwadza. NdiHeaven aitamba nechinhu changu achichiisa pane chake. Ini ndakange ndichichema asi haana kumbondiregedza achiti ndikangotaura chete anondiendesa kuvanhu vamakombi ndonochekwa musoro, (Mabasa, 1999. p. 144). (It is painful. Heaven played with my organ placing it on hers. I was crying but she did not let go of me saying if I report her, she is going to take me to the owners of commuter omnibuses who will behead me).

It is interesting to note that Hamundigoni is in charge here. He rebukes Heaven, threatens to assault her and he takes Reuben to the doctor for medication. This indicates that the mentally ill are not harmful; the sane are responsible for the pandemonium that exists in society. Hamundigoni is correcting glitches inflicted by those considered as sane. Such a scenario compels us to question the mental state of adults who sexually abuse minors. Indeed such perpetrators have mental problems.

Throughout the narrative, Hamundigoni rebukes unacceptable behaviour paraded by those considered as sane. The irony is that the mentally ill are stigmatised and marginalised by society yet these people are not a threat to society. Their problem is that at times they lack mental coordination, logical thinking and are talkative (Mabasa, 1999). Those without mental illness are the real nuisance, they cause harm and pandemonium to society as exhibited in the discussion above.

Mabasa insinuates that the problem with people is that they see other people as mentally ill and they fail to recognise that they do things that suggest their own weakness. He brings this out through Hamundigoni when he said:

Ndingafare kana ndikawana kwekuvererekera kuri kure neHarare. Kure chaizvo nehupenzi huno. Hupenzi hunosanganisira kuona hupenzi hwevamwe ivo vasingaoni hwavo (Mabasa, 1999, p. 30). (I will be happy if I find somewhere to go away from Harare. Away from this stupidity. Stupidity that encompasses seeing other people's stupidity without realising their own stupidity).

Harare as the capital city of Zimbabwe is framed as a city of mentally ill people. The neurosis is located at the heart of the capital city and is reflected in the statement “*Harare yakazara Mapenzi...*” (Harare is saturated with fools / mad people). Considering that Harare is the capital city of the country where the country's leadership is found, the statement is an insult to the ruling elite for it implies that they serve no purpose at all or that they have failed as

leaders. Kundai, a stripper, claims that she is not mentally ill like Hamundigoni. She boasts to Hamundigoni that the money that she gets from stripping and prostitution is tax-free and that she is her own boss. In response, Hamundigoni mocks Kundai by telling her that being a prostitute is a sign of mental illness because she values money at the expense of her health and life. Thus, Mabasa in his narrative successfully uses the mentally ill character to critic society. The device is effective in that the truth is communicated and there is open criticism and attack on all social vices at all levels and no one feels offended because it is coming from a mentally ill man. Mabasa successfully portrayed mental illness positively; the mentally ill is a man on a mission, is accorded adequate fictional space and is the main character in the narrative. Thus, the author is cognisant of the worthiness of all human beings' disability or not. All human beings should be accorded due respect in line with the dictates of *Vumunhu* whether one has a disability or no disability.

5.3 Use of Characters with Disabilities to Create Humour and Entertainment

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2021) humour is “the quality of being amusing or comic especially as expressed in literature or speech”. However opinions on what can be considered as humour may be debatable because what is amusing to someone may not be amusing to the other person. Thus humour may not be enjoyed by everyone always and it largely depends on one’s sense of humour as well as culture. Humour is a literary device that is used by writers to induce laughter in audience or readers. When used in a literary work its purpose is to break monotony. Thus, humour should be able to make readers and audience laugh and as such should be entertaining and at the same time relieve them from the story events which may be stressful, archaic or monotonous. With reference to the function of madness in literature Chigwedere (2015) posits that in literary texts ‘madness’ is used as a kind of device, a rhetorical or dramatical motif- madness as acting as a kind of vehicle for entertainment. Thus, in literary texts, this entertainment is relayed in the form of humour. There are several types of humour and each type is going to be discussed as it features in the discussion. In *Mapenzi*, to create humour and entertainment in the narrative, Mabasa (1999) uses Hamundigoni. Humour is created when the mentally ill protagonist is tasked to spell out the social vices committed by people and rebuking those who behave immorally. In this context, humour is created because under normal circumstances it is unexpected for the mentally ill to be in charge. The opposite is expected. Thus, it becomes humorous when the unusual occurs. Humour is created when we realise that the rebuking tendencies are coming from a mentally

ill man. As a mentally ill character, Hamundigoni attacks every corner of society with impunity. Mabasa through Hamundigoni is able to expose society's ills including sensitive issues that concern the ruling class without fear. The effect of this device is that no one feels offended. Instead, humour is created by Hamundigoni's rebuking tendencies because it is coming from someone who is mentally ill hence the meaning of his name Hamundigoni (Uncontrollable), he cannot be held responsible for what he says because he is mentally ill. Likewise, Mabasa cannot be held responsible for the actions and utterances of a mentally ill character. Thus, his use of the mentally ill character shields him from persecution by the responsible authorities

Hamundigoni functions as entertainment when he thinks aloud or speaks loudly at home, in public places like bus stops and public transport. People are amused by his utterances and are entertained throughout their journeys. They laugh at his utterances, interact with him and some doubt his condition while others are convinced the man is mentally ill. It is interesting to note that some people postpone their journeys in order to listen to Hamundigoni. One incident is when people who were waiting for transport refused to board a commuter omnibus because they wanted to listen to what Hamundigoni was saying:

...Kwakauya kombi asi vanhu vakaramba kukwira vachida kunzwa ticha vachitaura. Kupenga zvakunoiwawo futi... Vanhu vekombi vakasvotwa kuti vanhu varamba kukwira vachida kunzwa benzi raitaura ndokusiya vavatuka. Hanzi "mukateerera pfungwa dzebenzi nemi matovawo Mapenzi..." (Mabasa 1997, p. 148-149). (A commuter omnibus came but people refused to board it for they wanted to listen to what the teacher was saying. Mental illness and what it does.... Those manning the commuter omnibus were annoyed that people refused to board the commuter omnibus so that they can listen to a madman who was talking, they departed after scolding them. They said if you listen to the ideas of a mad man you automatically become mentally ill.

Disappointed the conductor insinuated that these people by refusing to board the commuter omnibus were mentally ill and not different from Hamundigoni. In this instance, the artist is using the mentally ill to entertain readers. The author is ridiculing this group of spectators who delay their journey in order to listen to someone they shun and despise (*benzi*) (fool). The novelist is suggesting that the spectators are equally mentally ill and this creates humour to the readers. It is also humorous to note that the conductor is annoyed and insults the spectators out of disappointment that he loses business. The author creates humour in that he gives the impression that the sane cannot reason rationally. They shelve their journey in order to listen to the utterances of a mentally ill man someone they do not have respect for. Are

they really sane? In this context, Hamundigoni serves as entertainment to both characters in the novel and to the readers.

In *Zvaida Kushinga* by Makari (1985), the author has a character who fakes mental illness. This is a literary device he uses in order for the liberation war fighters to familiarise themselves with the setup at the Rhodesian Forces Camp in order to attack it tactfully. Tinotonga a liberation war fighter fakes mental illness. He is on a mission to spy on the camp. The mentally ill character is effective here in that the camp is a prohibited area but being mentally ill he has no boundaries and he takes advantage of society's negative attitudes towards mental illness and as such he successfully carries out his mission without anyone suspecting any sinister motives. In this narrative humour is presented through dramatic irony. With this literary device, readers share some knowledge with a character which the other characters do not have. As readers we are aware that someone is faking mental disability and this brings humour. Humour is further created when as readers we realize those at the camp are duped. In this context, the use of a 'mentally ill character' is effective because under normal circumstances people look down upon those with mental illness, no one cares about a mentally ill person; he or she is ridiculed, despised, and ignored. The appearance of Tinotonga in regalia that is typical of a mentally ill character and behaving like a mentally ill person creates humour because as readers we know that he is not mentally ill, but is duping those at the camp. On this note physical humour is induced, it is triggered by this man's attire, his actions and the assault from Mashumba when he realised that one of the eggs he bought was rotten. More humour is created when Tinotonga enters the camp announcing that he is selling eggs

Eges good one
Eat one is enough
Big big like Matamba
Buy buy cheap egesi
Seti cent dhauzen
Very cheap one
Eggs good one

Eggs good once
 Eat one and you are satisfied
 Very big eggs (like a wild fruit same size
 with oranges, Buy cheap eggs
 Thirty cents per dozen
 Very cheap
 Good eggs

(Makari, 1985, p. 32).

Here the fake mentally ill man uses wit or word play humour by twisting language. Twisting of language in this context is humorous in the sense that it reinforces the fact that the man is not mentally well to the other characters. To the readers humour is in the form of dramatic irony readers are aware that those at the camp are being duped. The language he uses is humorous in that it is typical of the language that is used by mentally ill people. The mentally

ill are fond of using English yet they are not fluent in the language and their pronunciation is funny. Interestingly, the mentally ill character is able to communicate; although the English is broken we are able to understand what he says. The prisoners laugh at him, dismiss him and instruct him to go to the white men who have money to buy the eggs. Mashumba buys some eggs and we laugh at how he entertains an opponent unknowingly. Upon realising that some of the eggs are rotten Mashumba rebukes and assaults the fake mentally ill man who in turn does not show signs of disappointment. The fake mentally ill man grins at Mashumba and all this brings humour considering the motives of the fake mentally ill man. What is more humorous is the fact that Mashumba is not aware of the fact that he is not dealing with a mentally ill person and when the fake mentally ill man laughs after being assaulted he is laughing at Mashumba who is not aware of his (Tinotonga) true identity. Mashumba is going to suffer the consequences of ill-treating this fake mentally ill character.

Like Hamundigoni in *Mapenzi*, the fake mentally ill character is a source of entertainment to some of the prisoners who abandoned what they were doing and gazed at the mentally ill character. One of the elders at the camp was fascinated by the appearance and utterances of this fake mentally ill character. “VaMberi vakanakidzwa kwazvo nokufamba kwebenzi iri zvokuti vakayeverwa vakatanga kuritevera kuti vaone kuti rainoita seyi kuvarungu” (Makari, 1985, p.31). (Mr Mberi was thrilled by the way the mentally ill man walked. He got fascinated and he escorted him wanting to see how he was going to behave to the whites). There is a dramatic irony when Mr Mberi failed to recognise Tinotonga and this creates humour. No one is suspicious about the intentions of the mentally ill character. The fake mentally ill character is able to accomplish his mission, taking advantage of the people’s negative attitudes towards his condition. In this book, the author creates a character with disability to take advantage of the gullibility of the people using humour. He exposes the fatality of stereotyping and not taking each situation as unique as the soldiers suffered the consequences for negative attitudes towards disability. The story in this narrative is stressful due to its nature as a war novel. Nevertheless through humour created by the inclusion of a mentally ill fake character Makari is able to reduce tensions which continuously exist throughout the narrative.

In *Kurumwa Nehekuchera* Gudza serves as both a source of entertainment and humour. Gudza’s usual utterance whenever he was given food ‘the happy of the body is helps us’ (Runyowa, 197), p. 47) is meaningless. This language twisting is typical of the mentally ill as

evidenced in the recently discussed text. As readers, we laugh at the broken English but we are cognisant of what he wants to communicate. Interestingly the statement confirms his mental condition. In the narrative humour is also instilled by the story Gudza narrated whenever he was given food. The story is not logical, as such it confirms Gudza's mental state:

VaRungu vachangosvika munyika muno ndakasevenzera umwe muRungu basa rekubika. Mumwe musi kwakanaya mvura zhinj. Mvura yagasa ndakatora gaba remvuviro kana kuti baking powder randaifunga kuti harina chiro mukati. Ndaida kunojuruja majuru ndichiaisa mugaba iri. Ndichangosvika pachuru ndakaona muRungu wangu asvika achida gaba remvuviro randakanga ndatora. Ndakarizarura ndikaona, finish, mune mvuviro zvechokwadi. Ukuwo muRungu akarumwa nejuru ndokutomuka mudenga ndokubva abhagurira mvuviro pasi pakanga pakatota. Chinzwa unzwe. Mvuviro yakasangana nevhu nyoro. Chidzere chakatutuma chichikwira mudenga...Chidzere chakakura kuita gomo... Vanhu takavaudza zvakanga zvaitika asi vakaramba vachiti aiva manenji. Finish! Vanhu vaigara padyo negomo iri vakatamira kure... Imwe n'anga yamanyepo yakavakira musha wayo mugomo iri ichida kuzivikanwa nekugara maityiwa navazhinji kuti iwane vekurapa. Zita rayo rainzi Chiremba ndosaka Gomo iri rakanzi Chiremba'' (Runyowa, 1974, p. 48) (When the Whites settled in this country I worked for one of them as a cook. One day there was a heavy rain. When the rains stopped I took a tin of baking powder assuming that it was empty. I wanted to harvest some termites and put them in this tin. Upon my arrival at the anthill I saw the white man; he wanted the baking powder tin which I had taken. I opened it and I saw that indeed it had some baking powder. The White man was bitten by a termite and he jumped and bumped onto the tin and the baking powder covered the wet ground. Listen and hear. The baking powder dissolved into the wet soil. The anthill rose upwards (in a similar manner as dough). The anthill became big like a mountain...We informed people about this development but they could not believe it for they assumed it was a bad omen. People who stayed in this area moved to a faraway place. A certain fake traditional healer built a home in this mountain; he wanted to be popular for staying in a place many people feared to live in in order to attract clients).

This type of humour is called surreal humour which involves events that are not logical, situations that are absurd or nonsensical (Collins, 2014). The story creates humour and serves as entertainment to readers as well as to the characters in the story. The idea that baking powder developed an anthill into a mountain creates humour because this is not practical the assumption is that the soil should rise like what baking powder does in flour which is absurd. Such reasoning is typical of irrational thinking and this way humour is created. The fact that there is no authenticity in the story creates more humour. What is more humorous is the idea that the story is coming from someone who is mentally ill yet the story sounds like a myth that explains the existence of a local mountain called Chiremba. The story confirms Gudza's mental illness.

In *Pafunge*, Tsodzo (1972) uses lisp to entertain as well as creating humour for the readers in the narrative. Each time Michael appears in the story nothing of significance is communicated by his lisp except lying and proposing love to girls whom he is not serious with. This on its own creates humour. The author is making fun out of Michael's lisp. '*Kuti ndigan'e ndin'i ndega zvin'i kundinetsa. Man'i yokunóvoná mukadzi ndinayo. Chete vasikana vacho ndivo vandin'i kushaya. Kunáná gota kunonetsa chaizvo*' (Tsodzo, 1972, p, 56). On this note the author uses self-deprecating humour, Michael is belittling himself by the lisp. The lisp is an obstacle, Michael does not sound serious due to the lisp. In fact he is making funny of himself. Humour is created when Michael fails to articulate words properly and as such fails to communicate to Rudo. The author's decision to use the courtship register to parade Michael's speech disability creates humour. In the Shona culture, a boy is expected to exhibit good communication skills when proposing love to a girl in order to impress the girl and win her heart. Alas, Michael fails to communicate; Rudo cannot comprehend what Michael is saying.

In the works discussed in this section, the humour used by the authors through characters with disabilities is didactic (Mabasa, 1999; Makari. 1985) and reduces tension (Makari, 1985; Tsodzo, 1972; Runyowa, 1974).

5.4 Characters with disabilities as symbolic

Banik (2016, p. 199) argues that "in literature, physical disability is usually used as a device that represents inner defects of the mind." He calls this idea, "*The twisted mind in the twisted body*". The device is very popular and is employed to convey the evil and the sinister. However, this ideation stigmatizes disability and as such it has been questioned as indicated by Vidali (2010) who points out that scholars of disability studies have interrogated disability metaphors for emphasizing on deficiencies and for representing disability as disorder. Thus, this section discusses the inclusion of characters with disabilities as symbolic. In *Pafunge*, Michael's lisp is symbolic. The lisp may symbolise a weakness in the person of the character. Michael the character with a speech impairment is not morally upright. He is a criminal and womaniser who deceives young girls, sexually abuses and discards them when they get pregnant. Michael despises women and views them as sex objects. He believes there is no need for him to get married because he can access any woman around. Michael believes marriage is retrogressive as evidenced by how he laments about the downfall of his elder

brother after he married Chiedza a woman from Njanja. The fact that Michael's lisp is a literary device that is symbolic of his misdemeanour in the narrative is evidence of Tsodzo's negative attitude towards disability. The artist ridicules speech disability.

The other character with a disability we find in *Pafunge* is a former bread truck driver who lost an arm in a road accident and is conspiring with Michael in their criminal activities. The man does not have a name and this connotes the author's negative attitude towards those with disabilities, their identity is not important, what is worth mentioning are their disabilities. Nothing more is said about this man. It seems as if the author does not have serious business with persons with disabilities. All he is interested in is exposing their immorality as if to suggest that they are imperfect in nature, which can further suggest that any disability in an individual is a sign of imperfection in terms of character. The writer gives Michael and the bread truck driver inadequate fictional space in the narrative; they are minor characters who do not have meaningful roles in the narrative. The truck driver appears once and Michael appears twice in the story. Thus, the author portrays disability negatively by using it as a metaphor representing the imperfection of character. In the narrative, persons with disabilities are portrayed as evil in the sense that the two are criminals and are womanisers who do not value women but enjoy exploiting them. This is typical of stereotyping and 'othering' of persons with disabilities which was adopted from western literature which has the tendency to portray characters with disabilities as evil (Chidyausiku 1975). However such portrayal perpetuates the marginalisation of persons with disabilities who then continue to be treated as the 'other'.

In *Ruvimbo*, Chingono (1980) fakes disability in order to parade society's negative attitudes towards disability as well as showing how social status influences people's attitudes towards disability. His inclusion of Ruvimbo as a person with a disability is meant to highlight the plight of women in wheelchairs. The artist communicates that such women are not asexual; they need life partners as evidenced in Ruvimbo's poem.

Through the poem, the author manages to show that women with disabilities have feelings and wishes regarding love and marriage thereby dismissing the popular assumption that women with disabilities are asexual (Boylan, 1991). The poem together with the play serve to highlight the plight of women in wheelchairs. Thus, Chingono's inclusion of a character with a disability is a metaphor through which he hopes to address a broader theme. In this case,

Ruvimbo's disability stands for the blighted opportunity of women with disabilities (Zinyemba, 1986). Through faking disability, the author succeeds in exposing the tension and challenges that come into play when a man wants to tie a note with a woman in a wheelchair.

In relation to the use of disability as a metaphor, McCobin (2016, p. 1) posits that in literature, blindness is indicative of ignorance. This assumption emanates from the notion that knowledge is equated to light or sight. On the same note Vidali (2010) interrogates the metaphor 'knowing is seeing' through which blindness is represented as misunderstanding and disorder. For Larrissy (2007, p. viii) many writers of the Romantic period associate the blind with "the idea of intense inward vision" and the chief emphasis in this period is on "the compensation of enhanced sensitivity to music and words". Larrissy (2007, p. 5) then argues, "However, one of the central claims of our book is that Romantic-period writing strongly emphasises the aural compensations from which the blind may benefit". Such reasoning of compensation for blindness through intense inwards vision which occurs in various works discussed by Larrissy (2007) is nonexistent in ChiShona literary works mainly because in these texts there is no exploration of the life experiences of characters with blindness. The tendency is to inflict blindness on characters as punishment for immoral behaviour and once a character is blinded he or she is extinct and the story line ends. In *Garandichauya* by Chakaipa (1963) and *Mwana Waamai* by Mujajati (2006), characters are careless with their lives and they are blind to the implications of their immoral activities. Matamba, Muchaneta and Ruzvidzo could not perceive the consequences of their immorality and in this context; blindness is equated to their unawareness of the implications of their actions. Thus, in the texts blindness is employed as a metaphor that represents a failure to see beyond one's actions. Such a depiction trivialises the disability (blindness) in the narrative, hence the emphasis is exerted on its metaphorical aspect at the expense of exploring the life experiences of those with blindness. It is unfortunate that such a depiction yields negative attitudes. McCobin (2016) reiterates this thinking.

In Mashiri's (1977), *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga* (Family Secrets), Muchineripi, in order to evade starvation, pledges Maria his daughter to Nyikadzino. Maria should be wife to Nyikadzino's son Peter or to Nyikadzino himself. Unfortunately, Nyikadzino's wife is against the idea, as such she wants Maria dead. Nyikadzino is into drug dealings; he buys dagga from Manuwere and resells it, in Mutare. Manuwere is Mozambican; he is poor and has a disability, he limps. Manuwere is a notorious drug smuggler who was banned from

entering Zimbabwe but would illegally enter the country and continue with his drug dealing activities. After establishing a business, Nyikadzino asks Manuwere to look for a charm that would ensure his business flourishes. Meanwhile, Nyikadzino's wife asks Manuwere to kill Maria so that she can use her body parts to enhance their business. In both instances, Manuwere complies and as such is able to dupe the couple who unknowingly pays him twice. When he attempts to kill Maria he is caught in action. The artist uses Manuwere's disability (limping) as a symbol for weakness in Manuwere's character; Manuwere's limping is a symbol of his evil character. He is morally weak hence; his disability is used as a literary device that represents imperfection of character. Again, such a portrayal does nothing to address the plight of those with disabilities but instead communicates negative attitudes towards disability.

In *Zinyekenyeke*, Mujajati's use of stammering as a literary device also signifies weakness in Marufu's character. The artist is lampooning husbands who send their wives to school. He seems to suggest that Marufu's greatest weakness is empowering his wife who is now looking down upon him and is no longer interested in him. He is depicted as being responsible for the downfall of his family. The author further implies that Marufu's weakness as husband destroys his family. Marufu is weak and cannot control his estranged wife who disrespects him by ridiculing him and committing adultery

The discussion above shows that employing disability as a metaphor in the selected works yields a negative representation of disability. However, the inclusion of disability in literary works is a cultural myth, which shows how people understand disability to be representing some deeper metaphorical failing (Vidali, 2010). On the same note, McCobin (2016) remarks that employing disability in literary works as a metaphor increases its stigma and at the same time camouflages, the real experiences of persons with disabilities. Thus, disability is being depicted negatively through its inclusion as symbolic. Such a depiction is responsible for the negative attitudes society has towards disability and readers do not benefit much from works that include disability as a metaphor.

5.5 Abuses faced by persons with disabilities

Section 83 of the Zimbabwean Constitution (2013) that deals with the rights of persons with disability together with the UNCRPD prohibit the abuse and exploitation of persons with disabilities. Abuse of persons with disabilities entails physical or verbal abuse. Verbal abuse

involves inappropriate use of language or insulting persons with disabilities. Physical abuse includes sexual abuse and any other abuses that involve improper physical contact with someone with a disability. Both verbal and physical abuses affect an individual psychologically, socially and emotionally. The abuse of persons with disabilities emanates from the general belief that people with disabilities are a burden, useless, not productive and that they are not self-reliant (Kimbasa, 2016). The nouns that are used to refer to persons with disabilities promote negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Nouns like *benzi*, *mupengo*, *chirema*, *chikumbodai*, *mhanje*, *murungudunhu* and *bofu* (mentally ill person, mad man, cripple, deformed leg, barren, albino and blind person) are all abusive as they display a negative attitude towards people with disabilities by those who use these nouns. Some authors use these derogatory nouns to show society's negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. The consistent use of these derogatory nouns throughout narratives and plays is at times a sign of authors' negative attitudes and insensitivity towards disability issues as well as a reflection of society's negative attitudes towards disability. In this context, the theory of *Vumunhu* that guides this study is of paramount importance in that as a basic human philosophy it gives the Shona people identity and the need to respect other people no matter their condition. The theory's emphasis on humanness is essential in that it assists in challenging discrimination, stigmatisation and dehumanisation of persons with disabilities that may occur with these negative terms and other forms of abuse.

In the play *Ruvimbo*, Ruvimbo the girl in a wheelchair is an orphan. Masenda and his wife Munarwo have no problem taking Ruvimbo in because they were to benefit from the gesture, Ruvimbo's father left some money for her. That money lured the prospective guardians. When Masenda and Munarwo realise that Ruvimbo is dating Ngoni they become unsettled for they had longed to benefit from the money that Ruvimbo's father had left. With Ruvimbo now in love with Ngoni they realise that benefiting from the money was now under threat, "*Zvino mari yaakasiirwa mwana uyu tichaiwana here?*" (*Chingono*, 1980, p. 13). (Now will we be able to get Ruvimbo's share of the inheritance?). On this note, the author brings out the fact that Masenda and Munarwo were motivated to take care of Ruvimbo by the amount of money that her father left for her. The guardians show a good heart and raise Ruvimbo yet they had a hidden motive of benefiting from the money that her father left for her.

Another way in which people with disabilities are abused is through dehumanising them. For instance, in *Ruvimbo* Matienga (Ngoni's mother) instead of stating that she will never accept Ruvimbo as her daughter in law she says:

Ruvimbo haambofa akakambaira pano pamba pangu (Chingono, 1980, p, 26).
(Ruvimbo will never ever crawl here at my home).

Matienga dehumanises Ruvimbo by alluding to the fact that since she cannot walk she crawls. Adults do not crawl only babies crawl. Saying an adult crawls is degrading someone, it is likening someone to a creature which crawls.

In *Ndafa Here?* Christina dehumanises baby Sunungurai by likening her to a rat;

Chinhu chete chawakaita chakashata ukabvuma kuti ndechako kakonzo kako kakatsvukuruka semwana wembeva kawakabva nako kumateneti...'' (Mabasa, 2008, p. 131). (The only bad thing you did and acknowledged that it is yours is the reddish rat that you brought from the maternity ward).

The statement suggests giving birth to a baby with albinism is a bad thing and that Betty is accountable for bringing forth a baby with albinism. To Christina, someone with albinism is not a human being hence Sunungurai is not a human being; she is a reddish rat that looks like an offspring of a mouse. Christina detests Sunungurai's albinism she hates her complexion, which she alleges is not typical of human beings. This is wicked and the worst human degradation. Thus, Mabasa manages to capture society's negative attitudes towards albinism especially the paternal family's attitude towards albinism. Persons with albinism are not accepted; they are scoffed at and are considered as different from other human beings. The author wants to expose this wicked thinking about albinism.

In Chidyausiku's *Karumekangu* (1970), Chikweya as a person with disabilities is portrayed as evil or as a murderer, yet his wrath emerges from the abuse he suffers under Sarudzai. The author gets credit for exploring why persons with disabilities appear to become evil or murderers. They face abuse, ridicule, and exploitation and as a result, become hostile in response to the ill-treatment they get from society. Therefore, in this context, Sarudzai is responsible for Chikweya's vindictiveness. People with disabilities are often stereotyped as evil yet at times society is responsible for this evilness just as we witnessed from what happened between Sarudzai and Chikweya.

In the same narrative (*Karumekangu*), an unnamed prostitute is desperate one night, no one hires her for sexual services; she is desperate and has nowhere to put up. She decides to go to Chikweya's place in the hope that Chikweya is going to welcome her. Her sense is Chikweya

being a ‘cripple’ would consider her move a blessing since he is not able to attract women due to his ‘weird’ appearance (disability). Her motive is abusive; she takes advantage of Chikweya’s disability and assumes Chikweya will welcome her since he has a disability women abominate him. When Chikweya snubs her she laments:

Wangu munyama hausi munyama uri wega kubva ndadadirwa naChikweya chaiye chimukumbodai zvake munhu ane nhutwa kudai safa yomunhu akadai, zvivanhu zvinoseva nesawa (Chidyausiku, 1970, p. 79). (My bad luck is not entirely bad luck, Chikweya becoming arrogant to me ‘a cripple’ who has a hump on his back a useless and poor person, little people whose relish is sour milk).

In the excerpt, the woman further abuses Chikweya verbally, a derogatory term is used to refer to Chikweya ‘*chimukumbodai*’ meaning he has a deformed leg or is a ‘cripple’. The prostitute despises Chikweya by sarcastically describing his physical appearance and the description suggests his physical appearance does not resemble that of a normal human being. She is angry with Chikweya because he refuses to be abused. Thus, the author communicates that the conditions of persons with disabilities expose them to abuse by those without disabilities who seek to satisfy their selfish needs. In this context, Chidyausiku, captures sexual and verbal abuse that may be experienced by those with disabilities.

In Runyowa’s (1974) *Kurumwa Nechekuchera*, a mentally ill character Gudza is abused. The name Gudza means a blanket and in the narrative, implies one who does not reason and who is not aware of people’s motives, hence, he faces abuse. Chokuda and Maidei trap Gudza, they give him food with poison and he dies instantly. They drag his corpse into a nearby bush, open his skull and take the brain to Chakadini, the medicine man who uses it to prepare a concoction that would make Mandigona’s children become mentally ill. The two women took advantage of Gudza’s state of mind; his appetite, need for food, and that no one knew about his whereabouts and killed him in their effort to satisfy their selfish needs. They throw his remains in a nearby bush thereby denying him a decent burial. Indeed this is likely to be the fate of mentally ill people who are taken advantage of and are ruthlessly killed for ritual purposes. Thus, the author communicates that mentally ill people are vulnerable in the sense that they are killed for ritual purposes due to superstition.

In Mungoshi’s (1980) *Inongova Njakenjake*, (Each Man Does His Own Thing), of all the characters in the play, Kate has a disability, which possibly resulted from domestic violence. She is the only morally upright person but she is abused by her mother, Sheila who expects

and insists that Kate does house chores. While this is good grooming it is sad to note that it is not done in good faith. Kate's brother Joe feels for Kate and is always ready to assist but Sheila is adamant she insists that Kate does all the cooking;

Chaunofira chii? Iye Kate haagoni kubika? ... Ndakati ini kana Kate aripo ndiye anobika. Bhoi rake pano ndiani raanoti rinomuitira zvole? ... Chii chawakaitwa chinoshamisa apo? Inga kusona unogona wani?" (Mungoshi, 1980, p. 2). (Why troubling yourself? Is Kate not able to cook...? I said if Kate is around, she is supposed to cook. Does she have a slave who does everything for her...? What is unusual about your disability...? How come you are able to sew?)

Shiela hates Kate for her disability. It appears Sheila is bitter that she has a child with a disability. Shiela's hatred can also be attributed to the stigma that is associated with disability and maybe the belief that a child with a disability is a sign of a bad omen in the family (Choruma, 2006). Wamunyi (2012) further explains that a child with a disability is a symbol of a curse befalling the whole family hence their rejection by the family or community. Sheila fails to appreciate that Kate is industrious. What she only sees in Kate is her disability and nothing positive. This could have been due to a sense of guilt for giving birth to a child with a disability.

When a dispute erupts between Kate's sister Lucy and Shiela, Kate pleads with Lucy not to argue with their mother but Sheila is furious at Kate, "*Ngakanyarare!*" (Mungoshi, 1980, p. 6). (Keep quiet!) The statement is a negative command that belittles and despises Kate because she has a disability. The statement is demeaning. In the statement, */Nga-/* is a negative hortative formative that is imperative. Shiela is commanding Kate to stop talking with immediate effect because by talking she is irritating her. The diminutive */-ka-/* is a noun prefix of class twelve used to belittle and despise Kate. The use of the prefix */-ka-/* does not accord due respect to Kate as a human being but belittles Kate as a useless tiny something or a tiny human being. The use of the exclamation mark shows that Sheila is cross with Kate who has done nothing wrong.

Nevertheless, the playwright seems to have exaggerated Sheila's attitude and demeanour towards her own blood. Indeed Sheila has other motives behind her negative attitude towards Kate but it is clear that she dislikes Kate's disability. Her consistent reference to Kate's disability in form of insults is clear testimony to this. Thus, the artist captures bitterness that mothers may have towards a child with a disability and this bitterness is responsible for the abuse suffered by persons with disabilities.

In *Mwana Waamai*, Mujajati (2006) brings out that girls with Downs Syndrome are sexually abused for ritual purposes and used as payment for avenging spirits. Ruzvidzo whose intention is to ensure that his business flourishes sexually abuses Misodzi for ritual purposes, the minor is infected with an *STI*. On the other hand, Monica's paternal relatives inform her of their intention to use Misodzi as a ransom hand for avenging spirits that were tormenting the family. Their motive in coming up with this suggestion is influenced by the negative attitudes associated with persons with disabilities. The belief is people in Misodzi's predicament cannot marry and as such, they are ideal for rituals. More so, since time immemorial the Shona people view a child as a source of income as well as a financial benefit especially the girl child who will marry (Gelfand, 1979). While this may sound outdated it is unfortunate that some communities in Zimbabwe still hold to this view. Disability is believed to deter marriage. With disability, one may not be in a position to attract the opposite sex and may not be able to fulfil certain gender roles, and this is likely to facilitate negative attitudes towards the child with a disability (Chimhenga & Musarurwa, 2011). As such Misodzi, due to her disability, the assumption is she will not marry. Therefore, marrying her off to the avenging spirits is to the advantage of the family in the sense that the family would be saved from a threatening perpetual catastrophe that had already manifested itself by inflicting mental illness to Monica's cousin, Princes. While Mujajati manages to capture the Shona people's negative attitudes towards girls with disabilities, his depiction of disability is negative. Nevertheless, Monica snubs those who wanted to use Misodzi for ritual purposes.

In *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga* by Mashiri (1977), Manuwere limps. The author throughout the novel refers to Manuwere's limping. This highlights his negative attitude towards disability. In the narrative, children laugh at Manuwere and they imitate how he walks. This is ridiculing. However, Mrs Muchineripi rebukes the children and warns them against the consequences of laughing at those with disabilities. The children stopped laughing when she reminds them that their behaviour would result in them having disabilities. The author alludes to ChiShona taboos that discourage laughing at those who have disabilities. The children complied out of fear of acquiring disability not that they have respect for Manuwere's condition.

Chenesai and Chenjerai are victims of abuse in the play *Ndinodawo Mwana* by Nyika (1983). Upon realising, that Chenjerai is sterile, family elders arrange that his young brother Batanai have sexual intercourse with Chenesai Chenjerai's wife. Everything is arranged and done behind Chenjerai's back. Batanai and Chenesai are forced into the plan against their will. The plan is arranged in such a way that Chenjerai is made to believe he is responsible for Chenesai's pregnancy. When Batanai spills the beans, Chenjerai, Chenesai and Batanai are all exposed. Chenjerai is traumatised, feels cheated and he divorces Chenesai. Those responsible for this mess make no effort to clear the air. In fact they are incapacitated to do so. The artist highlights how those with infertility problems are abused on the assumption that their problem is being addressed.

In Kuimba's (1976) *Rurimi Inyoka*, Vida and Simoni are in a childless marriage. It is not certain who is barren between the two. Timoti is a philanderer. Upon meeting Vida Timoti fails to control his lust. He wants to have sexual relations with Vida. His motive is abusive: Timoti wants to experiment with Vida in order for him to find out who is barren between Vida and Simon. Thus, Timoti out of lust says to Vida "*Rega ndikupe mwana Vida. Haudi mwana here iwe? Unofa usina mwana ukaramba wakati naye kwati kwati!*" (Kuimba, 1976, p. 158). (Let me give you a baby Vida. Don't you want a baby? You will die childless if you stick to him).

In the above excerpt, Timoti is suggesting that Vida's marriage is worthless because the marriage failed to produce children and that such a marriage is meaningless. He does not value womanhood and thinks a woman can be easily sexually exploited all for the sake of children. The use of the exclamation marks signifies Timoti's negative attitude towards Simon whom he suspects to be barren. On the other hand, Timoti's demeanour is wicked given that Vida is a married woman; he wants to experiment with Vida in order to quench his selfish needs. His question insinuates that children are the source of happiness in a marriage which is not true. While the author succeeds in showing society's negative attitudes towards persons with fertility problems Timoti's demeanour is ruthless and abusive. He does not have respect for the barren. He considers them as a playground for experiments. Timoti underestimates Vida and thinks that she is so desperate that she will take up his offer. This kind of abuse is not different from Madezvipi's machinations which sought to outwit Vida through misrepresenting the '*kupindira*' (an arrangement made by family elders, someone usually a brother is asked to be intimate with one's brother's (who is impotent) wife for the

sake of procreation) custom and ensuring that Jane seduces Simon. Madezvipi also conspires with Jane that she should visit Simon in Harare so that they can be intimate. Her motive is to find out who is barren, Simon or Vida. Due to frustration and the Shona belief that marriage is sustainable and meaningful only when it produces children Jane foolishly admits to Madezvipi's intentions to seduce Simon. Upon Jane's arrival, Simon shames her. Simon chases Jane out of his house and tells her he has nothing to do with her. Out of frustration and bitterness, Jane insults Simon for his alleged sterile status:

Simon unofunga kuti wandikaurisa? Unofunga kuti ini ndiri rema? Ndinoziva zvauri. Ndazonyatsozviona nhasi. Wakaroora Vida, asi nanhasi haana mwana. Chikonzero chii? Ndiwe Simon. Kunyepera kuda mukadzi wako. Zvino zvauri mukadzi anopfeka mabhurukwa, unoita sei? Ndinonzwira Vida urombo. Zvino anoti akaitei? Wadii kumupa zvako kumunun'una wako George? Zvimwe George akaitawo sewe. Mese makadaro mhuri yavaTigere... (Kuimba, 1976, p. 105). (Simon you think you have fixed me? You think I am a fool? I know your sterile status. I discovered it today. You married Vida but up to today, she is childless. What is the cause? It is you Simon. You pretend to love your wife. Since you cannot procreate / are sterile what are you going to do? I sympathise with Vida. What has she done? Why not give her to your young brother George? Maybe George is also like you. You are all the same in Tigere's family)

Jane's demeanour is unrealistic if taken out of context but given that she was once Simon's girlfriend her actions are typical of someone who is hurt. She feels humiliated by Simon and as such, her response is compensatory behaviour. The author highlights the plight of the barren. Barrenness is portrayed as a disability that can be rectified and in the process, the barren are likely to be abused. Failure to correct it raises eyebrows. When a couple fails to have children and when the husband does nothing about it people would assume it is the man who is sterile because in the case of a woman being infertile a man is free to remarry or is given his wife's younger sister to bear children for her. Remarrying or requesting for a replacement when it is a man's problem results in exposing oneself. Hence, logically a man who knows that he is sterile would choose to stay with his first wife. Only the intervention of the family elders would save such a man from his predicament. This explains why Jane insults Simon. She believes Simon is sterile and this is the reason why he sticks to Vida and why he refuses to take her in. The author succeeds in showing how persons with disabilities are abused when society pursues its interests. When Simon snubs Jane, Jane assumes Simon is avoiding exposing his barrenness. Simon faces abuse from his own mother and Jane. They want to experiment with him in order to find out who is barren Simon or Vida. Indeed couples with sterility problems are denied due respect as human beings, their rights are violated by a society which seeks to rectify the problem unceremoniously.

Just as what happens in *Ndinodawo Mwana*, Kuimba (1976) shows that the Shona culture allows making fun of persons with sterility problems. The two authors at great length parade how people would mock jeer and say whatever they want about the childless couples. For instance, Jane sarcastically mocks Vida when she says:

Manheru mai va-hezvu! Ndanga ndakanganwa kuti hamuna mwana nhai. Ruregerero chokwadi'' (Kuimba, 1976, p. 20). (Evening mother of aaah! By the way, I forgot that you do not have a child. Please forgive me.)

Jane's remarks suggest that a woman acquires identity through her children. She, in most cases, is addressed by her first-born child's name thereby according her due respect. Without children, society is reminded of one's barrenness and a woman without children is belittled and as such, a barren woman suffers isolation, she is sorrowful and pathetic and this is typical of what Chenesai and Vida experience. Mrs Mashumba and Mrs Zipfende find pleasure in discussing Vida and Simon's predicament. They pretend to sympathise with Vida but mischievously encourage her to have sexual relations with other men so that she can conceive. The suggestion is neither constructive nor genuine but is meant to tarnish Vida's image. Innocently Vida discloses Madezvipi's effort in coercing her to have sexual relations with George. In response, Mrs Zipfende blames Vida for refusing to take up Madezvipi's proposal that is in line with the Shona custom. She claims the plan was proper and could have secretly solved her problem. Her suggestion shows how women out there experience abuse all for the sake of evading ridicule from society. Mrs Zipfende sounds genuine yet if Vida had submitted to her advice she would expose her. The discussion in this section showed that some authors use characters with disabilities to expose abuses suffered by such people.

5.6 To explain why and how people acquire disabilities

A significant number of ChiShona literary writers include characters with disabilities in their works to explain why and how people acquire disabilities. In Mukonoweshuro (1983) Soromoni's friend, Musekwa advises Soromoni to find out from traditional healers the cause of his disability. Traditional healers explain that his disability is punishment for ill-treating his innocent mother. The traditional healer also reveals that Makandionei is the one responsible for his father's death. Soromoni approaches his grandmother who then questions why he consulted a traditional healer. In response Soromoni remarks, "*Urema hwandinahwo handina kuzvarwa nahwo''*" (Mukonoweshuro, 1983, p. 88). (The disability I have is not from birth"). The artist is communicating that disability that emerges later in one's life is

questionable and is associated with some misfortune caused by certain forces which are contrary to Makamure (2017) who posits that disability that comes later in life can be tolerated than disability from birth. The author is also conforming to the Shona traditional belief on causes of disability by depicting disability as retribution for sin. Soromoni offended her mother and is inflicted with a disability as punishment for his misdemeanour. Chakaipa in *Garandichauya* and Mujajati in *Mwana Waamai* are among the authors who attribute disability to retribution. Mabasa (1999) in *Mapenzi* attributes Hamundigoni's disability to war trauma, In *Inongova Njakanjake*; Mungoshi explains that Kate's disability was caused by Tafi who assaulted Sheila with a chair when she was pregnant with Kate. This resulted in Kate's physical disability. In *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga*, Mashiri (1977) Manuwere was injured when he was evading arrest by police officers who wanted to apprehend him for possessing dagga. Runyowa (1974) in *Kurumwa Nehekuchera* and Mungoshi (1970) in *Makunun'unu Maodzamoyo* attribute disability to witchcraft and retribution. Depicting disability this way contributes to the marginalisation of persons with disabilities. Such a portrayal suggests persons with disabilities are responsible for their condition thereby justifying the stigmatisation and marginalisation of persons with disabilities.

From the authors cited in this section, it appears some authors create characters with disabilities to explain the origins of disabilities, for example, it may be a result of retribution for sin (Mukonoweshuro, 1983), punishment for failure to respect one's parents (Chakaipa, 1963) or just accidents (Mashiri, 1977) or trauma as a result of war experiences (Mabasa, 1999).

5.7 Conclusion

Chapter five addressed the research question: Why do ChiShona writers create characters with disabilities? This chapter has explored why authors of selected ChiShona novels and plays create characters with disabilities. Tsodzo (1972) and Mashiri (1977) in their works used characters with disabilities as a metaphor or moral symbols. Runyowa (1974); Tsodzo (1972) and Makari (1985) in their works created characters with disabilities as entertainment thereby creating humour for the readers. For Mungoshi (1980); Chingono (1980); Makari (1985); Kuimba (1976); Mujajati (1997); Nyika (1980); Runyowa (1974) and Mabasa (1999, 2008), they created characters with disabilities to highlight and explain the abuse experienced by persons with disabilities in society. Chakaipa (1963); Mujajati (2006); Mungoshi (1970); Mabasa (1999); Runyowa (1974) and Mukonoweshuro (1983) create characters with

disabilities simply to explain how and why people acquire a disability. In other words, authors create characters with disabilities as a literary device. The effect of this on some artists is that they fail to break out of common stereotypes that present people with disabilities as the different 'other'. This is mainly because in using disability as a literary device they lose sight of the humanity of persons with disabilities. In most of these literary works, the dignity of persons with disabilities is violated when persons with disabilities are exposed to stigma, violence, abuse, bias and disrespect which is contrary to the attributes of *Vumunhu*. However, Chingono, Mungoshi and Mabasa are able to provide strong critiques of society through the characters with disabilities that they created. Mabasa effectively creates a character that he uses to criticise the government and society without being charged for what his character says. Chingono through his character critiques society in a more subtle way. Thus, Chingono and Mabasa were able to maintain the dignity of persons with disabilities in line with *Vumunhu*. A careful analysis of the above-cited reasons points to the fact that authors' creation of characters with disabilities is contrary to the attributes of *Vumunhu*, such characters are not accorded due respect. However, the authors' creation of characters with a disability is didactic in nature. Several life lessons are conveyed through the use of characters with disabilities. Chapter six addresses the research question: What factors explain selected ChiShona novels and play authors' perceptions of and attitudes towards disability?

CHAPTER 6:

WHAT FACTORS EXPLAIN THE SELECTED CHISHONA NOVEL AND PLAY WRITER'S PERCEPTION OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABILITY?

6.1 Introduction

The third research question of this study, which this chapter addresses, is: What factors explain the selected ChiShona novel and play writer's perception of and attitudes towards disability? This chapter, therefore, focuses on factors that influenced writers' perception of and attitudes towards disability. Among these factors that have emerged from the literature I read are; dictation by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, which is discussed in section 6.1, literary competitions in section 6.2, the influence of ChiShona oral literature in section 6.3, the influence of Western literature under section 6.4, influence of authors' religious beliefs including Christianity discussed in section 6.5 and the influence of traditional and medical models of disability under section 6.6 The chapter advances the argument that the above factors explain the writer's perception of and attitudes towards disability. Hence these factors determined the writers' perceptions of and attitudes towards disability. The authors' presentations were in line or not in accordance with the factors that determined their inclusion of characters with disabilities in their works.

6.2 Dictation by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau

In chapter two the study underscored that according to Chiwome (1996) and Chinyowa (2007) prior to independence development of the ChiShona novel and play was influenced by the colonial regime which made the production of ChiShona literary works subject to the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. A number of Zimbabwean literary critics who critique the literature Bureau such as Furusa (2006), Wasosa (2014), Muwati (2009), Mutasa and Muwati (2007), and Makaudze (2009) concur that the Literature Bureau dictated the themes which authors were supposed to pursue as well as censoring all literary works to ensure that no politically-charged protest literature was written. The Literature Bureau was mainly interested in the safety of the white people. Indeed, even the Kenyan author, Wa Thiongo (1987, p. 69) noted:

In Rhodesia the Literature Bureau would not publish an African novel which had but religious themes and sociological themes which were free from politics

Indeed it was not curious about the blacks or the development of the ChiShona novel. Such an approach resulted in the underdevelopment of the ChiShona novel (Hassanin, 2020, p. 8). The ChiShona novel was reduced to the writing of literature that was shallow and separated from reality since the scope of what writers could author was limited. Polygamy, witchcraft and the effects of westernisation on Africans living in urban areas as well as the plight of a black man in the city were the themes that authors could write about (Hassanin, 2020, p. 9). As such, during that time not much literature on disability was written since themes were dictated upon and all literature was censored before it was published.

The Literature Bureau did not only control the themes that the ChiShona authors were supposed to dwell on. All books published by the Literature Bureau were meant for African school children and as such the plots were supposed to be very explicit. The Literature Bureau controlled the length of the novels that were to be written. Concerning this, Kahari (1972:3) argued, “If a novel runs to more than 150 pages, publishing and printing become expensive and the reading public especially school children cannot afford to buy it”. Such a scenario thwarted the development of themes and plots of the ChiShona novel. This meant African writers could not write much about disability if it was not a theme proposed by the Literature Bureau. Even when they had characters with disabilities, they could not give them adequate fictional space as this would add to the length of the literary work. Such a scenario could have possibly limited authors, for example, Chakaipa in writing the novel *Garandichauya*. The limitation in the length of the texts could also have affected other ChiShona literary writers in their exploration of various themes including those that had narratives with characters with disabilities such as Tsodzo (1972), Mashiri (1974), Mungoshi (1970) and Runyowa (1974).

In an effort to empower scholars to compose in indigenous languages and to encourage authors to write in line with the criteria put in place by the Literature Bureau, Chiwome (1996) asserts that after independence, the Zimbabwe Book Publishers Association joined the now Zimbabwe Literature Bureau in sponsoring literary competitions. As a result, the Literature Bureau came up with themes around which authors competed. In this way, again the Literature Bureau determined the subject that the authors wrote about. Consequently, Manyika (2019) emphasises that:

Competition themes were decided upon within the Bureau. The approach really was to choose the most interesting and most popular subject at the time. It does not pay to surprise the writer or make him write on a subject which the institution itself wants. Themes would be social, economic or political and would be accompanied with terms of reference (quoted in Hassanin, 2020, p.12).

As already pointed out above such competitions gave rise to the authorship of some works that have a disability as minor themes where the characters with disabilities were marginal as they were not the focus of the themes. Having persons with disabilities as minor characters created negative perceptions of disability as the authors did not depart from cultural stereotypes of disability representation.

After independence, the Rhodesia Literature Bureau was renamed Zimbabwe Literature Bureau but its operational command remained the same. Those who used to work for the Rhodesian Literature Bureau were the ones who were now working for the Zimbabwean Literature Bureau. This was necessitated by the fact that the association was a government-supporting division. Mari, an ex-worker at the Rhodesian Literature Bureau had this to say;

...an obvious weakness of the Literature Bureau was that it was a government department ... the government of the day would not be directly challenged in the stories submitted to the Bureau ... Writers would attempt to project the picture of the organisation ... (Quoted in Chitsike, 1989, p. 13).

It was with an awareness of the above circumstances that Mabasa (1999) in *Mapenzi* chose to evade political accusations and censorship by using a mentally ill character to articulate the ills of government officials and the government. As pointed out, no one takes offence at the utterances of a mentally ill person neither can one be interrogated for utterances of a 'mad' man. Thus, Mabasa found a way of writing back to the state through Hamundigoni.

6.3 Literary Competitions

After the attainment of independence, competitions continued but were now informed by deliberate efforts to highlight the plight of persons with disabilities. The authors had to show or to write empathetic works towards persons with disabilities. A typical example is that of the United Nations General Assembly which in (1976), declared 1981 as the International Year of Action at both national and international level. Its central theme was full participation and equality concerning persons with disabilities. This declaration emphasised the fact that persons with disabilities have the right to contribute in all domains of life, development and leisure. This proclamation compelled the Zimbabwe Literature Bureau to call for writing

competitions on the theme of disability, which saw the works of Chingono (1980) *Ruvimbo* scooping the second prize in the competitions, and this explains the author's stance on his positive portrayal of disability in *Ruvimbo*. In the play, Chingono reiterates that persons with disabilities should marry despite society's disapproval. Mungoshi's (1980) *Inongova Njakenjake* also won a prize in this competition. In the play, the author abandons stereotyping and superstition associated with disability and cites domestic violence as a cause of disability. In the play, Kate (the girl in a wheelchair) is a victim of domestic violence. Mungoshi empowers Kate with entrepreneurship skills thereby disproving the catchphrase 'disability is inability'. Thus, these two authors wrote from an informed position and as such, their depiction of disability is in line with the principles of *Vumunhu*. Given this background, it is now not clear whether their portrayal of disability was positive out of their own volition or that they were compelled to do so by the demands of the competitions.

In the works of Chingono (1980) and Mungoshi (1980), society looks down upon characters with a disability but the authors are loud and clear on their positive attitude towards disability. They depict disability positively and encourage the inclusion of characters with disabilities in the mainstream and in their works characters with disabilities are accorded due respect as human beings, they are empowered and their rights are recognised and honoured. Thus, in their representation of disability, the two authors were guided by the proclamation of the year (1981). Adhering to the standards and requirements of the Literature Bureau was of paramount importance to ensure that their works were published and that they won the writing competition. It is quite clear that published in the 1980s Mungoshi and Chingono were influenced by the proclamation of the year 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, founded in 1976 and the subsequent International Day of Persons with Disabilities which is annually observed on December 3, which aims to encourage full participation and equality of persons with disabilities. This is because their literary works adhere to the aim of the (1981) proclamation, which articulates the inclusion, and participation of persons with disabilities. Authors were lured to respond to these competitions by the prizes that were offered in form of cash by the Literature Bureau. Indeed, as elaborated by Nyawaranda cited in Muwati (2009) the offer was too huge to resist.

6.4 The influence of ChiShona oral literature

Oral literature influenced the depiction of disability as evidenced by the fact that some authors adopted the theme of disability from folktales and their negative stance on disability as evident in taboos and some ChiShona proverbs.

Kahari (1990) observes that there is a close link between folktales and the ChiShona novel since the latter developed from the folktale, for example, *Karikoga Gumi Remiseve* (Chakaipa, 1958) a narrative that developed from a folktale called *Pimbirimano*. Chakamba et al. (1987) posit that disability emerges as a theme in several folktales, for example, *Chinyamapezi*, (the leper) *Tsuro Nedzimwe Mhuka* (The hare and the other animals) and *Vakomana Vaishanduka Kuita Shumba* (Boys who transformed into lions) which were discussed in Chapter two. As such, some ChiShona narratives adopted the themes of disability from these folktales but ignored the positive perceptions encouraged at the end of these folktales. In folktales, characters with disabilities are shunned and scoffed at by society, but they succeed in whatever they do. A few ChiShona narratives carry on with the idea that persons with disabilities are successful in their endeavours as is evident in *Pafunge*, *Mapenzi* and *Ruvimbo*.

With reference to the play Chinyowa (2007) posits that ChiShona dramatists were influenced by oral literature as they emulated themes from ChiShona folktales. On the other hand, Zinyemba alludes to the fact that the Shona play developed from the traditional live performances like Shona rituals, ceremonies and communal observances as these encourage the idea of role playing.

The studied texts have shown that ChiShona literary writers are influenced to a large extent by ChiShona negative beliefs on disability. As outlined in chapter two, the Shona people hold negative beliefs about disability. ChiShona taboos together with some ChiShona proverbs parade negative attitudes towards disability. These negative societal attitudes are mirrored in some ChiShona narratives. Thus, the negative depiction of disability found in some ChiShona narratives and plays reflects the Shona people's negative beliefs on disability some of which are enshrined in taboos and some of the proverbs that articulate disability. As such, some ChiShona authors focus too much on these negative attitudes such that they use derogatory terms to address persons with disabilities. These authors dwell on explaining why and how people acquire a disability. It is as if their task is to justify the marginalisation of persons with

disabilities. Furthermore, the taboo *seka urema wafa* (Do not laugh at disability) mentioned in chapter two can be interpreted as a factor that hindered the depiction of disability in ChiShona literary works. The taboo can be a deterrent factor in both the depiction of disability and in the exploration of the life experiences of persons with disabilities. This is mainly because among the Shona, talking about or deliberating on disability can be equated to lampooning disability and those with disabilities. It is possible that authors refrain from exploring disability and the life experiences of those with disabilities on the assumption that it is unethical to do so. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that disability as a marginalised issue people find it futile to spend time on it.

6.5 The Influence of Western Literature

As discussed in chapter two, customarily ChiShona folktales demonstrate themes where those with disabilities, the disadvantaged and the physically small who in most cases represent persons with disabilities and despite criticism from society are triumphant over the huge animals that represent the people without disabilities (Kahari 1990, Chakamba et al., 1987). Contrary to this view, in *Karumekangu*, Chikweya, a character with a disability is a failure. His depiction is that of an evil doer, a trait that is not common in African folktales but exists in Western literature. Kahari (1990) in remarking on Chikweya's downfall, posits that the idea that characters with disabilities lose in their undertakings is foreign in ChiShona literature. Chikweya in *Karumekangu* is found guilty of murder in court, develops heart failure and subsequently dies in prison despite being a 'cripple'. Such a portrayal indicates that Chidyausiku abandons the ChiShona tradition of exalting those living with disabilities and instead adopts the Western approach that tends to depict characters with disabilities as villains (More, 1984; Rubin & Watson, 1987). Thus, the notion that people with disabilities fail in their endeavours is foreign; an indication that authors like Chidyausiku (1970) in *Karumekangu*, Runyowa (1974) in *Kurumwa Nechekuchera*, Nyika (1980) in *Ndinodawo Mwana* and Mashiri (1977) in *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga* were influenced by Western thought particularly English literature in their portrayal of disability. In the above, ChiShona novels Chikweya, Gudza, Chenjerai, and Manuwere fail in their undertakings as persons with disabilities something unheard of among the Shona.

Thus, in these works persons with disabilities are not accorded due respect as human beings, their portrayal is that of villains typical of what is conveyed in Western literature (Kahari 1975). This serves to communicate that some ChiShona literary writers were influenced to a

large extent by Western Literature in their depiction of disability. Chiwome (1996) clarifies this point when he mentions one Philipa Christine a ChiShona literature devotee of the time who served as a mentor to ChiShona writers. Advising on technique in the Writing of Poetry, Philipa Christine directed Mandishona towards English models. In her own words, she said, “Mr Mandishona is exploring historical poetry and will one day write English poetry and good poetry I believe” (Chiwome, 1996, p.3). This shows that ChiShona writers were trained to emulate English Literature. Thus, the literature that they produced was preparatory work for the writing of English literature. By so doing, ChiShona literature was made a junior model of English literature. The influence of Western literature is also demonstrated in the employment of disability in ChiShona literary works as a metaphor. This is a literary device they emulated from Western literature, for example, *Pafunge*, *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga*, *Zinyekenyeke*, and *Karumekangu* employ disability as metaphor. Thus, the idea of employing disability as a literary device in ChiShona narratives and plays is foreign. It is a technique found in Western literature which resulted in negative perceptions of persons with disabilities.

6.6 The Authors’ Religious Beliefs

The author’s background also plays an important role in influencing what he or she writes about. For example, in his depiction of blindness Chakaipa as a Shona person and a Roman Catholic Priest is influenced by ChiShona moral values as well as Christian beliefs which lay emphasis on the idea that individuals are answerable for their actions. Thus, Kahari (1997) posits that Chakaipa’s plots and themes reflect Augustinian and biblical commands on social morality. Kahari believes there is common ground occupied by Hebrew, early Christian and the Shona morality blending with the Roman Catholic missionary influence. This is evident in Chakaipa’s teachings on retribution, which is the consequence of the character’s actions. Thus, according to the teachings of the Bible, which are not different from the Shona moral values, which also influence Chakaipa’s *Garandichauya* every man, is responsible for his actions. Every man who plants evil will reap evil and he who seeds good will reap good. Thus, every man is held accountable for his actions. This motif exists in Chakaipa’s *Garandichauya* where Muchaneta and Matamba indulge in immoral activities and as such, at the end of the narrative, they are blinded as punishment for their immorality. Being a priest Chakaipa’s portrayal of blindness is also guided by the Christian belief system which emphasises forgiveness and the importance of marriage as one of God’s sacraments that should not be tampered with. Thus, Tsitsi should abide by the marriage vows she made, she

welcomes Matamba when he returns home in a state of complete blindness and they live happily ever. On this note, the novelist is highly influenced by Christianity and shows high regard of the principles of *Vumunhu* in his depiction of disability. As a priest, he is preaching forgiveness and chastity. Humanity is accorded due respect disability or not. Despite Matamba's condition and economic status, Tsitsi is happy to see her husband alive; her attitude is different from that of Rusiya who abandons Soromoni in *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* and Sarudzai who turns down Chikweya's proposal in *Karumekangu*. Indeed Chakaipa is influenced by Christianity in his depiction of disability.

According to Chinyowa, (2007) Mambo Press, a Roman Catholic Church owned press in association with the Southern Literature Bureau did not accept written works that were not morally edifying. Its forerunner the Catholic Mission Press had already published a play *Mutambo Wapanyika* (The game of life) by Father Pedro Calderon (1959). The play was a translated Spanish morality play that aimed at reconciling the Shona moral philosophy and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Zinyemba (1986, p. 19) argues that "Christianity and general western influence taught the dramatist also among other things, individualism and the joys of a private life"

6.7 Models of disability

Some of the ChiShona authors' perception of disability is also influenced by the traditional and medical models of disability discussed in chapter two. The concept of retribution which goes hand in hand with the traditional model of disability does not exist in Chakaipa's (1981) *Garandichauya* only. A number of authors are influenced by it. Mujajati (2006) in *Mwana Waamai* has Ruzvidzo who is inflicted with blindness as punishment for his sexual abuses while Gamuchirai is rendered barren and suffers a mental illness as punishment for indulging in prostitution. In *Inongova Njake Njake* by Mungoshi (1980), Lucy becomes barren as punishment for her promiscuous activities. Chingweru in *Makununu Maodzamoyo* suffers a mental illness as punishment for her transgressions. In Runyowa (1974), Maidei is inflicted with mental illness as punishment for her transgressions while Chokuda's son suffers the consequences of her mother's evil doings. Mukonoweshuro (1983) also adheres to the traditional model of disability, when Soromoni loses an arm in a road accident as punishment for ill-treating his mother and threatening her with death. Such a depiction is indicative of the fact that these authors are influenced by the traditional model of disability. However, the influence of the medical model of disability is evident in Mujajati's (2006) *Mwana Waamai*

and Zinyekenyeke (1997), Mabasa's (2008) *Ndafa Here*, Nyika's (1983) *Ndinodawo Mwana* and Kuimba's (1976) *Rurimi Inyoka* where those with disability are expected to resort to treatment and rehabilitation.

6.7 Conclusion

The chapter has explained factors that influence authors' perception of and attitudes towards disability and these have been outlined as ChiShona oral literature, the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, literary competitions, Western literature, the author's religious beliefs and the traditional and the medical models of disability. Adherence to the ChiShona oral literature enabled authors to produce literary works that protect the image of persons with disabilities as well as giving them due respect. Themes dictated by the literature Bureau obstructed articulation of the theme of disability, even in texts where disability features authors could not pursue the theme which was not within the agenda. The adoption of western education by Zimbabweans resulted in writers being influenced by western literature and this paved way for the negative depiction of disability. Christianity and the Shona negative beliefs on disability outlined in chapter two played a significant role in shaping authors' perceptions of disability as well as their attitudes towards disability. The next chapter is the last chapter that concludes this study by highlighting the major findings of the study as well as giving recommendations based on the findings of the study as well as suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an integrated perspective of the study. The chapter is organised into 6 sections as follows: Section 7.1 presents an overview of the study by restating the research questions guiding this study and highlighting how the study has responded to the questions. In Section 7.2 the conclusions arising from the study are presented. This is followed by recommendations in section 7.3. Suggestions for future research are presented in Section 7.4. The chapter ends with a conclusion to this chapter.

7.2 Summary

This study is about the depiction of disability in selected ChiShona novels and plays. The study set out to answer the following questions: (1) How is disability represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*. (2) Why do authors of selected ChiShona novels and plays create characters with disabilities? (3) What factors explain the selected ChiShona novel and play writers' perception of and attitudes towards disability? In answering these key questions, the study comprises seven chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction to the study on disability representation in selected ChiShona novels and plays. The chapter is made up of the background to study which provides the context of the study, and the aim of the study, the objectives of the study as well as the research questions which provide the direction of the study. The chapter further articulates the research problem that gave rise to the study as well as providing a justification of the need for such a study. The chapter ended with the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter two reviewed the literature that is related to this study. The review starts with an explanation of the theoretical framework that guides the study, that is, *Vumunhu*. The option for *Vumunhu* as a theoretical framework was based on the emphasis in *Vumunhu* on the need to respect all human beings, to talk, to write and behave towards all human beings with love and compassion regardless of their gender, race, colour, Creed, physical or mental status. *Vumunhu*, therefore, demands that all people be treated equally, equitably and humanely. The study, therefore, wanted to establish how writers of selected literary works reflected the values enshrined in *Vumunhu* in their discussion and presentation of people with disabilities. Having elaborated the theoretical framework the review of literature covered what has been

done so far in other studies in relation to ChiShona novel and disability in general which assists in locating the study into context as well as establishing my point of departure. The review of related literature adopted a funnel approach which involved discussion of Western literature, African literature, and Zimbabwean literature which included the history of the ChiShona novel and plays done with a view to establishing trends in attitudes towards disability and possible factors that could be of influence to ChiShona literary writers in their depiction of disability. The ChiShona oral literature as in folktales and taboos together with proverbs as aspects of language were also discussed in order to ascertain the Shona people's thinking or philosophy concerning disability. The chapter further considered the biblical view on disability.

Chapter three explains the research methods I employed. This study focused on examining literary texts which are selected ChiShona novels and plays and as such, it is a literary analysis. This approach was chosen through discussing literature elements such as irony, symbolism, and points of view, main themes and implied ideas that are not necessarily within the literature itself emerged to expose the authors' position in relation to disability. The study involved a thorough interpretation of the texts and as such the use of document analysis and critical discourse analysis was inevitable. Document analysis was used to collect data from both primary and secondary sources while critical discourse analysis was employed with a view to analyse and interpret what is meant when language is used to describe and explain events in the selected texts. As the primary sources are written in ChiShona, the process of interpreting meaning from the selected ChiShona novels and plays involved the extraction of quotations from these ChiShona texts. This approach called for the use of the translation method in the study. Thus, the translation method was used to translate quotations from the source language ChiShona to English which in this case is the target language used for this study.

Chapters four, five and six constituted data presentation, interpretation and analysis. Chapter four looked at how disability is represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*. In Chapter five, the discussion focused on why authors create characters with a disability while chapter six looked at factors that explain selected ChiShona novels and plays authors' perception of and attitudes towards disability. The process in these three chapters involved interpreting events in the primary sources as well as extracting excerpts which were then translated, analysed and interpreted to answer the research questions.

7.3 Conclusion

The theoretical framework of *Vumunhu* that guided this study is of paramount importance to the enquiry for it provided direction to the research. As a theoretical perspective that underscores the connectedness of human beings; it assisted in informing about how characters with disabilities are treated in selected literary works, their frequency in these literary texts, their fictional space, how they interact with the rest of the characters, the position they occupied in these literary works as well as how the theme of disability is treated in the selected works. This study benefitted from the theory of *Vumunhu* in that it is the lenses through which the study was able to perceive and ascertain the depiction of disability in the selected literary works. Thus, the interpretation of the depiction of disability is informed by the theoretical framework of *Vumunhu*. In concluding remarks, the research begins by focusing on the first research question: (a) How is disability represented in selected ChiShona novels and plays within the context of *Vumunhu*? Thereafter the chapter relays research findings in relation to the second research question: (b) Why do authors create characters with a disability? The last part of the conclusion focuses on the third research question: (c) What factors explain the selected ChiShona novel and play authors' perception of and attitudes towards disability? In this order, the chapter presents research findings.

7.3.1 How is Disability Represented in Selected ChiShona Novels and Plays within the Context of Vumunhu?

The study established that disability is under-represented in the selected ChiShona novels and plays under study. This under-representation is exhibited in the limited number of ChiShona literary works that have the disability theme. From the selected novels and plays, it is clear that fewer ChiShona novels and plays have a disability as the main theme. Furthermore, those novels and plays that articulate disability issues do so partially. When characters with disabilities are included in these literary works, they are usually minor characters except a few exceptional cases such as Hamundigone in *Mapenzi*. Rarely do they appear as the main characters. Inadequate exploration of the life experiences of persons with disabilities is another way in which disability is under-represented in the studied literary texts. This is evidence of the marginalisation of the plight of persons with disabilities. In other words, persons with disabilities continue to be relegated to the margins of society. Their presentation typifies them as insignificant or 'the different other'. This representation is against the principles of *Vumunhu* which insists on the need to address the plight of persons with

disabilities. *Vumunhu* underscores the imperative of recognising all human beings on equal footing and effaces marginalisation. It calls for the protection and positive portrayal of the marginalised for the full realisation of their humanity. Thus, *Vumunhu* is consistent with the UNCRPD demands that the rights of persons with disabilities must be recognised and granted equal opportunities in all spheres of life.

From the foregoing discussion, the representation of disability is largely negative in most literary texts where it features as a trivial theme. The exception to this trivial representation is Mabasa's (1999) *Mapenzi*, Mungoshi's (1980) *Inongova Njakenjake* and Chingono's (1980) *Ruvimbo* discussed in the next paragraph. This negativity is mostly reflected in the authors' deliberate emphasis on parading society's negative attitudes towards disability. Most authors failed to absolutely move away from society's pejorative postures towards disability even those literary works that sound positive about disability. Coming from a background where disability is shunned and detested; it appears some artists cannot absolutely extricate themselves and write positively about disability, they constantly fall retreat into society's unconstructive ways of behaving towards disability in their works. Yes, literature mirrors society but when it comes to issues to do with a disability it is destructive to communicate the negative attitudes society parade towards those with disabilities especially when the same texts remain silent on how the negative attitudes can be curbed. The portrayal of disability as punishment for sin and as a result of witchcraft as well as trauma emanating from one's evil actions which exist in selected literary texts is discouraging. This kind of portrayal is a reflection of the Shona people's disapproving beliefs and attitudes towards disability which are an obstacle to a progressive representation of disability. The notion that persons with disabilities are responsible for their plight finds imaginative rendition in texts like *Garandichauya*, *Mwana Waamai*, *Akafuratidzwa Moyo*, *Makununu Maodzamoyo* and *Kurumwa Nehekuchera*. These works of art perpetuate the marginalisation of persons with disabilities since their literary rendition deleterious images of characters with a disability. In all these instances, the literary texts advance imaginative images which broach the objectification and relegation of people to the margins of society. When this happens, their humanity is degraded as they are not respected. This is contrary to the philosophy of *Vumunhu* which calls for humane treatment of all people and correcting society's wrong perceptions and attitudes towards persons with disabilities. In this context, *Vumunhu* as a theoretical framework assisted the study in perceiving the ill-treatment of persons with disabilities camouflaged in Shona unconstructive beliefs about disability. Nevertheless, in

rare instances, novelists and playwrights apply the medical model when dealing with the lame, the barren and the mentally ill in an effort to ease and fix the disability as in *Ndafa here? Mwana Waamai*, and *Rurimi Inyoka*. But even though the language used by authors is undesirable.

Generally, the texts examined in this study show that there is ill-treatment of persons with disabilities and this mistreatment is trumpeted through their exploitation, unfavourable language that is used to address them. Characters with disabilities are not accorded due respect as human beings in the majority of the studied literary texts. They are either given denigrating names or they are scoffed at by fellow characters. There is a general showdown of characters with disabilities. The texts also show that society detests disability and, as such, its conduct towards those with disabilities leaves a lot to be desired and as a result their abuse is inevitable. ChiShona literary writers use denigrating terms like *chirema* ‘cripple’ *chimukumbodai*, (deformed leg) *mhanje* (female sterile person) *murungudunhu* (albino, fake white man/ a white man in an African community) and *benzi* (fool) to address characters with disabilities. This way, pessimistic perceptions and the use of these derogatory terms perpetuate the existing off-putting attitudes. These terms present persons with disabilities as objects not as human beings as evidenced in *Ruvimbo*, *Karumekangu*, *Zvaida Kushinga*, *Kurumwa Nehekuchera* and *Ndafa Here?* This maltreatment in its various forms is against the principles of *Vumunhu*. These literary texts are open to everyone in society and likely to offend readers who have disabilities or who have relations with persons with disabilities. Thus, evident in the foregoing discussion, the portrayal of disability in the studied texts disregards the philosophy of *Vumunhu*.

However, among the ChiShona novels and plays that discuss disability a handful depict disability positively. In these texts, characters with disabilities are accorded reasonable fictional space. *Inongova Njake Njake* by Mungoshi (1980), *Mapenzi* by Mabasa (1999) and *Ruvimbo* by Chingono (1980) are good examples. In *Inongova Njake Njake*, Mungoshi is constructive in his depiction of disability for his character with a disability, Kate is a noble character who surpasses all other characters in terms of her deportment and character. Mungoshi imaginatively empowers Kate with entrepreneurship skills; a quality which other characters do not possess thereby transcending the catchphrase disability is inability. Chingono, in *Ruvimbo*, communicates that although society does not expect a woman in a wheelchair to marry, it is possible for a man to fall in love with a woman in a wheelchair.

However, as already observed, it is difficult to determine what would have been their real positions. As it is the two authors, Chingono and Mungoshi's depiction of disability was dictated by the injunctions of the Zimbabwe Literature Bureau which sought to meet the demands of the expectations of the United Nations General Assembly which declared (1981) as the Year of Action at both national and international level. Its main theme being full participation and equality with regards to persons with disabilities, the Literature Bureau called for literature in indigenous languages that emphasised the fact that persons with disabilities have the right to participate in all spheres of life. Thus, the two authors' encouraging portrayals of disability, as well as their constructive attitudes on disability, were to some extent shaped by the dictates of the competition set by the Zimbabwe Literature Bureau.

In Mabasa's (1999) *Mapenzi*, the mentally ill outshines the sane in terms of demeanour. Mabasa ensures that Hamundigoni, the mentally ill character is imaginatively blameless, forthright and rebukes those that misbehave. This is indicative of Mabasa's progressive attitude towards mental illness. Thus, the author communicates that when the sane lack *Vumunhu* they are judged as inferior to the mentally ill, hence, there is no need to look down upon those with mental illness especially when they live in harmony with others and when the sane have the potential to do worse things. Hamundigoni is actually the embodiment of *Vumunhu*, he displays true humanity as he feels for his fellow citizens and rebukes corrupt behaviour. While Mabasa's depiction of disability is a result of his motive of using disability as a literary device to evade censorship, he provides adequate fictional space to his character with a disability whom he presented as the conscience of society. Thus, the novelist diverges from denigrating mental illness. Of course, he mentions society's negative attitude but he makes it a point that his character with a disability is good, he prospers in his endeavours and by so doing the artist adheres to the principles of *Vumunhu* in his depiction of mental illness.

The study also revealed that society detests sterility. For this reason, it makes an effort to fix the disability. Sterile women and men are both subject to ridicule. In an effort to fix sterility the rights of the affected characters are violated something that contradicts the principles of *Vumunhu*. Male sterility in particular trivialises a woman's womanhood, she is exposed to immoral activities which when discovered humiliate her and worsen her plight as in the case of *Rurimi Inyoka* by Kuimba (1976) and *Ndinodawo Mwana* by Nyika (1983). In these texts,

the artists expose society's negative attitudes towards those with sterility. While Nyika (1983) is negative in his depiction of barrenness, he condemns the Shona cultural practices that are invoked to conceal male sterility. Thus, the author communicates that people should learn to accept disability. Kuimba's depiction of barrenness is ambivalent in the sense that the couple's marriage does not collapse. They are eventually blessed with a baby after treatment. However, his resort to the medical model may sound negative. What if the sterile are not cured after seeking medical attention? The idea that Kuimba resorts to the medical model may suggest that he is negative about disability just like most of the authors discussed in this section.

7.3.2 Why do ChiShona Writers Create Characters with Disability in their Works?

In discussing why authors create characters with disabilities, the focus is mainly on the question of marriage. Most of the authors present disability as a hindrance to marriage. The depiction of persons with physical disabilities characterise them as possessing odd features which are not attractive to the opposite sex, and the picture of women with disabilities is incapacitation to perform their chores as housewives. This is imaginatively cast in *Karumekangu*, *Inongova Njakanjake* and *Ruvimbo*. Such individuals are considered asexual in literary works. In the plays, *Inongova Njake Njake* and *Ruvimbo*, those in wheelchairs are young women of marriageable age. This is a strategy employed by authors to expose the plight of such women. It seems women in wheelchairs are included in stories to show that they are immobile, incapacitated as housewives and as such cannot marry. Their portrayal is that of people who are stuck at home and their chances to meet possible suitors are limited hence they remain isolated. Despite the fact that the wheelchair provides mobility writers portray those in wheelchairs as immobile. As such, they are not expected to marry; their disability is considered a hindrance. This explains why Mungoshi (1980) in *Inongova Njakenjake* is silent about Kate's love life. Although Chingono in *Ruvimbo* ensures that Ngoni falls in love with a woman in a wheelchair resisting all discouraging comments disapproving him to marry a woman in a wheelchair, in the end, Ngoni marries a woman without a disability as Ruvimbo confesses that she has no disability. This alternatively suggests that Chingono in spite of his positive stance on disability reiterates society's disapproving stance on marrying someone in a wheelchair. Tendai, in *Makununu* *Maodzamoyo*, loses her husband when she suffers a mental illness and fails to reunite with

him even when she is healed of her mental condition, an indication of how disability and stigma impact negatively on marriage.

Males with disabilities in the studied texts do not have spouses, they are not employed and not employable due to their disabilities. For these reasons, they are poor and cannot attract the opposite sex. Their disability is also an obstacle in captivating the opposite sex. Gudza in *Kurumwa Nechekuchera*, Manuwere in *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga*, Chikweya in *Karumekangu* and Hamundigoni in *Mapenzi* are all single. Soromoni in *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* is abandoned by Rusiya after losing an arm in a road accident. This way the depiction of disability contradicts with the Zimbabwe government policy on disability and UNCRPD which states that persons with disabilities have the right to marriage. In such depiction, there are the violation rights of people with disabilities concerning marriage. Thus, this portrayal of disability negatively undermines the humane aspect of the concerned characters. It appears authors include characters with disabilities in their works to expose the plight of persons with disabilities in relation to marriage. While this should be laudable, the authors do not offer solutions to address their challenges.

Furthermore, in relation to the research question of why do authors create characters with disabilities, the study concluded that characters with disabilities are mostly included in stories for the sake of parading their disabilities as well as showing the shortcomings of such characters, an observation also made by Davis (cited in Opsteyn, 2015) and Nussbaum (2014, para, 2.). The trend in these literary works is that when the main character in a text has a disability the story in most cases is about disability and in some instances, the front cover of the text pre-empt the theme of the story or play by its features which explicitly suggest the story is about disability. This is typical of *Ruvimbo* by Chingono (1980) where the front cover shows a young woman in a wheelchair, and *Karumekangu* by Chidyausiku (1970) with a picture of a man with a hump on his back which again indicates the story is about disability. It seems as if, characters with disabilities are created in the story or play to incite responses from other characters, responses which in most cases are negative. In these texts, once a character has a disability other characters are there to comment negatively about the other character's disability. They abuse, denounce, shun and speak ill of the characters with disabilities. It is as if characters with disabilities are included in these texts to expose their disabilities and their shortcomings as people with disabilities and other characters are there to demean and deride characters with disabilities. This is typical of *Inongova Njake Njake*,

Ruvimbo, *Karumekangu*, *Zinyekenyeke*, *Ndinodawo Mwana* and *Rurimi Inyoka*. In these texts, there is constant reference to the character's disability as if to suggest that disability is all that can be said about characters with disabilities. Such a habit tends to lay emphasis on the weaknesses of persons with disabilities as well as suggesting that they are inferior, different from others and relegated to the margins of society. This is prevalent in both texts where disability is the main theme and in those texts where it is not. In other instances, the author leads in depreciating the character with disability a move that shows the artist's insensitivity to disability and contribution to the continued marginalisation of persons with disabilities. Typical examples are *Zvaida Kushinga*, *Pafunge* and *Kurumwa Nehekuchera*. Thus, the theoretical framework of *Vumunhu* is of paramount importance in that it informs on how best human beings should treat one another. As such, in these texts characters with disabilities are not accorded due respect as human beings, instead, they are treated as the 'different other'.

In responding to why authors create characters with disabilities, the study established that ChiShona literary writers employ disability in their works as a literary device. This tendency by the artists to use disability as a literary device in ChiShona novels and plays downplays its significance in these literary works. As a metaphor, for example, disability has adverse effects of increasing the stigma that is associated with it. Thus, the use of disability as a metaphor is responsible for inculcating negative public attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Typical examples of texts that employ disability as a metaphor are *Pafunge* by Tsodzo (1972) *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga* by Mashiri (1977) and *Garandichauya* by Chakaipa (1981). In these texts, the depiction of disability is negative.

However, as already noted Mabasa (1999) in *Mapenzi* and Chingono (1980) in *Ruvimbo* are innovative in their use of disability as a literary device. Their works depart from the usual disapproving use of disability as a literary device. In the narrative, mental illness is used positively and the experiences of the liberation war are held responsible for inflicting mental illness in Hamundigoni. Chingono (1980), in *Ruvimbo*, fakes disability in order to expose society's negative attitudes concerning marrying a woman in a wheelchair and the artist shows that women in wheelchairs have the right to marriage just like any other woman. Runyowa (1974) in *Kurumwa Nehekuchera*, Mabasa (1999) in *Mapenzi*, Makari (1985) in *Zvaida Kushinga* and Tsodzo (1972) in *Pafunge* include persons with disabilities in their works to create humour and remove tension in readers.

It can also be concluded that authors of the selected literary texts include characters with disabilities in their works to explain the abuse of persons with disabilities addressing misconceptions that exist in the Shona culture. For example, in *Kurumwa Nehekuchera* Gudza is abused and ruthlessly killed for ritual purposes. Misodzi, in *Mwana Waamai*, is sexually abused for ritual purposes. In this context, the authors' inclusion of characters with disabilities is meant to correct societal delusions, as perpetrators of the abuses are severely punished for their evil actions. Consequently, the artists' inclusion of characters with disabilities and the depiction of disability are didactic.

In relation to sterility Nyika and Kuimba's inclusion of characters with disabilities is for purposes of exposing the shortcomings of society. They highlight the inadequacies of some ChiShona cultural practices like *kupindira*. Through the characters, they disapprove of these archaic practices and teach that it is sensible for people to accept disability because cultural practices that used to be effective in the past are no longer conducive in the contemporary situation.

I have observed that a substantial amount of ChiShona narratives are interested in explaining why and how characters acquire a disability. Such an approach has enabled the employment of disability in ChiShona narratives as a plot device. As such, narratives fail to focus on the life experiences of persons with disabilities or to depict persons with disabilities just like the ordinary other characters. The result is that narrative writers fail to meaningfully represent disability thereby missing the mark in fulfilling their main function of producing literature that meaningfully shapes society with regards to disability. This is because such plots are responsible for the negative portrayal of disability as in instances where disability is represented as punishment for sin. It appears disability is employed in texts as a literary device to explain certain phenomena. Failure to explore the life experiences of persons with disabilities conceals their plight which is retrogressive in the sense that persons with disabilities remain disadvantaged, their plight, needs and achievements are not recognised.

7.3.3 What Factors Explain Selected ChiShona Novel and Play Authors' Perception of and Attitudes Towards Disability?

The authors' quest to explain why and how characters acquire disability is influenced to a large extent by superstition and the Shona people's negative beliefs on the causes of disability and partly by the biblical view of disability. Mujajati's (2006) in *Mwana Waamai*, Chakaipa (1981) in *Garandichauya*, Mungoshi (1970) in *Makunun'unu Maodzamoyo*, Mukonoweshuro (1983) in *Akafuratidzwa Moyo* and Runyowa (1974) in *Kurumwa Nehekuchera* dwell on explaining why and how people acquire a disability. In these narratives, those that acquire disability are perpetrators of incest, prostitution, and murder. Irresponsible husbands and disrespectful children are also not spared. Apart from depicting disability as punishment for sin authors cite witchcraft, avenging spirits and stress acquired from everyday experiences (psychological trauma) as causes of disability. Chakaipa as a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, in *Garandichauya* (1981) preaches that man is responsible for his actions. As such, in his narrative, Chakaipa inflicts immoral characters with blindness; a trend which Mujajati in *Mwana Waamai* adopts. Thus, in these two literary texts blindness is not inherent; it is inflicted on characters as punishment for their transgressions. This suggests that besides the Shona people's negative beliefs on disability, literary writers are also influenced by the Bible which lays emphasis on punishment for sins and that disability is a result of sin.

Through an analysis of early ChiShona literary texts, in this research I established that early ChiShona novel writers do not focus on explaining why and how characters acquire disability; neither do they base their depiction on superstition. Instead, their focus is on depicting persons with disabilities as evil and as villains. This depiction is contrary to Shona tradition as reflected in folktales which present characters with disabilities as heroines and heroes. So, the negative portrayal of disability is a trait they borrowed from Western literature, by virtue of being the pioneers in the writing of the ChiShona novel (Kahari, 1990). In such works, physical disability is ascribed to evil characters and villains and this is typical of *Karumekangu* by Chidyausiku (1970), *Pafunge* by Tsodzo (1972) and *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga* by Mashiri (1977).

Furthermore, the studied texts have shown that most ChiShona literary writers are influenced to a large extent by the contemporary Shona people's negative beliefs on the causes of disability. Most of the authors are not able to break from the prevailing attitudes and beliefs regarding disabilities. In other words, they are products of their times. This is the major

weakness that affects their portrayal of disability in their literary works indicative of their lack of new consciousness in the way they represent disability. It seems they do not think much about the implications of their portrayal. They should not focus on their experiences with a disability but instead, they should write in line with new consciousness as enshrined in the UNCRPD and the government policy on disability so that they produce works that are constructive otherwise literature ceases to function as a corrective measure in society. In this case, they fail to heed the dictates of *Vumunhu*.

The discussion above shows that the representation of disability is negative in the bulk of the discussed ChiShona literary works. The tendency by authors to highlight society's negative attitude towards disability is retrogressive. Most artists fail to tackle the issue of disability meaningfully which results in ChiShona literature being responsible for promoting stigma and marginalisation of persons with disabilities who continue to be viewed as the 'different other'. These authors are not able to go beyond the beliefs and attitudes prevalent in their societies. However, the few voices Mabasa, (1999) Mungoshi (1980) and Chingono (1983) need to be credited for being the conscience of society who in line with *Vumunhu* showed that persons with disabilities are human beings who deserve respect and to be taken seriously. These authors are able to transcend societal postures and fulfil the critical function of literature which is to critique society with a view to improving the welfare of the people.

7.4 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations emanating from the study. The recommendations are relevant to the following categories of stakeholders: authors of novels, academics, book publishers and the government of Zimbabwe.

7.4.1 Authors of ChiShona Novels and Plays

- First and foremost, it is prudent that recommendations are directed at those that are responsible for the production of literary works, especially for future authors. Authors of ChiShona novels and plays should be educated on how to write about sensitive issues like disability. They should be well informed about negative attitudes that are likely to be communicated to readers if language is not used cautiously. Authors should be able to deliberate on disability without conveying negativity towards disability such that the stories produced are capable of instilling positive attitudes towards disability. This will not happen overnight. There is a need to relay

information across the board with regards to how disability issues can be communicated through literary works. As mentioned earlier on, policy alone cannot eradicate misconceptions, discrimination and negative beliefs society holds about disability. Literature as a means of communication should be employed tactfully in order to address these attributes. Thus, ChiShona literary writers should be educated on the impact of their works on society. Writing from an informed point of view will certainly make a meaningful impact on their works. Such an approach will ensure that authors are conscious and courteous in the way they use language in their works. They should avoid the use of derogatory terms and language that is dramatic.

- ChiShona literary writers should refrain from employing disability as a literary device because the use of disability as a literary device obscures the actual experiences of persons with disabilities and only results in a negative depiction of disability. Instead, they should depict disability as a multidimensional way of being in the world. ChiShona literary writers should desist from depicting disability as punishment for sin or as a moral symbol because such a move perpetuates stereotypes and marginality. When disability is used to symbolise something the story line is never constructive, the result is always a negative portrayal (Vidali, 2010, Larrissy, 2007). ChiShona novel and play writers should avoid stereotypes and should depict disability positively. We need constructive stories which show that like everyone else people with disabilities are not different from other human beings. This is vital because the image of people with disabilities relies to a large extent on social attitudes which are instilled by literature. If literature instils negative attitudes then it becomes the key obstacle to acceptance of persons with disabilities in society.
- Writers of ChiShona novels and plays should not focus on societal negative attitudes in their portrayal of disability neither should they focus on their experiences with disability in their literary works. They should create positive stories in which people with disabilities are treated just like other characters with diverse experiences and characters. They should avoid stereotypes.
- It is not sufficient for authors just to expose the plight of persons with disabilities. They should make an effort to address the plight of persons with disabilities in their works by way of showing that they have rights like everyone else if their works are to convey a meaningful representation of disability.

7.4.2 Academics

- Language is dynamic, ChiShona academics should move with the times just like what is happening with English. They should develop and come up with new terms that are not derogatory and that do not promote negative attitudes towards disability. Old terms that are derogatory should be discarded for they are responsible for perpetuating stereotypes and marginality. New terms and phrases which reflect respect should be coined as is happening with English where we have denigrating terms that have been abandoned in favour of new ones that reflect respect. Thus, respectful language should be used in deliberating disability issues.

7.4.3. Book Publishers

- Book publishers should adhere to the requirements of *The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* as well as the country's policy on disability and ensure that all published ChiShona novels and plays that articulate disability issues promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities. They should call for adherence to the principles of *Vumunhu* in the authors' depiction of disability. Otherwise, literature ceases to serve its purpose as a corrective measure in the lives of people.
- Literary works on disability in form of ChiShona novels and plays are scarce and as such publishers should encourage writers to write about disability adhering to the UNCRPD through competitions. This should not be a once-off event but should be a continuous process and should serve as an awareness campaign. Such competitions should be accompanied by terms of reference to ensure literary works produced concurs with the demands of the government policy and the UNCRPD with regards to disability.

7.4.4. The Zimbabwean Government

- The government should ensure that all forms of media are monitored to ensure that they abide by the expectations of the UNCRPD together with the government policy on disability.
- There is a need to educationally empower persons with disabilities so that they are able to write their own stories. Given the chance and opportunity, they are in a better position to contribute to bias-free stories given their first-hand knowledge and experience with disability.

7.5. Suggestions for Future Studies

I feel that there is a need to have a dictionary of terms that replace all the ChiShona derogatory terms that refer to disability. A people's culture is reflected in their language and language also reflects a people's culture. The derogatory terms that the Shona people use to address disability parade and carry over negativity towards disability. Thus, in this context, the language that is used is a contributory factor in instilling negative attitudes towards disability. Such a scenario calls for the need for a revamps of all the derogatory terms that are used in deliberating disability issues.

An empirical study on disability issues is likely to yield results that are more informative especially when it comes to the Shona people's negative beliefs towards disability. There is a need to research more on assumptions underlining these negative beliefs.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the study by restating the research questions that guide this study as well as highlighting how the study has responded to the research questions. The conclusions and recommendations arising from the study have been presented together with suggestions for future research.

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Appendix 1

CHINYAMAPEZI

Mutauri, Kwakanga kuine umwe murume,
Vabvumiri. Dzepfunde,
M. Murume uyu akanga ari mambo,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Zvino aiva nemwanasikana wake,
V. Dzepfunde.
M. Akanga aine runako rwaipinda zuva nemwedzi,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Zvino mambo uyu,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Aida kuti,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Kuwana anenge aroora mwana wake,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Agare pamusha pake,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Kwete zvekuti aende naye kumusha kwake,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Mambo akafunga zano,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Rokuvaka dara,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Rokuti mwana wake agare,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Ndokubva avaka dara pamuti murefurefu,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Pamhando yomuti iwoyo,
V. Dzepfunde,
M. Paiva nemudzinga weuchi,
V. Dzepfunde,

M. Zvino mwanasikana wake uya ari mudara imomo,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Mambo akataurira vanhu,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Kuti kuwana anoda kuwana mwana wangu,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Anofanira kuva munhu akashinga,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Anogona kukwira muti uyu,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Achienda kumusorosoro ikoko kune dara ikoko,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Kuwana anenge aita izvi,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Ndiye anozobva amuroora,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Zvino zvikomana zvainge zvichatemwa dzinobva ropa,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Zvikati, Aa izvozvo chete,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Iye musikana akarurama kudai,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Tinototi timuwane chete,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Zvino vakomana vakatanga kubidana,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Vachiuya kwaiva nomusikana ikoko,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Mambo uya achiona vakomana ava,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Akati zvakanaka,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Itai rundaza mose,
 V. Dzepfunde,

M. Kana maita mutsestse,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Mumwe nemumwe wenyu okwira mumuti uyu,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Kana mheni anenge asvika kune mwana wangu,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Ndiye anobva amuroora,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Mukomana wekutanga akatanga kukwira mudenga,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Achiimba rwiyo,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 M. Zvino munodavira muchiti dzinoruma,
 V. Dzepfunde,
 Mushauri. Dzamundure mundurewe VaNyandoro woye jambwa,
 Vadaviri. Dzinoruma,
 Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro woye amai wee,
 Vadaviri. Nyuchi dzinoruma,
 Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure woye VaNyandoro woye amai wee,
 Vadaviri. Dzinoruma,
 Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro woye jambwa,
 Vadaviri. Nyuchi dzinoruma,
 Mushauri. Kuzoti mukomana uya ava pedyo nekusvika kumusorosoro ipapo paiva
 nemwanasikana wamambo, nyuchi dzikati uya tiennde. Dzikagomuruma dzikagomuruma
 ndiye mukomana tozom pasi dhii kuwa. Wakoniwa kusvika pane musikana.
 Zvikanzi nemumwewo, Aiwawo iwe unoteta nyuchi chaizvo iwe. Rega ndikwire ini tione.
 Mukomana wechipiri kubva atangawo kukwira mumuti achiimba. Rwiyo rwacho munodavira
 sepakutanga.
 Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro woye jambwa,
 Vadaviri. Dzinoruma,
 Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro yowe amai wee,
 Vadaviri. Nyuchi dzinoruma,
 Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro yowe amai wee,
 Vadaviri. Dzinoruma,

Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro woye jambwa,

Vadaviri. Nyuchi dzinoruma

M. Mukomana uyuwo zvaakazenge ava kuchinosvika paya pakambenga pagumira mukomana wepakutanga, nyuchi dziya dzose dzakabuda mumudzinga muya madzaiva ndokubva dzatanga kumuruma. Nokudaro arumwa kudaro haana kuzodazve kuedza kukwira mumuti. Chaakaita chete ndechekudzika pasi.

Vakomana vose vakanga vauya kumusikana uyu hapana akagona kuita zvaidiwa namambo. Vakadzokera kumisha yavo yose. Mangwana kukauryawo vamwe, vakaedzawo sokugona kwavo asi voruzhinji vakakundika nenzira imwe cheteyo yakanga yakundikawo nayo kaya vopakutangisisa.

Mangwana akatevera kwakauyazve vamwe. Mukati mevakauya ava makanga mune umwe aiva nemhezi muviri wake wose dzaisemesa kuringa. Mukomana uyu iye Chinyamapezi akati kuna vamwe vose. Regaiwo nhasi nditange ini. Kana ndatadza sokutadza kunochiita vamwe ndinoburuka pachibva pazopindawo zvapo umwe anenge adawo.

Vamwe vose vakanga vauya kumusikana uyu vakafa nokuseka. Vamwe vakati munhu uyu anofunga kuti angadiwa nomusikana akanaka sezhanje remuzambune nemhezi dzose dzaanadzo idzi—Aa, tichaona kunowira tsvimbo nedohwe.

Chinyamapezi akakwirawo mumuti sokukwira kunochiitawo vamwe. Kuzoti asvika pamudzimundiringe panova ndipo panochidonhera vamwe nyuchi dzikati uya tiende. Chinyamapezi nyuchi dzakamuruma sokunge dzairuma dombo, asi somunhu akanga atira nokurwadziwa haana kumbonzwa kuti kunze kuno kune chinonzi nyuchi dzinoruma.

Akaramba achikwira mumuti kusvikira apfuura paiva nebuma renyuchi ndokubva arudenha rwiyo.

Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro woye jambwa,

Vadaviri. Dzinoruma,

Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro yowe amai wee,

Vadaviri, Nyuchi dzinoruma,

Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro yowe amai wee,

Vadaviri. Dzinoruma,

Mushauri. Dzamundure mundure VaNyandoro woye jambwa.

Ndiye paya apa Chinyamapezi kusvika paiva nenhongoramutsipa yomwana, ndokubva amubata ruoko, obva ava kuburuka naye pasi. Zvino kaya vakanga vachimuseka vakazoshaya pokuringa nokusvoda. Baba vomusikana vakazoti kuna vakomana vose vakanga varipo. Mose vamwe chipararai zvenyu muchiti uyu aziva kwake uyu aziva kwake. Zvikoni zvikoni

mimba haibvi negosorwa. Mwanasikana wangu wawanwa. Vamwewo vanhu vakanga vauya kuzoona izvi zvakanga zvichiitika vakazoti. Wenhamo haafi kunofa akagarika. Chinyamapezi akazoswera ari murufaro rwakanga rusingafungirwe navaya vose vaizviita vatsvene.

Ndopakafirawo sarungano. Hodza, A. C.1983 Ngano Dzatambidzanwa.

Appendix 2

Below is the folktale in the ChiShona version.

VAKOMANA VAIPINDUKA KUITA SHUMBA,

Kwaivapo nevamwe vakomana vaigara kune imwe nyika iri kure kwazvo. Zvino vakomana ava vaipiduka vachiita shumba.

Rimwe zuva vakomana ava vakarangana kuenda kune imwe nyika yaiva ine mukurumbira nepamusana pavasikana vakanaka zvinonwirwa mvuraZvechokwadiwo vasikana ava vakanga vakazvarwa zvekuti vakomana rakava jemedzanwa kuenda mumusha umu kundotsvaka vasikana vokuroora.

Vakomana ava vakabva vati pfacha kusvika pamusha paya, vanasikana vose vaivaona vakabva vatorwa moyo nokuti vanakomana ava vaiva vakazvarwawo zviya zvisingashoreke. Asi chakanyanya kutora moyo yavasikana ava pavakaona vakomana ava vachipinda mumusha umu zvipfeko zvavo netsika dzavo.

Vakomana ava vange vakapfeka matehwe embada aiti ukaatarisa maziso haaizoda kubva paari. Tsika dzavakomana ava dzaitaridza unhu hwavo.

Zvino vakomana ava ndipo pavakasvika nepane imwe imba yaigara zvino zviuya zvevasikanah. Vakakumbira mvura yokunwa ndokubva vagara pasi vachimbonwa mvura. Izvozvo ziso range ratoona kare. Vasikana vaive vaona zvikomba zvavakomana izvi, vakomana zvimwe chetewo.

Vakamboti gare ndokuti Ko zvakanaka takuonai. Tatenda zvedu nemvura yamatipa. Vasikana vaya ndipo pavakapindurawo vachiti, “Aiwa munotendei, mvura chaiyo inotendwa nomunhu here?”

Vakomana vaya ndokusimuka voenda zvavo. Vasikana yakangosara iri nyaya yavakomana vaya chete.

Kwakapera mazuva akati wandei vakomana vaya vakadzokazve pamusha apa, ndokusvikokukumbira mvura sepakutanga. Vabereki vavakomana ava vakatennge vanyumwa kare kuti vanhu ava pane zvavakanga voda.

Nokudaro pakangosvika vakomana ava rwechipirivabereki vavasikana ava vakangoitawo sezvatinoziva tose zvinoitwa navabereki vose kana voda vakuwasha.

Vakomana ava havana kutombozotamba nenguva bodo pavakangonzwa vaamai vavasikana ava voti vachamboenda zvavo kurwizi kunogeza.

Rungano rwatinoziva tose rwakatanga nenguva isipi, vasikana vakabvuma, nyaya ikanaka. Musi uyu vakomana ava havana kuda kuzogara zvakanyanya kuitira kuti varege kubva varatidza kune vanhu mamiriro ezvinhu nemusi wekutanga wese.

Nokudaro vakaonekana nevasikana vavo, vakati vaizodzokazve musi waitevera kana kuti mumashure memazuva maviri.

Zvino pane zvose izvi zvaitika pane munhu mumwe chete akaziva izvi kubvira kumavambo kusvikira kumagumo. munhu uyu chaive chimwe chihanzvadzi chevasikana ava chaive chiri chirema, zvekare chiduku pane vasikana ava vose.

Pamusana poudiki nokuremara kwake hanzvadisikana idzi hadzina kunyanyova nehanya nokuti hanzvadzi yavo izive nyaya dzavo.

Chikomana ichi hachina kunge chanyanyofadzwa nekutarisika kwavakomana ava. Chakada kuti chitaurire hanzvadzi dzacho asi chakati regai vagozvionera pamhino sefodya. Asi chakaramba chichiongorora nokuziva zvose zvaitika pakati pevakomana ava nehanzvadzi dzacho.

Chimwe chinhu chakanyanyonetsa nokushamisa chikomana ichi ndechekuti seiko hanzvadzi dzake dzaida vakomana vadzaisaziva kumusha kwavo. Izvi hachina kugona kunyatsozvinzwisisa, nokudaro chakangoti tichaona kunowira tsvimbo nedohwe.

Mushure memazuva aya maviri vakomana vava vakadzokazve kumusha kwavasikana vavo. Ivo vaitenge varangaana kuti vatore vasikana vavo vachienda navo kumusha kwavo. Nokudaro pavakadzoka musi uyu, vakada kuziva kuti vasikana vavo vaitii nenyaya iyi.

Ipapo ndipo pakatozobvunza umwe wavasikana ava kuti kumusha kwavo ndokupi. Vakomana vava vakangopindura vachiti kumusha kwavo kwaiva kure chaizvo nemusha uyu. Vakomana ndokuda kuziva kuti vaida here kuti vaende vese kumusha kwavo.

Vasikana ava vakamboitirana nharo vamwe vachiti havangaende kumusha uku kana kuri kure sekutaura kwainge kwaitwa navakomana vavo. Asi vamwe vakati kure kwegava ndokusina mutsubvu, nokudaro vakati zvekundoona kumusha kwavakomana vavo ndicho chinhu chaive chakanaka chose. Pokupedzisira vasikana vava vakazobvumirana kuti vaende nevakomana vavo kumusha kwavo.

Asi izvi zvekuti vaende nevakomana vavo zvakarambwa nevabereki vavo vachiti moyo yavo hayaizogarisikana, vana vavo vachiendwa navo kunyika iri kure zvakadaro sokutaura kwavakomana vava.

Nokudaro vasikana vava vakaronga zvekuti vaende vabereki vavo vasingazivi kuti vari kuenda kupi. Vakapedza kurangana zvakanaka, vakabvumirana musi nenguva yavaizosimuka vachienda.

Asika kunyange zvazvo vakaedza napavaigona kuti mazano avo aya asazivikanwa nemunhu zvake pane umwe munhu chete akaziva kose zvako kanhu kavakarangana. Uyu munhu aiva chihanzvadzikomana chiya. Chikomana ichi hachina kuda kutaurira vabereki vacho kwete nokuti chainge chine zano racho rokuti chiende nehanzvadzi dzacho kuzoitira mangwana. Nokudaro chikomana ichi chakaramba chakazvipfumba mumoyo macho.

Sezvo chaiziva musi wainge waranganwa kuti vasikana ava vatize nevakomana vavo, zvakare musi uyu wakanga waswera chikomana ichi chakati kune hanzvadzi dzacho, Ini Ndinodawo kuenda nemi kumusha kwevakomana venyu. Mwana akati audenha idi mutunhu une mago.

Umwe akamunongerera neapa mumwe neapa mumwe nepano mwana akaramba achiti tuzu. Vakamutukirira, vakapedza shungu dzavo musi uyu asi hanzvadzikomana iyi yakaramba yakashingisa mukuda kwayo kuti iende.

Imwe yehanzvadzi dziya yakamboti regai tiende naye, mberi irima, hatizoziva chinotiponesa mangwana.

Asi vamwe vose, zvikuru musikana aitevedzerwa nechikomana ichi vakati kwete hazvitwebwa zvekuti hanzvadzikomana ipindire munyaya dzerudo dzehanzvadzisikana.

Chikomana chiya ndokuona kuti zvechokwadi chembwa pakanga pasisina sezvo vatenzi vaiva vararira mupunga. Nokudaro akati zano nderipi, ndokuti /Kana mandirambidza kuenda nemi ndinozvidura kuna amai nababa kuti ndizvo zvamuri kuda kuita izvi. /

Paye ndiye bwaibwai hanzvadzi dzashaya chokuita. Ndipo pavakazoti, Zvakanaka toenda zvedu newe asi usazotinyadzisawozve kwatinenge tichienda nokuti tinofanira kundoratidza unhu hwedu hwose kwatinoenda.

Zuva rokuti vaende rakasvika, vakomana vava vakabva vati vhu nenguva yavaive varangana. Nguva iyi yavaiva varangana yaive yorunyanhiriri, nokudaro pakasvika vakomana ava vainga vatogadzirira kare. Naizvozvo vakabva vangoti zvinyoronyoro yerer munzira kwede, ndiye hutu.

Vekumusha vakazoti rava ramangwana vakaona vanhu makatiisa riinhi. Kudoti napano vakabva vaziva kuti vanhu vange vatiza nezvikomba. Chakanyanya kuvarwadza ndechekuti kana dai vasikaana vange vatiza nevakomana vavo, ko, hanzvadzikomana yange yandotsageiwo. Izvi havana kugona kuzvipindura nokudaro vakangoti tichangoona kwazvinosvika.

Munguva yose yaipatarika vabereki ava kutsvaka vana vavo ivo vanasikana vavo nevakomana vavo nechihanzvadzikomana chiya vange vapedza mitunhu nokufamba. Nguva yose yavakabuda mumba vakomana ava vaive vasina kuona kuti vasikana vavo vakanga

vauya nehanzvadzi yavo. Pavakamuona vakabvunza kuti sei tsano ava vainge vauyawo. Hanzvadisikana idzi dzakapindura dzichiti Angochemerawo kuuya. Hapana chataigona kuita sezvo ainge ati tikaramba kuti auye nesu aitichera kuvabereki vedu.

Vakafamba asi havana kusvika kumusha kwavakomana vava. Chikomana chiya chikati ndaneta baba imi ndokunzi neumwe wavakomana vava Tsano huyai ndikutakurei. Vakafamba kusvika zuva rinyure asi havana kusvika kwavaienda. Nokudaro vakatema musasa ndokuraramo kusvikira ramangwana.

Vakomana vakafumomuka kuenda kunovhima, vakauya vakaita mhuka dzokutembedzana nokuti vaiti kana vava musango vaipinduka voita shumba, vobata mhuka dzavo. Kana vadzokera kuya kwavasiya vasikana vavo vaipinduka zvakare kuita vanhu.

Vakapedza mazuva mana vachifamba chete ndokuzosvika musango guru rakasvipa kuti ndo-o. Pavakasvika musango umu ndipo pakanzi navakomana vava, Tasvika mumussha medu zvino. Izvi zvakakatyamadza vasikana ava zvikuru kwazvo asi chiya chihanzvadzi chavo chakabva changoziva kuti zviya zvachaifungira kuti vakomana ava vane maminimini avo, rainge riri chokwadi.

Vakasvika pane rimwe bako ndokusvikonzi ipapo ndipo painge pari pamusha. Vakagara zvavo kwenguva yakati kuti. Vakomana vava vaifumoenda kunovhima, vachidzoka ava manheru mazuva ose.

Zvino chinhu chakashamisa vasikana ava pamwe nechihanzvadzi chavo ndechkuti mapfupa ose avaidya, vachirasa panze usikuvaizoono ramangwana ose pasisisna.

Rimwe zuva chikomana chiya chakati regai ndione kunoenda mapfupa, ndokuita zvacho sechakotsira icho chakasvinura. Pava pakti peusiku vakomana vava vakapindua vakaita shumba, ndokudya mapfupa aya ose, Mushure ndokupinduka vachiita vanhu. Izvi zvose zvaiva zviri mumaziso echikomana chiya.

Ramangwana chikomana chiya chakataurira hanzvadzi dzacho kuti vakomana vavo vaipinduka vachiita shumba. Asi hanzvadisikana dzakabva dzatuka chikomanachichinzi chinonyepa. Chihanzvadzikomana chiya ndokubva chanyarara zvacho.

Kubvira musu uyu chikomana chakaona kuti manyama aiva amira nerongo, nokudaro akatanga kuvaka dendere rake rokuti, kana zvinhu zvichinge zvazonyatsoshata, vaizogona kutiza kuenda kwavo.

Mumwe musu vakomana vava vakaenda zvavo kundovhima semazuva ose, chikomana chiya ndokutevera chichihwandira kuti chione kuti vakomana ava vaiita sei.

Vakomana vava vakasvika musango ndokubva vapinduka vava shumba. Chakaona rega kutaura chava chimveemvee mumakoma, kutsvaka mhuka.

Chikomana ichi ndokubva chati fukusu kudzokera kubako kwakanga kwasara hanzvadzi dzacho, ndokusvikovataurira kuti vauye kuzozvionera. Hanzvadzi dziya dzakabvuma ndokusvikokwira muchikomo dzakatarisa mujinga merimwe zigomo umo shumba dziya dzaingunoshena-shena dzichitsvaka mhuka.

Ndipo pakanzi nehanzvadzi iya, tarisai muone zvinoita varume venyu. Mazvionera moga zvino tochiona zvamuchaita. Achiri kungotaura kudarovakaona hakuchina chakanaka, shumba dziye dzavz kunanga kubakokuya kwavaigara, Kuzoti kuhanzvadzi dziya kutya kukati uya tiende, dzangova tsanga chete.

Ndipo pakanzi nechihanzvadzi chiya “Teverai kuno.” Vakaenda paye paive paine dendere pamusoro pedombo refu ndokubva vakwiramo.

Shumba dziya dzikati taona, regera uchiona zvoitwa navanagocha. Dzakauya dzakati tasa muzasi medombo iri, dzikasvikoparapara kunge dzichada kupunza dombo iri.

Hanzvadzisikana dziya dzikati dzozhamba nokutya. Apa chikomana chiya chakabva chatanga kuimba chichiti,

“Tundu, musere,

Toenda kwedu,

Tundu, musere musere,

Toenda kwedu,

Tundu musere musere,

Toenda kwedu,”

Ipapo dendere riya rakabva ratanga kusimuka richimhanya nemumhepo, ndiye hutu kuenda kumusha.

Pavakasvika kumusha vanhu vose zvikuru vabereki vevana ava vakatenda chikomana ichi zvikuru kwazvo nokubatsira hanzvadzi dzake kwaakanga aita.

Ndipo pakafira sarungano.

Fortune 1980 p 82-85

Appendix 3

Ukabata muswe wembwa kana kiti unoita bofu (If you touch a dog's tail, you become blind.

The real reason behind this taboo was that the Shona feared that the dog might bite the child).

Ukapfira musope unoita musope (If you spit upon the sight of an albino you become an albino.) Spitting on someone among the Shona is a sign of disdain or contempt. It is unethical. So the idea was to ensure respect for persons with albinism or that at least they were protected from witnessing such demeaning behaviour).

Ukaimba wakasenga chinhu unopenga (If you sing whilst carrying something on your head you become mentally ill.) The Shona used this taboo to ensure that one carrying something, usually a gourd of water did not lose attention and break the gourd.

Ukagara murusero unoita mbeveve (If you sit in the winnowing basket you will become mute.) A winnowing basket was a very important part of utensils in a Shona household. It had to be kept clean as it was used to process food.

Ukaseka chirema unozvara chirema (If you laugh at someone with a disability you will give birth to a child with a disability.) The taboo was intended to protect persons with disabilities from ridicule by members of society).

Ukateedzera chirema unozvara chirema (If you imitate someone with a disability, you will give birth to a child with a disability.) Again, this taboo was meant to develop respect for persons with disabilities by not laughing at them).

Ukadya howa mupengo unopenga (If you eat a mushroom that is not edible you become mentally ill. Wild mushrooms were known to be poisonous.) This taboo was therefore meant to protect the young people who could not distinguish edible from inedible mushrooms.

Ukadya uchitaura unopenga (If you talk while you are eating you become mentally ill.). Talking while eating could result in the young choking on food. So, this taboo was meant to prevent this.

Ukabika uchiimba unozopenga (If you sing whilst you are cooking, you will become mentally ill.) Singing or talking while cooking food was regarded as unhygienic. The taboo sought to discourage this.

Ukagara nechirema unoita nhodzera (If you stay together with someone with a disability you are likely to be like them) (Tatira, 2005).

Appendix 4

Ukawetera mumvura hauzozvari (If you urinate in water, you will become sterile or you will fail to conceive.) The reason why children were discouraged from urinating in water was based on health grounds that urine would contaminate the water, which is meant for various domestic purposes among them drinking and cooking (Tatira, 2005).

Munhukadzi akadya zamu remhuka haazozvari (A woman should not eat the udder of an animal because she will fail to conceive.) The idea was to encourage discipline in terms of what women ate.

Vanhukadzi vaviri vakabika muhari imwe panguva imwechete havazozvari (If two women stir in one pot at the same time, they will fail to conceive.) The Shona were aware of the potential of conflict developing between two women if they cooked in one pot at the same time. To prevent this from happening, the taboo was used.

Ukasunga musoro negavi hauzozvari (Tying one's head with a string from a buck, leads to impotence or barrenness.) The Shona were aware that tying one's head could interrupt the flow of blood. So, the taboo was used to discourage that.

Ukarova munhu nemutsvairo haazozvari (If you bit someone with a sweeping broom, they will become sterile or they will fail to conceive.) The Shona were aware that using the sweeping broom (made of grass) could result in grass splinters damaging the eye. At the same time, they could lose the broom.

Vakomana vakadya shana havazozvari (If boys eat a type of mice known as shana they will become sterile) (Chigidi, 2009)

Mrs Loveness Happanyengwi (218088714)
School Of Education
Edgewood

Dear Mrs Loveness Happanyengwi,

Protocol reference number: 00003737

Project title: Disability representation in selected Zimbabwean Shona novels and plays

Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your application received on 9 September 2019, your school has indicated that the protocol has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited.

For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited.

In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE:

Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,



12/11/2020

Prof Thamsanqa Thulani Bhengu
Academic Leader Research
School Of Education

UKZN Research Ethics Office
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
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