

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter serves as the general introduction of the study. It establishes the research problem under inquiry and the context in which it is situated. It also justifies the study's significance and what it pursues to complete. The approaches that were utilized in acquiring data and in analyze it shown. At the end of the chapter, the lay out the following chapters is presented.

##### **1.1 Area of investigation**

This study is in the area of language. It is centred on the use of vulgarity in the Zimdancehall music discourse. The study critically examines the concept of vulgarity, as an expression of power by the musicians and of the truth in the society, using selected Zimdancehall songs. By vulgarity, the researcher refers to a particular vocabulary with an element of vulgar or ribaldry often not spoken in public, in this case which is a characteristic of lyrics in selected Zimdancehall songs. The problem is then that in the genre in question vulgar is being readily dismissed by authorities and scholars (Mate, 2012). Be that as it may, in this study it is argued that every art form should be critically analysed considering its merits and demerits. This perspective is substantiated by Scott (1990) who argues that power relations in a society can be analysed using different art forms of the subjected. Power and truth is then influence through the ability to capture public attention, directly or indirectly, and exposition of societal realities through use of a distinctive form of art, vulgarity. This is supported by Mbembe (2001a) who is of the view that vulgarity can be used as an expression of power and truth. Therefore, in this study, the researcher examines how vulgarity as it is used in Zimdancehall can be regarded as an expression of power by the musicians and the generally concealed truth in the society. Thus, this study explores the other dimension offered by the low culture, vulgar, in attesting ascendancy and reality as eluded by a number of academics such as Bakhtin (1981), Scott (1990) and Mbembe (2001a).

##### **1.1.1 Background of the study**

Vulgarity in music or any other art forms is as old as language itself. The fact that there is an acceptable vocabulary in speech or in art implies that there is a vocabulary which is

considered as inappropriate. Gelfand (1973), Hodza (1979), Kabweza (1979), studied the Shona culture, and their researches show the existence of vulgarity in different art forms and situations. In the Shona culture, vulgarity or obscene terms are also considered as taboo words which are restricted to unique contexts. Therefore, vulgarity is not a new phenomenon in the society in question.

Vulgarity in the Shona culture manifests in various public and private events which include among others, the grain threshing parties (*kupura*), in spaces of people of different ages and sexes, bedroom poetry, *chiramu*, invective (*mavingu*) and sex education. In this regard, Ndogo (2007) asserts that in the Shona culture, in discussion of matters pertaining to sexuality, it is difficult for parents to talk about these issues without sounding vulgar. This indicates that, vulgarity had a role to play depending with context in which it was used. Therefore, vulgarity is not a new phenomenon in the Shona society.

Most of the words considered to be vulgar today have been around for more than a thousand years (Steinmetz, 2013). Words which refer to the body like *magaro* (buttocks) and *mazamu* (breasts) are extremely old words that were found in the Shona society. What modern speakers now call vulgar or obscene can also be traced back to the pre-colonial era, and in those times the terms would not have been considered as impolite as they are today. Hence, vulgarity is not a new thing in the Shona society. Chabata and Mavhu (2005) give the following examples to illustrate Shona words that may be considered as crude: *-mama* (defecate), *mukosho* (anus), *beche* (vagina), *mboro* (penis), *jende* (testicle), *chindori* (clitoris), *-tunda* (urinate/ejaculate) and *-sura* (fart). Although these terms are discouraged or prohibited in public speech, they may also be used freely in appropriate circumstances.

Then: What happened to vulgarity during colonial era? The colonial system introduced new administrative, religious, education and legal structures which include the laws, Christianity, schools and the media which suppressed vulgar discourses. The Shona cultural institutions were considered as devilish, thus this resulted in their deconstruction. The missionaries through Christianity stripped Africans of their culture and religion. Mbiti's (1969) observation contends that Africans were notoriously religious. However, their religion and cultural values which were like opium to them was slowly diluted through colonial structures which perpetuated colonial ideologies. The colonial education mainly targeted young people who were less resistant. Through the schools, the colonizers took this as a change to brain wash their minds into rejecting their cultural values. Rodney (1973) in line with this argues

that colonial education was used by colonialists to enslave Africans under foreign cultures. In support of this, Rennie (1973) blames colonial education and religion for diluting the Shona culture.

The Shona people have different gatherings such as *jakwara*, the *dare* (female, male and traditional courts), giving their children sex education and other societal value. This was affected as the colonialists banned any unauthorized gathering. This affected the contexts in which vulgarity was uttered in expressing power and reality. Vulgar vocabulary began to pop out in off contexts, for instance when the blacks were directly or indirectly insulting the whites. This confirms to Bakhtin (1981)'s observation that some elements of vulgarity were evident in slaved black Americans' discourses against their masters. In the case of the Shona society, what was uttered in *jakwara* (grain threshing parties), *madanha* (bedroom poetry) or in sex education was now being uttered in public contexts. The colonialists fostered their own ideology through administrative structures such as acts like Censorship and Entertainment Control Act of 1967 which banned different forms of art. These factors created individuals who were now culturally alienated.

Owing to what has been discussed above, vulgarity in the contemporary era is now used by different age groups in appropriate and inappropriate situations. The post-colonial government adopted most of the colonial systems of banning vulgarity in art forms. Just like the Rhodesian era, vulgarity in the Shona society has been suppressed on media, schools and other formal platforms through the use of repressive and ideological state apparatus. However, in as much as the colonial and post-colonial administrators have tried to ban vulgarity, it is now coming back or manifesting itself in Zimdancehall music. Artists like Killer T, Soul Jah love, Jerry b, T - boy, Sniper Storm, King Shaddy, Winky D, Celscius, Kinnah, Lady Squanda, Lady Bee and Ricky Fire are typical examples of musicians who use vulgar lyrics in some of their songs. This musical discourse is received differently in the society; while elderly people and some scholars consider it as divorced from cultural ethics, the younger generation and some liberal adults see no problem with music. Although vulgarity is regarded as inappropriate, an act of extravagance and negative representation, other academic authorities consider it to be an expression of power and truth. An in-depth study on the discourse brings out the important side of vulgarity in the society basing on its ability to express power of the subjected and reflecting the reality which needs are million words to be expressed in ordinary language. Power relations and the concealed truths are therefore argued to be exposed through this vulgarity discourse.

### **1.1.2 Statement of the problem**

Vulgar vocabulary is there in the society and is vigorously manifesting in music, various art forms and contexts. Many legal, religious and social efforts have for a long time tried to stand against it but it seems as if their initiatives are fruitless. However, it is not a new phenomenon in the Shona society as African academics like Chiwome (1992) and Kabweza (1978) evidences that it is an important unique feature of the Shona society which has ever since existed in art, parallel to ordinary speech. No matter how authorities, academics and other members of the society try to dismiss it, it is very prevalent in ordinary people's discourses in the contemporary society and, in this case, it is vigorously manifesting in Zimdancehall music. The researcher then subscribes to the view that music is power and a replica of the society. Given that Bakhtin (1981), Mbembe (2001a) and other scholars see it as it as an expression of power and truth, to what extent and in what way is vulgarity in Zimdancehall an expression of power and truth? The researcher therefore examines the Zimdancehall musicians' quest for popularity and to expose societal truth through vulgar lyrics.

### **1.2 Research objectives**

- i. To identify and analyze the manifestations, suppression and prevalence of vulgarity in the pre-colonial, colonial and contemporary Shona society.
- ii. To critique the use of vulgarity in the expression of power by the musicians, with particular reference to selected Zimdancehall songs
- iii. To explore the use of vulgarity in Zimdancehall as an expression of the truth of what is happening in the society

#### **1.2.1 Research questions**

This study answers the following questions:

- i. What is vulgarity?
- ii. Which situations or contexts did vulgar vocabulary exist and still exist in the pre-colonial, colonial and contemporary Shona society?
- iii. How do the audience and other established musicians view vulgarity in some Zimdancehall songs?
- iv. Of what practicality are the opinions that vulgarity can be used to express power and truth with reference to selected Zimdancehall songs?

### **1.3 Justification of study**

This study is an important addition to the existing body of language in music, and sociolinguistics fields, especially in the study of vulgarity in art forms. It is so since any art form does not grow or exist in a vacuum; but serves as an expression of "...social, political and economic forces in a particular society (Ngugi, 1972, xv)." Therefore, this study helps to understand how vulgarity in art forms can be used by the subalterns as an expression of power and truth. Mbembe (1992) maintains that as a way of resistance and refuge from the dominant culture, obscenity and grotesque are caricatures that challenge officialdom through turning it into a victim of ridicule. In spite of negative perception on vulgarity, in contexts controlled by unconditional master codes, it offers discursive spaces to marginalised individuals with which they construct different discourses. The choice of vulgarity is due to the fact that it can express what cannot be clearly expressed by euphemized and normal words.

Much of the literature relating to music sang by youths like urban grooves and Zimdancehall castigates such musical genres as full of obscene lyrics, without any tangible message. While some researchers view vulgarity as a negative representation of art (Okunna, 1996; Sasa, 2004; Kachere, 2008; Chari, 2009; and Viriri, 2010), others call for censorship of such lyrics (Viriri et al, 2011; Chari, 2008). Given the vigorous manifestation of vulgarity in Zimdancehall music, it is imperative to judiciously analyse the content of the lyrics in order to understand better its relevance in the music. There is need to explore how vulgarity is used as the voice of the marginalised (Mbembe, 2001). Undoubtedly, Zimdancehall artists are no longer ordinary people but artists whose voices are authoritatively reckoned. Their art, Zimdancehall music, becomes the centre of inquiry since it is a recent genre with the vulgarity component in question. Notably, this component is found in the songs of artists who include Killer T, Winky D, Lady Squanda, Lady B, Jerry B, Soja Love and Kinnah. Rather than prematurely dismissing the genre for vulgar elements in its music, there is need to comprehensively examine the lyrics in relation to ideas which consider the beauty of vulgarity based on its expressionism of power and reality .

Power relations in any given contexts can be studied through analysing different art forms produced in different power-laden situations as noted by Scott (1990). Henceforth, vulgarity as an art form produced, not in a vacuum, but in a society of human beings presents itself as a platform for studying issues to do with power in the society. About truth, music stands as a

replica of the society and to Ravenwood (1999), vulgarity in music is used to reveal the hidden truth, and to Bakhtin (1981) it expresses concrete, practical context or burning issues in the society. Much of the existent literature has studied vulgarity from grain threshing parties, praise poetry, graffiti inscriptions, slang, some genres of music and other different platforms. This study, therefore, explores the vulgar lyrics in Zimdancehall as an expression of power and truth. The research is worth carrying out as it seeks to cover the gap between vulgarity studies. Mangeya (2014) advances that vulgarity is generally associated with delinquency and anti-social behaviour, and studies in support of it have suffered long and unnecessary neglect. As a result, previous studies on vulgarity in Zimdancehall have not paid much attention to the socioeconomic and political issues raised on the Zimdancehall music. This study analyses power and truth expressed in selected Zimdancehall music with an element of vulgarity and that it should not continue to be a periphery academic study. The study also benefits academics, music critiques and other individual in the fields of language, music and culture.

#### **1.4 Conceptual framework**

This study is informed by the concept of aesthetics of vulgarity. This refers to a formal study of the relevance or splendour of vulgar in art forms. The key figures in this conception are, Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), D. Bigo (1989), James. C. Scott (1990) and Achelle Mbembe (1992 and 2001a). The study largely subscribes to Mbembe's (2001a) perspective that vulgarity is an expression of power and truth. He argues the subjected African to adopt a style of art in which they transcribe or decipher themselves by way of African subjectivity. The basic argument in this concept is that, vulgarity in art forms stands as the subalterns' vigorous voice in expressing power and truth. Thus, as he argues, there is need to uncover the reason for the use of grotesque and obscene. The researcher uses Mbembe (2001a) to argue that in spite of its negative perception, vulgarity in Zimdancehall music still offers artists and individuals with discursive platforms of expressing power by the artists and the truth of what is occurring in the society.

These elements of obscenity and grotesque are those which Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) claims to have uncovered in non-official cultures. The African post colony, in which these elements also manifest, is described by Mbembe as a specific system of signs, with a particular way of re-forming stereotypes. Cameroon, as his case study, demonstrates how the grotesque and the obscene are dual crucial features that characterise regimes of domination in the post-colonial Africa. He views are similar to Bakhtin's, who claims that grotesque and obscene are, most

importantly, the ordinary people's province. This is complimented by Bigo (1989) who sees the subjects' reference to elements like defecation (to pass faeces from the body), copulation (act of having sex), and extravagance as "classical ingredients in the production of power." Subsequently, these elements of vulgarity are used towards establishing, approving, or criticizing specific regimes of domination and also exposing the truth in the society. These theoretical keystones, thus, offer the drive for socio-linguistic investigation of the use of vulgar lyrics in Zimdancehall in relation to production of power and, fabrication reality and exposition of societal truths.

Mbembe, in citation of Bayart's (1989) terms (the mouth, the belly, or the phallus), stipulates that it is not enough in the context understanding post-colonial power relations to refer to them as automatically obscene. These to him are practical assertions in relation to the human condition, and add inherently to the production of the post-colony's political culture. In relation to this, Scott (1990) observes that the private transcript is existent in the discourses of both the dominant and the subjects. Consequently, the dominated have tendencies of exposing the truths with regards to their opinions in their 'hidden transcript' through arts. Therefore, in understanding power relations in music genres and concealed truths in the society, explorations on vulgarity in Zimdancehall music should be balanced, considering its merits and demerits.

Besides, explicit use of vulgar terms, the human body is the basic locale of the expressions and humour used in depicting power. What then escalates conflict is not the reference frequently made to those in power's genital organs, but considerably the way ordinary people by their laughter, hijack power and as if by accident, force it to scrutinise its own vulgarity (Mbembe, 2001). Mbembe (2001) further contends that the vulgarity account should not be taken as ordinary verbal extravagance, but more meaning should be conferred to it than its merits. Hence, with reference to the music in question, the fabrication of vulgarity by Zimdancehall musicians requires also to be studied as a cynical process which they do deliberately. Vulgarity, as more than an ethical category, is one of the domains in which subjects endorse or subvert power. Appropriately, in this study, this concept is suitable in critically analysing the vulgar elements in selected Zimdancehall songs. The selected Zimdancehall songs consist of elements such as defecation, grotesque, and obscenity which the key figures in this concept see as relevant to study. The themes expressed by the artist are by and large a reflection of the society, thus music stands as a replica of the society. Hence, it

is viable to study vulgarity as it is used in music by Zimdancehall artists and how the mileage which it is giving the artists in the music fraternity and in exposing truths in the society.

## **1.5 Research methodology**

This section summarizes the different methods used in this study and further justifies this use. This study adopts qualitative research methods. Qualitative approaches of research are flexible and they enable the researcher to explore the participant's interpretations, therefore, countenancing a comprehensive collection of detailed data (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003:2). A case study complimented by a phenomenology approach was used. Together, these helped in population and sampling techniques, data collection tools, and data analysis and presentation. These methods are viable since the study deals with language, specifically vulgarity in the music discourse.

### **1.5.1 Research design**

A research design is a comprehensive strategy of investigation which is characterized by a framework which guides the researcher in data gathering, population sampling and data analysis. Since the study falls in the discipline of language, particularly vulgarity in selected Zimdancehall songs, a qualitative approach is largely adopted and quantitative techniques were appropriate. Qualitative research is holistic and humanistic in its methods (Sprinthall, et al, 1991:102). It is considered to be holistic as its interpretations of behaviour in this study incorporate the context, and humanistic in that its inspiring purpose is to increase understanding of a particular subject through the viewpoint of other people. In data presentation the research made use of quantitative techniques; tables were used as visual presentation of the data collected.

A case study augmented by a phenomenological research design was used. A case study is defined by Hartley (2004) as an exhaustive exploration, with data often collected of phenomena within the context which illuminate the problem being studied. The researcher made use of a case study, and in particular, selected Zimdancehall songs have been carefully chosen since they are characterized by the vulgar component under enquiry. A case study is essential to the research in question as it thoroughly examines the central issue and as it deals with social reality. A phenomenological inquiry as advanced by Patton (1990:69) centres on the question: "What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?" Therefore, like phenomenologists, the researcher collected descriptive data and



ascertain how individuals experience and deduce their spheres. A phenomenological method was pursued in the data gathering process, since the quality of the research involves different opinions of individuals in an ordinary setting.

### **1.5.2 Population and sampling techniques**

The targeted respondents for this study were drawn from selected Zimdancehall artists, academics and audience of Zimdancehall music. A manageable size of four Zimdancehall musicians with an element of vulgarity in their songs was selected since they are the particular artists with the music in question and also because they have the first hand information on why they make use of vulgar lyrics in their songs. Academics in the fields of music, media and cultural studies were selected. These were selected basing on their competence in the field of culture, music and media. The other groups of respondents were audience of Zimdancehall music. They were selected because the artists in question produce their lyrics with them in mind as their targeted audience. Audiences were selected basing on the purpose of the research. Therefore, adding on these, the university students were also considered for data gathering under Zimdancehall audience.

On sampling techniques, both probability and non-probability sampling methods, that is, stratified random sampling and purposive sampling were used in this study. On stratified random sampling, thirty individuals from Zimdancehall audience, 15 males and 15 females, were selected when the researcher was administering out questionnaires. These sub-samples were further divided, studied, combined together and conclusions were drawn from the whole sample.

Purposive sampling also enabled the researcher to select people or respondents who had the information based on the purpose of the research and this enabled the researcher to attain relevant answers to the research questions. In this study, the targeted population method included 5 selected Zimdancehall artists (both male and female), and 5 academics who deal with music and others who deal with culture because they have information on the topic in question as they are experts in the identified fields.

### **1.5.3 Data gathering tools**

This section shows the data collection methods which were used by the investigator in this study. The researcher used various techniques in data gathering as this helped to acquire much valuable data. Primary sources provided direct descriptions of the study from data

gathered from the original sources making use of interviews and questionnaires; hence, the data was more reliable. Secondary sources of data refer to data collected and documented prior to the current study and that data may be internal or external to the organization. Therefore, journals, library books and internet sources were also relevant in this study.

#### **1.5.3.1 Questionnaire method**

The questionnaire method as a quick of data gathering from targeted population was used by the researcher. This research instrument consists of a chain of questions and other prompts for the determination of collecting data from respondents (Bamford, 2001). The researcher gathered much information from the audience of Zimdancehall music, music producers, and academics in the field of musicology. The questionnaires were self-administered to the local thirty individuals ensuring that they would not get lost or delayed. Out of thirty, six questionnaires were not returned. The strength of the questionnaire method as advanced by Babbie (1973) lies in gathering large amounts of data from a relatively large number of participants. However, the challenges were that some questionnaires were not returned and some questions not answered which resulted in limited data for analysis.

#### **1.5.3.2 Interviews method**

This researcher made use of interviews in collecting data as they allow clarification on information. Interviews are chiefly convenient for attaining the tale behind an interviewee's experience. They were be conducted mainly targeting Zimdancehall musicians, producers, selected experts in the field of music and some culture studies, and also fans and hearers of the Zimdancehall music. Both face-to-face and telephone interviews were used in interviewing some of the Zimdancehall artists with the selected songs and academics from specific fields. The face-to-face interviews helped the researcher to get first hand and some background information as to when and how the interviewees view the research questions. These helped to gather both verbal and non-verbal data. Telephone interviews were used to obtain data from respondents who are not easily reachable and to reduce transport costs. The information gathered from the musicians, music producers and academics was beneficial to the researcher in acquiring comprehensive data concerning the study being carried out.

#### **1.5.3.4 Document analysis**

Documented texts often carry history. An analysis of relevant documents in text and audio format was done in relation to vulgarity in Zimdancehall music. Documents analyzed by the

researcher included historical and contemporary documents such as audio and lyrics of the selected Zimdancehall songs, articles, journals and books on vulgarity and the music discourse. This method enabled the researcher to explore documents and to get knowledge of past and present existence and relevance in use of vulgarity in the society, in an unobtrusive manner. One of the greatest advantage of data analysis that the researcher noted was that documents are not affected by the nature of the research's inquiry and are therefore non obstructive and non-reactive.

#### **1.5.4 Ethical considerations**

A study is not conducted in a social vacuum, which entails that all appropriate modus operandi (legal, social and cultural) should be followed; henceforth ethical considerations were observed. The researcher observed the following research ethics in this research: voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and avoiding plagiarism.

Participants voluntarily participated in the research. Prior to participation, research respondents and local collaborators had the basic right to be familiar with the purpose of the study and the end-uses of the information. The researcher sought consent to record the respondents in interviews and also informed them on what they were subjected to. In the academic circles, plagiarism is considered as the mother of all offences. In other words, it is a deed of stealing somebody's philosophies, and arguments without referencing them. To ensure originality, integrity, and trustworthiness, the researcher referenced all borrowed facts.

#### **1.5.5 Data analyses and presentation**

Since the study is qualitative, descriptive data analysis tools were used. The thematic analysis of qualitative data and discourse analysis were used in data analyses. Thematic analysis constitutes of central themes identified by the researcher in reading through the data gathered from respondents. On presentation of data and its analysis, themes were designed considering the research objectives. The researcher further analysed the data by making a comparison between the research findings and existing literature on vulgarity and the music discourse, with reference to Zimdancehall genre. As recommended by Ryan and Bernard (2003) in Bryman (2012: 580) the researcher followed the following principles in identifying themes: repetition, similarities and differences and missing data. Accordingly, the researcher abided by those principles in analyzing data.

Discourse analysis was also used. Selected Zimdancehall songs with an element of vulgarity (from both male and female artists) were analysed using discourse analysis; considering the most controversial lyrics which express power and truth. Discourse can be defined as a communication in speech or piece of writing about a particular subject. Even though discourse analysis is reproached of being subjective its power is that it permits the investigator used it to understand works without being subjected to conditions in which the works are created. The data is presented by aid of tables and descriptive summaries were necessary.

## **1.6 Literature review**

This section reviews existing literature on vulgarity in art forms and the music discourse with a view of differentiating the focus of this study from former studies. A number of academics have written on art forms used for expression of power and truth, and vulgarity outlining their perspectives in relation to the topic.

Ravenwood (1999) examines how acceptance of vulgarity into high art can either advance or marginalise the cultural capital of rap music. She postulates that in the context of artistic representation, vulgarity can be a powerful weapon to enforce attention and awareness of foreign realities in a middle class audience. The researcher subscribes to her views that musicians, through vulgarity in music, aspire to directly point out a facet of reality which many people do not desire to acknowledge in support of her views, she cites Bakhtin (1981), who defines vulgar discourse as an art form which deals more concretely with explicit, practical contexts. Her research is different from that of the researcher since while she researched on rap music at South Park, America: the researcher's study is on Zimdancehall music and is informed by aesthetics of vulgarity.

Scott (1990) writes about domination and the art of resistance. His work looks at power relations and the art forms used by the low class in power-laden situations to reflect their resistance. According to him, the subordinates make 'hidden transcript' which represent a critique of power spoken behind the backs of the dominant. This is also evident in the researcher's research. With particular reference to the low class to him, the hidden transcripts are a backstage discourse, which consist of what cannot be said in front of those in power. Scott argues that rumors, gossip, songs, gestures, jokes and theatre of low class can be interpreted as vehicles by which, among other things, insinuates a critique of power while hiding behind inoffensive understanding of their conduct. Above all, Scott identifies and

contextually discusses the low class' arts of resistance. The researcher with Zimdancehall as the case study subscribes to some of Scott's observations. The researcher agrees that subordinate groups in a particular society are not just subalterns who cannot speak, but they voice their concerns through the use of different art forms like what Zimdancehall artists do. While Scott's work is largely on politics, giving reference to the slave era in Western communities, the researcher situates his study in the African community, particularly looking at relevance of vulgarity in the Zimbabwean community.

Chari (2009) in his article entitled "*Representation of women in male-produced "urban grooves" music in Zimbabwe*" stresses that the lyrical content of the urban grooves genre celebrates negative stereotypes of women. He argues that this type of urban grooves music goes against efforts of empowering women in the society. Most of Chari's arguments adhere to the researcher's study since both studies are on youth produced music. Unlike Chari who studies negative stereotypes of women in urban grooves songs, the researcher examines vulgarity as an expression of power and truth in Zimdancehall genre. Chari also makes use of the social construction theory, while the present researcher is informed by the concept of aesthetics of vulgarity.

Viriri et al (2011) investigate the socio-cultural influence of urban grooves music. They particularly, look at the role of the genre in question in socialization of the Zimbabwean youth and the extent to which it influences the behavioral trends of the youth in urban communities. Viriri et al cite other works which consider urban grooves music as copycat of western music styles. They see urban grooves musicians as agents of cultural imperialism, who with their music imbedded with chaff from western culture, negatively affect the cultural sensibilities of the Zimbabwean youth. They bitterly conclude that songs from particular musicians should be forbidden from airplay completely, unless and until they have something to contribute to the discourse of youth empowerment. Different from Viriri and other's study, the researcher suggest that in order to understand the reasons why Zimdancehall music make use of vulgarity there is need to analyze the vulgarity component in the genre with its own merits.

In an article, Mate (2012) argues that the songs banned to be played on airplay in 2007 expressed the youth subjectivities in social contradictions of socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. She establishes that urban grooves use humor, satire and stereotypical voices of the marginalized in publicizing the views of marginalized groups, whose opinions

are not considered. Mate postulates that the youths are driven by factors such as economic problems and unemployment, to address social and political concerns of their time. She admits that the other reason behind the nature of the youth lyrics could be seek of popularity, but to a greater extent she argues that the reality of what is happening in a society is reflected by the youth lyrics. This research subscribes to most of her arguments; however, what distinguishes hers from that of the researcher is that she studies banned urban grooves songs while the researcher examine selected Zimdancehall songs with vulgarity. Mate makes use of textual analysis while the researcher used discourse analysis and aesthetics of vulgarity as conceptual frameworks.

Many researches have largely focused on the use of vulgarity in literary works, graffiti inscriptions, politics, and in other different types musical genres. In Zimbabwe, researchers have exhausted the urban grooves genre in their studies, and currently little has been done on Zimdancehall. This research uniquely explores a grey area, which is the use of vulgarity in Zimdancehall music as an expression of power by the musicians and truth of what is happening in the society.

### **1.7 Delimitation of study**

This study is analysis of vulgarity in Zimdancehall music. The research seeks to investigate vulgarity as an expression of power and truth by musicians in the society with specific reference to selected Zimdancehall songs. The study focuses on selected songs with Shona and code-switched Shona-English lyrics. In terms of geography, the study was carried out in Zimbabwe, targeting artists in Harare and Gweru. The research was conducted from June 2015 to October 2015. A conceptual framework was used to explore vulgar as an expression of power and truth. In this qualitative research, several methods shall be used for data collection and analyses: Listening to lyrics of the songs, questionnaires, interviews, and documentary research. Thematic analysis, and discourse analysis were used for data analysis.

### **1.8 Limitations of study**

This section discusses, the challenges and measures employed to solve the challenges faced by the researcher in carrying out this study. The researcher compared the gathered data with existing literature and used telephone interviews to accommodate the respondents who were unreachable. Respondents attempted to limit the data which was needed, maybe, due to suspicion or any other reason. To rout out from this challenge, the research encouraged the

participants through convincing them that the research is for academic purpose devoid of baleful intentions. Some Zimdancehall audience were not able to answer some questionnaires adequately due to lack of knowledge of some aspects in the field therefore, many questionnaires were disseminated with the aim of collecting comprehensive data.

### **1.9 Definition of key terms**

To better understand the focus of this study, the following terms are contextually explained in this section. The terms are:

**Aesthetics** – it is used in the study to refer to the formal study of vulgarity in selected Zimdancehall songs in relation to the idea of beauty or relevance.

**Expression** – is communicating a feeling, opinion or fact using words or action in a particular situation. In this study it is used to refer to the use of vulgarity by selected Zimdancehall artists as an expression of power and truth.

**Power** – it is an organised energy or effort (Hill, 1928). In this research it can also mean the artists' systematized efforts to capture attention of the audience and to get whatever they want in the music fraternity.

**Subaltern** – in this research it is used to refer to someone with an inferior position in the society. If one is to borrow and then relate the question by Spivak (1998): “Can the subaltern speak?” to fit this study, the response would be ‘Yes’. How? ‘They can speak through use of different artistic forms, in this case vulgar in music.’

**Truth** – it is used in this study to refer to the real information or facts about different social, economic and political situations which in this study are aired in selected Zimdancehall songs with an element vulgarity.

**Vulgarity** - an aspect of being unrefined. Vulgarity, according to Ravenwood (1999) can be a powerful weapon to enforce attention and awareness of foreign realities in a middle class audience. In this research it refers to a particular vocabulary which is rude and likely to upset or anger people, especially by referring to sex and the body in an unpleasant way.

**Zimdancehall** - is a Zimbabwean subgenre of dancehall/reggae (with similarities with Jamaican convention of reggae), which grew out of the urban groove genre and mainly consists of young musicians like Winky D, Killer T, Sniper Storm, Soul Jar love, T-boy, Lady Squanda and Lady Bee. This music genre is well-known for its hard hitting lyrics which

often comprise of socio-economic commentary on different issues like unemployment, poverty and drug abuse (Pindula, 2015).

### **1.9 Dissertation layout**

This dissertation is in five chapters. The commencing chapter presents the general introduction which encompasses the area of investigation, background of study, statement of the problem, literature review, theoretical framework, data gathering and analysis techniques, population and sampling techniques and other sections. The second chapter explores the concept of vulgarity in the Shona traditional, colonial and modern society. Chapter three provides an analysis of vulgar in selected Zimdancehall songs as an expression of power by the musicians. The fourth chapter discusses themes reflected in Zimdancehall vulgar lyrics as an expression of truth of what is taking in the society. The fifth chapter provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### TRACING THE CONCEPT OF VULGARITY IN THE SHONA CULTURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter as the study's general introduction has established the research problem and its context, methodology, justification of study and all other aspects which form the footing of the whole study. This chapter traces the concept of vulgarity in the Shona culture and contextual trends in which vulgarity manifests. This chapter is structured into five expansive sections. The first section unpacks the concept of vulgarity and section 2.2 serves to provide an explanatory background on vulgarity in the Shona culture. The other three sections uncover different institutions and situations where vulgarity was and is manifesting in Shona traditional, colonial and contemporary societies. These historical and contemporaneous contexts are necessary in order to show the existence of vulgarity in the Shona society, changes which have occurred and, most importantly, its contextual aesthetics. In light of this, it is essential to look at these contexts as they will set a comprehensive background for the following chapters which have a strong link with the existence of vulgarity in the Shona society, changes which occurred in the colonial era and how vulgar is vigorously manifesting in the contemporary era in somewhat different contexts. The data in this chapter is qualitative and most relevant information used in this chapter is from secondary sources and interviews; and these were addressed making use of discourse analysis and the conceptual framework of the aesthetics of vulgarity.

#### 2.2 Unpacking the Concept Vulgarity

This section theorises the concept of vulgarity with the aim of showing that it is contextual. Vulgar is defined as “making explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions.” (Online Oxford dictionary). It can also refer to low variety of art, which are not in the style preferred by the upper classes of the society. What makes it vulgar is that terms which are considered to be unrefined would have been said in off context. If you talk of the vagina, penis, buttocks or defecation in biology, sex education or any other suitable context, it is not considered as vulgar by the hearers. However, if such terms are said at places like a soccer match, general speech, ordinary church service, literature or in music, they are now considered to be vulgar. This therefore illustrates that vulgarity is contextual since the same terms are regarded to be appropriate in one context and inappropriate in the other. A particular vocabulary is also considered to be improper because of its terms that are usually

used by people in insulting, mocking or in humiliating other individuals or institutions. More so, cultural, religious and legal considerations are also the factors which are used to say a particular vocabulary is not proper. Examples of Shona words considered to be vulgar include the following: *-sura* (fart), *-tunda* (urinate/ejaculate), *mukosho* (anus), *beche* (vagina), *mboro* (penis), *jende* (testicle), *chindori* (clitoris) and *-mama* (defecate) (Chabata and Mavhu, 2005). Notably, as argued above, although use of these terms is prohibited in public speech, they may also be used freely in appropriate circumstances.

Vulgarity in relation to speech is usually understood as an aspect of being unrefined. Vulgarity in this context refers to a particular vocabulary with an element of vulgarity or obscenity often not spoken in public which includes vulgar language, material and actions. The school of thought that sees positivity in vulgarity perceives it as being brutally honest and clear-sighted. This concurs to Mbembe's (2001) contention that vulgarity or production of obscenity must not be understood as backwardness but should be examined as an expression of power. Hence, certain individuals in a society go against the norm (vocabulary which is considered as proper) and utilize the vulgarity in their quest to acquire power or rather express the truth about a particular matter. If one could imagine a scenario in a commuter omnibus where there is verbal contestation between two or more people and one of them unexpectedly utters vulgarity vigorously or just a sound whisper, it's more than obvious that most of the passengers' attention will be caught. This, therefore, shows the power of vulgarity in capturing people's attention. Vulgarity, according to Ravenwood (1999) can be a powerful weapon to enforce attention and awareness of foreign realities in a middle class audience. Thus, censoring vulgarity in art form can be considered as killing discourse in relation to music and other art forms, the fact that vulgarity is prohibited by certain codes of law and that some artists go on against them, shows the artists' counter attack of the system to scrutinize its own vulgarity at the same time expressing power. Through art forms with outbursts of ribaldry and derision, the artists kidnap power and attention from the dominant groups and as a result much attention is given to them.

### **2.3 Vulgarity in the Shona Culture: A Background**

This section gives an explanatory background on the concept of vulgarity in the Shona culture. It looks at how vulgarity is perceived in Shona culture and changes which have taken place. The term vulgarity is equivalent to the Shona word *zvinyadzi* in plural. In the Shona culture, it is considered taboo to utter vulgar language in public. Through Shona idioms, like

*chidembo hachivhiirwi pane vanhu* (you cannot skin a skunk in public) which implies that secrets or private matters which are supposed to be confined to a peculiar context ought not to be divulged in public; everyone knew that vulgarity was not supposed to be spoken in public. Many prohibitions prevented direct utterance of vulgarity and confrontations between individuals in the society. In this regard, Chiwome (1987:49) elucidates that, in Shona society, “you cannot plainly say what you want to say. You have to dress it up in art. You can say a proverb, or wait for an occasion to sing it in a song.” Due to these ethics of averting direct utterance of vulgar terms and verbal war, criticisms were traditionally permitted to be conveyed or expressed through the arts. Thus, vulgarity wasn’t uttered as per will, but people waited for the right occasion to speak it though socially sanctioned arts like the *jakwara* (grain threshing party), where lewdness and ribaldry predominated. The other contexts are discussed under the subheadings below.

However, in the contemporary society, especially in urban areas, use of vulgar or obscene language in communicating to one another seems to be the norm. Mancuveni (2011) substantiate this view as she notes that in townships, the highly valued principles of respect of the Shona culture are now being lost. Individuals of different sexual categories and age groups, when they come together, make use of vulgar phrases and words in communication in different contexts. The changes in the colonial era are some of influential factors of this rampant utterance of vulgarity and art in both the private and the hidden spheres is explained in section 2.4. Bourdillon (1993) asserts that certain language and vocabulary adjust to fit a particular environment. Therefore, vulgar language is common in the contemporary society because of the life style (violence, alcoholism and prostitution) in the township (Velt-Wild, 1992b). Basing on what has been uncovered in the preceding section, the researcher refutes Mancuveni’s notion that “Shona culture has no vocabulary for vulgar language”. Vulgar vocabulary existed and still exists; however it is not supposed to be uttered in public, but at special occasions it manifests. This is substantially discussed in the sections below.

Nowadays, owing to different situations and changes which the Zimbabweans have encountered, due to colonialism, urbanisation and negative effects of globalisation, vulgarity now seems to be a common component manifesting in different art forms. The vulgar discourses can be interpreted to be reasonable aesthetic, stand-in as an expression of power and truth. As expounded by Mbembe (2001a), this would explain the new structure which characterises modernity. Scott (1990) considers that vulgarity as the subaltern’s hidden transcript. This, however, must not stand as absolute exception for the use of vulgarity. The

major quest is that, as vulgarity is vigorously manifesting, there is need for an in-depth study of the art forms in which it manifests in order to uncover the mystery behind its use.

It has been argued in this section with a simple background check that vulgar exists in the Shona culture; it is confined to peculiar spheres and it is offensive in off contexts. The changes which contributed to its vigorous outburst in public art form have been explained in brief and are further discussed in the sections below. The next sections explore the aesthetics of vulgarity in different contexts of the Shona society tracing it from traditional, colonial and contemporary epochs.

## **2.4 Vulgarity in the Traditional Shona Society**

This section discusses the expressionism of vulgarity in the traditional Shona society. This will be done exploring different contexts in which it existed. It is in this society where the spirit of communalism dominated. There were societal norms and values which were put in place to censor art forms and peoples' speech. Unrefined vocabulary was not uttered anyhow, but they were specific events where vulgarity or obscene terms manifested, not in an abusive way, but rather a socially sanctioned approach. This section is a broad section which carries six sub-sections representing vulgar vocabulary which was used in the society in question. These include grain threshing parties, bedroom poetry, *chiramu*, invective, in masculine discourse and sex education for both girls and boys. These will be explored and analysed in consideration of the tenets of discourse analysis and of aesthetics of vulgarity.

### **2.4.1 Lewdness and ribaldry at grain threshing party (*jakwara*)**

This sub-section discusses the expressionism of vulgarity at grain threshing parties (*jakwara*), which avail one of the contexts in which vulgar speech was permitted. Chiwome (1992) asserts that ribaldry and lewdness are the components which characterise the *jakwara* songs and these are distinctive elements found in the songs of the Shona society. In supplementing this view, Mazuruse (2010) notes that these parties allowed free verbal expressions and as a result this provided humour, aggression and criticism in a way that helped to manage harvest season stress. This provided a platform where provocative reality like one's greediness or laziness was derided. This demonstrates the contextual beauty of vulgar speech in the grain threshing parties.

The first interviewee, who is a doctor in the Department of African Languages, in his comments on the purpose of vulgarity in the Shona society said that:

Various art forms such as poems and songs with the vocabulary that refers to sexual encounters in a discourteous but humorous manner were part of the art forms which made the grain threshing gathering exciting. ... It wasn't just vulgarity in art for vulgarism's sake, but was a vehicle in which criticism and protests were brought about in social construction. It is said to be an event which one would never want to miss.

This illustrates that the utterance of vulgar vocabulary at a flexible environment like the *jakwara* (grain threshing party) enabled people to discuss some pertinent issues in reconstructing the values of their society. Following is a fascinating example of the Karanga *jakwara* song which was sung in Chivi District around 1960s (cited in Chiwome, 1992):

*Chimboroi?*  
*Chandanonga muguyo?*  
*Chimboroi?*

(What type of penis is this?  
That I picked up under the grinding stone.  
What type of penis is this?)

This song, besides being a *jakwara* (grain threshing party) song is part of the songs of women's private discourse. Publicly, the truth about women's sexual dissatisfaction was disclosed. The *jakwara* naturalised the power relations between men and women through free verbal utterances. Everyone had freedom to utter vulgarity or poke anyone present without restricted by patriarchal structural power. Although, women were cultured to appreciate any size of their partners, this song illustrates the truth that in private spheres women had the tongue to question some societal odds. The private discourses like this are what Scott (1999) considers as the hidden transcript. Thus, through songs like this the reality or truth was expressed; and Chiwome (1992) finds such expression at the grain threshing party as a therapeutic process. Examples of such songs which have vulgar or sexually expressive words include "*kurunga munya.*"

Furthermore, such songs help people who are burdened with secrets and with rebellious and even vindictive feelings to express them in a controlled manner while engaging in an economic productive activity (Chiwome, 1992). Every criticism was supposed to be left at the grain-threshing party and never brought up again (Kabweza, 1979). Mbele (1989) sees the *jakwara* songs as protest songs which originated in the labour which were developed as complains regarding communal vices and other societal injustices. Henceforth, it is arguable that the *jakwara* songs were a powerful weapon which the society made use of in exposing and criticising immoral behaviour.

It has been ascertained by the researcher in this section that vulgarity in speech and in lyrics of the *jakwara* songs was a powerful tool of boosting the workers' morale and managing stress from the work as it provided humour and entertainment. It also expressed power as art forms which protested against bad societal behaviours. Through that protest, the truth of what was taking place in the society was also reflected and dealt with.

#### **2.4.2 Thought-provoking vulgarity in *madanha nezvireverere* (lovers' bedroom poetry)**

Section 2.4.1 has discussed the aesthetics of vulgarity in speech and songs sung at grain threshing gatherings. This section examines the contextual relevance of vulgarity in lover's bedroom poetry under the blanket. In comparison with other art forms, this bedroom poetry has extreme vulgarity. Among these lovers' poetry under the blanket, are *madanha* (recited by wives to their husbands) and *zvireverere* (recited by husbands to their wives). How power and truth is expressed in this discourse is discussed citing examples from the bedroom poetry.

In reciting bedroom poetry, the chief determination was for the husband and wife to show gratitude to one other for the inordinate job completed in the blankets (Chigidi (1988). Makaudze (2015) contend that the process had to be done in a place far away from children's sight and ears as it was so dramatic, therefore, the father and mother's bedroom, usually, was away from that of children. This was done with the aim of making sure that children would not be exposed to the sexual activity and language before they matured. The obscenity in the bedroom discourse had the purpose of stimulating the sexual thoughts and feelings for both partners to enjoy the sexual encounter (Dhliwayo, 2007). This was a reality time where partners had an opportunity to comment or praise the functions of the private parts in a vocabulary which they cannot freely utter out of this context. All truth about the pleasure of sex and appreciation was expressed while partners were in an ecstatic state.

Through poems which had explicit vulgar or sexually suggestive, the masculinity of men and femininity of women was embraced. Such poems, according to Shire (1994), describe body parts, sexual desire, sensation and events using figurative speech. It was from this excitement and praises that some differences between the partners were invalidated. The poetry in this context was less euphemistic and some vulgar words like *machende* (testicles) and *matinji* (clitoris) which were uttered here were not supposed to be uttered in public.

A typical example of such poems is that of a man of the *Ngara* (porcupine) totem's penis which was equated to an extremely sharp and rampant arrow which penetrates through

obstacles which are not possible. Such poems reflect the power of masculinity in the Shona society (Shire, 1994). Another example is of the *Hungwe* (bird) men's masculinity is also celebrated in the vocabulary which is considered to be shameful in everyday communication. However, "...there is nothing shameful about that language when it is used to praise *Shiri* men for their sexuality" (Shire, 1994). Shire (ibid) further gives examples of vulgar phrases like "*machende eshumba...muranda wemheche* ('lion's testicles...slave to the vagina')." This shows the power of love making in neutralising the power relations between men and women. The power of male sexuality is expressed through their testicles which are equated to those of lions. However, the phrase '*muranda wemheche*' illustrates the truth about some men's subjectivity to women due to their need for sex. Therefore the truth on the centrality of sexual intercourse in naturalising power relations between men and women is expressed. Shire further argues that although both testicles and vagina are considered to be vulgar words in everyday language, it's not considered as crude or obscene when these men are praised or praise themselves. This shows that language which is sexually explicit and related performances are part of Shona culture, as the traditional lovers' discourse under the blanket discussed above shows. Thus, vulgarity in the private sphere has been shown to have been prevalent in Shona pre-colonial era.

It has been discussed in this section that the extreme vulgarity in bedroom poetry was meant for making, making love exciting and enabled the partners to thank and encourage each other for the job well-done. It was also ascertained that this activity neutralised the gender power relations and enables some enwinding disputes between the partners to be implicitly done away with.

#### **2.4.3 Jocular vulgarity in *chiramu***

Section 2.4.2 has explored lover's bedroom poetry discussing the aesthetics of vulgar vocabulary in it. This discourse under the blanket is closely related to the vulgarity used in *chiramu*. Therefore, this section serves to examine the expressionism of jocular vulgarity in *chiramu* which was both verbally, but restricted action. Hodza (1984) defines *Chiramu* as a joking relationship between *varamu* (a husband and his wife's sisters, his wife's brother's sisters and his brothers' wives). This style of joking is called *kunemerana* (lampooning each other). It was usually accompanied by *mabimbiri* (horseplay).

Sometime the *varamu* uttered obscene vocabulary, but it was not supposed to be heard by others outside that context (Hodza, 1984:56). It was through this light vulgar speech that the

*varamu* (in-laws) uttered truth in counselling one another's behaviour in a jocular manner. This vulgarity was also intended to create a close relationship between the *varamu*. This was a vehicle in which the *babamukuru* used to cultivate sexual imagination in his wife's younger sisters. Gwandure (2012) in support of this asserts that the *babamukuru*'s role as a traditional model of a good husband was to impart his *muramu* (sister-in-law) with knowledge of becoming a respectable woman that every man will desire to marry. Therefore, the truth was uttered through *kunemerana*. For instance, the truth would be about one's hygiene, bad behaviour and so on. In action, they also playfully pinched each other.

Through this discourse, the uncle was able to culture the young woman to resist being fondled by strangers. This verbal contact helped the girl directly or indirectly changed herself-handling and other areas which needed improvement. This is how the truth about, self-handling, relationships and marriage life was revealed and relevantly helped the young women. In expressionism of truth, the relationship was not lop-sided. The younger sister-in-law also freely counselled her *babamukuru* on how he handled her sister even sexually. This confirms what Mbembe (2001) describes as the beauty of vulgarity.

It has been ascertained through examining the vulgarity in *chiramu* that vulgarity used in speech and actions in this discourse was meant for imparting young women with knowledge of sexual fantasy and cultivating them to becoming respectable women. Henceforth, jocular vulgarity in *chiramu* was contextually relevant.

#### **2.4.4 Vulgarity in invective (*mavingu*)**

This section serves to make an analysis of the expressionism of vulgar vocabulary in invective (*mavingu*). This is done drawing relevant examples from data collected from interviews barked by that from secondary sources. The major arguments are reached through adhering to the aesthetics of vulgarity which is the informative conceptual framework in this study. As it has been argued, use of unrefined vocabulary in public spheres was a taboo in the Shona society. Although vices of censoring speech existed, in rare cases, vulgarity was used by paternal aunts and sometimes parents in dealing with a teenagers' bad behaviour. In different societies there are some well-known individuals who are feared due to their tongues which do not hesitate to release vulgar words. This is how they express power and enforce people's attention on themselves.



Hodza (1984) describes invective (*mavingu*) in Shona traditional setting as usage of angry words or phrases among people or parents and the offending person or child. The vulgarity which sometimes popped out in this confrontation was used as a powerful tool in addressing an outlaw of what is not expected of him or her. Interviewee 2, who is a publishing manager of a book publishing company, gave the following examples in citation of vulgarity in invective (*mavingu*):

...For example, a parent would say to a disobedient boy, '*Unofunga kuti zvawarembedza mabhora sebhuru munhembe dzako, wotoita zvawada pano.*'

(You think you can do whatever you want here because you now have big testicles like that of a bull in your pants).

This illustrates that a demanding verbal warning specifying the consequences of the disobedient boy's doings was uttered where necessary with crude vocabulary. This illustrates that power in vulgar speech was made use of in expressing the power of the parent or an elder member in the society in addressing the truth of different matters. However, such counselling with explicit words popped up in serious and rare cases. Interviewee 2, from his personal experience, further gave another typical examples of vulgar speech directed towards girls with wild behaviour are as follows:

*Tichikura wainzwa mhai vabatirwa nehasha vachiraira hanzvadzi dzangu vachiti: 'Unofunga kuti zvawave netwumazamu twakamira tave zera rimwe. Pamwe wainzwa voti "Gara zvakanaka! Uri kuda kutaridza ani zviripakati pemakumbo ako ane basa nazvo!*

(When we were growing up, you would hear mother counselling my sisters in an angry manner saying: 'You think because now you have little pointed breasts, we are now the same age. In other cases, I would hear her saying: 'Sit properly! Whom do you want to show what's between your legs who is interested!')

This shows that this was usually uttered by mothers or aunties when addressing of a girl who thought that she was now too big to be told what to do. With reference to the statement of sitting properly, in the traditional Shona context, from childhood girls were taught to always sit cross-legged so as not to expose their private parts in front of male members; if a girl sat careless, she was chided (Chiwome 1996). This is substantiated by Makaudze (2015) who argues that among the Shona, one was not allowed to see the naked body of members of the opposite sex unless they were married. Therefore, the purpose of vulgarity in invective, in this case, was to enforce the societal expectations of female members. Vulgar words gave power to the addresser over the addressee. The effect of this was that, after the culprit had a sudden surprise of addressed with unrefined words by adults felt shy and shameful of his or her bad doings and wished to repent, thus the objective of use of vulgarity in this context will

have been attained. Henceforth, this illustrates the power of the addresser attained from vulgar discourse in invective (*mavingu*).

Basing on what has been discussed in this section, it has been ascertained that vulgar vocabulary in invective (*mavingu*) is arguably an expression of power of the addresser over the addressee. In its significance, it served as a rare discourse which vehicle serious verbal counselling and protests to enforce behavioural change. It was also meant to conscientize young ones to adhere to societal behavioural expectations.

#### **2.4.6 Vulgarity in sex education of girls and boys**

This section looks at vulgarity in sex education. It examines the objective in the use vulgar vocabulary in offering girls' and boys' sex education. It is demonstrated in this section that the language used in sex education was not euphemistic but explicit since it described private parts of the human body and their function. It was approached in this way in order to reflect the truth about sexual matters.

In the traditional Shona society, nephews and nieces were taught sex education by uncles (maternal uncles) and aunts from the father's side that is in patrilineal family settings. The girl's aunty (*vatete*) had the role to educate her, first and foremost, about her self-hygiene and how it was to be a woman. Towards marriage, the young women were also extensively taught skills of handling and "sexually satisfying" men in bed (Gwandure, 2009). This is the same for mature boys, the maternal uncles had the role to offer sex education to them. This is supported by Kabweza (1979) who contends that the uncle also taught the man bedroom activities. More so, Shire (1994) further identifies the *dare* (male's court) as a space which enabled men to exchange experiences and also to learn about ways of making love with women. It was in these settings that the elder boys together with the uncle were free to use the restricted vocabulary, vulgar language. Thus, vulgar discourse was used to express the truth.

Accordingly, if one tries to put oneself in the aunt's or uncle's shoes, it is arguable that there can be difficulties which they can be faced with in trying to talk about issues of sex without sounding vulgar. There was no euphemism in sex education since it is a delicate matter which needs explicit to address the truth inclined in sex expectations. Inasmuch as the uncles and aunts avoided teaching the adolescence about sex issues with extremely vulgar words, they had no choice since direct language enables one to express oneself better.

Kabweza (1979) notes that the aunts in the Shona society were not shy to talk about issues of sexual intercourse as experience taught them that men had a habit of ignoring their wives who were not able to satisfy them sexually and would opt for extra-marital affairs. The aunty also educated the girls on how to behave during sex not to be just rigid like a dry log. Therefore, girls were equipped with the knowledge and skills of sexually satisfying their husbands.

In the Karanga communities the words like *mugoti* and *huyo* were used to refer to the phallus. The Great Zimbabwe museum shows typical examples of phallic objects used by the elder women to teach girls about issues of sex. The Zimbabwe Literature Bureau (1976) cited by Gwandure (2009) notes that girls were also taught sex poetry and songs that are recited or sung as poems. The girl took the teasing from the aunt or her friends seriously and made efforts to improve her body structure through use of medicinal plants. It was through these discourses that reality was expressed for the benefit of social sustainability. Sex education has a preparatory life lessons, so important truths of sex in marriage were directly discussed. For instance, Interviewee 2 in his comments about sex education said that aunties would tell the girls that: “*Hakuna murume anoda mukadzi ndonda pabonde*” (No man who will love a woman who is weak in bed). Such truths about expectations of husbands from wives motivated the girls to acquire necessary skills so as to be good wives to their husbands. On the part of men, some men made use of medicinal plants to enlarge their phalluses so as to... Shire (1994) gives an example of fruits from *mumvee* tree which is used by the Karanga men for penis enlargement.

This section has examined the elements of vulgarity in sex education. It has been ascertained that sex education was explicit not euphemistic since it was a delicate issue which involved description of private body parts and their function. It was also through the vulgar vocabulary that the truth about sex was reflected, how sex was used as a powerful tool of control between married partners and the sex discourse as an expression of power inclined in gender. With much having been discussed about vulgarity in relation to power and truth in the pre-colonial society, there need to discuss what happened to vulgar discourses on the colonial era due to the introduction of different cultural institutions.

## **2.5 VULGARITY IN THE SHONA CULTURE AND MORDENISATION**

Given that the place of vulgarity has been ascertained and its contextual spheres has been examined in the pre-colonial Shona society, this section traces different changes which took

place in the colonial era which extinguished art forms with vulgar words which expressed power and truth. This section discusses how the Shona traditional institutions were deconstructed through colonial institutions and ideology such as the church, the school and various policies. It also explains how vulgar vocabulary managed to survive as hidden transcripts and how it was therapeutic in the liberation struggle of Zimbabwean.

Colonial Christianity is of the colonial structures which were used to deconstruct the Shona people from their culture. The missionaries wanted to convert Africans into Christianity and it was a process of gain and loss. Through being initiated into a new religion and culture, the Africans slowly lost their own religion and culture. Colonial missionaries misconstrued entirely the full picture behind different Shona customs and denounced them. The new religion which was imparted on the Shona people and Africans as a whole was so dogmatic that it was not to be questioned. Ngugi in *The River Between* illustrates that the introduction of Christianity divided the people as some were fished out from their culture and some stood radically unshaken. However, Sykes (1902-05) cited by Zvobgo (1986), notes that “You cannot uproot in a day from the life of a nation what is part of that national life.” Hence, this shows that it the defeat and displacement of Shona traditional customs was slow. The context like adolescence’ sex education, the *jakwara* were suppressed and formal education was introduced. Colonial education distanced children from their society and ideologically brain-washed their mind to do away with their cultural practices.

Furthermore, it has been discussed in Section 2.3 that in the Shona society they were vices which censored direct utterance of vulgar vocabulary in public. These vices were weakened through the advent of colonialism which was a thorough-going process. As a result, vulgar vocabulary was now found in off contexts. The *jakwara* discourse was sustained as its art forms were existent at different labour gatherings such as road construction, white settlers’ farms. Bigo (1989) in his discussion on vulgarity on art forms of the slaved black Americans, he stresses that vulgar terms were used by the subjected to insult their oppressors. This can be argued to be the same in the Shona society. Thus, this is how the invective (*mavingu*) survived.

The colonialists also furthered their own ideology through administrative structures such as acts like Censorship and Entertainment Control Act of 1967 which banned different forms of art. Such laws greatly affected the beauty and relevance of vulgarity in different contexts and

art form. This led art forms to be formalistic, ahistorical, apolitical and divorced from the people's culture. These factors created individuals who were now culturally alienated.

Though different art forms were suppressed, aesthetic vulgarity utilization was maintained in private transcripts. A typical example of this is in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle where vulgarity had a therapeutic purpose. Mayowe (2014) notes that poems full of vulgar words were recited by comrades from Chipinge in their interesting accent. A typical example is the poem below, cited by Mayowe (2014):

*Ndinobva kwaBudji, kwaMukupe!  
Kune zvisikana zvakasecha...  
Zvinobika sadza namazamu, matako achiteketa...*

(I come from Budji, Mukupe!  
Where there are little girls, short like zvikwari  
Who use breasts to prepare sadza, while buttocks are shaking)

This poem makes use of some explicit words. The truth of how men view, appreciate or despise body sizes and shapes of women is expressed. Such words were to provide laughter to the comrades who were in harsh conditions in guerrilla camps during the liberation struggle. Vulgarity in jokes, songs, poems and other art forms during this era were relevantly utilized as they served to entertain and for mind therapeutic purposes. This concurs to Chiwome's (1992) contention of the therapeutic nature of traditional poetry. Thus, vulgarity in such context was sustained and relevantly utilized.

It has been discussed in this section that different traditional institutions were vulgar in speech had its aesthetics were suppressed through colonial structures such as colonial Christianity, education and policies. It was however ascertained that it was able to be concealed in the hidden transcript where it manifested.

## **2.6 VULGARITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY SHONA SOCIETY**

The preceding section has examined the changes which took place in the colonial era which resulted in the deconstruction of institutions which had contextual aesthetics of vulgarity as an expression of power and truth. It has also been discussed how vulgar speech was existent in the hidden transcript during that era. Evidently, the events during the colonial period together with modern factors such as globalisation shape the vulgarity in the contemporary society. This section discusses different situations, occasions, and platforms where vulgarity manifests in the contemporary Shona society. The discussion is informed by the concept of

aesthetics of vulgarity, suiting it in different contexts in which vulgar vocabulary manifests. The section will discuss the aesthetics of vulgarity in kitchen parties, church meetings, graffiti inscriptions, soccer stadium, social media and music. Other places not discussed in this section where vulgar is expressed include the bachelor's party, baby shower, baby welcome, flea markets, in streets and bear halls.

### **2.6.1 Vulgarity at kitchen parties**

One of the places where vulgarity in speech manifests in the modern era is at women's kitchen parties. The expressionism of vulgar speech in this event is discussed in this section in relation to its expression of power and truth. Most information used in this section was sourced from an interview and using desk research. Kitchen parties are in-house gatherings exclusively hosted by women for younger women before marriage or birth of a baby to offer them advice on married life (Thabethe, 2008). Women came with presents, usually kitchen utensils, for the new women which she would use in her new life.

In urban societies, usually mature women are the teachers who use their experience to teach young women sex education (Thabethe, 2008). Data from interviewees show that experienced sex-workers are also now being hired to teach both young and middle aged women sexual matters and receive payment after doing this work. In such contexts, women are taught different sex positions and to be flexible during the act. Interviewee 3 noted that these positions include “*kuigarira*” (the women will be on top), “*kuifongorera*” (bending down), “*kupepetu murume*” (man on top and woman is supposed to move accordingly with the man's body). Thabethe (2008) notes that one of the reasons men engage in extra-marital affairs is because of women's failure to satisfy them sexually. This explains the rising need for women to share and acquire skills to perform bedroom duties through kitchen parties. It is said that after the party, a woman is said to have acquired skills that would cause a man to literally scream in bed with pleasure.

The primary source in this part was a female interviewee, who proudly described herself as a professional prostitute and her information is relevant in this section as she is regularly invited at various places to provide sex education services at kitchen parties. In giving a description of the events at the kitchen party she says:

*Zvinyadzi zvinotaurwa sezvazviri, zvikuru patinenge tichitaura nyaya dzepabonde kumusikana achangobva kuroorwa. Zvinyadzi zvinotaurwa nechinangwa chekuda kubvisa nyadzi pamukadzi kuitira kuti asazovhunduke nokutadza kuita basa rapabonde.*

(Direct Shona obscene terms are spoken as they are, and mostly used when we will be talking about bedroom issues to a newly-married woman. Vulgarity will be brought into play with the intention of taking away the young women's shyness towards discussing bedroom issues so as to prevent her from shock or surprise and failure to perform bedroom duties.)

At such parties, a banana or a cucumber symbolizes the phallic. It was discovered from this interview that bananas or cucumbers will be exemplified as different sizes of men's penises. These are played with illustrating what a woman should do before sex calling the actual organ names like *ihombe* (it's big), *inonaka* (it is sweet) in order to raise a man's emotions for him to be ready for sex. They are taught how a woman should react during the sexual intercourse; like crying a soft cry (*kuchemerera* in Shona) as a way of showing that she is appreciating the process. A man too is supposed to respond doing a groaning-like sound (*kugomerera* in Shona) to show that he too is also enjoying.

The traditional Shona sex education institution is indigenized in kitchen parties which is a modern institution. It changed from being issued by aunts from the father's side to external women or hired professionals. In both eras, the truth about marriage situation and sex skills is said and it is also a sphere in which women will be in total control and their power will be expressed. This confirms to what Scott (1990) says as he sees the private sphere as a platform in which the power of the subalterns is expressed. The speech which women cannot say in front of men is freely said in kitchen parties. With total freedom to utter vulgar speech and discuss sex issues in this sphere, women express their power on how they conquer men psychologically and physically through sex. In kitchen parties, the role of a man as the head of the family is appreciated while a woman is celebrated as a queen and closest influencer of that man. Thus, it shows that some decisions which men pass where they reign are as a result of bedroom politics.

It is through these parties that women are conscientized of their power to control men sexually. Women express their power in this private environment through freely uttering vulgar vocabulary. The truth of sex as a need is also reflected and different marital situations are exemplified and solutions are given. Women are taught that they should sexually satisfy their husbands so as to prevent them from going for extra-marital affairs. Through vulgar speech, sex is resented as a sustainable measure of guarding against marriage breakdowns due to extra-marital affairs.

It has been discussed in this section that the discourse of the kitchen parties provides women an opportunity to teach young women sex education. It is in this private discourse where women express their power and some conceived truths.

### 2.6.2 Vulgar in church meetings

Typical church meetings are now some of the events which vulgar speech is manifesting. This section explores vulgar vocabulary in church meetings with the mandate of examining its expressionism in relation to power and truth. Sermons with components of vulgarity from preachers such as Pastor Kapandure, Mai Gunguwo and Mai Chitauro are used to exemplify this trait. It is evident from these preachers that a number of preachers at special occasions like evangelism sermons and women's conferences are making use of extreme verbal vulgarity in addressing congregants.

The first typical example of a preacher who uses extreme vulgar in his sermons is Pastor Kaps (Kapandure) from ZAOGA. In one of his brush sermons against prostitution, he stipulated that "the just shall live by faith not by condom", therefore, advocating self-control of sexual desires. He makes use of words which Chabata and Mavhu (2005) consider as obscene such as *chisuro*, *dhodhi*, *magaro* and *zamu*. Below are some paragraphed sentences the researcher picked up randomly from one of his Shona sermons:

*Toda vakadzi vakatendeka, vane magaro anokosha, anoudzwa magaro kuti iri rinobatwa naPeter wandakachata naye kwete wese wese! ...Chaungatidadire nacho kuti ndave nenyowani rine magaro acho sevheni haikona tuu... Apa uri kufira make-up yaiswa kumeso; iko kwacho hakuiswi make-up, hakuiswi foundation. ... Hure racho rine mangani? Mazamu!*

(We want faithful women, with precious buttocks, who tell their buttocks that this one will be touched by Peter whom I have wedded with not anyone else! **[Directed to women]**... You have nothing to boast with saying I have now a new woman with seven buttocks not two... You will only be dying for make-up on her face; no foundation is put on the vagina. ...How many does that prostitute have? Breasts!) **[Directed to men]**

The preacher makes use of vulgar words in addressing both men and women in an evangelical church sermon. His use of vulgarity can be argued that it stands demonstrate the preacher's radical approach towards ending societal immoralities such as unfaithfulness in marital unions and prostitution. Makaudze (2009) reports rampant prostitution and extra marital affairs in the modern era as a result of socio-economic issues in Zimbabwe. Henceforth, Kapandure is not shy to make use of obscene words in addressing a church congregation in showing the seriousness of his message. This confirms to Ravenword's (1999) notion that vulgar speech can be used to address concrete reality. In this case, the truth



about prostitution and extra-marital affairs is expressed in these vulgar sermons. Thus, modern preachers use the power of vulgarity in addressing pertinent issues which cause different problems in the lives of married Christian couples. It is also used as an evangelism tool in protesting against bad behaviour such as prostitution, lust and adultery. Hence, this reveals the expression of authoritative power by church preachers and the power of vulgarity in expressing the truth about immoral activities which is now extensive in the country.

However, although his use of vulgar vocabulary can be said to be an expression of power and truth, the context in which it is uttered is not the right place for explicit vulgar. Although it can be argued to be an initiative of indigenising Christianity with reconstructing Shona traditional institutions where vulgar speech manifested, the indigenisation aspect of it is lost since it is brought into play in a spiritual contexts and congregations where children would be present. This creates a negative picture of the church.

Furthermore, Mai Gungowo from Eternal Life Ministries and Mai Chitauro from ZAOGA, are yet other calibre of this new breed of preachers. Mai Gungowo, in one of her special editions on bedroom matters, “calls a spade a spade” (Mazara, 2012). This is more or less the same in the case of Mai Chitauro. In both sermons by these two female preachers, they spoke words like *matinji* (clitoris), *kumama* (to discharge faeces), *duzvi* or *dhodhi* (faeces) and *kukwirwa* (to be mounted). What they preach is akin to the discourse of sex education in the pre-colonial era and modern kitchen parties. Mazara observes that Mai Gungowo, preaches to her congregation, mostly women, that they must work hard, in their individual bedrooms, to satisfy their husbands, as much as satisfying their Lord.

Bedroom issues have largely remained a taboo in the Shona culture in that they are not supposed discussed in public, but Mai Gungowo’s sermons address issues that the society in question considers taboo, things that are perceived as shameful. She recommends that young women, when married, should be well-equipped with blessed and rich sexual thoughts in entering their bedrooms and not with sex toys. Through her sermons, Mai Gungowo expresses the truth of what is happening in some lives of married Christians. This is so since Mazara (2012) notes that her sermons are as a result of years she has spent as a pastor’s wife, counseling many couples who usually come to them, and not surprisingly, utmost all of their challenges seemed to be universal, sexual boredom. Mazara (2012) cites The Sunday Mail which suggests that due to the popularity of her sermons, “it could be a question of time before she hosts a radio show, or TV show, only that the slot has to be late night

listening/viewing.” However, these women can find criticism for encouraging women to behave like prostitutes and to be slaves of men. In particular, Mai Gunguwo is criticized by women with feminist notion first for using extreme vulgar words and for encouraging the marginalization of women as sex object or commodities which are who must perform sexual duties since they are purchased though bride price (*roora*) (Mazara, 2012).

This section has discussed how reality or truth is expressed in church sermons. Vulgar vocabulary has been discovered to be a tool in which the preachers express power, at the same time constructing reality. The church has also been discovered as an institution which is going through a process of indigenization.

### **2.6.3 Vulgarity on graffiti inscriptions**

This section looks at graffiti inscriptions which is one of the platforms in which vulgarity is very prevalent. Young (2009) describes graffiti inscriptions as institutionally illicit marks, made on walls (like dura-walls and toilet walls) or other surfaces where by an individual or individuals make an effort to create some sort of lucid composition, usually accessible to the public. In this section, the researcher examines vulgar graffiti inscriptions with regards to reflections of power and truth. Mangeya (2014) argues that these inscriptions reflect societal conventions and people as social beings, form graffiti inscriptions and consequently its communicative functions.

Among other graffiti inscriptions, Mangeya (2014) analyses sexuality graffiti in male and female toilets written in extreme vulgar. An example of graffiti he photographed from female toilets is a follows:

*Munotengesa [rubbed off] futseke amunyari mhata dzenyu dzavhurwa nemawindi amusi mavirgin munodada stereki*

(You sell [rubbed off] you are not ashamed. Your vaginas were opened by touts. You are too proud [for nothing])

The inscription illustrates societal notions of virginity. In Mangeya’s (2014) interpretation of this inscription, he stresses that it displays that students regard virginity as a symbol of cultural and spiritual purity as well as a source of power amongst the group. In confirming to aesthetic of vulgarity, it is evident from the above example that various graffiti inscriptions provide discursive platforms for the production of reality of social issues. Mangeya (ibid) argues that street protests through vulgar graffiti inscriptions disclose how power is omnipresent in the society; implying that power can never be absolutely entrusted into the

hands of particular people, or institutions. Therefore, graffiti inscriptions as a medium or peculiar discourse are crucial in power and ideological contestations.

However, the individuals who mark these graffiti inscriptions express their social indecency or disorder. Rosewarne (2004), from a feministic perspective, dismisses vulgar graffiti as street harassment and part of antisocial behaviours which largely belittles women. Even though vulgar graffiti inscriptions may be argued to be an expression of power of anonymous writers and construction of societal realities, it has its negative effects.

#### **2.6.4 The Soccer stadium as a theatre of vulgar language**

This section explores the aesthetics of vulgarity in discourses of the soccer stadium. Soccer stadiums are notably some of the platforms which are characteristically full of vulgarity, especially songs and utterances at the terraces. Vulgar lyrics are also evidently found in songs sung by both male and female supporters, but mostly male, at high school sport activities and national soccer games. After an encounter with youths during a local sporting activity, the researcher heard a number of songs with vulgar lyrics. What they chanted during the sporting activity was psychological in that it was an act of motivating the team they supported while demoralising the opposite team. Examples of songs which they sang include ‘Naume’ in which they sing “*Ndakakutaurira, Naume kuti rega kurohwa nyoro*”; in the song ‘*Mwana haana kukwana*’ the singers dropped obscene phrases like “*simudza gumbo tiise danda nyoro.*” The popular slogans corrupt the ‘Toyi toyi’ slogan or any other popular song or saying with vulgar lyrics. There is no doubt that they will be having the best of their time.

Ncube (2014) argues that “on the terraces, power is exchanged, lost, stolen, recovered, regained and shared.” Kaminju and Ndlovu (2011) argue that cultural institutions such as soccer have mostly been viewed as male spheres which permit men to express their thoughts at the same time sharing out some hidden ‘truths’ (Ncube, 2014). In a broader view, the humour of Zimbabwean stadiums is usually obscene. This is supported by Daimon (2010) who sees the soccer stadium as “...a theatre of vulgar language, insults and repugnant songs.”

Ncube (2014) contends that at public spheres such as stadiums, women essentially mimic prejudices perpetrated on them through the *gumbura* dance. This confirms to the Gramscian terms in which he consider popular culture as a site of struggle between the dominant and dominated groups. In this case, it will be women against men. However, the obscene discourse at soccer stadiums are criticised as a degradation of female sexual anatomy. With

reference to the word ‘hure’ shouted by fans when the ball is entering the net, Daimon interprets that it is “...symbolic of a prostitute being penetrated during sexual intercourse.”

This part has ascertained that the vulgar uttered at soccer stadiums is a psychological process, made use of in supporting the sided team and mocking the opponents. It has also been examined that it is a platform for expression of power and truth. It also provides a theatre for power contestations.

### **2.6.5 Vulgarity on social media/social networking sites**

This section looks at expressionism of vulgarity on social media. Social networking sites are social communication platforms which include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest and WhatsApp. Chiyadzwa and Dube (2014) assert that it is through private spheres such as mobile phones and internet-connected computers, the usually shunned vulgar language is activated or stimulated. They particularly identified two Facebook groups which they sampled in their research, that is, “*Zvemubedroom*” and “*Kuisana nekunakirana chete*.” In scrolling down these pages, it is evident that these virtual platforms are spaces where people in need of relationships post, seeking partners, advise and counselling ranging from bedroom sexual techniques and skills to dealing with mundane domestic dispute cases.

*Zvemubedroom*, is said to have more than twenty thousand fans, while *Kuisana nekunakirana chete* has more than ten thousand fans. These platforms are said to be exposing the participants’ true lustful, adulterous-minded attributes. Chiyadzwa and Dube (2014) shun the language being utilised by participants in *Zvemubedroom* and *Kuisana nekunakirana chete* virtual platforms as erosive to the *Shona* people’s cultural expectations as it is obscene, lucid vulgar. Some vulgar terms which the researcher randomly picked from statements used on these platforms include *beche* (vagina), *mboro* (penis) and *matako* (buttocks). These elements of vulgarity existed in the *Shona* society in discussing such issues. However, the differences are now in the contexts of manifestation of these elements. The problem here is that it popping out in public sphere which might negatively influence the behaviour of children who may access these pages.

Besides these Facebook performs, vulgar is also evident in WhatsApp groups. WhatApp provides a vehicle in which obscene word, phrases, pictures, music and videos are quickly disseminated. Due to the fact that most of these platforms have shifted from face-to-face communication, friends, groups and many people are enabled to utter whatever they deem

necessary. Through these sites, one can mock those in authority with vulgar words and the expression goes unpunished. This illustrates that some ugly political and socio-economic issues can be deliberated on these hidden platforms. The Baba Jukwa Facebook page is a typical example which shows how people use social networks to examine or ridicule the politics of the day. This is in line with Scott's (1990) observation that the hidden transcript gives the subalterns an opportunity to discuss what is offensive to be uttered in the public. Henceforth, power and constructed truths are expressed on these platforms.

This section has discussed the social media as has overwhelming power in addressing different societal matters such as behaviour and politics. The vulgarity in it has been argued to be an expression of power and truth.

### **2.6.6 Vulgarity in Music**

Having discussed different contexts and platforms in which vulgarity manifests in the contemporary era, this section explores the existence of vulgar lyrics in different genres of music. Lyrics with vulgarity or obscenity manifest in various musical genres in Zimbabwe such as rhumba, sungura, urban grooves and Zimdancehall. Before, discussing the vulgarity in Zimdancehall in the next chapters, it is important to demonstrate that vulgar lyrics are not only found in Zimdancehall but are also evident in old school music and other genres of music.

Jona Moyo's song, "Solo *naMutsai*", is an example of an old school music which has sexually suggestive lyrics. Sexually expressive lyrics are also evident in Tongai Moyo's song, "*Ndiro yababa haishandiswe*" and "*Sele*". Other songs in this category include "Special Meat" by Calisto Nyamhute, "*Ndipe zvandakavinga*" by Dino Mudondo's song, Kapfupi's "*Mai Nga*" and Jacob Moyana's "*Mumotidako*" and "*Pamhatakatererera*." Most of these songs were played on national television and radio and there were no complains about the sexual suggestiveness of the lyrics. It was then later after a number of contentious tracks from urban grooves artists than some songs in the genre were banned on airplay.

Much is discussed on urban grooves music since it is regarded as a mother genre to Zimdancehall. Through desk review, the researcher observed that many scholars like Bertha (2005), Muringisi (2007), Chari (2008) and Viriri (2009) who have conducted researches on urban grooves have unanimously labelled the genre as having vulgar-packed lyrics. In support of this, Mate (2012) notes that criticisms on urban grooves songs has been on its use

of vulgarity and that significantly, male artists use profanity in their lyrics more than female artists. Vulgarity in urban grooves music is also referred to as street language, and although not generally accessible to grown-ups, it exists as an insightful critique of adults' sexual excesses (Mate, 2012). Mate further observes that the elements they make use of in their songs like humour, stereotypes and satire are the voices of the marginalised. She advances that the ban of urban grooves songs shows grown-ups' hypocrisy in relation to youths. "Why else would it be offensive to hear anti-HIV, marriage and sexuality messages as performed by urban groovers when older musicians such as Oliver Mtukudzi sing about the same issues?" (Mate, 2012). Hence, the denunciation of youth lyrics can be contested to be as a result of responsible authorities' prejudice.

Artists like Maskiri are typically singled out as seeming to be fond of giving reference to obscene words. Machokoto in *The Sunday Mirror* (2005) cited in Bere (2008) writes that, there is method in Maskiri's insanity, which means that his insanity is a technique of achieving something, in this case, a way of expressing power and truth. In the same vein, profanity in Zimdancehall genre can be treated in the same perspective. "We should never look at music lyrics superficially, but should strive to look for the underlying lessons behind each song" (Machokoto, 2005 cited in Bere 2008). Thus, every genre of music equally deserves to be analysed concretely not just precipitately dismissing it.

It has been ascertained in this section that the vulgar trait in music is not only in Zimdancehall but also other different genres. It is through vulgar discourse that the musicians are evidently expressing power and the reality of what is taking place in the society.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

It has been illustrated in this chapter that vulgarity existed in the Shona traditional society; hence it is not a new phenomenon in the contemporary Shona society where it is predominant in different artistic forms, platforms and different situations. This chapter is the base on which the arguments in the next chapters on power and truth in vulgarity builds on. There is the need to comprehensively explore vulgarity which is vigorously manifesting in Zimdancehall music since it is a field not yet exhausted. Much of the contexts discussed in this chapter have been looked at by other researchers and it is Zimdancehall which needs much attention as it has the vulgar components under inquiry. The extent, to which power and truth can be expressed through vulgarity in Zimdancehall, is then the inquiry to be dogged.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **VULGARITY AND POWER IN ZIMDANCEHALL MUSIC**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter reviewed the concept of vulgarity in the Shona society and explained the contexts and trends in which vulgar discourse manifest in the same society. This was done by revealing the different institutions and situations where vulgarity manifests in the Shona traditional colonial and contemporary societies, respectively. It was also adduced that vulgarity is not a new phenomenon in the Shona society; and it has roots in the pre-colonial society where it had a vital role to serve; the colonial era through different structures like the church, education and laws suppressed it and this resulted in its off context manifestation. It was also ascertained through examining different contexts in the contemporary era that vulgarity is vigorously manifesting in music genres, particularly more explicit in Zimdancehall genre. This chapter, thus, provides a critical analysis of vulgar in selected Zimdancehall songs as an expression of power by the musicians. With reference to selected Zimdancehall songs, interviews conducted, data collected from questionnaires and the concept that informs this study, this chapter examines why Zimdancehall artists use vulgar lyrics and how that functions in relation to expression of power.

#### **3.2 Respondents' profile**

This section presents the profile of respondents and interviewees in this study. The questionnaire respondents in this study comprise of a sample of thirty audiences, fourteen university students, ten randomly picked school leavers and six university lectures. Out of the thirty disseminated questionnaires, twenty four were returned.

##### **3.2.1 Theorising Vulgarity, Power in Music Discourse**

This section theorizes and conceptualizes the concepts of vulgarity and power. One of the key figures, who inform this research Mbembe (2001), argues that obscenity must not be understood as backwardness but should be examined as an expression of power. In this case, vulgarity therefore becomes a weapon by which one repels from the suppressive force of society in favor of an extra undeviating liaison to the personality (Corbin, 2007). In the case where an individual utilizes it in the effort to be recognized, it is understood as a quest for popularity. Scott (1990) argues that discourse is conditioned by power relations. Thus,

vulgarity can be understood as a technique used by the subordinated to acquire power of direct control in any given situation.

The term power has multispectral meanings which can only be understood if deduced to context. They are different kinds of power which include compulsory power and or direct control, structural power, institutional power and productive power (Barnet and Duval, 2005). Weber defined power as “the chance that an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her own will even against the resistance of others.” Consequently, an individual or group does not hold power in isolation, but hold it in relation to others. Mangeya (2014) notes that power relations in a particular situation are shaped though discourse. This creates grouping in the society or in this case in the music industry whereby there will be the dominant and the subaltern musicians. Contestation for power is evidence as it is seen in dis songs and use of gendered relations were you would find a man labelled as a woman. Zimdancehall qualifies the subaltern group since it is a genre which came later after other genres were already dominant and greatly appreciated as high art by the society. It is also as a result of politics of age whereby older artists are much respected than the younger ones. Hence, Mbembe’s (2001) argument that vulgarity is used by the subalterns to gain power is validated under such situation.

In relation to art forms, power can also be inform of artistic power or structural power. This explains the situations were by an artist, writer, poet or musician grows from being an ordinary person to be an authoritative source. Power is omnipresent at different levels such as political, religious, societal, gender and art. This is supported by Giddens (2001: 447) who defines power as “the capacity to achieve one’s aims even against the resistance of others and often involves the use of force”. However, in this work the researcher is much worried about understanding the concept of power in music in relation to vulgarity. Power of the musicians usually manifest as charismatic power which come through popularity, popularity moulded in this case by the use of vulgarity. Gramsci observes that power is something that can be achieved once and for all. This is the same in music, through high art artists gain charismatic authority but it is power which needs to be defended. This is illustrated further supported by Gramsci who contends that the attainment and preservation of power is an on-going process.

Power is present in the music industry and demonstrates situations of imbalance since the a few musicians have power which they express over others. The effect of power varies from context to context. From one perspective, powers rely on upon the limit of the individuals who



holds and expresses it. On the other perspective, it relies on the degree to which it is contradicted or confined by the others.

This section has explained the concept of vulgarity in relation to power in music. It has been argued that artist seek to attain power though elevating their music into high art by utilizing vulgar lyrics.

### **3.2.2 Development of Zimdancehall and emergence of vulgar**

This section gives a brief background of the development of Zimdancehall music and the emergence of vulgar lyrics in the genre. Zimdancehall is a Zimbabwean genre of music which has origins in the tradition of Jamaican reggae (Pindula, 2014). It further notes that the home-grown musicians started to chant their own kind of the dancehall in the 1990's and artists such as Booker T, Major E and Potato attracted aficionados with their Zimbabwean lyricism style. Mate (2012) observes that the 75 percent content greatly motivated more upcoming musicians to express themselves in local languages, and this gave rise to increase of youths in musician. Zimdancehall got prevalent as it is chanted in native languages which the general public readily appreciates.

Vulgar lyrics in the genre were evident in the songs of artists like King Labash in his songs "*Ari kuda kukonzeresa*" and "*Kunanzva pakati*", Winky D in his songs like "*African ting*", "*Bigger size*" and "*Put the blame on me*" and King Shaddy's tracks like "*Handina sinhi rebhakosi*" and "*Mukonde waTonde*". However, it has increased due to factors such as increase of artists in the genre, influence of western genres like Jamaican reggae and American hip hop. The increase of production of tracks with vulgarity can also be explained by the rampant increase of ghetto studios where artists produce tracks at cheap costs. Use of explicit lyrics in the genre, especially in 'dis songs' is now very rampant. The 'dis element' is appropriated from the Jamaican dancehall. Many of these songs are evidently commentaries of the country's economic, social and political situations.

This section has explained the origins of Zimdancehall and emergence of vulgarity in the genre in brevity. It has been argued that, among other factors, the 75% local content has greatly contributed to the increase of musicians and emergence of new genres.

### **3.3 Vulgar as an Expression of Power by Musicians in Selected Zimdancehall Music**

This section discusses vulgar as an expression of power by musicians in selected Zimdancehall songs with an element of vulgarity. This is done in comparison and contrast to the data from interviews and questionnaires. Canons of power discussed based on research data include use of vulgar in seeking popularity, showing the superiority of the genre, politics of age, dis songs and power in gender relations.

### 3.3.1 Use of vulgar in seeking popularity

Thematically, this section presents and analyses data from the field based on use of vulgar by artists seeking popularity. Popularity is argued in this section as a source of the musicians' power. Popularity is generally the condition or state of being supported, admired or liked by many people. Artistic power is derived from an artist's influence and recognition. The research data from interviewees and 80% of questionnaire respondents illustrate that the major determination of Zimdancehall artists who utilize vulgar lyrics would be a quest to gain popularity. As evidence to this, the first artist interviewee, who is an upcoming Zimdancehall artist, in answering the question why artist in the genre sing vulgar lyrics, he confessed that:

*“Ini, personally ndinoimba vulgar in order to make a big name pamangoma nokukurumbidza. Madhara pamangoma awandisa, saka tinotoimba zvinoita kuti mafans akurumidze ajamba. Vapfana ndozvinovajambisa manje.”*

(I, personally, sing vulgar in order to make a big name in the music fraternity much faster. The older musicians are now too many, so we sing what quickly excites the fans. That is what makes the youths dance.)

The artist revealed that many unrecognized Zimdancehall artists make use of vulgarity in order to market themselves or rather to make themselves recognized in the musical fraternity where they are many musicians of different genres. Conspicuously, when vulgar language is uttered in public spheres, it has the power to draw people's attention (Bigo, 1989). This is in line with Mbembe (1992) who sees vulgar in artistic forms as an expression of power. The power is derived from achieving recognition through singing vulgarity. The artists' use of it is not by mistake but deliberately as they know its power. A typical example of this is D-Flex's song, *Penengu*, he sings:

*Parinongonzi penengu, door rechechi ndoda kugara ndirimo 6 to 6  
Penengu, door rechechi tichishumira Mwari, shumira  
Bhebhi achiti oh my god! hesi lord! Uu-ty'i a-ah jesus! Eish almighty god!  
Ini ndichiti oh my god! Hesi lord! Uu-u! aa-ah! Jesus, Eish! almighty god!  
Bhebhi achirira nendimi achiti nyiya-a nyiya-a aa-ah, nyiya-ah!*

(As soon as the door of the church is opened, I want to remain in there from 6 to 6  
The church door will be open while will be worshipping god, worshipping

Babe will be saying, oh my god! Hes lord! Uu-ty'i aah jesus! Eish, almighty god!  
While I will be saying oh my god! Hesi lord! Uu-u! aa-ah! Jesus,Eish! almight god!  
Babe will be speaking in tongues saying, nyiya-a nyiya-a aa-ah, nyiya-ah!

The artist tries to hide the vulgarity of his lyrics through employing euphemism, nevertheless, this seems not to be working since the lyrics of the song are sexually suggestive. He uses the church to symbolize a woman's genitals. His lyrics are full of sounds and actions which are sexually suggestive. The term *penengu* is Shona idiophone and as it is used in the songs, it refers to a woman undressing herself to expose her genitals.

D Flex is not a big name in the Zimdancehall genre and his use of sexually suggestive lyrics becomes a way he utilizes to gain recognition. Evidently, most of the artists who sing vulgar music are not recognized in the music industry, so their use of vulgar lyrics becomes a typical way of making themselves known (Walker, 2013). Examples of such musicians who sing vulgar lyrics include Ba Junior, D-Flex, Kinnah, Celcious and Lady B. Evidently it will be later in their music career after they have gained prominence that they would change from vulgar lyrics to the more acceptable standard. King Shaddy, King Labash, Snipper Storm, Ricky Fire and Winky D are typical examples of artists who made use of vulgar lyrics during their first years of music career. Winky D released tracks like "African ting", "Bigger size" and "Put the blame on me"; and these tracks are characterized with extreme vulgar lyrics.

King Labash was also made popular by "*Kukonzeresa*", a track which also has vulgar lyrics; the same with King Shaddy's early songs, "*Makanika*", "*Sinhi rebhakosi*" and "*Mukonde waTonde*." It is arguable in this case that, somehow, the use of vulgar lyrics by now popular musicians, though considered as negative representation of music, gave them a mileage in the music industry. They are now being reckoned for the decent didactic lyrics they are singing now. The fact that they entered the music scene or gained popularity in the musical fraternity using vulgarity is now no longer counting. Vulgarity in music is not for vulgar's sake but it is a means for less recognized artists to achieve popularity. Thus, the artists achieve power in the music industry through recognition by the audience and through vulgar recognition would be gained. However, the artists become recognized in a negative way.

### **3.3.2 Vulgarity in expressing Zimdancehall music and the Hegemony of established Musicians**

Following current debates on social media, supported by 60% of questionnaire respondents it was evident that besides use of vulgar lyrics by upcoming musicians in seeking recognition,

the prominent artists utilize vulgar lyrics to express their power and the power of their genre. Many debates in regard to the powerful genre of the 21st century have contested to which genre is has power between *sungura* and Zimdancehall. Mpofu and Tembo (2015) contend that the Zimdancehall artists in Gramscian terms, represent the ‘subaltern group’, and they are demanding for space and acknowledgment on the Zimbabwean musical scene. Therefore, the artists endeavor to strongly infiltrate the music fraternity through utilizing vulgar lyrics. In an interview with one of the audience of the Zimdancehall, she commented that:

*Zimdancehall kwakumberi, Sungura chava chikorobho. Hapasisina kwaichaenda, Macheso haana achamuendesera musambo wake mberi.*

Zimdancehall is at the fore front, Sungura is now worn out mop. It has no future; Macheso doesn't have other musicians to further his music.

The interviewee shows that she is a total fan of Zimdancehall genre and bates its popularity over Sungura, which she considers as a worn out mop. This debate is now the question of the moment as many sites such as online news, Facebook and WhatsApp groups are offering platforms to debate to which genre is prominent. Artists in other genres like Sungura call for a ban of vulgar music in zimdancehall, as they are said to be advocating for maintaining the acceptable cultural way of singing, however the other side of the coin is that they are somehow worried or foreseeing a possibility of Zimdancehall overtaking their genres because of its rising prominence. Foucault (1984) comprehends power as having unpredictable effects and characterised with both viciousness and concurrently an energising force (Manning, 2001). Artists employ different methods and tactics in their pursuits for popularity which is a source of power in the music industry. Thus, utilization of vulgar lyrics in expressing power in this context of genre contestation, functions in establishing dominant genres.

Alick Macheso, a popular Sungura artist, in a press interview verbalized that in spite of its current prominence, Zimdancehall won't substitute Sungura as the genre of choice in the nation in the long run. He says Zimdancehall is no risk to Sungura in light of the fact that its artists come up short on pertinent topics to sing in their music. He further said that it does “...not possess the musical sophistication to replace Sungura” (News 24 Zimbabwe, 2015). As a counter viewpoint, Ricky Fire, a popular Zimdancehall artist, in an interview with the Sunday Mail (2015) notes that, “Sungura and urban grooves are things of days gone by in because Zimdancehall has figured out how to catch the attention of both the youths and old. I don't see the individuals who are growing up in this Zimdancehall period retreating to listening to

Sungura.” Henceforth, expression of power through use of vulgar lyrics reveals contestations between artists of different genres over popularity.

Furthermore, Foucault (1980) views discourse in relation to power relations as an instrument of power and also recognizes that discourse can be utilized to seize power. A typical example of a discourse designed to seize power is Sniper Storm’s song “*Dai ndaiimba sungura*”, he sings: “*Dai ndaiimba sungura ndisina busy nemaverse.*” The vulgarity contained in the lyrics of this song is not explicit vulgar but implicit vulgar in Hunt’s (1870) terms. Sniper Storm describes Zimdancehall music as characterized by rich lyric content and flippantly, dismisses the *sungura* genre as having songs which are easy to compose as compared to those of Zimdancehall. To Mbembe (2001), this can be regarded as a typical method for deriding power. In this instance, it is the prominence of *sungura* which is being ridiculed.

Foucault (1980) cited in Gaventa, 2003 notes that power does not work as a chain or essentially applied by one predominant group over a subordinate group, however it circulates. The noticeable quality of *sungura* does not so much imply that it will ultimately remain prevalent over other genres as it is currently challenged by other genres which deny its conspicuousness over them. On the other hand, for Foucault, power is neither deliberate nor completely realised, it is somewhat a various and versatile, field of power relations, wherein sweeping, however never totally stable, domination are delivered. Henceforth, since they are contestations on the prominent genre of the time, Zimdancehall artists make use of vulgar in their music as a strategy of perpetuating popularity of their genre. Thus, vulgar is utilized as an expression of power by the Zimdancehall musicians.

### **3.3. 3 Vulgar in Dis Songs among Zimdancehall Artists**

Vulgar lyrics meant for contestation and expression of power in individual or group of artist in Zimdancehall are also evident in dis tracks. Besides expression of power through perpetuating the prominence of Zimdancehall genre over other popular genres by utilizing vulgar lyrics, the musicians also contest for big names among themselves in the genre. This is evidenced by the predominance of vulgarity in dis songs. A dis song is a track essentially composed with the intention of insulting or affronting another (Wiktionary, 2014). Consequently, the purpose of vulgar in dis tracks is to challenge, insult or evoke the opponent in the rivalry. Utilization of vulgar has the power to get the other person angry or humiliated (Ravenwood, 1999). Evidently, the Zimdancehall Sting has witnessed most of verbal disparage between artists in their efforts of trying to impress the audience in freestyle dis lyrics. Thus, through vulgar

lyrics, artists try to grab the power of popularity from one another. This is supported by Foucault (1980) who argues that it is through discourse that power can be grabbed one group to the other.

Examples of these dis songs include, Seh Calaz' "*Hatipisike*" and "*Mboko imboko*" and Soul Jah Love's "*Ndomudhanda*". The debate to who sings superior than the other in the music industry, between Soul Jah Love and Seh Calaz has been topical in public transport, in the streets, pubs and even in homes (iHararenews, 2015). In the song "*Calaz Ndakamukwapaidza*" directed to his rivalry artist, Seh Calaz, Soul Jah Love compares Calaz to a woman whom he can sexually take advantage of. This concurs to Ncube (2014), who sees men as expressing the power through subversion of female sexuality. Soul Jah Love expresses his superiority through making use of patriarchal empowerment which considers men as superior than women. This is what is discussed in section 2.4.6 on embracement of phallic power in boys' sex education. Shire (1994) argues that in patriarchal societies, male sexuality is seen as a symbol of power. Thus, Soul Jah Love is expressing his power or superiority over Seh Calaz as he aligns himself with male sexuality, and aligning Calaz under female sexuality in music industry.

Furthermore, besides male artists, female musicians utilize vulgar lyrics in various dis songs attacking one another or male musicians. In the 2014 Zimdancehall Sting, Bounty Lisa, Expatriot and Lady Squanda in their lyrical fight for superiority or power, end up using vulgar lyrics in insulting one another. Lady Squanda in her song "*Hameno Akamutengera Altezza*" which she disses Bounty Lisa, Soul Jah Love and Seh Calaz sings:

*Murume wake naCalaz vakunamana  
Kunyepedzera kudhisana ivo vachikisana  
Mune kahunhu kanenge kaCanaan Banana*

(Her husband (Soul Jah Love) and Calaz are gay  
They pretend to dis each other while they 'kiss' each other  
You behave like Canaan Banana)

Lady Squanda pronounces her superiority over Bounty Lisa, Soul Jah Love and Seh Calaz, She uses homosexually as a culturally unacceptable conduct to insult her rivalry male artist. She goes further to attribute the artist's behavior as that of Canaan Banana who happens to be post-independence Zimbabwe's first president, who is publicly known to have been jailed for sodomy. What she sings confirms to Mbembe (2001) who stresses that power is expressed by the subalterns through referring to the private parts of those in power. The power which is expressed her tallies with that which was evident in invective (*mavingu*) discussed in section

2.4.4 of Chapter Two. It was in this context of invective that one was feared or attained power in a social grouping through a loose tongue in confronting or insulting others using explicit vocabulary. This is also akin to this context in Zimdancehall dis-vulgar lyrics. Henceforth, artists make use of vulgar lyrics in expressing their power over other musicians in the music industry.

More so, this is evidenced by personas which the Zimdancehall artists are constructing for themselves. For example, Winky D calls himself ninja president, Killer T (chairman), Shinsoman (dancehall father), Soul Jah Love (Conquering Lion or Chibaba), Freeman (Doctor *wemagita*) and Lady Squanda (Dancehall Queen). Zimdancehall artists like Seh Calaz and Soul Jah Love have gained power in the music industry through their popularity through their dis tracks attacking one another with vulgar lyrics. This reveals the artists' quest for popularity and superiority in the music fraternity.

It has been ascertained in this section that artist express their power over other artists in the music industry through use of vulgar lyrics in dis songs. Issues of sexuality in relation to power reflections were also been contextually discussed.

### **3.3.4 Vulgarly and Politics of Age**

This section discusses the use of vulgar by Zimdancehall in their quest for their views to be listened to by the adults. The politics of age is a question of who has influence and the power to be taken seriously in a society or organization basing on age. Forty percent of questionnaire respondents raised the issue of politics of age. It was unanimously noted that the youth artists' music are given little attention by the authorities and adults and commented on their lop holes than their merits. Mate (2012) argues that the youth artists use street language which, though not ordinarily accessible to adults, has been an incisive critique of adult sexual excesses. Through songs of youths which are characterized by vulgarity, the subjectivity of peripheral artists, whose perspectives are not listened to are publicizing.

Vulgar language is in this case considered as an unusual approach of fabricating contestations of power. Ncube (2014) contends that discourses are political and exclusionary in nature as they discriminate regarding who can participate in process of producing knowledge to the world. Where there is politics of age, the discourses of well-established musicians or the grey haired becomes the yardstick of what the society can consider to be good music, thereby positioning them in positions of power. In this case, the upcoming or less known musicians

will strategically make use of vulgar lyrics as a counter discourse of the famous. This is done deliberately as a way of grabbing power from musicians of famous genres, and either removing crowns from their heads or designing the same crown for themselves.

Art, then again, in its beginnings was dependably an ally of the human quest for freedom from antagonistic nature and nurture (Ngugi 1998, 28). Youth artists in Zimdancehall make use of a distinctive art form, vulgar, as a way seeking freedom. In a society where wisdom is associated with age, some youths make use of vulgarity to make their voices heard. The less recognised artists' appearance in newspapers, besides associated with bad issues, makes them popular. One Zimdancehall artist in an interview said: "It doesn't matter whether I appear on media for singing vulgar lyrics. What matters is that I would have had the chance to appear on it." Thus, vulgarity to some artists is a means of achieving their ends.

They sing about matters that are usually considered taboo in the society, such as sexual connotations. They also make use of different lyrical devices such as satire, diction and euphemism to express things which cannot be said with ordinary words. Humor which is in vulgar, works as a remedy to the musicians and also the audience. Due to the difficulties in the economy, vulgar lyrics are used in order to make a living through performing in night clubs and other gatherings. The creation of vulgarity, one ought to include here, requires being considered as an intentionally contemptuous operation (Mbembe, 2001).

### **3.3.5 Kidnapping power through humour in vulgar**

This section examines how power is kidnapped between artists of the same and different genres through use of vulgar lyrics. Bardon (2005) contends that vulgar is a basic ingredient used of creating humour. The research data from interviews with Zimdancehall artists show that power in music is not static, but it is constantly kidnapped and regained. In the statement by one artist that "*mbiri inobvutiranwa-bvutiranwa*" (fame is snatched from one artist to the other). It is then that fame which install artistic or structural power on an artist. Power or superiority and recognition in music can be kidnapped among musicians through use of vulgar tunes. Snatching power from one another can be direct or indirect. *Kubvutiranwa-bvutiranwa* (power snatching and re-snatching) above illustrates direct kidnapping of power through though lyrical war. Power and fame in music like hegemony is an on-going process, it is constantly enforced (Gramsci, 1971). Interviewee 3, who is a lecture in the department of music and musicology at Midlands State University, in airing his views on prevalence and use of explicit lyrics in Zimdancehall genre, went further to comments that:



Despite the fact that songs with vulgar verses are considered as wrong, they have their spaces in which they are applicable. This clarifies why such songs are overwhelmingly utilized during the evening clubs, beer halls, parties and different social events. These songs are remedial to the people who go to those places.

This illustrates the possibility of vulgar in music in provide mental therapy to its audience through humour in it. If these songs are played at the right context they provide therapeutic function to Zimdancehall audience. This concurs to Chiwome (1992), who finds the vulgarity in grain threshing parties as therapeutic. This is akin to the use of vulgarity in songs sung at the soccer stadiums at the terraces. Ncube (2014) observes the employment of vulgarity at the soccer stadium by the supporters; a team which is defeated is said to have been sexually penetrated. This illustrates the direct verbal strategy of expressing artistic power.

The indirect way now is the equal space which is given to vulgar music side by side to decent music at parties and gathering. An acceptance by the audience that the vulgar lyrics have their time to be played at their gathering propels the fame and musical power of those songs with lyrics considered to be obscene. For instance, the individuals' enjoyment, repeated requests and playing of Ricky Fire's "*Kana uchigona kutambisa riri hwani*" (if you are able to shake only one of your buttocks), makes the people at a party directly or indirectly acknowledge the relevance of vulgar music at a party gathering. This is how fame and power is bestowed on an artist. Notably, most of the Zimdancehall songs with an element of vulgarity are usually played at youth parties and other gatherings. It is though that remedy or therapy that Zimdancehall music gains popularity through the relevant use of their vulgar tunes by the audience.

Furthermore, Ncube (2014) in citation of Mbembe (2001) contends that humour about the "sudden erection" of "tremendous" and "rigid" presidential phallus should not just be taken as a type of rough and primitive culture yet rather it exhibits power contestations in societies. This is the same with vulgarity in Zimdancehall in which it is used to express power through humour derived from vulgar. The ability of these songs to provide humour in contrast to those of other genres constructs a base on which the streams of power of the artist will flow through their recognition. An example of this is Ticky J's song "*Tambisa dako*"

*Tambisa-tambisa dako*  
*Tambisa-tambisa dako*

*Shake your buttock*  
*Shake your buttock*

Through a song with vulgar lyrics the artist expresses artistic power. Conde (2012) defines artistic power as the triple power to represent the real, to transcend it and to act on the

imaginary. This sort of power is kidnapped from humour in the vulgar lyrics. The song is more or less the same with Jacob Moyana's songs "Pamhatakaterera" and "Munotidako" where he utilizes word coinages which when joined sound vulgar to speakers of other dialects. Nevertheless, the listeners of such songs know very well the exact words which are being avoided but the singers. The humour in the songs with an element of vulgarity, in some way enforces equal attention to both songs of different genres. While those songs considered as dissent are played to establish the foundations of the gathering, those with vulgar will be utilize to make a party a party, not just a mere gathering. Therefore, power relations in music can also be examined through exploring the themes of individual artists who examine the popularity of other genres through counter genre themes.

It has been ascertained in this section that power and fame is snatched between artists directly or indirectly through utilization of vulgar lyrics. This is enabled by the humour and the therapeutic nature imbedded in songs with an element of vulgarity. Power through fame in music has been argued that in is not static, but constantly fought for.

### **3.4 Vulgar as an expression of power: A round up**

This section provides an overview of the issues discussed in the sections above. Notably, the obsessive use of vulgarity by Zimdancehall artists in the perspective of many artists, who I interviewed, is to propel them into acquiring big names in a short period of time. To a greater extend, vulgarity works in drawing the audience's attention on them. Mbembe (2001) asserts that the vulgar should not be interpreted as a sign of 'backwardness' but a clear expression of power (Ncube, 2014). Therefore, Zimdancehall musicians express power through making use of vulgar in music, a discourse which is crude and said to unacceptable in the Shona culture and also Zimbabwean music censorship laws.

Over the years, Zimdancehall has grown big and consist of many artists as compared to other long established genres like sungura, Zim-Afro Jazz, Urban grooves and Dendera. They are managing to grab power from established musicians as their music in now dominant at mass media and other public spheres like the marketplace, in kombis and different functions. Kaemmer (1989) cited in Bere (2008) contends that music as a form of art is often utilized either to grab or consolidate power, or to adjust to circumstances of weakness. In this scenario, the Zimdancehall artists who make use of vulgar lyric does not only snatch power from popular musicians of other genres but also from fellow artists in the same genre.

However, Zimdancehall tracks with vulgar lyrics are banned on mass media such as the Radio and Television, and they can be only played at private spheres, away from responsible authorities and strict parents or guardians. Given these conditions, it is difficult for the artists to gain much power using vulgarity. Ngugi (1998) notes that states contain and control the force of human expressions through co-picking artists, banning works of art, disregarding artists, detaining, tormenting, banishing or murdering artists, and the transforming of politicians into craftsmen. This installs fear into artists in singing vulgar lyrics which are extreme enough to capture the audience's attention and grab power from other musicians. Moreover, promoters of young artists have threatened to withdraw their funding from artists who sing vulgar lyrics. These then contribute to artists' self-censorship, thus, battling using the norm. The other shortcomings are that the musicians use vulgar lyrics became popular for wrong reasons, popular without following and end up disempowering themselves in an attempt to gain power.

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

The chapter unraveled vulgar in Zimdancehall as an expression of power by the musicians. The researcher established that through vulgar lyrics both recognized and unrecognized artists splinter their identities, protest against politics of age, kidnap power through humor from vulgarity, express power through societal gender power relations and contest for big names in the music fraternity at large and within the same genre. It was also discussed within the chapter that vulgar is an expression of power by the musicians. It was also ascertained that other achieve power through making use of vulgar lyrics but others fail to acquire recognition through its use. With the aim of this chapter having been accomplished, the next chapter goes a step further in examining how vulgar in selected Zimdancehall songs can be an expression of the truth of what is happening in the society.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### VULGAR AS AN EXPRESSION OF TRUTH IN ZIMDANCEHALL MUSIC

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter analyzed vulgarity in selected Zimdancehall songs as an expression of power. It was been ascertained through analysis of data from interviews, questionnaires and the selected songs that vulgar is an expression of power by the musicians. This chapter examines vulgarity in selected Zimdancehall songs as an act or art for expression of the truth in the society. This is done with the determination of ascertaining the extent to which this is true. The researcher made use of questionnaires and interviews in collecting data relevant to this chapter from the participants. The participants in this study comprised of Zimdancehall artists and producers, academics, and audience of the songs. The research findings will be interpreted to further explain how vulgarity can be considered as an expression of truths of what is taking place in the society. Henceforth, the chapter discusses prominent themes which can be drawn out from vulgarity in the songs as the truth of what is happening in the society.

##### 4.1.1 Interviewee profile

Table 1 below displays a profile of interviewees in this study

Broad Category	INTERVIEWEES			
	Zimdancehall Artists	Producers	Academics	Audience
No. Interviewees	5	4	5	6
method of interview	3 Telephone and 2 face-to-face interviews	Face-to-face interviews	Face-to-face interviews	Face-to-face interviews
Total No. of interviewees	$5 + 4 + 5 + 6 = 20$			

The researcher interviewed twenty individuals as illustrated on the table above.

#### 4.2 Conceptualising the Truth in the Shona society

This section discusses the treatment of truth in the Shona society. It theorises how certain truths are concealed and suppressed under certain circumstances. The word truth is equivalent to

the Shona term *chokwadi*. The term truth is a multi-spectral concept which needs to be understood contextually. In the Shona society, on religious issues God and religious figures are the sources of truth and in societal matters older folks and proverbs among others are thought to be wellsprings of truth. Truth about a matter is attained through how people interpret a particular situation at a given time in accounting for a certain event. Universally, an eye-witness is usually considered to be the beholder of the truth. As a way of validating one self's truth, individuals in the society also make use of swearing in proving whatever one is saying is the truth.

In the Shona society, truth is usually interpreted basing on what is taking place and sometimes on the memories of things that have transpired in the historical era. Consequently, proverbs in the same society are vital maxims that express some broad truths reached at basing on consequence of observations and experience. Sayings like *imbwa huru haihukuri hora* which literary means that the elderly speak the truth illustrates that elders are seen as vessels of truth. Elders are also considered to the repositories of truth as "...advanced age is taken as a criterion of not only the truth but also reliability and therefore whatever decision is made by people of advanced age should be taken as it is" (Muyila 2006: 43). What they say is dogmatic and is not supposed to be questioned. Furthermore, religious figures are also perceived as sources of truth as they are believed to have a direct link with God.

On truth in vulgarity, it is only supposed to be uttered in specific context as discussed in Chapter Two. This implies that its truths in vulgarity are to be uttered contextually, if it's uttered in public it is now a counter discourse. Furthermore, other forms of truths are not truth until evidently proven. Other forms of truth, especially those expressed in vulgar speech or off context are cautiously accepted due their constructiveness in attaining common good. For instance, the jocular vulgarity in *chiramu* provided the uncle and his young sisters-in-law with the chance to express truth of some serious matters in a jocular manner. If there is proof that something is actually happening, this is how truth is concealed. Newspaper articles and researches of other scholars will be cited in this chapter to provide evidence in relation to ascertaining the truth about particular matters. In the Shona society, the idea of truth is associated with the ethical notions of uprightness and genuineness.

It is generally accepted that truth which can be explicitly expressed is imbedded in speech or art forms with an element of vulgarity. This is so since the notion of vulgarity is perceived by Ravenwood (1999) as being brutally honest. However, the truth expressed in vulgarity is

generally suppressed as it viewed as divulging private secrets of a family or particular structures. Some truths are only supposed to be expressed in particular contexts. For instance, one cannot talk of his or her sexual encounters in public. In line with this, Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi (2012) contend that keeping private or other societal realities secret, particularly in public is a virtue in the Shona society. Gelfand (1973) further notes that amongst the Shona, youngsters are educated that the truth must be told and that if they are found lying they are punished. The truth in this sense implies the exact account of what could have transpired in different spheres of the youth. Notably, there are some definite truths in the Shona society that are not supposed to be divulged in public. More so, certain truths expressed explicitly in vulgar speech were also part of the truths not to be uttered in public. This shows that some truths were only supposed to be revealed in certain contexts. What the young say is not readily believed without abstract evidence to it.

This section has discussed the concept of truth and its treatment the Shona society. It has been discussed that the truth in vulgarity is suppressed and accepted in particular contexts

### **4.3 DISCOURSING THE TRUTH THROUGH ZIMDANCEHALL MUSIC**

This section discusses the themes of truth derived from selected Zimdancehall songs with an element of vulgarity. This is done with reference to data collected from interviews and questionnaires and drawing examples from the selected songs. The theme which are discussed in this chapter include themes on pornography, oral sex and HIV/AIDS, effects of unprotected sex, child marriages, celebration of phallic power, promiscuity and bad sanitation in ghettos. These themes are critically analysed informative of the conceptual framework which finds vulgar as an expression of truth.

#### **4.3.1 On pornography and oral sex**

This section analyses songs which reflects themes on pornography, oral sex and HIV and AIDS. In responding to the question which inquired if there are any themes of significance which can be conveyed from Zimdancehall music with an element of vulgar lyrics, 20% of the questionnaire respondents cited the above themes. Evidently, these themes on oral sex and HIV and AIDS are very prevalent and contested in Zimdancehall songs with vulgar lyrics. Examples of songs with such lyrics on the sub-headed themes include King Labash's "*Kunanzva pakati*" and Ba Junior's "*Une musikanzwa.*" King Labash is one of the pioneering

artists of Zimdancehall who became active in 2002. In the song “*Kunanzva pakati*” (licking in between her legs), he sings:

*Mamwe magen'a ari kunhanzva pakati*  
*Hanzi iromance vachiisa rurimi*  
*Pakati pakamadhisa Patty naMaddy*  
*Umwe murume ndopaari kuda kuisaka rurimi*  
*Kutobhadhara hoto kunanzva pakati*  
*Makumbo pamashoulders, kunanzva pakati*

(Some guys are licking in between women's legs  
They say its romance putting their tongues  
Patty and Maddy died because of in between women's legs  
And another man wants to put his tongue in between  
Paying a prostitute to lick her in between her legs  
Leg on the shoulders, licking in between)

As interpretation of the song, it is evident that King Labash is in contradiction with men who appreciate oral sex. The artist contends that this practice is one of the systems which are spreading HIV/AIDS. This observation has objective truth as UNAIDS (2005) specifies that oral sex has a risk of transmitting HIV and, though it is low it “...can increase if there are cuts or sores around or in the mouth and if ejaculation occurs in the mouth.” Therefore, the artist's concern seems to be as a result of his awareness of men's sexual fantasises affected by pornographic material. This is the means by which imported methodologies of unsafe sexual practices are globalized through distinctive stages, for example, the web. In genuine certainty, the artist vocally protests against such practices and his lyrics are a mindfulness battle to the adolescents not to receive such destructive remote practices. The musician chants that such practices are penetrating in the general public are smouldering ills that ought to be attended to for the health security of the general public. Jana et al (2012) has it that pornographic materials accessed through internet are a factor behind many youths engaging in different types of sex including unprotected sex. The singer reflects the truth of evident cases which are occurring in the society as many Zimbabwean newspaper articles have reported on the increase in circulation of pornographic material, with the popular Gumbura matter as one of the cases.

Most of the songs in the genre with such themes began to be prominent between 1990s up to this current era. In the social setting, the post-2000 era brought diverse changes and for this situation technological changes brought negative practices among both the grown-ups and adolescents. In most cases, the adolescent of today and other grown-ups due to broad internet, Wi-Fi system and western and some Nigerian movies, are exposed to sexual explicit materials.

As a result, they get into the danger of impersonating what they see on TVs, private mobiles and the internet. This is supported by Nyanga et al (2011) who laments that the internet and globalization are generating a youth culture which is different from the common culture. They further observe that the youths' lifestyle is now disengaged from the adults' world. It is not fallacy that in this technological era computers, laptops, tablets and smart phones are full of these pornographic material. At different universities and other tertiary institutions they are increase of cases of abuse of the cyberspaces though viewing sexually explicit material. Therefore, what some of these artists sing, is as a result of their observations of what is happening in the society and some from individual experiences which makes it concrete truth. What King Labash is trying to address in his song are pertinent issues or solid situations with most astounding capability of influencing the general population, particularly the adolescents; and these are some of the hurtful practices that cause circulation of diseases in the society.

Furthermore, Interviewee 6, a lecturer in the Department of Media and Society Studies at Midlands State University, in commenting on the themes reflected in Zimdancehall songs with vulgar lyrics says: "The truth in such songs is cosmetic. It is subjective truth which influences youths into imitating practices openly paraded through these songs." His view is sounding; however he fails to see the truth which is reflected in such songs. He delimits the truth expressed in the songs in question as 'subjective truth' which is reality based on an individual's opinion.

The contextual truth here is that these songs are reflective of activities and contestation which are among subcultural groups on oral sex (The National BC-Review, 2009). In contrary to King Labash's lyrics which does not celebrate oral sex, what Ba Junior, another Zimdancehall upcoming musician sings, in his 2015 song "*Une musikanzwa*" seems to be celebrating the practice. He portrays oral sex as giving more pleasurable than the casual sex. His perceptions seems to be influenced by Western pornographic material and settings as he mentions sex oils, the cultch and different naught styles of a girl who licks his penis; who is typically not African. What he seems to be appreciating in music, a public discourse, is a taboo to African customs. He portrays a women who behaviours in an eccentric or erotic way; a prostitute is better as she does everything to satisfy her customers for money not for free. He sings:

*Taona une musikanzwa  
Ndafunga paunoinanzva  
Zvandataura wazvinzwa*



(We have seen you are naughty  
I imagine when you lick it  
You have heard what I said)

A girl in this song is said to know all styles which make a man feel good in bed. These counter discourses in music shows that oral sex is a practice which is being contested in the society. The National BC-Review (2009) identifies that the practice of oral sex is not common in Zimbabwe, but it is increasing in developing states as a result of exposure to global media were is resented as a possible alternative to sexual intercourse. However, broadcasting this type of theme has negative effects on mass culture. The singer's lyrics have effects on listeners as he tends to celebrate the unusual harmful practice. This reveals that his music is influenced by western vulgar music genres such as hip hop (such as Nicky Minaj, Ricky Rose and BIG) and Jamaican reggae (such as Vybz Kartel, Mavado and Lady Saw) where obscenity in music seems to be the norm.

Though, it can be argued in this vein, the practice of oral sex is accepted in Muslim religion among some married couples and they see no problems in it if it's for stimulating one another before sex. What is not encouraged is not for a man to ejaculate in his wife's mouth or for a man to lick vaginal fluids. This is noted by Islamic respected scholars such as Allah wa Barakatuh and As-Salamu. However, the issue is also controversial among Muslims. With regards to Shona practices, though the themes are reflective of what is happening in the society, the artist here is doing a disservice to his audience as he encourages them to indulge in an ill practice which is detrimental to health and cause physical illness. In Ravenwood (1999)'s words this is what the grownups can label as "the affective fallacy."

#### **4.3.2 Vulgarity and the effects of unprotected sex**

This section discusses effects of unprotected sex expressed in selected Zimdancehall songs with an element of vulgarity. Unprotected sex is generally sexual intercourse done without use of condoms. This theme on unprotected sex was given as an example by 60% of the questionnaire respondents under themes reflective of the truth. The music producer whom I interviewed also noted that besides the negative perceptions on vulgar lyrics in Zimdancehall they are reflective of pertinent themes such as HIV and AIDS and unprotected sex which are not mentioned by other musicians in other genres. These notions can be argued to be as a result of alarming levels of effects of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe over the past decade. The National BC – Review (2009) notes that the "...first national prevalence estimate produced in

2003 indicates that HIV prevalence among adults aged 15-49 in Zimbabwe is 24.6%.” Evidently, this illustrates the capacity of vulgar lyrics in expressing the truth of what is happening in the society.

In early or mid-1990’s, Africa has been heavily affected by HIV and AIDS with Zimbabwe having 25% of people under HIV treatment. UNAIDS Gap report (2014), notes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, “South Africa has the highest number of people on HIV treatment.” Many people died and others lost their relatives and friends because of the pandemic. Notably, cases of HIV and AIDS infections in this post-independence era are still prevalent and many discourses in reference to the pandemic continue to be developed in the society. It is against this background that seems to be one of the alarming factors to the musicians singing about causes and effects of the pandemic. Du Guy (1996) contends that discourse performs a significant part in society in that it allows individuals to air their views about certain topics (Mangeya, 2014). Music has now become a platform which artists are using to air some issues which cannot be expressed well using ordinary language and they address them using a vulgar discourse. A typical example of a song on that theme on oral sex is Lady Squanda’s song “*Punani*” (the female genitals), in which she chants:

*Akanyenga bhebhi ipapo akabva atopuhwa punani*  
*Asingazive pakapuhwa vangani*  
*Apa bhebhi ranga riri chigulani*  
*Nhasi uno ari kuchema nenyaya yepunani*  
*Maronda in between papunani*  
*Uchinge wazara iwe unobvunza ani*  
*Kutanga waziva bhebhi zvitori nani*  
*Haikona kukwira njapisi zvisina purani*  
*Punani, iri kukonzeresa rufu*  
*Punani, unodyika kusara waita mafufu*

(He proposed a girl and was given the vagina there and there  
Without knowing how many people were given it  
The girl was a prostitute  
Today he is crying because of the vagina  
Wounds in between on the vagina  
When you are infected whom do you ask  
First knowing the girl is better  
Don’t have sex with a girl without making any plan  
Vagina; is causing death  
Vagina; you will depreciate and end up in pieces

The most recurrent word ‘*punani*’ is a Jamaican Patois or Indian vulgar slang which refers to the female genitals (vagina). Lady Squanda chants that unprotected sex kills. This recurrent term in the song is most popular in songs of Jamaican dancehall artists like Vybz Kartel,

Mavado and Alkaline. The Zimdancehall artists make use of this word in their songs as it sounds less vulgar to people foreign to its language of origin. Her lyrics advocates for youths to first know the status of the partners whom they tend to have sex with before making love to them or at least 'condomizing'. Her message is quite pertinent as it tries to conscientize her audience, especially men on the effects of unprotected sex or even having multi-sexual partners without knowing their status. She uses powerful language in installing fear of conducting HIV and AIDS in men and to specify the consequences of unprotected sex to men who meet different attractive women at different places. What she sings reflects the reality of what is happening in the society. Jana et al (2012) stress that many people especially youths, as a result of cultural beliefs and subcultural myths, and under the influence of drugs, peer pressure or as a result of lack of self-control indulge in unprotected sex. This exposes them to the risk of conducting STIs or HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS have been declared as a pandemic in 1999 Thus, the artists make use of this societal burning issue as a form of awareness campaign and at the end gaining popularity from it.

What is also important to note is that such discourses of music are played at beer halls, clubs and other youth gatherings and these are the same places where most scenarios exposed in this song occurs. Henceforth, the artist is doing a good service to her audience in warning them against harmful sexual practices. The artist through her vulgar lyrics reflects the truth of how HIV is spread through sexual intercourse done without protection. Henceforth, it can be argued that Lady Squanda is trying to educate the youths about sex, not to carelessly sleep around or use sex as for pleasing a partner before marriage but rather they should abstain from it before marriage or use protective measures.

Another typical example of a song on the theme on effects of unprotected sex is Lady Bee's song "Nyaya yebonde." Lady Bee is a female Zimdancehall singer who is known as and is popularly known for her controversial lyrics in the covert music (that which is deemed not appropriate to be to be air-played on national local radio stations the authorities). Some of her popular tracks include "*Babamunini*", "*Murume*", "*Inomira*", and "*Baba Maburitsa*." In an interview Lady Bee had with the Daily News, she defended her choice of music saying she sings reality. "I will continue with music and sing on social issues. She said, "I sing about things that people do not like to talk about, these are real social issues" (Daily News, 2012). Thus, there is need to examine the soundness of her self-defending in relation to vulgar lyrics as an expression of the truth of what is happening in the society.

In one of her songs, “*Nyaya yebonde*”, Lady Bee chants advising her audience on the effects of unprotected sex. Her view is that why not enjoy sex wearing condoms. In her chanting, she urges her audience to be extra careful when they indulge in sexual intercourse with different partners. She addresses a society where she knows that the use of condoms is debatable. While others subscribe to condom use, others find sex not enjoyable when using it thus the popularisation of the Shona slang terms “*kurova nyoro*” (having sex without using condoms).

Her approach to the issue is not holistic but rather liberal. She addresses individuals that she knows sex has become their ‘staple food’, an opium or addiction. She talks from a view point in which she understands that if you tell individuals “No to sex (abstinence)”, they consider you obstinate even if you specify the consequences, but if I would say “Condomise” (use condom during sex) the sorry would be negotiable.

They are many causes in the Zimbabwean society of unwanted pregnancies, unprotected sex and other. That of partners debating for unprotected sex has received much attention of health practitioners, academics and different organisation as the major reason to the cause of STIs and HIV and AIDS. Research literature on use of condoms in Sub-Saharan Africa, reveals that condoms are not frequently made use of in sexual happenstances (Grunseit, 2004; Nzioka, 2001). This is seconded by Kahari and Takavarasha (2014) who researched on condom use and anti-condom use discourses and discovered that some people are against the use of condoms by labelling them as rubbers, umbrellas, gumboots, raincoats, socks, bags and balloon. Hence, what these artists sing is not music for music’s sake but rather a reflection of the reality of what is taking place in the society. Though Lady Bee’s defendants might consider her music as educative or a form of awareness campaign for specific audience, her use of extreme vulgar words overrides the merits of her efforts. Therefore this is the reason why her music does not have a chance to be played on airplay.

Gunpowder in his song “*Punani*” sings against women who practice commercial sex work. This is contained in the lyrics “*ndiwo upenyu hwako kajaira kutengesa punani*” (That’s her way of living, she is used to selling off her vagina). Gunpowder uses the secondary prefix /ka/ which denote abnormal specimen. The lyrics, “*kanocheke kunge reza*” (she cuts like a razor blade), signifies a dangerous woman health wise, who practice numerous sexual relations. He further chants that “*mapunani anokuurayisa*” (vaginas kill), and “*zvitani zvikobvu, zvinaku, zvemakumbo matsvuku ndizvo zvatinozira*” (We die because of the lust for thick beautiful girls with light in completion thighs). This illustrates the truth about men’s hunger for intimate

sexual relationships with specific types of women, basing the choice on body shape. The artist invokes his fellow male counterparts note to be impressed by the outside looks of a woman without knowing her HIV status. This concurs with a popular saying ‘*Runako rwemunhu mukore uno rwuri muropa*’ (The beauty of a person in this contemporary era is in the blood). He further utilizes vulgarity in language to draw people’s minds regarding his message against prostitution.

His music is a form of male discourse, intended to advise other fellow men not to be driven by outside looks of women. There is additionally the exhortation against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The highest rate of infection of HIV virus is through sexual intercourses without using condoms (Attia et al, 2009). Gunpowder chants that, “Punani... Rasta, *ukadhibha unozorwa chirwere kunge Vaseline*” (Vagina... Rasta, if you are not careful you will be smeared the infection like Vaseline), the singer is describing how HIV/AIDS is easily spread through sexual intercourse with commercial sex workers and it is the highest way by which the virus passed on to the next person. The singer warns against commercial sex worker who are just after money relationships and they don’t care about health issues of their partners.

It has been discussed in this section that some Zimdancehall songs with an element of vulgarity are reflective of the theme on effects of unprotected sex. This theme has been ascertained to be expressive of the truth of what is occurring in the society.

### **4.3.3 Celebrating phallic power**

This section analyses celebration of phallic power in the society with reference to Winky D’s song “Bigger size” and King Shaddy’s “*Handina sinhi rebhakosi.*” Kabweza (1971) notes that in the pre-colonial era a boy would celebrate after having his first wet dream as it marked manhood and his ability to impregnate a woman. Loizos (1994,) further notes that phallic sexuality is a tradition and symbol of power. The majority of female audience whom the researcher interviewed commented on the embracement of male sexuality in the Zimdancehall songs with elements of vulgarity. Winky D’s song can be a typical example of celebrating phallic sexuality. Winky D’s birth name is Wallace Chirumiko, he released his first tracks in 1999 and he is one of the pioneering artists of the genre. In one of his earliest tracks, “Bigger size” chants:

She wants a bigger size between her thighs  
She closes her eyes and fanaticizes  
She wants an African man not an Indian

She says Winky D you are strong like a stallion  
Mi (I) have the longest *ting* (thing) in *na di* (in the) continent

The young lady is said to consider acquainting her boyfriend with her aunty after indulging in sexual intercourse with him, that is when she discovered and liked his bigger size (penis). This in Scott's (1990) terms is a 'hidden transcript' transitioned into public discourse. At gatherings such as grain threshing parties in the pre-colonial, contextually, era lyrics like these would not have not been considered as vulgar. A typical example of ridiculing phallic power is the song "*Chimboroni*" (what type of penis is this) cited by Chiwome (1992). This is no new art that women are presented appreciating or protesting against the phallic power. While the bedroom poetry celebrated phallic power, the beers parties offered women the chance to express their dissatisfactions on some male sexuality.

The song on the other dimension uncovers that some marriage unions today are now sex-centred. The underlying question is of whether a man's penis size matters to women as a consideration for marriage. The vocalist presents a lady who is autonomous, who communicates her contemplations that she finds African men with bigger penises as with the most capacity to offer more satisfactory sex. Such general talks or myths on the satisfactory capabilities of enormous phalluses of African men are there in the society. Notably, black men are believed to have enormous penises and to be more sexually potent than White males (Fanon, 1967; McCray, 1967). What Winky D sings cannot be ignored as fallacious since it uncovers some societal veracity. In relation to this, the modern society all over the streets, there is an increase in advertisements on natural medicines of penis enlargement, virginity tightening, and buttocks and breasts enlargement. This, in this manner, uncovers dissatisfaction between both men and women with regard to their individual or inverse sex expectations of body sizes and shapes. Thus, music becomes a domain in which some societal concealed truths will be expressed.

However, this is commonly uncultured, taking a gander at the Shona marriage customs which didn't permit sex between young unmarried individuals. The song further uncovers some men's perspectives of 21st century ladies' thoughts in picking a suitable life accomplice. This and his other two distinct tracks "*African ting*" and "*Put the point the finger at me*" convey the same subject of praising the gigantic phalluses of African men. King Shaddy's tune "*Handina sinhi rebhakosi*" is also another typical example on the same subject.

The women displayed in such songs are post-modernistic, and does not confirm to general societal expectations. In the pre-colonial set up, young ladies were taught to acknowledge any penis size and to be appreciative of what her spouse has though censored protest was there in specific contexts. This diminished rates of promiscuity in relational unions. Nowadays, the duties of aunts and uncles has been weakened, there is no suitable institutions to teach the young ones. It, in this way, appears as though the mass media, social networks and the internet has taken up those duties and the young people see foreign cultures which are exposed to as the standard to shape their lives. Therefore, these vulgar songs convey vital messages and uncover some ugly truths of what the the society is transforming into.

In this section, it has been ascertained that vulgar lyrics on the theme of phallic embracement are reflective of the truth of what is happening in the society. This was evidenced through increase in town streets of advertisement of traditional medicines for enlargement and tightening of male and female body private parts.

#### **4.3.4 Reflections on promiscuity, mini-skirts and prostitution**

This section discusses themes on promiscuity, mini-skirts and prostitution reflected in Zimdancehall songs with vulgar lyrics. The songs to be examined with such themes are “*Poto*” by Qounfuzed and “*Pfambi*” by Sniper Storm. Such themes on promiscuity and prostitution are very prevalent not only in Zimdancehall music but also in newspapers. Out of all questionnaire respondents, 70% identified the theme on prostitution and 20% identified the theme on promiscuity in responding to the second question which requested any themes of significance reflected in Zimdancehall song with elements of vulgarity. 80% of the respondents agreed that vulgarity in an utterance or in music which expresses the seriousness of the matter. This illustrates that most of the respondents were in agreement with the fact that some songs with vulgar lyrics are expressive of the truth of what is happening in the society. This, therefore, validates the argument based on that vulgar is an expression of truth of events in occurrence in the society. This concurs to Ngugi’s (1998, 30-31) view that the mirror, even a terrible mirror, may be centred on the expected item, however it is shocking how regularly it reflect different items around and which may make those seeing the scene see more into it than they were planned to do. This is the same with Zimdancehall songs with vulgar lyrics, though they are characterised with such lyrics they are expressive of pertinent themes which are not sung in other genres of music.

A typical example of a song on the theme of promiscuity is Qounfuzed's track, "*Poto*", in which he chants:

*Kana ndisipo ndapota usapote uchipa munhu poto  
Hatidi kuzonzwa kuti pane vauri kumira navo mumukoto  
Saka usangopfachura, kuti angoda wose unongopakura, achingochachura  
Zvakuda kudhabhura, kuti wava mukadzi wangu handisisiri bhachura  
Kana ndisipo, usapakure, kwidibira usazovhure  
Unandimirira kunyangwe ndiri kure  
Usazondichinjira zvinoita mhangure*

If I not there, please don't have sex with any person  
We don't want to hear that you being seen with other people (men) in thoroughfares  
So don't just carelessly dish out sexual favours to everyone who wants them  
It now needs you to double (consider) that you are now my wife, I'm no longer a bachelor  
When I'm not around, don't dish out, close it and never open it  
Wait for me even if I'm far away  
Don't change colours on me like what a black mamba does)

The most recurring term in the song which is also the title of the track is "*Poto*." *Poto* is a Shona lighter word or vulgar term used to allude to the vagina and is mostly used nowadays by youths. A pot is used to symbolise the female sex organ which the artists warns that it cannot be given to other men and can only be offered between married partners. '*Poto*' in this case can be argued to be what Tongai Moyo considers to be "*Ndiro yababa*" (the father's plate) in his song with the song with the same title. He uses a euphemistic language to chant about sexual matters. Both Qounfuzed and Tongai Moyo are singing about the same issue, but what is different now is that Qounfuzed's lyrics are more obscenely explicit than that of Tongai Moyo. The other recurring word in Qounfuzed's song is *punani*, which is a Jamaica Patois vulgar term which means vagina. He uses this foreign word "*punani*" which refers to a female's genitals to make his lyrics less vulgar.

The significant message which can be derived from this song is about being faithful in marriages. Marriage is a life time sacrifice and people usually take vows as it is depicted in the song, "*ndapota usazondikanya nekuti ndazvipira kukubata banya*" (please don't cheat on me because I have pledged to treat you well). Dissatisfactions ought to be stayed away from and a partner must be patient waiting upon the return of the other partner. His observation suits well in a society where they are many cases of extra marital affairs inclusive of both males and females (Wasosa, 2010; Tembe, 2010). He believes that when individuals are bounded by marriage, sexual intercourse must be confined to married partners only. The message is specifically dedicated mostly to married women.



Due to economic hardships in Zimbabwe, from 2008 and prior to that, many people continue to migrate to neighbouring countries in search of greener pastures and better economic standards; and this is resulting in separation of spouses. It is objective truth that some married individuals are indulging in value-based sex as they travel or remain behind because of monetary hardships. Hahlani and Kahlamba (2015) observe that poverty is the push factor for most women who join sex work. They further report that single women and other married women also indulge in sex work due to economic hardships. The other cause of being promiscuous in societies of today is the issue of socio-economic status. Married women are involved in multiple sexes in search of men who are financially stable. During the pre-colonial era, sex was only to be indulged by those who were joined by marriage and therefore, the singer is also presenting the same advice using powerful language, vulgarity, to the current generation. The message is extremely essential as individuals ought to glance back at Shona philosophy that supports sexual intercourse between married partners.

On songs reflective of themes on mini-skirts and prostitution, Sniper Storm's song "Pfambi" is a typical example of such songs. Sniper Storm is one of the most popular Zimdancehall artists. His career can be traced as far back as 1999 and Pindula (2014) notes that he is one of the founding artists of the Zimdancehall genre. In the cited song, he sings:

*Unogona kungodanana nemusikana akadaro  
Pari pavarume anonzi ane makaro  
Paafamba pese anotambisa magaro,  
Zvinhu zviripachena kunge poto isina muvharo*

(You can fall in love with a girl like that  
Where ever she is they say she is greedy of men  
Where ever she walks, she shakes her buttocks  
Her essential body parts will be outside like a pot without a lead)

Sniper's song seems to be against women who wear clothes that expose most of their body parts out. Sniper is of the patriarchal notion that some women's dressing is their strategy or a sexual attack to affront to men's ego. Dube's (2013) research respondents (61% of males and 63% of females) stated that women's wearing of too tight or too short clothes is 'provocative dressing' and has the risk of provoking a man to rape. However, Burt (1980) contends that rape is more of criminality of power reasonably than lust.

The musician here is of the conservative school of thought that advocates for decent dressing when it comes to clothes. To him, women who dress clothes that are too short do it to display their bodies to capture the eyes of men, and they are no less than prostitutes. The topic about

how to dress properly is a very debatable issue in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many 21<sup>st</sup> century youths cultural debates are usually about dressing; whether if it's appropriate or not for girls or women to wear these shorts, tight clothes and mini skirt. Evidently, different newspaper articles reported on the case of a young woman who was harassed being called her a prostitute and stripped naked by at a Kombi terminus by rowdy men for dressing a mini skirt (Zaniest Zimbabwean, 2014/10/14). This event was followed by an organised women's mini skirt march, which protesting against such sexual harassment on women with regards to dressing mini-skirts.

Consequently, distinguishing between who is a prostitute or not basing on dressing seems to be problematic due to cultural dynamism in dressing. However, the actions of the woman portrayed in this song qualify her as a prostitute. The problem come in the case were the woman's buttocks shakes naturally due to their size. The women which Sniper portrays is a typical prostitute in the sense that her shaking of her body is deliberately done in front of men thus qualifying her to resemble the title of the song "*pfambi*" (prostitute). In support of his song, one can allude that he is against the behaviour of women who wants to sexually satisfy every man they meets. Such personals with deviant behaviours are there in our diluted and diverse society. Thus, what he sings is not alien to societal notions of truths. He exposes a calibre of women with deviant behaviours in the society. However, he seems to lack the understanding of what pushes such women in prostitution. This behavioural trait is arguably as a result of the neo-colonial conditions were there are economic hardships which makes people to behave like animals in search for a better living. This concurs with the Marxists view point, which finds activities like prostitution as conditioned by unequal distribution of resources in a country.

This section has discussed themes on promiscuity, societal notions on mini-skirts and on prostitution. It has been argued that these themes are expressive of the truth that is happening in the society. Evidence from data collection and newspaper articles have been used to validate the reality reflected by Zimdancehall songs with vulgar components.

#### **4.3.5 Portrayal of bad sanitation in ghettos**

This section discusses songs with vulgar lyrics on the portrayal of bad sanitation at high density suburbs. Due to overpopulation in those areas, there is high electric load shading, bad sewage system and shortages of water. The singer with lyrics on such theme is King Shaddy,

his birth name Shadreck Kwarire and he is also one of the pioneering artists in Zimdancehall genre. King Shaddy's in his song "*Mukonde waTonde*" (Tonde's mountain of faeces) sings:

*Pakanga pasina bepa, zvaireva haana kuchingura*  
*Raive remagwavha; mutakura*  
*Asika, dai asiya afushira*  
*Ndozviri kukonzeresa korera*

(There was no toilet paper, which means he did not wipe off  
It was of guavas; mixed cooked maize and groundnuts  
But, he was supposed to cover the faeces  
This is the reason for outbreak of cholera)

The most recurrent word is *mukonde* which is a Shona word which refers to something mountainous and it is usually used to refer to hip of sadza. In this case, the singer used it to refer to a hip of human waste. He satirises a situation where a society, H-Metro and ZRP gather to find the owner of the faeces. He presents different societal perceptions about consequences which the owner of *mukonde* (mountain of faeces) was to face. What he chants is a reflection of living conditions in the ghetto. Chipare (2010) notes that due to shortages to water sources of flashing human waste, the people end up using bush toilets. This is what the artist is complaining that it is causing cholera. This is supported by Chipare (2010) who asserts that there were high rates of cholera outbreaks in Zimbabwe between 2008 and 2009. This resulted in many deaths connected to this outbreak. Consequently, that was the same epoch when King Shaddy's song was released. This, therefore, shows that he was influenced by the cholera outbreak to protest against bush toilets. However, he falls short of lyrics to expose the cause of such practice. In overall analysis, it can be noted that the artist drives humour out of vulgarity as a strategy of exposing the situations of bad sanitation in the high density areas.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The chapter has examined vulgarity as an expression of truth of what is happening in the society. The discussion has exposed that the songs analysed reflects different situations and condition which are taking place in the contemporary Zimbabwean society. Different prevalent themes in the songs have been discussed in relation to social and political system in the society. It has been ascertained truth analysis lyrics of selected songs and with reference to data collected from the field that vulgar is an expression of the truth of what is happening in the society. The truth in it was explored on themes such as pornography, oral sex, truth about sex, reflections on effects of unprotected sex, HIV and AIDS, bad sanitation in the ghetto and prostitution.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This is the final chapter of this study which serves to summarize and conclude the whole study, and then provide recommendations for further research. The study examined vulgar as an expression of power and truth in selected Zimdancehall songs. The introductory chapter of this study illustrated the problem which was under inquiry and its contexts. It further provided the conceptual framework informing this study, the main aims and the methodology used to acquire, analyze and present the findings. The following chapter, that is, chapter two of the research, reviewed the concept of vulgarity and further examined different spheres and situations where vulgar language relevantly manifested and still manifests in the pre-colonial, colonial and contemporary Zimbabwean Shona society. It is from this inquiry that the researcher discovered that vulgarity in art as a discourse is not a new phenomenon in the Zimbabwean society in different contexts. It further examined vulgar lyrics in selected Zimdancehall tracks as an expression of power by the artists and the truth of what is happening in the society. Guided by the concept of Aesthetics of vulgarity, the study analyzed lyrics of selected Zimdancehall songs and data gathered from questionnaires, interviews and secondary sources.

The study was firstly aimed exploring the prevalence and relevance of vulgarity in the Shona society through examining situations and spheres where it existed, was suppressed and still exists in the pre-colonial, colonial and the contemporary eras. Guided by this aim, the researcher established that utilization of vulgarity in speech is not a new phenomenon in the Shona society. In the traditional Shona society, it was societally and contextually sanctioned in different spheres and situations such as the discourse of lovers under the blanket, grain threshing gatherings, girls' and boys' sex education and in different masculine and feminine discourses. The research initially established the existence and relevance of vulgarity in pre-colonial, colonial and contemporary Shona society. The study further ascertained that the cultural institutions where vulgarity manifested in the contexts above were tempered with by the colonialists in their attempt to impart the colonial ideology on the native people. Colonial structures such as colonial Christianity, education and laws were used by the colonial masters in trying to uproot the colonised from their culture; however vulgarity managed to be sustained in the private transcript. In the contemporary era, vulgarity in vocabulary and action was found to be predominant on contemporary platforms and contexts like social media, at kitchen

parties, church sermons, graffiti inscriptions, soccer matches and other genres of music including Zimdancehall. Vulgarity in all the above contexts was argued to be an expression of power and truth. Looking at vulgarity in other music genres, it was discovered that it is also evident in its sexually suggestive and explicit manner in songs of musicians like Calisto Nyamunda's "Special meat", Tongai Moyo's "*Sele*" and Moyana's "*Munotidako*" and "*Pamhatakaterera*." However, it is sanctioned by censorship laws which are ideological and repressive. This inquiry was very vital as it validated arguments in the chapters that followed and also cleared away some misconceptions in the society and the scholarly fraternity with regards to the merits and demerits of vulgarity in the Zimbabwean society

The study went further to analyze the lyrics of selected Zimdancehall songs. This was done with the objective of ascertaining whether or not vulgarity in music is really an expression of power by the musicians. Data acquired from interviews and questionnaires was used as phenomenology in validating the arguments in the research. It was discovered in the chapter that since vulgar language has the power to draw people's attention, the Zimdancehall artists make use of it to acquire power in the music industry and splinter their identities. In relation to power, the study inferred that Zimdancehall artist utilize vulgar lyrics in seeking popularity in the music industry, in quest of being acknowledged by other well-known genres, for example, Sungura. Vulgarity is likewise utilized as it is part of the dis tracks among Zimdancehall musicians in showing superiority of some artists over others; additionally it demonstrates gender power relations in the general public and represents issues to do with politics of age in music industry. Consequently, the artists seize power through humor in vulgar. The last section of the chapter analyzed whether the artists get that power or not through using vulgarity and it demonstrated that the majority of the referred artists achieved their goals though use of vulgarity. However, they become popular for wrong reasons, popular without following and also disempower themselves in their attempt to achieve artistic power and popularity through using vulgar lyrics.

Furthermore, the other aim of the study was to explore the use of vulgarity in Zimdancehall as an expression of the truth of what is happening in the society. This was done looking at selected songs with a component of vulgarity and presenting and analyzing data from questionnaires and interviews. It was found that most of the analyzed tracks ponder predominant topics on pornography, oral sex, unprotected sex, themes in association with celebration of phallic power and marital promiscuity. For instance, on oral sex, though analysis of King Labash and Ba Junior's songs with reference to the data from the field, it is

ascertained that the practice of oral sex is contested in the society. While other musicians are against it, others are supporting it. This reveals the truth about post-modernistic notion of different people in the society. A few songs reflected poor sanitation in high density suburbs, patriarchal and general societal perspectives about prostitution, diverse discourses on HIV and AIDS, partners' negotiation of sex positions and ssexual or erotic dancing. It was established that the artists make use of vulgarity discourse in music as a platform of to speak the truth. Evidently, it is that truth which is not found in songs of artists of other genres and it is the truth which is dangerous to the society if it's not spoken. It was concluded that though vulgar language is considered as conveying negative intentions, it communicates solidly reality of what is going on in the society.

Given that the study shows that vulgarity in music is an expression of power by the musician and truth of what is happening in the society, basing on the research findings, the researcher recommends some areas for further research. Further researches should be done on analysis of vulgarity in different discourses like children's songs and literary works. This research largely attended to social, cultural and economic situation, therefore there is need to conduct further researches on vulgarity discourses forms in attending to politically situations in a country. There is also need to conduct other researches on kitchen parties and church sermons and other institutions and contexts where vulgarity manifests tracing the changes which have taken place.

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## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire for audience

I am Blessed Parwaringira, a student studying Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in African Languages and Culture at Midlands State University, Gweru. In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree, I am carrying out a research titled *Vulgar as an expression of power and truth in selected Zimdancehall songs*. (Explain the topic briefly). The topic critically discusses the vulgar lyrics in Zimdancehall selected music as an expression of power by the musicians and the truth of what is happening in the society. The data collected will be greatly appreciated. Data collected will be restricted to academic use only and confidentiality will be strictly observed.

#### SECTION A

#### Tick in the appropriate box

1. Do you listen to Zimdancehall music? YES  NO

2. Are there any themes of significance which can be conveyed from Zimdancehall music with an element of vulgar lyrics? YES  NO  Justify your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What was the place of vulgar language in:

(a) *the precolonial era*

.....  
.....  
.....

(b) *colonial period*

.....  
.....  
.....

6. What do you think is the reason for the use of vulgar lyrics by Zimdancehall artists?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. What are the societal perceptions of vulgar language in the area which you come from?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Section B**

	<b>I strongly agree</b>	<b>I agree</b>	<b>I'm neutral</b>	<b>I disagree</b>
1. Vulgar lyrics in music has the power to draw people's attention to the message in it				
2. Serious social, economic and political issues can be addressed vigorously through vulgar lyrics				
3. Vulgarly in Zimdancehall is an expression of power by the musicians and the truth of what is happening in the society				
4. An artist can become popular through singing vulgar lyrics				
5. Vulgarly in an utterance or in music expresses the seriousness of the matter.				

6. Is there any song in Zimdancehall which contains an element of vulgarity which you have listen to?

Yes

No

a) What's your comment on it?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

b) With reference to any song with vulgar lyrics of any Zimdancehall artist you know, what themes of significance can be drawn from it?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Interview guides for Zimdancehall artists**

I am Blessed Parwaringira, a student studying Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in African Languages and Culture at Midlands State University, Gweru. In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree, I am carrying out a research titled *Vulgar as an expression of power and truth in selected Zimdancehall songs*. (Explain the topic briefly). The topic critically discusses the vulgar lyrics in Zimdancehall selected music as an expression of power by the musicians and the truth of what is happening in the society. The data collected will be greatly appreciated. Data collected will be restricted to academic use only and confidentiality will be strictly observed.

### **The interview questions**

1. What is the reason for the use of vulgar lyrics in some of Zimdancehall artists' songs?
2. Are there any themes of importance that can be drawn from Zimdancehall songs with vulgar lyrics?
3. Who do you think are the major audience of this type of music?
4. What are your views on artists who utilize vulgar lyrics in their music; should this type of music be played on the airplay?
5. What mileage has this type of music given you?
6. What is your comment on the consideration that vulgar to be an expression of power by the artists and truth of what is happening in the society?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION**



## **Appendix 3**

### **Interview guide for academics**

#### **To: The informant**

I am Blessed Parwaringira, a student studying Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in African Languages and Culture at Midlands State University, Gweru. In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree, I am carrying out a research titled: *Vulgar as an expression of power and truth in selected Zimdancehall songs*. The topic critically discusses the vulgar lyrics in Zimdancehall selected music as an expression of power by the musicians and the truth of what is happening in the society. The data collected will be greatly appreciated. Data collected will be restricted to academic use only and confidentiality will be strictly observed.

#### **The interview questions**

1. What is your general comment on vulgar in Zimdancehall music in relation to today's society?
2. What do you think are the reason for prevalence and use of explicit lyrics in modern genres?
3. Considering that vulgar can be an expression of power, what is your comment on Zimdancehall music in relation to power?
4. Given that the vulgar discourses tend to expose concretely the truths of particular situations which cannot be explicitly said with ordinary words, what's your comment on vulgarity in Zimdancehall with regard to reflection of truth of what is happening in the society?
5. Since vulgar has the ability to propel an artist's music into high art, what is can you comment on the sustainability of that power?
6. What are the effects of obscene lyrics on first the artist's musical carrier and secondly the audience of Zimdancehall?