AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE SHONA NOVEL AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE SHONA NOVEL AS A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE DATE
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SUMMARY

A lot of research on the Shona novel has focused on the influence of orature and the Bible. It has also focused on the influence that the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau had on its development. This research has endeavoured to highlight the reliability and validity of the Shona novel as a historical document. The dependability of the novel as an alternative site from which history can be deciphered is corroborated by historical documents. The history that comes out in the Shona novels that have been studied covers the pre-colonial period right up to the post-independence period. Among the issues that come up in the research that relate to history are the Rozvi state under Chrisamhuru, the economic activities in pre-colonial Shona society that include raids for cattle and women as well as hunting and external trade. The Shona novel has also proved historically reliable in as far as it relates to the navigability of the Save River. It has highlighted the living conditions and the wages that Blacks got in colonial Rhodesia and exposed the land imbalances that came into existence because of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which left Blacks living on the periphery and in overcrowded, hot and dry reserves that were hardly fertile. The Rhodesian authorities, as the novels have exposed, denied most Blacks access to education. When schools were provided, they were poorly staffed and those on farms functioned more as labour pools than schools. The novel has also proved its dependability when it highlights the early days of the nationalist movement and the unilateral declaration of independence of 1965. It has also brought to the fore the birth of the armed struggle and the Rhodesian responses to it. The Rhodesians responded politically and militarily. Politically, it was through the Internal Settlement Agreement of March 1978. Militarily they moved people into ‘protected villages’ in an effort to deny guerrillas access to food and clothing. The novel also highlights the post-independence period especially political intolerance.
TITLE OF THESIS

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KEY TERMS

History, historicity, reliability, validity, facticity, historitainment, faction, liberation war, ZANU (PF), the Shona novel.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Literary products are environmental. They are time-framed and their coming into being is dictated by events of the past, present and by what the writers may hope to take place in future. When people sit down to write they take into account the political, economic, religious as well as other social conditions of their time. They may respond to these conditions by focusing on their current situation, past or their envisaged future. It is therefore necessary to point out the fact that it becomes clear that every novel, poem, short story or play is a product of its local history. Therefore, most writings of an imaginative nature are in some way historical documents. They record what the writer sees as the truth, or may wish to be seen as the truth, and most people end up accepting what writers put down as the truth about a given historical epoch. The same can be said of the Shona novel. It has elements of which students in schools, colleges and universities are required to decipher in their examinations. These elements may include an understanding of the Shona past among other issues. Some novels especially those that focus on pre-colonial Zimbabwe have been viewed by examiners and teachers as a reservoir of the lost and distant Shona past.

It is true that some novels have been used as historical resources that are very useful in showing the Shona past. The past in these novels is not only that which relates to the Shona as portrayed in pre-colonial times but also relates to their experiences in colonial Zimbabwe. The novel also focuses on the period after independence. Questions such as the following may need to be asked: Are these reliable historical sources? Moreover, how valid are they as sources? It is therefore important to note that these are not the only questions that need to be answered. Other questions that relate to whose history is being recorded, may also need to be addressed. The next issue to ask is whether the authors of these novels deliberately wrote down history, or stumbled across historical facts when they were writing. The issue of whether or not the stories contained in novels met up with the conditions for the publication of works of an imaginative nature was
highly considered since this was part of the writing and publishing process in colonial Zimbabwe. In light of this observation, it can be argued that novels contain part of history.

The study does not only focus on the history of pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Novels whose stories took place in colonial Zimbabwe, as well as those that focused on Zimbabwe's war of liberation and its aftermath are subjected to the same scrutiny in an effort to find out whether they are reliable or not, and if they are, to what extent. This helped the researcher appreciate why novelists are largely viewed as partners in historical processes. The study also highlights that some novelists avoid bringing out historical truths in their writings while others are interested in informing their readers on the historical processes that will be taking place.

The novelists range from Solomon Mutswairo who wrote (Feso 1956), who because of his pioneering work most scholars regard him as the father of the Shona novel, to Mabasa the author of Mapenzi (1999) as well as Mutasa (Sekai: Minda Tave Nayo 2005); whose novels are in support of Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme launched in the year 2000. The study focuses on other issues besides that of the land question. Among these are trade with the Portuguese (pre-colonial Zimbabwe), the war of liberation and the post-independence period and the turmoil embedded in it.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to show the reliability and validity of the Shona novel as a historical document. It is important to note that the thematic scope of the Shona novel spans a very broad spectrum. There are some novels that focus on life in pre-colonial Zimbabwe, during colonial rule, during the war of liberation, as well as after independence. This wide spectrum provides the sub-aims of this current study.

Concerning life in pre-colonial Zimbabwe the focus was on novels such as Mutasa's Nhume Yamambo (1990), Misodzi, Dikita Neropa (1991) and Mapatya (1978) as well as Chakaipa's Pfumo Reropa (1961) and Karikoga Gumiremiseve (1959). Other novels in the same category that were studied are Jekanyika
(Mugugu 1968), Kutonhodzwa KwaChauruka (Chiguvare 1968), Pfuma Ndeyamaoko (Gutsa 1980), Gehena Harina Moto and Tambaoga Mwanangu (Kuimba 1965 and 1968), Musango Mune Nyama (Hamutyinei 1989) as well as Rakava Buno Risifemberi (Matsikiti 1995). The study reflected on what is written in these novels in an effort to find out whether what is contained in them corresponds to what is recorded in some historical documents, or whether these novels are but a manifestation of colonialism's attempt to demonise the Shona past, or whether the writers have wittingly or unwittingly distorted history. How accurate for example, is the story that one of the twins was supposed to be killed as is said in Mutasa's Mapatya (1978)? If what Mutasa says is true, what could have been the motive behind the killings?

Given the fact that the purpose of literature is not only to entertain, there is also need to accept its moral function as a restraint on the wayward. It is in this light that Shona literature does not have to be studied for examination purposes only, as is the case nowadays. The Shona novel also needs to be studied for it functions as a signpost for what is considered good, bad, culturally appropriate and inappropriate so that readers may take heed. It is in light of this observation that the researcher also saw the need to look at the Shona novel written in colonial Zimbabwe in an effort to find out whether or not it related to the situation on the ground at that particular point in time. For instance, the issue of race relations. Other issues that pertain to colonial Zimbabwe that the researcher also aims to examine are those that relate to labour relations, land and settlement patterns in rural and urban areas as well as on farms.

Zimbabwe's independence came about because of a protracted and bloody liberation war. Close to thirty thousand lives (30 000) were lost and many people were maimed. Many thousands more were refugees in camps in Mozambique and Zambia. Novels which relate to Zimbabwe's war of liberation and which celebrate the coming of independence have been written. These novels include among others Zvaida Kushinga (Makari 1992), and Makara Asionani (Matsikiti 1987). Some of these novels reflect the pain that the liberation war fighters and the masses suffered. Among these novels are Mutunhu Une Mago and Paida Moyo (Nyawaranda 1985 and 1987) and Zvairwadza Vasara (Musengezi 1984). Some of these novels relate to the early stages of the liberation struggle like
Hamutyinei’s *Zvakanga Zvakaoma muZimbabwe* (1984). There was therefore the need to critically analyse these novels and find out whether they have any historical relevance. The focus was on whether they can be relied on as historical documents in as far as they give an account of the war. Both sides (the liberation war fighters and the Rhodesian forces) committed atrocities in this war. There was need to find out for example, if those novels that focus on this sad phase of Zimbabwe’s history have captured the real events or have chosen to give a biased version of history. There was again the case of the post-independence period that needs to be carefully studied and analysed. The post-independence period has novels like *Sekai: Minda Tave Nayo* (Mutasa 2005) and other novels in this category that deal with both the liberation war period and its aftermath. Some of these are *Chakwesha* (Chimhundu 1991) *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda*… (Manyimbiri 1991), and *Zvaida Kushinga* (Makari 1992). The research also analysed whether the people’s liberation war aspirations and expectations have been fulfilled. Issues of governance were also focused on. The issue of neo-colonialism naturally came out in the analysis of issues that have to do with the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of liberation war expectations.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

The study of the Shona novel of late is becoming multi-dimensional. It has not abandoned the traditional approaches of theme, plot, characterization as well as setting of events and other related aspects. It has now come to include different aspects such as classification, for example, the war novel, the historical novel and others. Scholars like Gaidzanwa have introduced a feminist perspective to the study of the Shona novel. It is clear from the examples that these multi-faceted approaches to the study of the Shona novel do not only broaden its scope and depth but also increase its appreciation. The current study was carried out from a historical critical as well as Africanist perspective. There was need to understand and analyse the Shona novel and access its historical reliability and validity, or lack of it.

This research is also justifiable because some readers and other critics have “come to wonder whether the truth about what really happened can ever be purely and objectively known” (Murfin 1996:117). The research sought to find out whether
the novels really capture the events on the ground. Commenting on the relevance of literature to life Carlsen and Gilbert say:

The subject matter of literature is life itself. The world's task is to preserve our tragedies and triumphs, our fears and foibles, our insights and insufficiencies (1985:2).

This statement from these two scholars is a good pointer to why it was necessary to carry out this research. There was need to find out whether these novels highlight the successes as well as the failures of the novelists in particular and Zimbabweans in general in depicting the history of Zimbabwe. When these novelists record follies, failures, triumphs and tragedies, do they record the truth or they evade the truth and only pass moral judgements on issues that are irrelevant? There was also the need to find out whether these writers have written history deliberately and if so why? This comes in the wake of the revelation that the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau functioned as a censorship board (Chiwome 2002:34-35). Does this then mean that the Literature Bureau continued to be such until its disbandment in 1998? The issue of stories contained in the novels and other aspects such as the conditions for publication that were prevailing in colonial Zimbabwe were discussed. These conditions are part of the history that may have been unintentionally written.

Ngugi (1972: xv) says:

Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society.

These words by Ngugi are a further justification for the study of the historicity of the Shona novel. The realization that literature is “given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern” raises questions on whether what is written then is historically correct, or what is considered politically correct. This becomes particularly interesting when an analysis of the novels published under the guidance of the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau and those that were published without its blessings is made. This becomes interesting when novels like Mabasa’s Mapenzi (1999) are also analysed.
This research also sought to fill a gap that has been left void by previous studies, which have tended to focus on the development of Shona orthography and the politics of publishing in colonial Zimbabwe as is given in Kahari’s *Aspects of the Shona Novel and Other Related Genres* (1986) and *The Rise of the Shona Novel* (1990). Chiwome’s *A Social History of the Shona Novel* (1996, 2002) focuses on the politics of publication in colonial Zimbabwe and only pays a cursory glance to the historical element. Other writings have focused on Chakaipa and Chidyausiku as evidenced by *The Novels of Patrick Chakaipa* (Kahari 1972). This was republished later as *The Romances of Patrick Chakaipa* (1994) and *The Moral Vision of Patrick Chakaipa* (1997). Kahari also wrote *The Imaginative Writings of Paul Chidyausiku* (1975). These writings of Kahari focused more on the thematic aspects, as well as the Shona traditional way of life as is given in Chidyausiku’s *Ndakambokuyambira* (1969). Chiwome (1996, 2002) has paid more attention to the Christian (Missionary) and colonial factors influencing the development and growth of the Shona novel. While these may be considered historical in nature, they address only one aspect of the history of colonial Zimbabwe, that of the directors of the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau (SRLB) who gave the direction towards which the Shona novel was to grow. This research therefore sought to fill the void that the above writings have left.

This study also intended to show that the post-independence Shona novel has been to some extent as dishonest as its predecessor – the colonial novel. The colonial novel has largely tended to show Blacks in a negative light, while the post-independence one has tended to be part of the local praise singers who sing praises to the country’s political leadership. These writers do not give an account of the sad chapter of the dissident era in Zimbabwe’s early years. The closest has been a reference by Masundire in his novel *Mhandu Dzerusununguko* (1991). This novel’s main shortcoming is that it has focused on the atrocities committed by the dissidents and ignored those by the National Army and yet the state President has referred to that part of the country’s history as “that moment of madness.” Some of these novelists have also ignored the atrocities perpetrated on the general populace by the freedom fighters during Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle.
The study also attempted to show that the liberation struggle was not only accomplished because of the fighters and their collaborators (*mujibhas* and *chimbwid os*), but with the assistance of the general populace.

It was also the intention of this study to show that while it is true that literature is social, it is also largely historical. What it transmits to people (readers) is history, even if this history may be judgmental and in the same vein biased, it is history. It intended at the end to show that it falls in line with what Cruikshank being quoted by Ofor (1991:23) observes:

> Human life cannot be represented in a fully or truthful manner without taking account of the pressures brought to bear upon the individual by his milieu, by the particularity of the social situation and historical circumstances.

It is clear from Cruikshank that there is the need to understand each novel in its context. Since every novel is a product of its own historical circumstances, there is then need to understand these circumstances and even go beyond and look at the hidden hand that dictates how each project is supposed to come out. The reason for the writers’ selection in the presentation of reality as dictated by events is so glaring that to leave this area untouched is to do a disservice to the study of the Shona novel. It is the hope of this researcher that this study will ultimately contribute to the already existing ways of analysing the Shona novel.

### 1.4 OBSERVATION

This study has observed that very little work on the historicity of the Shona novel including its reliability and validity has been carried out. It has also noted that a lot of historical facts/realities lie embedded in the novels, but scholars on the Shona novel have ignored this area, or they have just failed to see that there is such an area crying out for their attention.

Another observation made in this study is that novelists and other writers of literature are historians but they tend to be selective and biased recorders of history. What causes these biases may be the prevailing socio-political and historical climate of the day, and in the process, some important historical data
gets eroded even from the minds of those who know what should have been recorded with the passage of time, or as they pass on to the next life. There is also the observation that some novelists have recorded history, and that history is a true reflection of what will be taking place in their time, or will have taken place. However, these events are later paled into oblivion by other creations such as characters or other aspects like humour and satire as is seen in Mabasa’s *Mapenzi* (1999) and Tsodzo’s *Pafunge* (1972).

This study also observes that all literature emanates from its particular historical period, and as such, it may be written with the intention of manipulating readers to think along certain lines. The literature may also be written to convert, and as such, historical accuracy may be sacrificed on the altar of politics, national interests, political affiliation or any other such easily coined excuses.

### 1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Several critical works on the development and growth of the Shona novel have been written. Among those who have researched and written extensively on the Shona novel are Kahari who has written the following publications: *The Novels of Patrick Chakaipa* (1972), re-issued as *The Moral Vision of Patrick Chakaipa* (1997) as well as *The Search for Zimbabwean Identity* (1980), which focuses on the Zimbabwean novel in English, Ndebele and Shona. He has also written *Some Aspects of the Shona Novel and Other Related Genres* (1986), and *The Rise of the Shona Novel* (1990).

Chiwome (1996, 2002) has also written on the Shona novel in the book *A Social History of the Shona Novel*. Pongweni has written *Figurative Language in Shona Discourse* (1990). Chiwome and Kahari have tended to focus on the general development of the Shona novel. In *The Novels of Patrick Chakaipa* (1972:59), Kahari has referred to the fact that Chakaipa in the novels *Garandichauya* and *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* has commented directly or indirectly on the country’s education system. Kahari unfortunately does not state what Chakaipa comments on as regards colonial Zimbabwe’s education system. Chiwome has written specifically zeroing in onto the situation on the ground, highlighting almost every stage in the development of the Shona novel. The closest that Chiwome
gets to the idea of history is when he focuses on the historical circumstances that have led to the development or underdevelopment of the Shona novel in colonial Zimbabwe. He does of course refer to the plight of Blacks in a White city and under White employment, for example, when he refers to Murambiwa Goredema (Chiwome 2002:129) but he has not really written on the Shona historical novel.

Pongweni has on the other hand ventured into new ground by focusing on the use of figurative language in the Shona novel. His study has focused on Chakaipa, Mungoshi and Zvarevashe. Like Kahari who has focused on the influence of rungano (the folktale) on the development of the Shona novel, Chiwome has also written on the influence of Western traditions on early writers such as Paul Chidyausiku in his Pfungwa dzaSekuru Mafusire (1960). This writer/researcher has also written on the influence of the Bible on some Shona novels in his dissertation titled “The Bible and Literature: A Case of Biblical Influence in Some Shona Novels” (Mapara 2003). Gerard has also focused on biblical influence on the Shona novel, but has only referred to Chakaipa’s Rudo Ibofu (1966) in his book African Language Literatures (1981).

No work that relates to the Shona novel and its link with human history as it is has been written. If such a publication exists, it has escaped this researcher’s attention. There are however works that have a bearing on writings that can be said to have a historical leaning. These writings are however not on the Shona novel. Among such publications are books such as Gabel and Wheeler’s The Bible as Literature: An Introduction (1990). This book is handy to this study because it focuses on what biblical scholars refer to as historical books. These two authors try to show the significance of these historical books in Jewish religion and tradition. They also bring out an important aspect that relates very much to some of the Shona novels that are the subject of this study, that some of the history that is in some novels is not objective history but that which is subjective because it is meant for a particular period and purpose.

In his article, “Armah’s Histories” Lindfors (1980) acknowledges that some of Armah’s novels like The Healers are anchored in history, although he later goes on to say that the history given in The Healers is comic-strip history. Webb (1980), in an article titled “The African Historical Novel and the Way Forward” highlights
the fact that historical material is used in the creation of fiction. It is clear from Webb’s assertion that there is a link between fiction and history. From his writing, it can easily be discerned that history feeds into fiction. In fact, his statement makes this very clear. He writes:

"Few would doubt that the relationship between literature and society is a close and meaningful one. Equally, it is apparent that literary forms are never solely literary forms (1980:24)."

Johnson (1980) highlights the interface between literature and history in the article “The Middle Passage in African Literature: Wole Soyinka, Yambo Ouologuem, Ayi Kwei Armah.” In this article, he highlights the fact that the term “The Middle Passage” is taken to be a metaphor that refers to displacement, exile and slavery. The writer acknowledges in this same article that Armah in Two Thousand Seasons clearly demonstrates the catastrophic impact of slavery on the Africans, those who were taken into slavery and those who remained behind. It is clear from this article and those above that all writers whose focus is historical fiction have to be historically conscious, otherwise they risk falling into the trap of getting carried away by huge successes which are fictional, and yet these fictions won’t be of benefit to the readers. Therefore, anyone who wants to write on history in fiction has to be careful.

Scholars have not only focused on the relationship between Africa and the West. They have also written on the relations between Africa and the Arab world. Omotso (1984) makes this clear in an article titled, “The Trans-Saharan Views: Mutually Negative Portrayals.” In this article, Omotso focuses on the historical reality that Black African writers portray Arabs negatively in their writings. He also points out that the Arabs themselves also portray Blacks in a similar manner. It is clear then from some writings that the history of Africa is not complete if historians and writers of fiction ignore the animosity between Black Africa and the Arab north. This conflict is further clarified by the current conflict in Sudan, specifically in the Darfur Region.

Okam (1991) in the article, “The Novelist as Historian: Yambo Ouologuem’s Le Devoir de Violence revisited” states that there is a link between history and
literature. He even goes on to say that without history, there is also no literature. He writes:

> Literature is at one and the same time History’s major bequest to mankind, and the principal corrective of history. This is because all literature begins as an experience and ends as fiction. Accordingly, without experience, or if you like without history, there would be no literature (1991:55).

It is clear from the writer that experience, which is history, is linked to literature. Experience begets literature.

While all or most of the above scholars are linked to literature and history, there are some whose works may not focus on history and literature *per se*, but works that will be used as reliable documents. Such works are books like Ngara’s *Art and Ideology in the African Novel* (1985). Although this book is on the ideology of Marxism and the African novel, it also shows the link between the novel and history because, the intention by most post-independence African writers was to embrace and support Marxism as an appropriate ideology for Africa as a response to the historical and disastrous flirtations with colonialism and capitalism. Ngara also refers to the emergence of the Shona novel as a genre that was replacing the traditional storyteller. Although he does mention the authors Chakaipa, Chidyausiku and Ribeiro, he makes no reference to the direct link between the Shona novel and history. Ngara identifies the close link between the Shona novel and history when he refers to the impact that Mutswairo’s *Feso* had on the political activities in the country (1985:25). The other novel that he refers to as being historical is Mofolo’s *Chaka* (Ngara 1985:31). Mofolo’s novel is however not in Shona. Ellul’s *Propaganda: The Formation of Man’s Attitude* (1973) was also relied on because it helps in refocusing on the history in some novels, which is as well looked at as propaganda. There was however the need at the same time to analyse the historical circumstances that may have led to the development of such propaganda.

The historical element of alignment as given in some novels is a fact that Amuta presents in his book *The Theory of African Literature* (1989), and he clarifies this when he asserts:
...the author is mediating subject and his mode of representing socio-historical experience is a function of objective factors such as facts of biography, class, orientation, ideology and political alignment (p81).

Amuta is reiterating what Ngugi (1972: xv) has said about literature being shaped by one’s social consciousness. Maughan-Brown (1985) has written *Land, Freedom and Fiction: History and Ideology in Kenya*. In his research, he attempts to link several novels written by Black and White Kenyans and how these two racial groups depict the Mau Mau struggle. Blacks depict this struggle as one for freedom, equality and land. The Whites on the other hand see this as a rebellion against authority and not a fight for justice. In his analysis, Maughan-Brown shows novelists like Ruark presenting Blacks in the Mau Mau ranks as embarking on an orgy of violence, rape and looting. He tries to show how much of history as well as ideology is contained in each writing. This book helped to shed light on this research in as far it gives guidance on how the issue of history has been handled.

While the above books and articles were relied on since they have a bearing on this study, other historical texts, which deal with history as a subject, especially those that focus on pre-colonial Zimbabwe, colonial Zimbabwe and the post-independence period were also perused. This is so because some of them have information that is corroborated in some novels. As was hoped, these works yielded information that was useful in proving the validity and reliability or lack of it in some novels as historical documents.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

The research was carried out using the qualitative research approach. This approach was chosen because as stated by Gillham (cited in Dirwai and Gwimbi 2003:57), it is a method that enables the researcher to carry out investigations where other methods such as experiments are neither practical nor ethically justifiable. The advantage is that it enables the researcher to explore his area of study without the use of the ‘controlled’ approach such as experiments.

For this qualitative research, forty-nine novels were used as primary sources. These novels were chosen for analysis because of the themes that have a bearing
on historical facts. Some of the themes that come out in the selected novels deal with issues like land appropriation in colonial Zimbabwe and the recent agrarian reform. The other themes include education in colonial Zimbabwe, the liberation war, migrant labour, accommodation for workers under White rule, labour relations and corruption. The issues that are raised are important in confirming the historical reliability and validity of the Shona novels. Facts in novels were weighed, compared to and tested against existing authentic historical documents. Only Shona novels were analysed because according to Chiwome (2002: ix) Shona fiction comprises 85% of the literature that has been published for use in Zimbabwean schools.

Textual analysis of the selected novels was done using the historical critical method together with the Africanist theory. Historical criticism was used to determine the historicity of the information that is given in the texts (Marshall 1997:126). Historical criticism has been used to study the Old and New Testament to decipher and separate myths and legends from history. Freed (1986:61) makes clear the value of historical criticism to the study of texts. He states that when this approach is applied to biblical studies, it involves determining the oldest text, its literary nature, the circumstances that gave rise to it and its original meaning. He goes further to say:

> When used in the study of Jesus and the gospels, historical criticism involves trying to separate legend and myth from fact, to learn why gospel writers often report a saying of Jesus differently in different contexts; and insofar as possible to determine the original sayings of Jesus (Freed 1986:61).

In the above words, Freed makes it clear that historical criticism is useful in the study of the gospels because it helps the reader to separate legends and myths from the historical Jesus. Freed’s observation can be transferred into a study such as this one that seeks to establish the historicity of the Shona novel.

The Africanist theory was relied on as a complementary one to historical criticism. The major thrust of this theory is that there is no art for art’s sake (Chinweizu et al. 1980:251). Achebe also goes on to confirm the link between literature and history when he says:
It is clear to me that an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant – like that absurd man in the proverb who leaves his burning house to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames (1975:78).

In these words, Achebe is highlighting the interwoven nature of literature and history. He advocates that African literature be reflective of the socio-historical and political situation of the day. Like historical criticism, the Africanist theory helps the researcher to find out if the Shona novel depicts socio-historical issues.

Another data collecting instrument that was used is interviews. These were structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews were used with two prominent authors Chimhundu and Tsodzo. Chimhundu was chosen because he is an academic with years of experience in the teaching of Shona as a subject and, for his first degree he majored in History and Shona. In addition to this, his novel, *Chakwesha*, is one of the novels selected for analysis. Tsodzo was chosen because of his style in the novel *Pafunge* (1972) that enabled him embed historical material that the editors of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau failed to detect. Apart from that he worked for the Literature Bureau that handled Shona manuscripts.

Unstructured interviews were carried out with three people. These were relied on to crosscheck the validity and reliability of the data gathered. One of the interviewees, an elderly man Mr. Makombe, was picked because he is known in his community as Nhoroondo (History). He is believed to be a reservoir of his community’s history. The second informant, Nathan Masandudzi, was chosen because he was a collaborator during the war of liberation. The third interviewee is a brother to the late Susan Matsanga who acted as a courier carrying parcel bombs into the city of Mutare during the liberation war.

### 1.7 A DEFINITION OF HISTORY

To have a good understanding of whether the Shona novel is historical or not, there is need to have an understanding of what history is. The term history has several meanings. Marwick (2001:290) says that the most concise definition of history is:
The bodies of knowledge about the past produced by historians, together with everything that is involved in the production, communication of, and teaching about that knowledge.

Marwick's definition is rather restricting. It gives a narrow definition and makes history a preserve of professionals called historians. It ignores the fact that other people who may not be historians professionally may produce history with or without the knowledge that they are producing knowledge about the past. A *griot* for example, produces knowledge about the past. It may be biased, but the fact is that biased history is in fact what most students are taught.

Broadly defined, history is the study of past events that is intended to help the reader or learner to understand how the present has evolved from the past and how this past is likely to impact on the future. According to the Princeton University's website, [http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn) history is the aggregate of past events, the continuum of events occurring in succession leading from the past to the present. It may also be a record or narrative description of past events. The term history also refers to the discipline that records and interprets past events involving human beings.

History is not just a study of the past but of how the events of the past occurred. To have an understanding of how that past happened there is need to have an understanding of who the prime movers of those events are or were. From a Marxist perspective, the prime movers of history are the workers and peasants as well as students collectively. From a capitalist point of view, the prime movers of history are individuals and these are mostly the rich, famous and powerful. Generally, men have been credited with being prime movers in history. Women have hardly been recognised. It is only recently that the role played by women is being acknowledged. It is clear from both perspectives that history is largely hinged on the study of human beings of the past, their families as well as their societies ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History)). As a study of past events that are largely linked to human beings, it is important to note that knowledge of history often encompasses both knowledge of past events and historical thinking skills.

History is also about the greed that characterises humanity and how this greed and ideological myopia shaped events and continues to shape them. Since it is the
story of the greed of humankind, it is also a reference to the actions that
humankind has taken in, on and around his/her environment. It is also, about how
that environment has responded to the actions of humanity. Since history does not
just refer to events and what people did to make those events happen, history is
also, about how humanity responded to a changing environment. The change may
not have been caused by man as the agent but has just occurred naturally. For
example, from an economic history point of view, history is not just a study of how
human beings managed affairs but also about how people responded to changing
environments so that they could survive. A good example of this is the Sahara
desert that became desert not because humankind caused that but because of a
prolonged dry spell.

The word history comes from the Greek word ‘ιστορία’ – historia. This word is
linked to the English word ‘story’ and refers to enquiries especially on the past.
Since it refers to a field of study, that field relies largely on a body of knowledge
that may be written or oral. The written sources are mostly memos, letters (both
official and personal) as well as diaries. Besides these written sources, historians
also rely on oral sources. Besides these sources, history may also be deciphered
from fiction. Marwick highlights the importance of fiction as a historical source
when he states that the arts are a source of historical information. He advises on
how fiction can best be used to yield information that is historical. He writes:

Novels have sometimes been used as sources for living conditions and
standards, as paintings of domestic scenes have sometimes been used as
sources for what people ate. But it is far better to go directly to the actual
statistics of wage rates and to social investigations for the first topic, and to
household accounts, statistics of retail sales and so on for the latter one
(www.history.ac.uk/reviews/index.html).

Although he argues that history is an autonomous discipline, he confirms the link
between history, fiction and the arts in general when he further states:

My case is that history is an autonomous discipline with its own
specialised methods. I believe that these methods can, to
advantage, be applied to the artefacts created by artists, musicians,
architects, novelists and poets, taken along with all other primary
sources related to cultural production and consumption (2001:17).
What Marwick is saying is that literary documents can be used as windows through which a period can be looked at considering the circumstances that are prevailing during the writing of a given text. This insight is helpful in as far as, it relates to the Shona novels that are set in the New World. Those that deal with the Old World were written in the New World and are only an attempt by writers to paint a picture of the life that could have been lived in those years. Oral tradition can best explain these works. This is so because novels like Mutasa’s (1978, 1990 and 1991) as well as those by Zvarevashe (1976 and 1978) and Kuimba’s (1965 and 1968) have relied on oral sources for most of the information that is found in them. It is not only novelists who have tried to define history by relying on oral sources but also prominent historians like Beach (1980) and Bhila (1982). In fact, Chigwedere has written what is largely a history of pre-colonial Zimbabwe and Africa relying largely on oral tradition (*Birth of Bantu Africa* 1982).

It is important to note as already highlighted that history can be transmitted orally or in written forms. In written forms, it can come down as history textbooks, journals or pamphlets. It can also be disseminated as prose, poetry or drama. A good example of history that has come down as fiction is Achebe’s *Arrow of God* (1964) [Nnolim 1979:219-43]. Nnolim (1979:221) says:

> Since Nnolim’s *The History of Umuchu* predated *Arrow of God* by thirteen years, and *Things Fall Apart* by five, and since the discussion that follows will make clearer sense if organised around Nnolim’s chapters, I shall discuss Achebe’s borrowings under Nnolim’s subheadings where appropriate.

The argument being advanced by Nnolim (Jnr) is that the source that Achebe used for his novel is a historical book written by his (Nnolim’s) late father titled *The History of Umuchu*. Even though Innes (1979:244-5) argues against this assertion, one thing that comes out clearly in Nnolim’s assertion is that works of fiction have history embedded in them. Almost most of today’s best sellers are novels that are linked to history. A good example is that by Uris (1958) called *Battle Cry*. This novel is based on what transpired in the ranks of the American Marines in the Pacific and South East Asia Sea war arena during the Second World War. The novelist himself makes this clear when he writes:
To do justice to a story of the Marine Corps I felt that a sound historic basis would be the only fair avenue of approach. The Second Marine Division, its battles and movements, are a matter of public record. There are many instances where events have been fictionalized for the sake of story continuity and dramatic effect (1958: Foreword).

Uris is saying that his novel is based on historical events although the writers fictionalise some aspects. History can be all the above but it becomes meaningful history according to Carr (1964:29-30) when the historian selects and orders his facts that undergo subtle and perhaps partly unconscious changes, through reciprocal action of one or the other. He sees this reciprocity as between past and present and this is because the historian is part of the present and his facts belong to the past. After giving the above, he then defines history by saying:

My first answer to the question ‘What is history?’ is that it is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past (1964:30).

Carr’s words are very important in the study of the Shona novel because they help both the reader and researcher to find out if there is dialogue between the novelist and the period that s/he is presenting.

### 1.8 A HISTORICAL NOVEL

A historical novel deals with historical issues that are largely factual even though some of them may not appear in traditional historical textbooks. At times, the setting and events described are real. This is as is found in novels like *Chakwesha* (Chimhundu 1991) and *Zvairwadza Vasara* (Musengezi 1984). The historical novel is characterised more by narrative than by dialogue. When dialogue does come up in the story, a critical analysis of it usually yields undertones that are historical. As a narrative, it relies on events that have really taken place to inform its theme and plot as is clear in the novels *Wakandikoderei Mudzimba* (Magwa 1990) and *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda*… (Manyimbiri 1991). In some instances, historical novels tell stories whose events can be corroborated by other sources or informants who are on the ground.
It is also important to note that in a historical novel while the novelist has the freedom to describe fictitious characters as s/he sees fit, s/he does not have the liberty to make historical figures behave in a way that is contrary to what is known about them from history. For example, in the novel *Misodzi, Dikita Neropa* (Mutasa 1991) it does not make sense to let Chirisamhuru survive when it is recorded in history that Nyamazana and her soldiers skinned him alive (Needham, Mashingaidze and Bhebe 1984:70). Krog, a former publications officer with the Literature Bureau says that the historical novel gives more latitude, as fictional characters and stories may be superimposed onto a factual background (1982:7). Commenting on the nature of the same type of novel Fortune et al., (1994:113) say:

> He can arrange the private affairs of his imaginary characters, like their loves and their conflicts, in various ways, but the great events, like the sequence of battles, the victories and defeats, are prescribed by history.

Hawthorn (2005:190) also defines the historical novel saying:

> As the name suggests, the historical novel sets its EVENTS and CHARACTERS in a well-defined historical context, and it may include both fictional and real characters. It is often distinguished (in its more respectable forms) by convincing detailed description of the manners, buildings, institutions and scenery of its chosen SETTING, and generally attempts to convey a sense of historical verisimilitude.

The scholars quoted above highlight the importance of the historical contexts in the writing of historical novels. If the historical contexts are not convincing, it is difficult to accept some novels as historical. What these scholars are stating can be clarified by the example of Moses and Susan (Chimhundu 1991). These two may be fictional characters but they tell the true story of most Zimbabweans who were in exile in Western Europe who rushed to Zimbabwe at independence to get high posts in the civil service of the newly independent state. Most of these people like Moses who had dubious war credentials managed to get high posts after hoodwinking most people, including the leadership of the ruling party (ZANU [PF]). They are characters who are set in a world that is populated by real historical persons like Mugabe, Muzorewa, Nkomo, Sithole, Chirau and Smith. This same
world has the atrocities of the Rhodesian soldiers and their surrogates the Security Auxiliary forces that were under Muzorewa and Sithole.

1.9 THE NOVEL AND HISTORICAL REALITY

While it is true that literature is social and political, it is also historical. It is as much a social and political creation as it is a historical one. Even though novelists do not necessarily sit down to write history, they rely at times on historical events for the major inputs of their writings. Writers like Achebe in his novels *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Angus Shaw in *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place* (1993) have relied on historical events that were taking place in their different historical contexts. Achebe in his novels has been influenced by the corruption and other political ills that have befallen post-independence Nigeria (*A Man of the People* [1966]), and the coups and counter-plots and counter-coups among the former coup-plotters in the novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

Angus Shaw also relies on the history of colonial Zimbabwe, specifically the events taking place in northeastern Zimbabwe during the liberation war in the novel *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place* (1993). He gives some insights into how the Rhodesian Forces conducted their so-called counter-insurgent war. Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s novels *Devil on the Cross* (1980), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), and *Weep not Child* (1964) all have historically valid and relevant information embedded in them. *Weep not Child* is a novel that deals with events that relate to the Mau Mau war. The same is true of the other novel *A Grain of Wheat*, which is based on the atrocities committed by the askaris and other collaborators who worked for the colonial government in Kenya. It also highlights the painful truth that some of independence’s celebrated heroes were in fact traitors as is the case with Mugo. *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Devil on the Cross* (1980) are both inspired by neo-colonialism and the betrayal of the Kenyan people’s aspirations as well as the corruption in post-independence Kenya. It is clear that these novels are anchored in history.

Writers who have written in Africa are not the only ones who can be said to have penned what can be defined as historical literature. Uris, in the novels *Angry Hills*
(1964), QBVII (1970), Mila 18 (1961), Exodus (1959), Battle Cry (1958) and The Haj (1984) has used historical material. In the novel Angry Hills, he has used the Greek Resistance and underground movement to the Germans in the Second World War as the base of this book. The historicity of this novel does not just lie in its treatment of the war as a historical reality, but in his giving an account of the involvement of those who are normally ignored by textbooks and lecture room history – the peasants and the workers. He has also brought the Greeks to the fore, and most historians on Europe’s resistance to German occupation do not do this. Most tend to focus on French resistance, and that of Josip Tito of Yugoslavia.

In the novel QBVII, he focuses on the tracking down and trial of a known Nazi collaborator who had risen to prominence in the British medical fraternity. Although this trial may not be an actual one that took place, the novel is based on a true trial that took place. It is also inspired by many trials of former Nazis and their collaborators that have taken place. Most Nazis and their collaborators have been tracked down and sent to Israel for trial. Closer home is the case of Rwanda where those who were involved in the killing of moderate Hutus and Tutsis are being brought before the courts for crimes against humanity. The Rwanda issue has inspired the film Hotel Rwanda. It is clear then that novelists and writers of other literary genres rely on historical data to feed into their works, and while some of their works may not be considered historically accurate, they have an element of reliability in as far as they give general information that relates to what would have really taken place. In this novel, Uris does not only write about the trial of a former Nazi collaborator, but also gives information that reveals more on what happened in concentration camps such as Jadwiga, Majdanek, Dachau and Auswitchz. He also presents some ex-Nazi collaborators who went underground and even changed names like Egon Sobotnik who had changed his name to Gustav Tukla (Uris 1970: 451-3). This is historical reality. The fact that some former Nazi collaborators are still being caught as late the 2000s shows that there are some who went underground and were never caught. Other governments that felt that they had a lot to gain from these people for their own personal and national interest protected some.

Mila 18 deals with the Jewish Rebellion in the concentration camp of Auswitchz after the Jews realised that even if they complied with Nazi demands and
collaborated with them, they were still going to be exterminated. This is what really
happened and Uris acknowledges it in the foreword to the novel when he writes:

Within a framework of basic truth, tempered with a reasonable
amount of artistic license, the places and events described actually
happened … The characters are fictitious, but I would be the last to
deny there were people who lived who were similar to those in this

Levi (1986) also brings out how the Jews fought Nazism. His focus is on a certain
band of Jewish resistance fighters. He concludes his novel (in the author’s note)
by making clear the link between what he has put down as fiction and history by
stating:

My purpose has not been to write a true story, but rather to
reconstruct the itinerary, invented but plausible, of one of these
bands. For the most part, the events I depict really did take place,
even if not always on the sites and dates I have given them. It is
true that Jewish partisans fought the Germans, almost always in
desperate conditions, sometimes as members of more or less
regular bands under the Russians or the Poles, and at other times

Shaw confirms what Levi and Uris say when in the writer’s introduction he says:

The events are real. I have recalled a true-life situation that involved
hundreds of people and a broad time span, but for purposes of
clarity, certain individual characteristics have been combined within
one single character, some episodes have been rolled closer
together. Most real names have been changed (1993: Preface).

Shaw like Levi and Uris makes it clear that his novel is based on what really
happened. What really happened is history. Therefore, some novels are reservoirs
of history.

The novel Exodus (Uris 1959) focuses on the Jews’ attempt to get into Israel in the
aftermath of the Holocaust. In fact, the title of this novel is taken from the name of
a ship that really existed and was used to transport Holocaust survivors to Israel
(Palestine). In July 1947, the British intercepted this ship. It had 4 000 people on
board and three of these were killed when the British troops stormed it (McAleavy
1998:18). In this novel, the author also highlights Arab resistance to the Jews’
return to their homeland and the wars that later ensued. In the novel *Battle Cry* (1958), the novelist focuses on the exploits of the United States of America’s Marine Corps of the Marine Second Division during the Second World War in the Pacific war arena. *The Haj* (1984) focuses on the Palestinian problem, and portrays this as a creation of the Arab world. He shows this as a problem that could have been contained but was fuelled by the Arabs who constantly and persistently instilled fear into the Palestinians who ultimately ended up being refugees in other Arab lands, the West Bank and Gaza. They ended up as refugees in the Arab lands after fellow Arabs who wanted to swell their own egos and numbers had told them that the Jews were going to kill them.

Whether the novels that have their base in history are accurate or not, that is debatable. What is of significance here is that the novels and other forms of literature are conveyers of history, or at least readers are exposed to particular versions of histories. Even if some writings stir some emotions, it is one truth that they do reflect historical reality – for example, that there was once a war in this country (Zimbabwe) and that about six million Jews were killed in German concentration camps.

It is in the same vein that the Shona novel can be viewed as a carrier of history. This is because the writers of history may not have put some of the issues raised by the novelists down as history, yet they have historical significance, for example, the issue of land imbalances as given in *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (Chakaipa 1967). There is also the case of the inhuman treatment of farm labourers in *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* and *Nzvengamutsvairo* (Chakaipa 1967; Chidzero 1957).

### 1.10 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHONA NOVEL

The Shona novel’s history is a relatively recent one. Kahari has put this genre into two categories. These are: (i) The Old World Novels and (ii) The New World Novels. The term “Old World” is used to refer to those novels that have a historical setting that is before 1890, specifically before the British South Africa Company hoisted its flag at Fort Salisbury (now Harare’s Kopje area) on 12 September 1890. These are novels like *Jekanyika* (Mugugu 1968) and *Mapatya* (Mutasa
New World Novels on the other hand are the ones that relate to events taking place after September 1890 leading up to the present day. Novels like *Karumekangu* (Chidyausiku 1970), *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva* (Mungoshi 1975) and *Chakwesha* (Chimhundu 1991) fall into the New World category.

The first novel to be published in Shona is *Feso* by Mutswairo. This was in 1956. This was done with the blessings and guidance of the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau. The original publishers of this novel were Oxford University Publishers. *Nzvengamutsvairo* by Chidzero followed this publication in 1957 respectively. Other novelists of this early period include Marangwanda (*Kumazivandadzoka* 1959), Chakaipa (*Karikoga Gumiremiseve* 1959) and Bepswa (*Ndakamuda Dakara Afa* 1960). When these novelists wrote, they handled themes like murder, polygamy and the impact of westernisation on the Africans especially those in urban areas. It is important to note that the Shona novel was given direction by the government of Southern Rhodesia, later Rhodesia through the Literature Bureau. The ultimate decision to publish a novel or to reject it lay with this Bureau, which had the powers to decide on what was good and what was bad for the Black readers. A novel was considered an acceptable one if it contained material that was not construed as being offensive to the Whites (Chiwome 2002:35). Ngugi (1987:69) and Primorac (2006:18) concur with Chiwome as they also bring out the grip that the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau (SRLB) had on the writing and publication process. Ngugi comments on this grip saying:

> In Rhodesia the Literature Bureau would not publish an African novel which had but religious themes and sociological themes which were free from politics (1987:69).

Ngugi presents the SRLB as determining even the themes of the novels. These, as he points out, were to be free from politics. Primorac adds on to Ngugi’s observation and says that SRLB controlled the structure and thematic range of Shona and Ndebele manuscripts in an effort to control texts that were politically unacceptable to the state. The editors of the Bureau encouraged narratives constructed around elaborate but schematic plots that dealt with love, crime and family intrigue (Primorac 2006:18). Although the Rhodesian settler regime helped in the growth of the Shona language, and really encouraged Blacks to write in their own languages, it also felt that the Blacks’ writings had to be closely monitored.
because of the subversive potential of their writing. That the White settler regime that was in Rhodesia strictly controlled what Blacks wrote as fiction is stated by Veit-Wild (1993:246) when she states that the majority of authors writing in indigenous languages and published by the Literature Bureau were prevented from tackling political issues. She goes on to quote the Secretary for African education who in 1977 said:

In this connection, I wish to stress that the function of the Bureau is to provide popular reading material, as an adjunct to education, not to propagate political views. Proponents of the latter type of material have ready access to international publishers.

These words by the Secretary for African Education present the real position of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau as regards how African literature in indigenous languages was supposed to be channelled and filtered. It was not supposed to be political, but ‘educational’ in nature. The result of this deliberate intervention was that some of the educated Blacks (in the Western sense) wittingly or unwittingly distorted the history of Blacks in their attempt to write educative fiction. This had the effect of distorting the culture/identity of Blacks. An example of this distortion is given in Kuimba’s *Gehena Harina Moto* (1965). Kuimba depicts Blacks as dull; and as people who can easily be manipulated by women like Marumbeni. This stereotyping is naturally an influence of Western and colonialist writing like that found in Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (translated as *Migodhi yaMambo Solomon* by Muza 1975). Such a caricature of the African and his/her intelligence cannot be taken to be historically accurate. The unfortunate part is that school examiners tend to take such texts as depositories of Africa and Zimbabwe’s history and culture. Novels like these it has to be noted; especially when they were written in colonial Zimbabwe, tended to articulate colonialist pre-occupations. They have contributed negatively on what it means to be Black and African.

The White Rhodesians feared that Blacks would write something subversive in their literature. To them, the potential of such literature coming up with subversive material was real and it is with this feeling in mind that in 1956 the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau was set up. This Bureau was set up as part of the Ministry of Information. The Ministry of Information of any government is meant to act as that government’s public relations and marketing department. It has to
portray a good image of the government and country and at the same time market the country and government to its citizens and the outside world.

The main objective of the setting up of the Bureau was to counter what the authorities may have perceived as revolutionary art, which was used by despondent peasants and workers. It was not set up to nourish the growth and development of reflective and progressive literature, but to create an art that was pacific and compliant. Unfortunately and may be unknowingly, most writers who published under this system created an image of a loving White person who was the master of all Blacks. This White man was also shown as the owner of the land and the bringer of justice. This image was perpetuated by the White Rhodesians’ big brother arrogance. They saw themselves as people who had come to Africa to civilise Blacks, and the Black writers seem to have accepted this lie as is reflected in Chakaipa’s novel, *Pfumo Reropa* (1961:3) when he writes:

> Munguva ino yatiri kutaura, nyika ino iri pakati paZambezi naLimpopo yakanga iri matondo. Makanga musina migwagwa seyatinayo zvino. Vanhu vailfamba nomutunzira tudikidiki kana kuti nomusango.

(During the time we are referring to, thick forests covered this country of ours, between the Zambezi and the Limpopo. There were no roads as we have today. People walked along very narrow paths or even cut their way through forests that had no paths).

Such writings, as the one cited in the above passage from one of Zimbabwe’s most celebrated novelists reflect on the sad history in the development and growth of the Shona novel. Chakaipa is celebrating roads and the loss of forests. He may have failed to realise that the roads were not meant for the benefit of Blacks but for the exploitation of labour and other natural resources as well as tax-collection. Chakaipa also ignores the fact that most of the roads if not all in those early days were made using forced labour (*chibharo*). He is also celebrating the coming of the Whites and their grabbing of the Black people’s land.

Chiwome (1996:23) aptly sums up what is found in Chakaipa when he states:

> The unofficial was to direct the novel along the path of least ideological resistance to the Rhodesian government.
There is little that Chakaipa writes that is anti-establishment. He has fulfilled the official reason for the setting up of the Bureau. The Bureau was mainly interested in the security of the Whites and not that of the Blacks, neither was it concerned about the full growth and development of the Shona novel. It is unfortunate that the security of the Whites was achieved by manipulating the creative processes of aspiring and established writers. The result of this “unofficial” involvement was the underdevelopment of the Shona novel. It led to the development of a literature that was thin and one that was largely divorced from social and historical reality. It was a literature that constantly repeated most of the same old and worn out themes like evils of polygamy, witchcraft and the Black person being a foreigner in the Western city like Salisbury (now Harare) and Bulawayo. What can be realised then is the confirmation of what Boehmer (1995:79) has said about Europe’s perception of other races. She writes:

Always with reference to the superiority of expanding Europe, colonised peoples were represented as lesser: less human, less civilised as a child or savage, wild man, animal or headless mass.

The African is portrayed in novels like Migodhi yaMambo Solomon (Muza – translator 1975) as having no identity unless s/he is in the company of a white person. S/he is also shown as an evil that has to be overcome. In Haggard’s novel, this evil is personified in Gagool.

Not only Chakaipa and Muza show Blacks in a negative light. In addition, other novelists show Blacks as the insignificant one. Blacks are portrayed as people who can only gain significance if the Whites intervene. Without this intervention, they will always remain perpetrators of savagery on one another. They are also depicted as murderers, adulterers, as well as a jealous lot (Bepswa 1960). Mahanya (1976) and Chidzero (1957) also show Blacks in a negative light. The only good person according to Chidzero is one like Samere (Samuel), who is prepared to work for the White man, and convince others that the Whites are not bad. What is interesting in all these novels is that there are very few among all the pre-independence ones that show Blacks being brutalised and murdered in White factories, homes and on the farms.
The influence of the Literature Bureau was so great that the publisher could not publish any manuscript that had not passed through its hands. May be the publishers did what the Bureau dictated because they risked losing their licenses if they did not comply, or having their publications censored and banned from the market. This would have been a big loss to them. The function of the Literature Bureau as a censorship board is clearly amplified by one of Zimbabwe’s prominent Shona novelists, Tsodzo whom Chiwome (1996:27; 2002:37) quotes as saying:

I was in the literature section and I became curious to know what the Bureau stood for. It was strictly a censorship board.

As proof that no manuscript saw the light of day as a publication unless it passed through the Bureau’s conditions, it is important to appreciate what happened to Mutswairo’s Feso (1956). This novel was only published after the first chapter that was considered controversial had been removed. It was not only before the publication of a novel, where the Literature Bureau as the unofficial censorship board continued to work on literary works. They even followed up on published works, and if these were deemed anti-establishment, they were removed from the market. A very good case in point is again that of Feso (1956). Ten years after its publication, it was discovered that the novel had in it a poem that the Bureau considered offensive because Zimbabwean nationalist leaders were using it for mass mobilisation and protest. Because of this, the novel was banned and the reason given for its non-availability was that it was out of print (Mapara 2003). It was to remain out of print until 1982 when it was published by Longman Zimbabwe. This interference with the book industry and literary world in as far as the themes and images carried and used is a clear manifestation of the colonial government’s expectations on Black literature in English, Shona and Ndebele. It is clear from such cases of interference that Black literature in colonial Zimbabwe was not meant to be antagonistic. Chidzero’s Nzvengamutsvairo (1957) and Bepswa’s Ndakamuda Dakara Afa (1960) are very good examples of such non-antagonistic literature. Chidzero ridicules oppressed and dispossessed people like Tikana and Matigimu. These two he labels as lazy. Matigimu is portrayed as one who likes beer very much while Tikana is portrayed as a person who has a huge sexual appetite. Bepswa shows Taremba’s girlfriend being murdered by his friend Arikushanda (Alexander). It is such publications, which ridiculed Blacks and painted them as witches, savages and peddlers of other evils known to humanity
that are embraced by the Bureau. Any Shona novelist who imitated Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885) in portraying Blacks negatively was considered very good. Among the novelists who fall into this category are Mugugu (*Jekanyika* 1968), Chiguvare (*Kutonhodzwa KwaChauruka* 1968) and Kuimba (*Gehena Harina Moto* 1965 and *Tambaoga Mwana’ngu* 1968).

It was not only issues that were considered politically sensitive that were to be excluded from the Shona novel. Race also became a major player in determining whether a novel was to be published or not. Any novel that was considered to be racially sensitive, in as far as being offensive to Whites was concerned was not to be published, or could only be published if the offensive material had been removed. Bepswa, the author of *Ndakamuda Dakara Afa* (1960) had the script of his first novel not related to this one rejected because it was based on a theme whose story was based on an inter-racial marriage, which was then illegal in colonial Zimbabwe. He had to make radical adjustments which led to the publication of a new novel which though having the same title as the original one, was no longer related to this new one save the title and author (Chiwome 2002:41-2).

The fact that Bepswa later wrote the present novel mentioned in the above paragraph shows that he was a victim of the political machinations of the Zimbabwean colonial regime. He has fallen into what Ellul (1973) calls sociological and political propaganda. Ellul says that political propaganda is when a group of people, usually a government or one of its agencies uses techniques of influence in order to achieve goals which are clearly distinguished and quite precise. He goes on to say that, sociological propaganda is a sort of persuasion from within, which results when an individual has accepted or assimilated the dominant economic and political ideologies of his society. He then uses these as a basis for making what he regards as spontaneous choices and value judgments (Ellul 1973:64). Bepswa in *Ndakamuda Dakara Afa* (1960) writes and gives choices and value judgments that he has embraced (or has been made to embrace) and come to accept as true when in actual fact they are a fallacy that has been deliberately created by the Zimbabwean colonial system. What Ellul (1973) says clearly falls into this category of propaganda. The Rhodesia Literature Bureau was set up as a government agency to achieve the precise goal of making sure that all novels by
Blacks should comply with the government expectations of ensuring that the literature should not be politically offensive. As a result, writers were encouraged either through pamphlets with guidelines, or being told to remove the so-called offensive parts from their books. Ellul has called this type of encouragement sociological propaganda. From this definition of propaganda it is clear that the writers were compelled by the circumstances and guidelines laid down to accept or assimilate unwillingly the political ideology of the colonial Zimbabwean government.

According to Chiwome (1996:27; 2002:41-42) there are other authors besides Bepswa who fell into this trap. One other such novelist is Zanza who wrote the novel *Hunde Yerufu* (1971). The Bureau rejected the manuscript of his earlier edition. The manuscript had a title similar to the one of the current novel. The Bureau rejected it because it considered the manuscript political and controversial. This novel was only published after the parts that were considered offensive had been removed. The result seems to have been a new novel altogether rather than a revised script. Zanza is said to have accepted to change some parts of his script because someone at the Bureau had said to him, “It will bring discord to the state and you get in trouble” (Chiwome 1996:27; 2002:42). Zanza feared to get into trouble and he made radical changes that altered the whole novel like Bepswa. What really remained was the title when the original story had been changed. Many people were also discouraged from writing because they feared getting into trouble. Hamutyinei, another great novelist submitted two manuscripts in the mid 1960s. These two never saw the light of day because they were rejected as political. What were later published are novels like *Maidei* (Hamutyinei 1972) and *Kusasana Kunoparira* (Hamutyinei 1975) and novels like Bepswa’s *Ndakamuda Dakara Afa* that denigrate Blacks.

The interference and involvement of the colonial Zimbabwean government in the publishing industry greatly compromised the quality and growth of the Shona novel. Chitsike who worked for the Rhodesia Literature Bureau and is cited by Chiwome (1996:27) also had something to say about censorship. He refers to a manuscript that had been submitted to the Bureau by a certain person called Molife:
I remember the writer wanted to write something like *Animal Farm*. It was so blatantly political and I said, “No!” In this manuscript, there were white ants and black ants. White ants ate black ants. After some time the black ants amassed soldiers to attack white ants … It was so obvious. He never returned the manuscript.

Chitsike is here made an unwilling accomplice. He too unwittingly participated in the poor growth and under development of the Shona novel by successfully carrying out the role of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. Tsodzo’s *Pafunge Zvakare* also failed to get the nod for publication because it was considered as having material that was politically offensive. Unlike the other novelists, Tsodzo still managed to come out with a novel that is a historical commentary on the life of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe in a revised edition that was now titled *Pafunge* (1972). On the other hand, *Nzvengamutsvairo* (Chidzero 1957) was published because it was seen as politically and racially correct. It seems its publication was sponsored by the fact that the story thrived on what the Whites may have considered to be politically palatable which included their domination of Blacks and treating them as labourers and inferiors as well as people who positively accepted the lordship of the Whites over them as is brought out by Samere the protagonist.

There are some instances when novels would not be published if they were seen as offensive and insulting to the White man, even if the material was not politically sensitive. It can be found that in this context of the colonial discourse, Black literature in any language had to be an expression of the White man’s mastery and his being humane when compared to the Black man. It is interesting to note that Chakaipa (*Garandichauya* 1964), like Chidzero (*Nzvengamutsvairo* 1957) elevates the White person to the position not only of helper but also of leader. In *Garandichauya*, Chakaipa shows the reader a White man helping Tsitsi. Tsitsi had been left helpless after her husband Matamba and his girlfriend Muchaneta had beaten and kicked her out of the house. It is ironic that after the language used to describe the White that had been deemed offensive had been removed and suitable replacements and adjustments had been made, the manuscript was cleared for publication. It is unfortunate that the myth of the White man’s supposed supremacy and superiority has remained with many Blacks today as part of the colonial legacy. Most Blacks have even up to this day failed to have faith in one another. This is made worse by the political leadership that has not shown any commitment in bettering the lives of the majority under its rule. This poor
performance by the political leadership has even led some Blacks to accept the often-peddled lie that all Blacks are corrupt and that they cannot make progress without the leadership of the Whites. Such ideas are not only regressive and self-defeating but also ridiculous.

Chiwome (1996:28) supports the assertion of removing from manuscripts material that the Rhodesian editorial officers considered as racially offensive. He gives the example of a certain B.B. Fitz-Patrick who raised a number of concerns before Chakaipa’s novel *Garandichauya* could be published. Initially Fitz-Patrick was not certain whether the term *vasinamabvi* (those without knees, a term used by the Shona to refer to the early settlers, who when they first arrived were seen in pairs of trousers and riding breeches, and so their knees could not be seen) was derogatory or not. He advised a certain Walker to check, and this Walker concluded that the word was not only derogatory but that it was also offensive and an insult. This word was then removed from the manuscript. Other words and phrases that were considered offensive like *giwa* (White man, derived from Ndebele *umkiwa*) and *mhuru yomuchena* (White man’s calf, meaning the White man’s child) were also removed. These white editors seem to have been concerned more with the maintenance of their racial attitude of being untouchables and as a superior race, rather than with quality. It is clear that the competence of the editors did not lie in the promotion of quality literature but in identifying subversive and offensive material and ideas.

Besides ensuring that the novels that were published were a caricature of the African (Blacks), they were also targeted at the youths, especially the school going age. The Bureau made this group to read novels that negatively portrayed Blacks. Such novels are like Zvarevashe’s *Kurauone* (1976) and Mahanya’s *Rufu Runobereka Rufu* (1976). These novels portray Blacks in the past and in the present (colonial Zimbabwe) as blood thirst. The Bureau, together with the Department of Bantu (later African) Education deliberately and carefully chose this group. When the reading of such novels was made compulsory in schools, and by the youths, the intention was to make them and fellow Blacks feel inferior. In the process of reading, the novels made them look to the Whites as saviours who had saved them from the jaws of mass murders and family feuds as happens in *Kurauone*, or from criminals like Michael Chemhere Shumba (*Rufu Runobereka*).
At the end, Shumba is arrested. He is tried and hanged for the murders and other crimes he has committed. This type of literature made the African see a fellow African as a potential criminal and an unreliable person; and the only person to be trusted was the White man, especially one of British origin. Greeks could not be trusted because they were involved in the selling of marijuana (Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga [Mashiri 1978]). The (Whites) Portuguese could also be rapists as is shown in Chingono’s Chipo Changu (1979).

The Bureau did not only control aspects that were political. It also controlled even the length of the manuscripts. (This was still happening up to the time of the disbandment of the Bureau in 1998 – an incredibly long time considering that this happened 18 years after Zimbabwe had attained self-rule). In most of the cases the length of the manuscript was not expected to exceed 15,000 words. The Bureau argued that if the length of the novel was not controlled, books could become too expensive if they were to exceed 100 pages. If they were as short as Mahanya’s Rufu Runobereka Rufu (1976) that has 52 pages, they were all right. The Bureau also took it upon itself to control the conclusions/endings of novels. An example is Mungoshi’s (1975) Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva. The Bureau asked the author to change its ending to suit the established trend. The result is that there is a resolution at the end of the conflict. Rex and Rindai are reconciled as husband and wife, and Koni Garapo and Rindai have become close friends, but this is not what the author intended.

After independence in 1980, writers could submit their manuscripts for publication directly to the publishers. This was before the Bureau was disbanded in 1998. They could do this without going through the Literature Bureau. The publishers themselves did not refer any work back to the Bureau. Maybe this was because publishers saw in this new development a chance for the novel to develop and evolve into different forms, and not just retain the traditional form. The result was that some adventurous publishers published what the Bureau labelled as unpublishable. This happened with Mungoshi’s Kunyarara Hakusi Kutaura? (1983). The Literature Bureau, still haunted by the ghost of Rhodesia rejected this novel as formless. The Zimbabwe Publishing House later published this formless novel. This novel went on to become one of the top twenty-five best literary publications in Shona in the past century in Zimbabwe’s best seventy-five books.
This is proof that it is one of the best Shona novels published to date. The publication of this novel did not only usher in a new way of writing the Shona novel but also that of the novel in English in Zimbabwean literature. One of the writers who were influenced by this style is Hove who wrote two novels Bones (1988) and Shadows (1989) using the same style. Choto, another Shona novelist used the same style when he wrote his novel Tongoona (1989). It is ironic that the same Bureau that had rejected Mungoshi’s novel as formless later published in conjunction with Longman Zimbabwe Nyawaranda’s Barika Ramashefu (1991), which is based on the same narrative technique.

It is also very interesting to note that even though the Bureau was no longer the channel of approval for the publication of novels most authors and aspiring ones still submitted their works through it. Before it was disbanded, the Bureau was still handing out to aspiring writers the same rules and guidelines that it had given to aspiring writers in colonial Zimbabwe. This is a clear indication that the parent ministry, which at that time was the Ministry of Education and Culture did not seriously take the growth of the novel in Shona as an educational and cultural issue that deserved its attention. If this Ministry had been serious, the Bureau would either have been scrapped earlier or would have re-aligned itself and even introduced user-friendly guidelines – guidelines that would have nurtured and nourished the aspirations of upcoming novelists. This same Bureau continued to sponsor writing competitions whose rules were based on the same old guidelines made in colonial Zimbabwe and targeted at Black writers. Immediately after independence, the Bureau encouraged people to write on what had transpired during the war of liberation, but it did not go on to encourage people to write on other themes, which were political and did not agree with the ideology of the ruling party. No writings that focused on Zimbabwe’s post-independence period were published under the guidance of the Bureau. Issues like the dissident one in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces were not handled except from the official position as is reflected in novels like Mhandu Dzerusununguko (Masundire 1991). It would have been interesting to read what some authors would have written on the same issue if there was no government interference through the Bureau; especially on the government’s police and military response to this problem. It was brutal and it traumatised many civilians. This is a historical reality and a calamity that the state President, Robert Mugabe has called “an act of madness.” Other
themes that may have been expected to come up would have been those like the Willowvale Car Scandal (christened Willowgate Car Scandal by Geoff Nyarota, then editor of *The Chronicle*) as well as other scandals that reared their ugly heads in the 1980s and 1990s. It is clear that the Literature Bureau staffers were a cautious lot. They did not want to step on sensitive political toes.

While the Bureau may be blamed for not nurturing a new outlook and approach among the writers, especially after independence, in a certain workshop attended at Ambassador Hotel in 1989 by this researcher in his undergraduate days, it was found out that at times the Shona novelist is to blame for not tackling issues, which are political and deemed sensitive. Their main fear was that this would lead to arrest and punishment or even disappearance at the hands of the dreaded state security agents. Besides these, they also expressed the fear that their novels would not be published. According to representatives of the Bureau who were present the writers were supposed to lead in the paradigm shift since the Bureau itself was no longer making it mandatory for writers and publishers to submit their manuscripts to them for approval. It is on the basis of this that the meeting concluded that the post-colonial novel in Shona was not developing like the one written in English as evidenced by Nyamufukudza’s *The Non-Believer’s Journey* (1983) published by Zimbabwe Publishing House under licence from Heinemann. This novel highlights the cold bloodied murder of Sam, a Harare schoolteacher who had had some disagreements with some guerrillas. The writers, it emerged always feared that there was the possibility that their work would not be published, and even if they got published there was also the danger of them having to face the wrath of the state security agents if their writings were found to be offensive to the government. At the end, the publishers and the Bureau ended up blaming the writers and aspiring writers for living in fear of the ghost of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau as well as the Rhodesian security agents. It is this fear by the novelists that has led to the stagnation in the development of the Shona novel, and this has resulted in it lagging behind poetry and drama. These other two genres have made significant strides in as far as developing themes that are relevant to the prevailing situation are concerned.

Even though there are these shortcomings, some post-colonial Shona novelists are beginning to highlight cracks and shortcomings in the status quo. This is being
done especially by the young generation of writers like Zvaita in his novel *Dandemutande* (1998). In this novel, the thrust of the story is carried in only a few lines. The author says that life is like a cobweb that entraps small creatures but big ones manage to pass through (1998:8). It is necessary to analyse this statement against the immediate background of allegations, rumours and confirmations as well as charges of corruption against some members of the political leadership of the country. It brings out the idea that petty-criminals languish behind bars, while the political and criminal heavyweights continue to live freely. Mabasa is another novelist who has taken a bold step and has written what some political analysts may consider a politically offensive novel. Looked at from an Africanist perspective, this novel is relevant. It has made the Shona novel pan-Africanist in the sense that it tackles issues that are relevant to Zimbabwe in particular, and Africa in general. This novel *Mapenzi* (1999) has political overtones that are not so subtle. The same is also true of Chimhundu in his novel *Chakwesha* (1991). These two novels reflect on among other issues corruption, neo-colonialism, tyranny and betrayal. Another novelist who focuses on corruption is Mahanya (*Matsvamoyo* 1992). Manyimbiri, in *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda*… (1991) highlights the plight of the ex-combatants who after having contributed in the struggle for Zimbabwe’s independence find themselves unemployed and being labelled unemployable because they are said to lack the minimum educational qualifications. Mutasa (2005) handles the theme of the land redistribution exercise. He presents his theme through the epistolary technique. He presents different characters giving their opinion on the emotive land issue especially in as far as it relates to women owning land as well as the manner in which the land is being redistributed.

### 1.11 HISTORY AND THE SHONA NOVEL

The history of the development of the Shona novel as chronicled above shows that most works of fiction especially novels, are moulded and given direction by the prevailing historical and political situations. It is therefore clear that novels are not only works of one’s imagination but are historical documents. Gray (1992:137) amplifies this when he asserts:

The historicity of a novel might refer to the extent to which it deals with events that actually happened, its resemblance to a historical account or document, or the historical relevance of the events it recounts.
It has to be realised that in the light of what Gray has said novelists are the *avant-gardes* of history. They write down what historians may later put down. They are the earliest recorders of history. Novelists may not necessarily sit down to write history, but they may wittingly or unwittingly write historical facts. Linked to the history given by the novelists there is also the history behind the publication of each book. It is not only the politics of the boardrooms of publishing houses that is part of the story but also the politics of the political environment that dictates whether a novel is to be published or not. Lukács (1970:21) states:

> The genuine categories of literary forms are not simply literary in essence. They are *forms of life* especially adapted to the articulation of great alternatives in a practical and effective manner and to the exposition of maximal inner potentialities of forces and counter-forces.

From what Lukács says above it is clear that literature does reflect life and this life is characterised by conflicts. The Shona novel does exactly that. It reflects the history of Zimbabwe in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. It also shows that the concept of art-for-art's sake does not exist in African literature in general and in Zimbabwe in particular. The novelist writes to entertain as well as to educate and inform. In the light of all this, the Shona novel can be summed up as history that is laced with entertainment and didacticism; that it will not be wrong to refer to the Shona novels as historitainment – that is, they teach and relay history through entertainment. A good example of this phenomenon is Chakaipa's *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (1967) where Wadyazheve, Mavis' teacher caresses her. This shows that the teacher is unprofessional. He is like Muchazvirega (Garandichauya 1964) who instead of teaching sends his pupils out to look for *mazhanje* (wild loquats) for him. Both novels also show that in colonial days the authorities paid very little attention to Black education. In the novel *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe*, Mavis had been repeating standard three for a long time while Muchazvirega in *Garandichauya* praised the docile students like Matamba who sang praises to him. It was worse on farm schools because classes could be disrupted so that pupils could help for example, in picking tobacco, as was the case at Vhuka's farm (*Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* 1967).
Not only Chakaipa’s novels reflect historical reality. Manyimbiri in the novel *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda* … (1991) shows the dilemma and plight of Mabhuruku an ex-combatant. He is like the unemployed and destitute vagrant given in the late Samupindi’s *Pawns* (1992) as well as in Chirikure’s poem “Uya uya rombe” in his poetry anthology *Chamupupuri* (1994:54). Yesterday’s hero, Mabhuruku, has become a destitute and is not only unemployed; but is told that he is not employable because he does not have the minimum educational qualifications. All would-be employers insist that he should have five ordinary level passes. These people forget that Blacks had among other reasons lack of access to education as one of the reasons why they had to go to war against White Rhodesia.

There are times when novelists respond to real historical situations. Tsodzo in *Pafunge* (1972) is really responding to the historical period of his day. He writes to highlight the unemployment that was prevalent among Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe. He also shows in this novel that Blacks were not treated with respect neither were they accorded the respect due to them as members of the human race. They lived in squalid and overcrowded conditions. Even their transport system was not good to say the least. (This study is not in any way suggesting that living conditions have become better. It however has to be noted that in the 1970s and early 1980s people hoped that things would improve when Blacks would assume power and had the control of their own affairs in their hands).

Chinweizu et al. (1980:252)’s words can best explain what Tsodzo has done in *Pafunge* (1972) when they write:

> The function of the artist in Africa, in keeping with our traditions and needs, demands that the writer, as a public voice assume a responsibility to reflect public concerns in his writings and not pre-occupy himself with his puny ego.

Chinweizu et al. make it clear that the writer has to assume a public responsibility of articulating the people’s concerns. S/he should not be interested in showing her/his stylistics at the expense representing the people’s concerns. Tsodzo in *Pafunge* and even in *Mudhuri Murefurefu* (1993) has not only shown his literary skills. He has also dealt with the issues that emanate from his environment. He
has not only become a public voice. He has also documented what is happening on the ground. He has managed to remain relevant and not become like the proverbial man who leaves his house burning to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames (Achebe 1975:78).

The value of the Shona novel as a historical document is also realised when it is seen not as a record of large-scale national events. It is neither a history only of the big and powerful but also a history of the ordinary people. Unlike historical textbooks, novels have ordinary people as the heroes. Novels are also not large-scale in the sense that they tend to be local and it is local histories that they present, which are at times ignored, and yet they are part of the national picture. These are some of the histories that are handled by novelists. *Zvairwadza Vasara* (Musengezi 1984) is a very good example of novels that can be viewed as historical documents that focus on a local level. The novel refers to actual events that took place at St Augustine’s Penhalonga (near Mutare) in Zimbabwe’s Eastern districts during the war of liberation. There is even a memorial statement for the late Gabarinocheka (real name Tendai Pfepferere) who the Rhodesian soldiers shot and killed. This happened when the liberation war fighters were having a *pungwe* (all night vigil) with students in the school’s Great Hall. He has also written about the brutality of the Rhodesian forces and the use of concentration camp like types of settlements often referred to as keeps, which, the Rhodesians euphemistically referred to as protected villages.

More on the relevance and importance of the Shona novel as a historical document is best reflected in *Mapenzi* (Mabasa 1999) and *Sekai: Minda Tave Nayo* (Mutasa 2005). The last novel celebrates Zimbabwe’s agrarian reforms. Mutasa also addresses issues like multiple farm-ownership and the non-utilisation of the land that has been redistributed. The novelist however fails to highlight that there are the real land hungry people that have failed to get any piece of land and have remained with fields that are on hilly and rocky ground, in semi-arid areas or settled in heavily populated areas where there is little land for grazing and cultivation.

Mabasa’s *Mapenzi* (1999) refers to, among other issues the looting of the War Victims Compensation Fund. He also refers to one Magaisa (read politician) who
exploits the people and takes them for a ride. It is clear that novels like these ones have already recorded the actual events on the ground. They have recorded a history, which even the historians have not started putting down to paper. They become very valuable in that they help shed light on some issues, even if at times their look at the situation may be biased. Ngugi (1981: 72) captures all this relevance and value of the novel when he writes:

Hence, literature has given us more and sharper insights into the moving spirit of an era than all the historical and political documents treating the same moments in a society’s development. The novel in particular, especially in its critical realist tradition, is important in that respect.

This argument by Ngugi shows that literature is laden with the history of the particular period that it focuses on. It helps in highlighting the facticity of the Shona novel as a historical document. Gray (1992:115) defines facticity as factness and goes on to say:

The quality of being factual; used in discussing the nature of historical writing of all kinds, which may manifest different stages of facticity.

What makes Gray’s words relevant is the idea of historical facts that are contained in different types of writing. Naturally, novels fall under this “writing of all kinds” category. Novels like Chimhundu’s Chakwesha (1991), Chidzero’s Nzvengamutsvairo (1957) as well as Mutswairo’s Murambiwa Goredema (1959) give historical facts that are admissible. Chimhundu (Chakwesha 1991), presents among other issues the Internal Settlement of 1978 that Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau signed. Through the symbol of Moses and Suzan’s marriage, Chimhundu presents this political union as one of convenience. It collapsed with the coming of independence, just like the marriage of Moses and Suzan that collapsed immediately after they had returned home to Zimbabwe. Chidzero highlights the underpayment of the farm workers and the dehumanising conditions under which they worked. The same is true of Mutswairo. He focuses on the underpayment of the urban worker. Both facts raised by these novelists are not disputable. Besides not being disputable facts, the novelists have managed to capture even some issues like the impact of poor accommodation as well as
unemployment and underemployment that have impacted negatively on the social fabric of Zimbabwe.

The above-mentioned novels and others that are focused on in this research have elements of historicity in the sense that they have embedded in them information that is both historically valid and authentic. They refer to events that have really happened in history – real life situations. The stories account for events that are historically meaningful to both the reader and the writer. These stories were possibly written with the intention of entertaining the reader or to inform. Because some of them inform more than entertain, they help in putting the spotlight on the Shona novel in as far as its historicity is concerned.

1.12 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The research is divided into six chapters. These chapters are as follows: Chapter 1 is the introduction. It highlights the aim and justification of the research. Included in this chapter is also the observation made by the researcher on the development of the Shona novel and its historicity or lack thereof. The study focuses on books and other literature that is related to the area of study. This chapter also focuses on the methods of research as well as on how the Shona novel can be relied on as history.

Chapter 2 is on the critical theory of historical criticism, historicity, facticity and the impact of these on the development and study of the Shona novel and that of the novel in general. The main thrust of this chapter is to show that the Shona novel has a historical bearing. This chapter also shows that from the evidence gleaned from the novels some of them can be taken as historical documents as is the case with novels like Chakwesha (Chimhundu 1990) and Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda … (Manyimbiri 1991). This chapter is mainly on historical criticism, which is useful in unravelling and assessing the historical validity and reliability of some novels as historical documents. It also fully defines the characteristics of the historical novel.

Chapter 3 is titled “The Old World Novels as a Depiction of Pre-colonial History.” It focuses on whether what is depicted in Old World novels like Misodzi, Dikita neRopa (Mutasa 1991) and Tambaoga Mwanangu (Kuimba 1968) can be
accepted as historical or not. There is also need to find the validity and reliability of such history. The chapter also focuses on issues like marriage, religion and the socio-political and economic situation of the period. In addition, this chapter focuses on the Nguni raids into Shona areas. There is need to compare what is given in the novels with what is in historical texts. The settings of the novels’ stories and their distance from Matabeleland are analysed because at times the Ndebele have been said to raid the Shona when in fact it could have been the Gaza-Nguni of Soshangana, especially in areas to the east of the Save River. At times raids were carried out by the 
\textit{vanyai/dumbuseya} (raiders) who dressed and fought like the Ndebele/Nguni.

Chapter 4 highlights what was happening in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) when it was under colonial rule. Issues like the degrading and dehumanising conditions, which Blacks were subjected to, especially on farms come under scrutiny. Other issues relate to gender – such as the rape of Black women as is given in some novels. Among the novels that are analysed are the following: \textit{Chipo Changu} (Chingono 1979), \textit{Pafunge} (Tsodzo 1972) and \textit{Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda} … (Manyimbiri 1991). This chapter is titled “The Historicity of the New World Novel: Colonial Zimbabwe.”

The history of the war of liberation and the post-independence period is handled in chapter 5. This chapter focuses on issues like the brutality of the Rhodesian forces. It also focuses on the brutality of the liberation war fighters as well as press-ganging as one of their recruitment methods. In this chapter, the following novels are among those that are focused on \textit{Nguo Dzouswa} (1987) and \textit{Wakandikoderei Mudzimba?} (Magwa 1991). The others include \textit{Zvairwadza Vasara} (Musengezi 1984). This chapter is titled “The Shona Novel: From the War of Liberation to Independence.” Novels like \textit{Ndikandei Mugehena;} (Hamutyinei 1988) which deal with the morality of some of the liberation war fighters like Jasper Ndanga are also analysed. Besides focusing on events that took place during the struggle for Zimbabwe’s independence the chapter also highlights the events that have been unfolding since Zimbabwe attained self-rule. Novels like \textit{Mapenzi} (Mabasa 1999) and \textit{Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda} … (Manyimbiri 1991) are analysed. These novels focus on the current problems facing Zimbabwe such as corruption, the Acquired Immune-Deficiency Virus (AIDS) scourge, the Economic
Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the looting of the War Victims Fund. It also focuses on the problems by most former liberation war fighters such as unemployment and homelessness.

The conclusion of the research is in chapter 6. This chapter presents the research’s findings and recommendations.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the reasons why this research had to be carried out. It has highlighted the development of the Shona novel in the colonial as well as the post-colonial period. Concerning the development of the Shona novel, the chapter has shown that the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau made a great effort to ensure that the Shona novel and other related genres developed in a manner that the White rulers felt was not threatening to their well-being. The chapter has also defined what history is. It has as well shown the link between literature and history by highlighting that literature and history are interwoven. In the scope of the research, the chapter synopsis has been given. An analysis of related literature has also been carried out. The chapter has also highlighted that to appreciate and understand the Shona novel there is need to realise and accept that literature is given direction on thematic issues by its local environment. While from a formalist point of view literature is supposed to be timeless and belong to all worlds, there is need to highlight that literature really relates to real life situations. This relation confirms that literature is historical, and at times, it is unadulterated history. The next chapter handles the link between literary criticism and its influence on how this research has been carried out.
CHAPTER 2

CRITICISM AND THE SHONA NOVEL: APPROACHES TOWARDS THE STUDY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Any given literature does not come into existence by fiat. It is a creation of people who deliberately put pen to paper. It is nourished, nurtured and given impetus by the socio-political and historical environment of the writer. Literature is closely bound up with the historical processes of its mother country or of a given people reflecting on a particular historical epoch. At times, its thrust goes beyond national and continental boundaries. It is a record of the aspirations of a people. It as well records the conflicts and clashes that are part of everyday living. Literature, especially the novel, and in the case of Zimbabwe, the one in Shona is a mirror of the times. It reflects both the past and the present. It contributes to an understanding of what has happened in the past and how those events have helped in shaping the present through the participation of the inhabitants or their being overwhelmed by events beyond their strength. Lomidze's assertion on socialist literature clearly confirms that economic and political ideologies shape and influence literature. Even though he is writing on Soviet literature, his words ring true when the Zimbabwean situation is analysed. He writes:

Brought to life by socialism, every literature is, and this is quite natural, eager to tell the world about its own people and the changes that have taken place in their lives (1983:45).

It is clear that what Lomidze is saying would be relevant to any community whether it is socialist or capitalist. These words of Lomidze also make it clear that the Zimbabwean Shona novel has its defining parameters in history – in the history of occupation, resistance, liberation and independence as well as neo-colonialism. This clearly proves that literature should not be a passive reflection of historical conditions. It should help to shape reality (Ngara 1985:25) and reflect on the contestations that take place on the historical stage.
2.1 THE WRITER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The students and scholars of African fiction have to realise that this fiction has never been fully fiction. It has always been an account of Africa’s contact with the Western and Arab worlds as evidenced in most history texts for example, Beach (1984). In reality it has been the African people’s history being told through fiction. This makes it very clear that the Shona novelist, like every other African writer has the responsibility of telling the African story. In the task that is expected of her/him, there is the need to strive for honesty and accuracy or reliability. The story, which is to be told, is that of Africa in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. It would be a fallacy if one were to write and give a glorious past of Africa before the coming of the colonialists. Neither would one get much praise for giving a picture of Africa and specifically Zimbabwe that was all doom and gloom before her conquest and final subjugation by imperial Britain at the close of the nineteenth century. While it is acceptable that it is difficult to give a picture of what life was really like in pre-colonial times, some information can be found in the annals and chronicles of early Portuguese traders and the missionaries who were among the very first Europeans to venture into the African interior. The novelist should bear in mind that his/her task is to give a credible picture of the Zimbabwean and African past. This past was not a rosy one, neither was it a very bad one. Like any community that was developing at its own pace, it had a combination of both the good and the bad. The comment of Carlsen and Gilbert (1985:2) on the function of literature is ample proof of what literature should do and what is therefore expected of the writer. These two scholars say:

"The subject matter of literature is life itself. The world's task is to preserve our tragedies and triumphs, our fears and foibles, our insights and insufficiencies."

From what these two scholars say, it is clear that literature is a mirror of society. It captures all that takes place in people’s lives including their successes and failures. What these two say also has a great bearing on what is expected of the Shona novelist and the African writer in general. Even if people may have done something, which they think is a disgrace today, that disgrace still deserves to be written in history or literature if the writer is convinced that it is worth writing about.
It is a record of the past. A good example is that of a dark cloud that hovers over the execution of the liberation war in Zimbabwe. The way they got recruits was not always through politicisation. At times people were enticed by promises of scholarships (Makari 1985:44-46). The author makes this clear when he presents Tinotonga saying:


(We all discovered that the whole idea about us going for further studies was another issue – it was a lie. However, there was nothing to hide. We were told that it was every Zimbabwean’s duty to fight for the country’s freedom. We all planned to escape, but we were heavily guarded as if we were prisoners).

While it is true that writers should write and give honest accounts of Africa’s past, it has to be borne in mind that the writer also has to help in recreating his/her motherland’s image. The recreation does not have to be done through deliberately lying but by relying on something good and build a story around it so that it will have a positive influence on the readers. This is as far as recreating a good image is concerned. The idea of recreating a good image, in the case of the Shona novelist, has to be done with the realisation that Zimbabwe’s recent history has been one of a people who have been under colonialism. This means that one has to help in restoring and repairing as well in some instances recreating the Black Zimbabweans’ battered image that foreign occupation had largely distorted. Silenieks (1980:168) amplifies this task of the writer when he says the following words about what is expected of the Caribbean writer:

For many writers of the Caribbean region, historical identity is one of their principal pre-occupations proceeding directly from the complexities of their situation.

These pre-occupations of the Caribbean writer are the same with those of the African writer, and especially one who is writing in Shona. It has to be realised that Caribbean and African (Shona) writers share a common history. They have all been subjected to foreign rule. The only difference is that while the Shona (and other Blacks) became slaves in the land of their birth, the slave traders transported
the Blacks in the Diaspora to these foreign lands. It is therefore imperative that the literature of the Blacks should reflect this sad reality of its history. The writer should however go further in showing that the picture of the African that was given in colonial Africa is not true. The Whites’ misconceptions are captured in the following words:

Always with reference to the superiority of expanding Europe, colonised peoples were represented as lesser: less human, less civilised as child or savage, wild man, animal or headless mass (Boehmer 1995:79).

This picture is not a true picture of the African or that of any other human race. This picture caused the colonisers to end up believing their lie. In fact, they needed that lie so that they would have the excuse to occupy Africa and exploit its vast natural and human resources. They saw the African as always grinning whenever s/he saw a White person. To see Africans as always grinning whenever they saw the White man without making an effort to understand why s/he had to grin would be to do oneself an injustice. The Africans ended up grinning because they would be trying to smile at the White man whom they greatly loathed since he had reduced them to beggars and slaves in their own land. It is folly and being plain dull if the Whites read nothing beneath that grin. They failed to understand that they were responsible for that grin. It was a reflection of the African’s discomfort with the Whites as well as her/his lack of freedom. The grin is also a reflection of the fury and disappointment of the Blacks with the Whites. The African writer then has a duty to make sure that the reader understands why the African grinned instead of smiling. He has to make it plain that it was a case of being enslaved in one’s land and being told that he was less human and more animal that made the African to loath the White man.

The Shona writer as has already been mentioned should be one who should see in him/herself the expression of the people’s aspirations and collective history and memory. The novelist has to write down with pride and commitment this collective history. S/he should remember that every time s/he puts pen to paper s/he is writing about a people’s image. Gordon (in Silenieks 1980:161) makes this clear when he says that history is the collective memory of a people. This history is a history of a people’s past experience, its heroes and its great deeds. This history is
significant because it is the reservoir upon which it can draw on to give itself meaning and a destiny. It also endows its young with collective pride and dedication to the family, race, the state, the nation or religion.

There is need to caution writers to remember that while they are putting historical reality into fiction, the truth does not have to be sacrificed on the altar of national pride or the dictates of the ruling regime. The true story has to be told and entertaining literature is also welcome but this does not have to lie. Silenieks says that the writer should correct the fictional inaccuracies that have been part of the history of the colonised people written by their former colonial masters. He says:

Now it is a question of ‘historical reinsertion,’ involving not only correction of factual inaccuracies and rectification of white bias, but also re-creation of the past concurrent with the vision of the future, ‘a prophetic vision of the past.’

Historical reinsertion as stated in the above quotation is important, but it does not have to distort the truth. The major aspect that has to be reflected in the Shona novel as history is that it has to strive to portray people with their contradictions, conflicts and complexities. It is when these are reflected on that the issue of historical reinsertion becomes meaningful because this is where even the people’s misrepresented images are given their real reflection. When this is done the chances of getting as close as possible to an accurate picture when compared to that given by many White historians and anthropologists are very high. A good Shona writer and African one in general should write fiction that reflects the dialectics of humanity as well as the changing world in which s/he finds her/himself. Because historical circumstances shape literature, it should not skip the major stages in the country’s history.

When one sits down to write s/he should do so with a clear mind. S/he should do that with the knowledge that s/he has a task. Even if s/he is writing fiction, the writer should be actively aware of the task that s/he would have chosen to work on. When handling her/his subject the writer should bear in mind facts of biography, class orientation, religion, culture and even political alignment or orientation.
A good writer should also handle issues that relate to human relations, land and labour besides those already mentioned above. These are expected to come up in popular and serious literature, even if some of the issues handled may be deemed sensitive by some sections of society. By sensitive is meant issues that relate to aspects like human rights and governance. They do not have to be provocative. Commenting on issues that may be considered sensitive, Kamba (in Bhebe and Ranger 1995:2) says that it is imperative that a class of scholars capable of withstanding threats and intimidation as well as rising above racial, ethnic and tribal considerations have to come up. Serious and committed writers who are interested in producing works that would permanently become part of the Shona canon should in their work stand up against tyranny and the suppression of information. They should develop a very critical mind and eye that is focused on facts and be able to tell the difference between them and purported facts. Creative writers should find a way of telling their story so that politicians who may feel that some of the fiction available may not be to their liking will find it difficult to accuse the writers of being unpatriotic. Writers who fail to write on issues that are relevant and reflect their country’s situation are doing a disservice to their people and history will judge them harshly for not having done their duty.

Literature, whether written or oral is always concerned with the study and reflection of humankind’s world. This world has moral values and at times, these are lacking. The task of the writer then is to show humankind’s humanity or her/his inhumanity. It demands extra scrutiny on the part of the Shona novelist. S/he has to reflect seriously on conditions that have shaped the circumstances that humankind finds her/himself in. It is not a contestable fact that today, as in the past; literature is called upon to perform one of its major functions – not only to entertain but also of telling the truth. There is no good, for example, that comes from portraying the rule of the Rozvi ruler, Chirisamhuru as a successful one when he is known to have been a tyrant and self-serving ruler at the end of his reign (Mutasa 1991).

The Shona novel has today become broader and more incisive in its content than it was in the early days. It has also become more analytical and critical in its reflection and description of reality. It has become quite inquisitive and expository. Some novels like Mapenzi, (Mabasa 1999), and Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda…
(Manyimbiri 1991) have exposed the shortcomings of the war of liberation and the breakdown of services in urban centres like Harare and Chitungwiza where sewerage problems appear to have become a permanent feature of these and other cities. The writers of these novels are an example of what creative and committed novelists can and should do. They should tell the truth even if it is the painful truth. Lomidze (1983:78) amplifies what writers like Mabasa and Manyimbiri have done. He states:

> It is true that poetic thought attains the highest intensity and poignancy when it comes into immediate contact with facts and events of real life.

This is what these two novelists have done. They have brought to the fore facts and events from real life. The issue of demobilised ex-liberation war fighters failing to get jobs is a reality many artists have discussed in their works. They have also given issues that readers can identify with and in some instances give examples of where else this is happening. Examples of issues that writers can identify with or remember are the looting of the War Victims Fund that Mabasa (1999:27) highlights. When the Shona novel manages to elicit responses from readers as it often does, it would have succeeded in highlighting the importance of the writer and his/her position as a recorder of history.

It is also important that the Shona novel from each particular historical period should reflect the gains and losses that Blacks made as they tried to adjust to the altered conditions of living. A good example is Chidzero’s *Nzvengamutsvairo* (1957:54, 64). This novel presents people like *vasekuru* (uncle/grandfather) Chitehwe adjusting to White rule and giving up all hope of self-rule. Even the militant Tikana eventually succumbs to the persuasion of Samere (Samuel) and becomes a farm labourer together with his friend Matigimu. This is a reflection of the loss of independence for Blacks. It also shows the dehumanising experiences that farm labourers were exposed to on the Whites’ farms. These indignities are also shown in Chakaipa’s *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (1967).

The other task of the Shona novelist is to record as much of facts that relate to his/her country as is possible. S/he should not be demoralised by time, which seems to be constantly ahead. S/he has to bear in mind that her/his task is to write
literature that shows that the destiny of humankind is to reflect history, and that history is created by humankind’s will, aspirations, energy, failures, triumphs and intellect. It is his/her task to ensure that the readers are given a clear picture of the past as well of the present. Lomidze encourages writers to keep on with their work even if there are times when they appear to be lagging behind. He writes:

Literature is sometimes behind the times, unable to catch up with the quick march of history, to get a hold on its unexpected turns and zigzags. But it is hardly possible to understand the essence and flux of time, unless it is grasped by the powerful descriptive word…

Lomidze encourages literary artists to write works that reflect history since the descriptive word vividly captures historical processes. The expectations for the artist are here made very clear. S/he is to keep alive the memory of historical events and to preserve for future generations that which was otherwise doomed to oblivion.

2.2 THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

A historical novel is one that has its plot evolving around actual historical events. The historical novel is based on realistic events and persons from the historical past and present. They may be characters that may still be living, or characters that are moulded on those who are known to have existed. They may also be compound characters representing two or more personages who have shared the same ideology or principles and have possibly lived in the same historical period. The representative character does not have to be overburdened by many characters s/he will be representing. A maximum of four may do.

The historical novel has its origins in the nineteenth century, starting with Sir Walter Scott (Abrams 1993:133). The historical novel does not only take its setting and some of its characters and events from history, but makes historical events and issues crucial for the central characters and narrative. An example of such a novel is Chimhundu’s Chakwesha (1991), which is based on events that took place during and after Zimbabwe’s war of liberation. Chimhundu’s novel does not only mention names like Abel Muzorewa, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, among other personages. It also refers to actual events like the Pearce
Commission of 1972 and the Geneva Conference of 1976. Also mentioned are the activities of the guerrillas like the shooting down of two Air Rhodesia Viscount aeroplanes on two separate occasions by ZIPRA forces in the Kariba basin.

Daiches (in Ezeigbo 1991:11) identifies three kinds of historical fiction. All these have a bearing on the historical novel in particular and other forms of literature in general. He says:

... a historical novel can be primarily an adventure story, in which the historical elements merely add a sense of importance to the actions described; or it can be essentially an attempt to illustrate those aspects of the life of a previous age, which most sharply distinguish it from our own; or it can be an attempt to use a historical situation to illustrate some aspect of man’s fate which has importance and meaning quite apart from that historical situation.

Hamutyinei’s *Musango Mune Nyama* (1989) is one example of a novel that fits in well with the three elements of historical fiction that Daiches identifies. This novel is an adventure story of the survival of Chapakati when he goes hunting and an attempted poisoning by his late father’s senior wife. He also survives a crocodile attack. Within this adventure are given aspects of Shona life in the pre-colonial past like communal hunting and the killing of twins. In this novel, the political situation as it was in those days is also described.

Daiches has a second characteristic that describes historical fiction as an attempt to illustrate aspects of life of a previous age that mostly set it apart from that of the day of the writer. Mugugu’s novel *Jekanyika* (1968) also does this. In this novel it is clear that the economic life of pre-colonial Zimbabwe was not only based on agriculture as is generally said but that it was also coupled with agriculture and the raiding of weaker chiefs to get cattle, slaves and women who were also an important economic aspect since they worked the land. Women were also wanted for their reproductive value. In this novel Dendera says to his generals:

(After a few months we shall start travelling at night and sleep during the day. We would have arrived in Chaitezvi’s land. This land has many cattle and the cows have udders that touch the ground. It has huge longhaired goats. The girls of this land have beautiful dyed hair).

Schmidt (1996:33) who quotes a certain Sawada talking about the exploits of the Shawasha warriors highlights the economic value of cattle and women that is similar to what Mugugu highlights in the above quotation. Sawada says that wherever the Shawasha warriors went to raid they brought back cattle and women who were then surrendered to the father. The father naturally redistributed the booty with himself getting the bulk. The same applied when raids were carried out under a chief as is the case given in this novel.

The third characteristic given by Daiches is that of an attempt to use a historical situation to illustrate some aspect of man’s fate, which has importance and meaning quite apart from that situation. In the novel *Dzinza RavaGovera vaChirimuhanzu naMutasa* (Zvarevashe 1998:1-4), the writer uses history to explain how his ancestors came to his present rural homeland. He does it in the manner that Thucydides did when he wrote *The Peloponnesian War*. He recreates speech and other settings in an attempt to give his history credibility. In doing this, he goes to the extent of even referring to historical texts like Beach’s *The Shona and Zimbabwe: 900-1850*. Such history while credible is bound to be biased especially in favour of the informants who would naturally want to portray their side in a positive light.

### 2.3 SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

Like any literary sub-category, some aspects make the historical novel stand out. These characteristics are not exhaustive, neither are they compulsory. Daiches (in Ezeigbo 1991:11) has already discussed some. For most African fiction, including that in Shona, these characteristics may come up very sparingly. The case for Africa is very clear because most writings by Blacks have been nothing but responses to colonialism and neo-colonialism. For the female writer it has been these two and male domination and exploitation as well.
A historical novel should generally have less dialogue and more narrative. It should describe and explain historical facts and issues. Dialogue becomes important in as far as it helps in highlighting the issues that the novelist will be focusing on. It also helps in trying to recreate the atmosphere, as it would possibly have been at the time that is being described. This dialogue can be collected from eyewitnesses and out of these; one creates the possible situation of the time being described. If there is little or no dialogue, there is the possible danger of the narrative becoming almost like any historical text. If that becomes the case, the concepts historical novel and faction get lost.

Since history seeks to tell the truth, a historical novel should also have dates that are almost accurate. Events being described should fall within the same year even if the novelist may have them occurring in for example, two different months. It has to be noted that dates are at times not very important except those that delimit a novel so that it can clearly be understood in a given historical context. In place of dates, writers can use names of characters that are known to relate to certain historical periods like Nyamazana who is mentioned by Mutasa (1990) for having defeated Chirisamhuru. Even though Mutasa does not give the date of when this occurred, history has it on record that it was in 1836 (Needham, Mashingaidze and Bhebe 1984:70).

Historical novels should also refer to actual events that happened or that are known to have happened even if the place, name, date and time may be changed. There is no harm in giving even the actual place where the event took place. Novels like *Exodus* and *Mila 18* (Uris 1959; 1961) are based on events that actually took place, especially in Germany and occupied Poland during the Second World War. *Exodus* does not only give an account of the emergence of the modern Jewish state, but also of British efforts to stop Jewish migrants from Europe from entering Palestine. In Zimbabwe, novels like *Jekanyika* (Mugugu 1968) relate events that were a common aspect of pre-colonial Shona society when local chiefs fought one another in search of women for wives and cattle. In his narrative, the author makes this clear through the character Nharu who is one of Dendera’s generals and councillors. Nharu says:

*Changamire, ngatikokorodzei machinda enyu ose titsvage mambo watingarwise. Kana tichinge takurira, imi muchatsvaga vasikana*
vamunoda kuitira kuti vagove vakadzi venyu. Hatidzokeri kumusha kana tichinge tisina kuwana ziso rinozogara nhaka yenyu (1968:11).

(Your worship let us call all your councillors so that we find a chief we will fight. When we defeat him, you will choose girls you want for wives. We will not go back home if we fail to get an heir to your throne).

Schmidt mentions this idea of going on military excursions in search of wives when she states:

Prized for both their reproductive value, women and girls were also the objects of military expeditions and purchase (1996:33).

While Schmidt is quoting evidence from Karl Mauch, Mugugu is relying on tradition to bring out what is historically true.

Historical novels are rarely, if ever fast-paced. Most readers who are not historically inclined say such novels are not interesting. Most novels that deal with Zimbabwe’s liberation war are in this category. This researcher recalls the years he has taught novels like Chakwesha (Chimhundu 1991) and Zvairwadza Vasara (Musengezi 1984) in high school. These novels were not very popular with some teachers and students who claimed that they were too much like history and as such, they were not interesting to read.

Another characteristic of the historical novel is that it should give information that can be corroborated by other sources. These sources include written ones that are historical and anthropological texts as well as eyewitness accounts if these are available.

Above all these, a good historical novel should have the majority of the people as the major players and not individuals. If one character becomes dominant in a given novel, that character should represent the will or aspirations of most people. An example is Hamundigoni (Mapenzi 1999). He represents most people who feel cheated after having contributed so much for the successful execution of the war of liberation. Hamundigoni also represents some war veterans of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle who never got their pensions while others got them.
It is also important to note that in a historical novel while the novelist has the freedom to describe fictitious characters as he sees fit, s/he does not have the liberty to make historical figures behave in a way that is contrary to what is known about them from history. For example, in the novel *Misodzi, Dikita neRopa* (Mutasa 1991), it does not make sense to let Chirisamhuru survive when it is well recorded in history that he was skinned alive by Nyamazana and her soldiers (Needham, Mashingaidze and Bhebe 1984:70). There is again no sense in presenting Chirisamhuru as a military leader when it is recorded in history that the Rozvi military leader was Tumbare. To do that means that the writer would have chosen to be irrelevant.

These and other aspects make the idea of historical criticism and understanding the historical novel easier and more fruitful. These also help in the understanding of the concepts ‘historicity’, ‘facticity’, and ‘faction’ better. This is so because the writers will be bringing forth works that are grounded in history.

### 2.4 HISTORICITY

Historicity refers to something or a story that is historical. This something has to be a fact or connected with history. Historicity is about the historiness of a text, utterance or any other statement that has historical value. Its strength lies mainly in telling actual and historical truth. Historicity is to some extent linked to the French word ‘histoire’ that is used with reference to historical writing. Gray (1992:137) defines historicity as:

> A term for historical authenticity and validity: the historicity of an event concerns the degree to which it might actually have happened in history, and the degree to which it is a historically meaningful event. The historicity of a novel might refer to the extent to which it deals with events that actually happened, its resemblance to a historical account or document, or the historical relevance it recounts.

When applied to the Shona novel this definition means that most novels qualify to be historical novels. This is so because they refer to events that have actually happened in the past even if most of the events given are not recorded in historical
sources that most historians use. Some of the novels also refer to historical accounts of events that really happened as is said by Gray.

The historicity of a novel is further enhanced if the writer in his/her work takes into account the pressures that are brought to bear on the individual, his/her nation or immediate environment by the social-historical, political and economic circumstances that s/he finds him/herself in. The historicity of the novel is also strengthened if the writer bears in mind that his/her writing is hinged on experience. By experience is meant issues that are of local or national significance and not those that deal with the writer and his life. These should fire the artist’s work.

Historicity is further given an impetus by authors who also observe a high degree of respect for historical events. These artists should try as much as possible to stay within the constraints of historical evidence. Chimhundu (Chakwesha 1991) and Musengezi (Zvairwadza Vasara 1984) do this in their novels. They do not however have to undermine the fictional integrity of their work. Whenever a novelist makes factual claims in his/her writings, those claims should be verifiable from historical and semi-historical records. Novels like Manyimbiri’s Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda... (1991) have for example, factual claims that are verifiable from historical sources and other works of fiction from within this country like Samupindi’s Pawns (1992) and from outside like Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born that is quoted by Ngugi (1972:xvii). Armah says:

So this was the real gain. The only real gain. This was the thing for which poor men had fought and shouted. This is what it had come to: not that the whole thing might be overturned and ended, but that a few black men might be pushed closer to their masters, to eat some of the fat into their bellies too. That had been the entire end of it all.

These words capture the plight of most Blacks in the post-liberation war period, especially those who did the actual fighting and their supporters. Writers like Samupindi (1992) in Zimbabwe, and Ngugi (1987) in Kenya, clearly highlight this theme of betrayal. When a generation of writers or a succession of generations writes on the same theme, then this is adequate proof that the information given
by the writers is historically relevant and is verifiable. The idea of historicity can also be best understood through the theory of historical criticism.

2.5 THE IDEA OF HISTORY

The idea of history is about the actions of humankind that relate to what s/he has done in the past and how that past has influenced the present and is likely to influence the future. This idea is made clear through the search and interpretation of evidence. Historical evidence usually comes in the form of documents, and literary ones are among such documents. Murfin (1996) who refers to Brooks Thomas who was working on an essay in which he suggested how to have a fruitful discussion of Keats’ poem ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ makes the idea of literature being a carrier of history clear. He (Thomas) said that discussions might begin with questions such as: Where would Keats have seen such an urn? How did a Grecian urn end up in a museum in England? Thomas goes on to suggest that some important political and historical realities are raised by these questions. What Thomas is suggesting is that almost every literary piece has a history to tell.

History seeks to tell the truth or it should seek to tell the truth and not undermine it. When it is linked to fiction, there is then the need to analyse whether the novels being studied are telling the truth. It is the task of the student and researcher in history to discern falsehoods from the truth. The historian does not have to pass judgements on issues to do with right or wrong but to give a record of what would have transpired. He has to bear in mind that people’s moral perceptions are fluid and hence change with the passage of time. What was moral a century ago may no longer be moral a hundred years later. This is where the historian and the fiction writer differ. The novelist is not normally bound by the idea of the inconsistency of people’s morality. S/he usually takes a side and passes moral judgements in her/his writings.

Since history seeks to tell the truth, its value as a subject lies in its teachings being useful to humankind. This is so because events that have happened elsewhere are likely to be repeated in the same area or in a new environment. A good example of this is the recurrence of another major war within a space of twenty-one years after the first one ended in 1918. Germany, one of the major players in
the events leading to the outbreak of the First World War was again involved in
1939, and as in 1914, led most countries in the western world into another war that
was worse than that of twenty-one years earlier. The idea of history repeating itself
is also amplified in fictional works. Chimhundu (1991) and Manyimbiri (1991) retell
the same story of what happened to the majority of the people after the end of the
liberation war. The promises that were made to the people by the liberation war
fighters raised many expectations within them. Unfortunately, their expectations
were not fulfilled. Ngugi (1987, 1989) in the novel *Matigari* tells a similar story of
the tragedy of history constantly repeating itself in Africa with the masses being
sacrificed by the politicians. What these writers have in common is their interest in
how the events in post-independence Africa have been shaped by politicians with
the assistance of the masses. Collingwood (1994:24) shows the link between
literature and history when he says:

> Thus poetry is for Aristotle the distilled essence of the teaching of
> history. In poetry, the lessons of history do not become any more
> intelligible and they remain undemonstrated and therefore merely
> probable, but they become more compendious and therefore more
> useful.

Even though, he says that history is not any more intelligible if it is brought out
through literature, the most important thing is that he has shown the link between
history and literature. The two are interwoven. Literature like history focuses on
issues like the economy, politics and religion as demonstrated by some ancient
Greek playwrights like Aristophanes in his plays like *The Clouds* (Sommerstein,
A.H. Translator 1973). While the fiction writer is not objective, and is not expected
to be, the historian has to be.

The problem with the objectivity of history is that it is never objective because it
takes place in a socio-political and economic context. Carr (1964: 16-19, 24-25)
also observed that history is not as objective as it is said to be. He says that what
are generally referred to as historical facts are those that were selected by people
who deliberately felt that these were to be preserved for posterity or had to be
made known to humankind. This therefore means that there are facts that are
ignored by historians who choose those that they think would best suit their
interests. Carr gives an example of Greece in the fifth century BC. He says that
the history given is defective, not because so many bits of primary information
have been lost, but because it is a history that has been largely told by a tiny group of people in Athens. A different picture may have come into being if a Spartan, a Corinthian, or even a Theban and a slave had been given a chance to tell their own side of the story. The same is true of Greek literature. It tells history but mainly as the people of Athens, especially the rich and powerful saw it.

Carr defines history as “a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past” (1964:30). This idea of unending dialogue is true of the artist. His/her art should reflect that continuous dialogue between him/her and his/her world. Carr also says that history cannot be written unless there is some kind of contact between the minds of those about whom one seeks to write. History needs interaction, and this is interestingly where the idea of history and that of literature link. Like literature, history is essentially about looking and understanding the past through the eyes of the present. Again, like the novelist, the historian’s main task is not just to record but also to evaluate, because if a historian does not evaluate he will not know what is worth recording and what is not. It has to be borne in mind of course that race; class or religion determines what one evaluates and records. A good example in Zimbabwe is the 1896-7 Uprising. White historians of Rhodesia (colonial Zimbabwe) refer to these as rebellions while Blacks see these as uprisings and the genesis of Black Nationalism.

The link between the idea of history and literature is made very clear by among others, novelists in Shona like Chidzero (1957) and Chakaipa (1964). Since history means interpretation, these writers, each in his own way is interpreting the events of a particular period that he focused on, and in his focus, each writer justifies why it was necessary that these events were recorded. Chidzero among other things highlights the ill treatment that farm labourers were subjected to in colonial Zimbabwe (1957:55). They are not given appropriate attire for the type of work that they were doing. Matigimu, after seeing some of these workers wearing sackcloth says:

(Where do these dirty creatures come from? Do they work here? Oh dear father! These are people! The world has changed. Are these still people ... Samuel, do not say that my friend. I, Matigimu will not be compelled to do such dirty work. These ones look like people coming back from a forced labour session).

What has prompted Matigimu to say these words is the realisation that people working on the farm are not treated with respect and are not well provided for with the basic clothing that is appropriate to the type of work that they are doing. The reference to forced labour is another historical aspect that though the author may have mentioned in passing was a common aspect of colonial labour institutions and was legalised in the 1940s (Johnson 2000:124).

Chakaipa (1964) writes on the impact of the institution of migrant labour on the Shona family. He is writing fully aware of the fact that most men who left their wives in the rural areas and worked in towns and mines left them at the mercy of those men who remained behind in the rural areas or were working in the rural areas. This is the case of Muchaneta. Muchaneta had an adulterous affair with Handisumbe and finally ran away with Zikomo, a Malawian migrant labourer. Even though the author portrays her as a wayward woman, he was very much aware of the problems that blighted the rural areas. He could not put the problem directly on the shoulders of the colonial Zimbabwean capitalist system because if he had done so his book may not have seen the light of day. There are also high chances that even if he had done so he may have been advised by the Literature Bureau to remove the offensive parts since the publication of any novel (especially by a Black writer) in colonial Zimbabwe had strings attached. The authors did not have to write on any topic that was considered racially sensitive or was likely to cause Blacks to rise against the Whites. They had to write works that were consistent with the government status and feeling. The novel had to be directed along the path of minimal ideological resistance to the Rhodesian government (Chiwome 1996:23).

The issue of adultery due to husbands who were mainly away in towns, farms or mines and left their wives in the rural areas is a historical fact that Schmidt (1996:103) confirms. She quotes a certain Mtoko (Mutoko) Native Commissioner saying:
Adultery is becoming more and more frequent amongst Natives, and in almost all cases, the women concerned are the wives of absentees at work.

Chakaipa is not saying that adultery is a product of colonialism, but he makes clear the fact that the advent of colonialism had a negative impact on the Black family. It also led to a rise in cases of adultery.

Matsikiti in the novel *Makara Asionani* (1987:68) gives the other side of some Whites in colonial Zimbabwe. Not all of them were against liberation war fighters. Some of them acknowledged that there was injustice in Smith’s Rhodesia. He shows some of the Whites not as people motivated by the same ideology but by their different backgrounds.

The idea of history is also made clear through literature. According to Collingwood, (1994:314) history is essential for self-knowledge. Self-knowledge means more than knowing personal peculiarities. For Africa, it means among other issues acknowledging the fact of colonialism, neo-colonialism and corruption. There is need to realise that these cannot be completely reflected in history texts since colonialism affected different regions; even those of a given country differently. This aspect can then best be captured and complemented by fiction. A good example is that of how the colonial land tenure system in Kenya affected the Gikuyu than it did most other Kenyans. Good fiction should also capture other aspects like unemployment, poverty, lack of political representation and little or no access to education.

2.6 HISTORICAL CRITICISM

Mapara (2003:58) asserts that historical criticism seeks to assess the relative reliability and validity of different kinds of historical evidence and to determine the ordering of events whether they are proper or anachronistic. As a method, it is not just restricted to annals, lists and records of civil servants in ancient societies and their narratives. It can also be used in the study of literature. Historical criticism was first used in analysing Greek literature. It was later used in biblical studies initially to analyse Old Testament writings when it was used to confirm for
example, the occurrence of a flood similar to that recorded in Genesis 7-9. The Gilgamesh Epic reports on a similar flood even though the names of the major characters are different. There is a high probability that the Hebrews used the story and linked it with their religious life. The method of historical criticism was later extended to the study of the New Testament. In the New Testament, it helps in understanding among other books the four gospels. For example, a detailed description of the fall of Jerusalem in a narrative would indicate that the document was written after 70 AD, even though the gospel writers make it appear as if Jesus had foretold the fall of Jerusalem.

Marshall (1997:126-138) throws light on the use of historical criticism on the New Testament. He says that it means the study of any narrative that purports to give historical information in order to determine what actually happened and is described or alluded to in the passage in question (1997:126). By using this method, historical study may be undertaken in an attempt to throw light on an obscure narrative by determining more precisely the nature of events to which that text bears witness. Ladd (referred to in Marshall 1997:126) shows how this method is useful by saying that the meaning of various statements in the New Testament can only be understood if these are placed in their historical context. In John 4:6 Jesus is reported being at the well near Sycar at the ‘sixth hour.’ If this detail is historical (i.e. referring to what actually happened), it must have been remembered and recorded because it carried a message that was of significance to the people of that day or the originally intended readers. To today’s reader this time reference is meaningless if it is not explained. Commenting on the need for elucidation Marshall (1997:126) says:

A knowledge of Jewish chronology enables us to state that the equivalent time in modern terms was probably noon. If so, the detail indicates that this was the hottest time of day and helps us to understand why Jesus felt tired from his journey and thirsty. Here we see how a mixture historical skills – a knowledge of ancient chronology and insight into normal human feelings – may be used to illuminate the verse in question so that the modern reader may gain from it the full meaning which the author intended to be grasped by his original readers.

The idea of the historical relevance of a text can then best be understood if one has some knowledge of the period that is being referred to. This helps in reducing
the risk of having what may otherwise be historical, being thrown away as unhistorical. In this study, there is need to have an understanding of the periods that are covered by the scope of the research.

The next important aspect of historical criticism is that of historical accuracy in what purports to be a historical narrative. For example, various titles that have been given to local magistrates in the Acts of the Apostles have been proved accurate by the production of evidence to confirm this from inscriptions and other ancient documents. A careful scrutiny of any given narrative and its comparison with other sources of information enables the scholar/student to shed more light on the text and the other incidents that it records. In using this method, the student should possess a good knowledge of all the sources that may be relevant. S/he should also assess the reliability of the sources and through their use be in a position to establish what is historically probable. There is the need to interrogate the texts to construct a picture of the events being reflected. This picture has to be historically coherent. The reader/student has to realise that the process of historical study also suggests that events may not have happened as exactly as they are reported in a given source.

Marshall (1997:130) says that the final question concerns the amount of evidence that is needed to demonstrate that an event happened. Referring to the New Testament, he asks:

Suppose that we have a single narrative of some event, with no confirmatory evidence from other sources: is that report adequate as a basis for belief, especially if the event is unusual or supernatural? Only John 11 tells us of the raising of Lazarus: is that sufficient evidence to justify us believing that such a stupendous event occurred despite its miraculous nature and despite the silence of the other Gospels? What is adequate evidence?

What Marshall has said is highly applicable to the study of the Shona novel. When applying the method to the study of the Shona novel all material is usable. However, this is on condition that the types of evidence are distinguished and the right questions are asked and the weight of evidence as pointed out by Marshall is judged accordingly. An ancient work of fiction can be useful to a historian or someone interested in historical studies when it shows the interests and
presuppositions of society in a particular historical era and if these can be supported by historical evidence from other sources.

In traditional Shona society, motherhood is the most celebrated part of womanhood. A woman without children or at least a child was looked down upon. Almost everyone in society treated such a person with suspicion and without respect. Even up to this day, motherhood is seen as a virtue. When Kuimba (1965) gives the character Marumbeni, he is giving something that has historical validity. Her portrayal as a bitter person is also historically accurate because women without children were seen traditionally as bitter and disappointed. Their bitterness emanated from the fact that they would in most cases have lost favour in their husbands’ eyes. Society also looked down at them. In writing this, Kuimba is depicting the psyche of the Shona especially in pre-colonial days. Commenting on the importance of children to women Schmidt (1996:15) states:

A young bride acquired status primarily through the production of children for her husband’s patrilineage. Thus, her fertility was of prime importance. The more children she bore, the more status she acquired.

She goes on to quote the then Native Commissioner of Hartley (now Chegutu) District, who in 1903 said that a woman without a husband or children was openly held in derision. Once a woman had a child, she was no longer called by her first name but was referred to as ‘mother of _______.’ It is then clear that Kuimba’s Gehena Harina Moto (1965) has some historical information.

It has to be noted that pieces of historical information that are found in fictional works should not be confused with ancient factual chronicles, although it has to be borne in mind that the facticity of the chronicles is also based on what the compiler chose to capture. If a literary work refers to or even quotes a report, then it is more likely to be reliable if it was written soon after the events to which it refers. Details mentioned in fiction may be historical clues to dates, for example, Mutasa’s Misodzi Dikita Neropa (1991) refers to the fall of Chirisamhuru at the hands of a Nguni warrior queen called Nyamazana. A reference to historical texts and the Nguni incursions into Central Africa shows that this took place after about 1836
(Needham, Mashingaidze and Bhebe 1984:70). This means that some events described in some Shona novels have historical information.

Historical criticism is also useful when applied to the political economy of pre-colonial Zimbabwe as reflected in some Shona novels. Some incidents narrated in the novel *Jekanyika* (Mugugu 1968:11, 16) about raids that were carried out by some Shona chiefs on others who were militarily weaker are a true reflection of what transpired in this country before 1890. They raided not only for agricultural land. The raids were also that they add to their herds and numbers (Beach 1984:47). Schmidt (1996:33) confirms this when she quotes a certain Sawada saying that after a raid the Shawasha brought back cattle and women. She goes further in her discussion saying that because women were prized for their reproductive as well as productive value, military expeditions were carried out in search of them. Wherever raids were carried out young women and young boys were taken away. The raiders then killed old women and men. Old women were killed because they were no longer in a position to bear children. Old men were feared because they were likely to lead the young boys into rebellion, as they became adolescents if they were to be taken captive. Mugugu (1968) is not the only one who narrates the issue of raids. Chakaipa, (1961 and 1959) reports cases of Ndyire raiding and destroying certain homesteads for women and the Ndebele raiding the Shona for cattle and women.

Historical criticism does not only help in understanding novels that focus on the pre-colonial period. In novels that focus on the colonial and post-colonial periods, like Chakaipa’s *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (1967) and Tsodzo’s *Pafunge* (1972), as well as Chimhundu’s *Chakwesha* (1991) one can decipher historical details that are quite important. Chakaipa highlights the plight of Black labourers on White farms and the lack of interest in the education of the Blacks’ children by the White farm owners in his novel *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe*. For example, on Christmas day Vhuka makes his workers go to work, transplanting tobacco seedlings. This is made clear when Vhuka says:

Get up all men! Get up all women! Take your raincoats, go, and plant tobacco! Everyone to the tobacco fields! No one will stay behind except young children).

These words are historically correct in that they show how Blacks were treated on farms. There was no regard for their rights as workers. Vhuka, the farm owner even says that it is necessary that they should go to the fields. Even if they were going to be paid, working during a public holiday should have been voluntary.

Tsodzo in *Pafunge* (1972) also highlights the plight of the urban Zimbabwean who had no adequate accommodation for himself and his family. Describing what Rudo saw when she went to Gwelo to stay with Josiah Rugare (alias Joe Rug) the author writes:

_Akaona sokuti vanhu ava vakanga vava kugadzirira kurara nokuti vakanga vari kuwaridza. Mukadzi mukuru aiwaridza mubhedha, vakomana vachiwaridza pasi pomubhedha. Avawo vasikana vakanga vamirira kuti mwenje udzimwe vagokurura hembe vorara pakati pemba. Pano mumwe mubhedha pakanga pagere mukomana akanga asiri kutaura navamwe. Kuda akanga achingovawo mumwe munhu aigara imomo (p 4)._ (She saw as if these people were preparing to go to bed because they were spreading their bedding. An elderly woman was making the bed, while boys were spreading their blankets under the bed. The girls on the other hand were waiting for the light to be put out so that they could remove their clothes [in the dark] and put up in the centre of the room. On another bed, there was a young man who was not talking to any one. May be he was also someone who also stayed in that room).

These words show the desperate situation that families faced in colonial Zimbabwe in as far as accommodation was concerned. There is really no decency and no privacy. Parents and children would put up for the night in the same room. They even shared that same room with someone who was not a member of their family. This is a reflection on how the Whites treated Blacks. They did not care about their welfare but about their labour.

Chimhundu has shown that the period after independence is characterised by corruption. People in influential positions are selling drugs. He also refers to corruption by the politicians. He says this through Moses (Chakwesha) who says:
These words by Moses (alias Chakwesha) are a reflection of the scenario in post-independence Zimbabwe. Even though no senior government minister has been prosecuted successfully for corruption, several have been brought before the courts. The highest person who has been relieved of his duties because of corruption is Hwiridzai Nguruve who was the first Black Police Commissioner.

2.7 FACTICITY

In Africa, art is not art for art’s sake. It is a vehicle for carrying people’s aspirations and life experiences. These are the facts of their lives as far as they see them. The term facticity is therefore used to refer to the factness of a statement or writing that is deemed factual. It is mainly used in discussing the nature of historical writings of all kinds. These writings may manifest different degrees of facticity. The idea that a novel may give an account of the suffering of people due to poor and indecent accommodation is a fact. The facticity of such a novel like Pafunge (Tsodzo 1972) shows that the nature of accommodation for Blacks in most urban centres in colonial Zimbabwe was poor. The picture that Tsodzo presents is generally acceptable and truthful as is seen in the remnants of some of these houses as observed by the researcher on his visit to Mutapa high-density suburb in the city of Gweru on 24 September 2005. This is the major setting of Tsodzo’s story. In this suburb, there are still some houses that have external ablution facilities. Some have been renovated, but the remains of the external facilities are still there to be seen. In the novel (Tsodzo 1972:74), the following dialogue between Rudo and her boyfriend Joe is important to note because Gweru unlike Mutare, which is surrounded by mountains, is not close to any. There is a hill near
Senga, but it does not qualify to be called a mountain. These words by Rudo are therefore very significant because they highlight the appalling conditions under which the Blacks stayed in urban centres. Rudo says:

“ Asi muno murukisheni muna makomo kani?” Rudo akabvunza mukati merima.
“Makomo! Wabvunza neiko, nhai mudiwa?” Joe akadaro.
“Kuda ndatadza kunyatsoona, ndaona setiri mubako ndikati regai…”

(“Are there any mountains in this location?” Rudo asked as they were in darkness.
“Mountains! Why do you ask dear?” Joe responded.
“May be I have failed to see properly, but I see as if we are in a cave and have decided to ask…”).

This dialogue helps to highlight the novel’s facticity because it sheds light on the size of the rooms that Blacks had to themselves for accommodation. Added to this problem there is no indication that their houses have inside and outside lighting facilities.

The facticity of fiction becomes clearer and relevant if the artist produces work that gives meaning to people’s experiences and brings these under the microscope so that they can appreciate it. In the novel cited above, Tsodzo is highlighting the plight of the African in what is predominantly a White city. The African becomes an alien in a city that only requires his services but is not concerned about his family and comfort. The Zimbabwean colonial system ensures that s/he continues to suffer. The lack of interest in the African by the White man in colonial Zimbabwe as presented by Tsodzo is factual in the sense that it reflects the ‘othering’ of the Blacks. This ‘othering’ was a question of looking down upon and the racial segregation that was practised against Blacks who were seen as inferior, that was a common feature in Rhodesian (colonial Zimbabwean) politics. Blacks were not to be afforded the necessities of life, even the basic dignity that is inherent in all human beings.

Facticity is linked to historicity. Any information found in a novel that is deemed historical can be considered factual. It does not necessarily have to be accurate in the sense of having the date, character and place of the described event being the
same with that given in chronicles, historical texts or memoirs. Facticity can be retained if the text has basic elements of truth as is done by Uris (1961: Preface) when he writes:

Within a framework of basic truth, tempered with a reasonable amount of artistic license, the places and events described actually happened... The characters are fictitious, but I would be the last to deny there were people who lived who were similar to those in this volume.

These words of Uris show that the facticity of a literary text is not compromised even if the writer may introduce fictional elements. What is needed is for the author to stick to the basic truth. If such a policy is adhered to, the facticity of a text is maintained. Linked to the word facticity is the word faction, which is a combination of two words – fact and fiction.

2.8 FACTION

Vambe (2001:6) says:

World literature can in general terms be rightfully described as human treasure. It is human heritage because it distils human struggles in concrete artistic terms.

These words are very apt when the idea of faction is looked at. Human struggles are social, political and economic. These make the wheels of history turn. They reflect the reality of human life. This reality gives the writers the stuff with which to create their art. The fact that the environment, current and past, inspires artists is an indication that art does not rise ex vacuo, but has its roots in the people and the events around them. Those events are facts.

The struggles of humankind in literature are not written down as they are in historical textbooks. They are put down in an artistic form that is deliberately introduced, not as a distortion but as an attempt of making the learning of socio-historical processes entertaining.

Gray (1992:115) describes faction as a reference to novels and other literary forms that are based on actual events. When the term is applied to novels, these novels
are then called non-fictional novels. The words ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ are combined in a portmanteau word that indicates the confusing combination of invention and factuality that the form can assemble. Examples of works that are faction given by Gray are like Thomas Keneally’s *Schindler’s Ark* (1982) and Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* (1966).

The term faction has also been used to describe television drama documentaries. In this form, there is the conflating of two different genres. The genres are the investigative and factual one, combined with the fictional and inventive. Although, according to Gray the combination of these two forms is perceived as contradictory, in its seeming contradiction lies the actual element of its being faction. In Shona fiction, several novels qualify to be called faction because they are based on fact. Among these are *Chakwesha* (Chimhundu 1991), *Sekai: Minda Tave Nayo* (Mutasa 2005), *Zvairwadza Vasara* (Musengezi 1984) and *Mapenzi* (Mabasa 1999). The events in these novels are based on historical facts but the characters in the novels are fictional.

The idea of facts being represented in fiction seems to create problems. How does a given fact, for example become a dominant one over others that are known to exist? The idea of the same fact coming up several times in different novels lends credibility to it as a historical fact. For example, if novels constantly refer to chieftainship wrangles (*Chakaipa* 1961 and *Kuimba* 1965) then the issue of chieftainship coups is historical reality that was part and parcel of the Shona past. Even if one text refers to an event that is then corroborated by historical evidence from elsewhere, that novel should be considered as having material that is factual and therefore historical. Even though literature does not have to free itself from its main function, which is to entertain, it does not have to entertain outside the parameters of history and real life. It has to give stories that are credible. The credibility of such stories lies in their telling stories that show actual people even if the setting may be fictional. The stories’ being faction is embedded in the fact that it does not restrict its role to passively registering what has happened in the past, but also tries to look to the future.

Gabel and Wheeler (1990:51) make the idea of faction clear. They argue that even though the Christian Bible cannot be considered a historical document in the
sense that history is understood today, it is a document that has aided scholars in tracing the development of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Scholars have done this by observing the sequence of contemporary issues that the biblical writers responded to. Omotso (1984:116)’s ideas on mutually negative portrayals by both Blacks and Arabs in their literatures best sums up the concept faction. He says:

One glaring difference in the mutually negative portrayals that Arabs and Africans give each other is that while African authors write only of the Arab elite and their debaucheries in Black Africa, Arab authors do not invest characters in Black Africa with any form of dignity or heroic status that they can respect.

It is clear that these two groups have no love lost between them despite playing to the international gallery under the guise of African unity. The Arabs are like Whites in Africa who have never seen themselves as Africans but as Europeans and have thus identified with Europe than with the lands of their birth. The Arabs belong more to the Arab League than to the African Union and this reality is reflected in the writings of both Africans and Arabs as seen in Omotso’s observation. The value of historicity, facticity and faction are all predicated on the reliability and validity of the material that the novelists write. It is therefore important to understand what these two terms mean.

2.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The words reliability and validity are nouns derived from the adjectives valid and reliable. According to Procter (1995:1200), the adjective reliable means something that can be trusted because it works well. Rundell (2002:1193) defines the word reliable as meaning information that can be trusted to be accurate. From the two definitions that are given, the word reliability therefore means dependability or the state of being dependable and trustworthiness. When the reliability of evidence is therefore, analysed, there is need to be satisfied that the evidence produced is authentic and is not intended to mislead. The evidence produced does not have to be judged at face value. Whatever evidence is brought up, it has to be challenged and interrogated by seeking confirmation from other sources.

Valid is an adjective that means that some information or something is based on truth or reason. It is not only reasonable, but it also has to be generally acceptable
(Proctor 1995:1605; Rundell 2002:1588). When something is accepted as valid, it is compelling, convincing and authoritative. The noun validity therefore refers to the authority, soundness and legality of something as defined within the parameters of the area concerned. When evidence is under interrogation in an effort to find its validity, the analyser should focus on how sound, convincing as well as compelling the information presented is. This is important in the study of literary texts, especially when sources like the Shona novels that traditionally have not been considered as having valuable historical information are analysed.

In the light of the above definitions of reliability and validity, it can therefore be accepted that the Shona novel is a reliable and valid historical document. For example, the old world Shona novel proves that the Save River was once navigable (Matsikiti 1995:205; Randles 1979:4). Ngugi highlights the importance of literature when the issue of its validity and reliability are analysed. He asserts:

> Hence, literature has given us more and sharper insights into the moving spirit of an era than all the historical and political documents treating the same moments in a society’s development. The novel in particular, especially in its critical realist tradition, is important in that respect: it pulls apart and it puts together; it is both analytic and synthetic (1981:72).

In these words, Ngugi highlights the value of the novel in that it gives sharper insights into the life and events that it presents. It captures the injustices and other evils as well as positive developments of an era. Ngugi’s words also capture the reality that is similar to the one presented in the Shona novel as regards the life of the Shona in the pre-colonial period. Mutasa’s two novels, *Nhume Yamambo* (1990) and *Misodzi, Dikita, Neropa* (1991) are examples of novels that present material that is both valid and reliable. The novels give an overview of the life of the Rozvi under Chirisamhuru, as well as the circumstances leading to his fall and death at the hands of the invading Nguni under the leadership of Nyamazana (Mutasa 1991:139-40; Beach 1980:265). The historicity of this is confirmed in history. Mutasa (1978:98) and Hamutyinei (1989:66) also confirm the historical reality that children who were born as twins, triplets or more were killed. Even though they do not agree on the reasons why twins were killed, the information they have presented is sound, and is therefore valid. It is information that is reasonable and dependable in as far as it relates to the killing of the twins.
Although Matsikiti (1995:2) does not state that twins or more children delivered at the same time by one mother were supposed to be killed, he says that their birth was considered taboo and the parents were regarded as witchcraft practitioners.

2.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the importance of the Shona novel as a historical document by showing the link between literature and history. It has shown that literature is a carrier not only of culture but also of history. This can be revealed in the corroborative evidence that can be got from historical texts when they are compared to what is found in some novels. Even though some novels end up making comments on certain issues, the dividing line between this and what is found in history is very thin since history itself has its own biases, even if people who claim to be unbiased write it. The historicity of the novel as has been observed shows that whatever the time reference given in some novels, careful study of them shows that they are very valuable as historical documents. The next chapter focuses on the Old World novel and how this reflects pre-colonial Shona history. It focuses among other issues on the Rozvi state and its demise. The chapter also analyses the historicity of some issues that novelists raise, like the navigability of the Save River.
CHAPTER 3

THE OLD WORLD NOVELS AS A DEPICTION OF PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Literature is about man’s search for the truth. It is also an attempt to present a collective memory of a given people. This memory may be one passed down orally through the generations. It may also be the memory of what people still remember that has happened in their recent past. This search for the truth is however largely a record of a people’s world undergoing change – a world in perpetual motion. This is clearly, what is deciphered in some Old World novels. Some of them as observed in novels like Nhume Yamambo (Mutasa 1990), Misodzi, Dikita neRopa (Mutasa 1991) and Jekanyika (Mugugu 1968) attempt to give an insight into what pre-colonial life among the Shona was like. Among the Old World novelists, Mutasa (1990 and 1991) comes out as the closest to history as can be. The other novelists present a passing glance to the pre-colonial history. Mutasa on the other hand tries to marry history and fiction in his two novels. These two novels are based on historical fact when they are compared to others that deal with the same period. They fall in line with what Mensah (2004:69) observes as the purpose of the historical novel. Mensah states:

The purpose of the historical novel is to make the reader experience the psychology and ethics of the past, not as curiosity, but as a phase in mankind’s development, which is of concern to the reader.

What Mensah is saying is that the historical novel is important to the reader in that it is a window through which one looks at the way the people of the past lived. It also helps the reader to appreciate the present in as far as it relates to the past. The quotation also shows that there is a link between the past and the present. It as well brings forth to light the truth that humankind is constantly changing as his/her environment is exposed to new external or other internal factors. These words also highlight the importance of the historical novelist. S/he is one who links the reader with the past that s/he may not have perceived existed, especially if the
reader has not been a student of history or has not studied the history of that particular period. The novelist, like the historian presents life as a continuum.

3.1 PRE-COLONIAL SHONA STATES

3.1.1 The Rozvi state

The Shona have had in the past political entities that can be referred to as states or kingdoms, since the rulers of these entities were referred to as kings (madzimambo). The major political states of the pre-colonial Shona society are Great Zimbabwe, Mutapa, Torwa and Rozvi (Changamire). In his novel Nhume Yamambo (1990:152) Mutasa mentions in passing the fact that the original inhabitants of this land today called Zimbabwe were the Ba(Ma)sarwa (Khoi-San) and Tonga people. The Shona displaced these and pushed them to the periphery. He gives this information through Chuwe Tavada who is possessed. (In fact, the events in all the novels are narrated through a medium). Tavada says:


(Uncle said we were being shown the life of the Khoi-San. We were then shown the arrival of the Tonga and the Karanga, the people of the sun and the water. We were also shown the coming of the Nyai as well as the construction of Great Zimbabwe, its fall and the building of Khami by the Torwa. Also shown was the reign of the Munhumutapa, all showing the Black Africans in charge).

The epiphany that occurs to Tavada is historically significant in that it traces the peopling of the southern side of the Zambezi and north of the Limpopo, which the historians refer to as Southern Zambezia (Bhila 1992:640; Beach 1980:265, 319; Chigwedere 1982:31, 65, 133). It also shades light on who the Karanga are since it refers to one of the totems of the people who are generally accepted by oral history and tradition as the original inhabitants of Great Zimbabwe – the Dziva-Hungwe people. Besides that, it also gives an insight into who the original inhabitants of the Zimbabwean Plateau were. These according to the above
Men and women have lived on the Plateau for thousands of years, and for most of these thousands of years they were hunting and gathering people known to us as Stone Age peoples because of their way of making tools and weapons; the only ones who concern us here are the Late Stone Age people who lived on and around the Plateau from about 30 000 B.C. (1980:3-4).

These words of Beach are significant in that they tell the truth about how the Stone Age peoples as stated by Mutasa in the quote preceding this one, originally peopled the land that is largely occupied by the country that today is called Zimbabwe and mainly the Shona. The Shona were not the original inhabitants of this land. Although Mutasa (1990:152) does not give a detailed account of whom the Mandionerepi are or were; he goes further than Beach in that he identifies who the original human inhabitants of this land were. Beach only refers to them as Late Stone Age people. Chigwedere, an oral historian has also commented on the general existence of the Bushmen (San) and Hottentots (Khoikhoi), who are referred to by Mutasa (1990:152) as people who had previously peopled all Africa, before both the Negroes and the Bantu (Chigwedere 1982:131-33). His analysis is however broader than that of Mutasa and Beach whose focus is only on pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Chigwedere comments on the presence of the San on the African continent saying:

Whatever future research may discover about the history of the continent, one factor is constant and will remain so. That factor is the ubiquity in Africa of the Bushmen, now called the San people. It would be biased of us not to admit that Africa, for a very long time was no more than a Bushmen continent (1982:131).

Chigwedere is making it clear that the original inhabitants of the African continent are the Khoi-San. He, as already stated in relation to Beach explodes the myth that the Shona were the original inhabitants of Southern Zambezia. The Shona, in historical terms are but recent arrivals. What is of importance in his words is the fact that Chigwedere is in tandem with Beach on the fact that the Shona were not the original inhabitants of what is today Zimbabwe. Mutasa concurs with both authors who generally do not tally with one another. What is also historically
significant about this presentation by Mutasa is the dispelling of the generally
touted political position that is often repeated *ad infinitum* that the land called
Zimbabwe originally belonged to the Shona (Bantu). This does not however play
down the importance of the agrarian reform that is currently underway in the
country.

Another group of historical people that Mutasa refers to are the Tonga. He, like in
the case of the Khoi-San does not mention how the Tonga came to be on the
Zimbabwean Plateau and who they were. Beach attempts to explain who the
Tonga were. He confirms that there were Tonga people in this land who preceded
the Shona but were either pushed out by the Shona or absorbed. Beach describes
where these people were originally domiciled. He writes:

> Between the lower Zambezi and the Inyanga plateau and between
> the Ruenya and Pungwe Rivers lived the Sena-speaking Lower
> Zambezi Tonga. These people can be divided into two main groups
> from an historical point of view: those whose ruling dynasties were
> replaced by Shona speaking dynasties moving out of the Plateau
> and the Mutapa state area and those who remained under ‘pure’
> Tonga leadership (1980:158).

Beach is making an interesting contribution to the understanding of the pre-
colonial Shona. He is saying that not all Shona people are originally Shona. Some
of them are Tonga whom the Shona absorbed as they moved onto the Plateau.
Chigwedere also makes it clear that the predecessors of the Shona besides the
Bushmen (Khoi-San) were the Tonga. He states the following concerning the
Tonga:

> Here in Zimbabwe, they constitute hardly 2% of the African
> population. This is so partly because by the time the Mutapa
> invaders crossed the Zambezi River around 1000 A.D., only a few
> pockets of them had already crossed the Zambezi River.
> Furthermore, as the descendants of the Mutapas spread to the
> north from the south, they drove many segments of the Tonga Tribe
> back to the north across the Zambezi River (1982:30).

These words of Chigwedere are in tandem with those of Beach in as far as they
relate to the Tonga as Shona predecessors, although Chigwedere implies that
most Tonga were pushed back north of the Zambezi. The two do not concur on
absorption. What is however of significance is that the two’s information tallies in
as far as it relates to the Tonga being the predecessors of the Shona. This interface between history and fiction continues and is well blended because Mutasa’s version of history is in concurrence with that presented by both Chigwedere and Beach. He sticks to real historical people who have walked the length and breadth of the land that is today Zimbabwe. Even though Mutasa does not give much as relates to each of the groups, what he has put down is historically acceptable and is therefore valid. The historicity of his material is anchored in the fact that some local historians are confirming what he has put down.

The two novels, *Nhume Yamambo* (1990) and *Misodzi, Dikita Neropa* (1991) are largely a history of the Rozvi state. This is very clear from the novels because Mutasa almost entirely dwells on this state and highlights how Chirisamhuru, the second last ruler of the Rozvi state rose and fell from power. The author says that the Rozvi state is the successor of the Mutapa state. He however does not highlight the two stages in the life of the Rozvi state. He does not show that there was a break between the first and second Rozvi states. To Mutasa the fact that the Mutapa state, though a predecessor of the Rozvi, managed to survive up to about 1880 does not exist (Beach 1984:59). Mutasa further goes off track in the chronology and development of the Shona states in pre-colonial times. However, this does not largely misrepresent history because for one who is relying on oral tradition, this is fairly accurate since of all the Shona pre-colonial states, the Rozvi state is the most known. The overall impression that he gives is that the Mutapa state is the successor to the Great Zimbabwe state. Although this does not come out clearly in his novels, the following words imply this. He writes:

*Kana nguva yakwana yokutsindikudzana kwezviitiko, zvose zvine faniro yokuitika zvotoiitika. Dai zvisingadikwi navanhu kuti zvisaitika zvaigona kudzvivirirwa, matateguru edu haaitama achisiya Zimbabwe guru, mbiri noutongi hwaMunhumutapa hazvaiparara, vaZungu havaizombodzingwa navaRozvi vachisiya mapurazi avo, kana ivo vaTorwa havaizomboparara noushe hwavo paKami (1990:114).*

(When the time for change has come, no one can push it back. If that was possible, our ancestors would not have left Great Zimbabwe, Munhumutapa’s rule would not have ended, the Portuguese would not have left their prazos [farms], and even the Torwa’s rule at Khami would not have ended).
The novelist is in the above words relying on the religious concept of predestination to explain historical changes and upheavals. This method from a historiography point of view is an unorthodox method of gathering historical data. However, since Mutasa is telling his story from the point of view of a possessed person and it is fiction, he has managed in these few words to give a lot of historical material. He has pointed out that in historical processes change is the only constant. Mutasa has made it clear that the first well-known Shona state of significance to be established was the Zimbabwe state. He however makes the error of alluding that the Mutapa state succeeded the Zimbabwe state. Beach (1980:82) and Barnes et al. (1993:25) say that while tradition and earlier historians have made the Mutapa state the successor of the Zimbabwe state, archaeological evidence reveals that the Torwa state is the immediate successor of the Zimbabwe state. They dispute the presentation of the Mutapa state as the successor to the Zimbabwe state. Beach, who is Zimbabwe’s most prominent historian with an interest in the Shona pre-colonial states, says:

It has been pointed out that the obvious successor to the Zimbabwe state was the Torwa state based on Khami ... but it is worth mentioning here that archaeological evidence does not follow the suggestion of earlier works that the Khami culture rose out of the Mutapa state, which in turn had been the immediate successor of the Zimbabwe state: the progression from both the building and pottery styles of the Zimbabwe culture to those of Khami was a direct one without any detour through the north of the Plateau (1980:80).

Beach is stating that archaeological evidence has revealed that the successor to the Zimbabwe state was Torwa. This statement therefore has the effect of shutting out the earlier tradition that had said that the successor to the Zimbabwe state was the Mutapa one. However, Mutasa has the support of another historian who says that the Mutapa and Rozvi states evolved from the Great Zimbabwe culture (Bhila 1992:640). Bhila is unfortunately not very clear. His suggestion is because both the Mutapa and Rozvi states have traits that are similar to those found in the Zimbabwe state. In this case, it then becomes difficult to accept Mutasa’s idea that the Mutapa succeeded the Zimbabwe state. Either Mutasa was also influenced by the desire to write an epic for Zimbabwe or he was misinformed by the earlier written sources that Beach (1980:82) has referred to. It is clear that Mutasa has
misrepresented historical facts by stating that the Mutapa state succeeded the Zimbabwe state when archaeology through carbon dating (C-14) proves that Torwa was the real immediate successor to the Zimbabwe state. Despite this shortcoming, Mutasa is historically accurate when he states that the seat of the Torwa state was Khami, which he (Mutasa) writes in Shona orthography as Kami (1990:114). Although Mutasa makes it appear as if the Mutapa state succeeded the Zimbabwe state, he has some limited success in as far as the historicity of the information that he presents is concerned. It is true that the Zimbabwe state is linked to the Mutapa state since history has also recorded that the Mutapa state came into existence because of the Karanga of the Great Zimbabwe state who were moving from the south to the north (Beach 1980:83). It is also, however possible to accept Mutasa’s position, but only because the Rozvi state becomes the successor to the Zimbabwe state via the Torwa and Mutapa states.

While Mutasa errs in his presentation of the chronology and link between the Zimbabwe and Mutapa states, he does much better than Chigwedere (1982:107) who has presented the Zimbabwe state and the Mutapa state as synonymous. Chigwedere says that the man who organised the first constructions at Zimbabwe was Chigwangu. The result was that he was nicknamed Rusvingo after the imposing complex that had been erected. In the circumstances, given the fact that Mutasa is writing fiction, his histories become more reliable and acceptable than Chigwedere’s because Chigwedere is an oral and trained historian who has not taken into consideration the value of archaeology in setting a straight record in as far as the pre-colonial Zimbabwe states are concerned. He has ignored the value of archaeological tools like carbon dating (C-14) and potassium argon dating.

Mutasa also seems to imply that the Rozvi state succeeded the Mutapa state. Omer-Cooper (1976:347) also shares this notion and refers to:

… the Mutapa kingdom and that of the Rozvi empire, which succeeded it in ruling over the Shona communities of a greater part of Rhodesia.

Omer-Cooper has here highlighted the ahistorical element that is not in tandem with carbon dating, that the Rozvi state succeeded the Mutapa state. This presentation of the Mutapa state as the predecessor of the Rozvi state is
misleading. Evidence from other historical sources, especially the Portuguese documents that Mudenge and Beach have used indicates that the Rozvi is a breakaway state. When the Rozvi broke away, they moved to the south where they defeated the Torwa. According to Ilife (1995:102), the Changamire who was a Munhumutapa vassal conquered the Torwa state and set up a Rozvi (Destroyers’) kingdom which exercised a lose overlordship in the southeast until the nineteenth century. Curtin et al. further confirm this when they state:

In the 1690s the Changamire lineage, an offshoot from Mutapa conquered the Torwa, who had founded a successor state in the vicinity of modern Bulawayo after the fall of Great Zimbabwe. The Changamire rulers exerted power over a large territory and remained free from Portuguese penetration (1995:253).

Curtin et al. are stating that the Changamire state conquered the Torwa state that had succeeded the Great Zimbabwe state. It is not the Mutapa state that was preceded by the Zimbabwe state. This evidence clearly shows the emergence of a new state, not a successor to another one. In fact, both states (the Mutapa and Changamire) continued to co-exist until they collapsed under the impact of the mfecane and colonialism. As observed, Mutasa has again not presented an accurate picture of what transpired in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. What is however worth noting is the fact that in those misrepresentations the history of the link between the pre-colonial states of the Shona comes out. There is no denying the fact that these states are related. This comes out in Mutasa’s writings despite some shortcomings. He does far much better than Chigwedere (1982:33) who creates the impression that the Mutapa state was found under the leadership of Kutamadzoka who became Mutapa I. Chigwedere’s information cannot be corroborated by other historical sources and it is made less acceptable due to the fact that it is inconsistent. After having made the claim that, Kutamadzoka became Mutapa I after crossing the Zambezi River into Zimbabwe, Chigwedere then says:

It was Mabwemashava and Rusvingo who crossed the Zambezi River into this country at the head of the Mbire Soko Family. It was they who founded the Mutapa Empire (1982:88).

In these words, Chigwedere is asserting that Mabwemashava and Rusvingo founded the Mutapa state. This however contradicts what he has presented earlier
on page 33, when he states that Kutamadzoka who became Mutapa I founded the said Mutapa state.

Mutasa has also presented Chirisamhuru telling his sub-chiefs and members of his court that he would like to bring the spirits of Murenga, Dziva, Mambiri, Rusvingo, Munhumutapa, Changamire Dombo, Chaminuka and Tovera to be resident in the royal court (Mutasa 1990:119-20; 1991:41). When he presents Chirisamhuru speaking this way, Mutasa is making the claim that all the spirit mediums and founding leaders of dynasties were the ancestors of the Rozvi. They were not. What Mutasa has done is to marry traditions. He has added among the Rozvi progenitors some names of prominent Shona founders. Chigwedere (1982:88) mentions some of these. They are Chaminuka, Rusvingo, Murenga and Tovera. Chigwedere says the following about these, saying they “are the greatest known ancestors of the Shona” (Chigwedere 1982:88). He is saying that these ancestors are common to all Shona states when this is not true. Chigwedere ignores the Zimbabwe and Torwa states in his treatise. In fact, Changamire Dombo (Chikuruwadyambeu) was the founder of the Rozvi state (Beach 1980:230; Muganhu 1996:89). His real name was Dombolakonachingwango, which was shortened as Dombo (Beach 1980:230). He was not a Mutapa.

The first Changamire rose to power when the Mutapa was at the height of its power. It is therefore not historically accurate for Mutasa to link the Munhumutapa and the Changamire states as predecessor and successor. It is again improper to insinuate that the Rozvi and the Mutapa have the same ancestors. They were all Shona but they were not all Moyo (Heart). The Mutapa was Nzou-Samanyanga (Elephant – keeper of great tasks [Beach 1980:119]). (This is despite Chigwedere’s [1982:34] claims that the Mutapas were Mbire Soko). What is however revealing about the totems that are apportioned to the Mutapa by both Chigwedere and Beach is the fact that it becomes clear that the Mutapa and Changamire were not related. The fact that these two states in fact continued to exist as separate entities (Beach 1984:38, 59), is a clear indication that while the novels of Mutasa can at face value be accepted as historical, inconsistencies riddle their historicity at times as Mutasa attempts to write an epic for Zimbabwe. The reliability of his novels in as far as some aspects of the history of the pre-colonial states in Zimbabwe are concerned becomes unreliable and to some
extent questionable. The unreliability is however minimal when the fact that this is a writer who is relying largely on sources that were written by oral historians like Chigwedere (1982) as well as other oral sources is considered. The epic element also has to be taken into consideration given the fact that Mutasa is also writing with the idea of national unity in mind.

Beach makes it very clear that the Changamire is not the predecessor of the Mutapa state when he states:

The original Changamire of the 1490s had been a subordinate of the Mutapa, and the same was true of the Changamire of the 1680s. He rose to power as a keeper of Mutapa’s cattle herds, and was granted land on the borders of the state in the reign of Mukombwe (1980:138).

Beach is here showing the link between the first Rozvi state and the second one and their relationship to the Mutapa one. According to this quotation by Beach, the only relationship between the Mutapa and Changamire was one where the Changamire was a client herder for the Mutapa. There is no issue here of the Changamire (Rozvi) being the successor to the Mutapa state. In fact, the Changamire ruled an area that was dominated by people of the Moyo (Heart) totem. He was also Moyo himself. This, according to Beach (1980:119) does not make him a close relative of the Mutapa who was Nzou-Samanyanga (Elephant – keeper of great tasks). From a historical critical perspective, the Mutapa and Rozvi are only related in the sense that the Rozvi state started as an offshoot of the Mutapa state and that both were Shona. That is as far as the relationship in historical terms goes.

Mutasa (1991:49) also shows the historical link between Changamire Dombo and Tovera. Tovera is linked to the Venda in what is today South Africa’s Limpopo Province. He is referred to as Thovela (Tovela/Tobela). The Thovela state existed in the eighteenth century. There were Rozvi inhabitants in this state, but this does not mean that the state was under the Rozvi, neither was it an extension of the Rozvi state. There was a sub-state that the Shona who had moved across the Limpopo established, but they were not directly under the Rozvi state of Changamire. This sub-state of the Shona was culturally and linguistically absorbed by the Venda. Despite this cultural and linguistic absorption, many Shona traits
were transmitted into the Venda culture. The only link that existed between the Rozvi and this state south of the Limpopo comes in the sense that the Singo (Shona/Rozvi) sub-state made a conscious attempt to recreate the main features of the Changamire state, but practically it was independent. Mutasa falls into the trap of the tradition that claims that the Changamire ruled over the Venda. It is a common tradition between the Shona and Mudenge on 28 May 2006 when he was addressing participants to the Shona Linguistic and Literary Terms Workshop at Great Zimbabwe Hotel, also echoed the same sentiments. He said that the Venda are known among the Shona, specifically the Karanga as Vhezha. According to Jackson (cited in Beach 1980:261), the then Native Commissioner for Belingwe (now Mberengwa) there are counter-claims to the Rozvi claims that the Changamire ruled the Venda. The Venda say that relations between the Singo sub-state and the Changamire were hostile. In this case, the issue is not whether Mutasa is right or wrong. What is clear from Mutasa’s claim and the counter-claims mentioned by Jackson (cited in Beach 1980:261) is that the relationship between the Venda and the Rozvi is unclear. One clear aspect though is that there was a relationship but how developed and positive or negative this relationship was cannot be established. If that is the case, Mutasa has written and referred to a relationship that is historical. That is what is important considering the fact that Mutasa is writing fiction. Another important issue to note, that historical documents cannot confirm is the extent of Rozvi rule in as far as the south of the Limpopo is concerned. Mutasa was trying to prove that the Shona had a mega-state during the reign of the Rozvi. He does this by extending the boundaries of the Rozvi state to the south of the Limpopo (Vembe/Vhembe) River. Oral historians like Chigwedere (1982:33) most likely influenced this attempt. Chigwedere claims that the Venda in the south of this country and in South Africa’s Northern Province are descendants of Runji, the elder brother of Chaminuka and Mushavatu. The result of such an influence is that while it does give information on the fact of a relationship that existed between the Shona and the Venda, the true nature and extent of that relationship has been muddied in an attempt to create a great tradition of the Rozvi and the Shona in general.

In the novel *Nhume Yamambo* (1990:81), Mutasa says that the Venda and Vezha are descendants of the Rozvi/Shona. The link is historically there, but as has already been pointed out above, that link does not make the Venda the
descendants of the Shona (Rozvi) but that there were Shona immigrants like Tavhatsindi, Twamamba and Lembetu (Beach 1980:261) who settled among the Venda at Tshiendeulu hill in the Nzhelele valley. These Shona set a sub-state among the Venda but that state was absorbed by the Venda. To then claim or even suggest that the Venda are the descendants of the Shona and were under Rozvi rule at any one time or briefly up to the time of the fall of Chirisamhuru, is inappropriate.

It is important to note that even though the Rozvi may not have had any or little political influence on the Venda, it would be naïve to deny that there was a link between the two states as is reflected in the religious practices of the two. Mutasa’s novel (1991) then has some historical relevance on the religious front. The link between the two states is largely religious. Besides mentioning Tovera, Mutasa also mentions Murenga. Murenga is also known in Shona tradition as Sororenzou or Sororezhou. The Venda have retained the name Sororenzou that may have been bequeathed to them by the defunct Shona Singo dynasty. This name is rendered Thoho-ya-ndou in Venda. Chigwedere confirms the religious link that Mutasa highlights when he states:

At Matojeni in the Matopo Hills even today acclamations are made to Murenga Sororenzou (everything done at any of the national shrines in the Matopos is done in the name of Murenga Sororenzou), the great Mbire Soko and Venda ancestor (1982:100).

Chigwedere is in the above words suggesting that Murenga Sororenzou is the ancestor of both the Shona and the Venda. He uses the name Mbire or Soko Mbire to refer to all the Shona people. Therefore, when Chigwedere uses the term Soko it is a reference to the Shona. This reference by Chigwedere to the Soko Mbire or Soko has given credibility to Mutasa’s work because even though it does not point to a political link, it does refer to a religious link, a link that both Chigwedere and Beach, two Zimbabwean historians who rarely concur, confirm.

The other name that has been retained among the Venda is the title of the Changamire. This name is Chikuruwadyambeu. In Venda, this name is rendered as Vele-la-mbeu. Beach highlights this close religious relationship by asserting:
The Singo kept the Changamire title of Chikuruwadyembewu, altering it to Vele-la-mbeu, they also claimed descent from Mwari and they converted a praise name of Mwari, Sororenzou, into a title, Thoho-ya-ndou, that was used by claimants to Singo supremacy up to the end of the nineteenth century (1980:261-2).

Beach is here making reference to the historical and religious link between the Singo (Shona descendants among the Venda) and the Shona. Both people are descendants of the Changamire whose title was Chikuruwadyembewu (Vele-la-mbeu) and had the praise name Sororenzou (Thoho-ya-ndou). The name Chikuruwadyembewu is proof that there was indeed a link between the Rozvi state and the Venda. It is however not adequate proof that the Venda, despite using royal names similar to those used by the Rozvi were therefore under Rozvi rule.

The novelist captures the succession dispute between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu successfully. In the fight that occurred between the two claimants to the throne, Dyembeu was defeated and is said to have died in battle (Mutasa 1990:200). Historical sources back the issue of the succession dispute between these two (Beach 1980:239). Beach says that after the death of Gumboremvura there was a brief contest between a claimant using the ‘Dyembeu’ title and Chirisamhuru or Sabanko (Chapungu). Chirisamhuru who is said to have had the support of Dyembeu’s sons won the contest and became the mambo (Beach 1980:239; 1986:19-20). Although Beach says that the contest was brief, Mutasa says there was open war between the two (i.e. Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu), the two concur that there was a succession dispute between the two. Mutasa goes on to add a religious dimension to the whole succession issue, and this issue is the running subject in the whole novel Nhume Yamambo (1990). The issue of whether the clash between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu was brief or not is not much of an issue when it is considered that Mutasa is not a historian but an artist who is using history to push and develop his theme. It is true that what Lord Acton (cited by Halsall 1998:1) says is important to historical writings when he asserts:

For our purpose, the main thing to learn is not the art of accumulating material, but the sublimier art of investigating it, of discerning truth from falsehood and certainty from doubt.

Lord Acton is saying that the most important issue in the analysis of historical material is that the investigator or historian should discern truth from falsehoods
and make issues clear by removing any doubts in the minds of students and scholars of history. When analysing Mutasa’s novels it however has to be borne in mind that Mutasa did not set out to write history but fiction. Despite this realisation, there is still room to discern truth from falsehood in Mutasa’s novel. What may appear to be falsehoods can be excused because his is fiction that falls in the realm of faction and historitainment.

Most Shona and African novels are in some way historical. They reflect the history or some aspects of the history of a given period. While some of the events and characters given in these novels may be fictitious, some of them may be historical people who may have graced the historical stage. This is true of what is found in Mutasa’s novels. The two novels’ worth lies not only in the mentioning of some historical events that really occurred like the clash for succession to the Changamire title, but by also mentioning the chief people who participated in the clash. Mutasa has in his novels mentioned the involvement of other houses that were part of the Changamire dynasty. Some do not belong to the Changamire dynasty but they are associated with the Changamire. Some of the names mentioned are Mutinhima – a Rozvi house, Nerwande, and Mavhudzi, two houses that were involved in the cultic and religious life of the Rozvi. Mutasa (1990:33) says that after Rupandamanhanga Dyembeu’s father had been killed in battle, Gumboremvura became the new Changamire. He goes on to say that Mutinhima, with the support of Nerwande and Mavhudzi who were leaders of the Mabweadziva cult rebelled and attempted to kill Gumboremvura. Beach is in tandem with Mutasa on the issue of the attempt on Gumboremvura’s life. Beach writes:

The Mutinhima line, in other words, was a branch of the Changamire dynasty, which had become a distinct power in the state by 1800. Its closeness to the main dynasty can be seen in the tradition that the Mutinhima joined with the Mavudzi and Nerwande title-holders in an attempt on the life of Mambo Gumboremvura … (1980:240; see also Beach 1994:195-6).

What Beach is stating is that the Mutinhima house, which was closely linked to the Changamire dynasty, joined the religious leaders of the state, Mavudzi (Mavhudzi) and Nerwande in an attempt on Gumboremvura’s life.
Other names such as Jiri, Musaka, Gumunyu, Chakamanga, Samuriwo and Tohwechipi are mentioned as having been close to Chirisamhuru (1990:176). The Jiri house is mentioned as one of the Changamire ones, and as one that led to the revival of the Rozvi title after the advent of colonialism. There is however nowhere in history where it is mentioned as having assisted Chirisamhuru in his fight against Dyembeu for the throne of Changamire (Beach 1980:194, 223). Musaka does not appear in the little available historical sources either as one of the houses of the Rozvi dynasty or as a participant in the clash between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu. The same is true of Chakamanga.

Mutasa mentions the Gumunyu house as one of the Changamire families (Mutasa 1990:176). Beach (1986:19) who states that the civil war against Gumboremvura led to the total division of the main Rozvi dynasty between the Jiri and Gumunyu houses confirms this. The Gumunyu house is also mentioned in association with Chirisamhuru’s son and successor, Tohwechipi (Beach 1980:269). There is however, the possibility that in the struggle for power between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu, Chikore Muposi who was to lead to the strengthening of the Gumunyu house, could have supported Chirisamhuru, and his prominence could have become larger during the reign of Tohwechipi. If that is the case, there is a high likelihood that Mutasa is mixing issues or has relied on a different tradition from that used by Beach. Such mixing of issues can only best be explained by the existence of a big body of traditions that exist that relate to the Rozvi and their might. Added to this already existing body is the history of Chigwedere that is given in books such as Birth of Bantu Africa where Mutapa is presented as Soko Mbire while historians like Beach say he was Nzou-Samanyanga (Chigwedere 1982:33; Beach 1980:119). Whatever the case may be the historicity of the Gumunyu house remains engraved in history.

Mutasa (1990:177) mentions Nerwande as one of the sub-rulers who brought a force to fight on the side of Chirisamhuru against Dyembeu. Nerwande creates problems since according to Beach; he together with Mavhudzi (spelt Mavudzi by Beach) had rebelled against Gumboremvura. Beach states:

Gumboremvura, his successor, apparently relied to some extent on Mhari support, and although he ruled for a long time he had to face an unsuccessful revolt by his ‘son’ Mutinhima and two important
holders of ritual positions, Mavudzi and Nerwande (1986:19; see also Beach 1980:239 and Mutasa 1990:33).

Beach is saying that when Gumboremvura ascended the Rozvi throne he faced rebellion from the Mutinhima house that Mavhudzi and Nerwande who were important religious figures supported. The rebellion of the Mutinhima house was possibly prompted by the fact that as a Rozvi house, they felt that it was their turn to ascend to the throne. When Chirisamhuru ascended the same throne after Gumboremvura, it is likely that Nerwande, (according to Mutasa [1990]) turned to support Chirisamhuru after being convinced to do so by Chirisamhuru’s emissary, Chuwe Tavada. This may not be recorded in history but then history is full of cases where allegiances are never permanent but are constantly shifting. A good example is that of the alliance between Russia and Germany during the Second World War. It crumbled after Germany had attacked Russia and Russia joined the Allied Forces that included the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Nerwande may also have shifted his allegiance to Chirisamhuru for reasons best known to himself.

Tohwechipi was Chirisamhuru’s son. Unlike Dyembeu’s sons who rebelled against their father (Beach 1980:289), Tohwechipi stood by his father. He is the one who later succeeded Chirisamhuru as Mambo after the latter had been killed in the battle against Nyamazana.

Samuriwo (Mutasa 1990:176), is given as a brother to Chirisamhuru, together with Jiri, Musaka and Gumunyu. The relationship that is really being referred to is that of members of the Changamire dynasty who were supposed to have taken turns in becoming the Changamire. Samuriwo was Rozvi and Moyo. Mutasa makes Samuriwo someone aligned to Chirisamhuru when in fact the relationship between Samuriwo and the Changamire state had ceased in the eighteenth century (Beach 1980:288). Samuriwo was no longer directly under Changamire rule. What is however historically relevant that Mutasa brings out is the fact that the Samuriwo house was once related and close to the Changamire one, and Chotizva was in the eighteenth century confirmed as Samuriwo (Beach 1994:91). In fact, despite being Rozvi, Samuriwo was only vaguely related to the Changamire. Beach (1994:93) confirms this when he says:
But, as we have seen, not all *moyo* were Rozvi and not all Rozvi were *moyo*, and the closest links between the Samuriwo dynasty and the Rozvi seem to have been no more than a common totem and the fact that the Samuriwo dynasty probably came from the edges of the central *moyo* nuclear area in Uzumba.

These words of Beach clearly state that Samuriwo was *Moyo* but his being *Moyo* does not make him Rozvi. This is despite the fact that the two had had a relationship a century earlier. The Samuriwo dynasty has probably come from Uzumba. It is clear then that Mutasa is relying on the issue of totems and is taking every one who is *Moyo* to be Rozvi as is common with most people who are *Moyo* who today call themselves Rozvi. This is the truth about people. Everyone, where possible, wants to show links with those who are considered to be historically significant. In fact, the Samuriwo he is referring to was at the time of Chirisamhuru’s ascendancy to the throne now located in the Central Plateau and was closer to Nyandoro than to the Rozvi state (Beach 1994:90). If Mutasa set out to write history then some aspects of his history do not tally with what is found in the works of Beach who is one of Zimbabwe’s most prominent historians. It is however worth noting that historians do not always concur on the interpretation of the information that they have at hand. Another point worth noting is that despite contradictions that come up in Mutasa’s presentation of Chirisamhuru and the Rozvi state, he has captured how Chirisamhuru gained the reigns of power. He has also shown that Chirisamhuru fell from power because of the impact of the *mfecane*. That is what is essential when these two novels are critically analysed. He has managed to recreate a relatively acceptable history. For a writer of fiction, this is no mean achievement.

Chireya, Njerere, Makuvaza, Chirimhanzu, Chizema and Zimuto are also mentioned as having supported Chirisamhuru in his fight for ascendancy to the Rozvi throne. Chireya of what is today Gokwe is of the *Shava* (eland) dynasty. According to Beach (1980:72-3; 259-60), he was under the Rozvi as a tributary chief. Another sub-ruler who came to Chirisamhuru’s assistance is Njerere. History has a record of these two chiefs as having been Rozvi sub-chiefs. However, it does not state that they supported Chirisamhuru in his bid for the Changamire title or having fought against him. Whether they supported Chirisamhuru or Dyembeu is not important. Their importance lies in the fact that they appear in history as Rozvi subordinates. This is historically true and on this, Mutasa tallies with
historical documents. This is clearly in tandem with historical criticism which says that there is a need to assess the relative reliability and different kinds of historical evidence to determine whether they are proper or anachronistic (Mapara 2003:58). The reference to Chireya and Njerere is not anachronistic. It does refer to real historical people who had links with the Rozvi and were sub-rulers under the Rozvi state. There are two missing elements in Mutasa’s history. The first one is that it does not state when these became Rozvi sub-rulers. The other is that their involvement in the clash between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu is not documented elsewhere other than in Mutasa’s novels.

Makuvaza does appear in the historical sources that are available. However, his mention by Mutasa is anachronistic. He is mentioned in historical sources as a claimant to the Gutu title. He succeeded Denhere who had died in 1892. The British South Africa Company (BSAC) assisted him to get the title (Beach 1994:150). This clearly means that Makuvaza did not come to the assistance of Chirisamhuru in his campaign for the Changamire title. His being mentioned by Mutasa is therefore anachronistic. Chizema also appears as a historical figure but as a supporter of Tohwechipi, Chirisamhuru’s son and Tohwechipi is the one who took over as Changamire after Chirisamhuru was killed in the fight against Nyamazana. Concerning Chizema, Beach says:

> Probably in the late 1840s Tohwechipi, who had the praise name Chibamubamu, was recognised as the Changamire by both the Mutinhima house and the Portuguese and under his leadership the Rozvi, including the Swabasvi group along with other Shona such as Chirimhanzu’s son Chizema began to raid the Ndebele herds and villages (1980:267).

Although Beach is in the above quotation referring to Tohwechipi as the successor of Chirisamhuru, he has mentioned Chizema as an ally of his and not of Chirisamhuru as Mutasa states. It is therefore clear that Chizema is a supporter of Tohwechipi, Chirisamhuru’s son. This does not make Chizema Chirisamhuru’s contemporary, but Tohwechipi’s. However, there is a likelihood that since Chizema was leading Chirimhanzu’s force and came to the assistance of Chirisamhuru (Mutasa 1990:177), the two (Chizema and Tohwechipi) could have struck a relationship, which was to last after the death of Chirisamhuru. Their historical existence is therefore not in doubt. There is also a high likelihood that these two
may have fought on Chirisamhuru’s side when he fought Dyembeu. If that is the case, then the words of Tavada can be accepted as historically reliable. Mutasa records Tavada as saying:


(At the edge, there was a big force of chiefs from the east. This camp was made up of forces of Gutu Makuvaza, Chizema, Chirimuhazu’s son and the son-in-law; Commander Zimuto).

When Mutasa mentions the chiefs of the east he intends to show the extent of Rozvi rule, that there were no independent chiefdoms. They are said to have come to the assistance of Chirisamhuru. Among these chiefs was Zimuto who is also mentioned as one of those who led a force in support of Chirisamhuru. He was like Gutu, a tributary of the Rozvi state (Beach 1980:274). Mutasa again here presents historically relevant and reliable material. Tributary chiefs, as these ones were doing, had the option to support a claimant to the Changamire title, oppose him, or could remain neutral. The Gutu dynasty was also a tributary of the Rozvi that had had no opposition when it replaced the Chasura dynasty of the Shiri/Hungwe people. Beach (1980:336) confirms this when he states that Mabwazhe founded the Gutu dynasty in the mid-eighteenth century, and he drove out the local Shiri Chasura dynasty. The Gutu dynasty is said to have paid tribute to the Changamire state until it (the Changamire state) fell under Tohwechipi Chibamubamu. They may therefore have supported Chirisamhuru in recognition of his having given them a free hand over the Shiri/Hungwe people.

Mutasa also mentions a list of names of chiefs who were against Chirisamhuru. These are Nyamondo (Nyamhondo in Beach), Negove, Murove, Chivi, Matibhi, Chitaudze and Mupaose (spelt as Mupawose by Beach 1994:53) of the Remba. All these names are mentioned in the works of Beach and other historical documents at the University of Zimbabwe’s History Department (UZHD) as being in one way or another related to the Rozvi. Nyamondo and Negove were indeed Rozvi tributaries. Beach (1980:244) says that they were ordinary tributaries, and these were of Torwa origins who had been absorbed into the Rozvi state. Mutasa
(1990:179) confirms that Nyamondo’s people were Torwa. The Rozvi considered Nyamondo’s people their subjects. If what Beach is saying holds any water, it is then likely that Nyamondo, Negove and Murove may have seen in the stand against Chirisamhuru a chance for them to gain a better political foothold in the politics of the Changamire state if Dyembeu was to win. There is also a possibility that these tributaries may have seen a chance for them to break away and assert their own independence. What is important as mentioned above is the fact that these dynasties are mentioned as having had links with the Rozvi state. This is then a clear indication of the historical relevance of Mutasa’s two novels Nhume Yamambo (1990) and Misodzi, Dikita Neropa (1991). They show at least the extent of the Rozvi sphere of influence. Beach (1994:141) who says that the Nyamhondo rulers were Moyo/Zario, not Moyo/Mondizvo, and were descended from Nemakase, not any well-known member of the Changamire line, further confirms the facticity and historicity of the two novels. The same is true of the Negove dynasty. This house had a relationship with the Changamire that was even vaguer than that of the Nyamhondo.

Chivi, Matibhi, Chitaudze and Mupawose (spelt as Mupaose by Beach) of the Remba are also mentioned as some of the chiefs who did not support Chirisamhuru in his bid for the Changamire title. They instead supported Dyembeu just like Negove, Nyamondo and Murove had done. According to Beach (1980:244), Chivi had never really been a Rozvi tributary. The same is true of Matibhi (Matibi) who is referred to as leader of the Pfumbi house (Beach 1980:306). Matibhi seems to have become leader of the Pfumbi after Mafukanoro (Mafukanhoro) who could have appeared on the Plateau circa 1833. The appearance of the Pfumbi at this time is an indication that Matibhi would not have been chief at the time of Chirisamhuru’s ascendancy to the Changamire title, which occurred some time before 1833. By the time the Pfumbi appeared on the plateau, the Rozvi state had already had its first contact with the mfecane and about three years later Chirisamhuru died in battle. There is no evidence in history to suggest that Chirisamhuru had been in power for only about three years when Manyanga fell to Nyamazana. In fact, the Pfumbi are said to have fled from Venda and settled between the Umzingwane and Bubye Rivers and were therefore not a tributary of the Rozvi state. The Pfumbi are again not recorded anywhere, except in Mutasa’s novels as having at any one time clashed with the Rozvi.
The next chief who Mutasa mentions as having sided with Dyembeu is Mupaose (Mupawose) of the Remba. It is interesting to note that the Mupawose who appears in the available historical documents is not a Rozvi but is associated with Rimuka and the Ngezi dynasty. According to Beach (1994:53), this Mupawose was Tonga and not Shona. Chigwedere (1982:31) concurs with Beach on Mupawose and the Tonga. He writes:

Right in the centre of the Shona world in the Chegutu area, we find another segment of the Tonga people. These were originally ruled by Ngezi who, after Chimurenga in 1897, lost his chieftainship to Mupawose who is also Tonga. Because this segment is right in the heart of the Shona, it was Shonarized and has become patrilineal.

Chigwedere is here highlighting the fact that Mupawose was originally Tonga but was absorbed into the Shona system. He however does not mention the Tonga as being a tributary of the Rozvi. If they were, this does not come out in his writings or those of Beach. What comes out clearly is the absorption of the Tonga into the Shona culture. If the Mupawose who is mentioned is not linked to the Rozvi, then the closest to Mupaose is Mposi (Beach 1980:307) who is said to have led the Lemba (who in Shona are called Remba) from Venda and settled in the Belingwe (now Mberengwa) area. He is said to have fled back to Venda because of the mfecane. There is again no historical record of him having clashed with the Rozvi or of having been a Rozvi tributary chief.

The picture painted above concerning tributary chiefs who are said to have participated in the fight on the side of Chirisamhuru or against, points to the fact that Mutasa (1990, 1991) did not give a true picture of what really transpired in the fight for the Changamire title. That should however not be a cause for dismissing the two novels as lacking historicity. According to Cruikshank being quoted by Ofor (1991:23):

Human life cannot be represented in a full or truthful manner without taking account of the pressures brought to bear upon the individual by his milieu, by the particularity of social situations and historical circumstances.
Cruikshank is saying that in the writing of human accounts, there are other social and historical factors that influence a writer. The result is that at the end, what one produces is not objective history but a compromise document. What is important when the works of Mutasa are analysed is the fact that he is writing a history basing on traditions around him or focusing on his own personal interests. He may also have relied on other sources that historians like Beach and Bhila may not have used. In that case, that does not make his works less historical, and Beach or Bhila’s more historical. What has to be borne in mind that makes these two novels to be acceptable as historical documents is the fact that in any war or conflict situation, especially in struggles for higher posts, each contender has supporters. That is the most important underlying factor. That is also the case with Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu. Mutasa managed to bring forth the truth of the fact that these two had supporters who came to their assistance. That is what is historical and Mutasa managed to bring this out. He has also managed to bring out important Rozvi houses that are still known even up to this day. An example of some of these names is Mutinhima, a name that is common in Masvingo Province’s Bikita District.

Mutasa (1990:180, 1991:55) states that Mazvihwa, Maziofa and Mataruse had remained neutral in the wrangle for the Changamire title between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu. Neutrality like alignment is a political position. Again, like in the case cited above, what is of significance is not only the issue of neutrality, but also of whether these existed as dynasties associated with the Changamire state or not. That is where the historicity lies. History confirms the existence of Mazvihwa. Mazvihwa was leader of the Ngowa and his brothers are said to have been Maziwofa (Maziofa) and Musifari. The Ngowa are said to have taken over the land that was under the Moyo Mazhe people who were subordinates of the Rozvi. It is said the Rozvi did not contest the removal of the Chivi title-holders from power, but only assisted in the assassination of Zengeya, a Ngowa ruler, and replaced him with a Chivi title-holder, Tavengerweyi (Beach 1994:154-5). Mazvihwa is also said to have claimed the land between the Runde and Ngezi Rivers. In the reign of Mazvihwa, the Ngowa came under Ndebele rule (Beach 1994:156). This is a clear indication that they switched their allegiance from one superordinate power to another. Therefore, their having remained neutral in the clash between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu may have happened. It however cannot be
substantiated from any other source(s). That is however not important. What is of significance is the truth of the fact that the Ngowa were once under Rozvi rule. That proves the historicity and facticity of some of the information that is in Mutasa’s novels.

In the above scenario, what Mutasa has done makes his novels historical ones because he has fallen in line with Ezeigbo’s idea of what a historical novel should be like. Ezeigbo (1991:16) says with reference to Achebe, that Achebe’s characters are historical in the sense that they are representative of their age. In other words, Ezeigbo is saying that characters should be representatives of real historical people, not historical in the sense that they represent members of the political or economic elite. They should represent real human beings found in this world. Mutasa’s characters are equally representative of the age that he is writing about. They are in fact more than representative in that some of them really existed in the period under discussion. They are characters that represent those who lived and could have lived at the particular time that he is referring to. The names he has used give this a boost. Historical texts confirm these names and the activities of the people involved. It is therefore appropriate that his novels be accepted as reliable and valid historical documents since they are a mirror of the pre-colonial days.

Mutasa is however inconsistent in his portrayal of Tumbare. In one instance, Tumbare is recorded as having been killed in the clash between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu. In the novel *Nhume Yamambo*, he writes:

\[ Vana Dyembeu naTumbare vakamomoterwa navarwi vaNdumba vaid a kuva uraya kuti vagopuwa nyika. Varume vakafira nh amo ivavo pavakabatwa. Vakazara maburi amavanga se mwena yechisvino chamasese (1990:200). \]

(Ndumba’s forces that wanted to kill them so that they would be awarded with chieftaincies overwhelmed Dyembeu and Tumbare. The two were mercilessly butchered when these forces fell upon them. They were so full of holes like woven beer strainers).

This description is clearly putting across the fact that Tumbare and Dyembeu had fallen in the battle between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu. This is further confirmed on the same page where it is written:
Vakawana zvitunha zvaTumbare naDyembeu zvatakurirwa padyo nopperwa (1990:200).

(They found that the corpses of Tumbare and Dyembeu had been carried to a place close to the battlefield).

The inconsistence is realised when a reading of the sequel to Nhume Yamambo (1990), Misodzi, Dikita, Neropa (1991), has Tavada mentioning Tumbare as the army commander. About Tumbare (Mutasa 1991:6), Tavada says:

*Ndakanyevera Tumbare, jinda rehondo, ndokubva varwi vanyararidza nokugadzika vanhu mubonderere guru.*

(I advised Tumbare, the army commander, and he advised the soldiers to help in making the people settle down).

When the above scenarios are compared, it is most likely that the one given in Misodzi, Dikita Neropa (1991) is closer to historical reality than the one given in Nhume Yamambo (1990). Although it is likely that Dyembeu was killed after Chirisamhuru deposed him, it is most unlikely that Tumbare was killed in the same dispute. This is so because it is unlikely that there was a new Tumbare who had been installed immediately after the fall of Dyembeu. What is most probable is that initially Tumbare may have supported Dyembeu but later switched his allegiance to Chirisamhuru. In the event that Tumbare had remained on the side of Dyembeu until his death, it is then unlikely that Chirisamhuru may have retained him as commander of his forces. This would then mean that Tumbare had not died in battle. If Chirisamhuru did indeed retain Tumbare as head of his forces, he may have done that in an attempt to unite his fragmented state, that is, if Tumbare had indeed been on Dyembeu’s side. He also had to do that to appease the residual Torwa since he realised that Tumbare was not a Rozvi but a Torwa. By making Tumbare, keep his post as army commander Chirisamhuru would at least ensure that those residual Torwa who were under Rozvi rule would remain loyal. Commenting on the relationship between the Rozvi and the Tumbare dynasty Beach (1980:242) says:

*If not even the sekuru of the Changamire could be fully trusted, the people of the Torwa state offered a counterbalance. First of these*
were the Chihunduro soko and Tumbare moyo families which had been in occupation of the state at the time of the conquest. Although the leaders of the two families were killed by the Rozvi at the time of conquest, the families themselves continued under the new dynasty.

The above words make it clear that the Changamire state survived through a balancing act of creating alliances even with the former Torwa who are represented by the Tumbare dynasty and the Chihunduro one. This is because the Changamire could not entirely rely on relatives and other Changamire houses since these had the potential to rebel against him (Chirisamhuru). What Beach asserts is therefore plausible. It strongly re-affirms what has been suggested above – that the Changamire, Chirisamhuru had to retain the loyalty of the former Torwa so that there would be peace in his state, at least during his reign. The mentioning of all the above names that are said to have been aligned to Chirisamhuru or to have been on the side of Dyembeu in fact makes the novel Misodzi, Dikita Neropa (1991) historically reliable. These are names whose existence and roles in the Rozvi state history confirms.

When Mutasa (1991:6, 15) mentions Tumbare as being in charge of the Rozvi army, he is stating what is historically true. Beach confirms this when he writes:

But the Rozvi traditions remembered Tumbare as a leader. He was said to have commanded a major raid on a Middle Zambezi ruler just before the mfecane and he was also a counsellor of the Changamire (1980:242; see also Beach 1980:268; 1986:47).

These words, as has already been stated above, reveal the intricate plot of the Changamire that he put in place to ensure his success. He retained the services of Tumbare, an influential dynasty of the old Torwa state to maintain a political balance. He made him commander of the army. This was meant to ensure loyalty since the post of army commander was a powerful one. His skills helped the Rozvi in raids against a ruler who was in the Middle Zambezi. His success shows the might of the Rozvi army in the days prior to the mfecane. Mutasa also refers to Rozvi military might, even against the Portuguese who had superior weapons. He writes:

(Dombo defeated the Portuguese and pushed them out of the prazos that they had grabbed. He kicked them out of their fort at Maungwe and pushed them further to the east of the Nyanga Mountains).

In the above quotation, Mutasa records Changamire Dombo as having expelled the Portuguese from Nyanga and Maungwe. This reference to the success of the Rozvi over the Portuguese in Manyika and Maungwe is historically documented. According to the Portuguese document ‘Descrição Corográfica’ of around 1780, (cited by Beach 1980:231), there is a tradition, which states that the Portuguese had been paying tribute to the Changamire, but had then refused to do so. This had provoked a punitive attack. Caetano de Mello de Castro wanted to defend Portuguese interests in Manyika. To do this the Portuguese had to move into Maungwe. That the Rozvi had a special interest in Maungwe is true because even today the people who stay in the area around Tikwiri Mountain refer to it as ‘Gomo revaRozvi’ (The Rozvi’s Mountain). These interests led to the clash between the Portuguese and the Rozvi. The Portuguese were heavily defeated. They were then pushed out of Maungwe and Manyika. Mutasa uses the term Nyanga to refer to the kingdom of Manyika. Beach also refers to the defeat of the Portuguese by the Rozvi. He says that the Changamire fought the Portuguese in alliance with the Mutapa. He states that the rise of the Rozvi put an end to the Portuguese’s hopes of extracting gold from the Zimbabwe Plateau on their own. He says:

Indeed, the late 1680s and early 1690s saw a renewed reoccupation of their bases on the plateau, the feiras. Before any definite development could take place, however, they were caught up in the meteoric rise to power of the Changamire dynasty, which was rebelling against the Mutapa, building up power in the eastern territories and conquering the Torwa state, in very quick succession. A temporary alliance between the Changamire and the Mutapa saw the Portuguese evicted from the latter’s state in 1693, and two years later, they had been removed from Manyika as well.

Beach is stating that when the Portuguese were reoccupying their bases, which they had abandoned due to Mutapa hostilities, they were again forced to quit because of the rise of the Changamire state. The same Changamire managed to
kick the Portuguese out of Maungwe when he entered into a brief alliance with the Mutapa. Mutasa (1991:14) describes this expulsion of the Portuguese from Manyika as “... ndokupfochoreswa mberi kwemakomo eNyanga” (… and pushed them further away from the Nyanga Mountains). The defeat that the Portuguese suffered at the hands of the Rozvi at Maungwe should have been so shocking because according to Bhila (1992:660), the Portuguese came to believe that the Rozvi emperor had magic oil with which he could kill anyone simply by touching the person with it. Bhila says that, the Rozvi army’s prowess in battle can also be attributed to the thorough training that the soldiers underwent. The training involved military exercises as well as archery. Although Bhila gives these attributes of the Rozvi army, he underplays their victories, suggesting instead that the Portuguese were defeated because at the end of the seventeenth century the Portuguese were fighting for their survival along the East African coast from the 1650s to 1729 when the Sultans of Oman destroyed their fort at Mombasa. What Bhila manages to confirm is what both Beach and Mutasa state; that the Rozvi heavily defeated the Portuguese. The result was that the Portuguese left the plateau for a very long time. The story of the defeat of the Portuguese at the hands of the Rozvi clearly shows that at the height of their power, the Rozvi were a power to reckon with in military terms. It also confirms that in the history of pre-colonial Zimbabwe, on the Zimbabwean Plateau, the Rozvi were a formidable force. There is also historical validity in what Mutasa has presented. The fact that the Portuguese ended up believing that there had been the use of magic in their defeat speaks volumes about the Rozvi military might and as already stated, Mutasa has to be applauded for presenting historical information that is reliable and valid.

Concerning the installation of the Changamire, there is a tradition that Mutasa mentions as having occurred during Chirisamhuru’s installation. The tradition is truly Bantu, but it is definitely not Shona. This is the ceremony of the reed dance. It is a tradition that is for the Swati (Swazi) of Swaziland and females perform it every year before the king of Swaziland only. In Swaziland, it is known as the reed dance. Concerning this tradition Mutasa writes:

Vose vakomana navasikana vakanga vatema rutsanga, zvichireva kuyaruka pagore iri, vaiuya kuzotenda. Vaizotenda kuna Mambo, vadzimu naMwari kuti ndivo vakabatsirana kuti kuyaruka kwavo
(Both boys and girls had cut some reeds, which meant that they had come of age in this particular year, they came to give thanks. They would give thanks to the Mambo, the ancestral spirits and God since they would have helped one another in bringing them up. They came with reeds that were as beautiful as they were, with each reed representing every month that had passed after they had come of age).

Even though the reed parade described by Mutasa is for both boys and girls, he is attributing an alien tradition to the Shona. If such a tradition had been practiced among the pre-colonial Shona, it would have been known since most traditions that were there in pre-colonial days like the mbende dance (christened Jerusarema, to give it a Christian flavour) have survived up to this day. Mutasa has however, told the history of the pre-colonial Shona state of the Rozvi that is largely accurate and reliable. The validity and reliability of this history lies in the fact that other historical sources support it.

### 3.1.2 The extent of Rozvi rule

Mutasa (1990:7) claims to be writing the true history of pre-colonial Zimbabwe and the Rozvi state of that period. The story of the period is told through a possessed Chuwe Tavada. The spirit of his father Chuwe Mugura possesses Tavada. Through Tavada Mutasa says:

*Chiendai munodzima nhema dziya dzamunosiudzana panyaya dzorudzi urwu. Nerimwe divi imhosva yangu nokuti ukaona imbwa yodya matehwe inenge yashaya wokuvhima naye. Zvino kana manga muri tsengi dzamatowo chigarai mudye mafundo ondopakura mugapu roruzivo.*

(Go and erase the lies that you have been telling each other concerning these issues [i.e. the history of the Rozvi and pre-colonial Zimbabwe]. I also blame myself because if you see a dog eating hides, there will be no one to take it on hunting expeditions. Now if you were like dogs that were eating hides sit down and eat what I am going to dish out my pot of knowledge).
The speaker of these words is a possessed person. He claims that he is telling the real and true history of the Rozvi. He claims that the history that the Zimbabweans have been exposed to is not the true history of the land. Through this character, Mutasa is taking advantage of the Shona’s belief in spirit possession since he knows that the Shona believe in spirit mediums. By making use of this religious tradition in his narration, Mutasa is here making the claim that what he has written is the real history, not what readers have been hitherto exposed. He dismisses other historical sources as ahistorical. The other sources that he refers to, besides published books, may be oral ones that have been in circulation prior to the publication of his two novels that focus on the Rozvi. The claim that Mutasa is making is similar to the one that Luke makes when he introduces his gospel to his intended, reader a Roman official called Theophilus. He acknowledges the existence of other accounts but dismisses these other gospel accounts and makes a claim similar to Mutasa’s that he is writing a truthful account of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. He addresses Theophilus saying:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things that you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

Luke is saying that his account of the life and teaching of Christ is the most accurate and orderly one since he has carried out thorough investigations. Mutasa is also an echo of Luke in that he claims to be giving a truthful account of Rozvi history since he has a possessed person telling it. To him this makes his history authentic when it is compared to that which students of history and other people in general have been exposed to before. On the page where Mutasa (1990:7), makes a claim similar to the Lucan one quoted above, he goes on to state that the Rozvi are the ones who were the rulers of Dzimbabwe (1990:7). He is here suggesting that the Rozvi state came as a successor to the Zimbabwe state. This is not historically true. Even Mutasa himself unintentionally confirms this when he says that Changamire had destroyed the Torwa because they had parcelled out land to the Portuguese (1990:114; 1991:13). This indicates that the Rozvi were not successors to the Zimbabwe state but to the Torwa state. Mutasa also gives the
impression that the Rozvi occupied generally the same area as that occupied by
the modern state of Zimbabwe, with an extension into the land of the Venda south
of the Limpopo (Vembe/Vhembe [1990:81]). In his claim that Rozvi rule covered
what is today modern Zimbabwe, Mutasa writes:

Pazvigaro zvomunhandare yedare raMambo Chirisamhuru paiva
pakagarwa naose madzishe eZimbabwe, makuru namadiki. Madzishe aya aiva amatunhu kubva kurwizi Limpopo kusvika
Zambezi. Mamwe madzishe aibva kumatunhu okumakomo
eNyanga kusvika kurwizi Shashe kumuganhu neBotswana
(1991:1).

(The seats in Mambo Chirisamhuru’s court were occupied by chiefs
from all over Zimbabwe, both big and small. The chiefs were from
as far afield as the Limpopo and Zambezi River areas. Others came
from the Nyanga Mountains and extended to the Shashe River
where there is the border with Botswana).

Mutasa is here claiming that chiefs from all areas that are parts of modern
Zimbabwe came to witness the installation of Chirisamhuru as the new
Changamire. Mutasa repeats the same claim on page 14 of the same novel.
Besides the anachronism of referring to the boundary with Botswana when such
boundaries did not exist and both modern Botswana and Zimbabwe were not yet
there, he makes the error of referring to the two neighbouring states as Zimbabwe
and Botswana when this is not the case. In fact, the reference to Zimbabwe and
Botswana at that particular period is anachronistic. The description in the above
quotation makes clear what is implied in Mutasa’s claim that the present state of
Zimbabwe is the successor to the Rozvi state, after a brief interlude caused by
British imperialism. This claim made by Mutasa that Rozvi rule even extended to
the land of the Venda (1990:81) is supported by Ilife who asserts that the
Changamire state came into being when a Munhumutapa vassal whose power
appears to have rested on an army of brutalised young men modelled on the
chikunda got the reigns of power. With this force, the Changamire conquered the
Torwa state, set up a Rozvi (Destroyers’) kingdom, which exercised loose
overlordship in the south-west until the nineteenth century. The Changamire also
established a subordinate dynasty among the Venda people south of the Limpopo,
The words of Ilife state what could have really taken place on the ground. The
Rozvi were loose overlords and not the real rulers of the areas that are said by
Mutasa to have been under them. What Mutasa has done with the claims is to give credibility to his novels as history and this is being done through the claim that the story of the last days of the Rozvi state is being told through a medium who is spiritually possessed. The problem with spirit possession is that scientifically it has no proof. However, even if its credibility is doubtful in the eyes of Western science and knowledge, among the Shona and most Bantus, spiritualism is real. Spiritualism is another way of knowing the world that is available to humankind that the Western world however spurns (Asante 1998:17). This reality of the spirit world among the Shona makes the two novels acceptable to many as history.

Bhila (1982:97) also confirms the reality of the Rozvi as loose overlords over other Shona chiefs. He says that Rozvi overlordship over Manyika was established after the defeat of the Portuguese at the feira of Masekesa. He says that the immediate outcome of the defeat of the Portuguese was that the Changamire made himself lord of the kingdom of Manyika, appointed a chikanga (Manyika ruler) of his liking, and exercised some sort of effective political authority over Chikanga for at least a decade or so. Bhila further confirms that Rozvi overlordship over Manyika was not permanent and did not last long when he states:

Indeed, as will be seen, Changamire was to allow the Portuguese to re-establish the feira again in the eighteenth century. But even when permission to do so had been given by the emperor, it was still necessary for the Portuguese to negotiate with the man on the spot, the reigning Chikanga in Manyika. This suggests that Rozvi control over Manyika was less than complete during the eighteenth century (1982:97).

Bhila’s words do away with the myth that the Rozvi were in effective control of Manyika. By extension, it means that the Rozvi did not rule the whole land that is known as Zimbabwe today. The fact that Manyika was also a contested area between the Gaza-Nguni, the Portuguese and the English in the nineteenth century in the years 1822-95 (Bhila 1982:169-95), raises doubts over Mutasa’s assertion that at the time of Chirisamhuru’s ascendancy to the Rozvi throne, Manyika was under Rozvi rule. Beach gives more insight into the size of the Rozvi state by commenting that it is difficult draw boundaries of the Rozvi state to the south and east. He says that in the far east and the far south where areas, which were obviously independent or simply tributary from, time to time. These areas are
Bocha, Buhera, the southeastern highlands and the area that was to form the Duma Confederacy. Beach insists that there is no evidence at all to support the idea of close Rozvi control, but a lot of evidence against the suggestion of extensive Rozvi control (1980:236). One of the reasons given by Beach against the claimed extensive size of the Rozvi state is that whatever the Portuguese wrote concerning the Rozvi state was based on hearsay and on their defeat at Maungwe. Beach does not however deny the fact that it was the most powerful state in Southern Africa in its day. Curtin et al. (1995:253) confirm the fact that Rozvi rule was not as extensive as suggested by Mutasa. They say that the Changamire state was in the southwest of what is today Zimbabwe. It established some lose overlordship over other areas of the Shona. The establishment of some lose overlordship over some areas is not evidence enough to confirm that Rozvi rule was very extensive. It may only have been wider influence. Wider influence should however not be confused with effective overlordship.

It is historically correct that the Rozvi state had been involved in Maungwe in 1684 and Manyika in 1695, but that involvement only shows the extent of Rozvi influence. It is more likely that Maungwe and Manyika were tributaries of the Rozvi. That status then does not make them parts of the Rozvi state. They were only in the Rozvi area of influence.

Mutasa also claims that Budya, Barwe and the Ndau were under the Rozvi. That is historically inaccurate (Beach 1980:158). There was no Rozvi influence in the land of the Ndau in the southeastern highlands of what is today Zimbabwe. The Ndau did not even exist as a political entity while Barwe and Budya were independent political entities. Barwe was in what is today Mozambique, but Budya was in what is today Zimbabwe (in Mutoko and Mudzi Districts of Mashonaland East Province), so the claim that the Rozvi state covered an area that was as large as today’s Zimbabwe is a fallacy (Beach 1984:38, 59). For Mutasa to claim that Rozvi rule covered not only what is today modern Zimbabwe, but also extended into parts of what is today Mozambique, is a misrepresentation of history. He may claim to be giving a more historical account when he compares himself to others, but this is because he is caught in the web of seeing the Mutapa state as the predecessor of the Rozvi one. While it is historically true that the Rozvi state came out of the Mutapa state, the coming into being of the Rozvi state did not mark the end of the
Mutapa state but that of the Torwa. According to the information that can be deciphered from the map of Zimbabwe in pre-colonial times (Beach 1984:59), the Mutapa state continued to be in existence up to the 1880s. It may have diminished in power and area of influence at the time of the rise of the Rozvi, but it definitely was not a spent force. The Rozvi state that came into being circa 1680 ceased to exist as a state around the late 1860s to the early 1870s. From Beach’s argument, the fall of the Rozvi state preceded that of the Mutapa state which had however been reduced in size. Although Mutasa does misrepresent history, it is important to note that Rozvi influence did extent to almost all areas of what is today modern Zimbabwe. It was only influence, not direct rule and this has come out in these two novels.

Mutasa also gives contradictory information. He forgets that he has mentioned the Rozvi as the rulers of what was to become Zimbabwe in the twentieth century (1991:1) and refers to the Duma saying:


(The Mambo wanted to have my mother to give her hand in marriage to Mazungunye, the Duma chief. The Duma had occupied the expansive land to the east of Great Zimbabwe. The court had chosen my mother to become the chief and favourite wife of the Duma chief).

These words are a clear testimony to the fact that outside the Rozvi state, even close to its borders were independent political entities. The Duma Confederacy was one such territory. Despite its close proximity to the centre of the Rozvi state, it managed to retain its independence.

Beach sums up the issue of the size of the Rozvi state by showing that it was constantly fluctuating. This means that it is impossible to refer to the actual size that it attained at the height of its power. He says that the extent of Rozvi rule was rather exaggerated in maps that had previously been produced. He argues further saying that the maps that had been produced did not make allowances for the
fluctuation of Rozvi power over two hundred years. Beach says that the Urungwe (Hurungwe) plateau, the Mutapa state, the Mazoe (Mazowe) valley, Budya, Barwe, Teve, most of the southeastern lowveld, the Mafungabusi (Mapfungautsi) plateau and the Nambiya area seem to have been free from Rozvi political influence for most of the existence of the Changamire (Rozvi) state (1980:275).

The position taken by Beach is not an attempt to play down the power that the Rozvi yielded at the height of their power. What he is just bringing out is that at a time when state formation was an ongoing process due to those who rebelled and set up their own states, it is acceptable that the Rozvi state was not as large as Mutasa has painted it. What has come out of Mutasa’s novel, which is relevant to the historian, or one interested in the pre-colonial history of the Shona is that the Rozvi state, which was one of the greatest states in pre-colonial Africa had great influence in most of the areas surrounding it.

3.1.3 The religious practices of the Rozvi state and other Shona

Religion has always been at the centre of most states, both ancient and modern. The Pharaohs of Egypt are linked to religion. The ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun or the god of the sun called Amun. Some of the Pharaohs were even believed to be gods. What is true of some of those states is also true of the Rozvi state. The state was heavily involved in religion. Three people Mavhudzi, Nerwande and Chirisamhuru are closely linked to the religious life of the Rozvi as is given in Mutasa’s novels. One important character is found in Mutasa’s Nhume Yamambo (1990). He is Mavhudzi. Mavhudzi is a religious figure whose blessings Chirisamhuru needed to be accepted by the people as a legitimate Changamire. In the novel Nhume Yamambo, Mavhudzi is reported to be on the side of Dyembeu. Mutasa shows Tohwechipi, Chirisamhuru’s son responding to a spirit medium saying:


(What is worrying us grandfather, is that the commander of the Rozvi army is on Dyembeu’s side. Those in charge of the
Mabweadziva cult, Mavhudzi and Nerwande do not want your nephew Chirisamhuru to be king).

The above words purported to have been spoken by Tohwechipi show that Chirisamhuru wanted legitimisation from both the army commander and the religious leaders. Because of this need, Chuwe Tavada was sent to Mabweadziva (Matopos/Matonjeni) in an attempt to win Mavhudzi over to Chirisamhuru’s side. This, Tavada succeeded in doing. Nerwande is also said to have been an important figure in the Rozvi religious life. Together with Mavhudzi, Nerwande is said to have been a holder of a ritual position (Beach 1986:20).

One important figure, that Mutasa (1991:41), mentions is Mavhudzi who was the ritual leader of the entire Rozvi state. He was the intermediary between Urozvi (the Rozvi state) and Mwari. Like Chigwedere (1980:62), Mutasa says that Mavhudzi was of the Soko (monkey/baboon) totem. Chigwedere’s argument is that no one, except the Soko held the post of priest of the Matopos (Mabweadziva) shrine. He quotes several scholars among them R.G. Howman, E. Greenfield and I.G. Cockcroft. These said that the people who officiated at Matopos were Mbire-Soko. Those who had been absorbed by the Ndebele state were called Ncube. Their totem is as well Soko. According to Mutasa and Chigwedere, Mavhudzi belonged to the Soko totem. Beach does not dispute this although he does not mention Mavhudzi’s totem. What is also interesting to note is that both historians concur that Mavhudzi was a holder of an important ritual position in the Rozvi state (Beach 1980:252-3; 1986:20; Chigwedere 1980:62).

Mutasa has confused the clash between Mavhudzi and Gumboremvura. He instead says that there was a clash between Chirisamhuru and Mavhudzi. This is not so since according to Beach, the clash was between Mavhudzi and Gumboremvura. Beach writes:

Gumboremvura, his successor, apparently relied to some extent on Mhuri support, and although he ruled for a long time he had to face an unsuccessful revolt by his ‘son’ Mutinhima and two important holders of ritual positions, Mavudzi and Nerwande (1986:19, see also Beach 1980:242).
This quotation besides highlighting that fact Mutasa has confused issues concerning the contestation of Chirisamhuru’s ascendancy to the Rozvi throne shows that ascendancy to the throne was not easy. Since Mavhudzi is said to have been on the side of Mutinhima (Beach 1980:242, 1986:19), Mutasa has also misrepresented history when he says that Mutinhima was on the side of Chirisamhuru. Maybe by presenting a picture of Mutinhima being on the same side with Chirisamhuru, Mutasa is relying on later traditions on the Rozvi that focus on Tohwechipi, Chirisamhuru’s successor. This possibility is supported by Beach (1986:20-1) who states that it is most likely that no Mambo was installed immediately after Chirisamhuru’s death, but at some point well before 1852 his son Tohwechipi succeeded him, and as, in this case received the support of the Mutinhima house.

What is of significance about the mention of Mavhudzi and Nerwande is that Mutasa and Beach both concur that these two were religious figures. These two were “two important holders of ritual positions” (Beach 1986:19-20). The existence and functions of Mavhudzi and Nerwande is also important in that it reflects the interface and interplay between religion and the state. Bhila clearly amplifies this link between the state and religion when he states that the rulers also manipulated the priestly class in the installation of chiefs. They were also involved in libation practices and various spirit cults (1992:659).

Another religious aspect that Mutasa (1991:42), has captured is the religious concept of the belief in a high god. This is first mentioned in Nhume Yamambo (1990:51ff). This idea of a high god who manifests himself in natural phenomena is supported by Omer-Cooper (1976:347). Bhila (1992:659), also states:

They developed a religious system different from that of the Mutapa. Theirs was based on a belief in a high god who expressed himself through natural phenomena such as lightning or earthquakes. This Mwari cult was manipulated by the Rozvi rulers for a political end.

Bhila focuses attention on the religious systems that were different between the Mutapa and the Changamire. The Rozvi relied on a high god whose intermediaries were based at Mabweadziva (Matopos/Matombo). This is different from the Mutapa whose religious system was based on Dzivaguru. This Mwari, as
described by Bhila is also shown by Mutasa manifesting himself in the clash between Chirisamhuru and Mavhudzi in the aftermath of the fall of Dyembeu. Chirisamhuru does not give credit for his success to Mwari but to himself. Even though there is a tradition that says that Chirisamhuru wanted to bring down the moon, the truth is that no such attempt was made. What this tradition however highlights is the pride and arrogance of Chirisamhuru and the Rozvi in general. According to Mutasa, Mwari was not happy about this arrogance (1991:41). Mutasa shows the high god manifesting his anger through Mavhudzi and a tree. Mutasa writes:


(Within the quietness was heard a voice that was loud, shrill and far-reaching. In the first instance, this voice sounded as if it was coming from a tree that had the king’s counsellors under it. Some heard as if it was coming from the bateleur eagles that were flying above. Most people heard as if the voice was coming from the ground, from among and within the people or as if it was coming from the listener’s ear).

What comes out of this description is how the Rozvi religion’s god manifested himself. Whether what is described really happened or not, that is of no consequence. What is of significance is that what is historically revealing – that the Rozvi Mwari is said to have manifested himself in different ways. According to Omer-Cooper (1976:347), the Mutapa kingdom:

… and that of the Rozvi that succeeded it in ruling over the Shona communities of the greater part of Rhodesia, a cult had grown up involving belief in a deity sometimes known as Mwari and sometimes Mlimo. The deity was believed to communicate with man through the agency of spirit mediums.

Omer-Cooper is confirming the existence of a high god who manifested himself through natural phenomena and human beings as spirit mediums. Mutasa unfortunately undermines this important aspect of history that relates to religion in
the Changamire state attributing to it aspects of the Mutapa state’s religion. Bhila (1992:644) who says that the Mutapa used several control mechanisms in their day-to-day running of the empire makes this clear. They are said to have for example, required that each territorial chief rekindle his royal fire annually from the Mutapa original fire. This was done as an act of allegiance and of renewal of loyalty to the central authority. Once a year the Mutapa rulers sent out orders to the territorial chiefs to extinguish their royal fires. This ritual of loyalty was also repeated at the enthronement of a new Mutapa. If Rozvi chiefs renewed their loyalty to the Changamire in the same manner that the tributary chiefs of the Mutapa did, this then was a common practice among all or most Shona rulers of the pre-colonial states.

Mutasa in a poem in Misodzi, Dikita Neropa (1991:41-2), mentions the following spirit mediums among others: Tovera (Thovela), Murenga, Chaminuka and Dzivaguru. While Tovera and Murenga are associated with the Rozvi state, Chaminuka and Dzivaguru are linked to the Mutapa state. It is also important to note that even though Tovera and Murenga are associated with the Rozvi state, they are not mentioned in history as spirit mediums (Chigwedere 1982:88). What comes out clearly in Mutasa’s presentation is the issue of the involvement of both the Mutapa rulers and Rozvi rulers in the religious life of their day. Bhila (1992:644) has already mentioned this. It just goes on to show that spirit mediums as well as other means of religious epiphanies were a very important part of the religion of the Rozvi and other pre-colonial Shona. Through this account of what transpired in the Rozvi state under Chirisamhuru, and how the Rozvi rulers were involved in the religious life of their day, Mutasa has clearly brought out what Collingwood (1994:9) says about the object of history. Collingwood says:

What kind of things does history find out? I answer *res gestae*: actions of human beings that have been done in the past. Although this answer raises all kinds of further questions, many of which are controversial, still however they may be answered, the answers do not discredit the proposition that history is the science of *res gestae*, the attempt to answer questions about human actions done in the past.

The renowned philosopher, Collingwood is saying that history is about what human beings have done in the past. It is not everything that human beings have
done in the past that is important, but only that which is of significance, like the religious practices of the Changamire state and how the rulers got involved through manipulating religion as a political tool. Mutasa has tried to write a history that explains the past actions of the Rozvi rulers. He has tried to show what the Rozvi religious life was like. If there are inconsistencies in the history given, those may best be explained by the fact that the Shona, like most people on the African continent had no writing system until the advent of colonialism and the missionaries. Therefore, in the process of transmitting information oral issues may have been interwoven, exaggerated or even lost. If that is not the case, then the only other possible explanation is that Mutasa deliberately mixed the religious traditions of the Rozvi and the Mutapa in an attempt to create a history of Shona states that evolved and rolled into one another. In such a situation, the Mutapa state becomes the predecessor of the Rozvi state. If that is the case, Vambe’s words best sum up what Mutasa has done. Vambe, commenting on literary narrations states:

> Narration is conscious application of certain words. It is a willed creative process, but does not always guarantee that the meanings intended are the ones that readers get to understand. Because narration is neither neutral nor fortuitous, it is therefore constructed from certain points of view and other possible options. It is ideological (2006:54).

Vambe is here making it clear that narrations are not neutral. People who are interested in presenting certain views and opinions to the readers write them.

Religion among the Shona was not only a preserve of the state. At a local level, each family or individual could communicate with his ancestral spirits especially in times of need. This is clear in the novels Jekanyika (Mugugu 1968:38-9), and Rakava Buno Risifemberi (Matsikiti 1995:20-1). In the novel Jekanyika, the eponymous character Jekanyika, prays to his ancestral spirits to guide him when he embarks on an odyssey in search of his father. In Matsikiti’s Rakava Buno Risifemberi Gorerenhamo prays to his ancestors so that they protect him and his family as he moves away in search of a new place to settle after escaping from Njanja (Matsikiti 1995:20-1). These prayers were characterised by the mentioning of all the names of one’s ancestors whom he still remembered. One also offered prayers to thank the ancestral spirits if he had had a successful outing, as does
Jekanyika when he finally finds his father (Mugugu 1968:116). What Jekanyika does is similar to what Kufakunesu does after he has got himself a wife. He thanks his ancestral spirits for the wife and at the same time also presents the same wife to his ancestral spirits. As he presents the wife, he also offers in the same presentation a prayer to his ancestral spirits so that they shower him with blessings (Gutsa 1980:47). From the prayers offered by the Shona, it is clear that they did not frequently pray to their ancestors unless there was a need. This is very different from Christianity that is characterised by prayer days that are set aside every week.

### 3.1.4 The fall of the Rozvi state

Some of the shortcomings of Mutasa’s histories are found in the account of the clashes between the Rozvi state and the Nguni who had fled from Zululand in what is historically referred to as the *mfecane*. He gives the impression that there was a clash between Nxaba’s Ngoni and the Rozvi. There is no record in other historical documents that reports on the clash between this particular group of the Ngoni and the Rozvi. The closest that is there that relates to Nxaba’s Ngoni is that he is said to have been expelled from Sanga by Soshangane’s Gaza as he was trying to set-up a state in the area. He is said to have fled first to Gorongosa and then to either Zumbo or the Changamire state on his way to final destruction in the upper Zambezi valley (Beach 1980:178). There is no mention in this account by Beach of a clash between the Rozvi and Nxaba’s Ngoni. If there was any clash between the Rozvi army and Nxaba’s Ngoni, then it was after 1836 (Beach 1980:266). If that is the case, then Nxaba’s Ngoni do not seem to have had an impact on the Rozvi because Beach (1980:266) says that they passed rapidly through the Rozvi state. At this particular time, the Rozvi state was leaderless after the death of Chirisamhuru in the clash with Nyamazana.

Mutasa also mentions the clash between the Rozvi and Zvangendaba (Zvangendava). He says:

(However, Zvangendaba embarked on a trail of destruction. He concentrated on those chiefs who had declared their own independence. The state [Rozvi] rejected the appeal for help from these chiefs and great was their fall).

In these words, Mutasa is minimising the impact of Zvangendaba’s onslaught on the Rozvi state. He says that Zvangendaba’s onslaught was against those chiefs who had declared their independence, and so the Changamire did not send any army to assist them. According to Liesegang (1970:319-21) the Ngwana Maseko Ngoni came into the Changamire state just after Mpanga had been repulsed. The Ngwana Maseko Ngoni were defeated and they went off to the central Shona country. It is most likely that the Ngwana Maseko Ngoni are the ones who are being referred to by Mutasa as Zvangendaba’s Ngoni. The chiefs that are said to have been attacked by Zvangendaba are the central Shona chiefs who were attacked by the Ngwana Maseko. In this case, his account remains credible in as far as, it relates to the impact of the *mfecane* on the central Shona country. The only shortcoming is the confusion of names. According to Beach, Zvangendaba’s Ngoni are said to have come on the heels of the Ngwana Maseko Ngoni. Zvangendaba is said to have done a lot of damage on the Rozvi state although he did not remain in the state (Beach 1980:265). This is contrary to Mutasa (1991:130) who claims that Zvangendaba was repulsed without having inflicted much damage on the Rozvi state.

Mutasa rightly points out that there was a clash between the Rozvi and the Ngoni of Zvangendaba (1991:130). He says that Zvangendaba was defeated. Beach (1986:20) concurs with this when he says that Mpanga, Ngwana Maseko and Zvangendaba all invaded the Changamire state before 1835 and were expelled with some difficulty.

Another historically reliable aspect that Mutasa presents in the novel *Misodzi, Dikita Neropa* (1991) is the account of Nyamazana, the Nguni warrior-queen who is reported to have led a force that finally led to the fall of Chirisamhuru. Mutasa describes Nyamazana’s invasion as follows:

*Takazonziswa kuti nderimwe gadzi rokupamba rainzi Nyamazana rakanga rapamburana naZvangendaba. Ini ndakanyeverwa kuti*
We were later made to understand that the woman who was leading the invaders was called Nyamazana, who had broken away from Zvangendaba. I was informed secretly that she was conspiring with Mavhudzi and Nerwande was therefore assisting her).

The author refers to the impact that Nyamazana had on the Rozvi state. Tavada is suggesting that Mavhudzi conspired with Nyamazana in an attempt to topple Chirisamhuru. Mutasa goes on to mention that Chirisamhuru was killed in the fight that ensued between the two armies (1991:139-40). He also says that Nyamazana pretended to have lost the battle for Danangombe, but later made an onslaught that led to the sacking of the city (1991:132). Beach describes the arrival of Nyamazana and the impact she had on the Rozvi state. He writes:

The most dramatic blow fell after Zvangendaba’s departure. Another group of Nguni led by the remarkable female warrior Nyamazana, a relative of Zvangendaba’s, arrived in the state. By this time, the strength of the Rozvi had been badly shaken … Accounts of what followed vary, but it seems that Nyamazana was beaten in the first battle but made a second assault on Danangombe in which the Rozvi were beaten. Changamire Chirisamhuru fled in the direction of Manyanga, and was either killed on the way or after he arrived (Beach 1980:265).

Beach makes it clear that the fall of the Rozvi state at the hands of Nyamazana was because the state had been badly weakened by continuous onslaughts by different bands of the Nguni. He then corroborates Mutasa’s presentation on how Chirisamhuru met his death and where he possibly died. Although Beach does not mention a specific place where Chirisamhuru fell, Mutasa does. He says that Chirisamhuru was killed at Manyanga (1991:139-40). He says that Chirisamhuru was skinned alive at the orders of Nyamazana. History confirms this. This researcher remembers his primary school Grade five textbook by Tindall (1975: pagination forgotten) that says that Chirisamhuru was skinned alive after his capture. Tindall however, says that Zvangendaba is the one who defeated Chirisamhuru. Both Mutasa (1991:140) and Beach (1980:265) who say that he died at the hands of Nyamazana dispute this. Chirisamhuru was skinned alive and his remains were pushed over a precipice (Mutasa 1991:140). Mutasa says that on the first assault (1991:132), Nyamazana pretended to have been defeated.
Beach on the other does not refer to any pretence, but to a second assault after an initial one had failed, that led to the fall of Danangombe (1980:265). However, what is clear from both writers is that the Rozvi state fell after a second assault by Nyamazana.

The position taken by Mutasa as regards the end of the Rozvi state has corroboration from Curtin et al. (1995:253) who say that the Changamire state flourished until invaders from KwaZulu overthrew it in the 1830s. Beach who says that it is important to realize that the Rozvi state did not end with Chirisamhuru’s death, as some historians have claimed, disputes this position. He says that the basic structure of the state remained (Beach 1980:265-6). He further supports this when he says that it seems likely that no Mambo was installed immediately after Chirisamhuru’s death, but his son Tohwechipi succeeded him as Mambo well before 1852. In fact, the 1850s saw a rapid revival of Rozvi power (Beach 1986:20-1, 25).

Mutasa says that the death of Chirisamhuru marked the end of the Rozvi state, and attributes this fall to God’s wrath against Chirisamhuru (1991:44) and of Mavhudzi conniving with Nyamazana (1991:130). Beach argues on the other hand that Nyamazana defeated the Rozvi because they had been subjected to various Nguni invasions that had come in quick succession and these invasions had never given the Rozvi room to reorganise and recover. Whatever the case maybe, hand of God or not, the historical truth is that the Rozvi under Chirisamhuru were defeated at the hands of Nyamazana and Mutasa captures this in his histories. Even though as Beach states, the Rozvi state remained, it had been rendered a fatal blow because it quickly collapsed under Tohwechipi who had been installed as Changamire after the death of Chirisamhuru.

Mutasa has in his narratives largely succeeded in presenting an acceptable history of the Rozvi. This acceptability is confirmed by the stories that traditionally have been associated with the Rozvi building a tower (nhururamwedzi or shongwe [Mutasa 1991:55]) in an attempt to pull down the moon as well as the digging out of mountains in an attempt to build a watchtower (ndarikure Mutasa 1991:40). This issue is only historically relevant since it helps to shed light on how ambitious and arrogant the Rozvi political leadership was.
3.2 OTHER PRE-COLONIAL SHONA STATES

Some Shona literary texts are bound up with historical discourse. They are a window through which the past of the Shona in pre-colonial times can be viewed. It is through these literary texts that the other Shona states that existed before can at least be unravelled. This is especially of great benefit to those who may not have studied history or may be interested in knowing more about the Shona past. Some Shona novelists have in their writings given some insights into the life of the Shona in pre-colonial times. It has to be borne in mind that they did not necessarily sit down to write history but fiction. Their fiction has however become a valuable tool in understanding the past. Mutasa, who has given so much insight into the Rozvi state, has only given a cursory glance at the other three major Shona states namely: Zimbabwe, Torwa and Mutapa. Besides these major states, other smaller political entities existed. Some were independent of the major states and some were semi-autonomous. Among these states were the Duma Confederacy, Nyandoro and Nenguwo dynasties.

Mutasa (1990; 1991), has largely focused on the Rozvi state in his two novels. Although he has attempted to make the Rozvi state the greatest of all Shona states, he has also given passing references to Zimbabwe, Mutapa and Torwa states. In his references, he has made it clear that the last of the Shona states to emerge is the Rozvi and this is the greatest of them all. He does not identify, neither does he acknowledge that the Zimbabwe state is the first of the great Shona states. He however refers to the Zimbabwe state by acknowledging that this state is the one that put up the Great Zimbabwe structures. The reference to the Zimbabwe state comes out through a question that Ndomboya asks her brother, Chirisamhuru. She asks:

Ko uyo Dyembeu ari kuhupamba ndiye une zero naMasvingo eZimbabwe? (1990:15)

(What about Dyembeu who wants to seize power? Is he as old as the stone structures at Zimbabwe?)
Although Ndomboya is in the above words attacking Dyembeu who is alleged to have ascended the Rozvi throne, by referring to the Zimbabwe stone structures, the author, through her is in a way giving insights into the fact that among the Shona, the tradition of building prestigious stone dwellings started at Great Zimbabwe. This is what historians refer to today as the Zimbabwe culture. An insight into the achievements of the Zimbabwe state is also given when Mutasa refers to the Zimbabwe birds. In his description of Manyanga, Mutasa attributes some aspects of the Zimbabwe state to the Rozvi when he says that at Manyanga were birds that had been made from soapstone (1990:49; 1991:5). The truth of the matter is that the soapstone birds were made long before the Changamire state came into being. Despite this anachronism, Mutasa however acknowledges that the Torwa and Mutapa states succeeded the Zimbabwe state. He also says that the Torwa state preceded the Rozvi state (1990:152). What he says concerning the Rozvi, Mutapa and Zimbabwe states is contrary to what Chigwedere (1980:29) says. Chigwedere states that the Zimbabwe state is the successor to the Mutapa state. This is contrary to the version given by Beach who says that the successor to Zimbabwe both as a culture and as a state was the Torwa state that had its capital at Khami although before the fall of the Zimbabwe state the Mutapa state was already flourishing in the north (1980:51). What is important is that it has to be noted that while Chigwedere and Beach do not concur on which of these states preceded the other; they are all in tandem that the four major pre-colonial Shona states are related. Mutasa mentions all the other three as preceding the Rozvi. His only miscalculation is that he makes it appear as if the Rozvi state remained the only state in existence after the fall of the others. While the Zimbabwe and Torwa states were no longer there, the Mutapa state continued to exist up to around the 1880s (Beach 1984:59).

Mutasa also refers to the Mutapa state by mentioning Dziva, also known as Dzivaguru as one of the spirit mediums of the Rozvi (1990:17; 1991:49). He also mentions Munhumutapa the founder of the Mutapa state as one of the major Rozvi ancestors. In presenting such a picture, Mutasa wanted in a way to show the Mutapa state as the predecessor of the Rozvi state. This attempt, which is misinforming however yields some historical information in that it informs the reader that besides the Rozvi another major political entity that existed in pre-colonial Zimbabwe is the Mutapa state.
Dzivaguru/Dziva is a spirit medium that is mentioned in association with the Rozvi. The mentioning of this cult as a Rozvi one is anachronistic. The Dzivaguru spirit had links with the Mutapa state because according to Beach (1994:59), the Dzivaguru cult has links with the Zambezi valley and naturally the Zambezi River. He says that when the Mutapa rose to power the Tavara and early Karanga accepted Mutapa rule without much resistance and, “The Dzivaguru cult of the Tavara apparently remained influential over a wide area” (1980:118). In these words, Beach sets the record straight by explaining that the Dzivaguru cult has no links with the Rozvi, but with the Mutapa.

The Torwa is another major pre-colonial Shona state that Mutasa mentions in passing. Information regarding the Torwa can be deciphered from the mentioning of the stone cities of Manyanga and Danan’ombe (Danangombe). The Torwa and not the Rozvi put up these structures. Mutasa does not give the Torwa credit for the construction of these stone structures but to the Rozvi yet the Changamire state was noticeably poorer than its predecessors were. It had little or no connection with the tradition of prestige stone buildings (Beach 1980:226). This is despite the fact that Mutasa wants to create such an image.

Mutasa correctly points out that the Torwa state is the predecessor to the Rozvi (Changamire) state. Firstly, this comes out indirectly when references to Tumbare and Mavhudzi are made (1990:51), and when he writes:


(As you know, the Rozvi rose to prominence after the Changamire destroyed the Torwa who had committed the grave error of parcelling out this land to the Portuguese land grabbers).

Mutasa is here giving the reason why the Torwa were overthrown by the Rozvi. According to Mutasa, they lost power because they allegedly parcelled out land to the Portuguese. Whether that is true or not is another matter. What comes out is that this conquest of the Torwa presented by Mutasa is documented in historical sources (Beach 1980:227-35; 1986:19; Curtin et al. 1995:253; Ilife 1995:102).
The Duma Confederacy is yet another political entity that Mutasa refers to in his novels. He says that the Changamire at one time wanted Tavada’s mother to be one of Mazungunye’s wives. In his reference to the Duma, Mutasa through Tavada makes it clear that the Duma were domiciled to the east of the Changamire state. He writes:

\[\text{VaDuma vaiva vakabata nyika huru kwazvo kumabvazuva amasvingo eDzimbabweguru} (1991:1).\]

(The Duma had occupied the expansive land to the east of Great Zimbabwe).

Mutasa is not the only one who refers to the pre-colonial political entities of the Shona. Matsikiti also does this in his novel *Rakava Buno Risifemberi* (1995). He refers to Gorerenhamo who had fled his original home and had come to Nyanzira’s place. As he was being taken to Nyanzira’s place, the author says that they travelled close to the border between Nenguwo and Nyanzira’s lands (1995:29). Nenguwo and Nyandoro are confirmed in history. These two dynasties existed in pre-colonial Shona society in what is today Zimbabwe’s Mashonaland East Province. The Nyandoro dynasty was linked to the Rozvi and had some relative independence. Beach (1994:91) confirms that the Nyandoro dynasty existed when he states that Nyandoro seems to have been the intermediary between the central plateau Shona and the Changamire state in the south-west, while at the same time they acquired a personal ascendancy. Matsikiti correctly identifies where the Nyandoro dynasty had established its political base. He links it to the area around the Mupfure River. This is in tandem with what Beach (1986:255-6; 1994:19) says.

Several other Shona novels refer to kings who from what is written were independent since they carried out their own economic activities. Brand (1980:40) confirms the existence of such kingdoms. He writes:

In pre-colonial times, Zimbabwe was inhabited by a large number of autonomous or semi-autonomous chiefdoms of greater or lesser size and importance, which were brought under the control of larger confederate ‘kingdoms’ such as the Mutapas or the Rozvi only during certain periods.
Brand has here highlighted the fact that there were other political entities among the pre-colonial Shona. These states at times were subject to either Mutapa or Rozvi rule, but they always regained their autonomy. Some of them are even said to have had tributary chiefs. One such king is Dendera. Dendera, according to Mugugu (1969:12) had a tributary state that one of his generals was governing after he had defeated a certain king. Other political entities that are mentioned are those of Ndyire and Godobo (Chakaipa 1961:1, 79). These two are shown as controlling each a separate political area. They are not reported to have been subject to any major political power. These polities may not have been mentioned by name in historical texts but they are an indication that there were very small kingdoms in the pre-colonial period. Kuimba also mentions two kingdoms – that of Mupakavirí (1968) and that of Mhukahuru (1965). Beach (1994:31) mentions the existence of such small kingdoms when he says a small *zimbabwe* had been reported at the eastern end of the Mutanda range. This *zimbabwe* cannot be linked to the Marange dynasty because this dynasty can only be dated with certainty to the eighteenth century. This is a clear indication that smaller political principalities existed.

The major political states are not the only ones that had succession disputes. In the novel *Gonawapotera* (Zvarevashe 1978), Chipeperekwa’s descendants kill one another in a power struggle. Each is a claimant to the Mhazi chieftainship. Such clashes are reminiscent of that between Chirisamhuru and Dyembeu that is well articulated in Mutasa’s *Nhume Yamambo* (1990).

Like the major political states, the small political entities also had internal and external coups. In the novel *Tambaoga Mwana’ngu* (Kuimba 1968), Mupakavirí is killed by his brother Zinwamhanga. This is similar to Moyo’s *Tiri Parwendo* that is being shown on Zimbabwe Television (ZTV). In Moyo’s play, Chabvonga murders his brother Mambo Charinga. In the novel, *Tambaoga Mwana’ngu* Zinwamhanga tries to eliminate the assassinated king’s son who is the heir apparent. He accuses the late king’s son of the murder of the king who is the boy’s father and Zinwamhanga’s brother. The truth finally comes out when Zinwamhanga’s trusted lieutenant Mombeshora publicly confesses that Zinwamhanga (1968:107) assassinated the king. Chakaipa also gives more information on the same issue.
The Ndyires are said to have seized power from Tanganeropa’s ancestors. In this novel, Haripotse says to Tanganeropa:


(Do you know that you are the legitimate heir to the throne of this land that is being put to waste by Gwiba’s descendants? The Ndyires are not the legitimate rulers. Gwiba who was your great ancestor’s sister’s son and this ancestor of yours died without having ascended to the throne. After his death, Gwiba took the reins of power saying that he was taking his uncle’s inheritance. When king Chikeya died, Gwiba then seized power).

In the above quotation, the author through Haripotse explains how Tanganeropa’s ancestors lost their chieftainship to the Ndyires. Chakaipa here successfully presents the reality about pre-colonial Shona politics. There were coups and counter-coups especially between those who were related. The reference in these novels to the past shows that the politics of the day were characterised by coups and counter-coups. This confirms the historicity of the Shona novel. It would be to err to assume that the reference to coups and counter-coups that were part of the pre-colonial states supports the Western misconception that Blacks could not rule themselves. It is historically known that the world over, kingdoms, empires and dynasties have risen and fallen because of coups, counter-coups and outside invasions. This is not something that is peculiar to Africa only. Beach confirms the prevalence of coups and counter-coups and says that there were coups where a lineage of one totem overthrew that of another totem within the same unit. These were however overshadowed by coups within the dominant lineage (Beach 1984:21). It would be wrong to view the Shona novel in the context of anthropology. The scope of its analysis as is being observed can be widened. The two writers confirm that the purpose of literature is also as summed up by Lomidze (1983:238) who says that literature’s main aim is to keep alive the memory of historical events and to preserve for generations to come that which otherwise was
doomed to oblivion. This is particularly so when most people would want to paint a picture of Africa’s past as one that was without oppression and corruption. The picture painted as regards political turmoils that were a common feature of pre-colonial Zimbabwe show that the Shona as well as Black Africa as a whole had its own dark side. They have shown that ruling dynasties are not permanent.

3.3 ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN PRE-COLONIAL ZIMBABWEAN SHONA SOCIETY

The pre-colonial Shona society’s economy was largely based on cattle rearing, tilling the land and external trade. There was also internal barter trade. The internal trade evolved around the exchange of hoes, grain, cattle, goats and women. In the novel *Jekanyika* (Mugugu 1968:16) Nharu, one of Dendera’s councillors refers to cattle and goats that are said to be so many in Chaitezvi’s kingdom. He says:


(After a few months we shall start travelling at night and sleep during the day. We would have arrived in Chaitezvi’s land. This land has many cattle and the cows have udders that touch the ground. It has huge longhaired goats. The girls of this land have beautiful dyed hair).

Mugugu is describing the wealth that is abundant in Chaitezvi’s kingdom. The wealth manifests itself in both stock and human beings, especially women. The size of the udders of the cattle as presented in the novel appears exaggerated, but they must have been big because according to Gomes (being quoted by Randles [1979:5]) the cattle in the southwest in Butua (Torwa) were so big that one had to milk them standing. The words of Nharu are also an indicator of how pre-colonial Shona society regarded cattle. They were a status symbol. Randles confirms this when he states:

Cattle-raising succeeded only in the highveld where there was no tsetse fly. There were two breeds of cattle – one small one in the
north-east and the Nyanga mountains; the other large one in the
south-west (1979:51).

Randles does not only highlight the importance of cattle rearing among the pre-
colonial Shona. He also states the type of cattle that were reared on the
Zimbabwean Plateau that is characterised by different weather conditions. The
importance of cattle among the pre-colonial Shona is also highlighted by the fact
that they were used as beasts of burden and for riding on long journeys. Mutasa
(1990:77) confirms this historical fact when Tavada says, “Takatora mombe
dzakapfava dzokutasva nedzokutakurisa midziyo yedu” (We picked cattle that
were gentle for riding and for carrying our luggage). Matsikiti also confirms that
cattle were not only a status symbol but were also a means of transport.
Bvunzawabaya says to Pasipamire, “Hauone nguva dzose ndichinyanyotasva
mombe?” (Matsikiti 1995:122) (Have you not realised that most of the times I ride
a trek ox?). Randles (1979:51) who says that in Butua cattle were used as beasts
of burden and for riding agrees to what Mutasa (1990:77) and Matsikiti (1995:122)
say about cattle being used for riding and carrying baggage. The changamires
are said to have ridden them as the usual means of moving about the country. What is
ture of Butua (Torwa/Rozvi state) is also true of even smaller political entities like
Nyandoro and Nenguwo (Matsikiti 1995:122).

Not everyone had cattle though. Those who had cattle could give some to client
herders who would at the end get a beast as a form of payment. The client
herders’ benefits were the milk that they got from the cows within the herd.
Matsikiti makes this idea of agistment clear in his novel when he presents
Bvunzawabaya saying to Mbambara:

Naizvozvo ndafunga kuti ndichikuronzerai mombe gumi nembiri
pano. Pamombe idzi ndichaunza mhou dzinoyamwisa nhatu kuti
mugochivakamirawo mukaka wokudyisa sadza kana vaneta
zvokutsenga nyama yechimukuyu iyi. Ndichazounzazve mhou mbiri
namatsiru maviri ana mazamu kuitira kuti kana mhou dziri

(I have therefore decided to loan you twelve beasts. Out of these
cattle, three cows are for milking so that your family will have
something to eat their sadza with after they have tired of biltong. I
will also send you two calving cows for milking purposes so that
when the current three stop calving you will still have milk from the other two).

Bvunzawabaya is agisting his cattle to Mbambara who has agreed to give the hand of his daughter Yeukai, in marriage to Bvunzawabaya. Bhila (1982:32) also highlights the importance of cattle among the Shona when he says that a wealthy man who had a large herd of cattle quite often agisted some of his cattle to the less fortunate relatives or friends. As in any contract, the client herder enjoyed certain rights. He (the client herder) could use the manure, the milk of the cows (as was to be done by Mbambara in the case cited above), and at the end of the contract he was entitled to a beast. The client herder was however not entitled to disposing of any beast that had been agisted to him. This relationship is reflected in the contract between Mbambara and Bvunzawabaya. The contract was to end if the marriage arrangements that had been entered into between these two parties collapsed. If the marriage arrangements were to succeed, then Mbambara was to get some of the cattle, if they were to fail, the other terms that relate to agistment would apply.

The importance of cattle among the pre-colonial Shona was so great that at times raids were carried out so that the raiders would increase their herds. Gutsa in his novel Pfuma Ndeyamaoko (1980:4) describes a raid that chief Chivhimaushe carried out on Marwei’s chiefdom. He writes:

*Iri rakange riri pfumo raShe Chivhimaushe rakange rapinda mumusha umu kunze kuchangoti tsva-a. Ishe uyu akange anzwa nembiri yeupfumi hwashe Marwei. Vakadzi, mbudzi, mombe nehuku zvaingove rufaya.*

(Chief Chivhimaushe’s army had raided the village at dusk. This chief had heard about the wealth that Chief Marwei had in abundance. His [Marwei] land had many women, goats, cattle and fowls).

Gutsa states that Chivhimaushe (Hunter-of-wealth) had heard about the wealth that was abundant in Marwei’s chiefdom. The wealth, as is depicted in the above quotation was in the form of women, goats, cattle and fowls. To get these, Chivhimaushe had to raid Marwei’s land. Mugugu (1968:16) confirms this need to carry out raids to get women and increase herds. The Shona are also said to have
raided the Ndebele for cattle and women (Beach 1986:25). As already pointed above, these raids were carried out because the raiders were in search of cattle. Women were secondary. With cattle one was able to get as many women as one wanted as long as he could give away some cattle. They were the currency of the day. They were also a status symbol.

Literature helps the reader to interrogate and discover the truth about his/her environment. It does not supplement life, but gives an insight into the type of life that was lived in the past, whether recent or remote. It also helps the reader to understand how people in the past carried out their economic activities and how they accrued their wealth. As already pointed out above, wealth was largely accumulated through trade. The other way of getting it was when a family’s daughter got married. This type of wealth was normally in the form of cattle. When the above legitimate means of acquiring cattle were exhausted, raiding parties were organised. Besides raids, witchcraft was the other method used in acquiring cattle.

The term witchcraft is in this context used to refer to the employment of harmful charms to acquire cattle. In the novel Kutonhodzwa kwaChauruka (Chiguvare 1968), Chauruka is presented using witchcraft to get cattle and abduct people (1968:17-8). Chauruka uses his harmful charms to rob Dzumbunu and other people of their cattle. Even after he has been captured and has managed to escape with the assistance of Roparembwa, he is presented taking another risk to again cheat and rob Dzumbunu and his people of their cattle. He does this in concert with Roparembwa (1968:83-5). Chauruka is prepared to take the risk of potential exposure and possible death because he realises the value of cattle in his life. Without them, he has no power and status. Loss of status means for him loss of influence. The same is true of Chief Dzumbunu who, after being robbed of his cattle and daughter also decides to track down Chauruka and fight him. This is all because of cattle. Without these cattle, he cannot form alliances. Again, without his daughter he cannot add on to his herd because he no longer has anyone to marry off.

In the novel Mapatya (1978), Mutasa presents Gasa and Mugeza conspiring against Mutumwapavi in an attempt to get his cattle. These two want
Mutumwapavi dead so that they can lay their hands on his cattle wealth. In order for them to get this, they bring up a charge against him saying that he has to be killed for having raised twins, which in the Shona past was considered as taboo. They are so angry at Mutumwapavi’s success that they even allege that their king, Chipinda favours Mutumwapavi. Gasa addresses Gezai and Mugeza saying:

*Mutumwa mwedzi yakapfuura ak andorwa navarwi vedu kumupata ndokundouya namazakawatira epfuma yen’ombe nenhapwa. Zvose izvi ari kuti ndezvake isu varidzi venyika tichinyimwa (1978:5).*

(In the past few months, Mutumwa led our forces into battle at the pass and brought a lot of cattle wealth and captives. He is saying all this wealth is his and he does not want to share it with us).

The above quotation shows that what has irked Gasa is not the fact that their king favours Mutumwapavi. The real issue is that of cattle and women. The women are the ones that Gasa refers to as captives. That is what they want from Mutumwapavi.

The pre-colonial Shona were also involved in external trade. Their chief trading partners were the Portuguese and the *vashambadzi* who represented either the Arab traders or the Portuguese who had succeeded in elbowing out the Arabs from the lucrative trade especially in gold and ivory. The main items that the Shona exchanged with the Portuguese and the *vashambadzi* were ivory and gold (Chakaipa 1961:78). Matsikiti gives an insight into the role that was played by the *vashambadzi* when he describes some of the Portuguese as black (1995:205). He brings out an important aspect that the Shona referred to all traders whether Black or White as Portuguese. This is because most traders had been converted to either Christianity or Islam. Matsikiti also gives an insight into the importance of external trade in the lives of the pre-colonial Shona societies. He shows this importance through the actions of Pasipamire who exchanged some of his commodities with the Portuguese. Matsikiti writes:

(He at one time exchanged some of his items with the traders who came from the east. These were the Portuguese. These Portuguese brought with them different items. These included beads, white ornamental shells, cloth, guns and salt and gunpowder as well as an assortment of other goods. The Portuguese came looking for ivory, ostrich eggs and hides of animals like lions and leopards).

Matsikiti highlights the fact that trade between the Shona and the Portuguese was barter. This trade between the Shona and the Portuguese is well documented. Beach highlights the historicity of what Chakaipa (1961:78) and Matsikiti (1995:205) discuss when he says that the imports that the Portuguese brought into Shona country included ndoro shells, cowries, manufactured clothing, a few guns and even small cannon. In terms of sheer bulk, cloth and beads were however predominant (Beach 1984:37). Bhila (1982: 35) who states that there was trade in ivory between the Shona and the Portuguese also confirms the historicity of this trade. He asserts that the trade was so lucrative that many Shona got involved in it. This lucrative business is illustrated by the fact that in 1545 and 1546, between 110 and 450-500 bars of ivory were recorded as having been brought to the Sofala fortress.

At times, the Shona traders had to travel to the areas that had become the trading places for both the Shona and the Portuguese. Matsikiti who describes the journey that Zengeni and Pasipamire undertook confirms this. Chakaipa also presents a similar picture of Tanganeropa and others who had to travel to the place that they met the Portuguese traders. These historical confirmations are a clear indication that the Shona novelists have written reliable history that has been for a long time been sidelined with scholars like Chiwome (2002:34-5) focusing on how the attention of the novelists was diverted by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau to focus on issues that did not bring any glory to the Blacks. While that is true of some novels, a thorough reading and detailed analysis of some, like those identified in this study shows that they have valuable information that relates to the Shona past and the history of Zimbabwe in general.
Besides cattle, other economic activities that were carried out in the Shona past include hunting and iron-working. Hunting was a very important economic activity among the Shona in Zimbabwe’s pre-colonial society. Chakaipa in the novel *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* (1959:12) gives an insight into how hunting was carried out. People in the past used to go as a group on hunting expeditions where they spent several days in the forests. One such expedition is the one that Shambaropa led (Chakaipa 1959:12-3). Another novelist who gives historically valid information on the importance of hunting among the Shona is Hamutyinei, in the novel *Musango Mune Nyama* (1989). He impresses upon the reader that there were even specialist hunters (*vahombarume*) like Nhongonhema and Dzasangana (1989:76). Such people would go out to hunt as individuals or in the company of their sons as Nhongonhema (alias Nhongo) did with his with son Chapakati (1989:76). There are also times when they went on hunting expeditions in group excursions.

Hunting was largely communal and was done in spring when there was not much work in the fields. In such instances, women would also join in the expeditions (Hamutyinei 1989:82). The main instruments that were used during the hunting expeditions were nets (*mambure*) (Bhila 1982:34). Bhila highlights the importance of hunting among the Shona when he states that it was an important activity between the Manyika, and that it was intended to provide variety and balance of diet (1982:33). He also confirms that group hunting was occasionally carried out when the king would make a call for a *binde*, a form of group hunting whereby most people went to hunt for him.

Richartz quoted in Schmidt (1996:50) when he says that Shona women as well as men were involved in hunting confirms the importance of women in hunting expeditions. They were part of the large parties that characterised hunting expeditions when at times more than one village took part in the exercise.

Hamutyinei (1989:68) has shown that the history of environmental management did not appear on the horizon with the advent of colonialism. He has shown that the Shona had ways of ensuring that the animal population was sustained so that people would have more animals for meat in future.
Iron works were also a major economic activity that was carried out among the pre-colonial Shona. The place that is generally associated with iron working and mining in pre-colonial times is Hwedza (Wedza). Matsikiti (1995:193) also confirms this tradition as well as the place of the major mining activities for the ore. The mining of iron-ore was done in winter after the harvest season. The reason why mining was done in winter was that during this season, very little agricultural activity was done. Another reason is that it was difficult and hazardous to carry out mining in summer due to the danger of collapsing mines and waterlogging. When Pasipamire remained behind after his party had left, he learned the art of iron working. He is said to have made a lot of hoes, spears and other iron implements from the ore that he had extracted. He exchanged these implements with the Portuguese (1995:205). That the pre-colonial Shona traded in iron implements with the Portuguese and Arab traders is confirmed by Randles (1979:52). Randles quoting Botelho (1835) says that the Africans had perfected the techniques of brazing and hardening metals. The quality of their iron was so excellent that in the sixteenth century the Portuguese sent it to India to make guns. These exports by the Portuguese are a clear indication that the Shona novel is full of evidence, which points to the success of the pre-colonial Shona in as far as iron technology is concerned. The advent of colonialism therefore brought to an end all the technological advances that the Shona had made. Because of colonialism, most Shona of today have no confidence in themselves. They believe that Blacks had no technical skills of their own before the advent of colonialism.

The trade in hoes and other iron implements was not only external. There was also a huge demand for iron implements on the domestic market. Trade on this market was so lucrative such that an unused hoe that was big and durable made from the best iron (*njanji*) was of great value. Such a hoe could be exchanged with between eight and ten beasts. The value that was attached to hoes in pre-colonial times may appear exaggerated to people of today because of the fact that hoes and other hand held agricultural implements are readily available in this age. In the days before the conquest of this land by the British, the only place where iron could be got and processed was Hwedza. This then explains why any person who could lay his hands on iron could become rich overnight as happened to Pasipamire.
3.4 THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN PRE-COLONIAL SHONA SOCIETY

The way women were viewed in pre-colonial Zimbabwe as depicted in the Shona novel shows that the literary text and history are not mutually exclusive. They are intertwined. The literary text is not autonomous as formalists and structuralists would want most readers to accept and believe. The study of the Shona novel clearly shows that women who were still biologically productive were not to be killed but those who were beyond their prime were killed in the event of outsiders raiding a chiefdom or kingdom.

Women in pre-colonial Shona society were seen more as commodities than as human beings. Their status was close to that of beasts. In some cases, they were even viewed as trophies that had to be won. In the novel *Pfumo Reropa* (Chakaipa 1961:1-16), Ndyire sent out his army on what was veiled as an expedition against Nhindiri’s family that he alleged had stolen his goats (1961:14). After the destruction of Nhindiri’s village, Munhamo, the real object of the expedition was given as a slave (a euphemism for wife) to Ndyire who had ordered the raid in the first place. The other women were distributed among Ndyire’s favourites. This tendency of carrying out raids for the purposes of getting women is made very clear by Schmidt (1996:31), who says that chiefs and headmen desired the captured women as wives for themselves, sons and to reward warriors.

When Tanganeropa fought Ndyire II, the main reason was not the throne that Tanganeropa’s great-great-grandfather was said to have lost to Gwiba, Ndyire’s great-grandfather. The battle was for Munjai. To let Munjai get married to Ndyire II would have been a sign of cowardice not only on the part of Tanganeropa but also that of the people in Haripotse’s village. There was a fight in which Tanganeropa and those who supported him won. He also got the trophy – Munjai, the young woman whom Ndyire II desired, although he knew that she was betrothed to Tanganeropa.

Chakaipa is not the only one who presents women as people who were of low status in the pre-colonial Shona society. In the novels *Jekanyika* (Mugugu 1968:16), *Mapatya* (Mutasa 1978:26, 68), and *Pfuma Ndeyamaoko* (Gutsa 1980:4), the novelists present women as people who were to be considered as
part of the booty alongside young girls and boys. Expeditions were embarked on so that the raiding parties would bring cattle and women back. Schmidt comments on such expeditions saying that women were valued for both their reproductive and productive value and because of this, women were the objects of military expeditions and purchase (1996:33).

Women were also viewed as commodities that could be exchanged with cattle or anything of value to one who had several daughters but was poor. The number of women the rich and powerful had as wives was also a status symbol. Chakaipa presents a young woman who is being given away in marriage to an old man against her will. The father of the young woman does this to get wealth from his prospective son-in-law. The young woman who is not named by Chakaipa said to Tanganeropa:


(You see me walking around. I am in a desperate situation. My father wants me to get married to a certain rich man who is his friend to whom I was pledged when I was still young. I do not love this man. I was afraid of telling my father because I fear that he will kill me).

These words by the young unnamed woman show that the pre-colonial Shona society objectified and commoditised women. Matsikiti also presents a similar picture on how girls and women were treated by their male counterparts. Yeukai is pledged to a wealthy farmer, Bvunzawabaya (1995:60). Yeukai’s mother, Swedzai, has no say over the decision to pledge her daughter. She is said to be an outsider in the husband’s family. When she is asked to give her opinion over the case of Yeukai’s being pledged she knows that she is only being asked for formality’s sake. She knows that Mbambara, her husband wants her to agree with him (1995:60), so she says what she knows Mbambara wants to hear – that Mbambara has the right to decide since he is the owner of the family and home. Mbambara is not happy with the suggestion given by his sister that he finds alternative means of getting grain. To him the best way of ensuring his family’s
survival is to give Yeukai – a girl, away. There is nowhere in the Shona novels where there is a record of fathers giving away their sons.

Chakaipa (1959:31), like Matsikiti, shows that mothers had little or no say on issues relating to their daughters. In the marriage proceedings relating to Marunjeya, Marunjeya’s mother says that she has no say concerning Karikoga’s wish to mortgage his labour so that he can get Marunjeya’s hand in marriage. The dialogue she has with her husband makes this clear. The dialogue is as follows:


(Then the father-in-law turned to his wife and asked, “Have you heard that request?” The wife responded saying, “That issue relates to you men folk. I have nothing to say since I am a woman”).

The above cited cases, that of the young woman who is unnamed in Pfumo Reropa (1961:92), Marunjeya’s mother (Karikoga Gumiremiseve 1959:31), and Yeukai (Matsikiti 1995:60-1), are all clear indicators of the status of women in pre-colonial Shona societies. They could be given away to strengthen friendships as Mbambara wanted to do with Pfumisai, Yeukai’s young sister (1995:99), or to help a family out of a problem like hunger as is observed by Schmidt who states:

At the very margins of society, women and girls in poor families were its most vulnerable members. In times of great economic or political insecurity, they were the most dispensable, “exposed to the raw fact of negotiability.” If a poor man did not have cattle with which to pay a fine, to exchange for food in time of famine, or to pay tribute to a patron, he could offer a female dependent instead (1996:30).

Schmidt is highlighting the fact that women in pre-colonial Zimbabwe were very vulnerable because they could be exchanged for other commodities like food and cattle. They were the best currency that the poor could bank on. Zvarevashe also confirms what is presented in Rakava Buno Risifemberi (1995), in the novel Kurauone (1976), when Kurauone after having fought and killed Rwauya his half-brother, persuades Rwauya’s sisters to come with him (1976:117). The real reason for his doing this has nothing to do with his love for his half-sisters but
because he realises that as the sole surviving male of his family, besides his uncle Nherera, he stands to benefit when these girls get married. There is the potential that he will get cattle from the marriages of his half-sisters.

The pre-colonial Shona did not only give away their daughters in exchange for cattle, grain or other commodities. They also gave away slave girls as ways of cementing relations or enticing potential allies. Mugugu in the novel *Jekanyika* makes this clear when Madzudzo said to Hohodza (alias Jekanyika):


(You now go and have a bath Hohodza. We will prepare a room for you to put up. Reriya has been with us for two years. She is still young even though she looks older. When you are through with your bath come and see me at the village meeting village).

These words show that women had no life of their own. They were part of the property of the man. They could be passed on as presents to friends. This explains why even when a dead man’s estate was being wound up, his wives also had to choose being inherited or they had to go back to their parents’ homes. The second option of going back to their parents’ homes was however greatly discouraged. In most cases the late man’s brothers and cousins as well as nephews took them as wives.

When a woman died, her father’s family would ask for more information on how their daughter would have met her death. If the circumstances surrounding her death were for example, such that she had not fallen ill and had committed suicide, the husband or husband’s family was normally blamed for the death. The reason for putting the blame on the husband or his family as is the case between Gararirimo (Musosi) and his in-laws (Zvarevashe 1976:88-90), over the death of his daughter-in-law lies largely on the realisation by the in-laws that there would be no more benefits that they would get from Musosi after the death of their daughter.

When a woman was divorced or left her husband, she took away with her very little by way of belongings. She did not take away with her anything except her
clothing and bedding. An example is that in *Kurauone* (Zvarevashe 1976:53). When Ndingoveni was divorced, she left with her bag that had a few belongings. The same is true of Gararirimo’s youngest and last wife. When she left, after threats from Mandinyeya, she left like Ndingoveni, with just her bag of clothes and a few belongings (Zvarevashe 1976:102). Schmidt (1996:30) best sums up this status of women when she states:

> Although women and children played a crucial role in the overall economy, they were considered minors in society, possessed few goods and received little more than the food they ate, which was substantially produced by their own labor.

Schmidt is here pointing out that women together with children were used as sources of unpaid and readily available labour. It is clear from the presentations in the novels that women were considered less human when they are compared to men. They were seen as a source of wealth. They were commoditised and were there to help produce children so that the husband’s family would not only grow but also that labour would increase. This commoditisation is confirmed by the fact that raids were carried out mainly for cattle and women. This was not out of the love of women as human beings, because if that had been the case, then raids would not have been carried out. They were needed because the Shona pre-colonial society, like that of today, was patrilineal. Men therefore had to ensure the perpetuation of their names. There was therefore no better way of doing this than to have as many wives as possible. The more one had, the greater the guarantee one had against oblivion. This was so since child mortality rates were quite high in those days. Many children, especially male, were also a form of security in times of family internal strife.

### 3.5 SOME SOCIO-HISTORICAL ASPECTS

Among the pre-colonial Shona, there are other aspects that are both social and historical that are worth noting. These include mortgaging one’s labour for a given period in order to get a wife. Others relate to the case of the birth of twins, triplets or above, that were considered taboo. The novelists have also focused on Shona-Ndebele relations in their novels. The Save (Sabi) River is also presented as having been at one time navigable.
Getting a wife was a very important rite of passage among Shona men in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. A man who did not get a wife for himself had his family worried. This was to such an extent that the man who would not have got married, or would have taken long in getting married would be assisted in getting a wife. There are also situations when even if a man desired to get married, he could not afford the cattle which were the accepted bride price because they were poor or orphans. In such situations, a man could offer to mortgage his labour to his would-be father-in-law. Chakaipa (1959:30-31), and Matsikiti (1995:76-80), bring out some insight into the tradition of mortgaging oneself to get a wife (kutema ugariri). Poor young men who could not afford to pay cattle that were needed by the in-laws did this. In the novel Karikoga Gumiremiseve, Karikoga mortgages his labour to have Marunjeya’s hand in marriage (1959:30-31). Because of the labour that he has put into working for his wife Marunjeya, Karikoga finally gets her hand in marriage. Pasipamire does the same for Yeukai (1995:76).

Another historically important aspect that the novelists present relates to the birth of twins and/or triplets. Despite the fact that the Shona loved children and still love them today, especially male children, they had a practice whereby they killed twins or triplets. This practice ended as late as the 1940s (Interview with Elliott Taoramoyo Makombe, 12 December 2006). This practice of theirs is confirmed in some Shona novels. Mutasa (Mapatya 1978), Hamutyinei (Musango Mune Nyama 1989) and Matsikiti (Rakava Buno Risifemberi 1995) bring this out. The issue of the killing of the twins is also found in Samkange’s The Mourned One. In this novel Samkange (cited in Chiwome 2002:116), writes:

Twins, according to my tribe’s customs were not people. They were unusual beings to be put away in infancy. Custom decreed that they should be killed by being deposited in two big pots sealed so that they were air-tight.

Samkange gives the reason they were considered unusual beings. This is because they were borne as a pair or as triplets. It was considered taboo that twins or triplets would be permitted to live. Samkange says custom decreed that twins be killed. The custom he is referring to was that the Shona believed that only animals like goats could give birth to twins, not human beings.
Mutasa bases his novel *Mapatya* (1978), on the birth and survival as well as growth in secret of the twins, Miriro and Mirirai. Ultimately, the truth comes out and Gasa, Gezai and Mugeza take it upon themselves to ensure that the twins, together with their parents are killed. In the trial that follows the supposed real reasons for the killing of the twins are brought out. When Chief Chipinda asked if there is any reason backed by tradition on why twins should be killed a certain old woman said:


(If twins are all left to live, their mother will never conceive again. So it is better that one of the twins lives to ensure that the mother can conceive and bear more children).

The reason given by the old woman who is quoted is that twins will stop their mother from having more children. The reason given is not convincing to the court and ultimately the twins together with their parents are left to live. The real historical circumstances leading to the killing of the twins or one of the twins are not fully explored in this novel. They are not there. If they are there, no one has given any information. Even the early Portuguese missionaries and traders do not have anything that they recorded that relates to why twins had to be all killed or had to have one of the pair killed. The real reason is that they may have considered the birth of twins as unnatural. It tended to make the mother appear like a goat or another animal that could produce two young ones.

Hamutyinei (1989:66) is the other writer who also writes focusing on the killing of twins. When asked by his son Chapakati to explain why twins had to be killed when Nhongonhema had taught his son to respect the sanctity of human life, Nhongonhema says:

(That is a good question my son. Our elders who said that if twins were left to live, the rains would fail set down this law. However, I now see that this law is gradually being phased out because killing twins is also killing human beings).

Nhongonhema says that the killing of twins is for religious purposes. They are killed so that rains will not fail. The reason given by Hamutyinei is different from that given by Mutasa (1978:66-7). These differences coming from writers who were writing within the same province and drawing their information from the same sources is an indication that both writers were informed that twins were killed or one of them was killed but were not given the real reasons why twins had to be killed. They are each trying to reconstruct that past and attempting to find the reasons why twins were killed. What is clear is that both Mutasa and Hamutyinei are writing after the advent of colonialism and they are trying to portray the Shona of the past as people who respected children’s rights. This is not true. In an interview with one Elliott Taoramoyo Makombe on 12 December 2006, he stated that around the 1940s twins were still being killed. He gave an example of a person whom he grew up with whose twin-brother was killed and he (Mr. Makombe’s friend) was spared. He said that the reason given by the elders whom he asked was that it was taboo to have twins. He says that when he asked his father why twins had to be killed when they had gone on a hunting expedition he was told that the reason for the killing of one of the twins was that twins were considered difficult to feed and bring up. He also said that human beings were not supposed to be like goats. Mr. Makombe still believes that even though the tradition was dying as they grew older; it was still being practiced in his home area along Zimbabwe’s border in the country’s east.

Matsikiti in his novel Rakava Buno Risifemberi (1995) again relates the story of the killing of twins and triplets. Maingeni’s midwife VaMuchazvidii said:


(Please come and witness this omen! Twins! Why, my nephew Maingeni? Do you not know that twins are an ill omen?).
VaMuchazvidii, the midwife is expressing her shock after realising that Maingeni has just delivered her second baby. Just after VaMuchazvidii had declared that the birth of twins was a bad omen, the third child came out. After this last delivery, other women abandoned VaMuchazvidii and Maingeni. When they had been left behind, VaMuchazvidii told Maingeni that it was taboo for one to mother twins, let alone triplets. She clearly stated that twins were to be killed (1995:3). The reason given for the killing of twins or triplets given by Matsikiti is that the parents of the twins or triplets were labelled as witches or wizards. Matsikiti does not give the reason why the parents of twins or triplets were to be labelled thus. It is most likely that the reason given by Makombe (12 December 2006), that most people had no means of sustaining twins was the real reason why twins and triplets were to be killed or had to have one of them killed in the case of twins. What these three writers have all managed to agree on is the historicity of the fact of the killing of the twins and triplets that was prevalent among the pre-colonial Shona. In doing this they have recorded “our tragedies” and “our fears and foibles” (Carlsen and Gilbert 1985:2).

Some Shona novelists have also brought out information that is historically valid and reliable. Chakaipa has as well focused on Shona-Ndebele relations. He (1959:33) shows that there were Ndebele raids into Shona areas. These raids had an impact on the life of the Shona because family life was disrupted and some families were completely wiped out. The Ndebele raided the Shona in search of women and animal stock especially cattle. Chakaipa however exaggerates the times the Ndebele raided the Shona. He presents the Ndebele as raiding the Shona every year during harvest time. Chakaipa writes:

\[Yaive tsika yamaDzviti yokuuy a kumaZezuru nguva yokukohwa kuzovarwisa nokuvatorera zvirinwa zvavo zvose nemombe nembudzi. Imwe nguva vaitora vakadzi vakanaka navasikana vakanaka navakomana kuti vandove varanda vavo (1959:33).\]

(It was a Ndebele tradition to raid the Zezuru during harvest time and take away their crops together with cattle and goats. At times, they took captive beautiful women and girls as well as young boys whom they employed as their slaves).

Chakaipa makes the Ndebele raids appear ritualistic. They have become an annual event. While it is true that the Ndebele did raid the Shona, they did not raid
the same people and place every time. They were always changing and according
to Beach (1986:23, 29-38); they were in search of cattle and trade routes. It is
however not true that the Shona were always victims of Ndebele raids. At times
the Shona raided the Ndebele in search of cattle and the Shona, according to
Beach (1986:25, 33), even fought back that the Ndebele were afraid to go to
distant places that were far away from their areas. Even Lobengula advised his
people to stop raiding the Shona because he feared reprisals.

Chakaipa also gives an account of the calamities that befell those who would be
returning from trade with the Portuguese. Tanganeropa and his group were robbed
by Godobo’s force. All of them except Tanganeropa were killed (1961:79). Such
robberies may appear to be a figment of the fiction writer’s creativity but a reading
of Beach (1984:46-7) refers to the nyai and dumbuseya who turned to raiding as a
way of survival. The nyai are said to have fought off the Portuguese and mugged
traders between Zumbo and Tete. The dumbuseya (sway bellies) is another group
that is said to have taken to raiding as a career. These are likely to have been the
ones who raided Tanganeropa’s party because they (dumbuseya) are said to have
been good fighters. This is so because according to Beach (1984:47), the Ngoni
had trained them and this gave them the enthusiasm to take up raiding as a
career. The nyai/dumbuseya case does away with the tradition that the Ndebele
raided places that were as far away as Zimbabwe’s eastern highlands. Besides
the nyai/dumbuseya, the only other people who raided the Shona in these parts of
the country were the Gaza Nguni. Shona tradition refers to them as madzviti
(swarms of ravaging locusts) because the attire of the Gaza Nguni, the Ndebele
and the dumbuseya/nyai was similar. The use of Nguni military attire shows that
that tradition had a great impact on Shona life.

Southern Africa is known as that part of Africa that has no navigable rivers.
Matsikiti in his novel Rakava Buno Risifemberi (1995) has brought out an
interesting historical fact about the Save (Sabi) River. He says that it was once
navigable. Describing the place that was the trading place for the Portuguese and
the Shona, Matsikiti (1995:205) says that during the time of trade between the
Portuguese and the Shona, the Portuguese came upstream in their boats or ships.
Randles who refers to two hypotheses that Summers refers to, confirms the issue
of the navigability of the Save. Summers (cited in Randles 1979:4) says that
between the eighth and ninth century water in the Save increased that the river became navigable. It lost its humidity in the mid-fifteenth century, and the result is that the river lost its attraction as a means of access to the plateau. Summers’ second hypothesis relates to plate tectonics when uplift caused a slackening in the flow of the Sabi (Save). Recent evidence produced by H. de Laessoe who is cited by Randles (1979:4) shows that the Mozambique coast is a raised one and this elevation must have been produced uniformly from the confluence of the Lundi (Runde) with the Save (Sabi) Rivers, a view that is supported by the gradual gradient of the Save. This confirmation of Matsikiti’s narration shows the reliability of some Shona novels as historical documents. The only problem that comes out in this case is that of the use of the name Portuguese to refer to the traders who sailed inland to trade with the local inhabitants. The time that is referred to as the one when the Save was navigable is the one when the Arabs were active in the lands of the Shona as traders. Matsikiti has mixed up the identity of the traders. These were definitely the Arabs or their middlemen because during the period that has been mentioned by Summers as the one when the Save was navigable the external traders who were active in south central and east Africa were the Arabs. It however does not have to be doubted that at a later stage, in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese traders were involved in trade with the Shona and eventually elbowed out the Arabs.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown some of the reasons why the Shona novel has to be accepted as a reliable and valid historical document. It has also shown that some Shona novelists have embarked on a search for the truth. They have told the history of the pre-colonial Shona society and that history is acceptable. This chapter has as well focused on the Shona states of pre-colonial Zimbabwe such as the Rozvi and the extent of its rule in as far as its political boundaries are concerned. It has highlighted the fact that Mutasa’s novels in as far as they relate to the Rozvi state are historically true. There are minor inconsistencies between the history that Mutasa gives and that historians like Beach, Bhila and Chigwedere present, but these do not diminish the historicity of his novels. Other historical issues that have been discussed in the chapter relate to the religious practices of the Rozvi as well as the other Shona. Mutasa clearly brings out this presentation
because some of today’s Shona are still following some of the religious practices. The Shona novelists whose novels have been studied in this chapter have also given a truthful account of how at times succession was done in Shona kingdoms and chiefdoms in pre-colonial times. What has also been analysed and highlighted in this chapter is the fact that among the pre-colonial Shona, raids for both cattle and women were a common practice. This has shown that women were viewed more as commodities than as people. They have also shown that women were not treated as equals but as minors. They were dispensable especially during times of famine and in wars. They were as well a status symbol. The other novelists have also shown the importance of trade and hunting to the Shona. Besides the issue of women who were treated as perpetual minors, the chapter has shown that the pre-colonial Shona were involved in intercontinental trade as is shown in the trade that took place between them and the Portuguese. The novelists have successfully shown that the Shona past was not a rosy one, as some Africanists would want many people to believe. There were cases when twins were killed. This does not show a people who always respected the sanctity of human life. The fact that the novelists have written focusing even on the bad traditions like that of the killing of twins shows that they have written what can largely pass as a history of the Shona in the pre-colonial period. These novelists have succeeded in showing that Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular has a history. They have also proved that the history of Africa and Zimbabwe does not come into being with the arrival of Europeans into Africa. In fact, the arrival of the Europeans almost caused Africans to lose their identity and history. Chapter 4 highlights the historicity of the New World novel with a specific focus on colonial Zimbabwe. Among other issues, it focuses on those that relate to labour relations, education and accommodation for workers in urban areas and on colonial Zimbabwe’s commercial farms.
CHAPTER 4

THE HISTORICITY OF THE NEW WORLD NOVEL: COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

4.0 INTRODUCTION

People are always fascinated by the past. Their reasons vary. Some are interested to know about how they have got to be where they are today. Yet others want to compare the life that is lived in this day and that of the past. They make comparisons on things like the type of clothes that were worn in the past. Car and motorcycle enthusiasts are interested in knowing the types of cars and motorcycles that were there in the past as well as the changes that have taken place since these were first invented. On a comparative basis, the past also helps people of a given age to see how they have fared when the two lives are juxtaposed. This past can be got from historical sources like textbooks and films. The past can also be deciphered from popular literature. The term popular literature is here used to refer to that kind of art that Ngara describes as art that:

... is capable of appealing to the highly educated while at the same time being intelligible to the common man (1985:47).

It has to be an art that speaks to everyone and about them. This is true of the Shona novel that focuses on the life of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe. Some of these novels relate the life of Blacks under White rule and how the Whites treated them. Even though some people may see no history of significance coming out of the novel, it is sobering to note that some novels do contain history as Motsa (2006:13) highlights when she states:

Certain members of society may not even believe that literary creations can create and narrate ‘history’ from alternative sites as well as authorise versions of ‘literary history’ that can interrogate official historical accounts.

Motsa’s observation is very significant in as far as, it relates to novels as alternative historical sites. Some of the Shona novels that were written in colonial Zimbabwe present a more truthful account of what was then happening in the land
when they are compared to what is found in what were then officially sanctioned history books. This chapter therefore highlights some of the issues that relate to the life of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe. Among the issues discussed are those that relate to labour relations, education, accommodation for Blacks in urban centres and the Whites’ criminal activities. It also analyses the relations between Blacks and Whites as depicted in the colonial Shona novel.

4.1 THE LAND QUESTION

Official Rhodesian (colonial Zimbabwean) history is full of nothing other than the praise of the Whites, especially the Pioneer Column, a British South Africa Company military arm that led Whites into the country of the Shona and Ndebele. This military arm had been given a Royal Charter by the British monarch to occupy the land that the colonialists were shortly to call Rhodesia. This was in honour of Cecil John Rhodes who was their leader. In their history, the Rhodesians give the impression that Whites brought civilisation to a land and a people who were in the dark. This is a misrepresentation of history. The Blacks of the land had their own civilisation – a civilisation that was in harmony with both the biophysical and human environment. Again, the history of colonialist Rhodesians does not make the truth known. It does not tell the truth that the Blacks lost their land, especially the most fertile to the invading Whites. The history does not tell the truth regarding the issue of Blacks being pushed to the least fertile of all lands and again being crammed in overcrowded Reserves. Although their history does not mention this, it is one of the reasons why Blacks ultimately went to war. The Whites knew this injustice. This is why in the development and growth of written Shona literature the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau was very particular about what Blacks wrote. Because the Whites knew about this injustice, in the development of literature in indigenous languages, they made sure that nothing relating to this injustice or any other types of injustices surfaced in any writing. The writers were thus under strict supervision and guidance from the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau (Chiwome 2002:35; Primorac 2006:18). In fact, the aspiring writers and those whose manuscripts the Bureau accepted for publication were encouraged to focus on themes that did not highlight Rhodesian injustice. They were to focus on themes that for example, highlighted Black on Black violence as is found in novels like *Ndakamuda Dakara Afa* (Bepswa 1960) and *Rufu Runobereka Rufu*
Any writing that the Bureau deemed offensive was not published. If it managed to pass through without being detected, it would suffer a fate similar to that of Mutswairo’s *Feso* that was later withdrawn and the reason given for its disappearance from the market was that it was out of print (Chiwome 1996:27; 2002:42). The best literature that was acceptable was that which was in the mould of Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885), which Muza translated into Shona as *Migodhi Yamambo Solomon* (1975).

While writing as was dictated by the Literature Bureau served as an instrument of the government in monitoring creative writings by Blacks, the Rhodesian authorities, including the Bureau used it to peddle government propaganda and preach self-hate among Blacks. Most novels of the period present Blacks in a negative light. They are for example, misfits in urban set-ups. They do not know the difference between maize meal and white sugar (Chakaipa 1966:54). They are outright buffoons. Despite these negative portrayals of Blacks, some of the same Shona novels if they are critically analysed show that they are reservoirs of history. They even portray the treatment of Blacks at the hands of the Whites as it was – negatively. Among such novels are Chakaipa’s *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (1967), Tsodzo’s *Pafunge* (1972), Mutswairo’s *Murambiwa Goredema* (1959) as well as Manyimbiri’s *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda* … (1991). The first three novelists have shown that despite the fact that the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau tried to give guidance to the themes that writers had to focus on and produced literature that it deemed appropriate to the regime’s wishes, they managed to bring out in their novels issues that are of historical significance.

Chakaipa in his novel *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (1967), has among other issues pertaining to colonial Zimbabwe, brought out the skewed land policy that the colonial administrators of Zimbabwe and their successors who presided over the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) government of Ian Smith used. Although on the surface, he appeared to be writing about the evils of drunkenness, laziness and adultery, a closer and more analytical reading of the novel shows that Chakaipa has handled the land question. He has shown that Whites in Rhodesia had large tracts of land while the Blacks had very little land to themselves. Blacks were crammed in the Reserves where it was difficult to survive. The result of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 is that this piece of legislation was crafted in such
a way that 51% of the land in the country was set aside for European settlers. This same law did not on the other hand allow Blacks to hold or occupy land in the areas that had been designated as European areas. The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951, initially partnered this Land Apportionment Act before the Land Tenure Act of 1969, replaced it. The Land Tenure Act divided land into African, European and National land. European land like that of Africans was 45 million acres. National land was 6.5 million acres (Tshuma 1997:18). The picture painted above shows that each European who chose to go into farming had large tracts of land to himself while the Black person whose livelihood was largely based on agriculture had very little to himself and his family.

In his novel, Chakaipa shows the skewed land pattern that permeated the Rhodesian state. In this novel, the author shows the supervisor of Vhuka’s farm, Kufahakurambwe leaving the reserves and riding his bicycle to Vhuka’s farm. He also has a long ride on the farm before he gets to a settled area. The image that comes out clearly from the description given is that of a commercial farmer who owned a very large farm. Chakaipa writes:

*Akati mhanye-i-mhanye-i, akabva asvika muchitondo, akagoti naro bhasikoro, pawaya vhu-u, achipfuka mipurazi yomurungu wake tumbe. Akagoti naro gan’ a, murume dikita rongoti teu teu.*  
*Kuzoti ava pakati pebani iri, akamira achiti ature mafemo. Akatarisa kwaakanga abva nako, achida kuona kuti zuva rava kubuda here, asi hapana chaakaona nokuda kwouswa huno urefu hwaienda mudenga umo, hwaivhutirwa nevhuko dema rakanga rakati ndo-o kusviba sechidziro … Akatasva zvakare kabhizautare kake akagoti naro gan’a (1967:3-4).*

(He rode for a short time and got into a forest, and rode hard. He got to the boundary fence and got onto his employer’s farm. He rode hard on the plain, until he was sweating.  
When he was in the middle of the plain, he stopped to rest. He looked back where he had come from, to see if the sun had risen, but he saw nothing because of the tall grass that was fed by the dark rich soil … He again mounted his bicycle and rode hard in the plain).

The above quotation is a clear indication of how big Vhuka’s farm was. By extension, this means that White farms were very large. This farm was so big that a person could ride his bicycle on it and need time to rest. The reference to some of Vhuka’s cattle that Kufahakurambwe saw grazing on this farm further highlights
how big it was. There is nowhere in the novel where reference is made to a Black peasant farmer also using his small piece of land for crop and animal husbandry. They could not do this because their pieces of land were too small. In fact, Blacks had grazing areas set aside for them and these were communal. Beach (1994) highlights the issue of the skewed land distribution patterns that were prevalent in colonial Zimbabwe. He says that the contrast between commercial farmlands and the reserves was dramatic. The commercial farmlands were vast, undulating and beautiful and were apparently depopulated. On the other hand there were rugged mountains and overcrowded territories in which there were still expanses of woodland grazing in places, but in which very often the fields went on from village to village with hardly a break (Beach 1994:12). Moyana (2002:7-8) confirms the size of the farms of the Whites when he states that each member who joined the Pioneer Column was promised one thousand two hundred and fourteen (1 214) hectares of land. After the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893, many Whites got farms that were two thousand four hundred and twenty-eight (2 428) hectares in extent in Matabeleland. Moyana (2002:46) presents the Land Apportionment Act’s evil results when he comments:

The viciousness of the Land Apportionment Act is further demonstrated by the fact that while Africans were compelled to crowd in the reserves, the white landowners had at their disposal so much land that they could not utilize most of it. In 1957 a Select Committee reported that out of 12,8 million hectares which constituted white farm land in Rhodesia only 404 694 hectares were under cultivation. Even allowing for, say 40% for pasturage the fact still remains that most white land remained unused.

This picture painted by Moyana is a clear indication of how big Vhuka’s farm was. The issue of Vhuka keeping cattle on his farm also shows that the Blacks were disadvantaged so that Whites would prosper. While Blacks were encouraged to destock, the White farmers were encouraged to make their herds grow. The Blacks had communal grazing areas while for the Whites each had private grazing land.

Manyimbiri (1991:32) also affirms the point raised by Chakaipa (1967:3-4) as regards the size of the farms that each White settler who chose to go into farming had. In his novel, the main character Kwadokai states that he grew up on Bhasi’s (Baas’) farm. The farm had huge forests and different species of animals that
included herbivores and carnivores. The Reserves were in contrast bare and with no trees for firewood, that in the end they had to sneak into White farms at the risk of being caught and beaten (Chidzero 1957:38). The reference to the size of the farms that had forests with firewood and animals of different types may not give the actual size of the farm but recent developments in Zimbabwe’s tourism industry show that some of these farms were very big because some farmers ended turning their farms into private game parks. Hulme (2005:2) confirms the case of farms being turned into private game parks. He says that his father accepted a job to manage a cattle and wildlife ranch called Ruware. This is an indication that the Whites had land to spare even for game, while the Blacks went land hungry. They had no land to cultivate and they had run out of pasture.

The novelist Chakaipa goes further in showing the size of the land that was allocated to Blacks. This he does through Mavis who has embarked on planting their fields single-handedly and without having had them tilled. Mai Mavis (Mavis’ mother), Kufahakurambwe’s wife also brings out the size of land that was allocated to each Black family. She does this when she refers to the acts of Mavis who has embarked on an exercise to plant maize in her parents’ fields without the assistance of an ox-drawn plough. She says:

\[
\]

(Blessed are you who have draught power. For us without [draught power] we are just idling. I left Mavis, who behaves like a mad person, planting where the land has not been tilled, and I decided that I could not do that. Where in this world today, would you find people still relying on hand tillage?).

Although on the surface this appears to be just a case of someone who is lazy and wants to go and drink beer, an important aspect that relates to land tenure and distribution in colonial Zimbabwe comes out. The fact that Mavis saw it as possible for her to go through the fields relying on hand tillage is a clear indication of the size of the pieces of land that had been allocated to Blacks by the colonial and settler administration. They were very small pieces of land. By 1980 after some
window dressing amendments to the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, each Black peasant farmer had 23.43 hectares to himself and his family (Tshuma 1997:30). This is contrary to a minimum of 2 313.43 hectares per farmer for the Whites (Tshuma 1997:30).

Manyimbiri (1991) presents a character, Kwadoka who highlights the Blacks’ plight in as far as the land issue is concerned. Kwadoka says:

\[ Ndagatarisa \ dunhu \ rose \ reZaka \ ndikaona \ utukuutuku \ hwemakomo. \ Vanhu \ vakati \ pfokopfoko \ mumipata \ yemakomo \ aya \ kunge \ mbira. \ Minda \ yose \ yenhivi \ yakanga \ yapera \ kutorwa \ nemvura. \ Akanga \ ava \ makoronga \ asisarimiki \ kana \ kumera \ sora \ zvaro. \ Majinga \ emakomo \ ainge \ zvino \ otemwa \ miti \ kuti \ vanhu \ vawane \ pokufusira \ mbeu \ (Manyimbiri 1991:36). \]

(I looked at Zaka district and saw chains of mountains. People were packed in all mountain passes like dassies. All fields at the edges had been washed away. They were all gullies, which could not be cultivated, and no seeds could grow there. The feet of mountains had had their trees cut so that some people would find somewhere to plant).

What is coming out of this bird’s eye view that Kwadoka presents is that Blacks had long run out of land to cultivate. This led to the tilling even of the edges of the mountains so that people would sustain themselves and their families. The result was soil degradation that led to the development of gullies. When the Whites saw this development they blamed Blacks for poor land use and introduced contour ridges and destocking as measures to curb further degradation. They then enacted the Land Husbandry Act of 1951. Land degradation in colonial Zimbabwe is therefore a result of the way the Whites distributed land between themselves and the Blacks. This issue of land distribution that was in favour of Whites is made clear when a brief outline of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 is done. According to the Report of Native Production and Trade Commission of 1944 (cited in Moyana 2002:44) the Land Apportionment in Southern Rhodesia in 1930 was as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
<th>% of country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Area</td>
<td>19 890 398</td>
<td>51, 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Reserves</td>
<td>8 549 996</td>
<td>22, 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unassigned area</td>
<td>7 200 850</td>
<td>18, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Purchase Area</td>
<td>3 020 868</td>
<td>7, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Area</td>
<td>238 972</td>
<td>0, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined Area</td>
<td>35 832</td>
<td>0, 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38 936 916</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for African use</strong></td>
<td><strong>11 570 864</strong></td>
<td><strong>29, 7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This picture presented by Moyana is a clear indication of how the appropriation of the Black’s land had left them greatly disadvantaged and in the process impoverished. Lest Moyana be accused of being racist, Beach, a White Zimbabwean historian who is however writing on the pre-colonial political set-up among the Shona, confirms Moyana’s presentation. He however refers to how the colonial land distribution created some imbalances that affected local dynasties. He says that colonial rule as well as the large-scale alienation of the land of Africans to make commercial farms affected practically every dynasty in the country. Some of the dynasties lost all of their land, while others lost most, or some of it. The result was that even those who lost little or none of it to commercial farms had to give up some to those who had lost everything. This added to a tenfold increase in population (Beach 1994:11). The population rise was among the Blacks and it was not because of a sudden rise in the birth rate. It is because as the Rhodesians made efforts to make way for the White settlers who were coming in, they moved Blacks and relocated them to other areas. This dramatic rise in population led some Blacks who had no access to land to cultivate on foothills and mountainsides (Manyimbiri 1991:36). People even ended sharing the 23.43 hectares that each household got. They were overcrowded in the Reserves (Meredith 2003:115). The plight of the Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe as regards landownership is similar to that which Blacks in countries like South Africa, Kenya and Tanganyika (now Tanzania after the merger with Zanzibar) experienced. Brett describes the plight of the Chagga of Tanganyika saying that the Chagga of northeastern Tanganyika lost much of their land to German settlers and lived a very crowded existence (1975:173). Such an existence is similar to that of the Blacks of colonial Zimbabwe. This is clearly amplified in some of the Shona novels that focus on that period.
Black land ownership was not permanent even in the Reserves where they had been pushed. They could still lose their land to new farmers since the wave of White land seekers continued to grow especially after the Second World War. In fact, a White farmer or several White farmers could evict Blacks any time when it was felt that the land they were settled on was required for White settlement. Masukusa (1994:12) confirms this when he says that Giriki (Kirk) who was a dip tank superintendent for the Blacks’ cattle in the Serima, Chirimuhanzu and Hama rural areas had appropriated the place that VaNzivo was originally settled on with his family.

For Blacks, the issue of land was not only about land for cultivation. There was also need for grazing. This land was also inadequate. In *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (Chakaipa 1967), Paurosi (Paul) makes this dilemma of Blacks clear when he says that he would have wanted to buy cattle for his parents as a sign that he regretted that he had betrayed their faith and trust in him when he made Mavis pregnant. He says:

> **Ndanga ndichida kuti ndivatengere dzimwe mombe asi hazvigoneki nokuti vanhu havabvumidzwi kuita mombe dzakanyanya kuwanda nokuti dzinopedza ufuro** (p.109).

(I would have wanted to buy them some more cattle but that is not possible because if there are many cattle there will be overgrazing).

The issue here is not one about overgrazing the whole pasture. Even though Paurosi is not saying that it was a government directive that the number of heads of cattle per household be reduced, it is documented in history that the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 among other objectives wanted to reduce stock in an area to carrying capacity. According to Pendered and Von Momerty (in Moyana 2002:99), the Act sought among other issues to provide for good husbandry farming and protection of natural resources by all Africans wherever they farmed. It also aimed at providing security of tenure to the good farmer and to limit the number of stock in any area to its carrying capacity as far as practicable, to relate the stock to the arable land available. The Native Land Husbandry Act was noble in intention but its authors did not try to find out where the real problem of land degradation was coming from or they just did not care. There is no reference in this Act or any other relating to land that encouraged White farmers to destock. In
fact, the Act is called the Native Land Husbandry Act. This was because the Whites had more than adequate land, so there was no need for them to destock. The Act is also an indicator of the tragedy that befell Blacks when Whites appropriated their land and moved them into overcrowded reserves.

The appropriation of the land of the Blacks by the Whites was carefully planned. The intention was to make Blacks so poor so that they would end up selling their labour to the White commercial farmers and other industries cheaply. The poverty that set in among the Blacks because of the loss of their land led many of them flocking to towns, mines and farms to work. This came about because of land shortage. The land increasingly lost the capacity to hold more people and feed them as the population increased. The result was poverty. According to Moyana, the increasing land shortage accompanied by the increase in the quest for other needs like school fees, clothes, and western food made most people to seek work on farms. In the early years when the Whites had just come into the country the Blacks had depended on their cattle and grain from which a modest income that helped in defraying expenses was realised. They could rely on their cattle and grain in the early days because the Land Apportionment Act had not affected most of them. With the passage of time, the effects of land apportionment began to be felt. The landless peasant had no option but to sell his labour to the White miners and farmers (Moyana 2002:72) at a price determined by the Whites. In fact, by impoverishing the Blacks, the Whites had created the most foolproof way of guaranteeing the supply of cheap labour, where the employer determined the wage that was to be given to the worker (Moyana 2002:75).

Manyimbiri (1991) further confirms the shortage of land that was adequate for food production. This shortage led people to sell their labour so that they would get food for their families. He presents Mabhuruku discussing with Chimbidzikai the need for farm workers to move into the rural areas (Reserves) to sabotage the activities of the White commercial farmer on whose land he and his father worked. In response, Mabhuruku said that there was no adequate land for cultivation. The only spaces left were hilly. The other fields had been used for a very long time that they were no longer productive. According to Mabhuruku, people were now mortgaging their labour and would get food in return (1991:36).
It is clear in the foregoing discussion that land shortage among Blacks was artificial. The White settler regime deliberately created it. It did this with the intention of ensuring that the Whites would prosper while the Blacks suffered and became poorer. The desperate situation into which the Blacks were pushed ultimately led them to sell their labour cheaply and in some of the worst working conditions. This situation was a big boost for the White farmers, especially at a time when most farms had only tractors as the best proof of agricultural mechanisation. The situation also suited tobacco farmers since tobacco is a labour intensive crop.

By handling such issues that reflect on the life of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe, the novelists have shown that literature and history are intertwined. They are in tandem with Ogude (1991:1) who asserts that the African writer has to respond to great historical and social events that have determined the fortunes of the African continent in the last two centuries. He sees every literary work as a response to definite historical and socio-political conditions. The novelists being focused on in this study have responded to their historical circumstances by writing fiction that is really faction as is highlighted in chapter 2. It is fiction because it gives a narration that does not give an account of real places where the events described took place. It is on the other hand history because it highlights the dispossession of Blacks of their land. This is historical and historical documents confirm this.

The land issue was so thorny that it is the major reason that led to the outbreak of open hostilities between Blacks and Whites in colonial Zimbabwe. These hostilities finally led to the war of liberation that raged in Zimbabwe from the 1960s up to 28 December 1979 when a ceasefire came into effect. This ultimately led to elections and the attainment of self-rule by the majority Blacks. The capture of this historically relevant aspect fulfils in essence what literature should do. What these novelists have done is further given prominence when the following words by Lomidze are taken into account. He states:

> It is true that poetic thought attains the highest and poignancy when it comes into immediate contact with facts and events of real life (1983:78).
Lomidze is stating that literature should reflect real life events. These novelists have captured historical reality. It is these facts that turn their works into historically reliable documents. This is even more so for Chakaipa who was writing under the strict and probing guidance of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. He managed to bring up what is historically relevant by embedding in his surface theme of drunkenness the thorny and emotive underlying one of land imbalances. He also embedded in the same theme other issues that relate to education and labour relations especially on colonial farms and White households in colonial Zimbabwe.

4.2 EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR ISSUES IN COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

The issue of the employment of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe, especially those of Shona origin transcends several boundaries. They were the most affected because they are the ones who lost many of their lands to Whites. This was worsened by the fact that more Shona areas saw the establishment of mission stations and farms as compared to the Matabeleland region. The weather conditions in Matabeleland were also not favourable to most Whites who then moved to the Mashonaland, Victoria (today’s Masvingo) and Manicaland Provinces. The few Whites who settled in Matabeleland were mostly interested in ranching. This resulted in most of the Shona being pushed onto the Rhodesian migrant labour system. This issue related to relations between employer and employee, wages, living conditions for the workers and the deliberate creation of a cheap labour-pool. This situation ultimately led to the unemployment and the export of labour to neighbouring South Africa’s Rand goldfields that the employees generally referred to as *kuWenera* (to Wenera – WENELA). Clarke confirms the Rhodesians’ export of labour to South Africa in an effort to reduce unemployment. He writes:

> Ultimately, in 1974 a partial solution was sought in a policy allowing Wenela to recruit labour supplies for South African mines, 8 622 workers being recruited in 1975 alone (1977:18).

These words clearly capture the oversupply of labour that colonial Zimbabwe ended experiencing because of the appropriation of the Blacks’ land. The cheap
labour-pool that the colonialists created became a problem later on. Wenela did not succeed in solving the unemployment problem as Clarke notes.

Initially, when the White settlers came into what they later called Rhodesia and grabbed land, which they turned into farms, local Blacks did not join their farms, mines or factories as employees. This was because the Blacks had cattle, goats and fields that were the source of their livelihood. With the passage of time, as more and more Blacks’ lands were appropriated by a settler regime that was ever hungry for land, they found themselves without any means of survival. Some even found themselves being labelled squatters on land that was once theirs. They had the option to move out of these lands, to remain as contract labourers or to stay behind as tenants who were to pay rents to the new owners of the land. The charging of rent for those who had been allowed to remain on alienated land, hut taxes and the Pass laws resulted in a certain amount of forced labour (Stoneman 1981:3).

The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 was the most decisive piece of legislation that compelled Blacks to go and work for Whites on their farms, mines and in their factories. They were employed on the terms of the employer. There was no negotiation on how much they could sell their labour. Despite the fact that most commercial farms were close to railways, roads as well as other communication forms, they were on the other hand not very far from most rural areas. Most of these farms were in fact buffers between the railways and the rural areas. This set up of having farms in close proximity to rural areas was not a coincidence neither was it an accident.

The commercial farms were deliberately set in such a way that enabled the farmers to exploit the cheap labour that was in abundance in the poverty ridden rural areas. Chidzero (1957), Chakaipa (1967), Manyimbiri (1991) and Masukusa (1994) clearly paint the scenario that was common in colonial Zimbabwe. Chidzero presents Davies’ farm being very close to the rural areas (Reserves) where VaChitehwe and other Blacks were resident. He (Chidzero) states that across the Nyatsime River, the houses at Davies’ farm could not be seen clearly because of the dust that was there (1957:3). This description is an indication that the farm was very close to the reserves that the Land Apportionment Act and other colonial legal
instruments had created. If there had been no dust, the houses would have been clearly visible. In Chakaipa’s novel, *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* the farm was again within walking distance from the closest rural areas. Even though Kufahakurambwe, the farm supervisor could cycle into the rural areas, it does not mean that it was far away. Mhirimo’s wife, Mai Paurosi and her son Paurosi walked to the farm (Chakaipa 1967:30, 45-6). Paurosi even wanted to go back home on the same day that he had visited his mother who was working at Vhuka’s farm. This shows how very close the farm was to rural areas.

The importance of the close proximity of rural areas to commercial farms is highlighted when an analysis of the activities at Vhuka’s farm are brought under the spotlight. The need to tap into the abundant and cheap labour that was readily available in the rural areas becomes clear when the tobacco-picking season was at its peak. In the novel Chakaipa writes:


(Since at this farm there was a lot of tobacco that was grown, the workers were at times overwhelmed by the picking task; as a result, the farmer would at times send the foreman to neighbouring rural areas to get extra labourers).

The Blacks who were thus taken on as employees were subjected to the same conditions as the others. They did not negotiate for their wages.

Manyimbiri (1991) is another novelist who presents a picture similar to that depicted by Chakaipa. He makes this clear in the discussion between Chimbidzikai and Mabhuruku (1991:35-6). Chimbidzikai encourages Mabhuruku and the other farm workers to leave the employee of Bhasi (Baas). Mabhuruku rejects this proposition because as he rightly points out, the rural areas are poverty stricken (1991:36). The poverty that has riddled the rural areas is a product of deliberate policies that had been put in place by the White settlers so that they would exploit cheap Black labour since the Blacks had nothing that would cushion them against the grinding and gnawing poverty. They as a result were compelled
by their circumstances to go and work on White farms, mines and factories. The Blacks worked on White farms mainly for food (Manyimbiri 1991:36) and in very inhuman conditions (Manyimbiri 1991:22-3). The Whites’ purpose was to ensure that they got richer while the Blacks became poorer.

Another interesting issue that comes out of the novels that relates to the working conditions of Blacks on farms is that the employer was not concerned about their welfare. In the novel Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe, the workers’ Christmas holiday is disrupted. Even though Vhuka promises to give them a week to rest as compensation for the disruption of their holiday, it is clear that White commercial farmers valued their profits more than their workers’ health and rest. The workers were all ordered to go and transplant tobacco seedlings when it was raining (Chakaipa 1967:26). It would have been prudent to transplant the tobacco immediately after the rains. This was not done because the employer cared little about the workers. The way he ordered them to go and work shows that this was not subject to negotiation. This is further strengthened by his ordering Mai Mavis, Kufahakurambwe's wife to go and work in the fields with everyone else. The reliance on forced labour was ingrained into the psyche of the Rhodesian colonial settlers. They saw everyone who was able-bodied or appeared so and was resident on their farms as a labourer. If s/he did not want to work there then s/he had to leave. They had to work as a form of payment for staying on the farm. This explains why Muchemwa had to work for Masare (Masukusa 1994:9). His father had been injured after falling from a horse. His grandfather VaNzivo was too old to work. He therefore had to work so that his family continued to stay on the farm. Bhasi also tells Chimbidzikai that if he is to have a family, his wife and children will also work for him (Bhasi). What is clear in this picture is that forced labour is not all about people who were taken from their homes to go and work elsewhere. At times people were compelled to work so that they would earn their stay at certain places with their families. It is a modern type of slavery.

Chakaipa portrays Vhuka as more humane because of his encouragement to workers to take their rain jackets (“majasi emvura” [1967:26]) when he is compared to Bhasi in Manyimbiri’s Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda… (1991). This can best be explained by the different circumstances that the two novelists were under when they were writing. Manyimbiri is writing after Zimbabwe’s attainment of self-
rule while Chakaipa is writing in colonial Zimbabwe. Naturally, Chakaipa had to be cautious in his presentation of White characters. However, the name Vhuka tells the whole story about his brutality. The name is a nickname that was adopted from his behaviour of going around the farm waking workers up. It is an adoption and adaptation of the isiNdebele verb *vuka* which means “Wake up,” an imperative statement which indicates that Vhuka had a tendency of waking everyone up and ordering them to go and work. Vhuka’s reference to *majasi emvura* does not necessarily mean that he had provided protective clothing for his workers. He was only advising them to find something to cover themselves with which each could find. Clarke confirms the reality that workers especially on farms and estates had no provisions for protective clothing. He refers to the Zammitt Plan that Triangle Estates implemented in an effort to retain staff whose turnover prior to 1973 was at 50%. He noted that the working conditions for agricultural workers were Spartan. After Zammitt’s recommendations, protective clothing such as gumboots, PVC overalls for irrigators, goggles and work smocks for cane cutters were introduced (Clarke 1977:242). The case of Triangle Estates is an exception, not the norm. The norm was that there was no protective clothing for the workers. Protective clothing only became compulsory after independence in 1980. The following picture taken from Clarke (1977: insert) proves that workers had no protective clothing. They had no shoes or overalls.
Supervisors like Kufahakurambwe (Chakaipa 1967) and Matsikachando (Masukusa 1994) made working conditions on farms worse. These supervisors were taskmasters who really drove their fellow Blacks for the benefit of the White master. In the novel *Tsvaru Akazvara Tivu* Masukusa (1994:104), presents Matsikachando (Matsika) who told everyone working at Masare’s house to fill thirty bags of sand each before they could go for lunch. If one completed this feat, he would be left to go early for lunch and would only come back after lunch to arrange the bags into a defensive wall for Masare’s house. Like Matsikachando, Kufahakurambwe drove the workers at Vhuka’s farm to do twice the amount of work that had been set aside for the day (Chakaipa 1967:6-8). Freire best sums up the behaviour of the likes of Kufahakurambwe and Matsikachando when he states:

It is a rare peasant who, once ‘promoted’ to overseer, does not become more of a tyrant towards his former comrades than the owner himself. This is because the context of the peasant’s situation, that is oppression, remains unchanged. In this example, the overseer, in order to make sure of his job, must be as tough as the owner – more so (1972:23).
The behaviour of people like Kufahakurambwe and Matsikachando won them enemies among their fellow Blacks. No one was sympathetic when Kufahakurambwe lost his job or when Matsikachando lost the favour of Masare and Vheremu (Verm). What also comes out is that their White masters may have been happy at the way their work was being done but the result that is historically true is that when they acted with so much zeal in their given tasks, they did not only dehumanise fellow Blacks. They in turn dehumanised themselves.

The dehumanisation of farm workers in colonial Zimbabwe is also highlighted by the fact that Black farm workers were beaten and scolded. The White farmers did not give them any leave or off days. There was no sick leave (Masukusa 1994:18). During work, no one was permitted to rest. Pregnant women did not go on maternity leave. The result of the gruelling conditions that most of them worked under was that several women had miscarriages. Kwadoka (Manyimbiri 1991:22) says that his mother had several miscarriages because of the hard labour that they undertook on Bhasi’s farm. He further states that people were made to work as if they were prisoners. The farm owner himself followed behind with a leather sjambok. The farmer did not tolerate illness and considered it laziness. Kwadoka emphasises the brutality with which they were treated and says, “Taidada nebhunu redu tichiti ishasha pazvibhakera.” (Manyimbiri 1991:22). (We boasted that our Boer [master] was a great boxer). However, they all knew that they did not have to fight back (1991:22). The behaviour of Masare and those of like manner who believed in driving the Blacks hard was a result of racist ideas such as those espoused by Wilson (1952:50) who asserts:

> Impelled by the driving force of a determined leader, the African can accomplish great things … Left to himself he is disinclined to exertion, and sinks into a state which can only be called laziness. Leadership and discipline can work wonders.

The White farmers believed that even if a worker had committed a wrong he was supposed to be beaten. This attitude and belief is the product of the misconception that most Whites had about Blacks. They saw Blacks as little children who constantly needed to be spanked so that they would fall into line. The Shona novelists bring this up.
Chakaipa (1967) and Masukusa (1994) are the other novelists who highlight the use of beatings as ways of ‘disciplining’ Blacks. Chakaipa in his novel *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* presents Vhuka, who instead of talking over the issue of Kufahakurambwe’s absenteeism and alleged abuse of workers, opts to humiliate him by beating him in front of fellow workers (1967:30). Although Kufahakurambwe is said to have fought back, it is clear that White employers always beat Black workers. Masare (alias Giriki [Kirk] who beat his workers further strengthens this issue of the beating of workers. Masukusa describes VaNzivo as follows:


(In these hairs were marks, which showed that they were scars of wounds that had long healed. These scars were a result of being beaten by white farmers when he was tending their calves and sheep. His legs, starting from the waist right down to the ankles had scars of varying types).

There were times when these farmers would beat their Black workers to such an extent that they would have injuries that left them permanently disabled. This is the case of Gurai, VaNzivo’s son who had a broken back because of falling from a horse as he was chasing after cattle at the dip tank. Instead of being sympathetic to the injured Gurai, Masare insulted him further by beating him up. This, according to VaNzivo, is what made his son permanently disabled, not the fall from a horse (Masukusa 1994:9). Workers could even be murdered (Manyimbiri 1991:23). The indignities that Blacks were subjected to were because most White farmers believed like Jollie (cited in Moyana 2002:41) that the Black people’s contact with the White man and even oppression by him applies a stimulus to native energy. This misconception, just like that of Wilson (1952:50), made the life of most Blacks on farms and other work places unbearable.

The farm labourers also got a wage that was not negotiable. The employer determined it. In fact, the employers knew that the amount they gave their workers was inadequate as examples from Chakaipa (1967) and Manyimbiri (1991) show.
In *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (Chakaipa 1967:5), Kufahakurambwe tells his wife that he is underpaid. Even though he is building a defence against his wife’s admonishing him for his absenteeism, he makes it clear that he is underpaid. He asks, “Ndokupi kwamakamboona foromani achitambiriswa pondo ina dzine chumi pamwedzi?” (Where else is a foreman paid as little as four pounds and ten shillings?). These words tell the whole story about the general wage structure that was prevalent on most farms. It means that if a supervisor was paid the little that Kufahakurambwe mentioned, the other workers were getting very little indeed.

Another indicator of the poor wages that the farm labourers got is that of the ease with which farmers hired labourers. In Chidzero’s *Nzvengamutsvairo* (1957:69-70) Samere, Tikana and Matigimu all got job placements at Davies’ farm. Bhasi, in Manyimbiri’s *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda*… (1991:41-2) hired Chimbidzikai spontaneously. This is despite the fact that this was not that time of the year when more labourers were needed. In *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (1967:16), the issue of the underpayment of the workers comes out clearly. Vhuka was threatened with the potential departure of Wadyazheve. This in turn was likely to lead to the closure of the farm school, which on its own was a source of even cheaper labour. He decided not only to give Wadyazheve an increment that topped his monthly wage at £12.00 but also a bonus of £60.00 after the sale of that season’s harvest. In addition, Vhuka accepted Wadyazheve’s demand that each pupil be paid £6.00. The readiness with which Davies hired Matigimu, Samere and Tikana, the hiring of Chimbidzikai in the off-season and Vhuka’s acceptance of Wadyazheve’s demands all show that the farmers did not see the extra payouts that had to be made as a drain on their finances. This is therefore an indication that they underpaid their workers.

The wages of some farm labourers were also a pittance because deductions were effected if the workers had failed to meet the deadline or set targets. They were also effected for alleged wrongdoing. Even though Kufahakurambwe (Chakapia 1967:6) praised himself and lied that he stood in defence of the workers, he brought out this pertinent issue of deductions. In *Tsvaru Akazvara Tivu* (Masukusa 1994:54), Masare told Tozivepi that he would not deduct money from his wages (*kudyira tikiti*) for breaking the legs of a calf. Masare was stating a practice that was common among White employers in colonial Zimbabwe.
Chidzero's *Nzvengamutsvairo* on the surface appears to be pro-Whites, but there are some subtle elements that highlight the ill-treatment of workers on farms. These are embedded in it and they relate to the working conditions that were prevalent on farms and in urban areas. An example is that given on page 54. Chidzero on this page expresses his wish that there be harmony between Blacks and Whites. He does this because he realises as the authorial comment on the same page highlights, that the farm workers are poorly paid. This is reflected in the clothes that the author describes in the following words:

*Vasevenzi vapapurazi iyoyo vakati vodzoka kubasa vachimhanyira kundobika sadza. Vamwe vakatakura mapadza kana matemo pamafudzi, vanwe vaina masvinga ehuni, vanwe vakapfeka masaka, mamvemve, shangu dzendudzi nendudzi; vanwe vakapfeka midhabha nezvikoko rani zvinenge zvamasoja* (Chidzero 1957:54).

(The farm workers came back to prepare for lunch. Some of them were carrying hoes and axes on their shoulders, others had bundles of firewood, yet others were attired in sackcloth, torn clothes and were putting different types of footwear, some pairs of trousers and still others hobnailed shoes like soldiers).

The types of attire described are an indication of very poor wages. This explains why Chidzero has to wish for peace. The gulf between the Blacks and the Whites in terms of wealth is too much.

The wish for peace is an indication that the author, who was writing in Southern Rhodesia, knew very well that there was no harmony in the country. This was a result of poor remuneration for Blacks. Matigimu and Tikana further echo this. Matigimu expressed dismay at the way the workers were dressed (Chidzero 1957:54-5). Tikana then said that they dressed well in Harare, unlike the workers they had seen. Matigimu said, “*Chinondirwadza mwoyo ndechekuti ava vanhu vanenge varanda vavaranda.*” (Chidzero 1957:55). (What pains me is that these people look like slaves of slaves). The reason these people were like slaves of slaves is that they were so underpaid that they could not afford to look after themselves. It looks like the purpose of the colonialists was not only to reduce Blacks to the status of *desperados* who would sell their labour for anything but
also to that of beasts. Brand (1981:46-7) amplifies this reality of the underpayment of workers on colonial Zimbabwe’s farms when he states:

Farm workers have been hardly; if at all better off than peasant cultivators, in spite of having an apparent edge in overall income. In most instances their (usually self-built) housing and diet has been no better than that of the TTL population. In 1977, more than 80 percent of the farm labourers were earning less than $20 per month in cash wages plus a limited food ration and work clothing.

The issue of clothing relates mainly to overalls, especially for those working on farms. For most people working on tea estates, there were no overalls but raincoats. It is important to note here that the provision of work clothing was not out of consideration of the welfare of the workers. It was for profit. If workers were to be injured on estates, it would take long to train replacements. The reason for providing clothing was therefore motivated by the need for huge profits. If the employers were interested in the welfare of the workers, they would have paid them a decent wage, which enabled them to live comfortably with their families.

Farm labourers were provided with food at their work places. Bhasi (Manyimbiri 1991:42) told Chimbidzikai that besides receiving a dollar per month, he would also be given food for the evening meals. There is no reference to breakfast. Lunch would be served communally. The quality of food was poor. The meat that was provided by Masare in the novel Tsvaru Akazvara Tivu (Masukusa 1994) had moulds. The Black workers were also compelled to eat meat from cattle that had died of unknown diseases (Masukusa 1994:17). The so-called free food was also the cause of the poor wages because the employers deducted money for the food rations that had been given to the workers. Even though Moyana is referring to industrial employees, what he says about the deductions for food rations is also true for the farm workers. He refers to the wages that the Blacks in industries in Salisbury (now Harare) and Umtali (now Mutare) were getting. At the end of each month, the employers deducted eight shillings for the rations that they gave to employees (Moyana 2002:113).

The farmers deliberately underpaid their Black employees. The motive behind was to ensure maximum profits from their farming ventures. They believed that Blacks had no need for money. Masare asked his workers what they needed money for
since they did not know and appreciate its value. He asked, “Mari, unoidi iwe? Unoziva zvainoshanda?” (Masukusa 1994:18). (What do you need money for? Do you know its value?). Masare is just like Bhasi (Manyimbiri 1991:30) who asked Kwadoka:

_Munoti munoda kuwedzerwa mari. Munoida yei? ...One, chikafu chenyu hachidhuri fanika chedu isu vanaBhasi. Ini handidyi sadza ... Vana vako havaendi kuchikoro. Kunyange vachienda, chikoro chenyu hachidhuri fanika chevana vaBhasi._

(You say that you want a wage increment. What do want the money for? ... One, your food is not as expensive as ours is. I do not eat sadza ...Your children do not go to school. Even if they go, their school is not as expensive as that attended by Baas’ children).

Bhasi added insult to injury by stating that giving Blacks an increment would cause them to get drunk and this would result in them not being productive on his farm (Manyimbiri 1991:30). Masare and Bhasi’s thinking was universal among the majority of colonialist settlers. Their desire to underpay is described by Maughan-Brown who says that the White racists and racialists argued that:

_the native had every necessity of life and therefore what he got from his wages was a luxury. His taste for pay was seen as a cultivated taste and three shillings was seen as giving as much pleasure as three pounds (1985:86)._  

The above quotation puts the whole picture of the predicament of Black labourers on farms into perspective. They got a slave wage because their employers saw money as something that was alien to Blacks and was therefore not important in their lives.

The plight of urban workers was as bad as that on farms. For some of the urban workers, the little that they got was spent on other services like rent and transport to and from work for those who worked at places that were not within walking distance. Like the farm workers (and presumably the mineworkers), their wages were not negotiated. They either accepted the wage offered or they turned down the job offer. In _Murambiwa Goredema_ (Mutsawiro 1959), Murambiwa was told by Jones that he would each month earn £2.5s. He accepted, although he was not happy about this amount. Describing Murambiwa’s predicament Mutsawiro states,
“Kunyangwe mari iyi yaive shoma asi Murambiwa hapana chaaikwanisa kuita.” (1959:12). (Even though this amount was little, Murambiwa had no choice). The same scenario is repeated when Mavis was employed in Gwelo (now Gweru). She was told that her wage per month would be £8.10s. This amount was almost double what her father had been getting as supervisor at Vhuka’s farm.

Not only Mavis and Murambiwa were given poor wages. Tikana (Chidzero 1957:7) left his job in Harare because of poor remuneration. He stated that he was tired of working with, and for Whites, since he was receiving only seven shillings per week. Tikana rightly observed that this was a slave wage. He says, “Handisi srevhi yavaRungu!” (I am not the White men’s slave). Because of the poor wages, Tikana has resolved to stay in the rural areas and withdraw his labour. The complaints by Tikana, even if they are directed at the wrong people, are an indication that urban Blacks were also underpaid. The difference between them and the farm labourers was that the urban workers seem to have been more aware of their rights when compared to their farm counterparts.

The wages that urban workers got were so little such that they could not buy beds or good clothes for themselves. The beds that Dzungu and his roommate had were platforms perched on poles that had been sunk into the ground (Chakaipa 1967:90). The mattresses were made of sack material that had been sewn together and had been filled with dry grass. The blankets were of poor quality. The workers could again not buy decent clothes. Dzungu’s pair of trousers was all patches (Chakaipa 1967:91). Chakaipa says that Mavis’ employer helped her very much with clothes. He states:


(Mavis did not have a problem when it came to clothes. Her employer would give her any dress or garments that she had lost interest in. At times, she would go with her and buy her [Mavis] new clothes).

This act of buying clothes for Mavis or even giving her some is an admission on the part of her employer that she was underpaying her. She in fact treated Mavis
like a pet that had to be looked after. These acts of mercy were vainglorious. Freire (1972:115) who observes such generosity in oppressors describes these acts:

A psychoanalysis of oppressive action might reveal that the ‘false generosity’ of the oppressor as a dimension of the latter’s sense of guilt. With this false generosity, he attempts not only to preserve an unjust and necrophilic order, but to ‘buy’ peace for himself.

This observation by Freire, when applied to the Shona novel shows that the Whites knew that what they were doing was wrong. They could not publicly pronounce their guilt. They could only cleanse themselves through such acts.

Once one had been hired, whether on the farms or in urban areas, it was not easy for that employee to leave his place of work and look for a job elsewhere. After one got a job, he was to surrender his identity documents (passes) to his employer. The purpose was to keep the worker in the same place so that he would not go elsewhere where the wage may have been more attractive. A good example is that in Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe (Chakaipa 1967:15). Wadyazheve wanted to leave Vhuka’s farm school because by beating him (Wadyazheve), Vhuka had disgraced him. The taking of passes by employers was legal under colonial Zimbabwe’s laws. According to the Native Registration Act (cited in Moyana 1988:36) the employer could underpay his workers without any fear that they would leave. The Act also denied workers freedom to move and bargain for better wages. The other intention in promulgating this Act was to curb desertions from places of work (Chiwome 2002:143).

Blacks were also subjected to forced labour. The Shona novel successfully captures this. Even though Samere (Chidzero 1957:65) was trying to persuade his friends to come and join him to work at Davies’ farm, he brought out something that is historically relevant. He referred to forced labour in an attempt to persuade Tikana and Matigimu to join him as employees at Davies’ farm. He said, “Ndakanzwa kunzi kuna mapurisa ari kutsvaga vanhu vechibharo.” (I heard that there are police officers who are scouting for people to conscript for forced labour). Matigimu had earlier on referred to people who were coming from the fields as people coming from a forced labour session (Chidzero 1957:55). In Chidzero’s
novel, although no one on Davies’ farm was forced to work in *chibharo* sessions, the reality is that Chidzero has in passing brought out a historical fact that was common in colonial Zimbabwe. Karumekangu (Chidyausiku 1970:33) was also a victim of forced labour. He told the supervisor’s junior wife that when he asked for a lift from the farmer who was now his employer, he locked him up in his car and brought him (Karumekangu) to the farm. By taking Karumekangu to his farm in an area that Karumekangu did not know the farmer wanted to ensure that he would stay permanently on the farm. This was against his will. Karemukangu’s predicament is similar to that of most Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe. Onselen (in Chiwome 2002:143) describes the *chibharo* victims as people who:

formed the most exploited group of an exploited class. Recruited under strained circumstances, exploited in the work place … their lot was appalling.

Onselen’s words highlight the dehumanising nature of *chibharo* on its victims. It shows that forced labour as well as underpaying workers stripped them of all dignity. The Shona novels have shed light into the impact of cheap labour in colonial Zimbabwe and the appropriation of the Blacks’ lands. They flooded the job market. In the end, the market could not absorb all of them. The cheap labour pool that had been created finally overwhelmed the Rhodesian settlers. Because the Reserves had become overcrowded, and their soils which in the first place were not fertile failed to sustain the growing Black population, the Rhodesians had a problem on their hands. In an attempt to sustain themselves and to get away from forced labour that was being implemented in the rural areas, most Blacks moved to urban areas in search of employment where they thought that job prospects and life were better (Tsodzo interview with Ethel Chingombe, 26 April 2007). Most were disappointed. Tsodzo (1972), in the novel *Pafunge* presents Josiah Rugare (alias Joe Rug) who had lost his job, failing to secure another one in Gwelo. Josiah was not the only one who failed to get a job. In fact, most of those who were employed in the urban areas were either related to the supervisor or paid bribes so that they would be hired (Tsodzo 1972:40-1).

Tsodzo (1972:41) uses irony to describe the unemployment that was prevalent in Gwelo and by extension in other urban areas. The situation was desperate. He writes, “*Dai pasina foromani uyu marovha ese omuGwelo angadai akapinda*
basa.” (Had it not been because of the supervisor, all of Gwelo’s unemployed would have been hired on that day). Unemployment ultimately led some people into crime. Again, Tsodzo describes how Josiah Rugare and friends turned to crime after failing to secure employment:

_Nokudaro iye neshamwari dzake vakarangana kuti vararame nekutora zvinhu varidzi vasingazivi. Saka izvi ndizvo zvavakanga voita siku nesikati. Vakanga vasingazodzori havo zvavainge vatora nokuti vainge vachida kuzvishandisawo (1972:41)._  

(He therefore agreed with his friends that they were going to survive by taking other people’s property without their knowledge. Therefore, this is how they were now earning their living, day in and day out. They did not return whatever they had taken because they were also in need of it).

Tsodzo makes this sound as if it was only taking what was unwanted. This was theft and it was criminal. He however makes it clear that the gang got involved in criminal activities since they had nothing to live on. It has to be realised that at the time that Tsodzo wrote his novel, the Black population was nearing the 5 million mark. The colonial administrators ignored this significant increase in the population. They made no effort to increase the land that was available for Blacks in the Reserves. Most of the people were still on about the 22% of the land that had been allocated to them through the Land Apportionment Act as of 1941 (Moyana 2002:53). Most Blacks could therefore not go back to the rural areas because these were already overcrowded.

Unemployment became so rife in colonial Zimbabwe that some Blacks, especially in Chipinge and Chiredzi districts crossed into South Africa as migrant labourers. The government on the other hand started exporting labour to the Rand goldfields. This was done through the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) contract system (Musengezi 1984:152). The export of labour however, failed to minimise the search for jobs (Clarke 1977:18). Clarke says that this export of labour was a partial solution to the problem. The Rhodesians’ desire for a cheap pool of labour proved costly and explosive. This is so because the shortage of work finally drove some young men and women to join Zimbabwe’s war of liberation.
4.3 FARM AND URBAN ACCOMMODATION FOR WORKERS

Accommodation on farms was bad. The huts as Brand (1981:46) says were self-built. Karumekangu (Chidyausiku 1970:33) who built his hut on the farm compound confirms this observation. The type of accommodation was not spacious. Although they were pole and dagga huts, they were too low unlike those found in the rural areas. The huts were also too close. It seems that farmers were more interested in packing the workers into small places so that they would not take up a lot of space that was meant for grazing and cultivation. Chakaipa (1967:4) describes the set up of the huts that were at Vhuka’s farm. He says that their closeness resembled that of a dense growth of a maize crop (tswitswitswi kubatana sechibage cherunye). Clarke (1977:219) confirms the overcrowded set up of farm labourers’ compounds. The other aspect is that the farmers were not worried about the safety of these huts and the few belongings that their employees owned in the event that there was a fire accident. Even the path that led to the workers’ residential area was narrow in contrast to the wide road that led to Vhuka’s farmhouse. It is obvious that no one repaired their path, and yet as employees, some repaired the road that led to Vhuka’s house. The farmers would have viewed releasing extra workers to go and clear the path that led to the workers’ residential area as wastage of person-hours.

In urban and tourist areas, accommodation for Blacks was of pole and dagga. This researcher recalls that in the early 1970s, accommodation for workers at Troutbeck Inn, Nyanga, in Zimbabwe’s Eastern Highlands was of pole and dagga. It was then enclosed in a wooden fence. In urban areas, like on farms in the early days, accommodation for Blacks was also of pole and dagga. It was also not in the same locality with that of the Whites. This was what the Land Apportionment Act had decreed. The residential areas for Blacks in urban areas were called Native Village Settlements. Gatoma (Kadoma) where Matamba was now working for Raiza (alias Muchaneta) after his expulsion from school had such a settlement. It was called Bherina (Berlin). Chakaipa says that when Matamba went up a hill one day he looked down at Bherina. It had many thatched houses and the majority of them were of sunburnt bricks (Chakaipa 1963:58). When he looked east:
… his attention was caught by the glitter of beautiful houses, built of burnt bricks, with zinc roofs. These houses were for the Whites. When he saw them, he decided that he had to work for a White man.

The picture painted above is an indication of the racial segregation that was prevalent in colonial Zimbabwe. The houses that Blacks had to themselves were not built to last. This means that Blacks were only wanted on farms and in urban areas for the periods that they could sell their labour. When they became old, they had to leave for the rural areas or wherever they would have come from (Manyimbiri 1983:97-8). This set up was appropriate under the provisions of the vicious Land Apportionment Act. Under this Act, African urban workers lived a temporary makeshift existence (Moyana 2002:113). One of the unforeseen results of this Act was that some people who went to work in the urban areas never went back to their rural homes.

For most of the Blacks who were housed in the locations, the conditions were deplorable. The houses had no inside ablution facilities. This researcher confirmed this on his visit to Mutapa high-density suburb in Gweru on 24 September 2005. The researcher observed that most of the houses that are still being used up to this day had outside toilets, bathrooms and water points. This scenario is common through out most of Zimbabwe’s urban centres when suburbs like Mbare (in Harare), Sakubva (in Mutare), Mucheke (in Masvingo and Makokoba (in Bulawayo) are looked at. The houses are also semi-detached and are on a very small area. The above picture is important to appreciate because in the novel Pfunge (Tsodzo 1972) Josiah Rugare and his friends are said to have relieved themselves in the garden instead of the toilet (Tsodzo 1972:4). Another confirmation of outside ablution facilities is that by Masango’s wife, who when she was leaving to go and report to the police, lied that she was going to the toilet (Tsodzo 1972:108). The distance to the toilet was such that one could be mugged. Thieves could also enter one’s house as s/he left for the toilet. Mugging could also
take place in the toilets, since they had no electricity. The occupants of the houses had therefore no choice but to relieve themselves in the garden.

The houses and the residential areas of the Blacks had no electricity. In the novel *Chipo Changu* (Chingono 1979:9) Stephen and Blessing walked in the dark after they left the bar. In *Pafunge* (Tsodzo 1972), on the night, that Josiah walked with Rudo to his place the author says that it was so dark that Rudo was overwhelmed by the darkness. She felt as if the darkness was sitting on her (Tsodzo 1972:74). When they finally got to Josiah's place Rudo managed to see part of the set up of the house because of lightning, not electric lights (Tsodzo 1972:74). Josiah provides further proof that the houses had no electricity when he says to Rudo:


(Put out the lamp so that we go to sleep. However, if you do not want to sleep now, put out the lamp so that I can sleep, while you relax in the dark).

The reasons for not providing electricity for the Black residents of the cities and towns can best be explained by the fact that the Whites cared little about the safety of the Blacks. If some were mugged and killed, workers were easy to get since there were so many who were unemployed.

Besides the issue of ablution facilities and electricity, the houses for Blacks were also very small. The house used by Josiah Rugare was so small that:

*Kana auya neshamwari dzake kamba kaiti shaku kuzara kunge kabhokisi kemwana wechikoro* (Tsodzo 1972:10).

(When he brought his friends home, the house got so packed that it resembled a student’s suitcase).

Tsodzo uses the diminutive prefix /ka-/ to describe the house. This prefix is used in Shona to describe a small object. It may be an object that the speaker admires, or one seen as of poor quality. The meaning of the prefix is determined by the context in which it is used. In this context, Tsodzo is referring to the poor quality of the house especially to its holding capacity as well as the discomfort it causes the
inhabitants, especially when it is full. It also has to be noted that this same house had no electricity as well as inside ablution facilities. Tsodzo would therefore not have used a diminutive prefix in glowing terms. In fact, the houses were of such poor quality that even the inside rooms had curtains instead of doors, partitioning one room from another (Tsodzo 1972:93).

Urban workers also suffered from a shortage of accommodation. Unlike their counterparts on farms, they could not put up their own houses. There was such a shortage because no adequate housing had been provided since there had been pass laws that controlled the movement of Blacks into urban areas. These had been abolished during the federal years, 1953-63. Although the pass laws had been scrapped, the Rhodesian (colonial Zimbabwean) authorities continued to control the movement of Blacks into towns through the allocation of chronically short housing (Brand 1981:45-6). Their attempts did not however succeed. The result was that even though there were attempts to control the influx of Blacks into urban areas their numbers continued to increase. This worsened the already acute housing situation. Those who were sitting tenants ended subletting some rooms to desperate home seekers. Some of the tenants had families, and by subletting rooms, they would augment their meagre incomes. This acute shortage of accommodation that was a common feature in colonial Zimbabwe's urban areas led to people packing themselves in one house. Tsodzo describes an example of such a situation in the guise of describing Rudo’s curiosity when she saw a certain house (1972:4). Tsodzo says that Masango’s wife went ahead talking, thinking that Rudo was listening but:


(Rudo had remained behind looking with curiosity at a certain house that was full of people as if it was a bus. She saw as if these people were preparing to go to bed. An elderly woman was preparing a bed, while the boys were preparing their sleeping place under the
bed. The girls on the other hand were waiting for the light to be put out so that they would undress and put up in their place that was in the centre of the room. On another bed was a young man who was not talking to the others. May be he was one of those who stayed in the house).

Tsodzo succinctly handled the theme of poor accommodation among urban Blacks. Subletting led to loss of privacy both as families and as individuals. It also led people to stay with non-relatives. This explains the presence of a young man who was not talking to any one as is given in the above quotation.

The above quotation also shows that Shona novels are laden with history. The difference between the historian and the novelist lies in the way each puts across his/her history. While the historian makes bare his/her facts, the novelist, like the artist that s/he is, creates an atmosphere that while it may be tragic and horrible, will at times make readers laugh. It may also be entertaining. His/her history is driven by the creative word. The way the novelist handles history is that while his/her characters and stories are largely fictional, the themes handled in the novels are anchored on factual ground. This is exactly what Tsodzo and his fellow novelists do.

The settlers considered Blacks who moved into urban areas as labour migrants. Their real and permanent place of residence was considered to be in the rural areas. It was partly because of this that Blacks did not own houses in the urban areas. It was also due to the thinking of Whites like Huggins who believed that natives who were not working in towns had to be at least forty-eight kilometres away from these places (Moyana 2002:44). The result of having no title deeds to the houses in urban areas also led most Blacks not to take proper care of them since they faced eviction if they failed to pay the rentals (Tsodzo 1972:5).

While most urban workers stayed in the locations, others stayed at their places of work in the White areas of residence. These ones worked in the houses and gardens of their employers. Accommodation for these was a one-roomed cottage. This cottage had no running water and electricity. While the ablution facilities were attached to the cottage, they were outside. The tape for drinking and cooking water was also outside. They had a squatting chamber in the toilet, not one that can be sat on. It was built to show the difference between the White baas and the
Black employee. In *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (Chakaipa 1967), the accommodation that Dzungu, the garden minder and the cook shared was a one-roomed cottage. It had no cement floor, but hard packed earth. The cottage could accommodate only two single beds and a makeshift shelf on the walls. The workers owned beds that were a caricature of real ones. What they used as beds were not real beds but raised platforms that had their legs sunk into the earth. The mattresses were sacks that were packed with grass. The cottage’s roof was so low that:

*Mavis akatarisa mudenga, akaona mazenge emba, edenga racho, ari pedyo pedyo chaipo zvokuti munhu amire anogona kuabata* (Chakaipa 1967:91).

(Mavis looked up and saw the iron sheets that roofed the cottage, that were so low that if one was standing s/he could reach out and touch them).

Such a house with a low roof, and a zinc roof at that, was bound to be uncomfortable for the occupants. It was bound to be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. The fact that the house had no ceiling made the situation worse. This cottage shows that White employers in colonial Zimbabwe cared little about the welfare of their employees. What they wanted was only to be served. They only protected the workers from direct heat, rain and cold but never did enough to ensure their comfort.

Like the township houses, these cottages had no privacy. In Chakaipa's novel (1967:90), Dzungu says that when the cook’s wife and children visited, the cook, his family and he (Dzungu) shared the same room. This scenario is a reflection that the Whites were again not concerned about their workers and their families. The situation described by Chakaipa (1967:90) shows that there was no privacy for the cook and his wife and/or the cook and his family. It also means that the cook (and by extension all Blacks in the same predicament) had to satisfy his sexual needs in the presence of his children and Dzungu. There is no guarantee that Dzungu and the children would not hear what would be taking place. Such a set up reduced Blacks to the status of animals and was a major contributor to the sexual immorality that became a permanent feature of the urban areas.
For the workers who stayed on their employers’ properties, their cottages were constructed a distance away from the main house. In some cases, the employees’ residential places were fenced off from the main house. Chidyausiku (1970:25) makes this clear when he writes:

_Zizi rakanga riri kurira riri mumuti pedyo negedhi rokuenda kumba kwaSarudzai. Imba yakanga yakavakirwa chimhambwe kwazvo nemba yavaRungu vake._

(The owl hooted from the tree that was near the gate that led to Sarudzai’s cottage. The cottage was situated a distance from her employer’s main house).

The distance that is explained by Chidyausiku was an unwritten statement that if there had been a choice, Sarudzai’s employers, like most Whites would not have stayed with Blacks on their premises had it not been for the need to have food served and dishes cleared from the tables after dinner.

Those who stayed in the _kias_ (cottages) had difficulties in accommodating friends and relatives who were in need of lodgings. Tsodzo makes this point very clear when he states that Josiah’s employer told him that his friends with whom he was staying had to leave (Tsodzo 1972:38). Not only Josiah Rugare’s employer did not want to see Blacks other than his employees on his premises. Chakaipa paints a similar picture when Mavis advises Wadyazheve to hide behind the door after he had paid her (Mavis) a visit (Chakaipa 1967:95). Although her employer is said to have not tolerated male visitors, the point remains that the Whites did not want to see many Blacks in their neighbourhood if these Blacks were not employed or were not working in the neighbourhood. This made them feel very insecure. This insecurity has to be understood to be coming from a sense of guilt, that while they lived comfortably, Blacks were struggling to sustain themselves. These two employers (in Chakaipa 1967 and Tsodzo 1972) were following the stipulations of the African (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act of 1946. This Act wanted Blacks in urban areas to be assigned to the locations that had been specifically set aside for them. Only those who were needed at their place of work had to be accommodated there. The order by Josiah’s employer that his friends move away from his work and residential place that is depicted by Tsodzo in _Pafunge_ (1972:38) is historically accurate. It reflects what happened after the 1969
census. The results of the census gave statistical confirmation of what had been common knowledge amongst Salisbury (as Harare was then called) Whites: that more Blacks than Whites were resident in the White areas of the capital city. This imbalance predictably made the Whites to feel threatened (Pape 1999:261). The Whites did not see Blacks as partners or neighbours. They were subordinates and as such, they had to stay away from White areas of settlement. The only Blacks whom they could stay with in their areas of residents were those who worked in their kitchens and gardens.

4.4 EDUCATION FOR BLACKS IN COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

When the Whites colonised Zimbabwe, their intention was not to develop the country and exploit the resources, both natural and human, for the benefit of everyone. The people who were meant to benefit were the Whites themselves. This explains why they had to undermine the economic well-being of the Blacks by taking away large tracts of their land and pushed the majority of them to areas that had little rainfall and had the least fertile soils. They impoverished the Blacks so that they would sell their labour to them (Whites) cheaply. The Rhodesian settlers wanted to ensure that Blacks remained perpetual servants by giving them starvation wages. In an effort to make sure that the Blacks would not move up the social ladder, the Whites also denied Blacks access to education.

Largely, the missionaries provided education for Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe. The government was not worried about education for the Blacks. It made education for Whites compulsory from 1930 to 1960 (Moyana 1988:48) and for the Coloureds and Asians from 1938. The only time Whites, Asians and Coloureds had to pay fees was if they went into boarding school (Kadhani and Riddel 1981:60). It did nothing for the education of Blacks who had to pay fees. The schools that the missionaries opened for the Blacks were almost entirely primary schools. The first secondary school that missionaries opened for Blacks was St. Augustine’s. This was in 1939. Most of the schools run by missionaries were day schools. There were few boarding schools.

Untrained teachers like Muchazvirega and Phainos Kamunda (Chakaipa 1963:7-8; Tsodzo 1972:27) staffed most of the schools that were available for Blacks,
whether they were mission or farm schools. In both novels, the teachers who had been appointed to teach were not prepared for the task. For example, the teachers Muchazvirega (Chakaipa 1963:7-8) and Kamunda (Tsodzo 1972:27) had a tendency to take and use words from dictionaries without finding out their meanings. They would then use the same words to address their pupils. Chakaipa says the following about Muchazvirega:

Mudzidzisi uyu akanga ane tsika yokutora mazwi aasingazivi zvaanoreva mudhikishinari achizoashandisa kuvana vaive murugwaro rwokutanga kana rwunotevera (Sub A neB) (Chakaipa 1963:8).

(This teacher had a tendency of taking words from the dictionary whose meaning he did not know and use these to address Sub A and B pupils).

A good example of what the teacher said to his class was the statement, “Dis is immtatable, delapidation as such intorarebru.” (Chakaipa 1963:7). A translation of this statement into English renders it: “This is imitable, dilapidation as such intolerable.” It is not only an ungrammatical statement; it is also meaningless. Another teacher who is like Muchazvirega is Phainos Kamunda (Tsodzo 1972:7). Phainos had been a teacher at Mharapara before the arrival of Reverend Lovedale. Phainos spoke a variety that he called English, but it was not in any way English. It is in the hands of such teachers that the education of most Black pupils was entrusted. The government did not make an effort to find out whether the teachers that the missionaries were hiring had the minimum basic qualifications. The sad part in the history of the education of most Black pupils especially in the early years of colonialism was that it did not attract government support, neither was it made compulsory for Blacks because the Whites wanted to ensure that Blacks remained hewers of wood and drawers of water. They did not see education as of value to Blacks.

Chakaipa (1963:8) refers to Subs A and B. This is something that is historically significant. The full words are sub-standard A and sub-standard B. These designations opened into the two-tier type of education that was a feature in colonial Zimbabwe. Whites had pre-schools and Blacks did not. When Whites went to school, they started at standard one while Blacks on the other started in
Most schools that were there went up to standard five and later to grade five. In the novel *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (Chakaipa 1967:9), Jemusi who was in standard five assisted his teacher in handling classes. This was a result of a shortage of staff. According to Tsodzo (1972:1), Mharapara mission school at one time went up to grade five. This picture is an accurate historical presentation of the two levels that existed in the primary schools in colonial days. There was the lower primary and the upper primary. Even though Tsodzo does not mention these levels, but only mentions one, he has given a window through which the education of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe can be looked at. This was part of the bottlenecks that had been placed in the education of Blacks to ensure that very few of them advanced to higher levels. Chambati (in Moyana 1988:44) highlights this segmented system of education when he writes:

> In Chiweshe Reserve, where the Salvation Army has 23 lower primary schools, there are only three upper primary schools. In Urungwe Reserve, there are eight lower primary schools and only one upper primary school. In Magonde Reserve, the Salvation Army has three schools that do not go beyond Standard 3. In Chihota Reserve, Marandellas in 1957, there were 25 Methodist Church-run primary schools catering for 7,000 pupils, but only three upper primary schools with a combined intake of 500 pupils.

The picture painted by Chambati tallies with that presented by Tsodzo (1972:1). Of the primary schools that were available for Blacks, very few had an upper level. Secondary schools were even fewer. This can best be explained by the fact that the government of the day never wanted Blacks to go to school since educated Blacks were going to be a threat to most Whites. The government’s stance to make education compulsory for Whites, Coloureds and Asians makes this clear. When it grudgingly accepted to have the Blacks go to school, the assistance that it gave to each Black child was forty-five times less than that paid for a White pupil. Tsodzo further gives more insights into the plight of Blacks as relates to education in colonial Zimbabwe. While the missionaries did what was in their power to provide education for the Blacks, the government did almost next to nothing. In 1976, the government ran 95 primary schools for Blacks. This translates to 3% of the total number of primary schools that provided education for Blacks (Kadhani
Through an authorial statement, Tsodzo (1972:44) comments:

*Mazuva akare okutiza chikoro akanga apfuura kuchiuya mazuva okuchichemera chikoro nokuchishayiwa. Åsi zvikoro izvi zviri zvitatu zvaingokwanisa kutora vana vashomanana.*

(The old days when people used to refuse to attend school had been overtaken by those of hungering for it, but with most failing to secure places. Unfortunately, these three schools could only enrol a few pupils).

Because most children of school going age failed to secure places, the bulk of them never attended school. Tsodzo makes it clear that even though these children would have wanted to go to school, their failure to do so was not their fault. He does not openly say the government should have provided more schools. He could not say so given the power that the Literature Bureau wielded over writings that were seen as not conforming to the set standard. A reading of the text by one who is versed with Shona oral literature and culture will however reveal that Tsodzo may not have mentioned the Rhodesian government by name, and yet he put the blame on it. Through the statement, “*asi yakanga isiri mhaka yavo*” (but it was not their fault) (Tsodzo 1972:44) has pointed at the Rhodesian government as the one that did not provide schools for Blacks. This becomes clearer when the proverb, “*Chiri mumusakasaka chinozvinzwira*” (Whoever is in a dilapidated shelter hears for him/herself). This means that the targeted person has heard the message.

Tsodzo also gives information that relates to the early days when schools were set up and people were encouraged to send their children to school. They did not. Most parents hid their children. He says “*Mazuva akare okutiza chikoro akanga apfuura ...*” (Tsodzo 1972:44). (The days of running away from school were over). Schmidt (1996:124) who quotes a missionary saying that they had to hunt up the boys and bring them to school confirms the historicity of this fact. According to a Jesuit missionary, the early missionaries had to make presents of blankets and other things to parents in order to get their consent to allow their sons to attend school (cited in McLaughlin 1998:151). This was however around 1894-1918, not in the 1960s and 1970s.
Most Blacks viewed education as a means of enhancing a family or a member’s upward social mobility. This is why most people sacrificed what they had to send their children to school. Chakaipa (1963:19) makes clear the value of education when he presents VaRugare, Matamba’s father sending his son to a boarding school. VaRugare believes that whoever gets an education will dine and wine with people of different nationalities and races.

It is also historically correct that for a very long time the highest level of education that most Blacks could attain was the Junior Certificate of education. This was initially offered by the South African secondary system but the Rhodesia Junior Certificate (RJC) later replaced it. This development took place under Garfield Todd (Zvobgo 1985:22). Tsodzo (1972:47, 70) confirms that this was at one time the highest level that most Blacks aspired to. The author says that Rudo, with Winnie discussed issues relating to Mudavanhu Secondary School, which Rudo was to attend the following year for JC. The author says that Rudo was as excited as one going to study for a degree and not the ordinary and common JC. When Tsodzo refers to JC as ordinary and common, he is saying that this is the highest level that most Blacks attained. Any Blacks who wanted to go beyond this level had to go to South Africa. The reason why most schools for Blacks had JC as the terminal level had to do with White racist policies. They did not want to be equal to Blacks. Gray (cited in Moyana 1988:43) expounded on this reason saying:

> Who wants the native to buy a black pair of trousers to cover his black legs? His black legs are infinitely preferable as a worker and as an individual. The native will continue to be honest if you leave him with his beads and blankets … If we could clear out every mission station in this country and stop all this fostering of higher native education and development we would much sooner become an asset to the Empire. We are simply committing suicide.

These words sum up the entanglements and obstacles that the Whites put in the Blacks’ education. They feared competition, and the best they could do to stem it was to give Blacks an inferior education that would make them servants. They even contemplated closing the mission schools. The threat to close mission schools was not an idle one because it finally materialised when Smith got into power. Although no school was really closed, after 1970 no new mission school
was opened. Prior to this period, most mission schools had been taken over by African Councils that had no experience in running them. This was in a way a form of curtailing the missions’ desire to expand Black education (Zvobgo 1985:26; Kadhani and Riddel 1981:60).

The missionaries did a lot in ensuring that Blacks got academic education. This was contrary to the expectations of the settlers. The establishment of boarding schools such as Mudavanhu (Tsodzo 1972:47) and the others attended by Paurosi and Matamba (Chakaipa 1967:47; 1963:17-20) also evidences the contribution of the missionaries towards Black education. Their main reason for doing this was for evangelisation purposes (Moyana 1988:43). They feared that if they were not to set up schools, the propagation of their faith would falter or even die. According to Zvobgo (1985:17):

...the experiences of most missionaries elsewhere in Africa showed that the schools provided the nerve centre for Christian work. In places where schools had withered away, the church too tended to die.

The possibility of the church dying was very high given the fact that some missionaries had already clashed with practitioners of African Traditional Religions. A good example is that of Matamba’s grandmother who stated that she had never been in good books with the missionaries because they had discouraged the beliefs and rituals that deal with alien spirits (mashavi) (Chakaipa 1963:27).

The Blacks’ thirst for education was so high that those who could not afford to pay school fees worked on farms and estates that had schools to get it. Such schools are still in existence. If the White government had been interested in the education of Blacks, it would have paid for them, since only £6-8 was paid for every Black student as compared to £120-126 that was paid as assistance for every White pupil (Moyana 1988:47; Zvobgo 1985:21).

The most neglected area in as far as Black education in colonial Zimbabwe is concerned is the farming communities. Most farms had no schools. The few that had them set them up as cheap labour camps. Chakaipa in the novel Dzasukwa
Mwana-asina-hembe (1967) makes it clear that very little learning took place in farm schools. The pupils were more of labourers. Richert (quoted in McLaughlin 1998:82) confirms the use of farm schools as labour pools when he criticised European farm owners for exploiting children for their labour. He wrote in his diary:

Instead of giving them a salary for their work, he gives them free schooling – half-day work, half-day school. Of course, it is good that the children have a chance to go to school, but they pay a high price for it (Richert in McLaughlin 1998:82).

Even though Chakaipa says that the pupils in Vhuka’s school were paid a monthly wage, Richert makes it clear that farm schools were set up to exploit cheap labour from students who were desperate for education. Clarke (1977:250) also highlights the importance of schools as sources of labour more than educational institutions. He refers to the Rhodesian Tea Company (Rhotea)’s wish to stabilise labour and increase productivity at its Ratelshoek Estate in Zimbabwe’s Eastern district of Chipinge. In an effort to stabilise labour and employ almost all members of one family, the company invested in housing, welfare and schooling. The school was set to cater for students up to grade 11, although the bulk of the facilities were for primary levels. The idea of investing in a school was related to labour issues, not to the desire to see Blacks advancing (Clarke 1977:250).

The buildings that had been put up to house the classes at Vhuka’s farm were below standard. One of the structures was of sunburnt bricks (Chakaipa 1967:9). Chakaipa presents this picture so that readers learn about the educational conditions for pupils who were attending farm schools. Although he refers to one school, his presentation is representative of most farm schools.

The classes at the farm (and on most farm schools) were of mixed levels. At least one teacher staffed them. This teacher at times got the assistance of one of his senior students, who helped in handling lower classes. These schools at most ended becoming day care centres, especially for the pre-standard one groups. The pupils in sub-standards A and B were encouraged to play house and mould cars and cattle (Chakaipa 1967:9). It is clear that the schools were set to nurture labour and not to educate children.
The schools were labour institutions. At times lessons would be disrupted so that the farmer would have more labourers for his farm. An example is the one Chakaipa gives (1967:8). The pupils had to work beyond 1.30 pm because Kufahakurambwe who had been overzealous had caused a lot of tobacco to be picked. The farmer feared that his crop would come to ruin and sacrificed the pupils’ lessons. This makes it clear that the main reason for the setting up of the school was a ploy to lure cheap and scarce labour. Chakaipa goes further in showing that what the farmer wanted was labourers and not students by presenting Wadyazheve being beaten by Vhuka after he had protested on behalf of his students. When Wadyazheve threatened to leave after the beating that he had from Vhuka, the farmer was unsettled by such a development. He foresaw disaster if the teacher was to leave. Chakaipa captures the mental turmoil that engulfed Vhuka. He writes:


(The farmer went into deep thoughts, and realised that if the teacher was to leave, the school children would also leave – if the students left, his crop would die in the fields).

These words capture why the school had been set up. Vhuka and most farmers capitalised on most Blacks’ desperate need for education. A similar case is prevailing today in Tanganda’s Tea Estates. Tanganda (formerly Rhotea) runs primary and secondary schools in all its estates. In February 2006, the company decided to close all the primary schools arguing that there were many pupils of secondary going age who were in need of places. It thus took such a step to alleviate this problem (*The Manica Post* 3-10 February 2006). The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture did not accept this proposal. It saw it as leading to primary school pupils’ failure to get places in the surrounding schools. Tanganda’s reason for wanting to close the primary schools is suspect. It is most likely that the reason why Tanganda wanted to close the primary schools has to do with the International Labour Organisation regulations, which state that any child below the age of sixteen cannot be hired as an employee since this is child labour. Most pupils in Zimbabwe’s primary schools are now below sixteen years unlike in the past when this age group or those older where a common feature at that level. To
open more secondary schools for Tanganda would have widened the labour base that is constantly dwindling as more youths opt to find employment in urban centres or join cross-border traders.

The wickedness of the Whites is also realised through those who never encouraged Blacks to attend school. This is the case of most pupils on colonial Zimbabwe’s farms. The children on farms were a forgotten and lost lot. Concerning this group, Kadhani and Riddel observed that:

One area of education totally neglected by government (and to a lesser extent by the missions) down to the present day is the white farms, where a million black people live. The majority of the children here never went to school, as their parents could not afford the fees. Of the schools which did exist, most were unaided, often with unqualified teachers.

These words aptly capture the situation that was prevalent at Bhasi’s farm (Manyimbiri 1991). Kwadoka (Manyimbiri 1991:23) says, “Muchikoro handina kumbodongorera. Hwai dzaBhasi dzaizosara nani? (I never attended school. Who would have tended Baas’ flock?).” Kwadoka goes on to say that his father also discouraged him from attending school. The fact that Bhasi did not encourage his workers’ children to go to school shows that the Whites did not like Blacks to go to school. This is further strengthened by the fact that even in government circles there was no policy that related to the education of children on farms. Building schools on farms or encouraging Blacks to send their children to school would have increased the threats that the Whites feared and were trying to minimise – the threat of educated Blacks. Manyimbiri has shown that the purpose of denying Blacks an education was to dehumanise them. They were scolded and pushed around but they always thought that this was the nature of the White man. If the Blacks had been given an education, as a people, they would have reflected on their immediate environment and most would have perceived the Whites as oppressors.

The occupation of this country by the Whites left most Blacks maimed both physically and psychologically. The Whites never intended to accept Blacks as equals, but as people who had to be kept in perpetual servitude. To give them a decent and adequate education would have meant that as a race, their superiority...
would have been eroded. While the missionaries tried and educated most Blacks, a government that deliberately made policies that were meant to deny Blacks a basic human right like primary education frustrated them and hampered their efforts.

4.5 VIOLENCE ON LANGUAGE

It is known universally that the conquered have not only suffered physical, emotional and psychological harm. They have also suffered culturally. The greatest cultural asset that has suffered besides religion is the language of the defeated. Any people’s pride lies in their language because their language gives them an identity and defines them. Ngugi highlights the importance of a people’s language in defining and identifying them when he says that language is central to a people’s definition of themselves. This is in relation to their natural and social environment (Ngugi 1987:4). Colonial Zimbabwe denied Blacks the dignity of respect and treatment as human beings and subjected them to foreign rule. This was worsened by the fact that the White conquerors chose to address Blacks in a language that was neither foreign nor indigenous. The use of pidgin by the Whites was meant to deny Blacks an identity as well as to make it clear to them that theirs was not a language worth using. To use that language would have been to accord them a recognition that they did not deserve. Even when the Whites knew the language, they did not use it.

Some of the colonialist farmers were of Afrikaner origin. These spoke Afrikaans mixed with English, Shona and Ndebele. This variety managed to buttress the position of the dominated among Blacks. The Blacks were denied identity, respect and dignity by being communicated to in a language they did not own or identify with. At Masare’s farm, he (Masare) says to Tozivepi:


(Hold on properly, bloody baboon. Do you realise what you have caused? Come nearer, bloody kaffir).
The way Masare speaks shows that he has no respect for Tozivepi who is Black. He calls him a baboon. By extension, this means that there is no need to address him in his language because he is not considered cultured and is therefore not a human being. Masare says what most Whites thought about Blacks when he tells Tozivepi that Blacks were supposed to be oppressed by Whites (Masukusa 1994:54). It was with this mentality that the Whites did not really treat Shona as a language worth using, because to use that language would have meant acknowledging the existence of Blacks as human beings and not as relics of history.

Chidyausiku, like Masukusa also presents a similar picture. At the farm where Karumekangu was working, one morning the tractor driver did not turn up. The farmer was incensed and followed up to find the cause of the delay. He broke into the driver’s hut and thinking that the driver was asleep started shouting and flogging him. He shouted, “Vhuka wena you blari bhasit eti! Inoda kuuraya purazi yangu he? You fool! (Chidyausiku 1970:37). (Get up you bloody bastard! Does it want to kill my farm? You fool).

The use of pidgin is an indication that most Whites did not care about the languages of Blacks and the speakers of those languages. The violence that was committed on the languages of Blacks destroyed their culture and self-esteem. The importance of language as a means of communication and a carrier of culture was lost under colonial rule. A new culture of violence and silence as well as a culture that had no roots emerged (Manyimbiri 1991:23, 41-2).

The use of a class nine subject concord /i-/ in the above quotation is another indicator that the colonialists treated Blacks as animals. The subject and object concords /i-/ are for nouns in class nine. These normally refer to creatures that are singular and not human beings. Among these creatures are nyoka (snake) and njiva (dove). When used with reference to human beings, they refer to special attributes or professions for example, n’anga (diviner). To use this concord or pronoun iyo (it) to refer to a human being who is not in any way a professional or has special attributes in the traditional sense, is deliberate abuse. It is not only abuse of the person being addressed but also of the language. In the case cited above the addressee is being violated together with his language. The violence
that was visited upon the Blacks by the Whites confirms the historicity of the Shona novels because it is a historical fact that subject people have suffered at the hands of their conquerors. The plight of the Blacks is similar to that suffered by Italian Jews in concentration camps during the Second World War. They were addressed in a debased type of Yiddish. Levi (1988:76) sums up a fate similar to that suffered by Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe when he writes:

It is an obvious observation that where violence is inflicted on man, it is also inflicted on language.

The Whites' extension of violence to language is an indication that they felt that they could do whatever they wanted because they were the ones in power. It was also a sign that they did not respect Blacks as human beings, because if they did they surely would have made an effort to address them as human beings. The fact that they made no effort to learn to speak Shona properly is indicative of this negative attitude.

4.6 WHITE CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

The Shona novelists have also written stories that reflect the criminal activities that Whites in colonial Zimbabwe committed. They were rapists, drug peddlers and murderers. Chingono in the novel *Chipo Changu* (1979) presents Stephen Bwanya reading a letter that Blessing had written to him. In the letter, Blessing says that she turned to prostitution after her former employer of Portuguese origin raped her. She says:

Pane muRungu wechipiri akanga ari wechiPutukezi ndakabuda basa nokuti muRungu uyu akandibata chibharo mukadzi wake ari pazororo kuJoni (Chingono 1979:70).

(I left the employment at the place of the second White man who was of Portuguese origin because he had raped me when his wife was on holiday in Johannesburg).

It would appear as if the rape allegations that Blessing made against her former employer are baseless. History however, has records of Whites raping Black women as Blessing’s ex-employer did. According to Mandaza:
Instances of white men raping African women were widespread throughout the country during the late 1890s and persisted well into the twentieth century. But insult was added to injury when in 1903 the death penalty was introduced by the white settler administration for attempted rape of white women by black men, while permitting white men "to rape black women with impunity." (1997:137-8, [with the last part of the quotation being quoted from A.J. Hanna]).

Although these words from Mandaza point at what happened at the beginning of the twentieth century, it will be an exercise in self-deceit to accept that after these dates, White men stopped raping Black women. In fact as Hanna (quoted in Mandaza 1997:138), observes the rape of Black women continued with impunity.

The action of Blessing’s employer is a clear sign that the Whites saw African women as theirs. Schmidt (1996:174) confirms this attitude of White men in colonial Zimbabwe when she compares the situation prevailing as similar to that in the United States of America’s South. She asserts:

As in the antebellum U.S. South, European masters frequently exercised seigneurial rights over the bodies of black women employed in their homes (Schmidt 1996:174).

Schmidt is not referring to a foreign country, but to the Whites, and what these Whites did to Black women in colonial Zimbabwe. The Whites gave themselves rights over their properties, as well as rights over their female workers. In the light of the above quotation from Schmidt, it was therefore, not possible for Blessing to report to the police because no one would have listened or even if someone had listened; no one would have been sympathetic. This is because it had long been etched in the psyche of the Whites that they could have Black women whether they were married or not. They would face no sanction. This is made clear in a law, The Native Adultery Punishment Ordinance of 1916. According to this law, for African men sexual intercourse with a married African woman was considered adultery. It was not adultery if the woman was single. European men could have sexual intercourse with African women of any marital status without being liable to adultery charges (Schmidt 1996:105). The Portuguese man who raped Blessing saw this as sexual intercourse, not rape. The proof of the Whites’ rape of Blacks is very much evident in the existence of people of mixed parentage who are referred to as ‘Coloureds’ in this country and South Africa.
Another criminal activity that was carried out by Whites is that of selling drugs. Even though there is nowhere in Zimbabwean history where it is recorded that Whites sold drugs, there are recorded cases when Whites were arrested and tried for drug related offences. According to Godwin and Hancock (1995:41) seventy Whites, of whom half were under the age of 21 were arrested for drug related offences. Although their suppliers are not mentioned, it is clear that within the White community or some Whites working together with Blacks supplied drugs like marijuana. It therefore means that among them, there are some who knew where drugs like dagga had a ready market and where they could be procured easily. Mashiri in his novel *Chakafukidza Dzimba Matenga* (1977) brings forth this important historical information. Some Blacks and Whites were partners in crime as is evidenced by the case of Valakis and Nyikadzino (Mashiri 1977:17, 20).

Besides selling drugs, Whites also murdered Blacks. Kwadoka says:


I grew up seeing Baas murdering people, and the cases never were reported. It was just like that).

Whites treated Black lives with callousness. They saw them as too many and as not human. They also knew that the sympathies of the authorities lay with them and not with the Blacks. That is why they never respected the sanctity of Black life.

4.7  BLACK AND WHITE RELATIONS

Relations between Blacks and Whites in colonial Zimbabwe were not cordial. The Whites never treated Blacks with the respect that they deserved as human beings. This is not only shown by the education that was availed to Blacks but also by the way, their White superiors in work places treated them. In the novel *Garandichauya* (Chakaipa 1964:10), the White schools inspector beat Muchazvirega in front of his pupils. Since Muchazvirega was employed as a teacher, he was supposed to be reprimanded or cautioned in a secluded place. The purpose for doing so was to show that the White man is master of everyone.
A similar picture is painted in Chakaipa's other novel, *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (1967:30). Kufahakurambwe is beaten by Vhuka for being absent from work. This picture shows that the Whites saw Blacks as slaves who had to be driven in order to get results. Even though Kufahakurambwe fights back, he does not go ahead and give Vhuka a severe beating because as he says:

*Dai ndisingatotya kunofira mujere, chokwadi nhasi murungu uyu aidai azviona* (Chakaipa 1967:31).

(If it were not only because I fear rotting in jail, I would have given this English man a thorough beating).

Manyimbiri (1991:22) also highlights the reference to a jail term for beating a White man when Kwadoka says that one could be jailed for beating a White person. Godwin and Hancock also refer to the beatings that Black labourers were subjected to on allegations of impudence or incompetence. These Blacks never approached the courts for justice (1995:49). Most Whites like Mazhindu did not like educated Blacks. He forced VaMberikwazvo to climb a thorny tree because he had said that his cattle were seventeen. Mazhindu was incensed by the use of the word ‘seventeen’. He wanted Mberikwazvo to say *gumi nenomwe*, which in Shona means seventeen (Makari 1992:7). He called VaMberikwazvo a *bobjaan*, a term the Whites used to refer to Blacks. This is because they saw Blacks as baboons. Mazhindu even said this to VaMberikwazvo. He said, “Yes *gudo* (baboon) that’s your right place!” (Makari 1992:7; see also Godwin and Hancock 1995:9). Tsodzo (1972:8) captures the racial gulf that existed in colonial Zimbabwe when through the character Masango he refers to the two types of beer that were available. Masango says that there is one type of brew that is acceptable, and another one that is not. The reference to the two beers is a pointer to the fact that in colonial Zimbabwe one race was accepted and was accorded the respect and dignity that is befitting of human beings. The other one representing Blacks shows that Blacks were not accepted on an equal footing. Blacks were only wanted in colonial Zimbabwe, especially on farms and urban areas as labourers and not as partners (Mapara 2003:144).

The above-cited examples show that the relations between Blacks and Whites were characterised by the othering of the Blacks. The Whites saw themselves as
the real people while Blacks on the other hand were less human and were there to work for the Whites who were superior. The Blacks’ being less human was to be proved in this set-up where they were employees.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has proved how the Shona novel is a reliable and valid historical document. It has presented cases that are historically true that relate to the life of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe. One of the issues that is historically valid, that has been discussed in this chapter is that which relates to the working conditions that Blacks were subjected. They were given poor wages and their employers cared very little about their accommodation. Workers also were beaten. Forced labour as a means of harnessing free Black labour was also used. Besides labour issues, another historically important and valid issue that has been discussed is the one that relates to land distribution in colonial Zimbabwe. The chapter has shown that the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 dispossessed Blacks of their land. They were pushed to crowded Reserves that were also not fertile. The Native Land Husbandry Act followed the Land Apportionment Act. While the novelists do not mention these acts by name, they describe the prevailing situation in such a way that the reader will understand that the colonialists had put a law in place that facilitated in the dispossessing of Blacks. The chapter has also focussed on the education that Blacks got in colonial Zimbabwe. It was not an education that made them collaborators but subordinates. It has as well shown that besides the physical violence that Blacks were subjected to, there was another form of violence that was committed on the Shona language. This is realised with pidgin, which the colonialists chose to use as a way of denying Blacks a voice and an identity. White Rhodesians also committed crimes and most of these went unpunished because they sympathised with one another. It has also shown that Whites treated Blacks without any respect. They saw them as animals. Some of them even referred to Blacks as baboons. This clearly shows that they did not see them as people. The next chapter focuses on the history of the liberation war in Zimbabwe as well as the post-independence period. Issues that are analysed include among others, the involvement of the masses in the guerrilla war, the masses’ relations with the guerrillas, Rhodesian responses to the escalating guerrilla war as well as the issue of corruption in post-independence Zimbabwe.
CHAPTER 5

THE SHONA NOVEL: FROM THE WAR OF LIBERATION TO INDEPENDENCE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In Zimbabwe, the Shona novel has been used as a vehicle for the transmission of information that relates not only to her past but also to her encounters and experiences in her relationship with colonialism. This same novel is an expression of how Zimbabwe responded to foreign rule and fought to regain her independence. It relates the history of the conquest of Zimbabwe by the British, as well as the overthrow of colonial rule. It does not make the overthrow of colonial rule an overnight thing but a process that started with civil disobedience and demonstrations from the 1950s to the early 1960s. These finally culminated in the liberation war that led to elections and independence in 1980. It also focuses on Zimbabwe after the attainment of independence. This chapter, like the previous ones, focuses on the interface between history and the Shona novel. It explores among other issues, the early nationalist years, student involvement in politics and the reasons why Blacks ultimately chose the armed struggle as a way forward in the struggle for independence and majority rule. It also analyses the unilateral declaration of independence by the Rhodesia Front and the negotiations that the warring parties had in an attempt to stop the war that had come about because of Ian Smith’s intransigence. These elections are linked to the Internal Settlement that Smith together with Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau entered into after an agreement that they signed on 3 March 1978. The chapter again focuses on the execution of the liberation war. The researcher analyses guerrilla-peasant relationships and the promises that the guerrillas made to the people to encourage them to support the war of liberation. He also analyses the land issue and problems associated with it, going back to as far as 1981, a year after the country attained self-rule. Another issue that is analysed is that of corruption in both the public and private sectors. The chapter focuses on how the powerful have abused their privileged positions for their personal benefit. In the process of going through and analysing what the novelists have put down in their fiction, there is need to find out whether they have omitted information that may be considered relevant...
and of national significance. If they are found to have done that, there is again the need to try to find out why they have omitted such information.

5.1 EARLY NATIONALIST YEARS

The struggle for Zimbabwe’s independence did not commence with the resolution to wage an armed liberation struggle. It started as an appeal to successive White governments that were in power in different periods of the country’s history since the 1950s. The major political parties of the period, going into the 1960s were the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). ZAPU was born out of the ashes of the National Democratic Party (NDP) and ZANU broke away from ZAPU (then known in Rhodesia as PCC – People’s Caretaker Council) in August of 1963. ZAPU had been formed two years earlier in 1961 as the successor to the NDP that had been banned. These two parties were agitating for political change, their main cry was that for universal suffrage, and the call was “One man, one vote.”

Some novelists like Chimhundu (1991) and Hamutyinei (1984) capture the issue of what the political parties were fighting for in the early days of the struggle for Zimbabwe’s independence. In the novel Chakwesha (1991), Chimhundu presents the historical truth as regards the two main political parties through Marufu, the father of Moses. Marufu is advising and encouraging his son Moses not to join politics. Even though Marufu does not support the nationalist movements, through him, the author manages to present an important aspect that relates to the formative years of the nationalist movements – that the founding fathers of Zimbabwe’s struggle for freedom were Sithole, Nkomo and Mugabe. He makes this clear through Marufu who addresses Moses saying:


(Do not follow Nkomo, Sithole and Mugabe. They say we are children of the soil, the land is ours, and we want to give power to the people so that they rule through ONE MAN ONE VOTE. Do you think they will rule this country?).
Marufu is encouraging his son not to support the nationalist parties that were then being led by Nkomo, Sithole and Mugabe. He expresses his doubts over the ability of the nationalists to run the country. Although Marufu does not support the nationalist cause, his words are a pointer to early nationalist years. The original aim of the nationalist movements was that of trying to gain a new political dispensation in the country through the ballot box. This approach failed. The failure resulted in the execution of an armed struggle as is reflected later in these two novels and others that are being studied in this research.

Through the same apolitical Marufu, Chimhundu highlights the ugly head of political violence that has to this day remained a permanent scourge on Zimbabwe’s political landscape. Marufu shows that party-on-party violence was a major aspect of the early years of the independence struggle as the nationalist parties competed to get as many supporters as possible. Marufu says he does not like the way Blacks conduct their politics. They do this through violence. He advises his son saying:


(We are only used to showing off as well as bludgeoning and murdering one another. Have you forgotten zhanda that was practised in National where we used to live? Fists, clubs, stones and petrol bombs! Is that how to run a country?

Marufu says that the problem with Black politics is that the participants show off and the supporters murder one another as well as petrol bomb people’s houses. Although Marufu does not support nationalist parties, he is not saying these words to tarnish the image of the nationalists. He is stating the historicity of what really transpired in Harare (now Mbare) and Highfields Townships in the 1960s. There were a lot of beatings, stoning and cases of petrol bombings on houses of those suspected to be government sympathisers and informers or for belonging to a different political party/political parties. Among the Blacks, this violence was called zhanda. Zhanda was the act of destroying a perceived enemy’s property or beating him/her. It is synonymous with zhii a word both the Shona and the Ndebele used in association with urban unrest that was prevalent in colonial
The violence that was prevalent in Rhodesia’s urban centres in the 1960s at times was characterised by Black on Black violence that came on the back of inter-party conflicts. According to Kriger (1992:103), there was violence between nationalist parties that were competing for dominance. Meredith also confirms this inter-party violence and says that the two political parties, ZANU and ZAPU, resorted to gang warfare, petrol bombing, arson, stoning, and assaults. They did not pay much attention to the nationalist cause or the Whites whom they wanted to unseat (Meredith 2003:33). The violence first manifested itself when some National Democratic Party members were disillusioned with their leaders for allegedly abandoning party principles at the 1961 constitutional conference. The NDP was under the leadership of Michael Mawema and was banned in 1960 (Hamutyinei 1984:6). These disgruntled members went on to form two rival parties. These two parties did not survive, because according to Moore (cited in Kriger 1992:103), “they were castigated, beaten up and called traitors” by NDP loyalists. These two parties therefore did not survive. There was also political violence after the split of ZANU from ZAPU (PCC) in 1963. Kriger makes this clear when she reports that teachers whom she interviewed in Mutoko in 1981-2 who had joined ZANU in 1964, recalled how ZAPU members would visit the homes of suspected ZANU...
members and beat them (1992:103). Kriger shows that Black on Black violence manifested itself in the very early days of nationalism when she states:

From the time of the NDP until the banning of ZANU and ZAPU in 1964, petrol bombing residential, business and government property was a common tactic of seeking compliance with nationalist demands. Other Africans rather than Europeans were identified as targets. They included informers and ‘moderate’ Africans who did not show the requisite nationalist enthusiasm … (1992:102).

The above words are a pointer to the early nationalist years and the political violence that characterised this period. The violence was not directed at Whites, but at fellow Blacks who were viewed as not supporting a particular party. Besides the unrest that was very pronounced in urban centres, the novelists have also highlighted the participation of the rural population through civil disobedience. These refused sending their cattle for dipping. To ensure that no dipping of cattle took place, they filled the dip tanks with stones. Hamutyinei who states that when he got to Wha Wha prison, there were old men who had been arrested for encouraging people not to dip their cattle as well as filling the dip tanks with stones confirms this. Kriger also confirms this act of destroying government property like dip tanks. Even though she is referring to the period during the war of liberation, Kriger says something that is pertinent to the acts that were carried out in relation to dip tanks even in the 1960s (1992:106).

Chimhundu is not the only one who sheds light on this ugly patch that has blotted Zimbabwean political history. Hamutyinei also accounts a story that brings forth the animosity that existed between ZAPU and ZANU. Hamutyinei (1984:14-5) states that when he was arrested in Gutu, he was accused by three ZAPU members who had also been arrested, of being a traitor because he belonged to ZANU. Even though the author does not state that the two parties often clashed violently, that cannot be doubted. He may have done this in an attempt to give an impression of tolerance, which only degenerated into verbal exchanges. This is not the case as Kriger (1992:102) has already highlighted. The verbal assault that Hamutyinei was subjected to shows that the nationalist movements were a fragmented lot. The unity that is often stated as the principle that guided them is a creation of the post-independence era. There was no unity, but a scramble for
dominance and an attempt to annihilate each other. This, Chimhundu does by presenting a character that does not support the nationalists. He has helped in giving some insight into the early years of the liberation process. He has shown that which is historically true – that there was no unity in the nationalist ranks. Each would try to dominate the political scene. This is an interesting aspect in that it shows that while nationalist movements were fighting for majority rule and democracy, which are based on tolerance, they were themselves not democratic and did not tolerate ideas different from theirs. Chimhundu has also recorded in his historical novel, the resistance that the Black nationalists faced from the rulers of Rhodesia. They were incarcerated. Hamutyinei in his novel Zvakanga Zvakaoma MuZimbabwe (1984:26) also gives an account that corroborates what Chimhundu has given when he (Hamutyinei) says that nationalists were locked up in prisons.

The novelists who have written focussing on the early days of the liberation struggle are silent on the pre-ZAPU and ZANU days. They have for instance not mentioned the African National Congress of Rhodesia and its banning. While Hamutyinei (1984:6) mentions that there was a party called National Democratic Party (NDP), he fails to point out that this party was the successor to the African National Congress of Rhodesia (ANC-Rhodesia). Raeburn confirms that the successor to the ANC was the NDP when he states:

After the ANC was banned, the party reformed itself in January 1960 under the name of the National Democratic Party (NDP), but the Government banned this organization too at the end of 1961 (1981:1).

The National Democratic Party succeeded the ANC-Rhodesia after it was banned. This party was banned in November 1961. The novelists do not mention that after ZAPU was banned, the People’s Caretaker Council, which was outlawed together with ZANU in 1964, succeeded it internally. The novelists also fail to record the split in ZAPU (alias the People’s Caretaker Council – PCC) that led to the formation of ZANU in August of 1963. Such failure to present this vital historical information is difficult to appreciate given the fact that the two writers are writing in an independent Zimbabwe. It may be because the party that is ruling at the time of their writing is ZANU (PF), which broke away from ZAPU. If this is the case, they
may have been trying to avoid antagonising the people in power. Besides the fear of antagonising people in power, the writers may be supporters or sympathisers of ZANU (PF). If that is the case, the two novelists are guilty of not serving national interests but party ones. In the process, they have helped in giving a skewed version of the history of the early years of the liberation struggle. Even though these novelists may be accused of having ignored to mention issues that are of importance in the early years of the struggle, some of them provide historical information. For example, Hamutyinei should be credited with giving an insight into the civil disobedience cases that took place in rural areas such as the filling of dip tanks with stones and the burning down of White owned stores in Gutu district (Hamutyinei 1984:8-9; 26). This is important because the current textbooks of history tend to focus on the role played by those who participated in zhii activities as well as those who were armed, while at the same time ignoring the role played by the majority of the people. It does not however mean that the only rural areas that were affected by civil disobedience were in Gutu. Hamutyinei’s novel helps in highlighting that the cases of civil disobedience in the 1960s were not confined to the urban areas only.

The early nationalist years did not only see the disappointment of the nationalists with attempts at political accommodation through negotiation. They are also years that saw the birth of militancy within the ranks of the nationalist movements. By 1962, ZAPU had embarked on attacking members of the Rhodesian security forces, especially Blacks (Ellert 1993:2). In 1963 infiltration of ZANU guerrillas into the country started (Ellert 1993:9). Most of these incursions were not successful. Their success only lay in their ability to enter the country. After that, the Rhodesian police quickly picked them out. The most known of these incursions and contact was that between the Rhodesian security forces and seven ZANU guerrillas at Chinhoyi (Sinoia) in 1966. Chimhundu (1991:55) mentions this battle between the Rhodesian security forces and ZANU guerrillas when he writes:

*Muna Kubvumbi 1966 ndoopakabaka hondo iya yemagamba akazofira kuSinoia. Murungu ndipo paakazoona kuti zvinhu zviya zvaipa.*

(In April 1966, that is when that battle involving the guerrillas who perished at Sinoia was fought. That is when the white man learned that everything had gone out of control).
Chimhundu is here mentioning a historically accurate account. In fact, the Chinhoyi battle became in the 1970s, ZANU’s reference point for the beginning of the Second Chimurenga. Even though the date for the launch of the Second Chimurenga has since been revised back to 1964, the Chinhoyi battle is accounted for in history. Ellert says that the ZANU guerrillas, hopelessly outnumbered, fought to the last. Besides confirming that the incident took place in April as Chimhundu does, he gives the date of the battle as 29 April 1966 (Ellert 1993:12).

Chimhundu also says that in the early years, as the liberation war intensified, the Rhodesian authorities responded by inviting the South African soldiers to help stem out the flow of the guerrillas that was increasing (1991:55). Flower (1987:108) corroborates Chimhundu’s account on the involvement of the South African forces when he says that the result of joint ZIPRA-ANC incursions was that it brought the South African forces into Rhodesia’s guerrilla war. Chimhundu does however not refer to the joint ZIPRA-ANC incursions. He presents the South African forces as coming into Rhodesia’s war at the invitation of the Rhodesians, not because of the joint ZIPRA-ANC incursions. This has the effect of making that account not as informative as it should. It only makes it appear as if the Rhodesians were stretched, when in fact in the 1960s, while the Rhodesians had suffered losses (Flower 1987:107), they still had an upper hand. It would have made sense if Chimhundu had added the ANC dimension to show that the Blacks in both Zimbabwe and South Africa were fighting against injustice and racism.

5.2 REASONS FOR CHOOSING AND JOINING THE WAR OF LIBERATION

Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe did not choose to go to war because they enjoyed sacrificing themselves and shedding blood. They had tried to gain political mileage through negotiations and other peaceful means that included constitutional reforms and appealing to the British Government to come to their rescue. They had also tried to go up the social ladder through education. All this was in vain, as their efforts did not yield any positive results. In desperation, the nationalist movements resorted to the armed struggle as an alternative way of attaining majority rule in the country. Among the causes of the armed struggle was the
failure of the Blacks to get a peaceful transition to majority rule, as they had been agitating for in the period before 1965. The other causes are unemployment and land shortage. There was also the case of limited educational opportunities for Blacks. Yet others joined the liberation struggle due to their own personal reasons. All these and other related issues gave birth to the political engagements that were meant to lead to the granting of self-rule by Blacks through a negotiated settlement. When all this failed, the Blacks had only two options left – that is to give up or to find another way out of this political problem. They chose to find another way out and they opted for the armed struggle.

The Land Apportionment Act (1930) and a plethora of other Acts like the Preventive Detention Act that provided for the detention of any person at the “Governor’s pleasure” (Raeburn 1981:1) also caused Blacks to be more militant. There was also the Native Affairs’ Amendment Act that banned all meetings in African Reserves and in the so-called tribal lands. It denied Blacks both the physical and political space in which their being could be recognised and where they would share with other human beings what it means to be human. These acts were meant to make Blacks in Rhodesia invisible to the international eyes. These, together with the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act that had a mandatory ‘hanging clause’ for any one found guilty of terrorist activity were meant to ensure that Blacks did not stand up against the White Rhodesian regime and ask for their rights. These acts had the overall effect of turning Blacks into objects while the Whites were the subjects. Instead of demoralising the Blacks, these acts did the exact opposite. Through these acts, the Blacks saw that they had to resort to counter violence. The Rhodesians had perpetrated violence against them. They had been denied the right to own and name their world. Dialogue that had been initiated with the objective of achieving the desire for Blacks to name their world as stated by Freire (1972:61) had failed. The Blacks decided to resort to the armed struggle as a way of ensuring that they got their rights and recognition as fellow human beings. They were only responding to the violence that had been visited upon them by those who oppressed, and exploited them.

Some people chose to join the liberation war not because initially they were fired by the zeal to fight for Zimbabwe’s freedom but because the Rhodesian security forces had tortured them. They therefore wanted to revenge. A good example is
the case of Peter in the novel Zvairwadza Vasara whom a district assistant called Samusa had harassed and beaten (Musengezi 1984:47). He wanted to revenge and the only option that was available to him was to join the liberation forces (Musengezi 1984:47). An ex-guerrilla called Christopher Derera confirms the case of people joining the liberation forces because of the brutality of the Rhodesian forces. Derera whose *nom de guerre* was Elisha Chopper, in an interview with New Ziana, said that he joined the liberation struggle because he had been beaten by the Rhodesian security forces at Manica Bridge in the country’s Manicaland Province (Interview flighted on ZTV 02 September 2006). Derera’s story validates what Musengezi has put down as history. He has given some insight into why some people joined the liberation war forces.

Peter’s friend Mabasa, on the other hand chose to join the liberation struggle because he had impregnated two girls and his father insisted that he get married to the two (Musengezi 1984:49). It was not out of the zeal to see Zimbabwe liberated. Taviringana and Nyandoro make this case of Mabasa very clear when they comment:

*Mabasa anoenda kuhondo kuti awane matiziro aangaite nhamo yekutizirwa nevanhu vaasingadi, achiri mudiki uye asina chiri panzeve. Izvi zvinoratidza kuti vanhu vaitumwa kuenda kuhondo nenzira dzakasiyana-siyana (1992:26).*

(Mabasa goes to war to escape from two girls he did not love who had eloped to him, and when he was still young, and besides the fact that he had no money for *roora* [bride price]. This shows that people went to join the liberation struggle for different reasons).

These two assert that Mabasa chose to join the war of liberation because he felt that he was too young to get married. It was not out of the love for Zimbabwe’s freedom. Although Mabasa and Peter never made it to Mozambique, what the author has presented is a historical and truthful account. His characters may be fictitious but they represent real people and real events that took place in this country during the days of the liberation struggle.

The novelists who are under study here do not all make clear why Blacks ultimately chose to launch the armed struggle. They are not only silent on this, but also on why most Blacks went to fight in either of the guerrilla armies of ZANLA
(Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army) and ZIPRA (Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army) that had training bases in Mozambique, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique and Zambia. A reading of the novels will however, yield some insight into why the majority of the Blacks chose to fight. One of the reasons why Blacks joined the liberation struggle was unemployment. In the novel Zvairwadza Vasara (Musengezi 1984), Cephas Gwejegweje (alias Comrade Speed) chose to join the armed struggle because he had failed to secure a job in Salisbury (as Harare was then called). Cephas had been job-hunting for close to four years. The author makes this clear when he states:


(He had been badly affected by his failure to secure a job. He had given up. This failure to get a job had preoccupied him since he had left school in 1970).

Cephas had failed to secure employment ever since he completed his secondary education. Makari (1992:44), through Tichatonga, one of the guerrillas who were operating in Zaka district, also infers to why he (Tichatonga) was ready to join the armed struggle despite having been tricked into joining. He had failed to secure a job after completing his Ordinary levels at Gokomere Mission. Another novelist who confirms unemployment as a cause on why most youngsters readily joined the liberation struggle is Sungano (1985:23) in his novel *Kuda Muhondo*. Two political commissars of ZANLA and ZIPRA, Obvious Tichatonga and Spiro Ndebele whom Frederikse (1982:52-3) interviewed confirm the issue of unemployment as one of the factors that gave an impetus to most teenagers and young adults to join the liberation struggle. Tichatonga says that he had brothers and sisters who had nothing to do because of the discrimination that was prevalent in colonial Zimbabwe. His brothers and sisters had no jobs despite the fact that his parents had struggled to see them through school. Ndebele also says that he joined the struggle because he was at home and being downtrodden (Frederikse 1982:52-3). Although Ndebele does not clearly say that he was unemployed, his mentioning of the state of being at home is a clear indication that he was unemployed. Taviringana and Nyandoro (1992:14) confirm the issue of people joining the liberation struggle because they were unemployed.
Others joined the liberation struggle after being politicised. A good example of such people is that of Maburuku (Manyimbiri 1991). Maburuku agreed to work with Njuzu, a guerrilla, to sabotage Bhasi’s farm because Njuzu had given him a good political education that gave him an informed appraisal of what the situation in colonial Zimbabwe was really like. Njuzu had made him see the impact of racism on the lives of Blacks. He had also come to appreciate that the wealth of the land was in the hands of the minority Whites and the Blacks were used as a cheap source of labour. Njuzu made this clear to Maburuku when he said:


(They enslaved us and took away our land and country. They took away all our wealth and claimed it as theirs. They gave themselves all the fertile land and pushed us to the barren and infertile soils. They took away our cattle. They forced us to work for them. We are driven like oxen).

In these words, Njuzu makes it clear that Blacks had been turned into slaves in their country and on their land. The colonialists had appropriated all the Blacks’ land and wealth. From what is given in these words of Njuzu, some Blacks joined the liberation struggle because they had been politicised and had realised that they had lost their land to Whites. The Whites had squeezed them out. Manyimbiri shows that the Blacks fought for political and economic rights. It was a fight for them to be visible, recognised and for their own space as well as title to their land. This land issue was the main cause of disagreement that led to the rejection in 1972 of the Pearce Commission’s proposal that Blacks be paid £50 million for their land (Chimhundu 1991:58; Musengezi 1984:4).

According to Sungano, others joined the liberation struggle after they had lost their property, or their families had lost property to Rhodesian security forces. An example is the case of Kudakwashe (alias Kuda Hondo) who joined the guerrilla army of ZANU that had bases in Mozambique after the Rhodesian forces had burnt down his parents’ home. He joined the liberation struggle out of anger more
than because of the high unemployment rate of Blacks that was prevalent in Rhodesia. It is again not out of political consciousness.

Yet others joined the liberation struggle because of family problems. Nyawaranda makes this clear in his presentation of Chipo. Even though Chipo was killed before she had left for Mozambique, her reasons for wanting to join the liberation struggle had nothing to do with politics or the desire to see Zimbabwe liberated. In her composition that her teacher Tapera marked, she wanted to join the liberation forces to escape from the problems that were bedevilling her. She said that if she were expelled from school she would cross into Mozambique. She was not comfortable with going back home where her aunt and uncle were. She felt that her aunt did not like her since she did not want her (Chipo) to go to school (Nyawaranda 1987:12).

Although the reasons on why most youngsters joined the liberation struggle are varied, the main reasons are political and economic. Maughan-Brown who is however referring to the Mau Mau and their fight against colonialists in Kenya best sums these reasons. He brings out the similarity between why the Blacks in Zimbabwe and those in Kenya opted for armed confrontation. He states:

The causes of ‘Mau Mau’ were socio-economic, not “psycho-pathological” as the settlers and their apologists tried to maintain. They can be summed up as land-hunger, wide-spread poverty and lack of any significant political representation to which they could look for constitutional solutions to their problems (1985:29).

Blacks in Zimbabwe chose the armed struggle to redress a political and economic problem. It was not because they had a mental problem or because external forces like Marxists influenced them. Marxists only came in later as a means to an end. The Blacks were very poor and had no land. They also had no meaningful political representation. The search for an identity, a search for being and the desire for physical space that the Blacks could call their own led to the early stirrings of nationalism that emerged in the early 1950s as trade unionism. These evolved into political parties that negotiated for equality between Blacks and Whites. These negotiations yielded nothing. The result is that the Blacks became more militant and confrontational. They embarked on sabotaging White properties and government buildings like dip tanks. In the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe,
these were characterised by roadblocks, one of which claimed the life of the first White man at the hands of Blacks since the 1896-7 Chimurenga. This was by the Crocodile Gang that killed Oberholtzer on 4 July 1964 (Raeburn 1981:15-19). ZANU had recruited this gang’s operatives and trained them. It had then deployed them into the country. The operatives who killed Oberholtzer had been recruited in Northern Rhodesia (as Zambia was then called) (Raeburn 1981:8).

5.3 GUERRILLA RELATIONS WITH THE MASSES

Guerrillas did not operate in a vacuum. They operated mostly among rural masses. They had guidelines that gave them directions concerning how they were supposed to relate to the masses. The guerrillas were guided by three rules of discipline. These rules were that they were to obey orders in all their actions, not to take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses and to turn in everything that they had captured from the enemy. In addition to these three rules, there were also nine points of attention that they had to adhere to. The guerrillas were encouraged to speak politely, pay fairly for what they bought, return everything that they borrowed, pay for all damaged goods, not to hit or swear at people, not to damage crops, not to take liberty with men or women and not to ill-treat captives (Frederikse 1982:213). These rules and points of attention were meant to create a good image of the guerrillas, and minimise clashes between the guerrillas and the masses that were their support base.

While most guerrillas tried to adhere to the laid down guidelines, not all of them did this. Hamutyinei in his novel, Ndikande Mugehena (1988) tells the story of Marukwanisa, a chimbwido (a female collaborator) who had fallen pregnant after a relationship with a guerrilla leader called Jaspa Ndanga who operated in the Ndanga area of Masvingo (then Victoria) Province. Marukwanisa made the issue very clear when she was telling her mother that the person responsible for making her pregnant was Jaspa Ndanga (Hamutyinei 1988:8). Marukwanisa was not the only young woman who had a romantic relationship with a guerrilla. Kundai (Mabasa 1999:107) also refers to her niece who was impregnated by a guerrilla. She says:
(Some girls, like my niece who is at home in the rural areas, have children fathered by these comrades).

In the novel, *Gona ReChimurenga* Mabhunu fell in love with Thandi. He fortunately managed to control himself and nothing really happened between the two (Makata 1982:18). What made him succeed in controlling himself is that he was still hounded by the death of Priscilla, his late girlfriend. These novelists have presented guerrillas who are not angels or saints. They are human beings, mere mortals who fall in and out of love. Raeburn confirms the presentation of guerrillas who fall in love with women when he refers to a relationship that developed between Kumbi and Sabina, the Headman’s daughter (1981:155). Although Sabina did not fall pregnant as happened to Marukwanisa, this scandal led to the betrayal of the guerrillas by the Headman, who later hanged himself after a woman and her two children were shot and killed as they tried to run away from Rhodesian soldiers. The same soldiers (Raeburn 1981:170) also torched the whole village. Raeburn is not the only one who refers to the romantic liaisons between the guerrillas and civilian women. Kriger also refers to these relations and quotes a certain teacher she interviewed in Mutoko who said that the guerrillas were tempted by money, young girls and women whose husbands had left to join the liberation war. She sums this up by saying, “Guerrillas themselves fathered many children during the war” (1992:194). All these references are a pointer to the fact that the guerrillas were not saints and that it is not only the Selous Scouts, (a pseudo-guerrilla arm of the Rhodesian Special Branch) who fathered many children. While what they did is not being condoned, it would be naïve to believe that all guerrillas adhered to every letter and word of the nine points of attention (Frederikse 1982:213).

Guerrillas did also not take kindly to people whom they perceived as an obstacle to their objectives. Civilians who wanted to give other ideas that had a bearing on their personal security or that of family members were not tolerated. If their ideas appeared to be contrary to those of the guerrillas, they were not accepted. The civilians got verbally insulted. They were also threatened with physical harm or even death. Choto makes this clear in his novel *Vavario* when Tumirai said that
Mai Chimoto was going to do rounds in the village immunising and treating children since there was an outbreak of measles in the area. VaChimoto (the husband) was not comfortable with the idea and tried to raise his objections to the appointment of his wife to do rounds treating people because he feared the reprisals that would follow if the Rhodesian forces discovered that she was operating at the orders of the guerrillas. Tumirai was incensed. The author describes the tension that was caused by VaChimoto’s concern for his wife. He states:


(Tumirai kept looking menacingly at VaChimoto. “I have said that your wife is going to do what I have ordered. Forward with understanding VaChimoto,” Tumirai said with his eyes blazing).

The description of the verbal exchange between VaChimoto and Tumirai helps to highlight the dilemma that civilians faced during Zimbabwe’s liberation war. It was a difficult life for the people who were caught between two armed and warring sides. The dialogue also shows that the guerrillas at times used coercion as a means of achieving their objectives. Three aspects in the above quotation show that Tumirai was coercing VaChimoto to support his decision and that whether he liked it or not, he had to go along with it. The first is “akaramba akatarisa VaChimoto” (he kept looking menacingly at VaChimoto). In Shona culture, to look at someone menacingly means more than just an expression of anger or disappointment. It is a look that is loaded with threats that may imply physical harm or even death. The second aspect affirms the first one. This is the use of the slogan “Pamberi nekunzwisisisa” (Forward with understanding). The slogan does not refer to simple understanding or appreciation of the issues at stake. It is more than that. It means that one has to submit to the authority of the Party and the guerrillas without questioning. It also implies that one does not have to question an order. In this case, Tumirai was ordering VaChimoto to accept that his wife had to move around immunising and treating children and adults who were ill. VaChimoto could not question the decision that Tumirai had made. The last aspect that comes out in the above quotation is an extension of the first one that has been referred to.
This aspect is reflected in the words “maziso ake akatsvuka” (with his eyes blazing). The blazing eyes are linked to the menacing look that Tumirai cast at VaChimoto. It is again a description that highlights the fact that Tumirai was threatening VaChimoto. The result of all this is that VaChimoto gave in due to the fear of being killed or beaten.

The case of the coercion and the threatening of VaChimoto is further highlighted when Tumirai went on to say to VaChimoto, “Pfuti yandakabata iyi …Yakagadzirirwa kupfura munhu kwete mhuka …” (Choto 1990:134-5) (This gun that is in my hands … was made to kill people not animals …). It is clear from the words that Tumirai was coercing VaChimoto to accept his (Tumirai’s) decision and orders. There is no democratic path in the whole process. Because his words were loaded with threats, when Tumirai asked the other people gathered if they had any other questions, they remained quiet. Their keeping quiet means that they were afraid to be subjected to threats similar to those that VaChimoto had been subjected to. It is also because they realised the futility of asking questions when the person who invited for the same questions did not appear to be interested in dialogue.

In fact, the issue of coercion by Tumirai and his group goes back to the very first days when they arrived in their operational area. When they visited the village head, VaCharira, and told him to invite all people in his village to attend a meeting that evening at the village head’s homestead, Tumirai ordered VaCharira to report to him any one who refused to attend the meeting. He said that that person was likely to be an enemy. This is an indication that the guerrillas did not entertain any dissenting opinion to theirs. In this case, might, represented by the gun, is right. It shows that guerrillas did not deal with the masses in a democratic way. Even where there were cases when civilians presided over judgements, the purpose that guerrillas invited them cannot be called anything other than the need to share a collective guilt by the guerrillas especially when it came to issues that relate to beatings and the killings of those accused of being sell-outs.

Not only Choto portrays guerrillas as being coercive in their dealings with the civilians. Manyimbiri also does the same in his novel Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda
Through the character Kwadoka, the reader is told the plight of the unarmed person. Kwadoka says:


(Comrade comes wielding a gun, “Come to the base for political teaching. Cook *sadza* and bring it. If you fail to come, you will be in for it; you will know what caused a dog to fail to laugh when it can snarl.” We tremble. Whether you are afraid or not, you will have to attend).

Manyimbiri does not only here capture the fear of the unarmed civilians caught between two warring parties. He also raises questions on whether the civilians were always willing participants in Zimbabwe’s liberation war. The evidence that is coming from the above text shows that the masses were compelled to cook for the guerrillas while on the other side the Rhodesian soldiers also threatened anyone who assisted the guerrillas with death. The masses were also threatened if they failed to turn up for political and ideological teaching sessions (*pungwes/moraris*) that the guerrillas conducted at night. Makari also refers to the use of coercion when he states that even old people went up the mountain at a fast pace because they feared the gun (1992:17).

Although the masses identified with the cause of the liberation war, it would be too simplistic to assume that they all readily supported the guerrillas because they identified with the guerrillas’ and nationalists’ cause as suggested by Maxwell (1995:80). The above-cited examples show that coercion was a major tool of ensuring maximum co-operation and support from the masses that the guerrillas used. They had to do this in order to survive. Kriger (1992:101), who says that at times the guerrillas used coercion to get the backing of the masses, confirms the use of coercion as a way of getting support. Maxwell who describes the masses as willing participants in the liberation struggle goes on to concur with Kriger when he refers to cases of coercion when he states that uncooperative storeowners were killed and had their stores burnt down (1995:80). It is clear that this act, whether in Mutoko which was the area of Kriger’s focus or Elim in Katerere, Nyanga north that was the area of Maxwell’s study, the truth is, guerrillas at times used coercive
methods to get mass support. This is borne out by the fact that two novelists (Choto 1990 and Manyimbiri 1991) who have their stories in different geographical settings still refer to cases of coercion. Kriger (1992:101) defines coercion as a way of getting support not through bribery, warnings or advice and other forms of exacting power over another. The agent of coercion desires to bring about certain behaviour from the victim, and will impose sanctions if it is not forthcoming. When coercion is directed at an individual, it can indirectly affect the behaviour of a wider audience. This definition captures exactly what Tumirai achieved when he wanted VaChimoto to accede to his order that his wife, Mai Chimoto embark on the immunisation and treatment exercise that he had ordered. The threat that harm or death may come one’s way as mentioned in all the three novels is a clear indication that the guerrillas used coercion. These three writers have captured an aspect of the history of the liberation war that has been ignored for a long time. The researcher also remembers the days of the liberation struggle when he was doing grade six. In those days, mujibhas would move around inviting people to pungwes. They would emphasise the importance that every one attends by saying, “Kwanzi nanacomrade taramba wasara” (The comrades have said, no one should remain behind at home). These words are loaded with threats. They are very clear in that they show that the guerrillas did not want any youth or adult to remain behind at home while others attended a pungwe. It is possible that the guerrillas wanted the masses to all turn up because they feared that if anyone remained behind they would be betrayed to the Rhodesian soldiers. There was also the possibility that the guerrillas may have wanted as many people as possible to undergo political and ideological teachings. While it is true that by the time the war had reached its peak most civilians were on the side of the guerrillas, it is not correct to assume that the situation started like that. The support that the masses ended giving to the guerrillas was a result of politicisation.

In some instances, the guerrillas also dealt ruthlessly with people who worked for the Rhodesian security forces. Most of these were either severely beaten or killed to discourage others from joining. In the novel Kusaziva Kufa (Sungano 1987:114), Munyaradzi’s uncle was beaten for having been a member of the Rhodesian security forces. He was left crippled because of the severe beating that he got from the guerrillas. Sungano is not the only one who gives an insight into how traitors, Rhodesian soldiers and police officers were treated. Choto also presents a
similar picture. In his novel, Pita Bango (Tsitsi’s brother) was killed in an exchange with Jeri (1991:53). Jeri and other mujibhas (male collaborators) had come to collect Pita because Tumirai wanted him. Whether they were going to kill him or just flog him it can never be said, but it was common knowledge that guerrillas were rarely sympathetic to any person who was considered a traitor. Manyimbiri also highlights the guerrillas’ lack of sympathy in his novel, *Ndiri Parumananzombe* (1983:111). In this novel, Nyemudzai knew how guerrillas treated those who were accused of prostitution and of being traitors. She decided to run away from the forthcoming trial before the people’s court. She said to herself:

\[Kufa \ ndichipondwa \ senyoka \ handidi. \ Vanhu \ vanondipa \ mutongo \ wedanda \ chete. \ Handiiti \ kufa \ ndichiona \ (Manyimbiri \ 1983:111).\]

(I do not want to die being crushed like a snake. The people’s court will give me the sentence of a log [will not give me a sympathetic hearing]. I will not wait to die).

The people’s court was presided over by a chairperson, but the whole village would be present. The village passed a sentence. It was however, a sentence that they knew the guerrillas would like. It involved either flogging someone or having the accused shot by the guerrillas if s/he was deemed a traitor and confessed to that crime. The same was likely to happen to a woman accused of having taken liberty with the Rhodesian soldiers.

With the exception of Manyimbiri in his novel *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda* … (1991:53) and Nyawaranda (*Mutunhu Une Mago* 1985:36), the novelists studied here do not give reasons on why the masses supported the war of liberation or why some of them even chose to become guerrillas. There is however, a possibility that they may have given support because of coercion. A good example is Choto’s *Vavariro* (1990:26). In this novel, the author says that the Whites did not want to give Blacks their country, and the Blacks on the other hand did not want foreigners to rule them, when they, the owners of the land were there. This authorial comment does not address the real cause why the guerrillas went to war and why the masses supported the guerrillas in the war that was dubbed the people’s war. Such a comment has the effect of giving an impression that they really wanted to replace White rulers by Black rulers, not to correct socio-
economic and political imbalances relating to representation in parliament and senate, as well as to land. Tumirai referred to *gutsaruzhinji* (socialism) (Choto 1990:92), but he did not give the advantages of socialism over capitalism. Although he mentioned the land issue, he did not dwell on it extensively. The land issue is only mentioned when the war was already under way and the masses had long supported the war (Choto 1990:132). The novels fall short on this score. Their reasons on why the masses supported the war are not convincing.

Some civilians were involved in the actual fighting. This is the case especially with the *mujibhas* and *chimbwidos*. These youths were involved in cases of sabotage on White farms. In the novel *Vavariro*, the youths were involved in the poisoning of Dereki’s cattle. This was after Tumirai had said that they had to make life difficult for the Whites, especially those who had farms close to the rural areas (Choto 1990:28). After Tumirai’s declaration, Jeri and other youths went to Dereki’s farm where they poisoned the tanks of drinking water. They then looted and burnt Dereki’s shop. The result of the poisoning is that Dereki lost one thousand cattle. These were valued at R$150 000.00. This was a lot of money in those days. It was the equivalent of about US$150 000.00 or about UK£ 75 000.00. It is not only Choto who refers to cattle poisonings. Another writer who does this is Masukusa in his novel *Tsvaru Akazvara Tivu* (1994:140). Masukusa presents a guerrilla leader, Tsvairai sending out Sign, Tsivai and Assumpta to go and put poison in the tank that held water for Masare’s cattle. These poisonings did not only take place at Masare’s farm as *The Sunday Mail* newspaper later reported. They also took place on most farms around Lalapanzi, Chatsworth, Mvuma and Central Estates (Masukusa 1994:145).

The masses did not only participate in the war by poisoning the cattle of White commercial farmers. They also stole the cattle of the Whites and killed these for relish. In Masukusa’s novel, Tsivai and Sign would take several cattle from Masare’s farm and hand them over to other youths who would then drive them to Nyashanu in Buhera where the cattle would be handed over to a guerrilla leader called Tichatonga. Nyawaranda also refers to a similar case of the rustling of cattle from Zuvarigere’s farm (1985:17). Zuvarigere lost his cattle to youths whom guerrillas had sent. In the first incident, he lost four cattle including his breeding bull called Finiyasi (Phineas). In the second one, he almost lost several ones but
they were saved when a snake bit his horse. In both cases, in one mentioned by Masukusa and another mentioned by Nyawaranda, the cattle that had been rustled were referred to as *makabichi* (cabbages) and *mavheji* (vegetables). The purpose was to ensure that in the event of a follow up operation by the Rhodesian soldiers, children who were the most likely target of the interrogations would say that they had *sadza* with vegetables or cabbages (Nyawaranda 1985:29).

The cases of cattle rustling that Masukusa and Nyawaranda refer to are historically accurate. Cases of cattle rustling rose steeply during Zimbabwe’s war of liberation. Kriger (1992:146) mentions such cases when she states that Rhodesian authorities took punitive measures against entire villages for their alleged complicity in cattle raids on European farms. The measures often involved seizing and killing villagers’ cattle. Besides Kriger mentioning rustling, Shonge in an interview with Ranger (Ranger 1985: 180) also refers to such cases and the reprisals that the peasants suffered at the hands of the Rhodesian authorities. He is quoted saying:

> The people used to go on to European farms and drive away cattle. They never bothered to leave them alive. They killed them and ate the meat or left the carcasses to rot. If the army found any of the bones or any evidence of the cattle then you were in trouble. They shot your cattle, burnt huts. All the people in Matongo village were forced to strip naked – men, women and children – and marched for a mile while their huts were burnt.

Ranger is here quoting Shonge, one of the peasants who supported the guerrillas in the liberation war and probably participated in activities that were meant to bring the Rhodesian economy to its knees. The writer has aptly presented what transpired during the war of liberation. Nyawaranda presents a similar picture of what the masses did and the reprisals they suffered at the hands of the Rhodesian soldiers who accompanied the affected commercial farmers in his novel *Mutunhu Une Mago* (1985). In the case of Nyawaranda, what he has only changed is the name of the farmer. That there was a bull called Finiyasi that was a subject of follow up operations in the Nyatate and Nyamatsa areas of Nyanga district as well as Tanda of Makoni district (both in Manicaland) is true (interview with Nathan Masandudzi, 15 July 2006). The farmer who lost his bull to cattle rustlers was nicknamed Madhubure. The author did not also change the name of one of the
youths who went to raid for cattle. The youth’s name is Torapito Nyaguze. Nyawaranda has not only written what is historically accurate, but has also put down what some people of Nyatate, Nyamatsa and Tanda still remember. To this day, most people who were youths during the war of liberation remember the case of Finiyasi, the bull that led to brutal reprisals from the Rhodesian forces.

Choto has brought to the fore the history of people who are generally ignored in the history of the liberation struggle. He has mentioned the significant role that female *chimbwidos* played during the war. He has done away with the generally held notion that they were comfort girls as has been generally mentioned and believed. In his novel *Vavario* (1990:74), he refers to Tsitsi Bango’s being sent to Salisbury with a parcel bomb. She is said to have placed the bomb close to a hotel that was heavily patronised by Whites. When the bomb went off, it is said to have killed fifty patrons (Choto 1990:78). The role played by Tsitsi is similar to that undertaken by Susan Matsanga of Honde Valley in Manicaland. In 1979, she was sent with a time bomb that she placed in Meikles Store in Umtali (now Mutare). Several Whites were injured and killed when the bomb went off (Interview with Joel Matsanga, 17 July 2006). The role played by Susan Matsanga is not an isolated case. The fact that Choto refers to the case of Tsitsi shows that women played a significant role in the liberation struggle. Even though Ellert does not mention whether women placed the bomb that exploded in a Woolworths supermarket, in Salisbury’s Bank Street or not, he corroborates the idea of the use of parcel bombs by liberation war movements (Ellert 1993:75). The fact that Ellert does not mention women does not water down their role. They were in fact better placed to carry parcel bombs since most of them were not as suspect as their male counterparts were. The historicity of women’s involvement in the actual fighting is also recorded in ZANU’s official mouthpiece, *The Zimbabwe News* of September-October 1978. On page 62, the magazine has a picture that refers to a rally that Teurai Ropa and Josiah Tungamirai attended after the Umtali attack. Teurai Ropa is now Zimbabwe’s first female Vice President Joice Mujuru. The late ZANLA Commander, Josiah Tongogara who says that Teurai Ropa was still very active in the army (ZANLA) (*Zimbabwe News* September-October 1978:29), confirms the involvement of females as fighters. Raeburn also refers to the role women played in the liberation struggle when he states that Sabina did not only work as a nurse who attended to wounded guerrillas, but that she had also worked
very hard with Jack to politicise the masses and in preparing them for the arrival of the guerrillas (1981:137).

By giving the reader insight into the role the masses played, especially young women and the youths in general, the writers have added a very important aspect that relates to the history of the role played by women during Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle. They have not only contributed to local area histories, but have also demythologised the idea that has generally been peddled immediately prior to the disbursements of pensions to Veterans of Zimbabwe’s Liberation War in December 1997, that the masses did not do any fighting. They have shown that many people, both armed and unarmed, fought the war, and through their contributions, they made it possible for the liberation war to be referred to as ‘The People’s War.’ Kundai (Mabasa Mapenzi 1999) further confirms this. She says:

Chete chinokanganikwa nevanhu ava ndechekuti munhu wese akarwa hondo. Kubva kuna ambuya vane mudonzvo, vakabikira vakomana ... kwouya vainyora mabhuku nemapepa wakarwawo hondo neink. Kozoti vamwewo valimba nezvihudzvanyiriri, vanhu vanenge anaMapfumo nanaMutukudzi nevamwewo. The war was fought on many fronts kani (Mabasa 1999:106-7).

(The problem with these people is that they forget that everyone contributed in the war effort. From old women with walking sticks, they cooked for the boys ... then those who wrote books and papers fought the war through the pen. Then there are also those who sang about oppression, people like Mapfumo and Mutukudzi and others. The war was fought on many fronts).

In the words quoted above, Kundai is disputing the idea that only those who were armed did the actual fighting. Chimhundu also highlights the role played by the masses in supporting the war effort. He says that the women of Matsai in Bikita knew that after the guerrillas had paid them a visit, they had to sweep the grounds of their homesteads as well as the paths that the guerrillas had passed through (Chimhundu 1991:94). Chimhundu goes on to show that it was not only being armed that was risky during the war, but also to be found with war material like clothes for the guerrillas was equally dangerous. He makes this point clear when he presents the following thoughts that Itai Maposa had when the bus he was travelling on came to a roadblock at a place called Meeting. Itai thought:

(If they are to search us, I am in deep trouble. I will refuse that I have any goods on the carrier. Even if the bus conductor says that I have goods, I will refuse because my ticket does not indicate that I have any goods).

In the above turmoil that was in Itai’s mind, Chimhundu, like Mabasa (1999:106-07) has shown that the war was not only fought by those who were armed, but by everyone who contributed towards the war effort. Again, the fact that many people in their different capacities contributed towards the war effort is manifested in the role played by those who raided for cattle on farms. These raids had a negative impact on the Rhodesian economy (Kriger 1992:112). The novelists have also shown that the war of liberation would not have been successful if the civilians had not played a significant role. Overall, the novelists have shown that the civilians, especially the youths played a significant role in furthering the agenda of Chimurenga (the war of liberation) (Sungano 1985:96).

5.4 GUERRILLAS AND RELIGION

It is common knowledge that when a people are under oppression, especially by a foreign nation or race they become intensely nationalistic and patriotic. They look back to their past and identify symbols and other icons that they perceive as having defined them as a people. It is these symbols and icons that they revive in an attempt to re-assert themselves as a nation. This is exactly what happened with the people of Zimbabwe especially in the 1950s when Nkomo visited the Dula shrine in Matopos (Ranger and Ncube 1995:42). After this visit by Nkomo, most guerrillas especially those in the ZANLA ranks marched forward looking to their past by resorting to African Traditional Religion. Some novelists successfully capture the guerrillas’ reliance on African Traditional Religion. They also present some guerrillas being hostile to Christianity.

When the nationalist movements were waging the liberation struggle against the Rhodesian regime, they had to find ways of getting legitimacy and acceptance among the general populace. This search for legitimacy created a presentation
stage that helped the masses to accept the guerrillas and their agenda as their own. One of the methods that the guerrillas, especially ZANLA ones used was to ride on the crest of the wave of Shona religion and related taboos. They relied as well as practised the taboos that were a common feature of the hunters and warriors who lived in the pre-colonial era. It is these taboos and the respect accorded to Shona spirit mediums that gave the guerrillas a religious stature in the eyes of the majority of the largely rural masses who provided the necessary logistical support. The pursuit of African Traditional Religion by most guerrillas especially in Zimbabwe’s eastern areas gave the guerrillas the legitimacy that they desperately needed. In Choto’s novel *Vavariro* (1990:30), the author presents Tumirai, asking VaCharira to lead them to the local spirit medium’s place. The purpose of paying a visit to the local spirit medium was not because the guerrillas wanted to pay a courtesy call on the spiritual leader. It is because they knew that the person who could assist and have an influence on the masses so that the masses would accept them (the guerrillas) was the medium.

Choto is not the only novelist who records the alliance between the guerrillas and the local area spirit mediums. Another novelist who does this is Nyawaranda in his novel *Mutunhu Une Mago*. In this novel, Nyawaranda presents Muchapera addressing the masses saying that they had to visit the local religious leaders so that they present themselves before the local area spirits (1985:38).

The above cases are a clear testimony that the guerrillas saw it necessary to fit in with the masses. By doing this, they were following the Maoist teaching that the masses had to be the water within which the fish (the guerrillas) were to get their sustenance. The chances of them getting sympathy and support from the general populace emanated from the fact that the masses would see in the guerrillas allies in their defiance against White Rhodesian rule. At the time the guerrillas came back from Mozambique and Zambia, some elderly people still remembered the 1896-7 Uprisings. These elderly people, together with the local area spirit mediums gave legitimacy to the guerrillas. The reliance of the guerrillas on spirit mediums is a political and historical reality. Lan whom Lyons refers to confirms the importance of spirit mediums when she says:
An anthropological account of spirit mediums in Zimbabwe and their relationship to liberation wars and guerrilla fighters has been offered at some length by David Lan in his book *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (2004:73).

She goes on to say that although the focus of her research is not the role played by spirit mediums in Zimbabwe’s war of independence, she confirms the role played by the Nehanda spirit medium during the 1896-97 Uprisings and Zimbabwe’s liberation war in the 1970s. Lyons is here confirming the importance of spirit mediums in the struggle for Zimbabwe’s liberation. She goes on to say that the spirit of Nehanda was important during the Second Chimurenga (Lyons 2004:81). Even though she refers to Lan’s study, which is mainly anthropological, its significance is also historical in as far as it relates to Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle. Lyons’ study makes it clear that spirit mediums played a significant role in the Blacks’ struggle for independence. Of these spirit mediums, the most important were Nehanda, Chaminuka and Kagubi but the most prominent of these was that of Nehanda. Chimhundu highlights the importance of the Nehanda medium when through Chigidi, a ZANU delegate to London he states that the guerrillas relied in their fight against colonialism on the spirit mediums of the land. Chigidi goes on to say that after the guerrillas had taken Nehanda’s medium to Chifombo, more spirit mediums had joined them in Mozambique. These mediums were now blessing the guerrillas and their weapons before they left Mozambique for the front (Chimhundu 1991:123). The case of the Nehanda medium being taken to Mozambique is confirmed by Lyons (citing Janice McLaughlin 2004:79-80) who says that in 1973 Rex Nhongo (now Solomon Mujuru) ordered the rescue of the medium of Nehanda and had her taken to Mozambique. The medium was needed together with others to instil discipline amongst the guerrilla ranks. The mediums were not important only in Mozambique but even at the front. At local levels, other spirit mediums also played a crucial role as is evidenced when Tumirai and Danai were led by VaCharira to visit the local medium (Choto 1990:30). Ranger who confirms the significance of the role spirit mediums played in the liberation war states:

But finally, and fourthly, once the guerrillas had entered the mediums proved ideally fitted to play another and crucial role. It was they who offered the most effective means of bringing together peasant elders, who had hitherto been the local leaders of radical opposition, with the young strangers who entered each rural district, armed with guns and ready to administer revolutionary law. Hence,
not only peasants but also most guerrillas themselves came to draw heavily on religious elements within the composite ideology of the war (1985:189).

Ranger is in these words making it clear that the guerrillas relied on Shona Traditional Religion to gain acceptance among the masses. To gain this acceptance, the guerrillas had to rely on existing political and religious structures. Since the Shona traditional political leadership is hinged on spirit mediums, it was imperative that the guerrillas get into an alliance with the local traditional religious leadership. This is what the novelists Chimhundu, Choto and Nyawaranda present in their novels. They have successfully captured how the guerrillas gained legitimacy and acceptance among the rural masses.

While most guerrillas took seriously to Shona Traditional Religion, some were not so positive to Christianity. From what is given in the novels under study, they seem to have been very few. In the novel Kuda Muhondo (Sungano 1985:47), Kadiki addressed new recruits especially one called Jefuresi (Jefferies). He expounded his position:


(What is called Jefuresi in this war? Those names that you use with your Fathers [priests] back home should be forgotten .... Now you all pay attention. If you are asked your name, you should mention your nom de guerre and not those Christian names as if you know who God is. Abrahama, Jacob Peter. What is that? Forget those lousy names).

In these words, Kadiki was stating a common characteristic among the guerrillas especially in the early days of the armed struggle. According to McLaughlin (1995:92) some radicals among the guerrillas mainly those who had been trained in communist China and called themselves vashandi (the workers) were opposed to the use of religion in the war, be it Christianity or traditional religion. Their emphasis was on bindurazvinhu (revolution). She goes on to say that when the guerrillas first arrived at Avila Mission in April 1976 (Maxwell 1995:61) their attitude towards the Christian religion was hostile. She states:
They spoke of the glories of communism and the evils of capitalism as represented by the Kennedys, the Rockefellers and the Catholic Church. They also ordered Fr. Egan to reduce the fees at the school and the clinic and asked him to get them watches and radios (McLaughlin 1995:93).

The guerrillas’ hostilities to the missionaries and their religion especially in the early days of the liberation struggle are understandable. To most Blacks, the White missionary and the White farmer (Boer) were the same. They saw them as twin evils that deserved to be destroyed. This becomes worse when it is taken into consideration that the Pioneer Column came into Zimbabwe leading not only treasure hunters and adventurers. It also had among it missionaries, some of them who had little or no respect for Blacks as is evidenced by the words of the West African missionary, Albert Schweitzer who Achebe quotes saying that while he acknowledges that the African is his brother, he sees him as a junior brother (Achebe 1975:3). The same missionaries were in charge of very large farms that were under them, and among the grievances of the Blacks was land (Meredith 2003:112).

Although some guerrillas may have been hostile towards missionaries and even shouted slogans like “Down with the Lord” (Maxwell 1995:76, quoting Michael Mudzudza), there are some who appreciated the missionaries and their religion. Most may have chosen not to be against Christianity, or if they were, not to do so openly. This is because they came to realize how important the Church was especially when it came to medicines, medical care and clothing. In the novel Kuda Muhondo (Sungano 1985:131), after Kuda Hondo had been injured in a contact with the Rhodesian forces, a missionary attended to him. Narrating his ordeal, Kuda says that the night after he was injured in the battle against the Rhodesian forces who had set up camp in his area of operation, a missionary doctor took him to St. Richard’s Mission Hospital near Murambinda. It was at this hospital that he was amputated (Sungano 1985:131). This narration makes it clear that relations between the guerrillas and missionaries and their religion were not always hostile. If relations had been hostile, the priest mentioned in the story would not have come to the assistance of Kuda. The priest who is mentioned took a risk because his actions, if he was found to have assisted a guerrilla, instead of reporting him, would have led to a custodial sentence or deportation if he were not
Rhodesian. The actions of priests who took risks are recorded by McLaughlin who states the following about a certain Father O’Sharkey of Tanda in Makoni:

The mission used to treat wounded guerrillas, not only from the immediate vicinity but from other missions in the diocese as well. On several occasions, Fr. O’Sharkey from Tanda Mission used ingenious methods to get through roadblocks. One legend tells how Fr. O’Sharkey hid an injured freedom fighter under a bench in the back of his pick-up truck.

O’Sharkey is not the only one who took risks. Musengezi (Zvairwadza Vasara 1984) also tells of how a certain priest at St. Augustine’s Penhalonga gave the freedom fighters the room to address students (Musengezi 1984:77-104). The priest at St. Augustine also held a memorial service for a guerrilla, Gabarinocheka who was shot and killed by the Rhodesian forces in the schools’ Great Hall (Musengezi 1984:116). These incidents help to highlight that relations between guerrillas and missionaries were not always hostile. This therefore means that not all guerrillas were against Christianity as a faith. In fact, some of them were practicing Christians (Maxwell 1995:74).

5.5 RHODESIAN RESPONSES TO MOUNTING NATIONALISM AND THE LIBERATION WAR

When the nationalist push and the guerrilla war for Zimbabwe’s independence intensified, the Rhodesians took counter-measures in an attempt to ensure that the nationalists’ goal of Black majority rule did not materialise. The measures were two-pronged. One was political and the other one was military. These measures were futile and costly as events that were to unfold between 1965 and 1979 proved. If only the Rhodesians had accepted majority rule in the 1960s they would have saved many lives.

5.5.1 The political response

The Rhodesian response to mounting nationalism and the guerrilla war on the political front took the form of a plethora of measures that were instituted in an attempt to frustrate the Blacks’ political aspirations. According to Chimhundu (1991:21), after the Rhodesian Front (RF) assumed power in 1962, the
Rhodeanians antagonised the Blacks further. They also put pressure on Britain to be granted independence. Commenting on the RF’s assumption of power, Ellert (1993:2) says that on 16 December 1962, Edgar Whitehead resigned as Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia. This followed his electoral defeat by the RF. Winston Field; a tobacco farmer from Marondera (Marandellas) was the leader of the RF. Flower confirms Chimhundu’s presentation of how political events unfolded in Rhodesia when he states:

The RF had introduced two new features into Southern Rhodesian politics: a ‘cowboy element’, from which many of the candidates were drawn; and blatant intimidation of political opponents (1987:12).

In the quotation above, Flower is making it clear that by adopting a ‘cowboy element’ the RF was not interested in accommodating Blacks politically. The quotation also presents the RF as not accommodating any dissenting voices among both Blacks and Whites.

Chimhundu continues to trace the major political landmarks in colonial Zimbabwean history when he presents the rise of Ian Smith and the suppression of nationalist movements. He writes:


(In 1964, the Whites removed Field and replaced him with Ian Smith, when they wanted him to lead them against the Blacks. Smith accepted their mandate. In the same year, 1964 he banned all Black political parties. These were ZANU that had been formed in 1963 and the PCC that had replaced ZAPU in the same year, 1963).

Smith did not just ban the political parties. According to Chimhundu (1991:21), he also threw the leaders of these political parties into prison. Ellert who even gives the date when Smith’s government descended on the nationalist parties confirms the action that Smith took. He states that on 26 August 1964, the RF government
acted. It declared a State of Emergency in Highfields and banned ZANU and PCC, placing its leaders in restriction camps (Ellert 1993:3). While Chimhundu says that the Black political leadership was imprisoned, Ellert says that they were restricted at Sikombela and Gonakudzingwa respectively. Chimhundu’s account does not state where the leaders were imprisoned or detained. Ellert (1993:3) indicates that Sikombela in Zhombe was the restriction camp for ZANU’s leadership, while that of ZAPU (PCC) was restricted at Gonakudzingwa. Chimhundu's oversight does however not diminish the historicity of his novel. He succeeds in highlighting a major event that occurred in the 1960s which is a significant historical landmark. It is again not important to distinguish whether the leaders were imprisoned or restricted. What is of significance is that the novelist captures the fact that the political leadership of both parties was denied access to its constituents. That is historically accurate.

The intransigence of the RF regime led to the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Ian Smith on 11 November 1965. Chimhundu (1991:21) concurs with Flower who was then head of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) who makes the following observation:

> And on that day, 11 November, at the eleventh hour, it happened – the rebellion that was made to appear as though it was not a rebellion. The declaration was phrased in such a way as to give the impression that the ‘rebels’ were still loyal to the Queen; and it ended with the words ‘God Save the Queen’ (Flower 1987:57).

Flower is here presenting the actual time when UDI was declared. A reading of Chimhundu’s account makes it appear as if he is suggesting that the time when the declaration was made was at 1.15 pm. This is most unlikely. The 1.15 pm announcement was one done as part of a news bulletin item on radio. Even if Chimhundu has erred in the time that he has given, the date he has given is correct. What is also significant is the fact that Chimhundu captures what UDI was. It was a rebellion against British authority. He uses the phrase “chauya chauya” (come what may) (Chimhundu 1991:21) to underscore the point that Flower (1987:56) has given, that UDI was a rebellion.

Chimhundu's novel *Chakwesha* (1991) is the most historical of all Shona novels because the author relies on actual events and even refers to accurate dates. He
refers to talks that the British embarked on with Smith concerning political issues in Rhodesia that related to Blacks. Chimhundu points out that the constitutional talks were meant to be a public relations exercise in as far as the political accommodation of Blacks was concerned. These talks were held in 1966, 1968 and 1971 (Chimhundu 1991:56). The author points out further that the talks did not address the issue of Black majority rule. Although Chimhundu (1991:56) confuses the names of the ships on which the talks were conducted, his presentation is historically accurate. He makes it clear that the talks failed mainly because the RF government was not interested in seeing them succeed. Flower (1987:84-5) confirms this. He however puts the blame for the failure of the 1966 proposals not on Ian Smith, but on Smith’s cabinet (1987:85).

The UDI drama continued to unfold when in 1969 Rhodesia adopted a new republican constitution (Tshuma 1997:18; Meredith 2003:36). According to Chimhundu (1991:55), this constitution made Rhodesia resemble South Africa because the new constitution was entrenched in racism. The result of this new constitution is that the areas of settlement for both Blacks and Whites were separate. Tshuma confirms the racial nature of the 1969 constitution that gave the few Whites who were less than 10% of the total population the same number of acres with Blacks. He states:

In the spirit of racial segregation, the government introduced the Land Tenure Act of 1969 which repealed the Land Apportionment Act. The Act divided land into European, African and National land. European and African land comprised 45 000 000 acres each while 6 500 000 acres made up National land (1997:18).

It is clear from Tshuma’s words that the Rhodesians sought to pursue the policy of separate development, as was the case in apartheid South Africa.

The Rhodesians further entrenched their rule by giving more token powers to chiefs and adjusted their annual allowances. Chimhundu (1991:55) says that those chiefs who had less than 500 people under them got £240 per annum, and those with more than 500 received £420. The purpose of these incentives was to ensure that the chiefs would not tolerate nationalists in their areas of jurisdiction (Frederikse 1982:75). Concerning this development, Ranger (1985:169) observes:
During the 1970s, the Rhodesia Front administration embarked upon the policy of building up ‘traditional’ authority and erecting a ‘tribal government’ structure, which they could present as the legitimate alternative to nationalism.

Ranger rightly points out that the purpose of promoting ‘traditional’ authority and a ‘tribal government’ was to counter nationalism. History again here brings into the open one of the efforts that the Rhodesian authorities made in their effort to stamp out nationalism, or at least slow it down. Because the traditional leadership that was now under their patronage wanted to remain favourable in the eyes the regime, the chances were very high that in the interim, the majority of them would have barred nationalists from holding meetings in their ‘lands’. When Ranger confirms this development, he is ascertaining that Chimhundu’s *Chakwesha* (1991) is historically valid and reliable.

The other issue that is historically relevant that the Shona novel tackles is that of the Sir Alec Douglas-Home proposals of 1971. The proposals that were tabled before Smith were on the main aspect that voting rights and parliamentary seats be distributed according to people’s wealth and the amount of tax that they paid (Chimhundu 1991:56). Smith’s government accepted this proposal. When Claire Palley analysed the Smith-Home agreement, he stated that it was not going to be possible for majority rule to be in Rhodesia until 2035 (Chimhundu 1991:56; Meredith 2003:36). This agreement was put to the test on its acceptability by Blacks at the beginning of 1972 by a team led by Lord Pearce, hence its name the Pearce Commission. In an attempt to have the Blacks accept the proposals, the Smith regime intimidated and arrested 1800 people (Chimhundu 1991:56). In Mutare (Umtali) 15 Blacks attending a meeting were shot dead. The number of people shot dead could be higher than what Chimhundu presents. According to Ellert (1993:30):

> Dozens of men were shot dead in nights of violence and in Umtali (Mutare) where the local police commander declared open season after curfew hour, the number of those slain by police far exceeded casualty figures elsewhere in the country.

Ellert is not only highlighting the numbers of people who were killed by the Rhodesian police exceeding 15 (Chimhundu1991:56), but also the brutality and callousness of Whites when dealing with Blacks. They treated Black life cheaply.
Despite the violence and intimidation that the Smith regime employed, the Blacks did not accept the Pearce Commission’s proposals. Chimhundu (1991:56-8) makes it clear that under the leadership of the African National Council (ANC) the majority of Blacks voted “No” to the proposals (Chimhundu 1991:58). Musengezi concurs with Chimhundu when he states, “Zvechokwadi vanhu vakaramba chiPEARCE COMMISSION chikaponga” (1984:4). (The people resoundingly rejected the Pearce Commission’s proposals and it failed). Ellert (1993:30) who says that the rejection of the Pearce Commission’s proposals was massive confirms the historical relevance of these novels in showing how the Blacks worked towards the creation of their own political space.

The Rhodesian authorities also tried to curtail university students’ participation in politics. In an attempt to find out the main organisers of Black students’ political activism, they recruited informers from within the student body. Chimhundu (1991:49-52) narrates how Moses Marufu was recruited to become an informer for the Special Branch, an arm of the CIO that specialised in identifying as well as countering nationalist activities. Although Ellert does not refer to the employment of informers at the University of Rhodesia, he states that the university was a major target of the “E” Desk that focused on societies, organisations and personalities within the student and academic body (Ellert 1993:37). It is therefore clear that Ellert’s non-reference to the use of informers does not mean that no informers were used at the university. Chimhundu (1991:49-52) highlights the fact that Rhodesian authorities employed informers at the university. Moses Marufu was one such person.

Chimhundu also refers to the clashes between the police and students that occurred in 1973 when the leadership of the Black students was expelled from the university (1991:61-2). The student body responded by destroying university property, especially the administration block. The police, who had been monitoring the university students responded by beating and arresting them. At the end, most students left the country for Botswana and the United Kingdom (UK). Those who were allowed to write their examinations did so in February of 1974. After the examinations, the restriction orders that had confined them to their rural homes were invoked (Chimhundu 1991:75). Ellert blames the Rhodesian authorities for
ignoring Special Branch advice when it banned the students’ monthly magazine *Grope*. He writes:

> By ignoring this advice, the Rhodesian Government succeeded only in aggravating an already potentially volatile situation. Riots, which lasted a week, devastated that campus. Uniformed Police patrolled the University grounds for two weeks in an unprecedented move. In the aftermath of the University unrest, many students fled the country for Botswana and the UK (1993:37, 39).

Although Ellert blames the Rhodesian Government’s refusal to take the Special Branch’s advice for the disturbances that occurred at the University, it could be naïve to assume that the clashes would not have occurred. Their occurrence may have been delayed but they would have broken out at a latter date. Whatever the wisdom, or lack of it, of the Rhodesian authorities, what is clear from Ellert’s account is again to confirm that Chimhundu’s novel is more of history punctuated by fiction, than fiction that is a carrier of history. Its historical validity and reliability is not in question. In fact, part of Zimbabwean history is told from this novel, which serves as an alternative site.

In August 1975, a conference was held between Smith and some nationalists at Victoria Falls. The sponsors of this conference were Vorster, backing Smith and his team and Kaunda, backing the nationalists (Chimhundu 1991:93). The nationalists, especially ZANU, interpreted the conference as an attempt to stop the war and buy time for the Rhodesians. Flower says the conference resulted from pressure that Vorster had exerted on Smith and because of this, the conference was doomed to fail since the nationalists were also not willing to participate in Vorster and Kaunda’s détente (Flower 1987:161). Chimhundu, like Flower is silent on the nationalists who attended the Victoria Falls conference. He only says that the nationalists rejected the proposals. Ellert is more elaborate because he mentions the major players who attended the conference. The participants on the nationalist side were Muzorewa, Sithole, Nkomo, Msika and Gabellah. Sithole was on his own since his party, ZANU had refused to participate in the talks (Ellert 1993:59). The fact that Chimhundu has not mentioned Nkomo and Msika as participants at the conference may cause some readers to accuse him of writing patriotic history. Even though Chimhundu has short-changed the reader by not mentioning the nationalist participants at the conference he cannot be accused of
writing patriotic history because he would not have gone on to mention that Nkomo prevaricated in some instances. He mentions that Nkomo held talks with Smith (1991:130) outside even the parameters of the Patriotic Front union. Flower concurs with Chimhundu, thus confirming the historicity of the novel when he states that talks between Smith and Nkomo broke down in March 1976, as well as on 3 September 1978 when ZIPRA guerrillas using a Russian SAM-7 ground to air missile shot down an Air Rhodesia Viscount plane. Chimhundu does far much better than Musengezi (1984:174) who mentions that there was a conference at Victoria Falls but does not even mention who the participants on either side were.

The novelists, Chimhundu and Musengezi go on to mention two other conferences that were held at the instigation of the Americans and the British. These are the Geneva Conference held from 28 October to 4 November 1976 and the other one at Malta in 1978 (Chimhundu 1991:131; Musengezi 1984:174; Ellert 1993:66-7; Flower 1987:172). The two novelists do not mention the major people who attended the Geneva conference. What is however historically significant is the fact that Chimhundu mentions that among those who attended the Malta conference that excluded Muzorewa and Sithole, besides Mugabe and Nkomo were David Owen, General Chand and Lord Carver. Musengezi does not mention these but Flower (1987:196) authenticates their attendance. Chimhundu and Musengezi have not done enough in informing the readers because they do not explain why the conferences failed. For a historical account to be more honest to the events it is explaining, it should endeavour to clarify historical events and developments to the reader. In the case of the two novels being focused on here, the reader is denied the opportunity to know why the conferences failed to produce meaningful results. The readers would not only have been informed but would also have learned a lot if the causes of the failures of the conferences had been expounded.

Rhodesian efforts to counter the externally based nationalists and their guerrilla armies culminated in the Internal Settlement that Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau signed on 3 March 1978. The Agreement led to the establishment of what was called the Transitional Government whose Executive Council was composed of the signatories of the March 3 Agreement. Chimhundu mentions the internal political manoeuvre that the Rhodesians attempted. He writes:

(On 3 March 1978, Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau signed the Internal Settlement Agreement in Salisbury. The signatories hoped that the signing of this Agreement would have convinced Nkomo and Mugabe to stop the war that ZAPU’s ZIPRA and ZANU’s ZANLA were waging. These two did not acknowledge the Internal Settlement and saw it as a window dressing charade, in a country where the Whites continued to rule the country with the support of General Walls and his army).

Frederikse (1982:247) comments on the Internal Settlement saying that it was contrived to create the illusion that power had been transferred from the Whites to the Blacks. Muzorewa and Sithole had misrepresented themselves and had led Smith to believe that the guerrillas were loyal to them and not Mugabe and Nkomo. They failed to stop the war (Chimhundu 1991:121; Flower 1987:199-200; 208-9). The international community, especially the United Nations and the Security Council did not recognise this agreement (Chimhundu 1991:121). Flower and Ellert who served in the Rhodesian CIO and police concur with Chimhundu on the fact that the Internal Settlement was signed on 3 March 1978 and that it did not gain international recognition (Flower 1987:195-6; Ellert 1993:74).

The Internal Settlement Agreement (alias Transitional Government) charade continued into 1979 when an election was held in fulfilment of the requirements of the March 3, 1978 Agreement. Chimhundu says that the Blacks’ political parties that participated were Muzorewa’s United African National Council (UANC), Sithole’s ZANU and the Zimbabwe United People’s Organisation (ZUPO) led by Chirau. He goes on to say that most people who participated in these elections were forced to go and they voted for Muzorewa as the guerrillas had instructed them (Chimhundu 1991:132). Hamutyni inu also mentions the use of force during the elections that were purely a farce since the other main contenders who were externally based did not participate (1984:75). Another writer who refers to the use
of force as a means of ensuring that people went to vote in the April 1979 elections is Sungano (1987:109). Palley, (cited in Flower 1987:223) confirms the use of force and intimidation on the unwilling voters. Frederikse quotes an ex-detainee, Richard Dewa saying that he voted for Muzorewa while in prison because he feared that if they did not vote they would be killed (1982:270). Muzorewa won the elections with majority votes and he became the Prime Minister of the country that had been rechristened Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The use of this name to most Blacks meant that the Whites were still in power. Suzan said to Moses:


(This name Zimbabwe Rhodesia means that the Whites are still in power. What they have only done is to give the Blacks an illusion so that they may think that they are now in Zimbabwe while on the other hand the Whites will remain saying that they are in Rhodesia).

Godwin and Hancock (1995:238) state that the name Zimbabwe Rhodesia was received as a dumb squib. They comment:

Every faction of White politics greeted the name of ‘Zimbabwe Rhodesia’ with incredulity, dismay or laughter.

Flower also comments on this name and calls it an “absurdity” (1987:222). The absurdity that Flower refers to is not only in the name but also in the fact that the members of the Internal Settlement failed to see through their own lie. As before, Muzorewa failed to stop the war (Flower 1987:223) and Sithole had long lost his control of ZANU. The failure of the Internal Settlement as well as of Muzorewa’s as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia to provide a political solution to the country are an indication that the political initiative had failed. The two novelists, Chimhundu and Musengezi, but especially Chimhundu, have managed to present in their novels reliable history. Chimhundu’s Chakwesha (1991) stands out as the most truthful to history when compared to the other one.
5.5.2 The military response

The Rhodesians did not only rely on political machinations to counter mounting nationalism and the escalating guerrilla war in their attempt to cling to power. They also used military means. They used the army, which beat people and murdered some civilians. Captured guerrillas were also not treated as prisoners of war but were tried in Rhodesian law courts as criminals. The Rhodesians also relied on a pseudo-guerrilla unit of the Rhodesian army called the Selous Scouts. Linked to the Selous Scouts were the Security Auxiliary Forces, who went by the name *Pfumo Revanhu* (Spear of the People). The Special Air Services (SAS) together with the Selous Scouts also carried out what the Rhodesian military leaders called pre-emptive strikes into Angola, Mozambique and Zambia. The strikes were aimed at guerrilla training camps that were in these three countries. They also attempted to eradicate the people’s support for the guerrillas by moving people into concentration camps, which the Rhodesians euphemistically called protected villages (PVs).

As the guerrilla war escalated, the Rhodesian soldiers became brutal. Their brutality was with the approval of the military and political leadership of Rhodesia that enacted laws that protected the security forces against any legal action. In Sungano’s novel, *Kusaziva Kufa* (1987:12), a member of the Rhodesian security forces is presented brutally assaulting a civilian. Munyaradzi, the main character and narrator of the story, clarifies this brutality when he narrates:

“There! You are going to Mutoko looking for terrorists,” said the DA, and at the same time, he clapped the young man. The young man staggered and was struck on the other cheek and he hit onto the bus ….” He thoroughly beat the young man that I felt pity for him)."

Manyimbiri also highlights the brutality of the Rhodesian forces when he presents the beating of Kwadoka as well as the murder of his family. His wife, daughters-in-law and grandchildren were killed in cold blood by the Rhodesian soldiers who had ordered them to run and later claimed that they were running away from them.
Kwadoka himself lost an eye (Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda ... (1991:65). Musengezi (1984:24-5) is another novelist who recounts the brutality of the Rhodesian security forces. McLaughlin (1998:85) quotes a Jesuit missionary at St. Albert’s Mission who says that when they heard about the beatings and maltreatments of people under interrogation they complained to the commanding officer of the Rhodesian forces who were stationed at the mission. A member of the security forces is said to have told Fr. Fuhge, “We’re being rough now being soft doesn’t work” (quoted in McLaughlin 1998:86). According to Chimhundu, (1991:124) the Rhodesian soldiers and other security arms acted callously and with impunity because of the Indemnity and Compensation Act of 1975. This Act gave the Rhodesian security forces the power to act in any manner and they would not be held accountable in a court of law for their acts. This was possible as long as they could argue that they had acted in that manner in pursuit of the war objective, which was to protect the country. Frederikse (1982:197) who explains how bad this Act was when she confirms the historicity of this brutality as depicted in the novels states:

The ‘Indemnity and Compensation Act of 1975’ – with retroactive effect dating back to 1972 – protected any employee of the state from prosecution for any act committed ‘in good faith for the purpose of or in connection with the suppression of terrorism or maintenance of public order.’

What Frederikse is saying is that the security forces were not going to be held accountable for their atrocities, and by extension the government that had deployed them. The Act gave them powers of life and death. The Roman Catholic Church (quoted in Bhebe 1999:113) in its September 1976 report best sums up the aim of the Act. It concludes that the aim of this Act was “to condone and cover up [their] acts of torture and brutality in pursuit of the war aims.” The purpose of this Act and other related forms of legislation was to try to stop the majority of the Black population from supporting the guerrillas because of the pain and losses that they would incur at the hands of the security forces. The effect of this Act was the opposite. Most people ended supporting the guerrillas. The four novelists, Chimhundu (1991), Manyimbiri (1991), Musengezi (1984) and Sungano (1987) have remained within historical parameters because they have presented events in their narratives that relate to what really took place during the war. Chimhundu (1991:124) has even gone further than Manyimbiri (1991:65), Musengezi
(1984:24-5) and Sungano (1987:12) in that he mentions the Act that condoned brutality by name. This can possibly be explained by the fact that Chimhundu majored in Shona and history in his undergraduate studies. His novel reflects the hand of a meticulous historian, a person who wants to present historical information using the novel.

The Rhodesians also tried to stop the guerrilla war by countering it with pseudo-guerrillas who were later called the Selous Scouts. Flower and Ellert do not concur on when the Selous Scouts became part of the Rhodesian army. Flower (1987:115) says that the pseudo-terrorist group started in 1966. Ellert (1993:124) says that the Selous Scouts came into being as an arm of the Rhodesian army in 1973. Whether the two agree or not, what is clear from the two writers is that the Selous Scouts were an arm of the Rhodesian security forces. Their function was to tarnish the image of the guerrillas both locally and abroad. Chimhundu (1991), Matsikiti (1987) and Sungano (1987) make it clear that the role of the Selous Scouts was to ensure that the majority of Black people saw the guerrillas in bad light, so that at the end they would not support them.

Chimhundu highlights the mission of the Selous Scouts through a *mujibha* called Garikai who said to his fellow comrades:


(What they are now doing is to cause friction between the comrades and the masses. They send groups that pretend to be comrades who then destroy people’s homes, commit murder as well as rape, and steal. The objective of all this is to cause the people to turn against the guerrillas and accuse them of terrorism …).

Sungano (1987:96) confirms Garikai’s words concerning the Selous Scouts. Matsikiti (1987:10) also refers to the case of a girl who was repeatedly raped by Pedzainhamo, a member of the Selous Scouts who, together with his group had descended on this part of Mhondoro. They had come as genuine guerrillas when in fact, they wanted to turn the people against Mabahunumuchapera and his group
whom they knew were destined for this part of the country. When the genuine guerrillas came to such areas, they were likely to face resistance and even rejection. In the novel *Chakwesha* (Chimhundu 1991:101-12), the Selous Scouts who abducted Itai Maposa and his wife were interested in tarnishing the image of the guerrillas through murder and rape. Bhebe (1999:112) who quotes a certain ex-Selous Scout (cited in an undated Anti-Apartheid Movement Publication) who turned and joined ZANU in Mozambique confirms the image-tarnishing mission of the Selous Scouts. The ex-Scout said:

> Another task was to kill the local people in order to discredit the Zimbabwe People’s Army.

Bhebe further gives the example of the murder Doctor Mushori Zhou of Mnene Mission Hospital at the hands of the Selous Scouts (1999:211). The scouts pretended to be guerrillas who had come for medical supplies and when he went out, they shot him. The following morning the Rhodesian soldiers went around telling people the dangers of associating with the guerrillas (Bhebe 1999:212).

At times, the Selous Scouts would tarnish the image of guerrillas by committing atrocities that would cause international outcry and condemnation. A case in point is that of the murder of the missionaries at St Paul’s Mission, Musami. Garikai (Chimhundu 1991:106) addresses his fellows and tells them that it is the Selous Scouts who are responsible for the murder of the missionaries despite the fact that they wanted to make it appear as if the guerrillas had committed the murder. Chimhundu has again here captured a true historical incident that attracted the attention of the international community. Chimhundu (through Garikai) says that a survivor of the massacre is still convinced that guerrillas killed his fellow missionaries. Harold-Barry (2000:88) presents a picture that implicates the guerrillas. His argument is because those who committed the massacre are said to have shown contempt for Christianity. He also narrates the shooting to death of Father Pieper. The manner in which the priest was executed is similar to that of Doctor Mushori Zhou (Bhebe 1999:211). This points to the involvement of the Selous Scouts. Even though McLaughlin (1998:228) says that the killing of seven missionaries at Musami and other incidents of violence against missionaries elsewhere during the war remain unresolved she seems to imply that the Selous Scouts murdered the missionaries at Musami. She states:
The lone survivor, Fr Duncan Myerscough, SJ, blamed the “terrorists” for the deed. The JPC, with the help of the Jesuit Superior, Fr Henry Wardale, conducted their own investigations which pointed to the Selous Scouts (McLaughlin 1998:31; see also pp 156-60).

Besides the fact that the way the executors acted points to the Selous Scouts and despite the fact that Harold-Barry suggests that it was guerrillas, McLaughlin highlights the historicity of Chimhundu’s novel. Besides confirming the historicity of Chimhundu’s novel, she says that the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the Roman Church carried out its own investigations in relation to the massacres that concluded that the Selous Scouts were responsible. Frederikse (1982:204-5) suggests that the Musami missionaries were murdered by the Selous Scouts. She argues that the massacre occurred soon after a German pledge to help Zimbabwean refugees. It also coincided with the revelation by the school that hundreds of schoolchildren who had crossed the border to join the guerrillas had done so willingly. This had the effect of putting paid the Smith regime’s propaganda that the children had been abducted.

Ellert, an ex-police officer in the Rhodesian Police is another writer who further confirms the involvement of the Selous Scouts in the Musami massacre. He states:

Another element, which pointed to inconsistencies in the St Paul’s story, was that some days before the incident, the district surrounding the mission had been frozen following instructions from security force headquarters. This piece of information tallied with a report later received by a Special Branch officer at Mtoko. The security policeman was told by his source that the day before the killings a group of armed men had been seen jumping from a moving truck a distance twenty-five kilometres from St Paul’s Musami. Mujiba later spotted what they thought was a new group of guerrillas and reported this to the resident ZANLA section who expressed surprise. This new group was never accounted for and disappeared (Ellert 1993:154).

Three issues that implicate the Selous Scouts, thus confirming the historicity of Chimhundu’s account come out clearly. The first is that the area around St Paul’s Musami was frozen. This means that except the Selous Scouts, no other Rhodesian security forces were permitted to patrol that area. That area had
therefore been cleared for Selous Scout activities. The second is that guerrillas of course may have travelled by lorry or truck, but they were not trained to disembark when the truck was in motion. Only Rhodesian security forces that used airborne and motorised transport could do this since it was part of their training. Thirdly, this guerrilla group was never accounted for. This therefore means that the perpetrators were the Selous Scouts.

Another issue related to the Musami one is the massacre of the Elim missionaries. Chimhundu also mentions this incident in his novel (1991:106). He says that the Selous Scouts murdered the missionaries and their children. Although Martin and Johnson (1981:282) also mention the Selous Scouts as the perpetrators of the crime, what is important that comes out of Chimhundu’s account is that the missionaries were murdered. The real identity of the perpetrators of this evil has remained elusive although evidence coming up today points to ZANLA guerrillas who were operating in the Vumba area. Initially the evidence seemed to point to Sithole’s Ugandan trained Auxiliary Forces since they were vicious, and the murders were committed using axes, bayonets, knives and heavy clubs (Ellert 1993:155-6). Ellert later argues that in the late 1980s information emerged that ZANLA guerrillas were responsible. It is said that after the war the ZANLA members responsible for the massacres had a vision in which they saw the Cross and God’s hand raised against them in judgement. All these ex-combatants turned to Christianity and enrolled in Bible Colleges in Zimbabwe, East and West Africa (Ellert 1993:156). Maxwell (1995:69) concurs with Ellert that ZANLA was responsible. While it is true that the historicity of the massacre of the Elim missionaries as accounted by Chimhundu is accurate, the involvement of Selous Scouts is now in question. Chimhundu himself was writing before the latest information that both Ellert and Maxwell got from Father Griffiths, the former head of Elim Secondary School.

The other tactic that the Rhodesian strategists used was to send some members of the Selous Scouts to train as guerrillas in the very countries where the training was done. When these were then sent back to Zimbabwe, they were expected to turn against their fellow comrades-in-arms as Matsikiti (1987:1) highlights. The author rightly points out that the five who turned against Mabunumuchapera and his group had been recruited by the Smith regime to go and spy on guerrilla
training camps. Flower (1987:115) confirms this act of sending undercover agents to operate as guerrillas.

Selous Scouts also used poison as a way of trying to create rifts between the guerrillas and the masses. Munyaradzi (Sungano 1987:96) who was a member of the Selous Scouts clarified this tactic when he stated that after a Selous Scout would have lied that he was the sole survivor of a guerrilla group, he would then poison beer if the people provided this. The survivors of the poisoning would then blame the masses for having poisoned their comrades and at times, some people were killed as the guerrillas went on a witch-hunting spree. The use of poison by the Rhodesian security forces confirms the historicity of Sungano’s account since Ellert (1993:142-6) concurs with him.

The Rhodesians tried to boost their waning military fortunes by creating and arming a paramilitary outfit, which they called the Security Forces Auxiliaries. These were in two groups, one that fell under Muzorewa and another one under Sithole. The only Auxiliaries that the novelists refer to are Muzorewa’s. These were known as Pfumo Revanhu (People’s Spear) (Masukusa 1994:69) or Huruyadzo (The Best and biggest of all) (Manyimbiri 1991:59). Musengezi (1984:3) presents the Auxiliary forces coming to the masses in the guise of the guerrillas. They also shouted slogans as the genuine guerrillas did. In short, what Musengezi presents which Ellert (1993:187) confirms is that the Auxiliary forces were an extension of the Selous Scouts. Musengezi also presents accurate historical information indicating that the Auxiliary forces deployed in what is today Mashonaland West were loyal to Muzorewa (1984:4). Ellert says that the Auxiliary forces were successful in the early days in Urungwe (Hurungwe) District because they came claiming that they wanted to protect the people. This was after ZIPRA had killed some villagers so some people were angry. Ellert (1993:188) says that the Auxiliaries said that they had come in the name of Muzorewa to protect the people. They got the villagers’ support.

The Auxiliary forces got their recruits through deceit and force. Musengezi (1984:3) refers to Zango who was duped into believing that he was being taken to Mozambique for military training. Matsikiti (1987:80) describes the use of force by Pfumo Revanhu in an attempt to swell its ranks. He refers to the case of mujibhas
who had been misled and cheated by the Selous Scouts, and told that they were going to be taken to Mozambique for training. They were later handed over to the Rhodesian security forces who gave them the option of either joining *Pfumo Revanhu* or going to jail. Masukusa (1994:69) and Manyimbiri (1991:59) refer to the use of force in recruiting members for the ranks of the Auxiliary forces. Ellert confirms the use of force and deceit when he writes:

> In the beginning, the majority of SFA recruits came from the ranks of the original *mujiba* but these were soon reinforced by urban unemployed who were recruited by fair means and foul (1993:187).

In the words above, Ellert makes it clear that the majority of Auxiliary forces were made up of unwilling recruits. The Rhodesians had accused both ZANLA and ZIPRA of abductions, when they were also swelling their ranks using the same method.

The Shona novel also proves to be historically reliable when it focuses on the Rhodesians’ use of raids into Mozambique and Zambia. The raids were targeted at camps that housed refugee and guerrilla training camps. Chimhundu’s novel, *Chakwesha* (1991:125), proves to be very reliable on this issue. Through a character called Chigidi, Chimhundu makes it clear that the raid on Nyadzonia was in August 1976. He also mentions that the raid left over 1 000 people dead. Ellert, Flower as well as Martin and Johnson confirm the historicity of Chimhundu’s history. They say that the raid was on 9 August 1976 (Ellert 1993:135-6; Flower 1993:151-2; Martin and Johnson 1981:240-1). Ellert puts the number of those killed at 1 072. Chimhundu (1991:125) also truthfully records the bombings of Chimoio and Tembwe (Tembue) that occurred on 23 November 1977. Although Flower (1987:191-2) says the raid on these two camps was on 23 December 1977, the most likely date is 23 November 1977. This date is most likely because at least two historical sources (Ellert 1993:172; Martin and Johnson 1981:247, 288) confirm it. It is likely that Flower may have confused the months.

Makari (1992:49-50) is another novelist who refers to the bombings at Nyadzonia, Chimoio and Tembwe. He creates the impression that the raids were carried on the same day. The Chimoio and Tembwe raids are the only ones that were done one after another. The author does not give dates, but gives the impression that
the Nyadzonia raid was a result of one of the guerrillas who became a traitor. He does not say how this person ended working with the Rhodesians. Ellert (1993:135) gives some insight into how one of the guerrillas became a traitor. The Selous Scouts captured the traitor, a ZANLA Sectorial Commander called Livison Mutasa (alias Morrison Nyati). He helped the Rhodesians to ensure that the raid on Nyadzonia was a success. While Makari has given historical information, it is not as detailed as that Chimhundu presents.

The last of the military efforts that the Rhodesians effected in an effort to deny the guerrillas access to the majority of the people and food was the use of concentration camps. The Rhodesian Internal Affairs Ministry called these protected villages (PVs). Although Musengezi does not mention why the PVs were erected, he does refer to their existence when he states that Cephas was given a pass that allowed him to spend a night in one that he had visited (Musengezi 1984:24). On the same page, Samusa, a member of the Rhodesian security forces said that they had locked up the people in the PV. He said that they would only be rescued from the keep (another term for PV) by the guerrillas. His words are a pointer to the fact that PVs were battle arenas for both the guerrillas and the Rhodesian security forces. Frederikse (1982:84) says that the use of PVs was a desperate step that the Rhodesian authorities took in an attempt to deny the guerrillas access to food. This effort did not however yield the expected results (Frederikse 1982:87) since the masses and the guerrillas developed new ways in which the masses took food to the guerrillas.

Even though the Rhodesians tried to counter the nationalists and the guerrillas, they dismally failed. The onslaught of ZIPRA, mainly in the west of the country and ZANLA in almost all corners of the country (after ZIPA disbanded) (Chimhundu 1991:130) and finally the blowing of the petrol storage tanks in Salisbury (Chimhundu 1991:148; Ellert 1993:77; Godwin and Hancock 1995:238) in December 1978 dealt a blow to the Smith regime. Although the Rhodesians managed to hold on until 1979, when an election meant to market the Internal Settlement and the subsequent elections of April 1979, the major blows had been thrown. The Rhodesian regime had managed to hold for 14 years but due to the escalating guerrilla war and international pressure, it could no longer contain the heat. A conference was called for and was held at Lancaster. The novelists,
especially Chimhundu do not give an account of what transpired at Lancaster although he does refer to events leading up to the conference. It would have been more insightful if the reader had been given information that finally led the guerrilla leaders to accept a ceasefire.

5.6 INDEPENDENCE

The events that led to the independence of Zimbabwe emanated from the realisation that there was no end in sight for the war and more guerrillas were pouring into the country. Zimbabwe-Rhodesia had also failed to get international recognition. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) conference held in Liberia denounced the Muzorewa government. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Commonwealth countries also denounced the Rhodesian settlement and called for a final solution to the problem. Jimmy Carter who assumed power as United States of America President said that sanctions on Rhodesia would not be lifted (Chimhundu 1991:149). Flower (1987:227) confirms Carter’s sanctions statement as well as the OAU’s desire to see a political solution to the Zimbabwean war that would include the externally based political parties led by Mugabe and Nkomo. It was at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Lusaka (August 1979) that Mrs. Thatcher, then British Prime Minister and Lord Carrington agreed with other Commonwealth heads that Britain had to call for an all-party conference that should lead to a ceasefire and new elections in Zimbabwe. The elections were to be held under British supervision and other members of the group were to monitor these elections (Flower 1987:230). Because of the Lusaka CHOGM, a meeting lasting 47 days started at Lancaster House on 10 September and ended on 21 December 1979 (Chimhundu 1991:149; Flower 1987:232, 249).

Chimhundu’s novel, which is the most consistent and historical one, continues to give a historical outline of what happened after the Lancaster Agreement was signed on 21 December 1979. He states that on 28 December 1979, the ceasefire agreement came into force (1991:150). Bhebe (1999:265) concurs with Chimhundu on this date, thus confirming the reliability of Chakwesha as a historical novel. Chimhundu goes further and mentions the death of Josiah Tongogara, the ZANLA commander in a car accident in Mozambique. Tongogara
was on his way to inform the ZANLA forces of the Lancaster House Agreement (Chimhundu 1991:150; Flower 1987:252).

When political parties were preparing for elections, the Selous Scouts went on the rampage in an attempt to tarnish the image of ZANU (PF). They burnt churches and blew up Mambo Printing Press in Gweru (Frederikse 1982:214-5, 297). There were also attempts on Mugabe’s life (Flower 1987:3; Meredith 2003:42). Chimhundu records all these activities in the novel *Chakwesha* (1991:150) and other sources confirm these events. Ellert refers to the activities of the Selous Scouts in connection with the bombing of Mambo’s Printing Press and says that the evidence on the ground “had all the hall-marks of a Selous Scouts operation”, that was intended to give the impression that Mugabe’s ZANLA forces had blown the press for Moto’s slander of Mugabe (Ellert 1993:159). The slander had in fact been done by the Selous Scouts on 22 February 1980 when they distributed a forged copy of the weekly dated 32 February 1980 (Ellert 1993:158; Frederikse 1982:296-7).

In the elections that were held in February 1980, Mugabe’s ZANU (PF) came out with 57 seats, Nkomo’s PF-ZAPU won 20 and Muzorewa’s UANC got only three seats. The other contestants, Chikerema, Sithole, Mandaza and Chihota got no seats. After these election results, Mugabe formed a government of national unity comprising members of ZANU (PF), PF-ZAPU and Smith’s RF (Chimhundu 1991:153-4).

Chimhundu highlights the fact that corruption in government had it roots early in the days of independence. He uses the novel form to open historical spaces that have been officially relegated to the dustbins of history. He shows that immediately after independence there are some people who manoeuvred to get into prominent positions in both the government and the ruling party (ZANU [PF]). Most of these people had belonged to internally based nationalist parties, especially Muzorewa’s UANC. An example that he presents in the novel is that of Moses Marufu (Chimhundu 1991:155-6). Moses, together with his wife Suzan endeared themselves to some members of ZANU (PF)’s leadership. The result of their moves is that at the end they both were employed in the new government as Assistant Secretaries (Chimhundu 1991:158; Interview 02 February 2002). Moyo
(1985:184) also presents a similar case of Mukombachuru plotting to join the ruling party after his ZMFP lost the elections. Because of his manoeuvrings (Moyo 1985:195), Andrew Mukombachuru who now called himself Andrew Mapadza, rose to the position of District Chairperson of the ruling ZANU (PF).

What Chimhundu and Moyo have presented through Moses Marufu and Andrew Mukombachuru (alias Mapadza) is historically true. After the 1980 elections, Chirau, an ally of Smith who initially had joined PF-ZAPU announced he was joining ZANU (PF) (Frederikse 1982:339). Another case is that of Olivia Muchena, who is today in the ZANU (PF) government as minister and legislator. Muchena is mentioned in *The Zimbabwe News* (September-October 1978:57) among a list of people who are identified as Zimbabwean traitors. She is described as:

*Olivier Muchena*, a foolish and naïve Zimbabwean woman, who calls herself director for Women in the puppet Muzorewa gang. Olivier’s activities are offensive to all Patriotic Front forces.

It is possible that Olivier (Olivia) Muchena and others who crossed the floor will have done so in the spirit of reconciliation and nation building. It is also highly probable that these could be cases of political prostitution. They may have wanted to benefit from the new political dispensation.

Chimhundu (1991) and Mabasa (1999) are faithful to the historical situation in Zimbabwe in as far as it relates to the political situation. The two novelists highlight the political reality that the majority of those who did the actual fighting have not benefited from the fruits of independence. In *Chakwesha* (Chimhundu 1991:181), the author refers to people whom Itai Maposa and his friends call ZANLA (UK)s, meaning that they claim to have fought in the war of liberation when in actual fact they were studying and enjoying themselves in the United Kingdom and other western capitals. He says there was a person like Moses (Interview 02 February 2002). They even have burns that they incurred when they were roasting meat (Mabasa 1999:106). These people have been promoted ahead of those who did the real fighting, either as armed combatants, or as supporters of guerrillas. Hamundigone (Mabasa 1999:9) asks fellow passengers:

*Pindurai chirahwe chikukutu ichi:*

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(Please solve this difficult riddle
The pot was burnt while cooking *sadza* on the fire
However, the plates that were in the shelf went to the table).

Mabasa, like Chimhundu is making it clear that those who did the actual fighting have been sidelined while those who did nothing, or were even on the other side of the political divide jostle for places in the now independent state. When Chimhundu and Mabasa present such historical reality, they echo the words of Bamikunle (1991:73) when he states:

… it is widely accepted by literary critics that each work of art finds inspiration in the historico-social realities in which its author finds himself.

Bamikunle’s words help the reader to comprehend and put Chimhundu and Mabasa’s works, as well as those of others in a proper perspective. They are products of the Zimbabwean historical and social realities.

Masundire focuses on dissidents in the novel *Mhandu Dzerusununguko* (1991). The story evolves around Chiminya, an Assistant Inspector in the police force. The dissidents are presented as the ones who abducted and killed tourists who were on their way to Victoria Falls (1991:14). The writer correctly points out that the dissidents murdered people and destroyed public property (1991:21-2, 44).

The novel also helps the reader to understand that some of the people who became dissidents were deserters from the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) (Masundire 1991:91, 102). The author refers to the Fifth Brigade and its activities in tracking down dissidents in Matabeleland (1991:111).

While Masundire presents an issue that is historically true, he does not address the cause or causes of the emergence of the dissidents. He also fails to address the issues of the atrocities that the Army committed, especially the North Korean trained Fifth Brigade, commonly referred to as *Gukurahundi* in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. Werbner presents the predicament that ZIPRA ex-
combatants faced at the hands of the army in counter-insurgency activities against
dissidents. He says that the armed forces terrorised them. The police accused
those ex-combatants who were employed as migrant labourers in South Africa of
going to that country to train to be dissidents (Werbner 1995:193). Werbner refers
to the atrocities of the Fifth Brigade and how these affected the lives of the people
of Matabeleland. He writes:

Family members and neighbours saw their suffering in the light also
of widely known stories of mass murder and other atrocities by the

Werbner makes it clear that the dissidents are not the only ones who committed
atrocities like murder. The Fifth Brigade also committed them. In fact, the people in
the affected areas remember the Fifth Brigade more than they remember the
dissidents. The Brigade is remembered because of its excesses. The atrocities
that the Fifth Brigade committed have been described by the Catholic Commission
for Justice and Peace (CCJP) together with the Legal Resources Foundation
(LRF) as “ethno-political” (cited in a memorial advertisement in The Zimbabwe
Independent [July 20-26, 2007]). These two, CCJP and LRF say:

Civilians were randomly picked and subjected to horrendous
physical and mental torture. In extreme cases of callousness,
innocent people were wafted while in their huts and others faced a
firing squad of the 5 Brigade. Many people were forced to come and
witness the brutal torture and killing of their loved ones and to
ululate in support of the death.

A reading of these words shows that Masundire has not done justice to the topic
since he has focused on the government version only and has joined in the
conspiracy of silence as regards the truth of what really transpired in the 1980s in
Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces. The state President Robert Mugabe has
even acknowledged the excesses of this brigade, when he refers to “those days of
madness.” Masundire has therefore not treated the subject of dissidents
comprehensively and honestly, given the fact that he is writing three to four years
after the counter-dissident war had ended. He could have done what Sungano did
in his two novels, Kuda Muhondo (1985) and Kusaziva Kufa (1987). In the first
novel, the main character Kuda narrates the story of his involvement in the war as
a ZANLA combatant. In the sequel to the other one, he writes as a member of the
Rhodesian security forces, first as belonging to the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) and later to the Selous Scouts. Sungano has told the story from both sides.

While the government went to war against the dissidents in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces, other events were unfolding in other regions. Some ex-combatants who chose not to join the new Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) were living difficult lives. Some had formed or joined co-operatives after they had failed to secure employment as civilians. This was so for mostly those who had no five Ordinary Level passes (Manyimbiri 1991:66). Mabhuruku had joined a co-operative hoping that he would earn a decent living out of the enterprise. Fellow co-operators stole the produce and the money. At the end, he became a squatter in town. The fate of Mabhuruku’s co-operative is similar to that of other ex-combatants. Manyimbiri (1991:66) highlights the fact that the co-operatives’ biggest threat was theft of produce and money by fellow members. Kriger comments on ex-combatant co-operatives and explains why they failed. She comments:

Internal feuding among cooperators was not unusual. A study of *Shandisa Pfungwa* (Use your brains) at Marondera, a beacon of promise among Model B schemes, found its prospects were undermined by frequent thefts, disunity and excessive bickering … The frequent misuse of co-operative funds by cooperators reflected not only their ignorance of cooperative principles and of finance but also their overriding desire for immediate cash (Kriger 2003:147-8).

Kriger concurs with Manyimbiri in explaining a historical truth that cooperatives failed because of thefts. The co-operators may not have been prudent with their finances because they were not trained in financial management. These are people who just bunched together and never got any training on how they were to carry out their activities.

The Shona novelists also handle the land issue in their novels. In *Vavariro* (Choto 1990:132), Tumirai told VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi that after the war, they were going to occupy Dereki’s and Dhingi’s farms since they had no owners. When the war ended, VaChimoto and VaKanyuchi, together with their families moved onto Dereki’s farm. They were evicted from this farm after a year (Choto 1990:150-1). Dogs were unleashed on them during the eviction. In this novel, it would appear as
if Choto has not told the truth concerning the land issue in Zimbabwe after independence. This is so especially when one considers the fact that scholars like Herbst say that the government has in most cases bought land that squatters have occupied and has given each family twelve acres (Herbst 1990:67-8). There are however times when the government forcibly removed people from the farms that they had occupied (Herbst 1990:68). The forced removal that Herbst refers to is comparable to that of VaChimoto and his colleagues because the use of dogs is a sign of force. Tshuma (1997:64) also highlights the government’s intolerance to people who occupied land without its blessings. He states that in the case of Matthew Makanyanga and Others v The Forestry Commission, the appellants had between 1980 and 1983 moved into the area they claimed to be their traditional home. The government did not accept their reason neither did the Supreme Court. Garira (2006:21) also concurs with both Herbst and Tshuma on the issue of government intolerance on people who occupied land without its consent. She refers to the eviction of land hungry people from The Eastern Highlands Tea Estates lands in 1981 and 1982. Another reference, that Garira makes, that is most likely to be that of Makanyanga and Others, is that of people who were evicted from Bende Gap in Nyanga. The land was said to belong to the Forestry Commission. All these references confirm the facticity and historical reliability of Choto’s account in relation to evictions of land hungry people.

The land issue has continued to dominate the Zimbabwean political scene, especially from the year 2000, thus confirming that despite the evictions of the 1990s, the land hungry have remained a reality on Zimbabwe’s political and economic landscape. One novel that relates to the land reform programme that was restarted in 2000 has been analysed. This is Sekai, Minda Tave Nayo (Mutasa 2005). Mutasa (2005:19) through Zakaria says that land should be redistributed and be given to those interested in agriculture. Through the same character, he says that the exercise should not only benefit men but women as well (2005:19). Zakaria also says that the land has to be redistributed and Blacks should benefit since this is their land that the Whites appropriated.

Another issue that relates to the land issue is the fact that initially the government wanted a few farms to resettle people (Mutasa 2005:26). It had expected to get these farms on a willing-buyer-willing-seller basis according to what was agreed
on at Lancaster (Herbst 1990:70; Meredith 2003:119). Most of the White commercial farmers were however not willing to do that. Mutasa has also highlighted the divisions that have occurred in the country because of the recent land reform exercise, especially when the government is accused of taking away the Whites’ land (2005:26).

Mutasa, through Sekai, also places the land issue in a historical perspective, pointing out how Blacks lost their land to the Whites. The Whites enacted several legislative instruments that enabled them to appropriate the Blacks’ land and confine them to overcrowded and less productive reserves (2005:38-53). Moyana (2002:42, 44, 53) who focuses on the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and how it deprived the Blacks of their land confirms the historicity Mutasa’s argument.

The novelist has also paid attention to the problems, especially bribery, that have blighted the land reform exercise. Some land officers who are supposed to distribute the land ask for bribes from the land hungry. The example that the author gives is that of Njanji who asks Chandavengerwa to give him a bribe (2005:54-5). There are yet others who have more than one farm and the result is that the government has seen it necessary to set up a Land Audit Commission (Mutasa 2005:57).

Mabasa also has to be credited for mentioning the unemployment problem that has bedevilled Zimbabwe especially after the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of the 1990s. Although he does not mention ESAP, he refers to many unemployed people who were in the park. This is a clear indication of this problem. Sekuru Ticha said:

… kana kuti marovha ese aive azere mupark akadzokera kudzimba kwaaibva nguva handina kumbozvinzwa (Mabasa 1999:22).

( … I do not even know when the hordes of unemployed who were in the park left for their places of residence).

Chung (2004:242) confirms the rise in unemployment when she says that under ESAP workers were retrenched in large numbers. The wealth that had been promised never materialised. There is no doubt therefore that some of these
5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted an analysis of the historicity of the Shona novel in relation to the struggle for Zimbabwe’s independence. It has focused on the early nationalist movements like the NDP. The successor of this party was ZAPU. The PCC immediately succeeded ZAPU in the country although outside it continued to operate as ZAPU. Squabbles within PCC/ZAPU led to the formation of ZANU. Novelists as Chimhundu and Hamutuyinei have successfully captured the history of the period. Despite the squabbles that characterised the early nationalist years, there were cases of civil disobedience that the novelists capture. All these are recorded in history. The nationalist parties also decided to fight for independence not only through the legal channels but also through an armed struggle. Chimhundu records the first contact between the Rhodesian security forces and the early guerrillas at Chinhoyi in April 1966. This battle became the first stage in the launch of the second Chimurenga according to ZANU (PF). Dabengwa however says that contrary to ZANU’s claims, the armed struggle did not start in 1966 at Chinhoyi but in 1965 when ZAPU sent small units into the country (Dabengwa 1995:27). The Rhodesians responded to the threat of nationalism and the guerrilla war initially by banning orders and restrictions. These did not yield positive results. They also tried to encourage Blacks to accept the proposals of Sir Alec Douglas-Home that the Pearce Commission presented to the Blacks in early 1972. The people rejected these proposals. Further attempts at political settlement were made. Among these was the March 3, 1978 Internal Agreement. This led to elections in April 1979. Muzorewa won the elections but the nationalist tide and guerrilla war did not end. On the military front, the Rhodesians used pseudo-guerrilla gangs called Selous Scouts. These moved around as guerrillas and committed atrocities with the intention of tarnishing the guerrillas’ image. They even murdered missionaries at St. Paul’s Musami. The ZANLA guerrillas are believed to have also murdered missionaries at Elim although for a long time Selous Scouts or Sithole’s Auxiliary forces were the main suspects. When the 1979 elections did not lead to the expected international recognition of Zimbabwe-
Rhodesia, the Commonwealth invited the warring parties to Lancaster where an Agreement was reached and new elections were held in 1980. Robert Mugabe emerged the winner and he formed a new government of national unity, which his ZANU (PF) party dominated. After independence corrupt tendencies crept in. Some land hungry people also moved onto some unoccupied farms but were evicted (Choto 1990:150-0; Tshuma 1997:62, 64; Garira 2006:21). It is only in 2000 that the government again started redistributing land. Some novelists have captured this development, thus bringing the Shona novel to the forefront of history. It is engaged in the current debates. These and other related cases have highlighted the fact that the Shona novel can interrogate historical issues, and even bring those that are often ignored by official historians to the fore. The next chapter concludes the research.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on and concludes the research that has been carried out to illustrate the validity and reliability of the Shona novel as a historical document. Hence, it presents the findings of the research. The researcher also gives recommendations of matters that he thinks are relevant and useful not only in the study of the Shona novel but other Shona literary genres like the short story and drama.

The study has highlighted the development of the Shona novel in the colonial as well as the post-colonial period. Concerning the development of the Shona novel, the research presented the historical circumstances under which aspiring novelists operated. It has highlighted the fact that the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau made a great effort to ensure that the Shona novel and other related genres developed in a manner that the White rulers felt was not threatening to their well-being. The themes of most novels that were approved as good literature were either religious or politically neutral as Ngugi (1987:69) observes:

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

Although Ngugi is not writing about the Shona novel, he succinctly captures the problems that bedevilled the Shona novel from the time that this genre as well as other related literatures was introduced among the Shona. It was meant to serve the Whites' interests. Chiwome (2002:35) and Primorac (2006:18) concur with Ngugi on the grip that the Rhodesia Literature Bureau had on Black writers. They state that the Rhodesia Literature Bureau was a censorship board that approved what was to be published and what was not worth publishing. Besides defining what history is, the research has also proven that there is a link between literature and history by highlighting that literature and history are interwoven. This was not
only supported with evidence from the Shona novels like *Dzasukwa Mwana-asina-hembe* (Chakaipa 1967) and *Mudzimu Wakupe Chironda* … (Manyimbiri 1991) but also with proof from the writings of Leon Uris in his novels such as, *Battle Cry* (1958) and *Exodus* (1959). Other writings that have proven that there is an interface between the novel and history are novels such as *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place* by Angus Shaw (1993) and *If Not Now, When?*, by Primo Levi (1986). In his novel, Shaw gives some insights into how the Rhodesian Forces conducted their so-called counter-insurgent war against the ZANLA guerrillas in Zimbabwe’s northeast. Levi (1986) gives an account of how the Jews rose against Nazism. The study has not only focused on novels that have historically valid and reliable material that were written by Whites. It has also focused on those written by Blacks in Africa. Reference has been made to some of the novels that Ngugi wa Thiong’o has written. Among the novels that Ngugi has written that have a bearing on history are *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Devil on the Cross* (1980). The novel *A Grain of Wheat* is based among other issues on the atrocities committed by the askaris and other collaborators who worked for the colonial government in Kenya.

The study has also highlighted the painful truth that some of independence’s celebrated heroes were in fact traitors as is the case with Mugo. This is also the case with Andrew Mukombachuru in *Nguo Dzouswa* (Moyo 1985). *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Devil on the Cross* (1980) are inspired by neo-colonialism and the betrayal of the Kenyan people’s aspirations as well as the corruption that is endemic in post-independence Kenya. The other finding that the research has also highlighted is that for one to appreciate and understand the Shona novel there is need to realise and accept that literature is given direction on thematic issues by its local environment. In the case of Zimbabwe, the local environment is the socio-political and economic situations that were prevailing in Zimbabwe during the colonial days as well as what transpired after the attainment of self-rule. While from a formalist point of view literature is supposed to be timeless and belong to all worlds, the research found evidence that literature really reflects real life situations. This relation confirms that literature is historical, and at times, it is unadulterated history. Besides handling the link between literary criticism and its influence on how this research has been carried out, the research has proven that
the writing of novels is a deliberate effort that people make in an attempt to put their experiences and those of their counterparts on paper.

In this study, it has also been confirmed that literature is a carrier not only of culture but also of history. This is revealed in the corroborative evidence that can be got from historical texts when they are compared to what is found in some novels. For example, when people joined the liberation struggle, not all of them started as willing participants as Tinotonga (Makari 1992:44-6) confirms. The issues of coercion and press-ganging that Tinotonga and his mates were subjected to are historically true. Initially ZANU relied on press-ganging and coercion to get recruits for military training (Raeburn 1981:34-5). Ellert (1993:18) concurs with Raeburn on the issue that ZANU used press-ganging as a recruitment tool. Even though some novels end up making comments on certain issues, the research has shown that the dividing line between this and what is found in history is very thin since history itself has its own biases, even if people who claim to be unbiased write it. The historicity of the novel as the research has unearthed confirms that whatever the time reference given in some novels, a careful study of them will show that they are very valuable as historical documents.

This study has made it clear that the success of a novel as a carrier of history is dependant on the writer. It has highlighted the fact that the novelist has to strive for accuracy and honesty if his/her novel is to be accepted as historically valid and reliable. The findings of the research have also emphasized that reliable and valid history should reflect both the negatives and the positives of the particular period that a given novel will be focusing on. The study has also established that it is necessary for the novelists who write history to put down a history that is a reservoir upon which the readers can draw meaning and pride for themselves as a people. This history should help them know and appreciate that they are not in any way different from other people in the world around them. The focus has not only been on the definition of the historical novel as one that evolves around actual events and characters that have lived in the past or are still living. It has gone on to give examples of novels like Chakwesha (Chimhundu 1991) as a historical novel because among other issues that the novelist raises, some of the major characters in the story are real people who have graced Zimbabwe’s historical and political stage. The study has also highlighted the importance of also focusing on
pre-colonial activities like raids that chieftaincies carried out on each other. It has also been found that it is a historical fact that raids were also carried out for women and young men who would be employed as slaves, while their womenfolk would become wives of the chiefs and their courtiers. The references that have been made have confirmed the historicity of the Shona novel in that they have proven that a story linked to fact is historical.

The study has also focused on the Old World novel and how this reflects pre-colonial Shona history. It has focused among other issues on the Rozvi state and its demise. It has analysed the historicity or lack thereof of the extent of Rozvi rule as Mutasa has depicted it in the novel *Misodzi, Dikita Neropa* (1991:1). It has confirmed the historicity of the novel in as far as it relates to the influence of Rozvi rule, while at the same time clearly pointing out that the Rozvi state did not occupy a geographical area similar to the one occupied by the modern state of Zimbabwe. In its findings, the study has proven that Mutasa’s attempt to depict the Rozvi state, as the predecessor of modern Zimbabwe is misleading. It has pointed out that this misrepresentation is also a great disservice to the reader. It is also concluded that despite the shortcomings that have been observed, Mutasa’s two novels, *Nhume Yamambo* (1990) and *Misodzi, Dikita Neropa* (1991) have proven to have a lot of information that is historically valid and reliable. Historians Beach (1980 and 1994) and Chigwedere (1980) confirm the validity of the historical information that Mutasa has presented. Mutasa has truthfully told the fact that Chirisamhuru fell from power because of an onslaught on his empire that was led by Nyamazana, a Nguni warrior queen.

It has also been proven that the religious and political lives of the Rozvi state were interwoven. There are three people, Mavhudzi, Nerwande and Chirisamhuru that are closely linked to the religious life of the Rozvi as is given in Mutasa’s novels. One such important character Mavhudzi is found in Mutasa’s *Nhume Yamambo* (1990). He is a religious figure whose blessings Chirisamhuru needs to be accepted by the people as a legitimate Changamire. Beach (1986:20) confirms the significance of Mavhudzi as an important political and religious figure together with Nerwande.
Worth mentioning, is the fact that it has also been confirmed that the Shona novel is a reliable historical source since it confirms the existence of other pre-colonial states like the Mutapa, Zimbabwe and Torwa, which were all predecessors of the Rozvi state. It has proven that Mutasa has in his novels mentioned the Duma Confederacy as one of the political entities that were there in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. This political entity is confirmed in history as one of the Shona pre-colonial states that remained independent of Rozvi rule. Matsikiti has in the novel Rakava Buno Risifemberi (1995) referred to Nenguwo and Nyanzira’s lands (1995:29). Nenguwo and Nyandoro are confirmed in history. These two dynasties existed in pre-colonial Shona society. The Nyandoro dynasty was linked to the Rozvi and had some relative independence. Beach (1994:91) confirms that the Nyandoro dynasty existed when he states that Nyandoro seems to have been the intermediary between the central plateau Shona and the Changamire state in the south-west, while at the same time they acquired a personal ascendancy.

Another interesting historical finding that the research has brought out is the fact that at one time the Save River was navigable (Matsikiti 1995:205). Matsikiti says that the Portuguese traders used to sail up the river and trade with the local Shona inhabitants of the hinterland. Historians such as Randles (1979:4) confirm the historicity of this. It has been shown that some of the reasons why the Shona novel has to be accepted as a valid historical document are that it has also shown that some Shona novelists have embarked on a search for the truth. They have told the history of the pre-colonial Shona society and that history is acceptable. It has also shown that women were viewed more as commodities than as people. It has confirmed that women were not treated as equals but as minors. They were dispensable, especially during times of famine and in wars. They were also a status symbol when one acquired them as wives.

The study has highlighted that other novelists have also shown the importance of trade and hunting to the Shona. Besides the issue of women who were treated as perpetual minors, it has shown that the Shona novelists have successfully shown that the Shona past was not a rosy one, as some Africanists would want many people to believe. There are incidents when twins were killed. This does not show a people who always respected the sanctity of human life. The fact that the novelists have written focusing even on the bad traditions like that of the killing of
twins and triplets shows that they have written what can largely pass as a history of the Shona in the pre-colonial period. It has been proven that the history of Africa and Zimbabwe does not come into being with the arrival of Europeans in Africa. In fact, the arrival of the Europeans almost caused Africans to lose their history and identity.

The study has highlighted the historicity of the New World novel with a specific focus on colonial Zimbabwe. Among other issues that it has focused on are those that relate to labour relations, education and accommodation for workers in urban areas and on colonial Zimbabwe’s commercial farms. In its findings, it has proven that the Shona novel is a reliable and valid historical document. It has presented cases that are historically true in as far as, they relate to the life of Blacks in colonial Zimbabwe. One of the issues that is historically valid, that has been unearthed in this study relates to the working conditions of Blacks. The wages that the workers got were poor. Their employers cared very little about their accommodation. Workers also were beaten. Forced labour as a means of harnessing Black labour was also used. Besides labour issues, another historically important issue that has been highlighted in the research relates to land distribution in Rhodesia. It has proved that the Shona novel has highlighted that the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 dispossessed Blacks of their land. The result of the Act is that Blacks were pushed to over-crowded Reserves that were also not fertile. The Native Land Husbandry Act complemented the destructive effect of the Land Apportionment Act. Although the novelists do not mention these acts by name, they describe the prevailing situation in such a way that the researcher has understood that the colonialists had put a law in place that facilitated in the disposssession and further impoverishment of Blacks.

Needless to say, the study focussed on the education that Blacks got in colonial Zimbabwe. The type of education that the Blacks got did not empower them. It was an education for subordination. It has also been argued that apart from the physical violence that Blacks were subjected to, there was another form of violence that was committed on the Shona language. This is realised with pidgin, which the colonialists deliberately used as a way of denying Blacks a voice and an identity. White Rhodesians also committed crimes like rape, and most of these went unpunished because they sympathised with one another. It has also been
shown that Whites treated Blacks without any respect and even referred to some as baboons. This clearly shows that they did not see Blacks as people and therefore did not accord them the respect that was due to them as human beings.

The focus of the research has also been on the history of the liberation war in Zimbabwe as well as the post-independence period. The findings that have been analysed include among others, the involvement of the masses in the war, the relations between the guerrillas and the masses, Rhodesian responses to the escalating guerrilla war as well as the issue of unemployment and land redistribution in post-independence Zimbabwe. It has analysed the historicity of the Shona novel in relation to the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence. It has found out that the Shona novel has information on the early nationalist movements like the NDP and its successor, ZAPU. The immediate successor of the PCC was ZAPU. Outside the country, the PCC continued to operate as ZAPU. The squabbles within PCC/ZAPU led to the formation of ZANU. The study has also found that novelists like Chimhundu and Hamutyinei have successfully captured the history of the period. Light has been shed on the fact that despite the squabbles that characterised the early nationalist years, there were cases of civil disobedience against the White settler regime that the novelists capture. History has recorded most of these cases. It has also highlighted that the nationalist parties decided to fight for independence not only through the legal channels but also through an armed struggle.

Chimhundu records the first contact between the Rhodesian security forces and the early guerrillas at Chinhoyi in April 1966. This battle became the first stage in the launch of the second Chimurenga according to ZANU (PF). Dabengwa however contests this and says that contrary to ZANU’s claims, the armed struggle did not start in 1966 at Chinhoyi but in 1965 when ZAPU sent small units into the country (Dabengwa 1995:27). The Rhodesians responded to the threat of nationalism and the guerrilla war initially by banning and restricting the nationalist leaders to Zhombe and Gonakudzingwa. The banning and restrictions failed to yield positive results. In the research the historicity of the novel was confirmed when the White government is presented trying to encourage Blacks to accept the proposals of Sir Alec Douglas-Home that the Pearce Commission presented to Blacks in early 1972. The people rejected these proposals. The Rhodesian
authorities made further attempts at political settlement. Among the attempts that they made was the March 3, 1978 Internal Agreement. This led to elections in April 1979. Muzorewa, one of the signatories won the elections but the nationalist tide and guerrilla war did not end. It has been found that on the military front, the Rhodesians used pseudo-guerrilla gangs called Selous Scouts. These moved around, posed as guerrillas, and committed atrocities with the intention of tarnishing the guerrillas’ image. They even murdered missionaries at St. Paul’s Musami. The ZANLA guerrillas are now believed to have also murdered missionaries at Elim although for a long time Selous Scouts or Sithole’s Auxiliary forces were the main suspects.

The study has confirmed the historicity and reliability of the Shona novel through confirming that the 1979 elections did not lead to the international recognition of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. This caused the Commonwealth to invite the warring parties to Lancaster where an agreement was reached and new elections were held in 1980. Robert Mugabe emerged the winner and he formed a new government of national unity, which his ZANU (PF) party dominated. It has also brought out the fact that after independence corrupt tendencies crept in. One of the measures that were taken to investigate the corruption was the setting up of the Sandura Commission. It was set up to investigate the illegal sale of cars by senior Government officials especially ministers. There was also the looting of the War Veterans Pensions Fund, with some people benefiting several times. It has also been shown that some of the people did not forget the promises that the guerrillas made to them during the war concerning land. Because of these promises after independence, some land hungry people moved onto some unoccupied farms but were evicted (Choto 1990:150-1; Tshuma 1997:62, 64; Garira 2006:21). It is only in 2000 that the government again started redistributing land. Some novelists have captured this development, thus bringing the Shona novel to the forefront of history. It is engaged in the current debates. These and other related cases have highlighted the fact that the Shona novel can interrogation historical issues, and even bring those that are often ignored by official historians, like issues of political violence and the need for political change to the fore (Mabasa 1999:5, 135-6).
6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The above findings have proven that the Shona novel is reliable as a historical document. The validity of the information that it carries has confirmed that it is an alternative site from which history can be learnt and taught. It has also opened a new window through which other Shona genres can be studied. The challenge is now to future students and scholars of Shona literature to extend the use of historical criticism to the study of the Shona short story, poetry and drama. The researcher recommends that further studies on the validity and reliability of other Shona genres as historical documents be extended to the study of, for example, the Shona short story. He does not contest the application of formalist and structuralist approaches to the study of the novel. As a result, he recommends that other approaches to the study not only of the novel but also of other Shona literary genres be undertaken. This has the effect of making the study of Shona literature not only interesting but also fulfilling. For those researchers who choose to use historical criticism in the study of the Shona novel and any other related genres, this researcher recommends that they should strive to discern truths from falsehoods.

It is also recommended that those who choose to carry out research, especially on colonial literature, should try to empathise with the people who wrote under the guidance of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. To blame them for having been soft and apolitical on issues that relate to the life of Blacks is unfair. They were not given that platform. Instead of lambasting them, the researcher should try to find some subtle issues that relate to the burden of colonialism on the Blacks. For example, if a novelist or poet writes and refers to a period when life was good for Blacks before they moved to a particular area, it may be an indication that the poet and his people are victims of forced removals when their land was appropriated for White settlement. Another recommendation that the researcher is making to novelists and other literary artists is that they write and truthfully depict life as it is in their world. They should write literature that is relevant to their readers, not that which is not only irrelevant but is also not truthful.

The researcher also recommends that teachers of history and others who are interested in the discipline not only to rely on textbooks that are published
specifically for history, but to also rely on novels and other literary genres as alternative historical sources. It is again recommended especially to teachers of Shona literature that they approach the teaching of the Shona novel from a multipronged approach. It is not adequate to rely on teaching issues like characterisation and themes. The use of historical criticism to the study of the Shona novel does not only make the study of literature fulfilling but it helps in showing the interrelatedness of subjects.
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Appendix A: Structured interview guide for authors

1. When did you start writing?
2. Do you think that your educational background has influenced the way you write, that is, in terms of style and the themes that you have handled?
3. Do you subscribe to the notion that an African writer can maintain his or her relevance by writing and focusing on issues that are reflective of his/her target readers' situation and aspirations?
4. What prompted you to write on the issues that are found in your works?
5. If you were asked to rewrite any one of your novels, what issues would you include? What would you leave out? Why?
6. Do you have anything that you may want to add?
Appendix B: Questions for authors

1. Where were you born?
2. When did you start writing?
3. Who and what inspired you to start writing?
4. Do the circumstances surrounding your birth and growing up have a bearing on your writings?
5. Has your educational background had a bearing on the thematic issues that you handle in your works?
6. It has often been said that ‘Art is a handmaiden’. Do you think that your novels fall into this category? What reasons do you have for the response that you have given?
7. In your opinion, are writers free to write what they like? How does this compare with those who wrote in colonial Zimbabwe?
8. What has been the impact, if any, of the disbanding of the Literature Bureau on the development of literature in indigenous languages?
9. Do you think the issues that you have raised in your writings have had an impact on the readers?
10. If you were to rewrite one of your novels, which one would it be and what would you include in it that you think is missing in the current one?
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