

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHILD NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE AND  
ADULT NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF *WE NEED NEW NAMES*,  
*PATCHWORK* AND 'A HUG FROM UNCLE PETER'**

BY

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

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This dissertation of Sharon Malama-Muleya is approved as fulfilling in part the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Literature by the University of Zambia.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my late Mum and Dad, you were gone too soon. I also dedicate this to my family, my husband, Netto and our boys, Seth, Randy and Ethan-Samuel.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to make a comparative analysis of child and adult narrative perspectives in *We Need New Names* by Noviolet Bulawayo from Zimbabwe, *Patchwork* by Ellen Banda-Aaku from Zambia and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter' by Cheela Chilala from Zambia. The study is informed by the theory of Narratology by Genette (1980), limiting the narratological techniques to focalisation, narrator and narrating mode.

The viability of the study in the fictional world of literature is to see and believe that the child narrator, though a creation of the author is a real child (narrator) in the narrative. Thus, the child narrator must be seen in a true sense as a real child in all aspects in these adult fictions for the feasibility of the study. The study examines how a child and adult narrator sees and tells what they see, making comparisons from the point from which they see and tell. The study has compared the child and adult perspectives in the texts under study. Similarities and differences will be drawn from the two narrative perspectives in the texts under study. The significance of these have been analysed to show how they affect the narrative.

It may thus be argued that child and adult narrators both being creations of the author are mere tools for the transmission of the author's message. The child narrator can assume the level of maturity of an adult. The child and adult perspectives give variety to the narrative as they have different shades in terms of tone, voice and mood and these render the narrative a success. The naivety and experience of the child and adult perspective balance the narrative. Therefore, the author's creation of the two perspectives in the same narrative allows them to experiment with their narrators for the good of the narrative. The similarities and differences all work to comprehensively reveal information to the reader. It is these nuances brought out by the two perspectives which enrich the narrative.

**Keywords:** *Focalisation, Narrative, Fabula, Perspective.*

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study in question by giving the background of the study. It goes further to explain the purpose of the study arising from the statement of the problem. Furthermore, the chapter brings out the research objectives and the questions arising. The significance of the study, the theoretical framework that informs the study and its delimitations have been highlighted in this chapter. The chapter is concluded by the definition of terms. The conclusion of the chapter and a recap of the following chapter is explained.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The study of narratology can be traced back to Structuralism though it has gained independence with time (Barry, 2002:223). According to Prince (1990), narratology concerns itself with a narrative being a particular mode of knowledge even as it must serve the purpose of entertaining, informing as well as persuading. The study of narratology has various narratological instruments for description, classification and interpretation of literary narratives and these are applied to evaluate narratives generally. It is these evaluative measures that classify stories or tales under epic, tragedy, comedy, to mention but a few. Thus, it can be said that this field study examines narratives and determines what all narratives have in common. Narratology aims to describe the narrative-specific system of rules presiding over narrative production and processing (Herman 1999; Prince, 1973).

Narratology as a field of study evaluates and analyses specific narratives, in that, narratives are believed to be something in them. Prince (1987:65) posits that narratology has to do with the functions of the narrative and how it is a well-written piece, which must be understood by the reader. He aptly puts it that for people to ‘construct, study, memorize, paraphrase, summarize or organize narratives in terms of plot, narrator, narratee and character’, narratology plays a major role (Prince, 1990). Prince further notes that narratology does have crucial implications on our understanding of narratives (1990).

Narratology is fundamentally concerned with the identification and theoretical description of formal characteristics of narrative texts, which are common in all acts of storytelling. The events in a particular story and how these events are relayed is the choice of the author and it is the two with which narratology is concerned as it shows their relationship. It can be seen as a practical method of literary analysis and interpretation. Studies have been carried out on narrative fiction in terms of the levels of narration and other narratological techniques.

The dimension of the study of narratology has also been extended to cover film, painting, journalism and visual narratology. It has also merged with other fields of study such as philosophy, psychology (cognitive narratology) and history among others and has thus diversified and expanded with time.

Barry sums up six narratological techniques in question form thus: Who is telling the story, how is the story focalized, what is the basic narrative mode, how is time handled in the story, how is the story packaged and how speech and thought are represented (Barry, 2002:231-7). The interpretations of Genette's work by theorists of narratology such as Bal (1985) and Barry (2002) will be used in the study.

### **1.1.1 Focalisation**

The term focalisation was initially used by Genette to marry the two 'mood' and 'voice' and explain who the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective and who speaks or who the narrator is, respectively (1980:186). The perspective of the narrator in the narrative is vital, as it is this aspect which informs the story. The viewpoint can focus either 'inside' the character depicted or 'outside' the depicted character that is 'internal' and 'external' focalisation, respectively. External focalisation is one where 'an anonymous agent, situated outside the fabula, is functioning as a focaliser' (Bal, 1985:148). The external focaliser is more knowledgeable than the characters in the narrative. A reader sees what happens when characters are depicted from the 'outside', the reader depends totally on the information given by the narrator.

Genette observes that internal focalisation implies that 'the focal character can never be described from outside and that his thoughts never be analysed objectively by the narrator...as it is fully realised only in the narrative of interior monologue' (1980:1-14). In this kind of focalisation, a focaliser who enjoys the status of a character permeates the narrative. This shows the extent to which the narrator truly brings out aspects of another

character in the story, as they appear, thus highly subjective. The views brought out in the story are very dependent on the narrator. This is the case in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1991) in which Huck Finn; a mischievous 13-year boy narrates his own adventures indicating a continuation from the author's previous works, *Tom Sawyer*. Most young adult narrators perceive and are the voices that narrate their own narratives.

Genette posits that 'a text is said to be in internal focalisation if it can be rewritten in first-person with a change only in grammatical pronouns'. Therefore, this kind of focalisation suggests an intimacy between the narrator and the focalising character who actively presents the character's minds as there is no boarder. Bal further simplifies it by stating that in first-person novels, the introspecting character plays the function of being the narrator as well as the internal focaliser in that particular narrative (1985:148).

Focalisation can shift from one form to the other even when the narrator remains the same (Bal, 1985:143). This can shift within a text as it can be fixed to one character within. The other being variable focalisation as well as multiple in which the focaliser changes and the same event can be told by different characters in the text. An example would be in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) in which the author uses multiple perspectives from nine-year-old Claudia who feels the narrative with innocence to an omniscient narrator who gives history about the Saphead Church. In a young adult narrative, Cormier's *We All Fall Down* (1993) visions shift in terms of focalisation creating multiplicity in the narrated event as Buddy's feeling of gloominess over his parents' divorce are contrasted with a shift in view by showing Jane's response towards Buddy's affection.

Mieke Bal has further added to Genette's concept of internal focalisation by looking at it as a kind of double focalisation, in which the external focaliser watches along with the reader and does not leave the focalisation entirely to an internal focaliser (Bal, 1985). At this level, it is not clear as to whether the focalized object has actually been perceived. Authors would also freely get into minds and emotions of any character and this is what is called zero focalisation. Prince argues that this focalisation (widely known as omniscient narrator) is widely used in 'classical' or 'traditional' narrative (1987). He further states that this happens when 'no systematic conceptual or perceptual constraint governs what may be presented' (Prince, 1987).

Perception is said to be greatly influenced by a number of factors which include the seer's position with respect to the perceived object (Bal, 1985:143). In this light, it is clear that

distance, experience, knowledge and the seer's psychological position (among others) to the viewed object helps them to create the picture which subsequently is passed on to others through telling. Consequently, focalisation can be said to be the vision through which one sees the identity of the voice that is verbalizing that vision (Bal, 1985:143). Henry James in *What Maisie Knew* (1897) shows a part in which an innocent child focaliser is unaware of the erotic gesture as they are able to see more than the focaliser is.

### **1.1.2 Narrative Voice**

Who is telling the story is the question that arises under the personal Bal points out that the narrator is the 'agent which utters the linguistic signs which constitute a text' (1985:18). The narrator may be a character within the story he tells, thus he is given definable personalities, opinions as a distinct character presented intelligibly. Barry draws a discrepancy between narrators as he defines one 'who is identified as a distinct, named character, with a personal history, gender among other things as well as one who is just a voice or a tone, a mere telling medium which strives for neutrality and transparency' (2002:225).

This kind of narrator is called 'covert' or non-dramatized as they are simply telling the story as an 'outsider'. The narrator can also be called heterodiegetic as the narrator is not a character in the story but outside of it (Genette 1980:245). The other type of narrator is one that is part of the story they tell and this is called 'homodiegetic' or 'overt' narrator. (Barry, 2002:226). Bal defines this type as a case in which 'the narrator is present as a character in the story he tells' (1985:146). First person narrators can tell someone else's story or their own. For instance, Ahmadou Kourouma in *Allah is Not Obligated* (2007) uses a child narrator, Birahama, to tell his own narration of being initiated into a child soldier. Birahama, a ten-year-old leads the reader into the details of how he becomes a child soldier and what he goes through in his life. In the same vein, *To Kill a Mocking Bird* (2002) by Harper Lee exhibits a style in which the first person tells the story of another in which young Scott narrates the story of another. Narrators may take either form and omniscient narrators are usually heterodiegetic. Authors deliberately choose their narrators and in some cases, they switch between a heterodiegetic and a homodiegetic one.

An overt narrator according to Bal (1985:28) brings in the aspect of narrative truth as this kind of narrator proclaims that he recounts true fact about himself. The speaking agent names events and its perception clearly comes out, biased and ultimately more

knowledgeable in itself than the other. As a result, the focaliser and the narrator ultimately determine the narration as one draws a relation between who perceives and what is perceived. An author chooses the way in which a particular event is brought out in relation to the point from which it is perceived. Bal argues that 'the identity of the narrator, the degree to which and the manner in which that identity is indicated in the text and the choices that are implied lend the text its specific character' (1985: 19). This means that it brings in the aspect of the extent to which the narrator is accurately reflected in the text through the manner in which they perceive things and how they tell what is perceived. It is further claimed that the process involves objectivity and that it is a psychosomatic process as it strongly depends on the position of the perceiving body (Bal 1985:142).

An ideal example is how children perceive things in a different manner from adults, thus perception becomes a matter of how the one who sees is familiar with what they see for them to relay it accurately. A child narrator in texts like *To Kill A Mocking Bird* by Harper Lee (2002) orients the narrative as little Scout's view is given way though at a later time. This is to mean different times in a character's life are chosen.

### **1.1.3 Narrative Mode**

This is the 'mimetic' way of 'showing' in which the distance between the reader and the event is reduced. The 'diegetic' way of the narrative involves simply telling what already happened in the past and it is more 'rapid' and 'panoramic' (Barry, 2002:231). Narrative mode has to do with how less or more involved the narrator is to the events narrated, what Genette (1980) calls narrative distance. It is how the author uses the narrator to bring the readers closer by making them act as witness to a scene. As in Barry (2002), the two terms, mimesis and diegetic are originally Greek and in Plato's *The Republic*, they were used to contrast direct representation and its opposite, diegesis. The former embodies while the latter narrates.

This comes close with the manipulation of distance in which the narrator's involvement in the narrated events is ascertained through language. This can be coupled with thought and speech presentation in which Genette (1980) classifies narrated speech, transposed and reported speech.

According to Barry (2002:231), the question asked in terms of the narrative mode is: Is the mode mimetic or diegetic? It is how the author uses the narrator to bring the readers closer by making them act as witnesses to a scene through the presentation of events. As



in Allan Edgar Poe's 'The Oval Portrait' (Poe, 1994) in which the narrator's description of the room and how they entered is presented ranging from partial, mid and full mimesis. Authors can chose a type of focalisation and marry it with other techniques in an attempt to present events in the narrative which will involve the reader by having them as either, mere observers or listeners.

African authors, Zambians inclusive have explored techniques in their creation of artistic works of literature. The subject of how techniques such as perspective have been has been handled in texts but research on how these techniques are handled by authors to reflect society has not been explored. Moyo (2015) adds her voice to many scholars who see literature as a product of society and that it mirrors the society from which it is produced, authors experiment with techniques to reflect this or show a diversion.

To a large extent, the age of the narrator affects how the story is told and how the story comes out as a whole. Even though the author consciously creates his/her narrator, ultimately this creation affects the story. The use of the technique is up to the author to experiment but still produce works belonging to a certain period and place. It is this difference in perception between child and adult narrative perceptive on which this study is hinged.

## **1.2 Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to make a comparative analysis of child narrative perspectives and adult narrative perspective in three selected texts, namely, *We Need More Names*, *Patchwork* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The proposed study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To analyse child and adult narrative perspectives in the three selected texts.
- ii. To examine the similarities and differences between child and adult narrative perspectives in the three selected texts.
- iii. To evaluate the significance of the similarities and differences as emanating from Objective (ii) above and their effect on the texts.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The study seeks to address the following questions:

- i. How is child and adult narrative perspective handled in the three texts?
- ii. What are the similarities and differences between child and adult narrative perspectives in the three selected texts?
- iii. What significance do the similarities and differences emanating from question (ii) above have on the narrative as a whole?

## **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

It is certain that a child and an adult would not see things in the same way; hence, the narration of the same event by the two would be influenced by their worldview. One's worldview can be influenced by one's experience and knowledge. No study has been conducted to compare and contrast child-adult narrative perspectives in the particular selected texts. Put in form of a question, therefore, the problem that this study seeks to explore is: What are the similarities and differences between child narrative perspective and adult narrative perspective in *We Need New Names*, *Patchwork* and "A Hug from Uncle Peter"?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The point from which a narrator sees and tells the story is of great importance as it affects the narrative as a whole. A narrator is of great significance in narrative textual analysis as they are the agent who relays the events (Bal 1985:19). An author has a task to create a literary piece of art by exploring the tools available. Scholars have agreed that literature reflects the times and society in which it was written. If literature is to reflect the society from which it hails, it is thus the work of the author to create a close to 'reality' piece of work. The author's creation of his narrator and how he fits in the created world is worth looking into. Different perspectives in the same narrative have been explored in African works, Zambia not being an exception.

The extent to which the narrator is truly reflected and the manner in which they narrate is central in the three selected texts. The study will compare the narrative perspectives of a child and adult narrator in the aforementioned texts and how they affect the narration as a whole.

The findings of the study would be helpful in future to authors and would-be authors as they explore on creating narratives and how they study of narratology and its techniques can be manipulated to produce a literature of our society. It can further trigger more interest for Zambian authors to produce more works exploring the child and young adult perspective in adult fiction as finding such texts is a challenge. It can further add to the existing body of knowledge in literature in the field of narratology.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The proposed research will be informed mostly by the theory of Narratology by Genette, focusing only on focalisation, the narrator and the 'telling' of the story or narrative mode and not the other techniques. In his book, *Narrative Discourse*, Genette (1980) highlights the importance of these among other techniques in a narrative. The techniques will be used to try to explain how a child and adult narrator 'sees' and how they tell what they see using the angle from which they see it. These will be used to explain how language, knowledge and experience are reflected as the narrator 'tells' the story. The position of the narrator in the narrative they tell and how their worldview ultimately affects how they present facts is important. This will be done along with close analysis of other literary theorists of narratology such as Barry (2002) in his interpretation of Genette's *Narrative Discourse* as well as Mieke Bal (1985).

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The proposed study will confine itself to the techniques of the narrative voice, focalisation and the narrative mode and not the other instruments of narratology, hard as it may be to draw a line between these areas as they glide into another. It will further limit the application of the aforesaid narratological instruments to three literary works of fiction which include Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, Banda-Aaku's *Patchwork* and Chilala's 'A Hug by my Uncle Peter'. The study will not be concerned with other aspects of the texts save for what has been earlier indicated.

### **1.9 Methodology**

The study will use the qualitative approach, desk-based, as it will focus on critical textual analysis of the primary texts for data. This study entails close reading of the primary texts as well as their analysis in the light of the highlighted theoretical framework. Relevant

secondary texts will also be analysed alongside primary ones in detail to create a well-informed research.

### **1.10 Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation has been divided into seven chapters. The initial chapter introduces the study by giving background information, stating the problem, the purpose of the study, its significance as well as the objectives and questions. The theory which informs the study, the delimitations and the research methodology has been explained. Definition of the terms used in the study and a concluding paragraph to summarise the chapter and introduce the following chapter.

The second chapter deals with the review of literature related to the study. Studies that have used similar techniques have been analysed. This is followed by a summary of the chapter and a recap of the chapter that follows.

The third chapter brings out the synopses of the texts under study which include *Patchwork*, *We Need New Names* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'. The fourth chapter focuses on analysis of adult narrative perspective in the texts under study. The subsequent chapter, chapter five analyses the child narrative perspective in the same texts.

The sixth chapter focuses on the discussion of findings while the last chapter, which is seven focuses on conclusion of the study.

### **1.11 Definition of Terms**

The study has used certain literary terms which would need to be defined to clarify their use as in this study.

**Story:** refers to the chronological sequence of situations and events that can be reconstructed. It is also defined as the mere sequence of events in time—into the organized and meaningful structure of a literary plot.

**Event:** This is a thing that happens, especially something important.

**Fabula:** This is the elemental materials of a story.

<b>Focaliser:</b>	This is the subject of the focalization who is the point from which elements are viewed'. The 'eye' which sees and through whom the reader sees.
<b>Narrative:</b>	It is a story, whether told in prose or verse, involving events, characters, and what the characters say and do. It is the mode of representation of an event.
<b>Plot:</b>	This is defined as the combination and sequencing of events which form a story. Events are told not exactly as they happened as the author deliberately arranges the events in a certain order to form a particular plot.
<b>Perspective:</b>	It is a literary tool used by the author which acts as a lens through which a story is told. It is through this that the reader views the characters as well as the events.

## **1.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the study and all the sub-sections which help to understand the importance of the study. Authors experiment with different techniques to produce works of fiction and it is these works that reflect the society from which they are produced. The following chapter will review literature related to the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has brought out the introductory part of the present study. This chapter aims to review the literature related to this study. Researches in the field of narratology have been conducted using different narratological techniques on non-African and African texts. The reviews will be categorised in line with the three narrative techniques employed in this study, that is focalisation, narrative voice and narrative mode (mimetic and diegetic).

#### 2.1 Review of Related Literature

Narratology is defined 'as the study of how narratives make meaning, and what basic mechanisms and procedures are common to all acts of story-telling (Barry 2002:222-3). It gives a common ground on which narratives meet, grading them with common features. This goes back to the narratological elements looked at by Aristotle in his *Poetics* which classify the character and the action. According to Barry (2002), Propp does the same in his 'corpus' of a hundred tales as he identifies thirty-one functions as a basic structure of tales (227). However, not all stories apply the same functions but all stories fit in the application of these functions.

Focalisation as one of techniques is an important part of the narrative as an author has to choose the point from which the narrative is told. Lodge (1992) states that:

*The choice of the point of view from which the story is told is arguably the most important single decision that the novelist has to make, for it fundamentally affects the way readers will respond, emotionally and morally, to the fictional characters and their actions (Art 26).*

As earlier mentioned, the author can either choose to use one focal point or different points from which the story is narrated. The reader has no other point but one chosen by the author to relay his events. Other author's use of varying focal points by authors is chosen to achieve a rich perception given to the reader in turn widening their view.

Toni Morrison explores this multiplicity of perspectives in *The Bluest Eye* (1970) in which a child perspective is alternated with an omniscient view. The story is told through juvenile point of view of the adult Claudia younger self. The child view brings in the innocence while the omniscient, adult, all-knowing view give important historical pasts which help the reader understand some present actions. Claudia takes pity on a girl raped by her father, Pecola, who is not helped by the overseer of the Church, instead, is asked to kill a dog for the one in charge. The omniscient narrator thus comes in handy as it helps the reader understand the present action better. This is known of Toni Morrison as an analysis of *Beloved* (1987) also reveals a multiplicity of perspectives in her narration as different parts of the story are presented by different characters (Booker, 1996). It can be said that her use of different perspectives enriches the reader's position to understand without patching up events to make sense of whatever is happening. The child narrator's role to sweep-through her innocence through her narration is abetted with an all-knowing perspective to fill in the gaps by giving information that covers broader sweeps of time and space. The views of the other characters also enrich the narrative.

Tomkova (2014) analyses narratological techniques in American Gothic works of Edgar Allan Poe. In the 'The Tell-Tale Heart' (Poe, 1994) and in these works the initial picture one gets is that there is the use of internal focalisation and more precisely, fixed focalisation. However, a closer look shows a drift from this as an external focaliser who gives outward or behavioural comments and omniscient narrator gives an all-knowing eye and variable focalisation is also realised as other focaliser appear. It can be said his use of focalisation is inventive as its intentional and experimental which shows an author's creative work as it all works to the success of the narrative. In 'The Oval Portrait' (Poe, 1994) focalisation is initially internal as one of two travellers tells the tale and is alternated by an omniscient narrator.

Siluonde (2015) analyses Luangala's *The Chosen Bud* (1991) and Katulwende's *Bitterness* (2005) in terms of plot as well as narrative techniques. Her analysis on these Zambian texts on the portrayal of focalisation is that *The Chosen Bud* uses internal focalisation, specifically variable focalisation as different characters inform the narrative. The author marries variable focalisation with multiple focalisation as he employs more than one character to narrate one incident. The omniscient narrator is employed at some point to give sociological comments on life. In *Bitterness* (2005), internal focalisation is used as Besa's perspective is used in the narrative.

Narrative voice is another technique analysed in this study. The narrator's importance cannot be overemphasized in that an author has to choose a way in which the narrative will be told. A distinction is made between the types of narrators and these include: a distinct character with a history, gender, age and a mere voice simply relaying information. Suffice to say, it can either be present in the narrative (homodiegetic) or absent from the narrative (heterodiegetic) being told. It can be said that in homodiegetic narration, the narrator will be obvious and his or her act of narration highly ostensible by virtue of the very fact that she or he exists within the story world or text-world and is its source. Siluonde (2015) points out to say that if focalisation is external, then the voice is heterodiegetic and homodiegetic if it is internal. In her analysis of *Bitterness* (2005), the voice is heterodiegetic at some point as it is a narrative told about someone hence the change in the focus in the prologue and epilogue.

The narrative mode in the narrative has to do with the extent of 'showing' and 'telling' in the narrative. It engages the reader by bringing them closer to the narrated event. Barry (2002:239) discusses a narratological analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Oval Portrait' (1994). From this analysis, the primary narrative, which is the one told by the man, is mostly diegetic as the description of the place and what was found comes out. Mimesis appears shortly before the man beholds the portrait: "Long, long I read...The position of candelabrum displeased me, and outreaching my hand with difficulty ... I placed it so as to throw its rays more fully upon the book" (Poe, 1994:188). It switches to mimesis which can be described from partial to full as the description of the room and its decorations. The author switches between the two modes which supports Barry's claim that "writers use the two modes in tandem" (2002:223). Barry argues that there are degrees of mimesis as not all showing is explicitly visible to the reader. In both parts of focalisation, both narrative modes are used, although diegesis is more than mimesis. It can be concluded that the author has to balance on the two modes to have balanced narrative.

Tomkova argues that it all depends on the skills of the author on how he switches between the modes (2014). It can be argued that the type of focalisation used can affect the mode; for instance in internal focalisation, there is a limitation on what is written which is seen only through the character's eyes. The author's use of external focalisation can also influence the mode. However this does not mean that it is not possible to use 'showing' while using internal focalisation (Tomkova, 2014). In this light, it can be said that the balance in the mode of narrating events draws the reader into the narrative by how



‘revealed’ the events are. It either places the reader in a position to have questions depending on whether the event is partial, mid or full mimetic.

From this analysis it can be said that focalisation has some influence over the choice of narrator (or the other way around) in terms of ‘telling’ the story’. It would be impossible to have an omniscient narrator in an internally focalised passage. It is therefore reasonable that with the change of focalisation in ‘The Oval Portrait’ (1994) the narrators change as well.

Tomkova asserts in her dissertation that the choice of a narrator can directly influence our options for choosing focalisation (2014). It can then be said that an author deliberately chooses their narrator to fit into their choice of the focalisation technique used.

Therefore, it can be said that the narrator in a particular story affects focalisation and the other way round. For example in *What Maisie Knew* (1897) by Henry James, the focus of narration is an adult who tells the story, but his focus is on events as they are perceived and interpreted by the character Maisie, a child. She is not acquainted with the relations going on around her hence the reader must work out the given information and interpret it. Her perception is limited to what she knows.

Chilala (2010) agrees with Bates definition of perception as:

*By perception we mean the ability of an event to touch us so that we feel it. An event becomes experience only when it touches us. Perception involves a meeting between the event and human persons. There are many events in the world which are not experiences for us.... The process of perception, then, is concerned with what happens when an event touches us or enters into our world. We may feel it, see it, touch it, hear it, or smell it. We may read of it or be told about it second-hand as it were but somehow the event enters our world and thus we begin to perceive it Bate (2002: 78-9)*

It is evident that various works have clearly looked at how authors have used the different narratological techniques to evaluate works of literature both by child and adult narrators. However, this research concentrates on analyzing child and adult narrative perspectives.

## 2.2 Child

The definition of child in Africa varies from country to country as for some, a child is defined as one under the age of 18 and for some a minor is one under twenty-one (<http://www.africaanchildforum.org> December 2014). The definition of ‘child’ can be a debatable case at some age but at the age of five and below, this can be clear. This is so because at this age, one is very dependent on an adult. The age of six upwards can be argued as these have the ability to assimilate the world around them and are able to participate in the social issues that surround them. Steinmetz argues that ‘the definition of a child depends largely on each individual and also on social and cultural circumstance (2011). This indicates that people have stereotypical ideas in mind of who a child is depending on the psychological and emotional abilities of a child’ (Steinmetz 2011). Thus it can be argued that the definition of ‘adult’ and ‘child’ can be said to be a social construct. According to Schapiro;

*We have conventional norms for applying the concepts “adult” and “child” but they do not always match our intuitions about how to treat people. Positive law may stipulate, for example, that anyone under the age of seventeen counts as a child from the point of view of the state. However, we can ask in any particular case whether this stipulation is reasonable from a moral point of view. Questions about when to treat children as adults and adults as children, brings out the fact that there can be a gap between our conventional applications of these terms and their application for moral purposes (1999)*

With this in mind, the study will look at a child of ten and below and all omniscient perspective will be treated as adult perspectives. The definition of a child is by age and not by their intellectual trait or physical or emotional capabilities. Adults usually treat a child with ‘mature’ traits to be better and this is merely their own construct or rather a social construct.

## 2.3 Child Narrators

An author deliberately chooses their narrator to convey a particular message in a particular manner. Be it a serious message or not, the author decides how the message is conveyed.

They would use narrators to recount their own experiences or other people's lives in the past and by so doing, they assist the reader to understand the nature of experience of the narrator (Bainito, 2014). Muchiri argues that a narrator charms to the receptivity of the reader by giving them a portrait of their suffering thus showing the interdependent relationship between the narrator and the story they tell (2013).

In her dissertation, Steinmetz points out that a child narrator has the 'energy and vitality which electrifies and spurs the reading process' (2011). In most cases, child narrators usually relay serious messages in a carefree manner, setting a light tone in the novel. Thus the child's voice can be said to have the capacity to convey sensitive messages and still bring a 'mild' reaction from the readers which would otherwise have a negative reaction. An example would be Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1991), existing place names and sensitive issues like the selling of another human (selling of the slave Jim) among others are brought out at a time when these issues would receive a repulsive reaction. However, Huck's voice does not receive the hostility it might have had it been an adult's voice. A child narrator can, among other things, create a degree of distance between the adult author and his or her message that serves to lessen hostility to that message (Seraphinoff, 2007:5).

Eldred D. Jones in "Childhood in African Literature" highlights the treatment of children in some African societies (1998). In this light, he argues that child narrators are used by African authors mainly to disclose the "grim reality of cruelty, harshness and the vulnerable child's experiences". The innocent narrator is chosen deliberately to narrate the events in a story in a jolly, buoyant manner, despite the harsh reality they are exposed to.

Child narrators relay to the reader their lives on a day-to-day experience while bringing out the on a larger scale the social issues affecting their societies and how they fit in all the changes surrounding them. By so doing, they are also affected by societal issues and they assimilate them in their own worldview and this appeals to the reader. Pamela Reynolds notes that "children in [Africa] often live on the edge of dreadful things including community violence, state oppression, warfare, family disintegration and extreme poverty" (2005).

## **2.4 Adult Narrators**

Adult narrators, unlike child narrator are received by the readers just the way they narrate events. The message they relay is taken with the seriousness it deserves and depending on the message it prompts a deserving reaction. An earlier example of Huck Finn passing a controversial message at a time like that does not prompt hostility from the bigoted audience but this would not have been the case if the narrator was an adult narrator. An adult narrator reduces the distance between the intended message and the author. Thus an author could be labelled otherwise.

## **2.5 Unreliable Narration**

Whenever there is a child narrator, the issue of unreliable narration comes up compared to an adult narrator. A question of how 'believable' is their narration based on how they present facts automatically comes to mind. To what extent does the child narrator reflect their true self as a child in terms of knowledge and experience?

Abrams defined unreliable narrator as 'one whose perception, interpretation and evaluation of the matters he or she narrates do not coincide with the opinions and norms of the implied author which the author expects to alert the reader' (1999: 235). The discrepancy between what is said and what is done is key in the narrator's reliability. The inconsistencies and lack of cohesion between the actions and assertions makes a narrator unreliable. Child narrators are expected to behave in a childish way even as they grow in a narrative.

The child narrators are preferred because they are assumed to have the ability to relay things seen as they are or were. They innocently give their accounts while at the same time remain naively critical hence called the innocent eye. Hence the accounts bear some degree of truth and this innocence outweighs the unreliable aspect. The aspect of relaying information without thinking twice or sieving it is what makes them reliable. The author takes measures of making their narrator reliable by alternating perspective or having an omniscient narrator. Revealing of facts that could have been given in another version earlier in a narrative is another way of providing a reliable narrator.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the chapter has reviewed related literature written on the study and it can be seen that studies of this nature have been carried out. Siluonde's study is close to this study though it encompasses plot and narrative techniques. This research concentrates more on how these techniques reflect the child and adult narrative perspective. The next chapter will provide the synopses of the texts under study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SYNOPSIS OF THE TEXTS

#### 3.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter has given the literature review. This chapter will highlight the synopses of the texts under study which are, *We Need New Names*, *Patchwork* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'. A brief overview of these texts will be provided. The next chapter will analyse adult narrative perspective in the texts under study.

#### 3.1 *We Need New Names* By NoViolet Bulawayo.

The text was written by NoViolet Bulawayo and published in 2011. It is set in Zimbabwe, in a shanty compound called Paradise. The story is about the life of a young girl called Darling, full of humour and innocence, who brings out the hardships the country goes through in 1990s after their homes were bulldozed due to a political upheaval.

The novel begins with Darling, the main character, along with her friends, Godknows, Bastard, Stina, Chipu, Sbhv going to Budapest, a nearby suburb to steal guavas. They frequently leave Paradise, their home to steal guavas in Budapest where people live a better life than those in Paradise. For them, this is an adventure as they enjoy each moment. Darling lives with her mother and her aunt, Mother of Bones, who usually takes care of her while her mother is out for work. Her aunt forces her to go to Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro's church up on a mountain. The Prophet is known for healing numerable diseases. The society is given handouts such as clothing, toys and food by the NGO people who pass through the compound with a lorry full of goodies once in a while.

We see Darling and the other children try to leave for their expedition and not cause any attention from their elders who are also busy with their daily business which is, the men under a Jacaranda tree never lifting their heads and the women doing their hair and their talks. The men are hoping for change as it is Election Day and the women are supporting their men folk. Unfortunately, this hope is crushed when no change comes through as the results reveal a continuation of those in power. Paradise is poverty-stricken and the children are aware of this. They discuss how others have opted to leave for greener pastures and some of them wish to do exactly the same. This is also their hope, to leave the 'kaka

country' they live in just like Darling's father and many others. Darling anxiously waits for her time to leave for America to live with her aunt, Aunt Fostalinah. She is envied by her friends for this.

Darling is unable to sleep due to the nightmares she keeps having about how her former house and everyone else's in her neighbourhood was bulldozed. They lost all they had in the shortest period of time. This reveals how they came to live in Paradise, with nothing. Darling's father comes back home to his family after many years, sick and unable to move. It is through him that we see how those who leave to work in mines in other countries later come back home with diseases like whooping cough and HIV/ AIDS. Darling's mother asks Darling to keep her father's return a secret. Mother of Bones brings Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro to pray for him and he also has his superstitious conclusions. Darling's father cannot be taken to the clinic because the doctors are always on strike. Just like him, others who left for greener pastures show up to their relatives who in turn hide them out of shame.

The situation in the country is deplorable as it favours only a few. Bornfree and Messenger advocate for change but their involvement in political activities leads to Bornfree's death. A gang of angry youths go on the rampage, breaks and harasses non-Africans in Budapest with the chants of eliminating Boer and farmers and keeping Africa for Africans. Bornfree's death leaves everyone angry.

A glimpse of how people leave Zimbabwe in search of greener pastures beyond their borders is told. Aware of the restraint they will face in those strange lands but hunger, frustration and disappointment drives them off their mother's land still.

Darling goes to live with her aunt in America and the reality of America is not what she always dreamt of. The reality, Darling observes is different as, America seems to be nobody's country. The way everyone does things in America is different from her own country. She observes that America is a country in which Africans are treated as strangers who hail from the 'interior' in which absurd things happen. Africa is seen as a place where people die with hunger, malaria and other unimaginable things. Africans living here are on their toes working multiples jobs, worrying about their permits to work and study.

Darling, just like other children exposes herself to obscene material such as porn. She as well as her two friends sneak into a room when Aunt Fostalinah is away to watch porn. Parents and guardians are busy working doing a 'thousand' jobs to keep up with life in

America and be able to still send something for their relatives in Africa. The children from Africa and others born in America from Africans lose their roots and culture. The book ends with a chapter in which Darling reminisces on her friends back in Zimbabwe, some of whom left for greener pastures.

### **3.2 *Patchwork* by Ellen Banda-Aaku**

It was written by Ellen Banda-Aaku and published by Penguin books in 2009. It is a story about Pumpkin, a young girl of nine who lives with her disoriented mother, Totela in Tudu Courts and craves for the father's presence who is a married man with a family elsewhere. Her friend Bee, ridicules her for having an absentee father and this annoys her a lot. She is disappointed that she does not live with her father. Her mother, Totela, is drunk most of the time and leaves Pumpkin in the care of the grandmother, Grandma Ponga. She drinks out of the frustration as she was impregnated and not married by her child's father.

Totela is frustrated by this and drinks recklessly referring to beer as 'medicine'. Pumpkin cleans up her mother's mess (vomits) whenever she drinks. She stays fixated at some point in time in her past waiting for Sakavungo to marry her and looking at her wedding dress. This turns her into an alcoholic. On her worst days, Totela takes Pumpkin to her mother, Grandma Ponga, who lives in New Town and runs a tavern. Grandma Ponga does not like Sakavungo (Pumpkin's father) and her hatred stems from way back. It is implicitly indicated that he had an affair with her before he impregnated her daughter. Grandma Ponga advises her daughter that a tavern is no place for children and thus she should look after her and pull her life together.

One day, Pumpkin's father walks in on a drunken Totela and her daughter trying to clean up her mess as usual. This annoys him and he takes his daughter to his home. This changes Pumpkin's life as she gets to live with her new family, away from her mother. It becomes a turning point for Totela as she realises that it is her fault her daughter was taken away. Pumpkin is not welcomed with open-arms by her stepmother, Mama T. She finds comfort in the maid, Sisi.

Pumpkin learns about her father's life as she tries to fit into the new family. She learns that her father is a womaniser as he is seen to be with Totela, Gloria, despite being married to Mama T. Pumpkin goes through a difficult psychological time as she tells inconsequential lies and steals. She steals Mama T's ring but refuses to admit it. She also steals some coins



from Gloria's handbag. Pumpkin visits her mum and finds out that she and Uncle Oscar are having an affair. She loses hope of her mum ever being with her father. She returns to her father's house and lies again, that Uncle Oscar raped her.

Totela amends her ways and decide to get married to Uncle Oscar even though they discover that she is infected with HIV/AIDS. BaDodo dies after attempting to abort Mwanza's baby and this sends Pumpkin in a shock, as she is unable to talk for some time. Gloria treats her from this shock.

Pumpkin grows into a young woman, studies abroad in the United Kingdom and gets married to Mr. Tembo. She becomes the pillar for both families and is so much loved by the father. Mr Sakavungo is a politician, vying for the presidency and Pumpkin helps him. Pumpkin is jealous when she sees a lady who is given a lift by her husband. She approaches the lady and beats her up. She later asks her father to help get rid of this woman.

In the last chapters, Sakavungo loses the elections and shortly no one knows where he is. A call later confirms his death as he was found dead in a car accident. Pumpkin and the others go to identify the body and they discover that he died in the company of a woman. To Pumpkin's surprise, it is the lady she suspected to have been her husband's lover, Salome. The funeral arrangements are done but Pumpkin has a task of pulling her life together to get over her burden of feeling guilty for her father's actions.

### **3.3 'A Hug from Uncle Peter' by Cheela Chilala**

The short story was published in 2011, authored by Cheela Chilala. It is set in Zambia, in Misis compound, a slum in the capital of Zambia, Lusaka. It is a story about a young boy, Mabvuto, who lives with his mother and siblings in abject poverty. They have no hope of a better life. Mabvuto lives his life on the street, begging, trying to help his family. With no hope to enable him have a life like that of other children his age; he goes on his daily business begging for sustenance.

Mabvuto is the first-born son of Tilyenji, a young mother of sixteen, who did not complete her education. She failed her grade seven examination as she spent most of the time selling groundnuts on the streets. She dropped out of school at the age of fifteen and resorted to 'quicker' money. Then Mabvuto was born as a product of her promiscuous ways as she has no idea who his father was. Mabvuto was born at a time when the stepfather was jailed

for robbery. Agness, Tilyenji's mother had no help from relatives at the time of Mabvuto's birth. He was named Mabvuto because he was born at a difficult time in his family.

Misozi and Chimdima were also born out of Tilyenji's whorish ways. She does not know the father to her children. Her children live in poverty and Mabvuto has to beg in the street for survival. He does not get much from the street but hunger takes him back.

One day a ray of hope appears when one of his mother's many 'clients' in her prostitute business promises Mabvuto to count on him for anything. He does this at one of the night's visits. His mother brings a man to her home for the night and he gives her kids a hundred kwacha note and this promise.

Uncle Peter, one of his mother's clients hugs Mabvuto and assures him of his protection and help. His hug gives hope to the poor boy and he later meets him during the day. He runs to him full of hope only to be scolded and he denies ever knowing the boy. The narrative ends at this point when this ridicule crushes his hopes as it leaves him disappointed.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the chapter has looked at the three works under study by giving a brief summary of the works. The next chapter will analyse the adult narrative perspective in the three texts.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ADULT NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN *PATCHWORK*, *WE NEED NEW NAMES* AND “A HUG FROM UNCLE PETER”

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the authors' use of three narratological techniques to show adult narrative perspective, these being focalisation, narrative voice and narrative mode. Each technique will be applied to each text to examine how the adult narrative perspective has been used. Subsequently, similarities and differences will be drawn across texts.

#### 4.1 Narrative Techniques (Focalisation, Narrative Voice and Narrative Mode)

The first technique under analysis is focalisation. Focalisation shapes the entire narrative as it influences certain elements of it. Bal defines focalisation as ‘the relationship between the vision, the agent that sees and that which is seen’ (1985:146). From this, it can be narrowed down to mean that ‘internal’ and ‘external’ focalisation can be explained in simple terms of being character-bound (a focal eye within, telling a story) and an anonymous ‘eye’ seeing from outside, respectively. The other is a case of zero focalisation or omniscient focalisation as traditionally known, a case in which events are narrated from a wholly unrestricted or omniscient point of view.

According to Genette's typology, focalisation as a technique varies in types in terms of degree of restriction to narrative information that is given (Jahn, 2005:173). What makes a story be internally focalised is the giving out of narrative information from the point of view, perception or cognition of one focal character. It is through this character that all is let out to the reader. At times, multiple focalisation is used, a situation in which multiple characters are used to narrate events or an event, giving different viewpoints.

Under narrative voice, the author carefully selects their narrator to fit in with the other techniques applied to create a beautiful work of art meant to be unique but still serve the intended purpose. Narrators are therefore created to narrate the events in a particular narrative and the author chooses to either use a mere voice or tone which plays the role of a telling medium or a character in the narrative who is identified as a distinct, named character (Barry, 2002:223). The first type as identified by Barry (2002) is the

‘homodiegetic’ narrator, one present in the story they tell as a character. The narration is designated to a character that is given an identity, personal traits and is thus seen as a character-narrator. A ‘heterodiegetic’ narrator is the second type and is defined as one absent from the narrative they tell.

The narrative mode has to do with the narrator’s use of language in the narrative to indicate how close the narrator is to the narrated events. The narrator uses language to engage the reader in viewing the narrator’s speech, thought and action. The manipulation of distance either positions the narrator more or less distant to the narrated events. The ‘showing’ and ‘telling’ show the extent of the narrator’s involvement in the narrative. The two modes, that is the mimetic and diegetic will be analysed under narrative mode. Under what Genette (1980) called narrative distance, the narrator is either close or distant to the narrated event thus engaging the reader as well.

These will be applied to analyse the texts under study to ascertain the author’s choice of their agent through whom the events are relayed. The level of analysis when it comes to the narrator or narrative voice is the position of the narrator with respect to the story (Meyer, 2004).

The analysis of these techniques will be used to determine how the adult perspective is handled in the texts under study.

#### **4.2 Adult Narrative Perspective in *Patchwork* by Banda-Aaku**

The author chooses to narrate the events through one focal character whose perspective sweeps through the whole narrative. The focalisation technique is restricted to internal focalisation and the focaliser refers to its identity as ‘I’. The text is divided into two parts: one focalised by a child and the other by the same person as an adult. The author uses a nine-year-old character to relate the events as they happen, giving her a superior position to that of others. Pumpkin, the focal character matures into an adult, a woman of thirty-one, and she continues to narrate her story. The following passage is an example of an adult eye in the narrative: ‘I might as well be nine again, fighting with Bee, except I’m thirty-one. I’m an architect...I see myself in another time and place, for a moment, I’m nine again.’ (Banda-Aaku, 2011: 137,134).

This is maintained throughout the narrative as the author gives the readers the events through a single focaliser. The author uses fixed focalisation in bringing out the events in

the narrative. A close analysis both at global and local level reveal that the technique is maintained in both parts of the text.

The narrative in terms of voice uses a 'homodiegetic' overt narrator who is present in the story. The narrative is told by a nine-year-old girl called Pumpkin in the prologue as well as the first part and an older Pumpkin in the second part. She grows up to be an adult who continues to narrate in the second part of the narrative and this is the point of interest. The narrator's life is central in the narrative as it is a narrative of self-interest oriented by the central character in the story. The narration in this narrative is restricted to 'homodiegetic' narrator.

The narrative mode in the second part of the text is balancing between mimetic and diegetic modes. Most of the narration by the adult narrator is mimetic. According to Barry's analysis of the two modes, mimetic is categorised under partial or mid and full mimesis (2002). Sakavungo and Salome's relationship still remains a mystery by the end of the narrative though it is in mimetic mode. This kind of narration distances the narrator and ultimately the reader from the event even when an event is 'staged' before the reader as it occurs in the present time in the narrative. The diegetic mode is also explored. An example of diegetic mode would be the case in which Pumpkin refers to Sakavungo, her father, and Grandma Ponga's relationship. It occurred in the past before the present time in the narrative. Details are not given and the narrator is still unsure of what happened as she still indicates uncertainty after Sakavungo dies. It is all summarised as: 'Forget whatever happened between Tata and Grandma-Ponga.' (Banda-Aaku, 2011: 213). It refers to something in the past that the narrator tries to show to the reader but it still remains unanswered even as the narrative ends. Thus, the application of Barry's classification of mimesis as partial or mid or full proves relevant.

The adult perspective in the text is alternated with the child perspective through the adult narrator who comes in to inform the reader in the latter part of the narrative. This perspective is mainly concerned with the personal relationships existing between the characters as well as their endeavours. The adult narrator relates on the relations existing between those around her and the extent she goes to remove any possible ridicule to any of those she loves. Pumpkin beats Salome, the woman she suspects to be flirting with her husband. She tries to avoid any possible mistakes not only for her but also from those around her. Vulnerability is seen in the adult narrator as she tries to keep up appearances in an effort to have a perfect family. Pumpkin tries to cover her tracks after fighting with

Salome by calming herself down before reaching home. She admits to lacking self-control as well as her vulnerability (Banda-Aaku, 144-143). This is also clear in the following statement: 'My thoughts and actions are starting to feel unfamiliar and strange even to me (Banda-Aaku, 142).

The adult focal eye gives the reader events from partial to full mimesis. The author strikes a balance between mimetic and diegetic narration in the presentation of events. The narration of issues from past events can be seen when she remembers that it was Bana Bees's charms that caused the death of BaDodo. Adult perspective is explored in this part of the narrative, giving information on events to the reader from her view. There is an aspect of continuity that this perspective brings in as this can be deduced from BaDodo's death. Pumpkin being a participant in the narrative bridges the information gap as it reduces the distance between the narrated events and the reader. She bridges the gap between some events as viewed by the child narrator and the adult one. The perception on the charms distributed to clients by Bana Bee is that they are false herbs as they caused BaDodo's death but still, this is kept within herself and she allows her mother and herself to be treated by her. This also reduces the gap in the diegetic mode as the reader has met the child narrator before the adult one.

Despite this fact, the adult perspective still distances itself and the reader from certain events as information is not fully revealed. The portrayal of Grandma Ponga's relationship with Sakavungo is implied. This is seen in Gloria's statement: 'I understand your grandmother's bitterness' (Banda-Aaku, 172). Grandma Ponga also proves this by storming out of the car when her daughter, Totela, talks about women who internalise the hurt and keep the bitterness inside them until they are bitter (Banda-Aaku, 167).

#### **4.3 Adult Narrative Perspective in *We Need New Names* By NoViolet Bulawayo**

In *We Need New Names*, the focal character through whom the events are perceived refers to herself as 'we', 'me' and 'I' (Bulawayo, 1). A child perspective is initially used. At a global level, the text can be seen as internally focalised as the 'view point is restricted to one focaliser or reflector' (Genette 1980). Jahn clarifies the application of internal focalisation to a 'local' and 'global' level (173). This is to mean the analysis of a text can be done 'globally' on the whole text and 'locally' through respective passages. The events are given to the reader through 'I' as the focalizing eye.

Closer analyses of some passages indicate a deviation in this type of focalisation. The author does not stick to fixed focalisation deliberately as she uses another 'eye' to see beyond the first focaliser. As the following passage indicates;

*They did not come to Paradise. Coming would mean that they were choosers. That they first looked at the sun, sat down with crossed legs, picked their teeth and pondered the decision... Now we are ready for this. They did not come, no. They just appeared...swollen ankles and blisters under their feet, they appeared fatigued by the long walk... they shouldn't have done this to us. We fought to liberate this country... (Bulawayo, 73-75).*

The language used by the focal character denotes experience and hopelessness in the current state of affairs. As the reader, we view things through an experienced knowledgeable adult who expected change after the liberation struggles of Zimbabwe. Still, the country does not give the basic needs and human rights to its citizens. Apart from the child perspective, which introduces the text, adult perspective is one given by what we would classify under zero focalisation as an outside narrator is also used. The experience of the focal eye qualifies the focaliser as an adult.

The adult perspective in the narrative is not given by a character but by an outside narrator who has experienced or witnessed what the initial character-narrator experiences or is yet to. He speaks like an experiencing 'I'. The author selects certain passages and information to be given through 'an anonymous agent, situated outside the fabula, who is functioning as a focaliser' (Bal, 1985: 148). He sees and knows all that the main character has no experience over. There is a shift from a 'character-bound' to an anonymous focaliser. The adult perspective is explored by the author as it is through this narrator that the reader realises the gravity of the situation at hand.

In terms of narrative voice, the initial narrator is a homodiegetic one as they are a character in the story, giving their experiences as they happen. This passage proves the existence of a character-bound narrator: 'We are on our way Budapest: Bastard, Chipso and Godknows and Sipho and Stina and me... there are guavas to steal in Budapest, and right now I'd rather die for guavas' (Bulawayo, 1).

Darling, a character-narrator narrates the experiences of her life. The author chooses a child narrator to bring out salient issues affecting this particular society. Along with her friends, she brings out the life of her society, not only her experiences.

A closer look at selected passages reveals a different narrator, who is outside the story as they cannot be traced as a character in the text. They cannot be traced as a distinct character in the narrative with a particular gender, age or traits though he or she speaks as though part of the problems. The example can be seen from the passage selected:

*And when they asked us where we came from, we exchanged glances and smiled with shyness of child brides. They said Africa? We nodded yes. What part of Africa? We smiled...in America, we saw more food than we had seen in all our lives...We ate like pigs, wolves, like dignitaries; like vultures, like stray dogs, like monsters...how America shocked us at first. If you were not happy with your body you could go to a doctor and say, for instance...I don't like this nose, these breasts....we had applied for school visas because that was the only way out. Instead of going to school, we worked... we were now illegals...when we die, our children will not know how to wail, how to mourn us the right way. (Bulawayo, 145-237).*

Bulawayo introduces an anonymous narrator who is more informed than any other character in the narrative concerning matters affecting the society. The narrator strategically comes in to give an outlook of reality cementing on what the child narrator narrates. A 'heterodiegetic' narrator is used in selected parts of the narrative. Though the narrator refers to himself or herself as 'we' as being part of whatever struggles the characters go through, they still cannot be traced as a character within the fabula.

The narrative mode in the passages narrated by the adult covert narrator introduces their part of narration in a diegetic manner as the narrator relates events which already occurred in the past. The information relayed by the omniscient narrator has already occurred and is given as a presage of what is likely to happen to the characters, who are young and inexperienced. In certain cases, the narrator brings in actual dialogues by characters as they occurred bringing the reader closer to past events. An example of these actual dialogues is clear in these lines:

*They did not come, no. They just appeared...but far too many appeared without the things they should have appeared with. Woman, where is my*



*grandmothers' black stool? I don't see it here. What, are you crazy, old man? I don't have enough of the children's clothes and you're here talking about your grandfathers' stool* (Bulawayo, 73-75).

Throughout the text, the author chooses not to use quotation marks on direct speeches as given by the characters. In the diegetic mode, there is use of direct speech which is a symbol of mimesis.

The adult perspective is complimentary to the child perspective as he or she builds on what has been initially perceived. In the first part of the narrative, after the child perspective relates, the adult perspective comes in to concretize what has been relayed. In the latter part of the narrative, he or she gives some kind of foreshadowing. The picture of how things have been in the past is given and this correlates with what is happening and is likely to happen.

Being an outside eye, the adult narrator is able to see how the hopes of going overseas for the young narrator will finally end as it has happened in the past. The adult narrator speaks as an experienced character who has gone through or has experience over a similar phase. The showing of diegetic mode in actual dialogues tries to bring fiction closer to reality in the narrative in terms of time.

#### **4.4 Adult Narrative Perspective in 'A Hug From Uncle Peter' by Chilala**

The focaliser through whom all events are brought out refers to himself as 'I'. This means events are viewed through a character-focaliser who is a character in their own story. An example can be seen from this: 'I have nothing to smile about. My life is full of problems and pain' (Chilala, 47). The author uses internal focalisation in the first part as he uses an 'inner' eye to reveal events in the narrative.

The first part is focalised from a child's perspective. However, a closer analysis of other parts of the narrative reveals a departure from what is generally seen as internal focalisation. The following lines show this:

*It was dark and cold, the night Mabvuto was born...At the time of his birth, his sixteen-year-old mother, his sixteen-year-old mother, Tilyenji was living with her parents in a run-down two-roomed house in Misisi...Tilyenji was Tiseke's step daughter...Mabvuto was a product of Tilyenji's whorish ways... After Mabvuto came Misozi and Chimdimba* (Chilala, 47, 51).

The focaliser in this part is not present in the narrative but an all-seeing, all-knowing 'eye'. Contrasted with the child perspective is the adult perspective in the form of an omniscient eye. The author switches between internal focalisation and zero focalisation. There is the use of varying focalisation as it switches between the character-bound and an omniscient authoritative 'eye'.

In terms of narrative voice, the adult perspective in the narrative is a heterodiegetic one who is situated outside the fabula, contrasted with an overt child narrator. The covert intrusive narrator serves the function of seeing it all, providing moral judgement and filler comments on the characters. The extract below indicates this:

'Tilyenji was Tiseke's step-daughter. She was born during Agness's first marriage. Tiseke had been married twice before marrying Agness. He had no children from his earlier marriages... Tilyenji was fifteen when she dropped out of school... Mabvuto was a product of Tilyenji's whorish ways' (Chilala, 47, 51).

The adult unseen narrator fills in relevant information in relation to the characters. The author deliberately chooses to switch the narrative voice to give information that the child narrator cannot give. The position of the adult narrator enables the reader to know all the characters by giving relevant information for the reader to understand them better.

The narrative mode explored by the adult omniscient eye is mainly diegetic as it involves relaying information of events which occurred in the past. The diegetic mode as earlier indicated shows the distance between the reader and the narrated events. This is so as events do not happen in their 'eyes'. The narrator 'tells' only that which has happened in the past but he manages to recount past dialogues.

The adult eye provides information through flashback as it takes the reader back in time to provide relevant information. It is this information which helps the reader understand the present time in the narrative better. With the positioning of being outside the fabula, the perspective is authoritative. The adult narrator provides diegetic narration which is recounted at some point with actual dialogues as if the characters involved were staged before us.

#### **4.5 Similarities and Differences in Adult Perspectives in *Patchwork*, *We Need New Names* and ‘A Hug from Uncle Peter’**

The authors in the three texts use the adult perspective and alternate them with child perspective for a purpose. The similarities and differences in the use of the adult perspective by the three authors are highlighted below.

##### **4.5.1 Similarities in Adult Perspective in *Patchwork*, *We Need New Names* and ‘A Hug from Uncle Peter’**

There are similarities among the three texts. The adult perspectives in the *We Need New Names* and ‘A Hug from Uncle Peter’ are all employed to give knowledge like that of a God-like looking eye on the events and characters before the present time in the narrative.

The other similarity between the two is that both adult perspectives are situated outside the fabula they inform the reader of. They are heterodiegetic. They all fall under zero focalisation as they know more than the characters and they pass moral judgements on the actions of the characters. They are both knowledgeable and experienced as can be deduced from the way they narrate.

Coming to the adult perspective, both texts explore the diegetic mode of telling what they perceive as they relay what already happened. Therefore, there is weighing of what is happening in the present time of the narrative and what already happened. They both relate past events and still recount past dialogues and this tries to bring the reader closer to the past events.

##### **4.5.2 Differences in Adult Perspectives in *Patchwork*, *We Need New Names* and ‘A Hug from Uncle Peter’**

The difference between the two novels is that the adult perspective in *We Need New Names* is there to give knowledge on the state of affairs in the country and its consequences. The ‘eye’ also gives a presage on how the lives of those who leave the country for greener pastures end-up. The knowledge is that of one who either has experience by being a victim of the situation or having lived long enough to see those who have gone through it. In ‘A Hug From Uncle Peter’, the adult perspective is there to give information that will help the reader understand the characters and the narrative better by giving past information.

Different from the two texts, *Patchwork* uses a homodiegetic adult narrator to give the readers an adult perspective. The adult perspective falls under internal focalisation unlike

the two texts where it is under zero focalisation. Pumpkin as an adult orients the narrative from her point of view and this is maintained throughout the second part of the text.

The author uses a distinct, named character, with a personal history and gender among other things. Coming to the narrative mode, the adult perspective mainly explores the mimetic mode of narrating as they 'stage' the events to the reader as they occur. The diegetic mode is also used.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The chapter has examined the use of the three narratological techniques in an attempt to bring-out the adult narrative perspectives in the three works under study. The similarities and differences between and among these texts have been examined as observed from the texts. It can be said that there are more similarities than differences in the way these perspectives are brought out. The next chapter will look at the child perspective in the texts under study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHILD NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN *PATCHWORK*, *WE NEED NEW NAMES* AND 'A HUG FROM UNCLE PETER'

#### 5.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter examined the adult narrative perspective in the three texts which are *Patchwork*, *We Need New Names* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'. This chapter will go further and analyse the child narrative perspective in the texts under study as used by the authors. This will be done by applying the three narrative techniques which are focalisation, narrative voice and narrative mode. In this regard, the similarities and differences will then be drawn.

#### 5.1 Narrative Techniques

The three narratological concepts which are focalisation, narrative voice and narrative mode will be applied to the three texts. Focalisation as earlier stated has to do with the 'eye' that sees and the angle from which it views events. According to Siluonde, perspective has to do with the point of view (the position taken by the narrator), voice of the narrative (the person telling the story) has to do with the presence or absence of the narrator in the narrative (2015). It has to do with how what is perceived is told to the reader. Suffice to say that it is not always that the person narrating uses his or her own point of view. Thus it is not always that the focaliser and the narrator are one person.

For instance in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), the narrator uses different focalisers as she has access to the feelings and thoughts of the characters. Consequently, the relationship between perspective and narrative voice cannot be over-emphasised as they show how events are viewed and told to the reader. The narrative mode comes in to show the intimacy between the narrator and the narrated events.

The author's use of child perspective is germane at this point of the study as it will be analysed in the three narratives under study. It is through the child perspective that all is filtered.

## 5.2 Child Narrative Perspective in *Patchwork*

The focalisation technique in this narrative is restricted to internal focalisation and the focaliser refers to its identity as 'I'. The text is divided into two parts and the first part is focalised by a child. Pumpkin, a girl of nine, orients the narrative in the first part of the novel. The lines below show the existence of a child in this focal position: 'I'm two different people according to the Registrar of Births...My birth was registered twice...Even though I was too young to understand I knew. I knew I was a bad seed... they all looked at me as though they have never seen a nine-year old girl' (Banda-Aaku, 2011: vii-I).

Nine-year-old Pumpkin is the narrator in the narrative. The author uses a homodiegetic narration in which the young Pumpkin tells us a narrative of self-interest. The young narrator informs the reader from her view about her life and that of those around her. She is the protagonist and above other characters. An intrusive overt child narrator is maintained throughout the first part from the prologue to the end of part one. The first-person narration is placed in the innocent eyes of a child. It is clear that the narrator shows interest in the outcome of the narrative in that she concerns herself with the choices made by the characters. She worries about the life led by other characters thereby tries to draw the reader in her line of interest.

Coming to narrative mode, the most explored form is mimesis. The narrator narrates events to the reader through staging the action before them. As a result, this places the reader under the illusion that the events are happening right before their eyes. She does more of showing than telling though her impression comes out clear through her narration. An example of a mimetic situation is the scene between Pumpkin and the old man Sibanda, the owner of the Bottle store where she is sent to buy beers by her mother, Totela. She describes him as having 'a hunched back and a wrinkled face but his hair is as black as charcoal' (Banda-Aaku, 13). This creates a vivid picture in the minds of the readers as though they have seen the character in person. The narrator's description of most events, actions and characters is clear and precise. The diegetic mode is also used by the narrator as she relates the incident of Grandma Ponga's attack on Tata when she finds out about him acquiring another birth certificate for Pumpkin just to give her a name of his choice (Banda-Aaku, viii).

The child perspective in the first part of the narrative informs the reader by showing events explicitly while exhibiting extreme knowledge. This is portrayed in both dialogue and narration as Pumpkin's description of things such as car models and shades of colours. These descriptions are too good for a nine-year-old. Pumpkin's description of car models and colours is too precise for someone her age. This is evident in these lines: 'A group of children is crawling in and out of the battered body of a white Peugeot 404...the store is dim... the two bulbs...only give out only a faint blue glow' (Banda-Aaku, 13).

The use of language by the child-narrator is exaggerated as compared to other child characters in the text. This can clearly be seen in her use of lexis both in speech and thought as can be seen in the following sentence: 'Mama T is charging down the corridor screaming. For a fraction of a second, as she charges towards me...' (Banda-Aaku, 97). A comparison of language in terms of syntax between Pumpkin and her friend Bee reveals this imbalance. Bee responds to Pumpkin's question when she comes looking for BaDodo as is clear in the following sentence: 'Maybe she go toilet,...You want play...I'm sure she go toilet...' (Banda-Aaku, 19, 20). Pumpkin use of language is as that of an adult narrator.

The child perspective in this narrative through nine-year-old Pumpkin is concerned with portraying her life and the relationships existing among those around her. She comes out as both an innocent and knowledgeable narrator as evident in the example extracts in the preceding paragraph. It is a young focaliser though not a young narrator because of the heightened language and the seeming experience. Pumpkin gives a picture of both a child and adult view through her innocence and extreme knowledge, respectively. Naivety is still evident as she describes the sexual process between BaDodo and Mwanza. Her view of events is innocently brought out as a child would.

As a child narrator, Pumpkin struggles to keep up appearances to her friends, Bee and Sonia, while she hurts from within for having an absentee father and a drunk for a mother. She has to take care of her mother and justify her father's absence to avoid any embarrassment. Pumpkin passes opinions on other characters and provides initial information which the adult perspective builds on.

### **5.3 Child Narrative Perspective in *We Need New Names***

The technique of focalisation in the narrative is internal and zero focalisation. The eye through which events are revealed to us as the reader initially is through a child. Nine-

year-old Darling, who is the protagonist, perceives the narrative. The focal eye refers to themselves as 'I', 'we' and 'me' denoting their presence in the narrative. It is clear in these lines: 'We are on our way to Budapest: Bastard, Chipo and Godknows and Sipho and Stina and me... there are guavas to steal in Budapest, and right now I'd rather die for guavas...I'm thinking about how Godknows has a big mouth that will get him slapped one day' (Bulawayo, 1). This suggests the existence of a focal eye in the narrative. The focalisation technique used initially is internal and particularly, fixed focalisation which is alternated with an adult omniscient eye.

In terms of narrative voice, the author uses a homodiegetic distinct narrator who is a young girl of ten telling her experiences. The child narrator is present throughout the narrative and is alternated with an outside anonymous narrator. Darling's experiences in the narrative are narrated to the reader and it is through her story that serious social issues affecting her society are brought out. The narrator refers to herself as 'I' and it is an 'I' talking about themselves. It is an experiencing 'I'.

The narrative mode in the part where the child narrator narrates is mainly mimetic as the narrator invites the reader to follow along and 'watch' as if the events were performed before their eyes. The narrator shows the readers events as they occur. For instance, Darling's experiment on the attempt to get rid of Chipo's stomach (Bulawayo, 78). However, a balance is struck between the two modes as the narrator has scenes where they simply recount past experiences. An example of such narrations includes: 'Mother had not wanted father to leave for South Africa to begin with, but it was a time when everybody was going to South Africa and other countries, some near, some far, some very, very far' (Bulawayo, 91). The scene in which she thinks about how her mother did not want her father to for leave for South Africa only comes to her after he comes back sick and is unable to move.

The child perspective fills the narrative with humour at the same time conveying a serious message affecting the society and its people. Darling, as a victim of social problems, passes the message on to the reader as an innocent eye would. Her naivety or innocence fills the narrative in the part she narrates. This is evident in her ignorance about how Chipo becomes pregnant as in these lines: 'Where exactly does a baby come out of? The same place it goes into the stomach. How exactly does it get into the stomach? First, Jesus's mother has to put it in there. No, not Jesus's mother. A man has to put it in there...Then if



a man put it in there, why doesn't he take it out?' (Bulawayo, 1-2). Being innocent takes precedence in her view of this event.

This perspective builds on the forehand information given by the adult perspective. It is there to reinforce on the initial view. This focalisation allows for an innocent eye with no much experience and knowledge thus her narration of events hinges on limited knowledge. Darling gives the picture of issues affecting citizens in Zimbabwe after the upheaval as well as the life and the problems affecting those in the Diaspora, particularly America. As a narrator placed in a focal position, she is part of the life she portrays. Most of her narration is 'staged' before the reader as it happens.

#### **5.4 Child Narrative Perspective in 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'.**

Internal focalisation is initially used to open the narrative as a character in the story gives the reader his experience. Mabvuto, a nine-year-old boy relates his difficult life as a street kid. The focalisation is left in the hands of a child and this is clear in these lines: 'I am just a young boy. My mother says I am nine years old. But am thin like the mosquitoes which always trouble me at night' (Chilala, 1997). The author utilises the combination of narrator and focalisation in the initial part of the narrative and later couples it with an anonymous adult narrator.

The narrative voice used is a homodiegetic one as the author uses a character in the narrative who tells their experience as a child in a poverty-stricken environment. Mabvuto is the protagonist in the story. An example of the presence of a child narrator is evident in this extract: 'my life is full of problems and pain...I am only nine years old but I have to feed my family' (Chilala, 47). It is alternated with an adult omniscient narrator who gives foreground information.

Narrative mode in the narrative fluctuates between mimetic and diegetic. The child perspective relays information that has to do with Mabvuto's family and the state in his life. The diegetic mode is mainly used due to the nature of the genre as the information has to be condensed within a short space. This mode can be seen in these lines: 'I remember a time when our home completely ran out of food...My family expected me to do something. I was like a father to them' (Chilala, 50). The mimetic mode is also used by the narrator as is evident here: 'I sat on the pavement to wait for my friends...I felt excited when I saw Uncle Peter...' (Chilala, 52-3).

The child perspective in the narrative maintains fixed focalisation as the narrative is focalised from Mabvuto's viewpoint. Apart from the adult perspective, the child perspective gives the details from their innocent angle of viewing things. The narrator as a child in its naivety believes in a man who only comes to visit his mother for sexual pleasure for one night and places his hopes in him. As a young narrator, his syntax is very simple as he uses simple language reflecting his age.

## **5.5 Similarities and Differences in Child Narrative Perspective**

The portrayal of the child narrative perspective in the three texts shows similarities and differences. These will be separately discussed with vivid examples under each.

### **5.5.1 Similarities in Child Narrative Perspective**

The information in the three texts is relayed to the reader through character-focalisers in that all the focalisers are placed within the fabula. Not only this, but also that they are narrators qualifying them as homodiegetic ones. They all relate narratives of themselves. This also means that they are given an advantage over the other characters. They all comment and pass their opinions on other characters. In *We Need New Names*, Darling passes her thoughts and judgements on other characters. It is evident in these lines: 'Even the stones know that Sbho is pretty, prettier than all of us here, prettier than all the children in Paradise' (Bulawayo, 13).

*Patchwork's* Pumpkin also passes her opinion on issues and people. An example of how she passes her opinion on Old man Sibanda and how she knows men of his kind who are cowards as they abuse children. This is evident in this extract: 'I know men like him, who do bad things to children are cowards (Banda-Aaku, 16).

In 'A Hug from Uncle Peter', Mabvuto informs the narrative and makes general comments as in these lines: 'Only children of the rich are fat. They eat good food...the rich people they live well... (Chilala, 47). All the narrators in the three narratives narrate as first persons in the narratives.

The child perspective in *Patchwork* provides information on which the adult perspective is built. A child being the initial focaliser in the two narratives relays information on which the latter perspective builds on. In this regard, the child perspective opens up the narratives thus providing forehand information. 'A Hug from Uncle Peter' employs the adult narrator to provide initial information which is relevant for the reader's story development. All the

narratives begin with the child perspective. Generally, all the three narratives shift in terms of tone between the child and adult perspectives, with the former giving a light tone to the scenes presented. In *We Need New Names* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter', the authors employ alternating narrating voices while in *Patchwork*, the child and adult voices are separated by the parts of the texts.

Another similarity is that the child-narrators informing the three narratives are all portrayed as victims of disintegrated families. In 'A Hug from Uncle Peter', for Mabvuto, the thought of ever knowing his father is out of question as not even his mother knows who his father is. His effort to try and find out the truth from his mother yields nothing as is evident in the text: 'The girl had no idea who the real father of the boy was because she had sold her body to a lot of men, most of them total strangers (Chilala, 51). Pumpkin in *Patchwork* has an absentee father in the first part of her narration as her father lives with his family elsewhere. Even when she gets to live with him, there is no hope of seeing her mother married to her father. This creates a void in Pumpkin's life which she tries to fill up by seeking attention even when it means lying.

In *We Need New Names*, Darling's father also leaves his family in search of money in South Africa and forgets about them. He does this against his wife's wish. They do not hear from him until his return as a sick man unable to move. This is evident in the passage: 'Father comes back after many years of forgetting us, of not sending us money, of not loving us, not visiting us, not anything us...' (Bulawayo, 89).

All the narratives in question display some extent of naivety or innocence in relaying certain information, typical of child perspective. In 'A Hug from Uncle Peter', Mabvuto is able to trust the assurance of a strange man who visits his mother one night. The man, Uncle Peter assures Mabvuto he would always be there for him should he need him. However, the purpose for his visiting Mabvuto's mother is for his sexual pleasure and he would not want anything associated with it disclosed during the day, not even by Mabvuto's. His innocence overshadows his judgement as he places his hopes in Uncle Peter.

In *Patchwork*, Pumpkin tells inconsequential lies just to get attention without thinking of the consequences. She lies about Uncle Oscar defiling her for no apparent reason even when she is aware of what can come of it (Banda-Aaku, 114). Her description of Mwanza

and BaDodo's sexual act also displays some innocence but she still keeps it a secret (Banda-Aaku, 22).

Darling's description of the sexual act between her mother and the stranger who visits in the night and disappears by morning also confirms her innocence (Bulawayo, 64). It is evident in this extract: 'Now Mother is moaning; the man, he is panting. The bed is shuffling like a train taking them somewhere important that needs to be reached fast' (Bulawayo, 64). This comes as an affirmation on her limited knowledge of how one becomes pregnant as in the case of Chipo. Darling's choice of words like, 'mute-mute' to show the degree of the meaning. This is clear in these lines as she describes Chipo: 'She is not mute-mute, it's just that when her stomach started showing, she stopped talking' (Bulawayo, 2).

### **5.5.2 Differences in Child Narrative Perspective**

The difference between *Patchwork* and the other two narratives is that the child-focaliser and the child-narrator seem to be different at certain points. Pumpkin sees but the narrator's voice does not seem to be that of a nine-year-old. Her description of colours and car models among others exhibits extreme knowledge, not that of a child-narrator. This is evident in this extract: 'The sun is getting ready to set. It's shedding its yellow hue for orange and the clouds are floating across the sky have turned a purplish grey...' (Banda-Aaku, 13). Pumpkin's knowledge on colour shades as well as her use of lexis is remarkable. She does not come out convincing as a child-narrator in certain parts of the narrative in that she exhibits extreme knowledge.

*We Need New Names* explores humour in its portrayal of events irrespective of the gravity of the problems raised as compared to the other two narratives. This can be seen as she describes her father after he returns home, sick and unable to move. It is clear in these lines: '...his body a black terrible stick...so thin like he eats pins and wires...his skin sticking to the bone like somebody ironed it on...' (Bulawayo, 89-101). Darling humorously brings out a serious situation which otherwise would arouse grave feelings from the reader. She talks about a dreadful incurable disease at that time with humour.

The other difference is that the narration of events in *We Need New Names* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter' alternates between child and adult narrative perspective. The two narratives utilise this alternating style as there are alternating narrative voices. The child narrating voice is alternated with an adult voice which is in omnipotent view. This shift

allows variety in tone and mood in the narratives. In this regard, the child perspective in the narratives is thus complemented as it is reinforced in that whatever they view has its beginning reviewed by the adult perspective. As compared to the child perspective, the adult perspective is all knowing. *Patchwork* is divided into two parts, one told by a child narrator and the other by an adult narrator.

The other difference is that the narrator in *Patchwork* exhibits a kind of narration in which her impression comes out as she is concerned with the choices of other characters in the narrative. Unlike her, the two narrators in the other two narratives do not show much of this creating a distance between their narration and the events they narrate. The outcome of the narrative in the two is left to take its course unlike in *Patchwork* where the narrator seems to have interest.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

It can be said that child narrators in the narratives view events in some parts of the narrative and are used along with adult narrators. Generally, it has been observed that child perspective in *We Need New Names* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter' builds on the foreground information provided by the adult perspective. In some cases, the perspectives are there simply to give a contrasting tone to the narrative, thereby giving a different feeling to the reader.

The differences in child perspective in the three texts give a different tone as the focal-narrators narrate events giving a different tone to each narrative. Given the different contexts, *Darling* fills the narrative with humour, *Mabvuto* gives a gloomy feeling to the reader as they read and *Pumpkin* gives a sober feeling to the narrative. It can be said that there are more similarities than differences among the narratives. The next chapter will discuss the findings as provided in this and the previous chapters.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings as provided in the two previous chapters. The two narrative perspectives which are the child and adult perspectives will be discussed in line with the set objectives. The significance of the similarities and differences between the two narratives will then be drawn.

#### 6.1 Findings on Child Perspective

This section will look at the findings on adult narrative perspective as analysed in chapter four of this research. It will further be sub-divided into the findings according to the three texts under study. The findings will be itemised and then discussed.

##### 6.1.1 Child perspective in *We Need New Names* by Bulawayo

1. The narrative is focalised through a child character narrator.

In *We Need New Names*, the child narrator sees and relays what she sees to the reader. Darling, a young girl of ten narrates the experiences of her life as they happen. The character-narrator fills the narrative with energy which pushes the reader to read on as she narrates. Through her eyes, the grave situations such as hunger, unemployment which drives Darling and her friends to Budapest to steal guavas is lightened. She narrates the serious social calamities that surround Zimbabwe in 1990s.

The parents in Paradise are unable to provide the basic need for their children as this is beyond them. This situation leads the children to Budapest and this in turn affects the reader as it draws them to sympathise with them. Darling and her friends behave as though they are going for an adventure but in the actual sense, hunger drives them to Budapest in search of guavas. The narrator lightens the hunger situation by mixing it with fun thus the gravity of the situation is lessened.

2. The child perspective fills the narrative with humour as well as the use of imagery which enhances the reading process.

The tragedies described by the child perspective are mixed with humour, thereby including a light moment amidst tough conditions. This can be seen in these lines: 'We didn't always live in this tin, though. Before, we had a home and everything, we were happy. It was a real house made of bricks, with a real kitchen, sitting room, two bedrooms. Real walls, real windows...real everything. Now all we have is this bed sitting on bricks and poles' (Bulawayo, 63). The use of the word 'tin' is to vividly describe what kind of house she lives in. For Darling, the loss of her home is a traumatic experience as it makes her unable to fall asleep most of the night. The trauma of the experience she goes through is how the reader gets to know how the families came to live in Paradise.

Her view on how they lose their homes before they come to Paradise is a sorrowful one as it affects Darling. Their homes are bulldozed and this leaves Darling psychologically affected as she has difficulties in falling asleep afraid of the return of the bulldozing machines. This is evidenced in this extract: 'Nobody knows that sometime I do not sleep. Even if I want to sleep I cannot because if I sleep the dream will come and I don't want it to come. I am afraid of the bulldozers and those men and the police, afraid...' (Bulawayo, 65). It is this fateful day that brings Darling and her family along with other families to Paradise, where food and other basic needs lack. The reader is drawn to sympathise with the narrator, a traumatised juvenile who still brings humour to the narrative.

Darling's perception on the voting taking place which brings new hope to the elders is humorous. This is her view: 'The men are not like their usual grumpy, down casted, withdrawn, sitting under the Jacaranda tree with their chests jilting out and their heads held high... The women also make themselves beautiful and giggle out as they observe their men talk about change, about a new country, about democracy and about elections. But for the narrator, she does not care about change' (Bulawayo, 60). On Election Day, the children play even as they anxiously await the return of their parents, who also take long. They comfort themselves by trying to justify their parents delay. Their sadness disappears after seeing the adults appear. The child's perspective shows less concern even when they see the adults withdraw their excitement and hope from their voting as the current government continues.

The child perspective in its buoyancy brings out the dreadful diseases of the time. The effects of the AIDS pandemic through Darling's father are brought out with the utilisation of the innocent eye as Darling describes him with a mixture of detestation and humour as expressed in this sentence:

*'Father comes home after many years of forgetting us, of not sending us money, not loving us, not visiting us, not anything us and parks in the shack, unable to move, unable to talk properly, unable to anything, vomiting and vomiting, Jesus just vomiting and defecating on himself... his body a black terrible stick...so thin like he eats pins and wires...his skin sticking to the bone like somebody ironed it on...' (Bulawayo, 89-101).*

It can be noted from this extract that humour and imagery are explored by the child's view to relay this sensitive information. Her use of humour to describe something so grave is an advantage to the narrative as it enhances the reading process. The child narrator cheerfully comments on serious issues affecting the society. She contrasts the five dollars and a she-goat charged by Prophet Reverend Bitchington Mborro for him to heal her father to the absence of doctors in clinics as they are ever on strike. The bribes taken by the police to free the erring citizens are not an exception. The mixture of pranks in bringing out real life situations gives the novel a light tone. The main focus for the focalizing character is to pass on the message as it is seen.

3. Naivety is expressed when narrating certain events due to the lack of experience and knowledge.

The view on how the narrator understands Chipo's pregnancy is displayed without much understanding. Lack of understanding on how one becomes pregnant as well as how the baby comes into the world is one that the narrator does not comprehend. The reader is placed in the position to watch the limited view of the focal character as they are aware of the process of birth. The 'staged' operation in an attempt to remove the baby from Chipo's stomach displays this naivety and turns out to be comical as well.

### **6.1.2 Child Perspective in *Patchwork* by Banda-Aaku**

1. The narrative employs internal focalisation through a child character-narrator.

The character-narrator in *Patchwork* sees and relays information to the reader as it happens. Pumpkin opens the narrative through a prologue and gives a child narrative perspective as a nine-year-old. From her perspective, the reader is drawn into the narrative as is the case with most child narrators. Pumpkin gives her experiences as she goes through them.

2. The perspective displays much of the actions and decisions of the child character as a stagnation to a psychological stage in which she wished for a complete family.



Living with her mother and not able to live with her father is a major problem as it obscures her view of life. She has to constantly prove to Bee that she has a father. Being teased by her friend for having an absentee father, Pumpkin has to justify his being absent by creating a defensive hedge even when it hurts her within. While living with her mother, Totela, Pumpkin feels she has to look after her mother. She creates a perfect picture of her father and idolises him.

Moving in with her father is yet another challenge to her. She tries to get attention whenever possible. Pumpkin limits her view on what she really wants, which is her father marrying her mother. She dislikes the partners of the two people she loves the most. Pumpkin steals Mama T's wedding ring just for the sake of doing it as she later spits it out into the rubbish pit. She denies having done it though Mama T is convinced of her being a 'compulsive liar' (Banda-Aaku, 95). She also steals from Gloria and she does not understand why she does it (Banda-Aaku, 74). Her perception of her mother's new relationship with Uncle Oscar still does not please her and she fabricates a story of being raped by the man without thinking of the repercussions. She lies just to get attention.

3. The perspective reveals certain information as an adult narrator though focalised by a child.

Pumpkin's dialogues with other character is presented in a simple manner as that of a child without much complication. Her narration says otherwise as it is way above her age. However, Pumpkin's description of colours portrays a knowledgeable narrator older than the narrator. This can be seen from these lines:

*'Yesterday, Tata bought Mama a car: a bright red Fiat, registration number AAC 1951. Nineteen fifty-one that's the year she was born... I know Ma's mind, like mine is in the dark green Mercedes... The sun is getting ready to set. It's shedding its yellow hue for orange and the clouds are floating across the sky have turned a purplish grey... with the light brown soil...the walls of the bottle store is coated in bright yellow oil paint... a group of children crawling in and out of the battered body of a white Peugeot 404'* (Banda-Aaku, 2,7,13).

Pumpkin's knowledge of car models and colours according to her description suggests that her narration is that of a mature person instead of a child. Not only in this instance do we see this but also her other narration as in this passage: 'Mama T's voice blasts through my

sleep; it's a thunderous roar that rattles the window... Mama T is charging down the corridor screaming. For a fraction of a second, as she charges towards me...' (Banda-Aaku, 97). From the above examples, it is evident that the child-narrator's language in terms of her use of lexicon and syntax does not befit that of a nine-year-old. She can not be compared with her mates though other aspects of class can come in.

### **6.1.3 Child Perspective in 'A Hug from Uncle Peter' by Chilala**

1. The child perspective is internal and fixed as it is left to one character.

'A Hug from Uncle Peter' explores the child perspective through the eyes of nine-year-old Mabvuto. Through him, the view of life as a poverty-stricken street kid is brought out. Mabvuto's view of the life he leads does not give him any hope for a better future both for him as well as his siblings. The child perspective is there to bring out the experiences of the character- narrator as they happen.

2. The child perspective is there for continuity as it bridges the gap.

The perspective is employed to bridge the gap between the initial alternate adult view and his view. Mabvuto relays information that is a continuation from what is relayed by the alternate perspective. Though he introduces the story to the reader, he only narrates events that depend on the alternate perspective for the completion of the story.

3. The narrator in this perspective uses simple lexis

As a narrator, Mabvuto's use of language is simple as that of a nine-year-old as it is understood easily. The two perspectives complement each other as the initial view is in line with the latter one. Being the focaliser as well as the voice that narrates enables clarity in terms of narration of events.

## **6.2 Findings on Adult Perspective**

The following are the findings on adult perspectives in the three narratives under study:

### **6.2.1 Adult perspective in *We Need New Names* by Bulawayo**

1. Adult perspective is given through zero focalisation

The adult perspective comes is there to supplement what the initial focaliser sees. Along with the child focaliser, the adult perspective comes in to give initial information. It narrates from an all-knowing position. The perspective reveals how the people now living

in Paradise just appeared not much to their choice. The preceding scene is one in which the child perspective brings out how she is unable to sleep due to fear of the bulldozers that brought down their homes and brought them out of what they knew to be home. The perspective is alternated with the child perspective.

2. The perspective does not explore the characters' minds and feelings but rather gives information as an experiencing 'I'.

The narrator in this case does not get into the minds of the characters in the narrative. The narrator tells the story retrospectively, as he or she gives an impression of one who has experienced what the initial character/narrator is experiencing. The narrator is more knowledgeable in his narration. This perspective draws the reader to his interest which comes out in his narration.

The two perspectives are alternately used and this shows the gravity of the situation and how the two are linked. The perspectives are a building block to each other. While the child perspective gives the picture of how their houses were bulldozed leaving them with nothing and leading them to Paradise; the adult perspective comes in to emphasize what the earlier focaliser saw by revealing how these people appeared in Paradise. This perspective depicts a continuation from what the former focaliser sees. From the people losing their houses and moving to Paradise as shown by the child perspective, the adult perspective perceives how everyone appears without much of the things they treasured. The people complain of what has happened and how despite being liberalised, fellow country-men lead them out of their homes. The child perspective reinforces what the adult perspective has already seen.

Through the child view, it is revealed to the reader how people left the country in search of greener pastures. The child-narrator, Darling as well as the friends, Bastard and Godknows, aspire to leave the country. This reveals that the citizens have no hope for change as leaving the country is the only option that may present better opportunities. The adult perspective shows the other side of those who left. It reveals that those who left only left because things have fallen apart. They flee the country which belongs to their ancestors to live in strange lands despite being aware of the restraint that awaits them in those lands where they do not belong. From the child perspective, leaving the country is prestigious but the adult perspective reveals the hardships that come along with it.

3. The adult perspective foreshadows how the narrative will end.

Before the narrative comes to the end, the adult perspective brings out the challenges faced by those in the Diaspora. The perspective portrays the life they live and the problems they face in the Diaspora. It is through this perspective that the reader is made aware of the challenges those in the Diaspora face. They are perceived as those that come from lands where people die from cholera, hunger and malaria among other things. Escaping from immigration officers as they live with expired study permits becomes their core occupation. They, along with their children, lose their sense of belonging to their countries as years go by. This is done before the end of the narrative thus foreshadowing how the life of the characters will be by the end.

### **6.2.2 Adult Perspective in *Patchwork***

1. The adult perspective in *Patchwork* is internal.

Pumpkin, a thirty-one-year-old woman, relays information as it happens. We, as the reader are told things from an adult perspective. Her view on life and those around her is influenced by her father as she depends on his opinion on almost all her decisions. She returns from United Kingdom and gets married to Tembo. She still clings to her father as part of her overall authority on her actions.

2. The perspective displays the actions of the character narrator as one who aspires for a perfect family.

The perspective focuses much on the life of Pumpkin and the relationship she has with those around her. Pumpkin as a character is concerned with the decisions made by those around her as she is affected by them and this is what the perspective is keen on revealing. The emotional distance between the narrator and the characters as well as the narrative is lessened. Pumpkin is concerned with the outcome of the narrative. Her view of her husband's suspected mischief with Salome ends up in a shameful manner as she is sued for assault. Pumpkin takes the matter as well as Salome to her father for an ultimate solution. She avoids confronting any situations that are problematic and rushes to her father.

Pumpkin's perception on a number of issues is avoidance. She reads Gloria's letters after she and her father break-up but still she refuses to see her Tata for the man that he really still the narration of the event is implicitly relayed to the reader. She refuses to see what may reveal her father's true colours as she holds him in high esteem. Mama T's confession of Sakavungo's illness, another diegetic revelation, and his sleeping with young girls in

the hope of getting his strength back is not what Pumpkin wants to hear or think about (Banda-Aaku, 172). She refuses to see the bad side of things or a reality which is not as good as she expects.

**3. The adult perspective is more similar to the child perspective.**

However, there is little discrepancy between the child and adult voice. The child and adult Pumpkin sound more or less the same in dialogue as spoken by the characters is that as depicted by a child narrator. Compared to Bee, Pumpkin as a speaking child and as a meta-narrator displays knowledge as she comes out more eloquent in her use of lexis. She is, for this reason, more or less similar to the adult narrator.

This can be likened to the famous beginning of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1991) in which Pip, the first person narrator avails information as he makes his own imaginative conclusions on his relatives while he visits their tombs. He analyses them based on the shapes of their tombstones. Through his internal thoughts, knowledge and attitudes, an adult narrator is clearly visible. This is reflected through style, that is, his use of elaborate language and ironically extravagant lexis ([www.anglistik.unifraiburg.de/narrativesituation](http://www.anglistik.unifraiburg.de/narrativesituation)). Focalisation in this case wavers between the knowledge and the attitudes of the adult narrator and the experience of the child narrator as is the case in *Patchwork*.

**4. The perspective is there for continuity and variety.**

It can be said that the adult perspective in this narrative is there to link the actions of the first part of the narrative to the final part of it. The initial focal character introduces the narrative in which events that are seen by the child character are later built on by relaying how they turn out. The resolution of what the child perspective initially introduces is seen through the adult perspective. Not only does it give the narrative continuity but also variety. The tone of the narrative changes by virtual of a child and adult being the focaliser.

**6.2.3 Adult perspective in 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'**

**1. The adult perspective is there to give initial information which is needed for the development of the story.**

The perspective of the adult eye comes in to give the past events that link the story to the present time in the narrative. The focaliser sees from outside like a 'look-down' eye and

sees all the characters both in the past and present time in the narrative. This perspective narrates events prior to the narrative time to help the story develop.

It provides a link between what the focaliser can see and what the adult perspective has seen. The adult view knows all the characters as well as their lives. The adult narrator's view of the life Tilyenji and her children lead is not different from what Mabvuto sees. A situation with no hope is what both perspectives present.

3. The adult perspective creates no impression as they narrate without any impression given.

Both the adult and child perspectives seem to render the story without a bias in how events will turn out. They distance themselves from having any interest in the choices made by the characters and how the story will turn out. Suffice to say that the narrator does not give out an impression as they narrate even if they know all the characters. They seem not to have any interest or bias to any decisions of the characters or how the narrative will end.

### **6.3 Similarities and Differences in Child and Adult Narrative Perspectives**

This section will highlight the similarities and differences between child and adult narrative perspectives. Having in mind the different structures of the narratives, the following are the similarities in child and adult narrative perspective in the narratives under study:

#### **6.3.1 Similarities and Differences in Child and Adult Narrative Perspectives in *Patchwork***

1. The two perspectives have similar attitudes.

The child perspective in the narrative is concerned with the relationships of the protagonist and those around and so is the adult perspective. The perspectives are concerned with the same things and they portray a similar attitude in their narration. The inability to detach themselves from the decisions made by other characters comes out, as they being characters in the narrative have an upper hand.

2. They relay information that bridge the gap in the narrative to make it whole for the story's development.

The initial perspective introduces the narrative to the reader. The child perspective relays initial information on which the adult perspective builds on. With the two perspectives in

*Patchwork* the development of the story is enabled as they provide the information relevant to for its completion. The adult perspective views what the child narrator has not as it is concerned with viewing the latter part of the narrative.

### 3. Both perspectives give variety to the narratives

The perspectives all have features that are peculiar to the individuals involved in this focal position. It is these features that have an effect on the reader different from the other. Either the focalisers come out experienced or innocent or this in turn affects a reader. The energy of a young narrator has a positive impact on the reader as it heightens the reading process.

The differences include:

#### 1. The child perspective is given the first part of the narrative

The first part of the narrative has a child as a central figure in narrating events. The introduction of the narrative is left to Pumpkin who views and relays information from her perspective as a child. It is from her that the reader is let in to the details of her mother's inability to get married to her father and her subsequent depression which leads her into alcoholism. She thus narrates from a point of one who has a disintegrated family.

#### 2. The child perspective introduces the story while adult perspective provides continuity to the narrative.

What the initial focaliser has viewed is only completed by the adult focaliser who in this case is the same person but as an adult. She thus provides the narrative with continuity as she completes what has initially been introduced by the initial child focaliser. The introduction of the narrative is left to the child perspective and its continuity is dependent on the adult perspective.

### 6.3.2 Similarities and Differences in Child and Adult Narrative Perspectives in *We Need New Names*

The two perspectives in the narrative have similarities and differences in their viewing of events. The similarities are less as compared to the differences and these include:

#### 1. They both view events from a point of no hope in the state of affairs of Zimbabwe in that time.

The initial focaliser views the events with no hope and thus the only solution was to leave the country in search of green pastures. For the adult perspective, the citizens left as they

hoped for survival beyond their borders. Both perspectives expected change to happen to the citizens out there and not anything positive from their own country. Having no hope in the governance of the country made people leave to search for jobs and security out there but even when presented with difficulties, they preferred to stay in strange lands.

**2. The two merge in their focalisation of events.**

The two perspectives view events as they occur and meet at some point in the way they view. While the initial focalisation is left to a child perspective, the adult perspectives comes in to view along with the initial perspective. This can be seen in the case where Darling reflects as their houses are being bulldozed and the adult focaliser comes in to relay how the families came to live in Paradise without much of their desired things.

The differences in the two perspectives include:

**1. The child focaliser is a character in the narrative while the adult one is outside.**

The child perspective introduces the reader to the events in the narrative as they occur thereby not just telling but also showing the events. She runs through the activities as they occur and relays the information to the reader. The adult perspective on the other hand views with an omniscient eye as they relay events from both past and present.

**2. The adult perspective comes out more experienced and does not get into the characters' minds.**

The adult perspective provides the reader with knowledge and information of an experienced character who has learnt from what they have gone through. The adult narrator does not get into the minds of the characters in the narrative but they know more than the characters. They detach themselves from linking directly with the characters in the narrative but just views alongside the events happening. By so doing, the narrator does not refer directly to any character in the narrative as compared to the child perspective who comments on other characters. The retrospective telling of the story places the focaliser above the characters.

**3. The child perspective adds humour and innocence to the narrative.**

The child focaliser adds humour to the narrative by viewing the events in a cheerful mood. She is filled with energy which drives the reader to read on while at the same time cheerfully relaying what she views. Her innocence is yet another attribute of the child perspective as she displays naivety befitting her knowledge and experience. The narrator's



limitation in knowledge and experience places the reader in a position to weigh the truth as she relays information.

**4. The adult perspective foreshadows how the narrative ends.**

The omniscient focaliser brings out information as one who has passed through a similar experience and has found no good in it. Being placed in this position enables the narrator to project the end for those who pass through what he or she already passed through or witnessed. The retrospective telling of the adult narrator in turn foreshadows how the narrative ends. Being able to relay what has been experienced by those who had gone places the experiencing 'I' as a victim of fate.

**6.3.3 Similarities and Differences in Child and Adult Narrative Perspectives in 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'**

The two perspectives are used to focalise the narrative as a child and adult are placed solely for this purpose. They have similarities and differences in the way they perceive events and being narrators, how they relay what they see. Similarities in the narrative include:

**1. The focalisers in both perspectives do not show any bias in terms of how the narrative will end.**

Mabvuto being both focaliser and narrator does not give out any impression on how he wants events to turn out. They distance themselves by relaying information without selling out their side or how the characters make their decisions. The adult perspective comes in to give initial information which completes the narrative as it links the past events to the present time in the narrative. They do not influence the characters' decisions.

**2. Both perspectives share the same attitude.**

The child perspective through Mabvuto shows how he lives in abject poverty and his daily life is a struggle as he cannot have food. He still has to provide for his siblings and he resorts to begging on the street, which still, does not cover for his needs. Mabvuto tries to build up hope, thinking he might escape poverty, but it is a false one. The adult perspective having followed the life of the characters around the protagonist also presents events as they are and gives a no hope situation. Both perspectives present a no hope situation for the current life of the young Mabvuto.

**3. The child perspective is placed in the eyes of a character narrator**

Mabvuto, a ten-year-old is the focaliser in the narrative and is given the role of character/narrator. As a child, he views the events around him and relays the information to the reader. He is the experiencing 'I' and he tells his own narrative as it occurs. The adult perspective on the other hand is left to an omniscient focaliser who is located outside the story. The child narrator is limited to what is around him while the alternate focaliser has a hovering eye above all the characters and not limited to the narrative time.

**4. The two perspectives focalise on different narrative times.**

The child perspective focalises the present time of the narrative. It presents events as they happen. On the other hand, the adult perspective focalises on events in a time before the present narrative time. The two presentation of events completes the narrative and enables the reader to catch up with events before the present time.

**5. The innocence of the child perspective is contrasted with the knowledgeable adult perspective.**

The voice of the child narrator in the parts of the narrative in which the child focaliser perceives brings into the narrative an innocent side of it in which experience and knowledge are limited. The innocence comes in to cloud the decisions made by the character-narrator. The captivating voice of the narrator works its magic to the reader as child narrators have an effect of drawing-in the reader into the narrative. This narration is coupled with the alternate adult narrator who is all knowing and sees it all.

## **6.4 Significance of the Similarities and Differences**

**1. Variety is achieved through both perspectives in the narrative.**

The child and adult perspective in *We Need New Names* are employed to bring out salient issues about the narrative. This brings about variety in the narrative which is achieved in different ways. Humour and cheerfulness fills the narrative as the child perspective renders this aspect. Another form of variety comes in with the innocence of the child view on events which gives the reader a desire to read on. It fascinates the reader as one unconsciously engages in a process putting themselves in the child's place as well as validating the truth as it is brought out. The reading process is enhanced by the child narrating voice. All the narratives under study utilise internal focalisation in which the perspective is left to a child character within the *fabula* to relay events

Adult narration in the text does bring out important issues differently from the child as it does not give the reader the same effect as the child does. This perspective gives a different voice and mood to the narrative. The child voice draws the reader to empathize with them. Different from the child voice, the omniscient adult voice perceives and speaks authoritatively.

**5. The perspectives depend on each other for the narrative's success.**

The differences in how the two perspectives view things come in to blend the dreams of the young narrator and the reality of things. Alternating narrations by different focalisers act as a build-up platform on which both perspectives converge to give one solid picture to the reader. The desire to leave the country as portrayed by the child perspective is further clarified by the adult perspective by showing how those who leave do so with no much choice and with an awareness of the hostility they might face.

**6. The two perspectives complement each other.**

The child perspective in *We Need New Names* gives complements the adult perspective so as to emphasize what the retrospective focaliser has seen. For the former perspective, leaving the country for greener pastures is seen as prestigious while the latter perspective gives a different picture of those that leave the country. Darling and her friends see leaving the country as the solution to escape from poverty. She is the envy of all her friends when they learn that she will be leaving for America. However, the reality of America for Africans is not what one can envy as from the adult perspective. In this narrative, the two perspectives reveal parts of the narrative that build it as a whole. The experience of the adult perspective and the naivety and humour of the child perspective creates a successful narrative. The ten-year-old narrator is convincing as a child narrator in her view of events. Her portrayal of events and her narration fits in the view of a child. She fills the narrative with buoyancy despite her being a victim of poverty. The two perspectives complement each other. Their differences and similarities all work to bring out a balanced narrative as the author uses a child as a focal character along with the child voice.

**7. The portrayal of the perspectives reduces the age gap of the focalisers.**

*Patchwork's* portrayal of both views has its differences and similarities as earlier analysed. The presentation of some events does not reflect a voice of a nine-year-old but that of an older narrator. With focalisation aimed at seeing the relationship between the elements seen and the vision through which they are represented, the experience and the knowledge

of the narrator are of great significance. In Pumpkin's case, the experience and knowledge of a nine-year-old does not fit in her description of certain things, in this case reducing the gap between the child and adult perspectives.

The significance of the differences though not much as the child perspective and the adult perspective are more similar is that these views create a kind of convention which creates a fictional world of possibilities. The convention in which Banda-Aaku gives us a child perspective whose voice is not a convincing nine-year-old is accepted.

**8. Continuity is achieved through the use of both perspectives.**

The young focaliser introduces the narrative to the reader and the adult perspective comes in to continue giving the reader the events which were started by the initial focaliser. The latter perspective continues to perceive what the former has started, thus continuity is achieved. Continuity in turn renders the narrative a success as it fully develops the story. It encompasses both the present and past events.

**9. The two perspectives bridge the information gap which is relevant for the development of the narrative.**

The importance of the perspectives in 'A Hug from Uncle Peter' create a bridging gap in terms of information that is given to the reader. The view of the child and that of the adult come in to blend to form a unified whole. The adult omniscient narrator takes the reader through a flashback as it comes in to give initial information relevant for the reader to 'catch-up'. This omniscient view entails that information about a character or event is more of an absolute truth in that the narrator knows more than the character knows. The adult view presents everything as it is. The main difference is that the child perspective mainly focuses on Mabvuto's current situation while the adult one focuses on the past which the initial narrator does not know but is relevant for the development of the story. In both perspectives, the diegetic and mimetic modes are alternated in the narration to strike a balance. The child and adult perspectives give variety to the narratives in question.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the chapter reveals that the authors in the three texts use the adult and child perspective in different parts of the narrative to comprehensively reveal information to the reader. This provides the narratives with an innocent side as well as an experienced one, giving variety.

It is clear from this analysis that the adult perspective gives the narrative information that is linked to the other perspective. Through a flashback as well as normal narrative time, the perspective helps the reader comprehend the narrative better. The child perspective, with the innocence of a child voice through the child narrator has a positive effect on the reader as it draws them to read on. It also allows for clarity in narration of events as the one who sees and the one who tells are one and the same. The similarities and differences are simply there to offer this contrast and also reveal how the perspectives blend for the full realisation of the narrative.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.0 Introduction

This chapter will conclude the study by linking the set objectives to the findings as arrived at in the three preceding chapters. The child and adult narrative perspective have been analysed and compared in terms of how they have been used in the narratives under study.

#### 7.1 Summary of the Study

The study set out the following objectives: **i)** to analyse child and adult narrative perspectives in *Patchwork*, *We Need New Names* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'; **ii)** to examine the similarities and differences between the child and adult narrative perspectives; **iii)** to evaluate the significance of the similarities and differences as emanating from objective (ii) above and their effect on the narrative.

The study employed only three narrative techniques which are focalisation, narrative voice and narrative mode which are propounded by Genette (1980) in the theory of narratology. The three techniques were used to analyse the child and adult perspectives in the three texts mentioned above.

The following were the observations and the conclusions thereof: The first objective stated: **i)** to analyse child and adult narrative perspectives in *Patchwork*, *We Need New Names* and 'A Hug from Uncle Peter'. It was discovered that in *Patchwork*, the author initially employs a homodiegetic child narrator who informs the reader through her view. The child perspective is left to nine-year-old Pumpkin and this is coupled with an adult perspective. Homodiegetic narrators are used in both parts and perspectives of the narratives. The adult perspective is left to the same narrator as an adult. The child perspective initially relays information on which the adult perspective builds. Young Pumpkin is concerned with showing the reader the relationships with those around her. In addition, the child perspective gives out an impression to the reader as they come out biased in that they try to influence the decisions of other characters. Consequently, this shapes how the story ended. Through the young narrator, the child perspective uses elaborate language.

The research also suggests that the adult perspective and the child perspective are more similar in terms of attitudes. It concerns itself with portraying the relationships of those around the main character, just like the child perspective. The two complement each other as the adult finishes what the child perspective brings. It is apparent that the child perspective introduces while the adult perspective is there for continuity thus giving variety to the narrative.

The research also shows that *We Need New Names* uses a homodiegetic child perspective as it utilises internal focalisation through a character narrator. Ten-year-old Darling views the narrative and relays information to the reader as it happens. The researcher arrived at the view that the adult perspective is left to an omniscient narrator. It may be argued that the adult perspective in this narrative speaks from a retrospective point of view in which the narrator speaks as one who has had experience over the events in the narrative. He or she narrates from an experiential point and is there to give variety to the narrative. The perspective foreshadows how the narrative ends by virtue of having experience.

‘A Hug from Uncle Peter’ uses a homodiegetic narrator to view events. Mabvuto, a ten-year-old boy relays information to the reader. He uses simple lexis reflecting his age. The research arrived at the view that the omniscient adult perspective gives initial information on which the child perspective builds.

The second objective was **ii)** to examine the similarities and differences between the child and adult narrative perspectives. In *Patchwork*, it might be argued that the child perspective serves the purpose of introducing the narrative. Its use of a young narrator provides the narrative with a young voice which usually appeals to the reader by enticing them to read on. It also shows an innocent side of the narrative through the innocent view of certain events. However, it may be argued that the child perspective exhibits extreme knowledge and experience through the narrator’s use of heightened language. The adult perspective reveals the latter part of the narrative and just like the former perspective, concerns itself with personal relationships around the main character.

*We Need New Names* also has its similarities and differences in terms of child and adult perspectives. The research suggests that the child perspective views events as they happen while the adult perspective views events from the past. It may also be argued that the adult perspective explores the diegetic mode with dialogues recounted so as to bring them closer to the reader. The child perspective also adds humour to the narrative. The child

perspective exhibits naivety in narration of certain events while the alternate perspective is experienced as an adult. To some extent, it may be argued that the adult perspective foreshadows how the narrative may end as they portray what happened to them.

The similarities between the two perspectives include: they both view events without close attachment to the decisions made by the characters in the narrative. The findings suggest that both perspectives show no hope of change in the system and the style of living.

‘A Hug from Uncle Peter’ also has its similarities and differences. The adult perspective gives initial information on which the child perspective builds. The research also shows that the child perspective introduces the narrative and displays naivety in its judgement. The two perspectives share a hopelessness on any change that may be expected on the part of the protagonist.

Lastly but not the least, the third objective is to evaluate the significance of the similarities and differences as emanating from the second objective and their effect on the narrative. In *Patchwork*, the differences and similarities give a contrast in terms of voice as well as continuity. The author’s use of an extremely knowledgeable child narrator is accepted. Variety in terms of tone and mood as one reads is due to the change in perspectives. *We Need New Names* is also built by the two perspectives which complement each other. The narrative balances with an experienced eye as well as a humorous one. ‘A Hug from Uncle Peter’ also is knitted in the two perspectives for the development of the narrative. Variety is also experienced in the narrative as a result of alternated perspectives. The full development of the story in the narratives is dependent on the perspectives.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

The findings suggest that the use of the child and adult perspectives in a narrative is of vital importance to the success of a narrative as a whole. The two depend on each other to reveal to the reader relevant information in a style that will create nuances in the actual narration of events. It is these shades which appeal to the reader in turn as the different narrative situations within a text provide this variety. It is then imperative to say that the child and adult perspectives in a text serve different purposes which depend on each other as they create a different effect on its readership. Whether or not the author’s creation of their narrators or focalisers reflects in the truest sense as similar to reality as possible is not a factor as it is an accepted convention. It is actually such experimentation that calls



for analysis of texts from the readers. Thus the use of the two perspectives provides different atmospheres in the same text.

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