

Breaking the chains: An Afrocentric exploration of ageism in selected Zimbabwean musicians' songs

Aphios Nenduva, Allan. T. Maganga & Charles Tembo

To cite this article: Aphios Nenduva, Allan. T. Maganga & Charles Tembo (01 Aug 2025): Breaking the chains: An Afrocentric exploration of ageism in selected Zimbabwean musicians' songs, Educational Gerontology, DOI: [10.1080/03601277.2025.2538202](https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2025.2538202)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2025.2538202>



© 2025 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.



Published online: 01 Aug 2025.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 150



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Breaking the chains: An Afrocentric exploration of ageism in selected Zimbabwean musicians' songs

Aphios Nenduva ^a, Allan. T. Maganga ^a, and Charles Tembo ^b

^aNational Language Institute, Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe; ^bDepartment of African Languages, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

ABSTRACT

Old age is associated with negative stereotypes such as witchcraft practices rigidity, boring, talkative, senile, immorality and inadequacy of human survival skills. Such experiences are expressed in various sites as music, poetry, novels, and autobiographies. Of particular interest in this paper are Zimbabwean Shona musicians who address the concept of ageism and learning. Learning is as old as humanity whilst aging occurs later in life, and everyone will in fact encounter aging at some point. Against that background, the article critically engages Charles Charamba's song, *Nokusaziva* (2004), Winky D's song, *Dzika ngirozi* (2018) Jah Prayzah's song *Hallo mama* (2017) and *Takabva neko* (1994) by Marshal Munhumumwe within the African context of their attitudes toward aging and ageism. The songs posit that old age dislocates and decenters people to internalize pain, grief, hopelessness and loneliness as the pervasive mood of life. Contrary to that, in the Shona community, aging is associated with certain societal freedoms, come with the freedom to do more of what pleases and satisfies the society, the simplifying and de-cluttering of life, slowing down and letting go off excessive obligations, expressing thoughts and feeling for others. This qualitative study is guided and oriented by the Afrocentricity theory. It established that whereas Charamba and Munhumumwe lament over moral emptiness in stereotypical ageist beliefs, Winky D and Jah Prayzah blame globalization for its paternalistic effects of destabilizing the lives of older adults. In this study music is viewed as cultural texts.

Introduction

Music allows people to express themselves effectively as it gives words to the innermost feelings of human beings when words can be scarcely found (C. C. Mbaegu, 2015). This paper is a textual analysis of Zimbabwean musicians' selected songs by Charles Charamba, Winky D, Jah Prayzah and Marshal Munhumumwe. It arises from the need to expand the field of cultural gerontology since The UN has declared 2021–2030 a global decade of healthy aging. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021, p. 2) defines healthy aging as 'the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age.' The musicians have been conveniently selected given the fact that their voices are in search of African people's 'right and responsibility to exist as a people, to speak our own special cultural truth, and make our own unique contribution to the forward flow of human history,' (M. Karenga 2007, p. 451). The argument avowed in this paper is that while morality sets pace, music upholds good morals and denounces some bad ones as well. In African traditional and contemporary societies, music plays a pivotal role in educating the youth as well as the older

CONTACT Charles Tembo  tembo.charles7@gmail.com  Department of African Languages, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

© 2025 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

generation. It is a vehicle through which good morals are inculcated so that they will be transferred from one generation to another. In this article, we take heed of Gusha (2023, p. 1)'s view that, 'Although entertaining the masses is one of the major roles of music, musicians use entertainment as a method of educating and informing the society. They speak for the voiceless and confront evil and oppression of people in the society.' Cognizant of that, there is also a need to analyze the contribution of music in unsettling settled stereotypes toward aging. Music has the potential to influence and teach a wider audience on how people perceive older persons and the process of aging. Like a double-edged sword, it has the power to influence both negative and positive behavior. Several Zimbabwean literary critics discussed the role of music in addressing societal problems in areas relating to family disintegration, urbanization, HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, abuse of political power, war and male-female relations. Some of the key scholars who addressed societal challenges in musical renditions are Chitando and Chitando (2021), Gukurume (2022), Maganga et al. (2022) and Muwati et al. (2013). However, this paper addresses an important but overlooked area on cultural gerontology which was addressed by Hungwe et al. (2023, 2024) and Mamvura, (2021). Against that background, in this study, music has become an instrumental tool in contextualizing the concept of ageism which is mainly overlooked by scholars. The study of Zimbabwean musicians' portrayal of aging is premised on the argument that music itself cannot answer our problems, but it gives us lessons that answer to our common global problems. Since the concept of gerontology is culturally centered, we advance the view that the selected musicians are 'that type of rulers namely, the artist who provides and sustains the fundamental ideas of their society' (p'Bitek 1986, p. 39).

The problem of ageism is not unique to Africa, but it is a global problem which needs to be tackled head on. In developed communities like the west, challenges faced by the elderly people are different from those faced by the elderly in developing economies like Zimbabwe. In developed economies the elderly are sent to retirement or care homes where they meet their peers of the same age as them whereas in developing economies like Zimbabwe, the elderly usually stay with their relatives at home. At these homes, they normally suffer isolation and loneliness because of generation gap and other social factors which are culturally oriented. In fact, it is an indispensable duty and responsibility of the young to stay with the elderly and not relegating them to old people's homes because that is 'tantamount to breaking the circle of life that characterise Shona people's cultural world' Mamvura et al. (2021), p. 147). Thus, the practice of sending them to retirement homes can be viewed as shredding the esteemed values of the knowledge they possess and throwing it into the bin. Yet the Africans hold that, 'when an old man dies a library has burns down.' This implies that, there is no way a community can survive after neglecting its granary of knowledge. Contrary to that, with the changes brought by globalization, modern religious practices and the capitalistic system of life, these libraries (the old adults) are normally left redundant in rural areas languishing in poverty and at times labeled as the chief architects of the problems facing the youths.

Against that background, the selected musicians as the most sensitive points in the community came up with songs which addresses these fundamental issues of aging and ageism. Their music ceases to be solely an entertaining tool; rather it is rich in didacticism on the concept of aging. The contention of this paper is to unpack the contribution of music as an advocacy for change on ageism which is a deep-seated societal problem in the modern world. In strict traditional context, the Shona people have an informal way of teaching their children through folktales and these folktales were accompanied by songs. Songs in these folktales were didactic in nature, enshrining lessons from generation to generation. Through music which is part and parcel of the traditional way of inculcating cultural values, the musicians call for self-introspection and recovery of the age-old values where the elders are viewed as the custodians of culture.

Theoretical framework and methodology

The paper utilizes Afrocentricity as the guiding theory in analyzing the musical renditions of the selected Zimbabwean musicians. According to Asante (2003), Afrocentricity is a school of thought and

action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. As a guiding philosophy, Afrocentricity emphasizes that all aspects of African life – spiritual, social, political, and economic – be viewed from the African cultural perspective. Mkabela (2005) astutely buttresses this view by emphasizing that an examination of the African reality from the perspective of the African, one that places the African experience at the core, recognizes the African voice and reaffirms the centrality of cultural experience as the place to begin to create a dynamic multicultural approach to research. As an analytical tool in the analysis of art, Afrocentricity is a way of investigating a phenomenon by starting with Africa as the center of a study. This implies that Afrocentricity is an intellectual quality of thought, practice, and perspective where the scholar perceives Africans as subjects and willful agents of phenomena, who act from their own historical and cultural image for human interest. In this paper, Afrocentricity is the most suitable theory in the study of how Africans/Zimbabwean musicians portray aging in their musical renditions. Asante cited by Chawane (2016), p. 83):

Afrocentricity is constructive primarily because it does not deny others their place. It is based on harmonious coexistence of an endless variety of cultures. Equally, there can be no true multiculturalism without Afrocentrism.²⁰ Afrocentricity does not deny 'the right of Europe to view the world from its cultural centre.' The gist of the argument by Afrocentrists is that the European view must not be imposed as universal. Just as much as Europeans, Africans are entitled to give their own perspective on the African experience, making Afrocentricity an exercise in self-knowledge. Afrocentricity becomes valuable also for Europeans by giving them a new perspective, an ability to see from different angles and by so doing, putting them in a position to explore different views and bring new perspectives

As a theory of practice, Afrocentricity is based on three principles, and these are dislocation, location, and relocation. The advent of urbanization and western type of education, the Shona people have been dislocated from their center and their values have been uprooted. Nyamnjoh (2012) is of the view that the colonial conquest of Africans – body, mind and soul – has led to real or attempted epistemicide – the decimation or near complete killing and replacement of endogenous epistemologies with the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror. Thus, the way the youths treat their elders in the selected songs is a clear testimony that their moral fabric has been uprooted, hence the musicians are trying to relocate them through songs. By viewing African as active participants in the race of life, it helps to view them not as helpless and lifeless recipients who are acted upon. In this paper, the researcher locates the situation, events, and the musician in the right context to analyze their successes and shortcomings. The selected musicians' lyrics were translated and transcribed to allow their views to reach a wider audience.

Background

The term ageism was first coined and defined by psychiatrist Robert Butler as 'prejudice by one age group toward other groups' (Butler, 1969, p. 243). In later writings on the topic of ageism, he further defined it as a process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old (Butler, 1975 p.35). Thus, ageism is best described as a difference in one's feelings, beliefs, or behaviors based on another person's chronological age (Levy & Benaji, 2002). Ageism is prevalent in various domains of life: at work, in public spaces, in shops, and in doctors' offices. Additionally, elements of ageism can be found in individuals' behavior, in organizational regulations, and in cultural values. Be that as it may, ageism can be experienced at any age, such as the young toward the old or the old toward the young. Katz (2001) is of the view that today ageism joins racism and sexism as a term that identifies how prevailing forms of injustice and inequality victimize human differences. However, in this paper we refer to ageism in relation to the age discrimination experienced by old adults emanating from globalization, the capitalistic system and cultural beliefs which promote the abandonment, relegation and victimization of old adults. Our discussion of ageism hinges on Asante's view on Afrocentricity that it places African/Shona people at the center of any analysis of African phenomenon in terms of action and behavior.

Against that backdrop, people's perceptions on aging are shaped by their culture. Hence, musicians as Shona people's cultural ambassadors must contribute to the revivification of the old-age smooth relations that have defined and sustained Africans for a very long time. Of particular interest to this article is that although there is an intergenerational gap between the youths and older adults in Zimbabwe their belief systems remained relatively the same. Like any other ethnic groups, the Shona have been affected by the tide of globalization that has to some extent changed their way of life. However, it is important to note that some of the Shona traditions that have survived the test of time and continue to be at the core of their belief systems, is the belief in witchcraft. The historian Wolfgang Behringer, in his research on witchcraft accusations in Tanzania concludes that 'between 1960 and 2000, about 40,000 people accused of practising witchcraft were murdered in Tanzania alone Many cases of killing elderly people suspected of practising witchcraft have also been reported in Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and South Africa' (Uchendu et al., 2023, p. 5). Against that background, it shows that in Shona communities, any discussion of aging and ageism must take heed of the people's cultural beliefs.

The connection between ageism and witchcraft

The connection between witchcraft and ageism is aptly captured in various platforms in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. Witchcraft accusations of elderly people are very common. In Shona there is an adage which says, '*Wakura wave muroyi*' (When someone is aged it means s/he is now a witch). The belief in witchcraft is deeply embedded in a people's culture. Some Shona texts books for example Tsodzo (1985), p. 26) in his book *Rurimi Rwaamai Bhuku 3* has a comprehension passage on witchcraft with images of witches portrayed as old adults especially women who have wrinkled faces, yellow eyes and hunched back stance. In the passage entitled *Varoyi nemabasa avo* (Witches and their duties) the writer acknowledges witchcraft as part of the Shona people's beliefs systems deeply rooted in their culture. The late Zimbabwean legendary sungura musician Simon Chimbetu in his song, *Varoyi* (Witches) acknowledges the existence of witchcraft in Zimbabwe. Witchcraft exists in different forms and in the case of Chimbetu, he is referring to opposition politicians in Zimbabwe who are equated to witches by causing untold suffering to the country by forming alliances with western countries and calling for the imposition of smart sanctions in Zimbabwe. Cognizant of the power of music in influencing behavior and thought, we noted that, songs like Simon Chimbetu's *Varoyi* (Witches), Mahube's *Ndiwe muroyi* (2008) (You are the witch), Mangoma Express' *Tula Bhechulude* (1999) and John Chibadura's *Ndiregerereivo varoyi* (2004) (Forgive me witches) provided the moral campus on how people comprehend and understand problems in their community. Motsoeneng (2022) gives characteristics of the elderly, commonly used to accuse people of witchcraft (such as oldage, bad health, red or yellow eyes, wrinkled skin, missing teeth, or a hunched-back stance. These justify Mbiti's (1975) assertion that Africans are religiously notorious. In all human communities, culture usually shapes people's attitudes. As Richard Nnyombi cited in Mwandayi (2011, p.58) observes religion 'covers all aspects of life, from before the birth of a person to long after s/he has died. It is a way of life and life is at its centre Hence the remark such as: For the African, religion is literally life and life is religion.' Against that background, this study's analysis of the concept of ageism in these musical renditions take heed of Shona people's culture and belief system since these cuts across their economic, social and political life. Uchendu et al. (2023), p. 2) observe that Africans interpret their lives through religion and culture. Therefore, against a strong cultural background of the belief in witchcraft, most of the Shona youth will tend to internalize a misguided belief that aging is synonymous with witchcraft, hence fostering ageism.

In Zimbabwe, introduction of Christianity and the growing increase in Western education did not erase the Shona belief system in witchcraft but it further complicated it. The conceptualization of witchcraft wears religious garb since their daily lived experiences show that witchcraft affects them in many ways. In light of the above, the power of culture in shaping people's beliefs in Zimbabwe is reflected in the stories making major headlines in media. The media is awash with news of people

killing and abusing their old relatives on allegations of witchcraft and goblin possession in Zimbabwe. According Maphosa (2021) cited Priscillah Gavi the Executive Director of HelpAge Zimbabwe saying ‘cases of people being murdered on allegations of witchcraft are on the rise and the media is one of the institutions on the blame for this’. The director reiterated that the majority of the stories that people read or hear from electronic media were very negative about the elderly people and they portray them in a very bad way. In Africa as a whole and Zimbabwe in particular cases of elderly people being killed on allegations of witchcraft are rife. In Zimbabwe for example, Gavi points out that in Buhera district statistics show that 70% of the murders in the area are generated from by witchcraft allegations. A report by Chilimampunga and Thindwa (2012, p.19) on The Extent and Nature of Witchcraft-Based Violence against Children, Women and the Elderly in Malawi concluded that ‘the belief in witchcraft in Malawi permeates all sectors. Most Malawians regardless of age, education or social position hold the belief in witchcraft and that witches are real. Statistics show that more that 70% of the 18.7 million people believe in witchcraft and over 80% amongst the rich and well-educated people are also strong believers of witchcraft.’ Therefore, witchcraft is very difficult to prove but Africans who believed in it are convinced that witchcraft is an act which is objective-oriented and not process-oriented. The objective of witchcraft is to cause harm and misfortune but how the individual came to face such circumstances is not known. Zachrisson (2007), p. 36) observes that ‘to accuse someone of witchcraft has been unlawful in Zimbabwe for almost a Century, but to divine and cleanse someone from evil “things” is not against the law.’ In light of the above, it shows that witchcraft is a complex act which is very difficult to prove, and some people have resorted to witchcraft accusations to settle personal vendettas. Hence there is a need for civic education since witchcraft-related violence is on the rise on a daily basis. Chilimampunga and Thindwa (2012) observes that in the past, witchcraft was limited to women and the elderly. However, the current dimension to the belief is that there are ‘child witches.’ These are being taught witchcraft by the elderly, it is alleged. Once taught, the ‘child witches’ cause harm such as murder, diseases, infertility, or accidents.

The concept of witchcraft is just as complex as its conceptualization, and it varies culturally and societally. Furthermore, witchcraft and a people’s religion are inseparable entities. Witchcraft is a concept embedded in a people’s culture and religious belief. The power of religion is suppressing all other knowledge production epistemologies is proved in the belief in witchcraft. In African Traditional Religion, any circumstance in life, whether good or bad is attributed to the link between the physical world and the spiritual world. When Africans encounter challenges in life such as misfortune, unemployment, illness, death, barrenness among others, they use a holistic approach to the challenge when they seek the real causes of the challenges. According to Muranda (2019) death is a reality which humans and animals are not immune to. It defines the end of the physical life and brings pain to humanity. It also marks the beginning of a new journey of life in the spiritual world. Although death is an inevitable sad reality to all living things, the Shona and Ndebele people of Zimbabwe’s conceptualization of death is based on the theory of causality. Among most African people, sickness or death does not just happen naturally, there should be forces behind a cause, which is usually understood and interpreted through the concerned people’s belief. If the illness leads to the sick person’s death, it is natural for the deceased’s relatives to consult a diviner to learn the cause of the death, if the information is not yet available at the time of death. Banana (1999, p. 27) argues that the concept of death is unsettling, face threatening, unnatural, shocking and dreaded. It is a disrupting and suspicious phenomenon that although people know that they will face death, they attribute it to certain mystical forces within the metaphysical space. In light of the above, death is viewed as a nuisance, a robber and a form of destructive force which stifles and dismantles the social ties of both the young and the old. This is because no one has survived to tell others what happens when someone joins the ancestors in the world of the living dead as the understanding of the Shona people on death. People are overwhelmed by the fear of unknown and hence no one wants to die regardless of age. Against that background, in Shona communities, the rise of African independent churches especially the apostolic churches that continue to mushroom and grow has ushered Zimbabwe into a new era of fresh ways of interpreting how certain things came to existence in life. Remarkably, since the Shona people rarely

expressed death as natural, regardless of how old or sick the person was, this cosmovision promoted the exclusion and victimization of old adults who are viewed as the perpetrators of suffering, misfortunes and even death.

According to Aja (2001) for the Africans, the world is an ordered universe in which all the events are caused and potentially explicable. Gyekye (1987) maintains the doctrine of universal causation in the Akan-African world. Thus, the African does not just speak of a metaphysical kind of causality, which binds the creator to the creature. Pertaining to the western concept of things happening by chance, Ozumba (2004) argues that what they call chance is their ignorance of the series of actions and reactions that have given rise to a given event. Therefore, to find closure on any event like, barrenness, misfortune and death, in the family the Shona people consult the spiritual world to get the answers. Because of the mystical forces shrouded on the concept of death, there is a lot of stigmas associated with surviving old adults by the youth because most of the people of their age would have joined the ancestors. In light of the above, we proposed that since music educates and instructs the listeners the selected musicians' lyrical renditions will open new ways of thinking aging, witchcraft and ageism in Zimbabwe. It provides an important contribution to our understanding of aging issues in Zimbabwe by giving voice and space to old adults vis-à-vis the broad concerns of the Zimbabwean musical canon.

A biographical sketch of Marshal Munhumumwe, Charles Charamba and Winky D and Jah Prayzah

In analyzing the concept of aging and ageism, musicians whose songs have been primarily selected as cultural texts are Charles Charamba, Marshal Munhumumwe, Winky D and Jah Prayzah. Charles Charamba is a Zimbabwean gospel artiste and a former pastor in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) Church in Zimbabwe. He has since started his church by the name Rooted in Christ Ministries. He is one of the best gospel artists in Zimbabwe backed by his band, Fishers of Men. Some of Charamba's popular songs include *Machira chete*, *Buruka* and *Nyika YeZimbabwe*. His albums have been the top selling gospel music in Zimbabwe since early 2000 and have won several musical awards. Vested interest in analyzing his music emanates from the view that gospel music plays a key role in serving as a powerful and meaningful symbol of identity, functioning as an avenue for expression and mediation of conflict (Manuel, 1988, p. 16). Thus, Charamba's music has the potential to change people's views on aging since he reaches a wider audience through songs. The prominent leitmotif in Charles Charamba's musical expression is the necessity of synergistic as opposed to schematic relations between old adults and the youth. The prevalence of HIV and AIDS-related deaths in the early 1990s which were erroneously attributed to witchcraft has caused shock waves and panic amongst families. In the face of increasing family conflicts and victimization of the old adults, Charamba released the song *Nokusaziva* (2004) (Because of the lack of knowledge) to exonerate old adults who were being persecuted by the youths. The voice in the song is in unalloyed defense of old adults whom he depicts as responsible, and innocent and the youth should draw inspiration from them.

The other musician Marshal Munhumumwe is a late Zimbabwean legendary sungura musician whose career spanned for over 25 years. He played sungura music with his band The Four Brothers although the band members were not blood brothers like the Mahendere brothers in Zimbabwe. In 1994, Marshal Munhumumwe was on the peak of his musical career, and he released three albums in the same year, namely, *Mambakwedza*, *Kumawere* and *Mbereko Yakaramba*. The song *Takabva nako* is in the album *Mbereko Yakaramba* which was an advisory song to the community to accept the will of the almighty on childbearing before entering into the game of mudslinging between wife, husband, and family members. Vested interest in the song *Takabva neko* emanates from its message where the artist admonishes young adults from shunning and discriminating old adults because of their age. Thus, Munhumumwe's music ceases to be solely an entertaining tool; rather it is used to raise a lot of experiences, conscientizing people not to forget their responsibilities.

The third musician is Winky D whose real name is Wallace Chirimiko. He is an award-winning Zimbabwe Dancehall- reggae artist. He was born in Harare and grew up in the high-density suburb of

Kambuzuma. He is popularly known as ‘The Ninja President.’ The artist is most known for his hit songs *Musarove Bigman*, *Disappear*, *Dzika Ngirozi* and *Panorwadza moyo*. The musician has featured in various platforms apart from radio, such as being a brand ambassador for community initiatives such as male circumcision programme. Winky D’s has become a household name in dancehall music and his music has shaped the bulky of young Zimbabwe Dancehall musicians, hence his lyrics deserve a lot of attention. Unlike other artists who engage in self-censorship, ignoring ‘the burning issues of the day’ (Achebe, 1988), Winky D catches the bull by its horns in his recent album *Ghettocracy* where he bemoans the harsh economic situation that has forced millions of Zimbabweans to leave the country in search of greener pastures. The same theme of massive exodus of the youth from their mother is addressed in his song *Dzika Ngirozi* where old adults are construed in the Fanonian concept of ‘the wretched of the earth.’

Lastly, Jah Prayzah is the fourth musician whose real name is Mukudzeyi Mukombe. He is a Zimbabwean modern musician and frontman for the band Third Generation. The name Jah Prayzah evolved mainly from his first name, which in Shona language means Praise Him (God). His love for Reggae music led him to adopt the Jamaican name for God, which is Jah, he then fused these two meanings to come up with his name Jah Prayzah. He started his career in 2001, but his music became more popular after the launch of the album *Sungano* in 2012. In 2013 Jah Prayzah took all the top three spots with songs *Gotchi Gotchi*, *Maria* and *Chirangano*, breaking the record for the first time. This fame earned him ambassador status for the five organizations namely, Population Services International, Zimbabwe Defense Forces (culture Ambassador), Chicken Slice (Brand Ambassador), Champions Insurance- Brand Ambassador, Savanna Tobacco- Brand ambassador and World Remit. He is also the first Zimbabwean to win an MTV African Music Award when he won the award in the Listeners choice category on October 22, 2016. According to Tazvida (2018), during an interview on April 7, 2018, Jah Prayzah says ‘I cannot treat my music as a tuckshop business where we meet in the street, and someone pays.’ In light of that, the musician reminds the audience that his target is to address global problems through music. It is worthy appreciating his music since he addresses issues which blend the traditional and contemporary culture which resonates with audiences both at home and abroad. Against that background, it is crucial to analyze his music since there is no better way of spreading the message of healthy aging than through music. Cognizant of the above, the selected musicians are worthy celebrating because their musical renditions are major discursive warnings about an impending crisis which unfolds at the turn of the twenty first century as a result of denigrating old adults. The musicians’ songs are treated as what Jegede (1993) terms ‘art for life’s sake’ because they sing out of liveable and lived experiences. Their art is rooted in the African ontological existence. The next subsection explores and interrogates Charles Charamba and Marshal Munhumumwe’s songs in defense of old adults who are being despised by the youthful generation. The two musicians are voices of reason in search of harmony between the old adults and the youth. In undertaking this task, we are guided and informed by *The Way of Heru* which is subdued chaos, disharmony and establishes balance and justice within the lives and minds of African people (Gray, 2001, p.24).

Singing in unalloyed defense of old adults and centering disparities in Charles Charamba and Marshal Munhumumwe’s songs

Charles Charamba’s album *Verses and Chapters* spawned the song *Nokusaziva* (Because of the lack of knowledge).

Charamba released the song in 2004 which is a period described by some scholars as a decade of crisis (raftopoulos and mlambo, 2009, p. xxx). The decade of crisis is a period between 2000–2010 and scholars referred to it as a decade of crisis because during these years Zimbabwe plunged into an ‘extra ordinary zone of political and economic instability. When people are in crisis, they interpret reality from different perspectives and in the case of Charamba religious and cultural perspectives were embraced to interpret the challenges people were facing in their lives. During this horrendous period

marked by poverty, unemployment, shortage of basic commodities and high mortality rate caused by HIV and AIDS-related diseases, Charamba could not afford to ignore burning issues of the time. To the musician, old adults were accused as chief culprits for every calamity, death or misfortune the society was facing. The musician sings:

Tisazonde vana mbuya, Let's not hate our grandmothers,
Vachembera nekuzvibata, who are aged because of self-discipline,
Tichiti ivo, ndivo vatiuraya. Accusing them as the ones who have killed us
Tisavenga neharahwa, Let's not hate our grandfathers,
Dzisina misodzi panyatwa, Who have no tears to shed on funerals,
Tichiti ndidzo, ndidzo dzatiuraya. Saying that they are the ones who have killed us.
Chiremba mukuru Jehovha, The renowned doctor God,
Akataura naHosea, Spoke to Hosea
Ndokumuratidza, And show him
Chikonzero chauraya. The causes of the death.
Kusaziva Its lack of knowledge
Chiremba mukuru Jehova The renowned doctor God,
Akataura naHosea Spoke to Hosea
Ndokumuratidza And show him,
Muroyi wauraya The witch who has killed

Kusaziva × 3 Its lack of knowledge × 3
Vanhu vangu vaparara My people have perished
Vanotaura Baba Said the father,
Kusaziva Because of lack of knowledge.
Ndiyani akati zvikwambo zvine mari? Who said goblins can generate money?
Ndiyani akati kufeva kune pundutso? Who said prostitution has positive outcomes?
Kusaiva Its lack of knowledge
Ndiyani akati umbavha hune pundutso? Who said robbery pays?
Vangani vedu How many of us,
Vafa nekachasu? Have died of taking intoxicating drugs?
Kusaziva Its lack of knowledge
Nekangopisa doro retototo? Illicit beer brewing
Kusaziva Its lack of knowledge
Makamaonepiko mabhindauro Have you ever seen these shenanigans
Kurima mbanje munda wese? Of growing marijuana in the whole field?
Kusaziva Its lack of knowledge

Emerging out of the extract above is an embedded commitment by the musician rubber stamping the Biblical verse Hosea 6:4 which says: 'My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. Since you have forgotten the law of your Lord, I also forgot your children.' Charamba is singing from lived and liveable experience of the Shona people's belief systems. Like what has been indicated above, the Shona people believe that death is never natural and whenever it comes, they need to dig deeper on the cause of death. Thus, to find closure on death, they consult either a n'anga (traditional healer) through *gata* or a prophet. Mandaza (1970) defines *gata* as a ceremony that is held to determine the cause of the death of a person. Just like the postmortem, which is done by modern medical practitioners in hospitals, the *gata* was done by consulting a traditional healer to establish the actual cause of the person's death. The Shona believed that death was not natural especially when the deceased is still able bodied, hence they need to establish the cause by consulting a traditional healer. This is also embedded in the Shona people's proverbial philosophy that '*Chiripo chauraya zizi harifi nemhepo*.' (Something has killed the owl; it cannot be just wind). Masaka and Chingombe (2009), p. 190 posit that in most cases *gata* led to accusations, violence, and disharmony in the society. The musician is highlighting that the youth engage in sexual

immorality and contract the deadly life limiting HIV and AIDS virus; however, ignorance and complacency led them to shoulder the blame on their elders as witches causing their suffering. When the musician asked, '*Ndiyani akati kufeva kune pundutso?*' (Who said prostitution is a means of earning a living?), the musician perceives the crisis to be a corollary of impious acts and other misdemeanours by the youth. Instead of taking responsibility of their behaviour, they shoulder the blame on old adults. Against that background, Charamba singing in defense of old adults fulfils Chinouriri (2014)'s observation that musicians have the mandate to protect, monitor, broadcast, enforce and sanction breach of society's customary rules, regulations and codes of conduct by being objective and uncompromising.

The advent of white garment churches in Zimbabwe did not change Africans' beliefs on the concept of causation. It has even worsened the situation by creating a huge rift between elders and the youth. Africans have an intrinsic zeal to know about their future hence these Pentecostal churches and the apostles named (Johane Masowe Church) thrive on people's life-threatening situations by instilling fear in them. They are told that their problems are emanating from evil spirits sent by family members. In most cases, elders in the family are accused of causing problems to the youth through goblin possession or witchcraft. The situation becomes worse when a member of the family passed on. Thus, Charamba is aware that the Shona people's faith in agentive causality leads them to postulate mystical powers as causal agents of events. Gyekye (1997), p. 28), cements the same view that 'even though Africans are aware of these purely scientific causal explanations of death, they do not often consider them as profound enough to offer complete satisfaction in accounting for the events of life that they feel need an explanation.' By making reference to the The Creator and the biblical prophet Hosea Charamba is singing from experience as a staunch believer in African traditional religion regardless of his position as a Pastor. This is a clear testimony that in the Shona society, the way Christians consult prophets seeking guidance in their lives is similar to the way believers of African traditional Religion consult traditional healers. Witchcraft is feared amongst the Shona people because it is believed to be an evil which destroys life, and no one wants to die. To show how the belief in witchcraft is deep seated in the psyche of Africans, Maza (2017) cited the then president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe accusing his former deputies Joyce Mujuru and Emmerson Mnangagwa of using witchcraft to succeed him as president. Therefore, if well-educated public leaders like the national president who advocate for science, technology, engineering and mathematics show persistence of fear of witchcraft in the age of evidence-based knowledge how would he expect ordinary citizens to react on issues of witchcraft? It shows that Charamba is addressing a pertinent issue in African societies because the belief in witchcraft is rife, and it has led to the marginalization of elderly people in the society. In most of the African societies, modernization, westernization and Christianization have failed to eradicate pre-industrial beliefs in witchcraft. According to F. Sibanda (2018), p. 297) 'the phenomenon of witchcraft is not a myth in ATR, because there are people who practise it, contrary to the objecting stance adopted by Western missionaries and colonial administrators from Europe who questioned the reality and existence of witches.' In Zimbabwe, the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1899 made it a crime to accuse anyone of being a witch and denied the existence of witches. However, the Witchcraft Suppression Act was amended in 2006, 16 years after independence and it officially recognize that witchcraft does exist and should be punished by law. Despite its recognition, it is difficult to prosecute cases of witchcraft via the legal system because courts need overwhelming evidence to prove someone guilty and witchcraft is complex and difficult to prove. Thus, Charamba's took a sober stance in advising the youth to take stock of their behavior rather than embracing the blame game syndrome whereby they attribute all the evil to the elders. His voice is a voice of reason, a voice that is rummaging for harmony between the young and the old for collective good.

In addition to that, the elders are also marginalized on the basis that they are accused of causing mental health problems to the youth. A World Health Organization (WHO) report (2024) estimated that, in 2019, about 970 million people globally, double the number from a decade ago, suffered from mental illness. Mental illness amongst the Shona people is attributed to several factors such as witchcraft, breaking cultural taboos, communication by ancestors, emergence of aggrieved or

avenging spirit and to a lesser extent thinking too much. In his lyrical renditions, Charamba addresses one of the most serious public health and socio-pathological threats facing adolescents and young people of drug and substance abuse which has long-term effects on their future and wellbeing. It has been observed that drug use has negatively impacted the overall human, the family, community, and nation. Zinyuke (2024) notes that, 'Statistics by the Zimbabwe Republic Police reveals that drug-related cases in Chitungwiza increased by 40% between the years 2021 and 2023. Also, over 1,3 million people in Zimbabwe suffer from mental disorders with significant portion linked to the exponential rise in drug and substance abuse. At least 28,4% of all mental health consultations done by Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) from 2021 to August 2024 were linked to substance abuse.' In relation to drug and substance abuse, some of the common substances used by the young people include cannabis, crystal meth, *bronelear* and other illegal alcoholic beverages. After taking these substances, the youth end up having mental problems, indulging in prostitution, robbery and other antisocial behavior. Singing in defense of old adults Charamba poses rhetorical questions when he says:

Ndiyani akati kufeva kune pundutso? (Who said prostitution is a means of survival?)

Ndiyani akati zvikwambo zvine mari? Who said goblin possession pays?

Vangani vedu vafa nekachasu, doro retototo? How many lives have we lost due to drug and substance abuse?

Makamaonepi mabhindauko, okurima mbanje munda wese? Have you ever seen these shenanigans of growing weed in the whole field?

By posing rhetorical questions, the voice in the song encourages the listener to reflect on what the implied answer to the question must be. According to Zillman (1972), rhetorical questions are used to make the message more persuasive. They do not require any formal answer but it's a device used by the speaker to assert or deny something obvious. It is obvious that lack of knowledge and reckless behavior have plunged the youth into unending problems. When the youth encounter problems, they resort to violence as a defense mechanism for their rotten behavior. Cognizant of the above, we pivot the argument that Charamba's music 'presents itself as a veritable pedagogical tool that has the capacity of instructing listeners while reconstructing their consideration of the world and societies in which they live' (Ncube & Gwatisira, 2022, p. 40). His music allows individuals to rethink and reconstruct the ways we live with our elders in the community. The popular African proverb says, what an old man can see whilst seated, a young man cannot see whilst standing. The proverbial philosophy invites youth to respect their elders since wisdom comes with age in Africa. Blaming elders for the problems faced by the youth is scapegoat psychology rooted in running away from responsibilities and realities of life. p'Bitek (1986), p. 38) reminds us that, 'Problems, crisis and challenges are, have always been and will continue to be a necessary ingredient of living. And it is precisely the facing and tackling and solving of them, that life is all about.' Thus, when Charamba says *tisazonde vana mbuya* (Let's not hate our grandmothers), he reminds the youths to take a secular approach in dealing with the challenges of life. Reigersburg (2017), p. 134) categorically says '... music can lighten the load of the suffering, calm those in pain and distress, communicate information, and concepts and promote these ideas in culturally appropriate ways to those listening to or performing or generally experiencing music.' Thus, Charamba's music helps to bridge the intergenerational gap between the youths and the elders on aging. In the same vein, Marshal Munhumumwe also defends the abuse and mocking of old adults reminding the youth that there is nothing new in youth since they have also passed through the stage.

As already hinted above, Marshal Munhumumwe like Charles Charamba is singing in defense of old adults. In the song *Takabva neko*, (We passed through it) Munhumumwe's music is an attempt to what can be described as a noble 'marching forward to the past' Mungwini (2007), p. 124). The voice in the song is humanizing and harmonizing old adults who are being discriminated and objectified

because of their age. There is a Shona proverbial philosophy which says, '*Chinokura chinokotama musoro wegudo chave chinokoro*' which means everything will always come to an end. Cognizant of the above, the musician sings:

Vasikana musatiseka takabvawo neko, Girls do not laugh at us we passed through it

vakomana musatiseka takabvawo neko, Boys do not laugh at us we passed through it

Ndaimbova mhandara yainetsa mazuva ayo, I was a gorgeous girl during my youth

Ndaimbove jaya rainetsa mazuva aro, I was once an energetic boy during my youth

The persona in the song takes an advisory role to warn the youths that everything will come to an end in life, and they should live their life responsibly. This explains why scholars like p'Bitek (1986, cover page) affirm the dictum, 'Artist the Ruler,' referring to creators of art from which musicians have portion of existence. Therefore, if ever musicians are 'rulers,' then they have authority to denounce anything detrimental to people's survival like mocking old adults. According to Nzewi (2009) indigenous musical arts creations have the mandate to caution, curb and purge aberrant behavior and criminality in all aspects of societal living. Munhumumwe seems to take a defensive stance for old adults understanding that there are challenges associated with aging. He fulfills the African proverb which states that 'until the lions [prey] produce their own historian, the story of the hunt will glorify only the hunter' (Achebe, 2000, p. 73). In the song, the singer deliberately constructs himself with the victims (old adults) by constructing personal pronouns when he says '*musatiseka*' (Do not laugh at us). By associating himself with the victims the musician endows subtle protest with an experiential flair which impacts forcefully on the psychology of the listener. Thus, music becomes a tool for social and intergenerational engagement, fostering mutual understanding and respect among diverse groups.

Apart from rebuking and calling back the youths to respect their elders, Munhumumwe functions as a true 'keeper of memory' (Ngugi, 2009, p. 114) for his society. Like Charamba, he asked the rhetorical question '*Hamuzive here kuumhandara takabvawo neko?*' (Don't you know that we passed through the girlhood stage?) In Shona, girlhood is a period after puberty stage where girls are expected to be dating their future husbands. It is a critical stage in the lives of girls since it marks the turning point of their life to adulthood. According to Gelfand (1979) at this stage, children are taught the meaning of marriage and their education toward this end extends over several years. The musician understands that aging dismembered people and one form of dismemberment is the lack of physical stamina. Perceptions of people on old adults in most parts of Africa have changed from that of respect and care for the elderly to that of discrimination and abandonment Iyare et al. (2022). Thus, in propping up and promoting healthy aging, the musician reminds the youths that their current state of affairs is not permanent and sooner or later, they will join their elders. Munhumumwe's message resonates well with the Shona proverb that '*Umhandara/usikana idambakamwe chikuru umvana*' (Virginity is a special status enjoyable once in life and the rest is womanhood). For that reason, we argued that Munhumumwe is making concerted efforts to reconnect the youths with their history so that they do not lose track in understanding the situation of their elders. Clarke (1999), p. 36) candidly argues that:

History is a clock that people use to tell their political and cultural time of day. It is also a campus that people use to locate themselves on the map of human geography . . . the relationship of people to their history is the same as the relationship of a mother to her child.

Thus, the lyrics in the song *Takabva neko* (We passed through it) are 'trying to draw history to the attention of the attentive' Okafor (2010), p. 12). In fact, the musician is trying to 'renew the instructions of their mothers and fathers' (Carruthers, 2010, p. 55). In Africa, there is a general belief that "old age comes with wisdom and an understanding of the world as captured in the African

proverb ‘When an old man dies, a library burns down.’ Thus, Munhumumwe appreciates that old people are a rich source of heritage for Africans since old age is the basis of wisdom because of their experience with life. The view is supported by Dei (1994), p. 13) that gerontocracy is ‘the traditional African respect for the authority of elderly persons for their wisdom, knowledge of community affairs, and “closeness” to the ancestors.’ Contrary to that, Mtukudzi in the song *Bvuma* invites old people to accept aging. Hungwe (2024) says Mtukudzi seems to view old people as useless and irrelevant in the society. By saying *bvuma wasakara* (accept that you are worn out) in Shona the term *kusakara* (worn out) is used to explain something which is no longer useful like a rag. Things which are considered torn only belong to the dust bin and by saying you have worn out Mtukudzi uses derogatory and discriminating words which help to perpetuate stereotypes where the aged are viewed as useless. Mtukudzi’s narrative on aging is anti-life and unAfrican hence there is need for artist to beat the anti-defeatist drum by promoting fairness and justice on the treatment of old people in the society.

In light of the above, we concluded that Charles Charamba and Marshal Munhumumwe are Afrocentric musicians who developed and created their music inspired by their history and experiences as members of the society. Their message is rooted in the African ontological existence of life where they are singing in defense of old adults. Like Booker T Washington’s invitation that, ‘Let us lower our buckets into the deep well of our ancestral heritage so that we can imbibe the fresh waters of restoration, renewal and healing’ (Carruthers, 2010, p. 56), the musicians are making a clarion call by fostering the spirit of hope and confidence in people’s past. The following subsection will analyze Winky D’s and Jah Prayzah’s music on the concept of aging and ageism in Zimbabwe.

Unpacking victimhood, alienation and pessimism of old adults through songs

To obtain a nuanced understanding of Winky D and Jah Prayzah’s music on aging, it is pertinent to place their music in the broader socio-historical context in which they were produced. While the voices of the musicians in the preceding section are defending old adults as voices of the voiceless who are being victimized because of cultural beliefs, musicians in this section the view globalization and capitalism as the major forces behind the alienation of old adults by their children. Winky D’s album (*Gombwe Chiextra*) which spawns the song *Dzika ngirozi* (2018) (Come down the angel) was released during the dawn of Mnangagwa’s leadership after the resignation of Zimbabwe’s longest serving President Robert Mugabe. According to Matsilele et al. (2023), p. 3), Winky D’s ‘music challenges the obstinate socio-economic and political problems whose fulcrum is Robert Mugabe’s hold on Zimbabwe, and presently Emmerson Mnangagwa.’ Against that background, Winky D’s music lambasts the Zimbabwean government for its policy failures which led the mass exodus of the youths to neighboring counties abandoning their old adults in rural areas. On the other hand, Jah Prayzah just like Winky D views urban areas as melting pots in which ‘things fall apart’ Kahari (1986), p. 107). Both musicians view globalization, urbanization and capitalistic society as the center of destroying kinship relations between old adults and their children there by exposing them to victimhood abandonment, depression and ageism. Dansereau and Zamponi (2005) cited by Nhongo (2018), p. 209) note that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the political and the economic crisis in Zimbabwe since the economic crisis comes because of the prevailing political environment. Thus, we concluded that every singer is a singer in politics because politics affects all aspects of human history. Winky D as a social commentator did not turn a blind eye to the crisis of the old adults who are abandoned but he sings:

... *Moyo wekubereka zvino wandiremera*, (... the pain of giving birth is unbearable,

zvinondibaya pahana pandinotarisa vana I am being pained by looking at my children,

Pfungwa dzotenderera, misodzi yoyerera My mind goes far, tears dropping down my cheeks)

The voice is of a parent who is mentally overloaded by the painful memories of her lonely life emanating from economic meltdown which has forced her children to run away from their motherland. Children who are supposed to look after her are dehumanized and emasculated by the prevailing economic situation. The woman's situation and status can be summed by the Shona proverbial philosophy which says '*Mwana watsva kudumbu mai vatsva kumusana*' translated to (The mother has blisters on her back whilst the child has blisters on the stomach) hence there is no way they can carry each other. The lyrics bear testimony that the parent feels defeated by bleakness, desolate and lonely life in tribal trust lands of Zimbabwe. The musician offers a deep insight into the woman's inner turmoil. The woman is living alone in rural areas because her children have moved to the city to look for greener pastures. These rural areas are products of laws of impoverishment and dispossession like the Land Apportionment Act of 1931 in Zimbabwe (see Raftopolous & Mlambo, 2009). The laws created an anomie by forcing black people to marginal, unfertile and barren areas whilst the whites occupied arable productive lands during the colonial period. According to Mtathiwa (2014) the migration of people to the city and the demands of city life create anomie, as norms people live by in the rural areas are ruptured and overturned, leading to a situation where human desires and expectations 'rise above and beyond what is attainable, and also become unstable, in both cases leading to disappointment, disillusionment and dissatisfaction' (Crossley, 2010, p. 10). Thus, the parent's hopes and aspirations about her children are shattered when she poses the rhetoric question, *Ndakaberekera gejo ndasiyaneiko nemombe?* (I gave birth to capitalists, for I am no longer better than a cow). From the except above, the hallmark of Winky D's music is victimhood, hopelessness, entrapment and despair of the old adults caused by the capitalistic system in the city. The mother understands that her children are working day and night trying to make ends meet. It is apparent from the lyrics that the home is under a blitzkrieg since capitalism is a system which favors the employer impoverishing the worker. What is evident from the lyrics is that capitalism creates a horse and rider relationship between the worker and the employee. Contrary to Jah Prayzah's music where the parent views the city as paradise, a place of hope and fulfillment, freedom and opportunity, Winky D views the city as a version of hell on earth, a place of suffering, struggle and evil. The voice of the mother is saturated with expression of profound gratitude that her children are working as she says:

... *Vari kumhanyisana nemabasa kuda kudzinga hurombe,*

Ndinosisivaona kuhope, Vari pamushando

hadzisi nyope kubva mangwanani vari pandima dzamara kudoka

(They are chasing after employment to deal with poverty

I usually dream about them, working hard from morning till night)

Against that backdrop, it shows that Winky D's music is rooted in the African ontological existence of life. The voice of the parent appreciates that her children are working but the system they are operating under is impoverishing. She does not blame children for failing to return home and look after their parents, but she shoulders the blame on the exploitative capitalistic system. In the words of Tembo (2013), p. 146), Winky D 'unrelentlessly and unapologetically underlines the importance of optimistic perceptions of the world, regardless of the challenges.' He understands that the large rift created between parents and their children is not of their own making but is a result of the existing hegemonic world trends. Winky D views capitalism as the chief culprit of social tensions existing between old adults

and younger generation. The musician is singing from experience, and his message resonates with (Hove, 1988, p. 13)'s assertion that 'the city is like the throat of a crocodile; it swallows both the dirty and the clean.' Thus, it dismembers the children from their parents by causing them to throw away their admirable plans they have, to resume city life. Thus, the prominent leitmotif in Winky D's music is pessimistic existentialism of old adults caused by capitalism.

Therefore, we argued that, blaming children for neglecting their parents is a skewed and blinkered vision rooted in academic amateurish since children are also victims of larger global hegemonic forces. Matiza (2022), p. 14) commenting on family disintegration caused by movement of children to the city parents remain in the countryside avers that '... the high rate of economic migration in the country has given birth to another challenge for disgruntled families. ... parents are longing to be with their children who cannot afford the hardships in the country, hence migrate for better livelihoods.' Thus, by portraying the city as a monster which swallows both the good and bad people, Winky D bemoans intergenerational gap between elders and the youth brought by capitalism. Children in the song escape from their duties of looking after their family as espoused in the Shona a proverbial philosophy of life that '*Chirere mangwana chizokurerawo*' (Look after it now, for tomorrow it will do the same for you). Such escapism is a result of the city life where morality is suspended and the struggle for survival guides all human endeavors. Thus, capitalism has castrated and stripped people of their dignity so that it is impossible for them to be role models for the community in terms of moral rectitude as well as in terms of the knowhow which they possess since one of its mandates is 'a strong and continuous pursuit of profit' (Aldridge, 2007, p. 63). Victimhood of the parent in the song manifests through the deplorable change in the society in which the parents continue to fend for themselves to earn a living in a society where the elderly are count 'among the dead' because of the shortage of support structures to look after them. The family structure which is the bedrock of the Shona people has been heavily disrupted by capitalism and can no longer stand.

For Winky D economic challenges in the country make parents to endure long periods of alienation, loneliness and psychological trauma in old age, since their children are abroad. The artist invokes feelings of neglect, vulnerability, incompleteness and sorrow resulting from the young people's migration overseas. The degree of the parents' vulnerability is seen through their voices as they lament seeking divine intervention to rescue them and their children from the menacing situation. However, although capitalism has managed to dismantle kinship relations between old adults and youths in Zimbabwe, we established that viewing the elderly in a positive sense is deeply entrenched in Shona culture, thereby making them an indispensable part of the Shona family unit and society. The culture of abandoning parents and discriminating them because of their age is a residue of western culture which has formatted the ubuntu philosophy of life among Africans. Thus, Winky D's music is a reminder to children in diaspora that when parents are old many are left neglected, forgotten or taken for granted by the children they raised sacrificing their resources. This can be read as a warning to families, volunteer groups non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to put effective support structures to assist the aging population. Reneging on such a responsibility is a dereliction of duty that breeds distress among the elderly.

As already indicated above, in Winky D's music, Jah Prayzah's song *Hallo mama* (2007) exposes the fragmentation and disharmony that goes with the destruction of the social bond between a mother and her child who has moved to town looking for greener pastures. The mother has a nostalgic feeling because her child used to send groceries, clothing and even communicating with her but suddenly this has come to an end. The child in the song no longer communicates with her mother and the mother questions the reasons for the silence. The voice in the song is not only nostalgic but starts with positioning the unconditional love of the mother to her child in the following words:

Hee mwanangu, oh my son

Uri ropa rangu, haubve pamoyo wangu, uri hura hwangu, you are my blood at the core of my heart

Asi ndingafare kutambire runhare, But I will be happy to receive a phone call,

Chiiko mwanangu chaita unyarare? What has happened that you are silent?

Dai wangoti hallo × 4 Just say hallo

Inga waimbotumira chouviri You used to send some goods,

Shangu, nemarokwe jazi nechari Shoes, dresses, and small blankets

Nhasi ndongorarira mbeva mbiri, Now I am sleeping after taking only two mice

By portraying her child as her blood, it shows how connected the mother is to her child because without blood, humans cannot live so the mother expresses how strong is the bond between herself and the child. By looking back in past historical moments of her life, the mother invoked a *sankofa* approach since Gray (2001, p.102) stresses that:

sankofa includes drawing on that past functionally, anchoring efforts in that past-gleaning the most instructive and constructive information from the African past, refining that information as necessary, and then utilising the information along with one's particular personal desires.

In African societies, there is an expression which says that a child is the walking stick of parents when they are old. Elaborating further on children as walking sticks of parents, they are expected to assist their parents 'by any means necessary' because parents usually sacrifice a lot to raise their kids. The mother looks back and sees that her child used to be responsible, which is one of the prime duty children are expected to fulfil in African culture. The voice of the mother in the song is aware that she has reached the afternoon of her life and feels pity for the child who is failing to get in touch with her on the last days of her life. Jah Prayzah is tapping from the Afrocentric philosophy of life and the Shona people's culture in particular where mothers have a crucial role in the lives of their children. Makaudze (2015), p. 275) posits that:

The mother's ancestral spirits are known to be very powerful and loving. However, if they are annoyed or angered, they cause untold harm to the siblings. When the Shona faces a terribly serious problem, they normally have an adage '*Mudzimu wamai wadambura mbereko*' which means the mother's ancestral spirits have forsaken its siblings. The Shona believe that the maternal ancestors are so powerful and extreme in meting punishment on wrongdoers than the paternal ones.

From the excerpt above, mothers command highest respect since they have the potential to cause untold suffering to their children even after they have departed. However, in the song *Hallo mama* the mother does not understand what had stopped the child from sending groceries. The picture of the city that emerges in the mother's imagination is nuanced and one-dimensional. It is a picture where life is rosy. Whilst we cannot rule out the fact that the child might be enjoying in the city forgetting his parents at home, there might be other factors as well which are beyond the child's control. Communication breakdown might not be the child's volition but a result of the capitalistic economic system of oppression, exploitation, degradation, and discrimination that is dominant in the neo colonial environment. The child in the song who fails to communicate does not deserve the mother's diatribe but rather love and comfort. Rakodi (1995), p. 5) avers that cities are colonial invention, and they were intended for the benefit of whites. Black people were admitted into the city as a source of cheap contracted labor and were expected to return to their rural homelands at the end of their contracts. Thus, the black person was made to feel as an alien in an urban environment, a place he was not supposed to regard as home. The child in the song responds to her mother trying to explain to her that he was a stranger in the city when he says,

'*Tiri musango kushandira kudzinga nhamo*' (We are in the jungle working, to make ends meet). Jah Prayzah like other African artists view the city as a jungle. The unbelonging and unhomeliness of the city to black people is inaugurated in the politics of dispossession, displacement and exclusion. To the Shona people, when parents meet their children coming from urban areas, they always ask them, '*Muri sei mumasango?*' (How is the situation in the jungle?). In African traditional societies, people live by hunting and gathering so the introduction of cities to Africa resembles the new hunting grounds. Thus, when the child says they are in the jungle, he suggests hard life, struggle, and suffering in the city where only the brave and strong emerge victorious. In light of this view, there is antagonism between old adults and the youths because the youth view old adults as people overtaken by time and their days of living have lapsed leading to their alienation and abandonment in society. Contrary to that, from an Afrocentric point of view, old adults are the repositories of knowledge, culture and wisdom, thus denying them 'voice, space and authority' (Gwekerere, 2013) is tantamount to cultural Darwinism.

The voice of the mother in the song is failing to see that her child has been weaned and strangled by the system of exploitation in the city. Both the mother and the child have psychological turmoil resulting from exploitation; hence they are victims of a system. As Ngugi (1993), p. 50) rightly posits that, 'imperialism, in whatever form and guise, aims at complete ownership, management and control of the entire system of production.' Thus, the child which the mother claims is no longer serving her interest but the interest of the new master. Against that backdrop, the mother is trying to reclaim her space and authority on the child who has been dislocated by the system of exploitation. Hence, by blaming the child for ignoring her, the mother is blaming a victim of a system who needs deliverance from the yoke of exploitation. Asante Kwame Ture is of the view that the colonizer sought to change the colonized in every respect except color by moving them off their psychological, political, fashion, philosophical, historical, name, linguistic, and cultural terms. Contrary to Winky D's narrative where the parent understands the challenges of the child in the city, the voice in this song sees the city as a place of hopes and dreams of a good life, a factor that motivates people to migrate from the rural areas to the city.

Conclusion

The upshot of this exegesis has been that Charles Charamba, Marshal Munhumumwe are Afrocentric musicians singing in defense of old adults in the songs *Nokusaziva* (2004) (Because of the lack of knowledge) and *Takabva neko* (1994) (We passed through it), Winky D and Jah Prayzah. These musicians tap from the celebrated African philosophy of life to bridge intergenerational gap between the young and old adults. The musicians managed to highlight how Shona people's belief systems like the belief in witchcraft have exacerbated the discrimination of elderly people in the society. Their voices are voice of restoration, saturated with life-affirming and life-furthering messages shunning the discrimination of older persons in the society. Shunning the elders and discriminating them as witches is a reflection that the society has lost its moral campus. From an Afrocentric point of view, humans are valued even after death because they assume a bigger role by joining the ancestors when they die taking larger responsibilities of looking after the family. Thus, their presence or departure is always celebrated by the living hence there is no reason to discriminate the aged. However, on the other hand, Jah Prayzah and Winky D's view the Shona people's philosophy of respecting the elders under siege by cultural, economic and political forces shaped and underpinned by the ever-mutating faces of global modernization. The voices in their songs presented youth living in political and economic exile because 'the centre can no longer hold.' This crisis created a 'dog-eat-dog' society in which people become creatures of opportunism whose approach to surviving the crisis explodes all that the ethical code of *ubuntu* stands for. Children are earning a living through unorthodox means. We established that, although Jah Prayzah and Winky D managed to reflect on pertinent issues affecting societies in the contemporary era, blaming children for neglecting and abandoning their parents is a parochial view of analysis of aging within the African context. Mukoma Wa Ngugi (2003) emphasizes on the need to posit history and culture as essentials in any study of African people. Projecting pessimism

and victimhood as well as canonizing the blame game is a view which emasculates Africans into objecthood. Achebe (2009, p.128) succinctly observes that ‘it is not enough for us that our art should merely report the nature of things; it should aim to change it. Cognisant of that, this article can prepare for demographic shift by combating ageism by positively perceiving old adults and the process of ageing. This is particularly important in view of the findings of the World Health Organisations’ (2021) global report on ageism which indicates that Zimbabwe is among those sub-Saharan African countries with very ageist attitudes (2021, p.33). We established that such ageist attitudes expose old adults to abuse, abandonment and even death resulting from witchcraft accusations, hence there is need to restore sanity and harmony by producing positive images of old adults. The imperative to safeguard more humane life conditions for the elderly is a sacred mission that guarantees continuity and solidarity between the young and the old and all stakeholders have a duty and responsibility to work toward the common good of society.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Aphios Nenduva  <http://orcid.org/0009-0006-5180-9338>
 Allan. T. Maganga  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1744-2684>
 Charles Tembo  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5113-3589>

References

REFERENCE

- Achebe, C. (1988). *Hopes and impediments: Selected essays*. Heinmann.
- Achebe, C. (2000). *Home and exile*. Oxford University Press.
- Aja, E. (2001). *Metaphysics: An introduction*. Donze.
- Aldridge, D. P. (2007). “Black male/Female relationships: The lens Model”. In C. Hudson Weems (Ed.), *Contemporary African theory, thought and action: A Guide to africana studies* (pp. 57–74). Asmara World Press.
- Asante, M. K. (2003). Afrocentricity: The theory of social change. African American Images.
- Banana, C. S. (1999). *Come and share. An introduction to Christian theology*. Mambo Press.
- Butler, R. N. (1969). Ageism: Another form of bigotry. *The Gerontologist*, 9(4_Part_1): 243–246. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/9.4-Part-1.243>
- Butler, R. N. (1975). *Why survive? Being old in America*. Harper and Row.
- Carruthers, J. H. (2010). The Elder’s staff: Tell our children; renew the instructions of their mothers and fathers. In C. C. Robertson (Ed.), *Africa rising multidisciplinary discussions on africana studies and history: From ancient times through modernity* (pp. 150–166). Africa World Press.
- Chawane, M. (2016). The development of Afrocentricity: A historical survey. *Yesterday and Today*, (16), pp.78–99. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2016/n16a5>
- Chilimampungu, C., & Thindwa, G. (2012). *The extent and nature of witchcraft-based violence against children, women and the elderly in Malawi*. Association for Secular Humanism and Royal Norwegian Embassy. <http://www.whrin.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Witchcraft-report-ASH.pdf>
- Chinouriri, B. (2014). ‘Singing the Third Chimurenga: An Investigation of the use of music as an ideological force in the political mobilisation of Zimbabwe’s land reform programme, 200 to 2010’, *Unpublished doctoral thesis*, University of Pretoria RSA.
- Chitando, E. (2021). “We are tired of HIV, but is HIV tired of us?” Ongoing reflections in African theology and religious studies. In E. Chitando, E. Mombo, & M. R. Gunda (Eds.), *That all may live! Essays in honour of Nyambura J. Njoroge* (pp. 181–188). University of Bamberg Press. <https://doi.org/10.20378/irb-50019>
- Clarke, J. H. (1999). *My life in search of Africa*. Third World Press.
- Crossley, N. (2005). Repr. (2010). *Key concepts in critical and social theory*. Sage Publications.
- Dei, G. J. S. (1994). Afrocentricity: Cornerstone to pedagogy. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 25(1), 3–28. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1994.25.1.05x0961y>
- Gelfand, M. (1979). *Growing up in Shona society*. Mambo Press.

- Gray, C. C. (2001). *Afrocentric thought and praxis: An intellectual history*. Africa World Press.
- Gukurume, S. (2022). Youth popular music, Waithood and protest: Zimdancehall music in Zimbabwe. *Muziki* 19(1), 44–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18125980.2022.2144420>
- Gusha, I. S. (2023) Musicians as prophets: A comparative analysis of Winky D's music and John the Baptist's message. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 79(4), a8993.
- Gwekwerere, T. (2013). *Space, voice and authority: White critical thought on the Black Zimbabwean novel* [Doctoral thesis]. University of South Africa. UNISA Institutional Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/13848>
- Gyekye, K. (1987). *An essay on African philosophical thought: The Akan conceptual scheme*. Tempel University Press
- Gyekye, K. (1997). "Philosophy, culture and technology". In E. Chukwudi Eze (Ed.), *Post colonial African philosophy: A critical Reader* (pp. 25–44). Blackwell publishers.
- Hove, C. (1988). *Bones*. David Phillip.
- Hungwe, C., Chamisa, V., & Mugari, Z. E. (2024). Exploring gerontology in Tuku's selected songs: The case of Wasakara (2000) and Ndakuvura (2002). *Educational Gerontology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2024.2391153>
- Hungwe, C., Hungwe, E., & Mugari, Z. E. (2023). Representations of ageing in contemporary Zimbabwe. Gerontological reading on Non-Violet Bulawayo's (2013) *We Need New Names* *Journal of Population Ageing*, 17(1), 111–128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12062-023-09418-5>
- Iyare, A. E., Imafidon, E., & Abudu, K. U. (2022). Ageing, ageism, cultural representations of elderly and the duty to care in African traditions. In Chimakonam, Jonathan O., Eiteyibo, Edwin and Odimegwu, Ike, (Eds.), *Essays on contemporary issues in African philosophy*. 2022 (pp. 281–300). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70436-0-18>
- Kahari, G. P. (1986). *Aspects of the Shona novel and other related genres*. Mambo Press.
- Karenga, M. (2007). "Nguzo Saba (the seven principles)." In Hudson-Weems, C. (Ed.) *Contemporary African theory, thought and action: A Guide to africana studies*. (pp. 445–458). Asmara Africa World Press.
- Katz, S. (2001). Busy bodies: Activity, aging, and the management of everyday life. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 15(2), 135–152. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065\(01\)00017-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065(01)00017-0)
- Levy, B. R., & Benaji, M. R. (2002). Implicit ageism. In T. D. Nelson (Eds.), *Ageism: Stereotyping and prejudice against older persons* (pp. 49–75). MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/10679.001.0001>
- Maganga, A. T. (2022). Oliver mtukudzi as a cultural activist: exploring africanity in tuku music. In E. Chitando, P. Mateveke, M. Nyakudya, & B. Chinouriri (Eds.), *The life and music of oliver mtukudzi reconstruction and identity* (pp. 107–119). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Makaudze, G. (2015). The power of a mother in Shona milieu. *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1 & 2), 266–276.
- Mamvura, Z., Nyota, S., Masowa, A. (2021). The projection of the elderly Shona in discourse: A linguistic anthropological study. In P. M. Chiangong (Ed.), *Old age in African literary and cultural contexts* (pp. 137–152). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Mandaza, D. M. (1970). "Traditional ceremonies which persist", In C. Kileff and P. Kileff (Eds.), *Shona customs: Essays by African Writers* (pp. 54–60). Mambo Press.
- Manuel, P. (1988). *Popular musics of the non-western world: An introductory survey*. Oxford University Press.
- Maphosa, V. (2021). *Elderly couple killed over witchcraft allegations*. www.heraldonline.co.zw Retrieved November 12, 2024.
- Masaka, D., Chingombe, A. (2009). The relevance of gata among the Shona of Zimbabwe in the context of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(1):189–199. <https://scispace.com/pdf/the-relevance-of-gata-among-the-shona-of-zimbabwe-in-the-4ex7mvtk2o.pdf>
- Matiza, V. M. (2022). Family disintegration and migration in Shona musical voices in Zimbabwe, *African Identities*, 22 (3) 648–663. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2022.2096568>
- Matsilele, Msimanga, Tshuma. (2023). Popular music and political contestations in Zimbabwe: An analysis of Winky D's and Jah Prayzah's music. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 15 (3), 2–17. https://doi.org/10.1386/jams_00106_1
- Maza, C. (2017). *Mugabe says Mnangagwa plotted via witchcraft*. www.nehandaradio.com Retrievedonline on November 24, 2024.
- Mbaegu, C. C. (2015). The effective power of music in Africa. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 6(5), 176–183. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2015.53021>
- Mkabela, Q. (2005). Using the Afrocentric method in researching indigenous African culture, *The Qualitative Report*, 10 (1), 178–189.
- Motsoeneng, M. (2022). The lived experiences of elderly women accused of witchcraft in a rural community in South Africa. *EUREKA: Social and Humanities*, (3), 112–118. <https://doi.org/10.21303/2504-5571.2022.002423>
- Mtathiwa, S. (2014). Faces of an African city: Versions of Harare in the poetry of Musaemura Zimunya and Chenjerai Hove. *Journal of Humanities (Zomba)*, 23, 101–110. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48815911>
- Mungwini, P. (2007). 'Forward to the past': Dilemmas of rural women's empowerment in Zimbabwe. *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 11(2), 124–133. CODESRIA.
- Muranda, R. (2019). Reflecting on death through song. *Dande Journal of Social Sciences And Communication*, 2(2), 106–119. <https://doi.org/10.15641/dande.v2i2.53>

- Muwati, I., Gambahaya, Z., Mutasa, D. E. (2013). A potentially dystrophic era: Analysing the lyrical sociology of selected sungura songs in Zimbabwe in the, 1990s, and beyond. *Muziki*, 10(Supp. 1), 107–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18125980.2013.852748>
- Ncube, G., Gwatirisa, Y. (2022). Music as pedagogy: The life, Times and music of Oliver Mtukudzi. In E. Chitando, P. Mateveke, M. Nyakudya and B. Chinouriri (Eds.), *The life and music of Oliver Mtukudzi Reconstruction and identity* (pp. 39–49). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ngugi, W. (1993). *Moving the centre: The struggle for cultural freedoms*. Heinemann.
- Ngugi, W. (2009). *Something torn and new: An African Renaissance*. Basic Civitas Books.
- Nhongo, R. (2018). Retrospecting the Decade of crisis: An exegesis of delected songs by ndolwane supersounds and makosi connection. In I. Muwati, T. Charamba, & C. Tembo (Eds.), *Singing nation and politics music and the 'decade of crisis' in Zimbabwe* (pp. 189–225). Midlands State University Press.
- Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2012). 'Potted plants in greenhouses': A critical reflection on the resilience of colonial education in Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 47(2), 129–154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909611417240>
- Nzewi, M. (2009). 'Modern African cultural arts: Resolving entrenched aberrations, In M. A. Masoga, O. Nzewo, & M. Nzewi (Eds.), *African indigenous knowledge-sensed musical arts education, policy consideration* (pp. 115–130). CIIIMDA.
- Okafor, V. O. (2010). Understanding the Afrocentric conceptual paradigm. In C. C Robertson (Ed.) *Africa rising multidisciplinary discussions on africana studies and history: From ancient times through modernity* (pp. 122–137). Africa World Press.
- Ozumba, G. O. (2004). African metaphysics. *Quodlibet Journal*, 6(3), 10–14.
- p'Bitek, O. (1986). *Artist the ruler: Essays on art, culture and values*. Heinemann.
- Raftopolous, B. and Mlambo, A. (Eds.) (2009). *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*. Weaver Press.
- Rakodi, C. (1995). *Harare: Inheriting a settler-colonial city: Change or continuity*. Wiley and Sons.
- Reigersburg, S. (2017). M, E collaborative music, Health, and wellbeing research globally: Some perspectives on challenges faced and how to engage with them. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 5(1–2), 133–159. <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfolkrese.54.2.06>
- Sibanda, F. (2018). 'The legality of witchcraft: Allegations in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe'. In M. C. Green, T. J. Gunn, & M. Hill (Eds.), *Religion Law and security in africa*. African Sun Media.
- Tazvida, F. (2018). *Aiming higher: My music is not a tuck-shop business, says Jah Prayzah*. www.nehandaradio.com Retrieved February, 2025.
- Tembo, C. (2013). An embodied culture of optimism and struggle: The sungura music of Tongai Moyo. In *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 6(5), 1144–155.
- Tsodzo, T. K. (1985). *Rurimi rwaamai Bhuku 3*. College Press.
- Uchendu, E., Elizabeth Onogwu, E. O., & Agbo, C. (Eds.). (2023). Understanding witchcraft in continuously evolving society: An introduction. In *Witchcraft in Africa: Meanings, factors, and practices* (pp. 112–126). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- World Health Organization. (2021). *Decade of healthy ageing: Baseline report*. WHO. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240017900>
- Zachrisson, P. (2007). "Witchcraft and witchcraft cleansing in Southern Zimbabwe" in *Nomos*, 102(1), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.5771/0257-9774-2007-1-33>
- Zillman, D. (1972). Rhetorical elicitation of agreement in persuasion in *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 21, 159–165. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0032316>
- Zinyuke, R. (2024). *Substance abuse fuels mental health crisis in Zimbabwe*. www.heraldonline.co Retrieved December 2, 2024.

Discography

- Charamba, C. (2004) *Nokusaziva. Verses and chapters*. Gramma Records.
- Munhumumwe, M. (1994). *Takabva Neko. Mbereko Yakaramba*. Shed studios.
- Prayzah, J. (2017). *Hallo mama. Kutonga kwaro*. Universal Music (Pty) Ltd South Africa.
- Winky, D. (2018). *Dzika Ngirozi. Gombwe Chiextra*. Oskid Productions.