

**PORTRAYAL OF DISABILITY (ALBINISM) IN GORO WA KAMAU'S *GHOST AND
THE FORTUNE HUNTERS***

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DECLARATION

I hereby solemnly declare that the work presented in this project is my original work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it has not been submitted for the award of a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION.

To Caroline and William,

Your constant reminder on the importance of finishing this project, along with your encouragement gave me the strength to complete it.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the relationship between portrayal of disability in literature and the perception or image created towards characters with disability. Although disabled characters exist in texts ubiquitously, their presence is overlooked or they carry negative connotations as explored by literary scholars who examine recurring stereotypes and misrepresentations perpetuated in literary texts. This research focuses on the impact of negative representation and more especially, on ways of creating new interpretations of disabled characters in literature. In this research therefore, we examine the role of the disabled child character in deconstructing disability in Goro Wa Kamau's novel *Ghost and the fortune Hunters*. we explore the strategies employed by the disabled character to deconstruct existing stereotypes and misrepresentations in understanding albinism in the text. These strategies lead to constructions of normalcy and dynamism in perceiving disability. The study further examines how disability is re-imagined to create realistic and positive portrayals in literature.

Since representation in fictional works informs the way we interpret reality, we applied psychoanalysis theory in order to analyze the behaviors and attitudes of characters. Characters' psyches and actions affect the way they perceive disability. Deconstruction theory was also applied with the aim of challenging existing interpretations of disability, destabilizing myths and beliefs with regard to disability and constructing new or diverse images of disability in literary texts. Drawing on literary styles: metaphor, point of view and symbolism, the study reveals that positive and realistic representations are achieved by analyzing the text using the above forms of style.

INTRODUCTION

The study investigates how literary texts portray characters with disability, with focus on Goro Wa Kamau's *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. Portrayals of disability in literature have greatly relied on character to examine the place of disability in society. Various literary writers who have addressed disability in the past have used character to portray their attitudes and those of society towards disability. Representations of characters in texts attach meaning to bodies deemed disabled. The meaning could be positive or negative depending on roles, description and the traits the characters exploit in the texts.

This study focuses on how the child character has been used to deconstruct portrayal of disability. Children are often perceived as dependent and vulnerable in unfavorable environments. The protectionist model perceives children as “priceless” (Roche 1999), however, compared to adults, they are incomplete, socially incompetent and inherently vulnerable (Cheney 2013). They therefore are assumed to be in need of protection from adults. However, children have demonstrated independence and autonomy in handling critical issues that they encounter in life. Goro Wa Kamau, in an interview, says:

It was my feeling that when we talk especially about children's and young adult's literature, a lot of writers tend to put more accent action – fast-moving and thrilling stories- and less focus on the meaningfulness of the story. There seems to be an ingrained view that young people do not want or cannot handle serious issues. The two, however, are not mutually exclusive. A story can be both interesting and serious at the same time.

I agree with Goro Wa Kamau's assertion because child characters in texts can expose a myriad of issues that affect the society. The study, therefore, delves into literary portrayals of disability and

examines the effectiveness of the author's employment of child characters in the treatment of the theme of disability. Narratives that capture children as main characters present them as symbols. Children symbolize naivety yet they are innovative and revolutionary. Authors use child characters to depict the growth of a society in relation to various perspectives. In Eldred Jones's introduction to the 1998 special issue of *African Literature Today* entitled "Childhood in African Literature", he argues that child narrators/protagonists are used by African authors to disclose "grim reality of cruelty, harshness, parental (particularly paternal) ego-centrism and extraordinary bruising of the vulnerable child psyche" (7).

Goro wa Kamau uses child characters to examine the challenges children face in a modern society. Some of the challenges include, violence, neglect, and oppression. Edgar Nyabutanyi in "Representations of Childhoods in African Fiction" highlights the child narrator as "A symbol of particular African problems such as colonial violence in Oyono, alienation in Laye, or postcolonial disillusionment in Okri" (2). Nabutanyi's analysis presents children as an allegory of colonial and postcolonial issues. Despite the portrayal of the African child in literature highlighting negative societal aspects, the use of the child character in literature also illuminates hope. This is because they cultivate diverse ways of solving challenges facing them based on their transient ways of thinking and perceiving issues in society.

Child characters with disability in the contemporary literary texts depict individuals deconstructing disability by demonstrating competence in various fields which reflect real children with disability in our contemporary society. Characters with disability should not be embedded with stereotypic representations; rather portrayal should echo real experiences of children or people with disability. Characters that resemble real people strengthen the modern way of studying character where characters are not only for literary functions but also unique individuals with complicated

personalities and experiences just like real people. Characters generated in literary texts as Seymour Chatman observes “are not real people. Although the characters are constructed imitations, that does not mean that they are in any way limited to the words on the printed page. A literary character is constructed in the same way that a historical person is constructed or even how the people we meet in real life are constructed” (99).

Literary characters as presented by Chatman live beyond their depiction in fictional works. They echo real people’s experiences. Therefore, representation of characters in texts cannot be detached from representation of real people. Portrayals of characters with disabilities or special needs in texts can thus be assumed to depict the true nature of people with disability. Portrayals of characters with disability hence should emphasize on developing or appreciating the individual with disability rather than perceiving them as metaphors of evil or bad leadership.

Positive portrayals will encompass characters who are appreciated and included into societal space. Negative portrayals on the other hand reveal incapable characters whose impairment hinders their acceptability and penetration into society. From the studies presented by scholars on disability, one could argue that, in a text, if a character is an embodiment of stereotypic imaginations and cripple-related descriptions, so that the character appears to be helpless and subordinate, resulting in pitiable and sympathetic connotations, then the character is irredeemably incapacitated and his value and purpose in society is bleak. This character is then studied as a metaphor of evil or pity.

But if a character manifests the ability to deconstruct perceptions of disability, we will expect to see a character who cultivates a strong personality, who demonstrates a level of independence and who performs his or her roles adequately in order to achieve certain objectives. The author who presents such a character communicates diversity and hope. This depiction of character builds on

the qualities of an individual which lead to re-reading disability in a positive light. Disability scholars, as Maria Truchan asserts, “are working to defamiliarize conventional presence of disability in narrative ...and may help to liberate the collective psyche from tyrannical impositions of normalcy to greater realization of the richness of human diversity.” (19)

The author, who projects disability in a text, has the obligation of portraying real and dynamic characters with disability, free of stereotypes or cultural notions of disability, characters whose experiences merge with those of real people with disability. Authentic literature depicts characters with disabilities as persons who belong to various communities and have acquaintances because they are well rounded and multidimensional (Smith-D’Arezzo,2003), as opposed to flat stereotyped victims or outsiders to be rescued (Myers and Bersani, 2008/2009).

Literary forms that conform to social stereotypes lead to intense social stratification of people with disability because of misrepresentation. Marginality therefore develops from stereotypic representations which overlook an individual’s potential and focus on impairment. Literary forms that reconstruct disability and debunk cultural stereotypes on the other hand are perceived to have achieved purpose and engineer diversity in portrayals of people with disability. The study will therefore investigate whether Goro Wa Kamau achieves positive representation in portraying disability.

Goro Wa Kamau addresses critical issues in society that appeal to humanity and social awareness. Some of his areas of address include: articulating concerns of people with disability, people with HIV and AIDS, urban crime and its punishment, alcoholism, and family fragmentation in urban settings. *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* in particular is a social commentary projecting recent accounts of kidnapping and butchery of albinos to sell their body parts to witchdoctors.

Kaboci, the main character, who is an albino, is a pupil at Malengo Primary School. At school, he is seen to be a serious, focused student and his intense skill in timekeeping earns him the position of bell ringer. His constant arrival at school earlier than any student earns him his first nick-name, 'Ghost'. Ghost, however, not only connotes arriving early but also his skin colour. His brilliance evokes jealousy from some students in class who ridicule him. Njomo for instance, throws a prank at Kaboci that makes Kaboci to overreact and fight another student. Njomo tells Kaboci that Chebet called him a 'Freak'. Kaboci had earlier on run away from another school because he beat a student who called him an 'Elf'. From this aggressive nature, Kaboci realizes that his anger would lead to his downfall and decides to change. At home, he grapples with poverty as his father had abandoned them due to his condition. His mother only owns a stall; from which they earn a living.

Kaboci is kidnapped by a deadly gang which Njomo has recently joined after dropping out of school with the hope of becoming wealthy within a short period of time. The gang, named 'Wasps' is led by Machage. On his way to school, Kaboci is approached by men in a jeep that has a coffin on its rack. One of them grabs him into the car and he is taken to a certain premise where he is anaesthetized and transported to Tanzania. The discussion on ritual killings and witchcraft is brought out in the text.

Goro's literary corpus articulates the plight of marginalized and vulnerable individuals in society. The theme of marginality is not only addressed in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* but also in *When the Sun Goes Down*, which became a story for an anthology of short stories compiled for post-primary learners in Kenya. What provokes the reader's attention towards the text is the presentation of characters in the text. The main characters, who are victims of HIV/AIDS, emotively relay their predicament, which makes the reader get to the hearts of the characters. John Mullan, in *How Novels Work*, asserts that, "successful characterization involves taking the reader

to the heart, the inner core of an imagined person” (84). The reader can’t avoid empathizing with the characters who are victims of HIV.

His subsequent book, *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*, which won the Burt Award, further placed the author on the limelight because of the concerns it addresses. Ritual killing of albinos is a topic rarely addressed in literary writing despite its pervasive nature in African countries. The topic triggers the reader’s conscience towards the treatment of people living with albinism. The ritual killings of children with albinism in Tanzania, as reported in media, portray the recklessness, inhumanity and the brutal nature of the perpetrators. Headlines on media reports range from general ones like, “Albino’s Hunted for Body Parts in Africa” - [Daily Telegram](#), to more sensitive ones like, “Albino Tribe Butchered to Feed a Gruesome Trade in “Magical” Body Parts” - [Daily Mail](#).

This research also ridicules societal beliefs on disability and comments on the evils propagated upon people with disability. Narratives of ritual killings in recent times not only expose vulnerability of the victims, but also reveal inhumanity, brutality, greed, ignorance and facelessness. Life should always be safeguarded at whatever circumstances. The issues articulated are contemporary and require close criticism. The study therefore interrogates Goro’s projection of marginalization, stigma and societal ignorance towards people with special conditions as some of the thematic concerns in his texts. It seeks to identify whether the author represents the voices of those silenced in the society.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study investigates the role of the child character in subverting and reconstructing disability in Goro Wa Kamau's *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. Children symbolize naivety yet they are innovative and revolutionary. Authors use child characters to depict the growth of a society in relation to various perspectives. Children are often perceived as dependent and vulnerable in unfavorable environments. They therefore are assumed to need protection from adults. However, children have demonstrated independence and autonomy in handling critical issues that they encounter in life. This research therefore examines the transient nature in the representation of the disabled child character in Goro Wa Kamau's *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. Disability, albinism in particular, has been marred with a magnitude of misrepresentations and stigma which contributes to marginalization and vulnerability. Using the child character reflects a force that is determined to transform existing stigma and prejudice. The project therefore, delves into literary portrayals of children with disability and examines the effectiveness of the author's employment of child characters in the treatment of the theme of disability.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to:

- Discuss portrayal of the character with disability in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*.
- Examine symbols that deconstruct perceptions of disability in the text.

HYPOTHESES

The study will be guided by the following hypotheses.

- Portrayal of the child character with disability deconstructs negative depictions of disability.
- Certain symbols in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* contribute to enhancing positive representation of disability.

JUSTIFICATION

Literature on disability has captured various forms of disability: Physical disability, mental disability, developmental disability, visual impairment and albinism have all been articulated in literature. The author's perception towards disability, as explicated in the characters he creates however varies from one author to another. A work of art that re-imagines characters with disability as complex, real, active and embodied authorial figures; not metaphorical figures, or tragic victims is significant and timely.

Moreover, a positive approach towards disability can transform the understanding of narrative form, structure and genre. Positive portrayals envision dynamic forms in their presentation as opposed to negative portrayals that reflect monolithic structural and narrative forms which align themselves to cultural understanding of disability. Therefore, studying portrayals of disability in literature not only improves the attitudes evoked by disability, but also presents diversified forms of genres which challenge cultural constructions of disability. This study in particular challenges beliefs and myths about albinism that are entrenched in people's thoughts.

Literature that abhors discrimination in all its form and condemns violation of rights of children with albinism is therefore timely and the true calling of art. The study criticizes cruelty and inhumanity that is as a result of ritual killings of albinos. It confronts societal belief that albino's body parts install success and power. It also mirrors the role of the albino child in changing the perceived notion on disability. The child assumes a transient role as he struggles to rise above disability through hard work and determination; not through reliance on governmental aid. While some elderly people with disability expect the government or organizations to protect them, the child assumes the responsibility of protecting themselves.

Having read other novels like *Ghost Boy* by Martin Postorius and *Wonder* by Raquel Palacion where protagonists are children with disability who inspire a sense of hope and resilience, I believe, this topic on disability in children is essential because it restores the dignity of the people with disability.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of this study is on utilizing characterization in representing children with albinism in Goro's *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. We will discuss the role of characterization in displaying the voice of children with albinism. We will also discuss the place of disability in society. The study will be exploring stigma, stereotyping, isolation and the vulnerable nature of a character with albinism, who is exposed to ritual killings and sacrifice. Concentration will lie on the strategies employed by the character to overcome prejudice and construct a positive individual who rejects imposed identification by a biased society. The study will limit itself to character and characterization and the metaphorical and symbolic meanings of disability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is an important segment in research as it equips one with knowledge about a certain topic which aids in identification of existing gaps. The main intention of this study is to delineate the representation or portrayal of disability, specifically, albinism in literary works. The literature review will keenly tackle earlier representations of disability in literature then narrow down to contemporary representations. The study will reveal how the gaps inform creation of new narratives with regard to disability, with *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* being such one text. Literature review will refer to disability and particularly literary texts that feature on disability. Scholars who have written on disability focus on various approaches to analyze disability, some of which will be reviewed. The *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* is a text that has not been analyzed before and therefore limited literature review on the text. The topic will cover disability studies but with a lot of focus on albinism.

Disability Studies and Character Representations in Literature

The study examines literature review on disability in two dimensions. The first one will be addressing the medical and cultural approaches of disability while the second perspective will discuss the social and affirmative models of disability. The study will demonstrate the differences in representations from the two dimensions and identify how disability studies has developed in literature. In this section of literature review, I argue that social or affirmative models of disability are effective or suitable in approaching disability in literature as opposed to medical or cultural models.

The medical model, as Danforth articulates, “Frames disability as a condition of biophysical essence and origin that renders an individual unable to perform expected valued, or typical human activities” (349). The medical model as expressed by scholars dehumanizes and segregates people with disability on grounds that they are not complete human beings and that to be complete, they need to be fixed or treated to correct the deformities so that they fit in society. The cultural approach according to Tom Shakespeare focuses on language, stereotypes and the creation of meaning. Using the notion of ‘otherness’ he suggests that cultural constructions of disability initiate and intensify the processes of denial and rejection. From the above models, disability is fraught with negative connotations which don’t depict reality about people with disability. These approaches influenced authors’ forms of representation of disability especially canonical authors.

Rosemarie Garland in *Disability, Identity and Representation* strongly criticizes the negative representation of disability in texts. She says, “Literary texts necessarily make disabled characters into freaks, stripped of normalizing contexts and engulfed by a single stigmatic trait.” (11). Three classic works have been used by scholars, among them Mitchell and Snyder to depict author’s perceptions towards disability. They include; *Richard III*, *Moby Dick*, and *A Christmas Carol* that involve, “murderous hunchbacked king, Richard III... the obsessive, one legged captain, Ahab... and the sentimental, hobbling urchin, Tiny Tim” (17). From the above illustrations, I agree with Rosemarie that some literary texts contain misconceptions about people with disability. Metaphorical presentations of disability in texts with disabled characters being embodiments of evil, hopelessness, brutality translate into repressive policy in real time individuals. These lead to stereotypes which have been addressed in some literary texts.

Carol Moore, in *Portrayal of the Disabled in Books and Basals*, analyses negative stereotypes in texts. She mentions the three texts above, and more others whose summaries have been highlighted below:

The Grimm brothers collected folktales that contain grim-visaged, deformed witches with poor eyesight who commit insidious acts upon innocent children. Born one-eyed, hunchbacked and lame, Quasimodo, in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is an object rejected by society because of his hideousness. Stevenson, In *Treasure Island*, depicts the one-legged long John Silver and the blind beggars as symbols of evil and subliminally perhaps, suggests that the disabled should be avoided and not trusted (275).

Kathrine Quarmby, in her speech, 'Literature and Disability', points out that Literature in its main reflected harsh attitudes towards disabled people – with writers like Charlotte Bronte painting a completely unsympathetic picture of the "madwoman in the attic", Rochester's wife, in *Jane Eyre*.

These and many other scholars present negative stereotypic representations of disability which do not depict the real nature of people with disability. The texts mentioned above focus on disability as opposed to the individual's potential. These stereotypical disabling factors influence the perception of people with disability. Garland Rosemary asserts that, "The more the literary portrayal conform to the social stereotype, the more economical and intense the effect; representation thus exaggerates an already highlighted physical difference" (11).

Negative or stereotypic representation in texts, especially in classical works, destroy the reputation of disabled people. These portrayals not only depicted the treatment of disabled individuals then but it also enhanced discrimination of people with disability. I therefore believe there is a gap in representation of disabled people as presented by earlier writers. These gaps in representation have

been sought by some contemporary writers who portray the individual in a realist plight that is devoid of societal myths and stereotypes. These writers re-write disability and fill the gap created between the abled and the disabled. Such authors include Morrison, Faulkner, Coetzee, among others.

Alice Hall, in *Disability and Modern Fiction*, analyses representation of disability in works of three Nobel Laureate winners: Faulkner, Morrison, and Coetzee. She says that the three present “recurring representation of disabled bodies that endure, that refuse to be removed from view even at the end novels and essays (56).

Morrison, in *Sula*, describes Eva as follows:

Whatever the fate of her lost leg, the remaining one was magnificent. Nor did she wear overlong dresses to disguise the empty place on her left side. Her dresses were mid-calf so that her one glamorous leg was always in view as well as the long fall of space below her left thigh (52).

Hall argues that, “Morrison goes beyond simply re-writing disability often perceived as a ‘lack’ into a positive presence” (52).

Eva’s description in my opinion reveals the realistic demonstration of characters and individuals with disability. The author concentrates on analyzing the individual and not society’s perception of the individual. The presentation of Eva reveals a character that is confident about herself and one who is determined to assert herself before people. Morrison deconstructs the idea of beauty in a way that it is inclusive. It applies to the disabled, just like it does to the abled.

Jen Scott Curwood, in *Redefining Normal: A Critical Analysis of (Dis) ability in Young Adult Literature*, examines the construction of disability in three recent young adult novels and asserts that the three novels “include complex, realistic portrayals of characters with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. These include: *Mercelo in the Real world*, *Five Flavour of Dumb* and *Jerk California*. In, *The Real world*, Mercelo, a character with autism, manages to overcome cruelty and becomes independent in decision making. He even helps a disabled girl to seek justice when he realizes that his father’s law firm is defending a manufacturing client who is responsible for disfiguring the girl. Curwood says, “The author develops Marcelo into a complex and dynamic character who is capable of making his own way in the world” (20). In *Five Flavour of Dumb*, Curwood describes Piper as “an unlikely manager for a rock band. Not only is she a high achieving student and member of the chess club, she has also profoundly hearing impairment. But Piper is determined that she will make Dumb a success” (20).

I support the above portrayal of characters with disability because they are victors, who despite their disability, strive to reclaim and empower themselves and more importantly cultivate a positive attitude which aids in transforming societal perceptions on disability. It is upon these depictions by Curwood that I anchor my presentation of a character with albinism. *Ghost and The Fortune Hunters* can be read as an archetype of the young adult novels mentioned above.

Curwood’s and Hall’s analyses echo the social model of disability. Tom Shakespeare discusses the social model and writes:

The social model focuses on disability as a relationship between people with impairment and a discriminatory society. Disability is defined as the outcome of disabling barriers imposed by environmental or policy interventions. It suggests a strategy of barrier removal,

or education to remove prejudice, with the goal of inclusion. Disabled people in this approach do not want anything extra, but wish to be treated the same as non-disabled people. (37)

The models of disability contribute to the understanding of the trends realized in representing disability. Literary studies concentrate on models that positively portray disability as opposed to those ones that enhance disability and therefore negatively portraying disability.

Albinism

NOAH defines “albinism” as a “group of inherited conditions when people have little or none of the pigment melanin in their eyes, hair, or skin. They have inherited altered genes that do not make the usual amounts of the pigment; melanin” (238). Albinism in literary texts however, does not focus on pigmentation but the treatment accompanied by lack of pigmentation. The deficiency of melanin places an albino at a risky and vulnerable situation which exposes them to ridicule and misinterpretation since they are considered as neither black nor white.

This section explores the challenges and suffering that people with albinism encounter especially in Africa. Various scholars have articulated issues like hunting of albinos by witchdoctors, parental neglect of albinos among other concerns. They have, however, not addressed counter-reactive measures that albinos employ to resist neglect, and inhumane treatment. The study will be keen to underscore how albinos salvage themselves from cruelty and subjugation.

In a research conducted by Erica Stemson, about the social stratification of albinos in Tanzania, reports on charms made from albino bodies reveal that:

To bring luck to a business by placing a human skull in the foundation of new buildings; to secure big harvests by burying body parts on farms; to cure strokes, hands are burnt into ash and mixed into a paste; to boost vitality, brains and political power, blood is used and finally; to cure infertility and create good luck, genitals are used.

An article in *The Daily Mail* narrates Matatizo's hunt down as she is branded a ghost because of her 'striking white skin'. Whiteness in albinism doesn't receive the same connotation as in the discourses of race. Kromberg's study on albinism in South Africa reveals a speculation that, "since albinos are white and 'real people' are black, perhaps albinos are seen not as real mortals, but as spirits or reincarnations of spirits." (61)

In a study by Lund, he opines that, "The distinctive appearance of persons with albinism has a powerful impact on their lives from birth until death. They are always conspicuous, but not always seen." (48) Views about albinism are also remarked by Daniel Howden who indicates, "These Tanzanians, too white to be black have always been viewed with suspicion, thought to possess supernatural powers in local superstition, ghosts who do not die but simply disappear" (23). Another research highlights that, "Albinism is a lifelong curse as white-skinned men in black society are shunned and feared as the products of witchcraft, tented by children and drunks as 'peeled potatoes' 'monkeys' 'ghosts'. Some societies in Africa used to sacrifice albinos to idols, banish them from villages or throw them into forests at birth" (269).

The negative portrayal, torture and inhumanity experienced by people with albinism reveal ruthlessness, injustice and savagery. Further misrepresentations posed by myths and belief systems reveal isolation and marginalization. They are viewed as 'the other'. From the research above by various scholars, various misconceptions cloud the lives of albinos in the society. This research

therefore will not only address the challenges that albinos go through but also will focus on measures employed by albinos to mitigate the effects of albinism. Through employment of resilient and positive characters, the study will demonstrate how the text *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* corrects misrepresentation of albinism. Child protagonists have been used to protest against ridicule and bad treatment.

Narratives of brutal killings, rejection by parents, ridicule and isolation have been articulated by child protagonists who are albinos. In her research essay “Enduring Negativity”, Charlotte reviews various texts which have children with albinism as the protagonists. In Destremau’s *Negre Blanc*, Semete’s father decides that, “The albino couldn’t be his son, he could not possibly figure in his lineage.” (47) Destremau remarks that, “Albinism is a stain to the reputation of the family, a sign of failure or weakness.” He further describes the albino as “being beyond tolerable norms.” (237)

Charlotte Baker also comments on William Sassine’s novels; *Wiryamu, and Memoire d’Unepeau* by saying that:

These are different novels, but there are parallels between them notably that both protagonists have been abandoned by their birth parents and have difficult relationships with their adoptive mothers, and both characters are only recognized by those around them in terms of their albinism and its connotations.

Charlotte further state, “The visibility of people with albinism in sub-Saharan Africa has been manipulated into a symbolic otherness by writers, film makers, and artists aggravating the situation of individuals who are already surrounded by a web of beliefs in the form of myth and stereotypes”. In the article, “Representing the Tribe of Ghosts Stereotypes of Albinism Emerging from Reports of Recent Attacks in Tanzania and Burundi” Charlotte makes a further revelation:

Traditional beliefs relating to the conception of a child albinism as a punishment for misdemeanor and the notion of the intermediary position of the albino between the real world and the spirit world, run alongside the stereotypes of albinism which include a fear that albinism is contagious and the belief that people with the condition are mentally handicapped ... The belief that sex with people with albinism is a cure for Aids is one of the most disturbing.

Charlotte gives a critique on the treatment of albinos in Africa. She ridicules cultural practices that endanger the lives of albinos. However, she doesn't project the voice of albinos who cultivate resilience in facing the challenges and reconstruct negative descriptions. She presents vulnerable individuals who succumb to torture. From the literary point of view therefore, focus is laid on the power of the character to rise above stereotypes and stigma. I will therefore concentrate on the role of albino characters in projecting counter narratives about cultural beliefs and stereotype. Literature, especially protest literature spur awareness to society about the need to value and detach from retrogressive misconceptions. To achieve positive representation, I address the contribution of the child character in reconstructing albinism.

The voice of the child further tries to reconstruct the narratives of isolation and exclusivity. Reactions of adults vary from those of children. Children with albinism in literature trigger critical insight into the challenges faced by albinos and strategies employed to overcome the challenges. This is why many writers have used a child's voice to represent people with albinism and their predicament.

Irene Nyamu, in her research titled, "Teetering on the Brink: Locating the voices of Children with Albinism" posts that:

Adults with albinism have used their distinct skin color, characteristic low vision as well as fear for the occult that spread from Tanzania to construct themselves as disabled in political and legal terms in order to claim certain social, economic and political benefits. However, personal accounts of children with albinism and their parents tell a more nuanced story, one that shows that this group identity is contested, and not every member of the group wishes to be identified in this manner which portrays them as 'weak' (16).

Nyamu's research demonstrates children's positive attitudes and how they are motivated to redefine who they are in challenging settings. Positive attitude therefore, generates transience. The voice of the child therefore becomes critical when used by authors because it is a tool of change and also allows critics to look beyond general sociological issues and begin to grasp intimate awareness.

Children with albinism have undergone various levels of discrimination, traumatic experiences, neglect and isolation especially in school. They often grapple with the challenge of understanding their condition at initial stages of growth but they don't submit to stigma and isolation but rather rise up to construct meaningful identities and empower themselves.

Albinism, just like other physical disabilities, is fraught with stereotypic and negative imagery. Literature therefore questions the relevance of the images and minimizes narratives of vulnerability and lays focus on individual development. There is gap in representation of albinos by various authorities who generalize the experiences of albinos and who capitalize on cultural portrayals of albinism instead of articulating challenges each individual undergoes and how they exploit unique traits that empower them.

The research also focuses on other symbols that relate to ghost. Ghost in literary studies reveals a category of concerns in the past just as in the present. Mid nineteenth century, ghosts and other supernatural events and phenomenon were seen as a result of involuntary forces of the mind such as dreaming, hallucinations or more serious mental disorders. People who could experience hallucinations –the phenomena of seeing ghosts- would be effectively treated by medical practitioners who used hypnosis or mesmerism. This research though, is not interested in this subjective definition of ghost but an intense critic on ghost in light with contextual definitions. But I argue that victims (children with albinism) may undergo such involuntary phenomenon, especially dreaming so as to relieve the repressed feeling of anger and rejection as will be discussed later.

The ghost stories also, as presented by Niki Brandon in his essay, “The significance of Ghosts in Charles Dickens’ *The Christmas Carol, The Haunted Man and the Ghost Bargain, and The Signal Man*’ presents the contextual meaning and relevance of the ghost, which supports my argument. He says, “Ghost stories of the nineteenth century expressed concerns, campaigned for change and criticized the Victorian society... They also criticized the bad working conditions for the workers in the work houses, factories and mines [...] The ghost story in particular was often used by many novelists to advocate social awareness and moral order “(11,41).

I therefore argue that the ghost in the text *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* is a multifaceted entity that appeals for parental responsibility; for positive recognition of people with albinism; and for a need to repair social evils like greed and crime. American studies of ghost especially Afro-American literature, reawakens the terrible memories of slavery. These horrifying experiences in a way relate to the experiences of the hunted albinos. In both experiences (of slaves and albinos), there is a connection to power and wealth as the motive of brutality.

Renee Bergland's article, "The National Uncanny: Indian and American Subjects" focuses in early nineteenth century which features Native American ghosts because, "in American letters and in the American imagination, Native American ghosts function both as representatives of national guilt and as triumphant agents of Americanization." Also, another study of American ethnicity and literature proposes that, "cultural haunting" is a separate, contemporary genre of ethnic literature in which the ghost is an "enigmatic transitional figure moving between the past and present, death and life, one culture and another. She also adds that *Beloved*, is an example of ghost literatures that, "signal an attempt to recover and makes social use of a poorly documented, partially erased cultural history."

The literature review presented exposes attempts or researchers to delineate critical issues of inequality in society with regards to the treatment of people with disability. It reveals that disability especially in literature is important because it contributes to reconstructing negative notions of disability in society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study relies on psychoanalysis and deconstruction theories to analyze the text. This is because the study aims to examine the psyche of a child with albinism. The character of the child will be influenced by some of the psychoanalytical attributes such as the id, ego and superego. Deconstruction will seek to decentralize facts about disability in society in an attempt to reveal positive portrayals in disability.

Psychoanalysis is a theory that focuses on analyzing the human mind, the desires, and wishes of individuals in an attempt to understand their behavior and character. It is an appropriate theory for my study because it portrays the development of a child up to adulthood, the expected behavior and how the behavior builds or destroys the personality of individuals and also explains the causes of depression and trauma that arise from rejection and isolation.

Psychoanalysis has three distinct meanings. Firstly, it is a school of psychology which lays emphasis on how important childhood experiences are in molding one's personality and behavior. Secondly, psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on the roles of the unconscious in determining human behavior, is a specialized method for investigating the unconscious mental activities and finally, psychoanalysis' significance as a therapeutic method for the investigation and treatment of mental disorders, especially the neurotic disorders. Psychoanalysis operates with the help of other sub-theories. The sub-theories are: levels of consciousness, psychic structure of personality, psychosexual development, defense mechanism and theory of instincts. The study will be interested in discussing and utilizing two of the above mentioned sub- theories: Levels of consciousness and psyche structure of personality.

There are three levels of consciousness discussed by Freud: the conscious mind, the preconscious, and the unconscious. The conscious mind consists of, “Events, memories, fantasies, and the sensations from sense organs along with the feelings, emotions of which one is aware at the moment (235). However, it is also important to note that an idea that is conscious now is no longer so a moment later, although it can become so again under some certain conditions which are easily brought about. The state of consciousness therefore, is characteristically conceived to be very transitory.

The preconscious, also referred to as available memory, consists of desires and experiences which are readily recallable. The preconscious allows material to be recalled and therefore retrieved to the conscious part of the mind. The unconscious consists of “buried memories, thoughts, emotions, and impulses for which conscious mind has no direct voluntary access. According to Freud, there are two kinds of unconscious, “that which is latent and is capable of becoming conscious; and that which is repressed and not capable of becoming conscious in the ordinary way (243). The unconscious receives content from two sources: the inherited and the experienced. The inherited contents are pleasure dominated and have brutal instincts, and are primitive in nature. Experience-based contents contain repressed memories, feelings of fear and anxiety, or trauma which caused by disturbing experiences. Although these inherited instinctual drives and repressed memories have no direct access to the conscious mind, they exert a profound influence on the conscious mental processes.

Three principles, as distinguished by Freud exist within the mind: id, ego, and superego. Id, the source of psychic energy is the prime mover. Libido is the major drive which governs the id. If the id is left unchecked, it will lead to amorous activities. The id essentially adheres to the pleasure principle. Here the pleasure of an infant is of utmost importance. The id will therefore search for

pleasure and avoid pain. The id will strive to satisfy the individual by seeking desires and wishes. “It (the id) has no values, knows no laws, follows no rules, does not consider right from wrong and considers only the satisfaction of its needs and appetites” (56).

The ego, unlike the id is governed by reality principle and not pleasure principle which governs the id. Carducci in *The psychology of personality: viewpoints, research and application*:

The ego meets the needs and desires of the id by operating on the reality principle. The reality principle dictates that while trying to meet the unconscious and often irrational needs and wishes of the id, the ego must follow the rules of reality, one of which is delaying gratification. (2009)

The information-processing of the ego is characterized by logic and reason and is referred to as the secondary process. The third part of personality, the super ego is “the moral sensor which is identified with the voice of consciousness”. The super-ego knows the expectations of society, right from wrong and good from bad as learnt from the parents and other figures of authority in society. In addition, the super-ego includes the ego (standards of what is right) and the conscience (standards of what is wrong) (98). At this level therefore, arguably, the unconscious would be interpreted as the id; the pre-conscious as the ego and the conscious as the super-ego.

Repression is one of the most important defense mechanisms. In this the unfavorable events are driven back to the unconscious. Even though the repressed events can never become explicit, they have profound influence on the behavior of an individual. Some of the mechanisms include denial, displacement, dream among others. Defense Mechanism is a process through which the ego satisfies the id, hence maintaining the ego’s strength. However, the contents of dream are censored by the ego meaning they are not the direct expressions of the repressed contents. In order to reveal

the unconscious, it is necessary to interpret censored contents of the dream. Often the contents of a dream which Freud calls the manifest dream are symbolized acts.

The content of the dream which is also referred to as the manifest dream should be deconstructed so as to decipher its symbolism or what Freud calls the dream thought. There are other dreams that are wish fulfilling in nature. Freud reveals that the wish fulfilled in a dream originates from the following sources:

It may have been incited during the day, and owing to the external circumstances failed to find gratification. Also it may come to the surface during the day rejected, leaving an unfulfilled but suppressed wish. Lastly, it may have no relation to daily life and belongs to those wishes that originate during the night from the suppression. (19)

From the theory discussed above, I will critically analyze the character or personality development by using Freud's concept of the id, the ego and the super-ego. I will also analyze the various dreams and the symbols they reveal and how they are connected with the recurrent themes. The concept of the unconscious will also come in handy in shifting trends in the behavior of children with disability and how repressed memories affect their psyche. A psychoanalytic reading of *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* allows one to better understand the characters, the complex nature of their problems, and to analyze effectively the psychological impact of societal issues on the characters' psyche.

As psychoanalysis analyses the personality or psyche of characters in the text using psychoanalytic conventions, it does not delineate societal changes that emerge due to development of various personalities. Deconstruction will therefore focus on how the personality of the character,

especially a character with disability, reveals a diverse attribute. This attribute deconstructs presumed notions, myths or beliefs about disability and creates new interpretations of disability.

Deconstruction, according to Dobia, views texts as, “Fluid, dynamic entities that are given new life with repeated readings and through interactions with other texts, thereby providing an ongoing plurality of meanings” (146). Decentralization of meaning is therefore realized and this threatens to destroy the texts original meaning. However, Barbara Johnson observes:

Deconstruction is not synonymous with “destruction” however, it is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word “analysis” itself, which etymologically means “to undo” –a virtual synonym for “to de construct.” If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A constructive reading is a reading which analyses the specificity of a text’s critical differences from itself.

Deconstruction therefore declares meaning as virtually undesirable. This concept is therefore to problematize various conventions and contradictions and arrive at many meanings in a single text, all of them possible and all of them replaceable by others. Deconstruction therefore goes beyond examining the structure by looking at places where texts contradict thereby deconstructing themselves. Their interest is not on the conventions of a text but interestingly on how they falter. Therefore, this asserts that a literary work “No longer has one unifying meaning that an author (critic or author) can enunciate, instead meaning is accepted to be the outgrowth of various signifying systems within the text that may even produce contradictory meanings” (143).

Application of deconstruction works on the assumptions that language is inherently ambiguous. This means that any human utterance has a multitude of possibilities for meaning. A simple

statement can hold a variety of interpretations which undermine and discard what it appears to be saying. To deconstruct therefore, as Holland observes, “Is to take apart the structural ‘fault lines’ created by the ambiguities inherent in one or more of its key concepts or themes in order to reveal the equivocations or contradictions that make the text possible” (169). Therefore, a signifier has no single signified or mental concept, as the structuralists espouse rather heads to a chain of signifiers. The term difference derived by Derrida summarizes the concept of deconstruction; its denotation, ‘to defer’ and to ‘to differ’ implies that meaning is always postponed leaving only differences between signifiers which further asserts that knowledge comes from dissimilarities and absence, making it dynamic and contextual.

Derrida, therefore, destabilizes the logo centric nature of western thinking that “there is a centering principle to which all belief and actions are grounded and that certain metaphysical ideas are to be favored over others.” Moreover, he asserts that; “texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs and practices do not have unambiguous meanings as they do not have strict and rigid boundaries.” (144-148)

Deconstruction seeks to demonstrate how narratives of disability can be reconstructed and new dimensions of perceiving disability considered. I focus on particular binary oppositions such as: abled/disabled, adult/child, ghost/being, among others to reveal how assumed conventions about these binary oppositions are reversed and other meanings realized.

The theories mentioned above will serve to study various characters in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. Characters in a literary text are driven by various motives and desires to perform certain actions. The desires could lead to the downfall of one character or facilitate the success of another. Psychoanalysis will amplify on the troubled psyche of isolated individuals in society, and how it

affects their self-identity. Application of deconstruction in disability studies because it problematizes various concerns presented in texts by destabilizing the binary oppositions. Ability and disability are some of the oppositions that will be looked into leading to revisiting attitudes assumed by the binary oppositions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The concern of the research is to realize how effective the child's voice is in constructing meaningful identities for people living with disabilities especially children with albinism. To succeed in this, the methodology will involve descriptive analysis and close reading of the primary text *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*, followed by a reading of other texts such as R. J palacio's *Wonder* that present children with other forms of disability just to examine whether approaches used in representing children with disability resonate. The study shall also utilize literary theories of literature; psychoanalysis and deconstruction.

Psychoanalysis will study the development and behavior of characters in the text. Concepts such as the level of consciousness and psyche structure will help in establishing the motives of various characters and how they perceive aspects around their environment. The process of self-recollection, self-redefinition and empowerment is realized through development. The process will enable acceptance, inclusivity and positive portrayals of characters with disability.

Deconstruction, which confronts traditional conventions of philosophy and the fluidity of language and meaning, shall build our understanding of trends in defining disability and the changing attitudes towards disability. Various thematic concerns and character traits will be deconstructed with the aim of seeing how various meanings develop which threaten existing conventions.

The study shall also view works by scholars of disability, the history of disability in literature will be highlighted in the literature review. This will help establish the changes in portrayals of disability as projected by various authors.

PROPOSED CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One

This chapter will cover the following subtopics: introduction, statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis, and justification of the study, scope and limitations of the study, literature review, theoretical framework and research methodology.

Chapter Two

The second chapter of the research will discuss the portrayal of character in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. The chapter will critique the author's portrayal of character and how the portrayal contributes to perceiving literature. Point of view and metaphor will be analyzed. Point of view will seek to unearth the attitudes and reception of disability while metaphor will show what they represent from those attitudes.

Chapter Three

The third chapter will focus on a deconstructive approach to disability and explore various symbols. Various thematic concerns and character traits will be deconstructed so as to view how disability can be re-read in a more positive light. Equally, the chapter will discuss how symbols will be used in deconstructing disability. A broader perspective of disability will be which involves perceiving disability beyond human inability will be discussed.

Chapter Four

This will be the final chapter covering conclusion and recommendations for future research areas.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DISABLED CHARACTER AS A METAPHORICAL AGENT OF THE SHATTERED SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the interrelatedness of character, metaphor and theme in interrogating disability (albinism) representation in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. The chapter examines how the author has approached albinism through characterization. The characters the author creates and the treatment he subjects them to, depict various attitudes and concerns about albinism. This chapter analyzes the thoughts, the actions, and the speeches of characters involved in the text with the aim of identifying how they metaphorically represent invisibility, entrapment, discrimination, courage and resilience. The chapter seeks to uncover metaphors and themes that reflect a shattered society. In the analysis, I discuss how point of view has been used to advance characterization. Character analysis will rely on the dictates of psychoanalysis especially the three models of the human psyche which are the id, the ego and the superego.

Character and Characterization

According to James Phelan, in *Reading people, Reading plots*, character is a literary element which entails three components: the mimetic, synthetic and thematic. The mimetic component refers to how a character can be an embodiment of a real and possible person. The synthetic component perceives character as a literary construct, that is to say, a character is an artificial entity. He or she bears no semblance with real people. The thematic component refers to how a character can be used to represent a certain idea, a group or a class within the semantic structure of the literary work (56).

I concentrate on the mimetic element of character. The mimetic element studies character as an archetype of real people. The mimetic study of character places special interest in the character's thoughts, and emotions which enhance understanding of their behavior. A human-like being is constructed from the mimetic technique of representing characters. A mimetic analysis echoes the humanistic approach of classifying characters. According to Peter Martin, humanistic notion suggests that character "should be read and studied as a representation of people and is characterized by psychological and sociological speculation which seeks to uncover the motivation for the character's behavior" (24). Montgomery et al focus on how important it is for authors to create characters that are realistic when constructing a narrative that is realist. They argue that literary authors ought to be keen on the characters they create since they (characters) should be portrayed to the reader as "fully functioning characters" (286). Perceiving characters, especially those with albinism as real human beings, appeal to the reader's conscience on the treatment of disabled people.

A close interrogation of the creation and function of the characters in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* indicates that the characters, especially the main character Kaboci is not a mere effect of the text or a synthetic character, but a reflection of the real experiences of children with albinism and by extension people with albinism. The author's presentation of Kaboci echoes non-exaggerated depictions of children with disability because the character is not too good to be artificial or a character that is stereotypically depicted; rather, the author concentrates on the individual traits, some of them expressing the weakness and the strengths of the character. The character therefore is likened to a real human, one perceived beyond the text's level. The author in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* presents characters' emotions, thoughts and desires elaborately

and chronologically so that they almost resemble a real human being's thoughts, emotions and way of life. The character's experiences are not detached from real individual's experiences.

Chatman's presentation titled "*Character as a Human-like Entity*" projects that the 18th and 19th century brought about the rise of the novel which brought:

An unprecedented range of various characters that were gradually becoming more and more individual and unique. Their uniqueness was based on ever richer descriptions of their nature that fully abandoned the medieval functional perception and started to construct characters that resembled their readers in the complexity of their inner thoughts and emotions (37).

A close reading of Kaboci illuminates Chatman's interpretation of character. Kaboci is internalized, not just as a character, but as a real child who is struggling to achieve essence in a society that perceives him differently. Kaboci undergoes close introspection of himself, which allows the reader to see a character psychologically disturbed, confused about who he is, and grappling with self-rejection and rejection from society. As the plot develops, the character undergoes transformation. He accepts who he is and develops a positive attitude. He becomes courageous to disapprove society's perception of albinism. Finally, we see some form of liberation when the character rescues himself from the hands of the captors. He breaks loose from isolation, when, in court he realizes that other people, who are like him, exist. He attains self-freedom and freedom from the chains of an oppressive society. I therefore argue that Kaboci is an embodiment of real individuals, just like Paulina in Tony Morrison's *Sula* is a reflection of resilient disabled people in a contemporary society who ignore stereotypes projected against them. Studying characters as real, complex, rounded and developed individuals enables the reader to relate to

characters as though they are human hence allowing the reader to comprehend the mindset, as well as the resultant behavior and actions of characters.

The mimetic presentation of characters presents an opportunity to study the experiences and challenges disabled people undergo because the characters resemble real people. Unlike the textual function of characters, the mimetic function aims at reducing stereotypical portrayals of disability and focuses on the individual's development, or how disabled characters deconstruct disability. The textual function of a character as highlighted by formalist critics who assert that "fiction is not an appropriate means with which to unearth the 'truth' about human nature and that character is more productively regarded as a text effect which functions to serve narrative necessities" (65). The formalist critics perceive characters in an artificial way. They detach textual characters from real people. Although an author has the authority to do anything to his or her characters, which reveals the fictional part of characterization, the reader should be in a position to relate characters' experiences with those of real human beings.

Characters with disability are studied or analyzed keenly in order to identify various dimensions of perceiving disability. The characters can be presented as reflections of media and cultural stereotypes or be presented as unique, independent individuals, who perceive themselves positively. The adjectives used to describe these characters carry meaning on their portrayal. Equally, the emotions, the perceptions, the attitudes and memories evoked by the characters with disability and those without disability impact on the representation of disability in literature. The mimetic presentation is reinforced by point of view. The thoughts, attitudes and emotions and actions that are expressed in mimetic are driven by point of view.

Character and Point of View

David Lodge writes that, “Of all the elements of fiction which are recognizably discreet, character is the most difficult one to discuss in isolation” (67). I agree with Lodge because a character in a text will have a voice, an angle within which he or she perceives ideas, or will symbolize something. Character is not achieved in isolation but is, as Peter Martin argues, to a large degree, facilitated and enabled by narrative processes some of which are point of view, narrative voice, dialogue, and the situation, that is, place and time in which the narrative unfolds. I therefore use point of view, metaphor and symbolism to support character. The mimetic analysis of the character illuminates point of view since it engages the character’s thoughts and feelings. Point of view sheds light on how the character transits from a state of invisibility to a state of resilience and courage.

Various scholars who have discussed point of view point out two categories of point of view: the perceptual point of view, and the conceptual point of view. According to Chatman, in *Story and Discourse*, the perceptual point of view is the “literal, non-metaphorical sense and refers to the angle from which we view an object. It’s concerned with actually seeing or looking at something” (186). Uspensky uses the term *spatial* to describe perceptual point of view. He also discusses temporal point of view which refers to the presentation of events in a fictional world from a particular position in time.

The conceptual point of view on the other hand is metaphorical or figurative and it is concerned with judgmental attitudes of characters and the narrator. The conceptual point of view constitutes the speaker’s stance on a particular subject. Chatman, in *Story and Discourse* posits that the figurative point of view “refers to the attitudes or conceptual apparatus, the way of thinking and how facts and impressions are strained through it” (152). This point of view is similar to Fowler’s

ideological viewpoint which concerns people's sets of beliefs and values and the categories by which they comprehend the world. The perceptual point of view in my opinion offers a surface interpretation of things. It refers to the actual position from which something is seen or the physical appearance of an individual or an object. The conceptual point of view is detailed since it refers to what is implied. It expresses the opinions, feelings or attitudes evoked by what's seen. The perceptual therefore relates to the disability itself while the conceptual expresses the symbols and metaphors drawn from the disability.

This chapter focuses on the conceptual point of view because it reveals the feelings of the protagonist towards himself, and the feelings of other characters towards the protagonists. The author tells the story from the viewpoint where everything about the character is discovered. The speech, the thoughts, the emotions, the actions displayed by the narrator aid in creation of character and the roles the characters play in relation to albinism.

Kaboci's point of view with regards to his condition reveals his feelings of hate for his skin color, feelings of worry and discomfiture. His thoughts are filled with anger, fear and frustration about his skin. Fear, according to Robert Blanchard, in *Handbook of Anxiety and Fear*, is "The motivation associated with a number of behaviors that normally occur on exposure to clearly threatening stimuli" (30). The "threatening stimuli" that arouses fear in Kaboci is his albino skin. The fact that his skin makes him "stick out" (3) and the hat makes him appear "like a clown" (3) make him uncomfortable and worried. His skin expresses his different look which makes him susceptible to ridicule and isolation. The different look also cultivates a troubled psyche which leads to the impulsive nature. The violent nature of the character is a defense mechanism which results from unresolved or repressed feelings of fear, and anxiety. Kaboci is unable to control his anger and becomes aggressive. He becomes a violent and tempestuous person at the slightest

provocation. The anger and aggression reveal a character that is yet to accept his condition. This results in him cultivating a wish to disappear because he faces identity crisis. The repressed emotions of anger, fear and torture culminate into bad dreams.

From Freud's analysis of dreams, repressed content is directed to the unconscious part of the mind, which then is expressed in dreams. Kaboci experiences a terrible nightmare in which a monster tries to kill him using a machete and its poisoned spikes. The boy suddenly is unable to defend himself because his body becomes paralyzed and he is unable to rescue himself. The monster here echoes the cruel society which rejects and discriminates him. The machete and poisoned spikes symbolize trauma and suffering and the struggle to fight against rejection and the paralysis echoes vulnerability, internal fears and feelings of uncertainty. The dream symbolizes the danger that people with albinism face. It reflects hostilities and pain inflicted by society.

The author at the beginning creates a character who has a low personality, and whom the reader sympathizes with. The character feels isolated and resentful. The author, however, does not create a flat character who is embittered and battling with his condition; but, a dynamic, resilient character. The point of view of the protagonist shifts as the plot develops and he is perceived as a metaphor of resilience and courage. The feelings of contempt and thoughts of despair are replaced with feelings of contentment and acceptance. The protagonist develops into to a more positive character, one motivated, not by his emotions, but by the desire to succeed. First we see the character trying to acknowledge his weaknesses and their effects. The author says this about the character, "Kaboci vowed that he must somehow control his tempestuous temper. If he did not, he realized, it was going to land him in serious trouble sooner rather than later" (18).

With time, the id is controlled by the ego. This means that the boy's process of development is noted. Kaboci's behavior and actions, which are revealed through his aggressive, violent and contemptuous nature, are driven by the id. The id, as discussed earlier is irrational and is governed by the pleasure principle. Kaboci is driven by the id to seek fulfillment of his needs and desires which are respect and acceptance, regardless of the consequences. Later we see him acknowledging that his thoughts and actions are wrong, meaning, he is controlled by logic and reason (the ego). He is therefore prompted to behave or act in a rational way; the super-ego directs him to morally accepted behavior and actions. The boy is no longer provoked to engage in a fight nor does he wish to commit suicide or wish to disappear. He develops a great sense of self-realization and education becomes a tool through which he is able to reclaim his traumatized psyche. Education helps him develop a positive attitude towards himself and to interact with other people in society. Later we see his dedication to reclaim his reputation. From his point of view, his disability should not be a point of focus, but his intellect and performance should. The character is motivated to disapprove people in the society and to prompt them to see beyond his handicaps.

Kaboci's character, as depicted in the text, echoes the mimetic way of presenting characters. Kaboci is a unique or complex character who is capable of feeling frustrated, or depressed; examining his behavior and actions and their consequences, and thereafter develops confidence, and readies himself to confront various challenges that emerge due to his condition. Kaboci's depiction therefore echoes real individuals thus strengthening positive and realistic portrayals of people with disability.

In *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*, Kaboci's speech, actions, consciousness and description portray a level of confrontation against perceived notions of albinism. Albinism has been marred with a magnitude of misrepresentations and stigma which contribute to marginalization and vulnerability.

Using the child character reflects a force that is determined to transform existing stigma and prejudice. The author therefore strategically uses character to protest against mistreatment and violence against people with albinism. Through Kaboci's point of view, the plight of the vulnerable is revealed and the need to debunk retrogressive beliefs that threaten the lives of children with albinism. The child character therefore is an important tool in deconstructing disability.

Besides the protagonist's point of view towards himself, the author also uses other characters' point of view to highlight their perception towards albinism. The author uses characters like Njomo, Kaboci's father and the kidnapers to show how albinos are treated with resentment and rejection. However, the author doesn't concentrate on discrimination, but on the albino's struggle to overcome discrimination. Njomo's behavior and thoughts, which are mainly driven by the id, reflect discrimination against Kaboci. The feelings of hatred lead him to bullying and insulting Kaboci. Bullying becomes his defense mechanism as we see him struggling to alleviate poverty. He desires to be rich, with a better life away from the slum settlement and his father's violent nature, which is caused by drunkenness. His unconscious mind is filled with repressed content or unfulfilled wishes which reveal themselves through bullying, hate and low self-esteem. He gives up with education because of his inability to compete favourably and ends up joining a gang. He is unable to control his id and thus ends up in prison.

Njomo's point of view towards Kaboci is that he is a useless freak and an "alien from mars" (56). Njomo cultivates a disrespectful attitude towards Kaboci, not only because he is an albino but also because he is a good performer. He tries to compete or out do him but he fails and therefore resents him. The way Njomo treats Kaboci echoes the way children with albinism are treated by fellow students. The students call them names and ridicule them based on their differences. Through Njomo, however, the strong character of Kaboci is highlighted. Kaboci does not fall for Njomo's

intimidation. He doesn't submit to the ill treatment he receives from Njomo nor does he seek help from an adult, rather he confronts him and asserts the need to be respected. The author presents the idea of people with disability resisting subjugation and asserting their dignity in society. This is a common trend of representation in disability studies.

Equally, the gang called WASPS; whose name itself symbolizes terror and cruelty, reveals the torture and discrimination albinos endure in society. They are hacked to death and their bodies used as charms. The author reveals the thoughts of the members of the gang that capture Kaboci and ferry him in a coffin with the intentions to sell him. Some of the members of the gang express disdainful thoughts towards albinos when they say that the sun was going to kill them nevertheless. Moreover, they jubilate at the lucrateness of the job. They mention that some of the body parts now fetch a fortune. These faceless and inhuman natures of the gang depict the treatment of people with albinism in the text as people whose lives are not of much value and therefore using them to fetch money.

They are driven by greed to undertake inhumane acts like murder, theft and other evils in order to satisfy their id. These behavior and actions could have arisen due to repressed feelings caused by experiences such as street poverty for Gitena after displacement during the 2008 post-election war in Kenya, and the trauma he suffers when he watches his mother and brother get killed; and incarceration for Machage. The experiences the two underwent reflect disillusioned individuals who are driven by the desire to avenge. Their lives are marked with violence, trauma and drug usage.

The point of view of Kaboci's parents with regard to their child's condition as presented by the author is that of misinformation. Their ignorance about their child's condition leads them to neglect

and discrimination of the albino child. The father thinks that he cannot sire such a child and therefore cannot take responsibility as a father. Further he is imbued with superstition-related analogies in dismissing the baby as his. Kibet, therefore is easily convinced to sell his son to the cruel witchdoctors who hack albinos to death. His desire to reunite with his wife and the wish to acquire wealth, he assumes, will be achieved if he gives away his son to the witchdoctors. Without hesitating, he accepts the offer proposed by the gang members. Here again money is the need that the id is required to satisfy. When he is told that he is likely to scoop two million shillings from the deal, he is extremely shocked. The narrator explains, “Kibet’s mouth moved but no words came out...Two million did you say?” (59)

Also, his desire to re-unite with his wife is a wish that has been threatened by the presence of the albino son. The id therefore endeavors to satisfy the individual is demonstrated by this heinous act of selling the son to carnivores. The mother on the other hand gives a vivid account on the events that followed the birth of Kaboci. She says, “I screamed ... I didn’t believe he was my child. I asked the nurses to take him away... and for two agonized days, I didn’t even see him.” (17). She further reveals that “My friends, even when I finally saw him, I couldn’t bring myself to hold him. I was so shocked. I didn’t know how to face the society with such a child.” (17)

As recounted above, Kaboci’s mother expresses two issues of concern that worry and disturb her. First, the unique nature of the child and her lack of knowledge about the existence of such a child are displayed. Second, the challenge of facing the world with such a child disturbs her. The fear and anxiety and rejection of the child by its mother reveal the unwelcoming nature of such children in society, which form the foundation of stigma matted on children and adults with disability. The mother’s feelings towards her child however change and the mother accepts and supports her child and nurtures him to be a responsible child both at school and at home.

Point of view resonates with the mimetic interpretation of character. This is because critical interrogation of the character's thoughts and emotions is involved. The complexity of characters as demonstrated through their point of view makes them akin to real-life people. Studying point of view then creates characters whose relevance goes beyond the text and examines societal concerns. Issues like disability, witchcrafts, and other social-economic aspects are evaluated based on how they are perceived by the character.

Disability and Metaphor.

Shaw Harry, in *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, defined metaphor as, "A figure of speech in which a word or a phrase is applied to a person, idea, or object to which it is not literally applicable". It imaginatively identifies one thing with another by using implied analogy" (1972). A metaphor is a device by which an author twists, or turns the meaning of a word.

In *Narrative Prosthesis*, Mitchell and Snyder assert that, "the function of people with disability is primarily twofold: disability pervades literary narratives, first, as a stock feature of characterization and, second, as an opportunistic metaphorical device" (18). Disability metaphors in literature involve viewing disability as a metaphor of evil, metaphor of pity or metaphors of violence. These metaphors have been viewed with suspicion by "first wave" scholars who argue that these metaphors don't reflect the true nature or the actual lives of disabled people. Lennard Davis in *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* highlights "The tendency for disability to be invoked in literature as an easy metaphorical shortcut: a marker of pity, vulnerability or, less frequently the heroic "superscript" (106). Shari Thurber sees the metaphorical use of disability as "a most blatant and pernicious form of stereotyping" (12).

Recent scholars counter the arguments made by first wave scholars. Lakoff George and Mark Johnson in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, argue that, “Disability metaphors can be productively reinvented and reinterpreted by artists and cultural critics” (169). Metaphors are an integral part of the way in which narratives and even cognitive processes are structured. Therefore, they cannot simply be stripped away. This research supports the recent scholars and explores disability metaphors that are not inclined to stereotypic classifications. The metaphors studied in this chapter resonate with the real lives of people with albinism. They are a protest against stereotypic metaphors. They also expose a gap in societies’ attitude towards disability.

Albinism, as perceived by Kaboci in the text is a metaphor of entrapment. Brown et al, in *Loss Humiliation and Entrapment*, describe entrapment, “as being associated with stressful life events or circumstances that are particularly chronic and ongoing” (45). Entrapment relates to confinement or being trapped which yields a feeling of stress, or depression. The author portrays an entrapped albino character. At the beginning of the story the narrator reveals Kaboci’s entrapment in fear and anxiety that result from his condition. Kaboci’s character as demonstrated from his point of view reveals how he is entrapped, both internally and externally. Internal entrapment relates to entrapment in internal thoughts and feelings whereas external entrapment relates to entrapment by external events or circumstances. Internal entrapment is revealed by Kaboci’s feelings of hate for his skin color, feelings of worry and tension. Inability to comprehend and accept the reality about his skin color further highlights internal entrapment, and marks the beginning of his psychological battles with his conscience and societal ridicule. The character feels separated from the rest of society. External entrapment relates to his thoughts about the sun being “the enemy in the sky” and other external forces like the kidnappers who entrap Kaboci. He is

forced to lead an exclusive life because of these external threats which endanger his existence and exclude him from leading a comfortable life, just like other members in society.

Entrapment therefore leads to development of a traumatized psyche. The character becomes helpless or vulnerable. The vulnerable nature culminates into loneliness or isolation, then feelings of regret for having been born with albinism. Kaboci, asks, “Why me? Why, God? ... My father must have been right after all. I am a freak, an abomination and a curse! That’s why YOU won’t answer, God. Isn’t that so?” (45). This monologue echoes a traumatized psyche and an entrapped character because he is deemed different, unaccepted and condemned by society. The isolation and ridicule result in the character cultivating a sense of denial and lack of self-appreciation. Therefore, we are not surprised when we see him attempting to commit suicide.

Kaboci’s entrapment develops as a result of lack of exposure or societal negligence towards people with special conditions. Kaboci is kept in the dark as he knows little about his condition. Although he tries to ignore the ridicule and isolation by concentrating on his studies, Kaboci feels elated and relieved upon realizing that other people who are like him exist. Towards the end of the text, the narrator says, “Kaboci noticed that almost half of the people were him, people with albinism. They hailed him as he entered. Tears jumped to his eyes. *I’ve brothers and sisters. I am not alone in the world!*” (155). Kaboci is relieved from his captivity and a sense of belonging and inclusivity is instilled in the character.

Kaboci is also read as a metaphor of courage and resilience. Disability has been viewed by various authors as a state of helplessness. Tiny Tim as reflected in literature review is viewed as a “Romanticized” or a helpless character. The author in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* presents a character who rises above numerous challenges, through courage and determination. He survives

through abuse and ridicule due to his courage and decisiveness. He decides to ignore negative description and rejects intimidation from some classmates such as Njomo. When he is abducted, he courageously rescues himself by escaping into the dangerous hood during his captors' negotiations with the disguised buyer. Kaboci takes charge of his life and even with the harsh condition in the forest, he is optimistic that he will survive. Kaboci's representation echoes the social model of disability that was discussed earlier on in the text. Kaboci ignores the disabling factors or barriers that describe him as different and is determined to reclaim perception of disabled people as helpless. He initiates positive perception of himself and his rescue.

Disability as a metaphor of discrimination is an aspect commonly discussed by scholars who have analyzed disability. The form of discrimination prevalent in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* is attributed to witchcraft. Albinos are discriminated against by people who believe in superstition and false myths. They are believed to possess charms that contribute to wealth, power and success in various fields. They are therefore objectified as they are sold, slaughtered by witchdoctors and their body parts used for various purposes. The narrator uses phrases like, "In this hotbed of albino slaughter" to emphasize on discrimination and injustices meted against albinos in the society. The narrator reveals that several albinos have sold and only a few had been rescued. Other forms of discrimination involve rejection derived by stereotypes and name calling as described earlier in character and point of view.

Discrimination has detrimental effects on people with disability; however, the author uses discrimination as a tool of demonstrating how the albino character cultivates strategies of overcoming discrimination. Kaboci concentrates on achieving his objectives as a student and develops a strong personality that rejects intimidation and ridicule. The text is therefore read as a narrative of protest against discriminating factors. The author does not present a character that is

helpless and who succumbs to discrimination, but a character that struggles to construct or redefine his existence and societal perception towards disability.

The metaphors discussed above expose various thematic concerns. In the text, disability not only refers to albinism, but also on society's inability to fulfill various aspects that they should perform. Through disability, the author reveals how society has failed in maintaining family cohesion, inability to dislodge witchcraft in relation to albinism, inability to detach from illicit alcoholism, inability to reduce poverty, inability to provide good governance and inability to put an end to criminality. These aspects render a society crippled, which affects development socially, economically, and even politically.

To begin with, the text tackles the issue of family disintegration. It is disquieting that the author has presented a number of families but none of them is successful. The family situation in the text very much echoes the family in our contemporary society. Family disintegration has become a worrying trend that threatens the existence of successful families in future. The main family in the text is Kibet's. Kibet is unable to establish a new family even after he abandons his wife, Miriam and their child Kaboci. When Miriam and her sister, Fridah, talk about Kibet, we realize that he never settled in any marriage. Fridah has since supported Kaboci with his health protective materials and has also offered to sponsor Kaboci in his secondary school. Fridah asks whether Kibet remarried, Miriam reluctantly replies and says, "Well, he did not. Rather, he tried. Not once. Several times. But he can't keep a wife. They kept coming and going until, I think, he gave up" (94).

Njomo's family is affected by his father's absence. He resigns to drinking illicit alcohol. Whenever he is home, he is violent. He physically assaults his wife and hails abuses at her and his son. Finally,

he dies and surprisingly he is buried at the cemetery because his brother greedily grabs his land. Njomo further distances himself from his mother as he chooses to go and join the Gang. In this instance, both the nuclear and extended families face challenges of disintegration. Relationships as well as marriage don't sustain themselves. Simiyu, dupes Warigia with the intention to exploit her. Once Simiyu realizes that Warigia is pregnant, he disappears. The narrator says, "As silently as a ghost, he had disappeared."

The families in the text face many challenges with single motherhood being the aftermath of disintegration. They are left with the baggage of providing for their children. Family deterioration also affects children. Njomo turns into a criminal to make up for the life he enjoyed before his Father started drinking. Njomo's nostalgia of the happy family, where he could enjoy good meals and favours drives him to desire to have money. Kaboci leaves a devastated life with the thoughts of never having to see his father. The depression almost affects his studies if not for his mother's intervention.

Njomo is overwhelmed by the desire to become rich. He detests the kind of life at his home, the monolithic system of life as the father comes home drunk on a daily basis and confronts the wife. This leads to his aggressive inhuman nature at school. He bullies and is in a constant confrontation with Kaboci. This bitterness makes him perform poorly and later drops out of school to join a dangerous gang after his father's death.

The author articulates the issue of witchcraft in the text and its shortcomings. The inability to disengage from detrimental beliefs and myths is in itself a disability. The author mentions that despite the burning of witchcraft by Tanzania's president, ritual killings of albinos still persist and that the business is more lucrative. The ban therefore does not change the attitude of those who

believe in witchcraft. Belief in myth of witchcraft is deeply entrenched in people's minds and therefore, efforts to end such practices are futile. Machage, one of the gang members, says, "The fact is you can't ban something like witchcraft for the good reason that it exists in people's minds. And for as long as it does, banning it is an exercise in futility (67).

Good governance and responsible leadership are lacking virtues as presented in the text. Poor living conditions and disillusionment are as a result of poor governance. Greed for power and wealth facilitate the inability to provide good leadership. The author opines that the business of capturing and selling albinos starts booming when election period approaches. It is quite ironical that the same people who should protect the lives of marginalized people are the ones who are betraying them for selfish gains.

Moreover, the text alludes to the clashes that took place in 2008 after disputed polls in Kenya. Lives were lost and some victims of the violence ended up in streets. Gitena, a member of the gang, is one of them. Poverty and poor sanitation are some of the issues articulated by the author. Bad leadership which is marred with greed for power and wealth as highlighted by Mr Tiampati in the text leaves the majority of citizens impoverished.

The author expresses lack of trust in leaders and believes that the challenges experienced by people in the text are as a result of bad governance. The idea of teenage criminality symbolizes the disintegration of the moral fabric which strengthened society leading to values such as honesty, unity, humanity, respect, among others being held with high esteem. Teenage criminality offers a critical interrogation of society in general. Some of them especially teenagers turn to criminality to salvage themselves from the harsh survival conditions posed by poverty.

The author addresses teenage criminality with worrying concern. The society is incapable of reducing the number of teenagers recruited into crime and that the recruitment destroys the lives of teenagers. The Narrator says, “Over the years, numerous members of the gang was never short of new recruits. Young men and women drawn by the allure of making a quick fortune or merely by a weird sense of adventure came in droves to replace the lost” (109). The author notes, from Kaboci’s auntie’s perspective that teenagers are in a rash to become wealthy, their motto being YOLO, which means, “YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE”. Some of the youths in the text are guided by this principle to engage in activities that are in society.

The society presented in the text is one affected by materialism, drug abuse and crime, lack of value for education, informal settlement and poor sanitation. All this can be attributed to bad governance. Moral decay and impatience or greed for acquiring wealth illegitimately reflects a dying nation with a glimpse of hope for productive and resourceful youth who will steer development. Alcoholism and drug abuse are also some of the determinants of a deteriorating society. Consumption of illicit alcohol as portrayed in the text destroys the lives of young men and their families.

CONCLUSION.

This chapter concentrated on examining the plight of the character with albinism in the text. Goro Wa Kamau’s narrative provides an avenue of rethinking and reconstructing disability portrayal in literature. The text’s portrayal of disability depicts narrative enablement since the main character with albinism does not succumb to stereotypes and discrimination. He demonstrates ability to perform well and achieve success; ability to gain independence and most importantly, ability to cultivate a positive image towards himself.

It is important to note that disability has received various approaches as mentioned earlier. In the previous chapter the study has concentrated on the social model-that of eliminating disabling factors in order to see the potential of people presumed disabled. Disability therefore doesn't hinder social, political and intellectual abilities. It demonstrates that people perceived as disabled can perform functions performed by abled people if they are incorporated and appreciated by society.

The mimetic way of analyzing character enables the reader to observe the character's development, his thoughts and emotions. The changes derived from his thoughts and self-perception, reveal how the character develops from a disillusioned and helpless individual to a confident and a positive individual. The author allows the reader to sink deep into the character's unconscious and conscious mind and from it, a realistic portrayal of albinism is achieved.

Use of style to highlight representation of disability, as explored in the chapter plays a great role in transforming disability. Point of view helps in identifying how the character with albinism changes his perception towards albinism. Character development is achieved through close examination of the character's point of view. The perception of characters without disability is also reflected in the text. Their perceptions reveal the place of albinism in society. Albinos are discriminated against as their lives are threatened by witchdoctors who hawk them to death. The author however portrays albino individuals who refuse to be sacrificed. The albino character engineers his own escape from the human traffickers. The author also seeks to dissolve entrenched beliefs about albinism in the society. He does so through use of positive metaphors as discussed in the chapter. The metaphors transform rather than intensify stereotypic and negative portrayal of albinism.

CHAPTER 3

SYMBOLISM AND DISABILITY IN *GHOST AND THE FORTUNE HUNTERS*

Introduction

The previous chapter concentrated on analyzing the depiction of the disabled character and the metaphors generated from his depiction. Disability as a metaphor of entrapment; metaphor of invisibility; metaphor of discrimination; metaphor of resilience and courage were examined with the intention of assessing the place of disability in the text. While metaphors reveal the treatment and attitudes towards characters with disability; symbolism focuses on how ideas, individuals, and events in the text express diversity in approaching disability. By diversity I refer to a broader thinking towards disability that limits negative metaphors from dominating in representation of disability in literature. Symbolism differs from metaphor in that it does not contain a comparison, rather, by virtue of association represents something more than itself. For example, if the flag symbolizes patriotism, its symbolic meaning does not arise from a comparison. Metaphorically, having a disability means being vulnerable or evil, or even resilient but symbolically, disability represents diversity. Portrayal of the character with disability in the text symbolizes the changing trends in portrayal of disability. Use of metaphors helps in realizing the trends.

Symbolism, as defined by Radhika Bai in his journal, “Symbolism in Ted Hughes Poetry”, is a literary technique used when some things are not to be taken literally. The symbol can be a person, a situation, an object or actions that have a deeper meaning in context. The lion, for instance, symbolizes courage and strength; scales, justice; the orb and scepter, monarchy and rule; a dove, peace; the rose, beauty among others. Actions and gestures are also symbolic. Arms raised denote surrender, hands clasped and raised suggest supplication, and beating of breasts signifies remorse,

among others. The symbols above are common ones that are usually referred to as universal symbols. There are others that are private, that is, they are used in specific contexts to represent something else. In Macbeth, the recurrence of blood image symbolizes violence and guilt. In Hamlet, disease and weeds symbolize decay and corruption.

Laurence Perrine in *Literature, Structure, Sound, and Sense* states that, “a literary symbol is something that means more than what it is. It’s an object, a person, a situation, an action or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story, but suggests or represents other meanings as well” (211). Moreover, Perrine reveals that a reader should be alert for symbolic meanings by observing some cautions:

The story itself must furnish a clue that a detail is to be taken symbolically. It means that symbolic phenomena can be identified by repetition, emphasis or position. The meaning of a literary symbol must be established and supported by the entire context of the story. It means that the meaning of the symbol can be identified inside the text, not outside it. To be called a symbol, an item must suggest a meaning different in kind from its literal meaning. A symbol may have more than one meaning.

Shamisa S, classifies symbols into two types: Arbitrary symbols and personal symbols. Symbols that are common and familiar, whose meanings can simply be recognized by the reader, are called arbitrary symbols. The cross, for instance, is a symbol of Christianity. Spring symbolizes youth and freshness. Personal symbols on the other hand are those fresh and new ones which the poet or the writer creates newly, and contrary to arbitrary symbols, their recognition is difficult for the reader.

Symbolism is an important device in literature since it not only communicates the subtle and hidden ideas of a complex age but also expresses and interprets the materialistic realities of life bringing out the mysteries of human existence. Symbols lead us to understand the varieties of meaning, and assess the ever shuffling diversities of life. Moreover, symbolism gives a literary work more colour and richness because the meaning of the work is deeper. Symbolism allows a writer to exercise freedom of adding two levels of meaning to his work; a literal one which is self-evident and the symbolic one whose meaning is far more profound than the literal one. Symbolism, therefore, gives universality to the themes and characters in a piece of literature.

Symbolism can also be interpreted through Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis where he writes, "A symbol represents what has been repressed from consciousness, and the whole process of symbolization is carried on unconsciously. Dreams symbolize repressed desires and wishes which are directed to the unconscious part of the mind.

In *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* various ideas, people, and objects carry different meanings which are deeper and more significant. The child, the mother, ghost and the albino skin are personal symbols in the text that represent various ideologies: one of them being, diversity and deconstruction of the narratives of disability. The symbols illuminate the changes that have emerged in disability representation which include: use of characters with disability as main characters, focusing on real depictions of characters with disability, inclusion of characters with disability in society, and change in perception of disabled people.

Tara Tripathi, in her Dissertation, "Deconstructing Disability, Assistive Technology", summarizes Foucault Michel's studies on disability and says that: "normality" and "abnormality" are both linguistically constructed and that a change in social environment may make the disabled as fit as

an able-bodied individual. When such a reality dawns on the society, disability can be eradicated. Impairment will still exist but it will not disable people from participating in day to day activities (47). Symbols that have been used in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* conform to Foucault's criticism on disability studies. The symbols depict how representation of disability in literature has evolved from the stereotypic or the freakish figure to an appreciated, "normal" human being. The albino child in the text symbolizes the new conventions of approaching disability in contemporary fiction.

The Child Character as a symbol of transformation in Ghosts and the Fortune Hunters

Ghost and the Fortune Hunters is about how children perceive various aspects surrounding their environment. It is an interrogation on how children understand themselves and others who are different from them. The author uses children to underscore various key concerns in society. The voice of the children symbolizes transience in terms of perceiving disability and other thematic concerns. The children in the text are school going children who are in primary school. The children's interactions, thoughts, emotions and actions reveal how transient they are in tackling issues surrounding their environment.

The students at Malengo Primary interact with Kaboci freely, oblivious of his different look - his albinism. Although they nickname him Ghost, this is not to be misinterpreted to mean a derogatory or demeaning term but an appreciation of Kaboci's unique attribute of always being ahead of them. Kaboci is punctual in school and is a good performer in class. The narrator says:

It was his Nickname at school, Ghost boy. At first, Kaboci had resisted the moniker. But the more he resisted, the more it caught on like fire until nobody called him by his real

name. Kaboci gave up after realizing that the school mates did not mean any harm. That most of them –in fact almost all of them – were his strong allies. (5)

Ghost from the above presentation does not carry connotations that are stereotypic rather, the name is more inclined to Kaboci's character. The name Ghost later acquires stereotypic meanings when it is used by the gang as a justification of selling him to witchdoctors. One of them says, "ghosts are supposed to be late" While adults use the name ghost to infer spirits, a cultural stereotype which implies that albinos are not real human beings but spirits, children use ghost to highlight character.

The children's perception towards ghost interrogates the adult/child binary opposition. The adult's perceptions with regard to 'disability' and that of children are put to contest here. An adult should be someone who demonstrates maturity, understanding and one who is experienced in a certain field. We assume that he/she should be responsible and cognizant with the humane values and virtues. The child, on the other hand, is portrayed as naïve and selective. This convention is destabilized as adults turn out to be weak characters who resort to superstitious beliefs in order to explain certain phenomenon such as albinism. Kaboci's father believes that the boy is a curse. In essence, adults qualify the boy as unwanted and disabled.

The use of a child is a significant tool in enabling the author to positively represent disability.

The naivety of a child constructs natural identity free from stereotypic and mythical beliefs.

Kaboci is not guided by myths to make decisions in life rather he is guided by his vision.

Stereotypes and myths, though present, are not hindrances to achieving success. The following lines validate the above argument, "Soon he will be doing his final exams. He studied hard. And every morning on his way to school, he vowed that things will not always be so hard. Just wait until I am through with school – and watch this space. Yes, watch this space" (6). By space, the

character means the child aspirations and objectives that will deliver happiness and achievement. The optimistic nature of disabled children replaces the resigned and pessimistic nature of adults as seen in the following conversation:

“What do you mean?”

“Oh, it’s nothing. That’s my nickname at school - Ghost.”

“Ghost? Why? Because...Oh, my. Aren’t kids so cruel?”

“And why didn’t you tell me before?” Kaboci’s mother said.

“Aw mum,” Kaboci said. “It’s nothing, really” (95).

From the above conversation, Kaboci demonstrates understanding towards his condition. To the classmates, Ghost connotes unique, to imply that Ghost boy beats them in most activities. The children remark that, “Like a ghost, the boys said, he was always a step ahead of the others in the hazy light of dawn.” Therefore, the children develop positive attitude towards ‘disability’ and so when he is kidnapped; it’s no surprise to see children joining hands to demonstrate so as to heighten the search for their fellow pupil. Children’s actions and thoughts nonetheless demonstrate erasure of stigma which ironically is intensified by adults. The children effectively demonstrate transience in accepting people with disability. Also Ghost boy’s acceptance of the nickname ghost further demonstrates his maturity. He is not emotionally affected when called Ghost. Children’s use of the name ghost is more realistic than adult’s perception of the name. We learn how the child subverts the notions around his environment. The author then uses children to portray positive representation of disability. Children symbolize transience as they deconstruct the meaning of ghost. The classmates focus on the qualities of Kaboci in making judgment or criticism.

The author also presents the issue of love in a way that it does not discriminate against the disabled. Virginia is an attractive girl who is prompted by two boys: Kaboci and Njomo. Virginia's confession of her feelings towards Kaboci reveal a positive image and a change of attitude towards albinism. Virginia's impression about Kaboci is that he is, "A really charming guy, she thought. It was such a pity that a girl was not allowed to *katia* a guy. Or was she? What would happen, she wondered, if she one day gathered enough guts and walked over to him and said that she, kind of fancied him?" (4)

Virginia's feelings for Kaboci develop naturally despite Kaboci's skin color. The skin color is not a hindrance towards the two teenagers' relationship. We would expect Virginia to fall in love with Njoma, one of the boys who expresses interest in her, but she doesn't. Virginia becomes objective in accepting Kaboci. She is a good judge of character based on her decision to settle on Kaboci. Kaboci is calm, responsible and hardworking while Njomo is arrogant abusive and rude. The author uses the relationship between the teenagers to reinforce positivity towards disability. Kaboci, a character with albinism, is appealing and lovable and who is able to win a girl's love and who never gives up until he succeeds.

The children's actions further illuminate positive representation. Their actions depict independent thinkers who cultivate solutions when a problem arises and who are united in effecting the solutions. The author presents children as capable of reasoning wittily on particular issues and developing decisions that are adult-like in nature. They are not passive individuals who wait to be guided or to be instructed to do something by an adult as we could expect. When Kaboci disappears and his classmates suspect that he has been abducted by 'devils', they plan a demonstration with placards raised high demanding for the return of their 'Ghost'. Holding demonstrations is in most cases attributed to adults. However, in this instance we see children united in the quest to have one

of them back. The demonstrations reveal their attitude towards Kaboci. The children's care and concern demonstrate their love for Kaboci and the desire to have him back.

Similarly, when Njomo's father dies, his classmates assert their resourcefulness and creativity in assisting Njomo. One of them suggests that they contribute twenty shillings each, but another adds that that would be little and so proposes that they invest the money in a temporary business of selling *mandazi's* in order to increase the amount. They then take the proposition to their teacher Mr. Mumo to seek for his consent. The humanity depicted by children in the text reveal their contribution towards positive perception and responsibility.

Children also are a symbol of hope for a disillusioned society. Various issues are tackled by the writer, among them bad leadership, greed, family disintegration, crime and violence. The author portrays a disillusioned society which can only be salvaged by focused and determined individuals like Kaboci and Virginia. Kaboci, in his dreams sees himself as a changed person, no longer a boy, but a respected and loved doctor. "He saw himself battling and annihilating the most horrible plagues like cholera and Ebola" (23). We note that cholera has been addressed in the text. Njomo's father dies of cholera, which would have been mitigated and the father wouldn't have died. Further his affair with Virginia, a girl from a different tribe supposedly a Luo and him a Kikuyu, grimes hope because the text alludes to the tribal clashes in 2007 which affected Kenya and therefore ethnicity arose as a national disaster.

Mr. Tiampati, the owner of the hotel where Kaboci and Virginia sit to have lunch after their studies in the library gives a disquieting commentary on the state of the country in context. From his reflection he opines that, "Africa's greatest curse was its leadership. [...] a leadership that saw no further than its immediate crave for power and wealth and the greater majority of people still mired

in poverty, ignorance, and disease.” (40) However, when Mr. Tiampati observes the two lovebirds, who are from different ethnic extractions, he says, “...they seemed to embody a bold new future and not just for the country but for themselves too. Children therefore symbolize hope and transformation. This critical role assigned to children reveals the author’s powerful portrayal of children, especially, the main character.

Children, as presented in the text, deconstruct perceptions of disability. Rosemary Garland in *Extraordinary Bodies*, posits that, “Disabled literary characters usually remain on the margins of fiction as uncomplicated figures or exotic aliens whose bodily configurations operate as spectacles, eliciting responses from other characters or producing rhetorical effects that depend on disability’s cultural resonance. Portrayals of disability in the past elicited sharp criticism by scholars among them Garland. Such negative portrayals have been reassessed by modern fiction writers whose depictions of disabled characters are realistic. Goro wa Kamau and other writers expressed in literature review reflect a change in representation. The author’s use of children in the text reveals the new trends of perceiving disability in literature. The new trends include: attempts to overlook their disability and focus on achieving success just like other individuals; Inclusivity of children with disability into the mainstream educational setting as opposed to confinement in special schools; seeking independence in decision making, and focusing on self-empowerment as opposed to resorting to compassion and help from organizations as adults with disabilities often do.

The author portrays Kaboci as a character that confronts the ability/disability binary oppositions. Disability/ability is one of the main binary oppositions that the author addresses in the text. *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* questions our understanding of disability. Disability is fraught with meanings that range from being crippled, unable to incomplete. Disability however, as presented in the text dissolves the above meanings and interprets them as mental perception which, if changed,

disability would uphold new conventions. Disability therefore does not essentially connote incapacitation; rather it as well means ability. Ability to perform various tasks, ability to demonstrate competence in various fields and gain skills that transform them to able individuals.

Elizabeth Adams St Pierre in *Post structural Feminism in Education* asserts that the strategy of deconstruction provides, “Practices of freedom that can help us rewrite the world and ourselves again and again” (483). From the assertion, we note that meaning can never be fixed completely in language. Therefore, rather than constructing a vulnerable, weak, and marginalized albino student, deconstruction allows us to create a space for a new image by envisioning a strong and courageous student who influences inclusivity into the mainstream environment.

Kaboci is not controlled by his disability but he is determined to earn a better and significant title that is Doctor, rather than the ones imposed on him by society like ‘ghost’, ‘freak’ and ‘mzungu’. The positive and determined attitude is highlighted by the narrator, “As the exams drew nearer, Kaboci had no doubt that save for a tragedy of unprecedented proportions; he was going to ride roughshod over the exams and emerge victorious. He would crown his eight year struggle in school with flying colors.” “Just watch this space,” he said. (116)

Kaboci’s determination along with encouragement from teachers and his mother is the pillar of his success. We see a child motivated to achieve success despite the hostile environment of isolation and rejection. His unique skin colour becomes his greatest stronghold not a setback towards his success. As Wopperer posits, “Literature provides the necessary perspectives for children and young adults with disability to see themselves differently, more positively.” (28)

Children as symbols represent hope amidst a society hit by various challenges. Children offer an opportunity for us to perceive things differently, especially disability. They are perceived as the

determinants of a better society. They reconstruct a destroyed society and envision positive growth. The author however does not claim that children are perfect. Some reflect degeneration of morals in society and involvement in crime.

The mother as a symbol of positive representation

Remi Akujobi, in an article entitled “Motherhood in African Literature and Culture”, defines motherhood as “an automatic set of feelings and behaviors that is switched on by pregnancy and the birth of a baby.” She further adds that, Motherhood morally transforms a woman as she ceases to be an autonomous individual due to the attachment created between her and the baby (03). Akujobi’s definition not only identifies the strong bond created between a mother and her child but it also highlights the lack of individuality which comes along due to roles and expectations of parenting. The picture painted of motherhood in Africa is that of self-sacrifice/giving and much more in the spirit of motherhood. Akujobi further asserts that, “While mothers are revered as creators, as providers, cradle rockers, nurturers, and goddesses, they also inspire awe because they are known to wedge huge powers in their children’s lives” (04). Motherhood, therefore is presented as an overwhelming task for women as they are expected to shape and transform the lives of their children and they are responsible for their children’s successes or failures.

In a paper entitled “African Motherhood- Myth and Reality”, Laurreta Ngcobo asserts that the image of motherhood is the most dominant in African Literature. This she feels, is because the African community attaches the woman’s reproductive fertility to her self-worth. Because of this, she goes on to say the African woman’s individuality and thus humanity has been eroded since the woman is always considered as someone’s wife, mother, or daughter. I agree with Ngcobo’s deposition that fertility defines a woman and that motherhood robs a woman off her individuality, but I don’t support her views with regard to women’s erosion of humanity since the challenging

task and societal ridicule brings out a different set of women: women who are strong-willed, radicle and who are determined to make a difference towards emancipation.

Women are prompted to, as Aduke Adebayo puts it, “tear the veil of invisibility” because if they do not, “it will mask her identity, it will muffle her voice and distort her vision” (23). Adebayo contends against the submissive and resigned state of women due to the challenges they face; some of which arise due to womanhood, motherhood, and single-parenthood. Adekunle Olowonmi, in “Mothering Children in Africa: Interrogating single parenthood in African Literature”, highlights the plight of single and widowed women in various texts. Although we expect them to be hopeless and distressed by their states, ironically we see how resilient and diverse they are in perceiving ideas and people surrounding them. Adekunle describes Ramatoulaye in *So Long a Letter* by Marriama Ba, as “a strong single parent in the universe of the novel” (153). Ramatoulaye is said to give her daughters the latitude to express themselves, a step she feels helps them to discover. Adekunle further adds that, “Ramatoulaye’s ‘mother-figure’ is as accommodating as it is liberating” (153). Ramatoulaye’s character is compared to that of Miriam, in *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*. She is a strong character whose guidance takes the son through the journey of self-discovery and self-liberation.

Kaboci’s mother symbolizes diversity and positivity in perceiving disability. She is the means through which inclusivity and reclamation of disability is seen in the text. Miriam is a significant character who enhances the author’s treatment of disability. Miriam is a woman of strong character and determination. Her hope and belief in her child demonstrate the author’s positive treatment of disability. She is an embodiment of positive representation of disability.

Miriam's strong belief in her child contributes to the child's desire to perform better so that he doesn't disappoint her. Miriam believes that her child is well enough to be admitted into a mainstream system of education. She believes that mainstream will shape and prepare his son to face challenges caused by society's ridicule and rejection. She says, "There was nothing wrong with her boy, she insisted, nothing so bad as to warrant him being taken to a special school. The boy must learn to stand up for himself in the world no matter how cruel it was". (13) This assertion builds a great foundation in Kaboci's personality which later enables him to confront various challenges and to establish a strong sense of belief and self-esteem.

Miriam also warns her son against seeking sympathy from people by telling them his problems. By doing this, Miriam is trying to cultivate independence and courage in her child and encouraging him to confront his problems confidently. Later we see a character who is focused and who is confident that he will pass. The high psych enforced in Kaboci is as a result of her mother's encouragement and positivity. Through Miriam, the author's efficacy in employing the social model of disability is realized. The mother removes the disabling factors from her son and sees a capable and astute child. Kaboci comments, "It was not just his mother who saw beyond his handicap" (23). Although Kaboci is mistaken to think that some strangers, who later become his captors, see beyond his handicap when they comment that "This boy is priceless", he is well aware that his mother sees beyond his handicaps.

Miriam keenly observes her child and knows every aspect about him. She reads Kaboci's continence and is able to tell when he is disturbed or when he has a problem. When he tries to commit suicide, she arrives in time to stop him from stabbing himself with a knife. When he is depressed from school due to assaults howled by Njomo, his mother is always there to ease the pain and help Kaboci resume normalcy. Kaboci therefore grows into a boy who believes in himself

and who approaches life positively. Miriam's role as a mother resonates with Littlefield's assertion which posits that, "Motherhood gives the notion of an incomparable connection between mother and child, one which is seen as an integral aspect in the growth and development of a child. Mothers among a myriad of other responsibilities, nurse, provide love, affection, and guidance and shape primary development to their children" (54).

The strong bond established between mother and child enables them overcome the worst experiences in their life. Although Miriam rejects her child at birth, she transforms the feelings of rejection to feelings of outstanding love and care. When Kaboci is kidnapped, her mother passes out and awakens in hospital. She is terrified by the disappearance of her son because her life is solely attached to him. Kaboci too is attached to his mother that even when he learns his mother had rejected him at birth, when he eavesdrops on his mother's confession, he keeps it to himself. He is motivated to make the mother proud.

Unearthing mythical and stereotypic conventions of the albino skin

In a documentary about children and teenagers with albinism in South Africa, John, a law student at the University of Petersburg says, "The skin is talkative; it decides who is superior and who is inferior," the student further explains that he chose to pursue law as a career in order to protect himself from societal barriers and violence.

The albino skin, unlike the black skin which is interpreted as concealing, is open to damage because it lacks the important component present in the dark skin. The individual with albinism therefore becomes vulnerable and is open to ridicule and judgment. The delicate nature of the albino skin facilitates a web of misconceptions emanating from society. An albino's skin is a symbol of wealth and power to those who believe in witchcraft. Charms made from albino's skin

and body parts produce powerful results to those who use the charms. Ritual killings of albinos to obtain charms decimates or devalues albinos since they are not perceived as dignified human beings but rather as objects used for sacrifice.

This inhuman treatment of people with disability is also addressed by Kathrine Quarmby who recounts how disabled people were selected for sacrifices in her speech, "Literature and Disability". She says, "When a crisis or disaster struck a Greek city bringing down the ire of the gods upon the mortals [...] all too often, the offering that cleansed and purified the nation was a "useless" person or an "outcast". Someone "mistreated by nature" was often targeted. Disabled people were all too often selected as perfect candidates for scapegoating" (19). Using people with disability as human sacrifice reveals inequality and discrimination which leads to isolation and marginalization of disabled individuals.

Ghost and the Fortune Hunters addresses the issue of ritual killings in Tanzania. The victims are captured from Kenya then ferried to Tanzania. Although the text gives fictional accounts of ritual killings, they very much echo real practices in Tanzania. Ritual killings in Tanzania and in some parts of East and Central Africa, have become a rampant practice which is attributed to beliefs and myths about albino's body parts.

NOAH observes that:

The slaying and mutilation of individuals with albinism is grounded on the spiritual connotation attached to the body parts by believers of witchcraft. In Tanzania, it is a widespread belief that charms mixed with body parts of persons with albinism can be used to create strong magic potions which cost a fortune.

In *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*, Kaboci is kidnaped by a gang which aims at selling the boy in Tanzania to witchdoctors. The inhumanity and cruelty meted against Kaboci is evident as he is placed in a coffin, a symbol of death. The author also reveals how albinos are hacked to death by witch doctors. Moreover, they are subjected to fear and worry because the feeling draws adrenaline, which makes the charm more potent. The exercise is a lucrative one as the members of the gang salivate at the money they will make after the sale. One of them says, “A limb is fetching around a hundred thousand shillings. And you can expect anything up to twenty million Kenyan shillings for a whole body.” (69)

The text reflects society’s beliefs and values about albinism. Traditional beliefs and misconceptions about albinism are reflected in the text. Belief in witchcraft and reliance on albino’s body parts to create wealth and power is a prevalent issue in our contemporary African society. Victims have given account on their experiences with regards to the hunting and execution of albinos. A report on persons with albinism in Kenya submitted to human rights documented the attacks on people with albinism. One account of murdered victims indicates, “In January of 2008, Margaret was abducted by three men. Her body was found the following morning with her legs, genitals, breasts and hands removed.” This is one among many other cases documented.

The albino’s skin further symbolizes invisibility or ghost as used in the text. The unique skin color of an albino is likened to a ghost on the superficial level but acquires a more serious and detrimental meaning once analyzed keenly. Ghost according to *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* is the spirit of a dead person that a living person believes can hear or see; the memory of something especially something bad; and, a very slight amount of something that is left behind or that you are not sure really exists. The above definitions, once applied, would mean that albinos are perceived as spirits or imaginary creatures that are unrecognized and invisible; unless they

assert their presence and demand recognition. This perceived absence justifies their execution by witchdoctors. They are unwanted, haunting memories as conceived by their parents. Lastly they are neglected, isolated individuals whose existence is not appreciated. In the text, Kaboci knows that he is perceived as different and unwanted and that he shouldn't exist, which is why he attempts to commit suicide. The intense feeling of displacement drives him to hate who he is. Some of his classmates don't want him, some other people desire to execute him, and worst of all, his father abandons him. The character is left in a disillusioned and in a denial state at the initial stages of teenage hood.

The term ghost relates to belief in myth. Myth as defined by M. H Abrams is "A story in mythology that seeks to ascertain why the world is as it is and things happen as they do based on a certain system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group" (49). Stories about people with albinism that existed in African societies portrayed them as ghosts or spirits from the dead that come to haunt the living. Kibet, Kaboci's father deserts the family after the birth of Kaboci because he believes the child is a curse. Miriam, the wife recounts the experience and says, "My husband turned to me and...and... told me that they don't get such children in his family! He said that the child is a curse, that I should go and sort out the matter with my family." (18) The myth that children with albinism are born as a result of wrongs committed by the parents is one among the many myths about albinism.

The persecution of people with albinism in Tanzania is built on the myth that albinos are spirits that should be sent to the spirit world and that their peculiar skin is linked to power and acquisition of wealth. The charm made out of the albino body parts is believed to facilitate the success of a rich person or a politician. In the text, Mr. Tiampati echoes what he had seen on newspapers when he says, "In Tanzania, some people apparently believed that charms made from albino body parts

had magical powers and could bring great fortune and power to those who could afford them” (100).

Myth, “Reflects the integrating values around which societies are organized. It codifies belief, safeguards morality, vouches for the efficacy of the ritual and provides social norms.” Myths from the above assertion become integral in understanding systems in a particular society. Myths that explain the existence of people with albinism endanger the lives of people living with that condition since the stories are believed to be true accounts. Perceiving albinos as ghosts, therefore, makes them susceptible to mythical interpretations. They become symbols of isolation, rejection, and torture because people rely on myth in order to understand their presence. And because the myths present negative stories about albinos, they intensify unacceptability or rejection which then leads to isolation and finally torture or mistreatment.

Myths are conceived to be true accounts therefore reflecting the society’s ideology with regard to various aspects encompassed in a particular myth. Myths and beliefs about albinism have, for a long time dominated Africa’s conceptualization of who an albino is. Despite the “wealth of research and documentation on the genetic nature of albinism,” understanding of albinism is attached to myths about albinos. These myths however don’t portray the true nature of albinism; rather they facilitate the destruction and dehumanization of fellow humans. The text along with research on albino killings exposes the impact of beliefs and myths on human beings in our society. The violence and vulnerability experienced by people with albinism is largely attributed to beliefs and myths.

While myths have been used by Soyinka and other literary scholars to explain the African values and heritage, some of them have proved to be detrimental and therefore the need to be discarded.

Literature plays a critical role in interrogating the adequacy of these beliefs and myths. Goro Wa Kamau addresses some of these myths and beliefs, and their detrimental impact on persons with albinism. The writer exposes the ignorance and inhumanity that is enhanced by some individuals in society, because of belief in myth. Traditional myths, especially those about albinism, facilitate violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of people living with albinism when they are applied in modern society.

Ghost and the Fortune Hunters is a text that dismantles the fabric of myth with regard to albinism. The author dissolves the meaning and relevance of myths in interpreting albinism. He destabilizes cultural practices and truisms that determine conceptualization of albinism. The author dis-entrenches perceptions that an albino's body parts can be used as a charm that creates wealth and power. The author does this by presenting characters who acknowledge that myths on albinism especially regarding their body parts are untrue and farfetched. Stigma, stereotypes, misconceptions, taboos and prejudices conceived in an albino's body evoke an inspiring subject for writers. Goro Wa Kamau portrays a disillusioned, frustrated, isolated and rejected character with albinism. However, the character's determination and resilience enable him to maneuver through the challenges imposed by society and establishes a powerful identity.

Apart from myths, other forms of stereotyping and victimization have been addressed in the text. Teasing, name-calling and violence symbolize degeneration of respect and essence for people with albinism. Children with albinism are subjected to cruel treatment and ridicule by fellow children. A different identity, that of disability is imposed on these children. The visual impairment forms the basis of identifying children with albinism as disabled. The color of their skin is a hub of various forms of abuse and ridicule. Some of the derogatory names include, 'whitey', 'powder', 'ghost', 'casper', and 'snowball'. The derogatory names, as Coleman notes, "imply that persons

with albinism are lesser beings.” They constitute emotional disarray which sometimes would negatively affect the self-esteem and dignity of children living with albinism. In an African setting, derogatory names vary from one society to another. The names imply various meanings which are negative and devaluing people with albinism. NOAH observes that due to lack of pigmentation of persons with albinism, the Bamileka people of Cameroon associate them with the sacred world of the dead hence they are referred to as ‘*meffeu*’ meaning, ‘*dead*’. Other names include ‘*fogtab*’, ‘*gab*’ (white or chicken). In South Africa, people with albinism are still referred to as ‘*nkau*’ which means monkey.

In *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*, the names ‘ghost’ and ‘mzungu’ ‘freak’, ‘elf’ have been used in the text to refer to Kaboci. Although the name ghost has been used in a positive light to imply, unique, or outstanding, its negative connotation of neglect and absence are felt through the text. The boy however has no problem with the name ghost because he believes that the children don’t mean any harm by calling him ghost. However, when he is called freak and elf, he violently engages in a furious fight with the children who call him the demeaning names.

The humiliating names result to trauma which makes the child with albinism become defensive and highly temperamental. Other children may submit to the trauma and become dejected, hopeless and even drop out of school. The violent reaction reveals Kaboci’s defensive nature. He doesn’t allow any child to demean him hence resulting to the character’s efforts to reject derogatory names and thus empowering himself and positing positive dignity. Name calling as presented in texts on albinism portray isolated, annihilated individuals which lead to emotional degeneration. Although Kaboci confronts the students who call him names, the names leave an impact on Kaboci’s perception of himself.

Lastly stigma and discrimination are among the challenges faced by people with albinism. Stigma can be defined as, “A societal reaction which singles out certain attributes, evaluates them as undesirable and devalues the person who possess them”. 70). Goffman also defines stigma as:

A special kind of liaison between attribute and stereotype... attribute that is deeply discrediting... reduces the bearer ... from a whole and usual person to a tainted discounted one... we believe that a person with a stigma is not quite a human...” (16)

The above definitions qualify an albino’s treatment in society. The skin of an albino is deemed to be an attribute that is undesirable, hence perceived to be unacceptable. A child with albinism is rejected and the mother is disappointed right after birth. This attribute could trigger stigma because the children are perceived as unwanted. Apparently, as the mother narrates, the son eavesdrops and listens to the story. He is devastated. Questions such as, “why me?” prompt his mind leading to emotional frustration and pain and anger. Thoughts about his father re-surface, “My father must have been right after all. I’m a freak, an abomination and a curse!” (33). Lose of self –worth develops due to rejection and stigma.

The chapter clearly extrapolates the perceptions of society towards albinism. The author demonstrates that society has not yet accepted and appreciated the presence of albinos in the society. This leads to reliance on misrepresentations such as myth to explain the existence of albinos. For instance, bearing a child with albinism is as a result of a curse on the parents for some wrongs they committed.

Despite the heightening rate of negative representation though, the author doesn’t portray a disillusioned minority group of disabled people; rather he employs powerful characterization which is aimed at subverting the existing prejudice and ridicule. The child devices coping

strategies which enable him achieve his dreams. The child symbolizes diversity by constructing positive images hence redefining disability. Although the child is double-affected by vulnerability and disability, he overcomes challenges such as rejection, victimization, stereotyping, and subverts perceived notions of disability. Literature plays a pivotal role in changing perceived notions of disability. This is because literature, as Lisa Cottrell's essay, *Shaping Attitudes: How Literature Influences Perceptions with Disability* "Has the potential to influence a magnitude of readers. It can affect their emotions, their attitudes and can increase awareness of and sensitivity towards diversity." (01)

In contemporary literary texts, authors have minimized stereotypic characters by presenting real experiences of people with disabilities in literary texts. In *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters*, Kaboci is an embodiment of a child with albinism in the society. The author develops a character whose traits are not exaggerated or inclined towards cultural assumption. Kaboci isn't too good, or bad, or pathetic, or evil, rather he portrays the image of a grappling with barriers that arise from cultural beliefs and myths, and who cultivates a personality that is not influenced by cultural beliefs. The author uses literature to deliver a powerful message that challenges African beliefs regarding ritual killings of people with albinism. Literature contributes to initiating change by affecting society's attitude towards people with disability and creating awareness about albinism.

Literature appeals to humanity and believes that all human beings should be valued. The author draws our emotions and makes us empathize by explaining how brutal and ruthless the process of execution is. The narrator says, "Machage, the leader of the gang, says, "You could help them anaesthetize the poor albinos before they hack them to pieces. That's one thing I've never liked about the way they do it. Man, have you ever seen the way a pack of ravenous hyenas or wild dogs

run down a prey? Biting off chunks of meat as the victim runs howling in agony in a desperate bid to save its life? [...] that's exactly how the witchdoctors do it. (126)

CONCLUSION.

The chapter set out to explore the symbols the author has used to deconstruct disability. These symbols help us to draw analogies on the place of disability in literature. The use of the child, the mother, the ghost among others inform us that disability is an idea created in our minds based on cultural and social interactions of what is normal or abnormal. When we change our perceptions towards disability, we begin to appreciate and evaluate individuals with disability based on their personality and traits. These perceptions steer clear stereotypical and mythical perceptions.

Kamau's use of children, enables the reader to appreciate the contribution of children in initiating positive perceptions of disability. Children act as a tool in subverting existing notions about disability. Because children are not inclined to societal or cultural perceptions on disability, they become objective and realistic in perceiving disability. The use of children therefore deconstructs narratives of disability. They mark the beginning of a new society or era where individuals with disability are included in various facets in society; they are valued and respected.

The chapter also ridicules belief in myth and the use of stereotypes in perceiving individuals with disability. Due to belief in myth, and stereotypes, the author portrays the torture, humiliation and injustices that individuals with albinism face. It is ridiculous that some members of the society still believe in such myths and stereotypes. The author therefore dissolves entrenched beliefs that contribute to the persecution of people with albinism. Through the mother's voice, the child's voice, and other characters' voices, we see change in attitudes and believability or reliance of such myths and stereotypes. Diversity in terms of perceiving disability is therefore achieved.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION.

The study sought to examine portrayal of disability in literature with keen interest in the role of the child character in subverting existing cultural conventions and perceptions in literary disability studies. It revealed how disabled child characters attempt to approach disability positively by ignoring disabling factors and constructing normalcy. Although they undergo tough experiences such as torture, ridicule and abuse, authors portray them as resilient, and focused in deconstructing disability. These characters show how disability is contested and re-envisioned to produce disability counter narratives.

We also discussed the changes that have been noted in portrayals of disability in literature especially by modern literary writers. Their narratives reflect positive representation as they adopt narrative forms where disabled characters are not pitiable, or pathetic, nor are they dependent. Rather they are complex, diverse individuals who are determined to redefine disability. Meaningful and realistic portrayals of disabled characters demonstrate transience and complexity in terms of reading and critiquing disability in literary texts. Goro Wa Kamau, and other writers such as Tony Morrison, R.J. Palacio present complex characters who cannot be easily dismissed as abnormal or crippled. Rather they are individuals who ignore social barriers such as stereotyping, discrimination and focus in achieving essence or success in in terms of career ambitions and personal acceptance. They therefore deconstruct societal perceptions of disability and create new dimensions in approaching disability studies in literature.

The social model or critical disability theory was essential in the research as it compliments positive or meaningful representation of disabled individual. As the model concentrates on the individual's personal traits, their strengths and their personality, it becomes effective in depicting

real images of people with disabilities. The model therefore enhances meaningful criticism and it is a tool through which disabled individuals assert their strengths and deconstruct disability. This is because the model discourages social constructions that preempt disability based on cultural norms and beliefs. Together with other theories such as deconstruction and psychoanalysis, the research revealed that stereotyping, ridiculing and discrimination of disabled individuals can only thrive if disabled individuals allow it. However, if they exude strong personalities, assertiveness, and demonstrate clarity of vision, they empower themselves and restore their dignity. The study therefore showed how disabled characters resist or protest against cultural constructions such as stereotyping which bar them from exploiting their potential socially, academically and even politically.

Through the employment of various techniques like metaphor, point of view, mimetic character explication, and symbolism, we explored how style has been used to enhance positive portrayals of characters with disability. Style is an essential tool through which disability perspectives are re-imagined and re-constructed. Through point of view, we saw how the main character, Kaboci, goes through the process, of self-contempt, self-discovery, and later self-empowerment. He manages to reclaim his identity and cultivates a strong personality which enables him to attain independence and success. The first hypothesis of the study which posits that portrayal of the child character enhances positive representation is therefore confirmed. Equally, through point of view, we see how other characters change their perceptions towards disabled characters. Most of the characters especially Kaboci's classmates, present realistic portrayals when describing Kaboci. They are not informed by cultural conventions to define Kaboci.

In exploring the use of metaphor in disability studies, we resolved that metaphors can be re-examined so as to see how they contribute to positive portrayals of disability. Various disability

critiques have ridiculed how writers depict disabled characters as metaphors of pity, violence, evil among others; using classic works such as *A Christmas Carol*, *Moby Dick* and *Richard III* in analysis. This research however studies how metaphors represent disabled characters in a positive and more realistic way. We saw how Kaboci is a metaphor of resilience, transience and hope. These metaphors revealed that disability studies in literature have a future that is not dominated by negative criticism.

The research also recognized various symbols that are used in representing disability differently. Various characters, their actions or ideas symbolize either liberation or suppression of disabled individuals in society. The word “ghost” for instance symbolizes absence or invisibility. Some characters especially the fathers are portrayed as invisible. Their presence is marked by irresponsibility or parental negligence. The albino character is oftenly referred to as ghost. Although the name implies unwanted or invisible, the author modifies the interpretation of ghost to reinforce Kaboci’s hardworking and determined nature. He is exemplary and unique, unlike other pupils. The albino character therefore symbolizes transience in disability representation. Further, symbolism enables us to explore various thematic concerns such as parental negligence.

In a nutshell, *Ghost and the Fortune Hunters* is a text that gives insight into how the author crafts disability counter narrative or normalcy narrative. The text enables readers to question various binary oppositions such as ability/disability, ghost/creature, adult/child among others. These binary oppositions help in constructing new perspectives towards disability. The text further dismantles cultural beliefs and myths that explain the existence of disability; especially, albinism. It protests against ritual killings of people with albinism for purposes of conducting rituals and other sacrifices. The author condemns the inhuman act of hunting innocent people because of cultural beliefs.

The research contends that disability deserves a story and scholars should focus more on disability, especially modern conventions of studying disability in literature, just as they have studied more on gender, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality. Consequently, the main characters should be those with disability and these characters should not be used to address or reinforce other concerns. Rather, their representation should echo realistic experiences of people with disability so that future analysts can review how disabled individuals contribute to societal development, knowledge and leadership.

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