

## Teaching and learning about HIV and AIDS through William Shakespeare's plays.

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the use of William Shakespeare's works; Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It, Antony and Cleopatra and Hamlet to teach Zimbabwean students studying Literature in English in Form Three and Form Four ,issues about HIV and AIDS. Secondary school students are a very youthful population, a vibrant segment of the society that is vulnerable to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The extirpation of this group by HIV and AIDS not only portends a diminishing of the future workforce but more so endangers regeneration and societal continuity. The use of William Shakespeare's plays in teaching and learning about HIV and AIDS fits well into Zimbabwe's Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture. This is particularly so in the Secondary School Curriculum where teachers are expected to use participatory and learner centred methodologies when conducting HIV and AIDS and Life Skills and Education Lessons. This study is significant within the area of HIV and AIDS information dissemination and will emphasise on the inclusion of drama that not only imparts instruction through pleasure but more so provides an after performance for the discussion .The study also furthers the existing body of knowledge on the utilization of didactic cum entertainment medium of drama for the circulation of life saving information on HIV and AIDS to this highly vulnerable segment of the society. Using William Shakespeare's plays sets a novel technique in HIV and AIDS communication processes in Zimbabwean Schools using theatre for development as a methodology.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Zimbabwe is among the countries hardest hit by HIV and AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa and it is estimated that more than 25% of the population is living with HIV and AIDS (UNICEF: 2010). HIV and AIDS remains the greatest sustainable human development challenge for Zimbabwe as its impact has increasingly become more complex affecting all economic sections. Today, almost every

Zimbabwean is either affected or infected by this pandemic. The impact ranges from declining life expectancy and negatively affects economic productivity, education, health, agriculture and human capital development. This is particularly felt where the epidemic is spreading along fault lines of social development as evidenced by the social and structural drives of the epidemic such as; poverty, gender inequality, migration and transactional sex. In the absence of pharmacological, immunological and medical interventions, HIV and AIDS education in schools can become effective.

The most common place for young people to learn about HIV and AIDS is at school because of the capacity and universality of schools. Various studies including Abner et al (2007), kyrychenko, Kohler and Sathiakumar (2006) have shown how school based HIV and AIDS programs are effective in reducing risk taking behaviours because of the benefits of interactive platforms. Young people are at a high risk of becoming infected with HIV and AIDS and it is vital that they are educated about the pandemic before they are exposed to situations that put them at risk. Schools play a major role in shaping the attitudes, opinions and behaviours of young people and are an ideal environment for teaching the social as well as the biological aspects of HIV and AIDS.

Discussing HIV and AIDS in schools is also important as noted by Kim et al (2001) because most parts of Sub-Saharan Africa have strong social and societal norms that restrict open discussion of sex related issues with parents because it is believed that teaching children about sex will encourage them to have sex. Gelfand (1979) argues that traditionally in Zimbabwe; aunts, uncles and other extended family members provided sexually- related information to young people. However, as urbanisation intensifies the distance between family members is becoming greater thus largely almost leaving the school with the responsibility of informing young people about sexually- related issues. As a result, young Zimbabweans generally have inadequate information about HIV and AIDS.

Chamba (2011) found young people who also include Form 3 and Form 4 students to be a highly impressionable group which possesses a penchant for the eventful and spectacular so much that an educational process that readily attracts and is spectacular, is capable of engendering profundity in them. Because of the advent of technological advancements, the need arises for the adoption of an attraction laden and eventful-packaged process that provides the youths with participation in the creation of communication instruments. Normalistic HIV and AIDS awareness and talk- centred talk approaches do not seem to have taken the peculiar nature of the youth into deep consideration.

In many ways, HIV and AIDS research and education can never be over- stated and as a social menace, it can no- longer be confined to the HIV and AIDS lesson but to all the other subjects in the school curriculum including Literature in English. For students and Teachers alike, HIV and AIDS seem to be a taboo and terrifying topic which should be avoided in the confines of the classroom because both teachers and students may be affected or infected by it. Learning about HIV and AIDS through William Shakespeare's plays can assist Africa in realising its goal of an AIDS and HIV free generation in future.

William Shakespeare the English playwright who lived in the Elizabethan period (later part of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to earlier part of 17<sup>th</sup> Century) wrote over 32 plays which were performed on stage. His works appeal across generations and are still relevant in today's life. Shakespeare's concerns are reputed to be universal and timeless and this has motivated the current researchers to carry out this research based on his works. The area of study, that is Shakespeare, is so broad that the researchers were forced to leave out Shakespearean poetry for an in- depth analysis. Out of the numerous plays, only four have been selected for this study although references to some of his other works will be made. This study is mainly guided by the following questions:

1. Which issues does Shakespeare raise which are relevant to the issue of HIV and AIDS?
2. Which works by Shakespeare would be most suitable for discussing issues relevant to HIV and AIDS?
3. In what ways can these issues be used to teach/learn about HIV and AIDS?

### **HIV AND AIDS TEACHING IN ZIMBABWE SCHOOLS**

The Zimbabwean Government has played a key role in defining responses to HIV and AIDS by putting in place policy, tools and frameworks to combat HIV and AIDS. Some of the frameworks include, the National Aids Strategic Plan 1988-1998, Zimbabwe National Strategic Aids Plan 2006-2010 and Zimbabwe National Strategic Aids Plan 2011-2015. In 1995, Zimbabwe launched the AIDS Action Plan for schools through a partnership with United Nations Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. In response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, the Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture declared HIV and AIDS Education a compulsory component of the curriculum to pupils from Grade 4 to Form 6. According to Singizi (2003) the Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture Director's Circular Number 2 of 2003 gives important policy guidelines on the teaching and learning of HIV and AIDS and Life Skills Education in all schools in Zimbabwe. This document includes; time allocation, teaching methodology, capacity development, building support for the programme, materials, clubs, peer education and networks.

According to Ministry of Education, Arts, Sports and Culture Director's Circular Number 2 of 2003, teachers are expected to use participatory and learner centred methodologies when conducting HIV and AIDS and Life Skills Education lessons. This approach (Makawa, Ota, Hatendi, et al: 1992, Singizi: 2003) is a process whereby learners are involved in identifying their own problems, discussing solutions, planning and carrying out an effective action plan. Such an approach is based on Verkull's (2004) empowerment approach to educating young people about HIV and AIDS. The model instils self- esteem, personal responsibility and building capacity and opportunities for personal decision making. Such an approach also meets the objectives of HIV and AIDS Education which is to encourage positive behavioural change.

Various studies into the quality of education in HIV and AIDS have been carried out in recent years and the "*Deadly Inertia Report*" (Global Campaign for Education: 2004) provides an overview of

the quality of delivery and content of HIV and AIDS by citing a number of limitations in HIV and AIDS education namely; lack of teaching and learning materials, no specific time or too little time being allocated to HIV and AIDS education, HIV and AIDS Education being added to an already overcrowded curriculum and the conflicting messages such as on condom use and safe sex. Muguwe and Gwirayi (2011) in a study on the implementation of the AIDS Action Plan in Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe also observed the same limitations in Zimbabwe's AIDS Education Programme. They noted that the 30 minutes a week allocated to HIV and AIDS lessons was inadequate and that there is lack of teaching resources in addition to lack of a variety of participatory teaching methodologies. Teachers were found to use the lecture method followed by question and answer sessions. A similar finding was also reported by Chavunduka, Rukanda, Matiza (2004) who observed that a variety of participatory teaching methods were more evident in primary than secondary schools where question and answer was the predominant mode. It also emerged that lack of a syllabus at Secondary schools where the subject is not examinable made teachers to self-direct themselves by reading general books and articles on HIV and AIDS.

The Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council according to Dirwai (2008) has tried to include HIV and AIDS aspects in examinations across the school curriculum. Dirwai (2008) gives examples of ZIMSEC 2007 Geography paper (2248/2) and Mathematics (4008/2) which included questions surrounding HIV and AIDS. Such candidates by learning Mathematics and Geography also get to solve societal problems surrounding HIV and AIDS indirectly by first understanding the diseases and its effects and subsequently coming up with ways of behavioural change at school and after school.

A critical analysis of Shakespeare's works can be used in a way that gives learners information which assists them in making decisions about HIV and AIDS issues. Learners can identify and analyse HIV and AIDS problems and can look for solutions through role- playing and drama and in this way new information is introduced in a way that is relevant and practically useful to the learners. HIV and AIDS Education calls for new and effective education strategies which entail more than the dissemination of information alone (Tsvere: 1999). New strategies according to Jackson (200) such as reflective thinking and reflective teaching which are also explored in this study greatly influence individual decision making, behavioural change and development of life skills.

## **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING DRAMA**

Many learner- centred and participatory methods may be used to teach about HIV and AIDS through drama. One of the important methodologies is the Drama Theory which was derived from Mathematics Game Theory which explains how drama affects audience behaviour whereby,

*...emotions in drama trigger rationalizations that create changes in the game, and so change follow change until either all conflicts are resolved or action becomes necessary.(Kincaid:2001:5).*

According to Kincaid (2001) characters in a play affect the audience to the extent that they become involved with the characters' feelings, thoughts, and emotions and anticipate their next move and sympathise with what happens to them. This theory is important to the teaching of HIV and AIDS

because it conveys the idea that by observing what is taking place in drama, students are able to undergo a similar change themselves. Closely linked to this theory is the Social Learning Theory in which according to Bandura (2003), learners learn through observing the actions of others. Drama Theory and Social Learning Theory call for use of role play and the narrative method in teaching young people about HIV and AIDS.

The narrative method involves situations where students attempt to shape their experiences and knowledge for themselves. This method according to Tsvere (1999) owes much to psycho-drama and generates interesting and often valuable interactions. Since the scenarios are produced by the youths themselves, this makes the method rich in content hence, calls for the full participation of those involved. Role-play involves presenting small spontaneous plays which describe real life situations as those found in Shakespeare's plays. A situation is given to a group which takes on the roles of the characters involved. Students act out what these characters would say or do in a given situation. Other students carefully watch and after the play they all discuss the situation, their reactions and feelings about it. Considering these theories of emotional response which maintain that emotional messages in drama are more acceptable by audience members and are more likely to lead to behavioural change, it is reasonable to assume that drama is very useful in raising young people's awareness about HIV and AIDS.

Drama does not 'throw' messages at the audience but rather it shares the message with the audience thereby giving the audience alternatives for behavioural change. The infusion of HIV and AIDS information in Literature in English drama texts as inferred by Bandura (2003) and Basil (1996) as a form of education-entertainment can promote changes in health-related beliefs and behaviour. Such changes in behaviour can be in terms of sex and contributing behaviours such as stigmatisation, gender inequality and other societal relations that underpin the actions of young people which are key to the prevention of HIV and AIDS.

Similarly, plays by Shakespeare can be acted out in the classroom and students may discuss any changes they may want to make to the play and act out while others direct and look on. Such interactional methods according to Jackson (1992) allow students to get more insight into each others' motives for certain behaviour and they will be better prepared to make the right decisions when faced with HIV and AIDS situations. More importantly, as argued by Verkull (2004) it is not enough to only tell young people not to engage in sex, since they also need empowerment and skills to better control their decisions.

### **CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN HIV and AIDS AWARENESS AND EDUCATION AND THE SHAKESPEAREAN WORLD**

The Zimbabwe HIV and AIDS National Policy and Strategy Framework of 1999 articulates that since the identification of the first HIV and AIDS case in 1985, the response to the disease has been very much driven by the health sector. This is because the problem initially presented itself as a medical problem and currently, apart from the medical consequences of the disease, there are more non-medical aspects which are rooted much deeper in the development or under-development

context and these include the significance of social implications such as gender, culture and coping with death and stigma. This study focuses on these non-medical aspects which are rooted in the development or underdevelopment context.

In different societies, cultural practices and traditions abound that were adaptive and which fulfilled important functions in the past. Panos (1999) suggests that such cultural practices and traditions may today, carry serious health and welfare risks. Such practices which were prevalent in the Elizabethan Era, also alive in Zimbabwe nowadays include; wife inheritance and arrangement of marriages. The inheritance of a wife by the deceased's husband's brother, also called the practice of the Levite, has long been around and can be traced back to the bible:

*Now there were seven brothers and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also, and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman dies also. (Luke: 20 v 29-32)*

The above excerpt from the bible highlights the high prevalence of the custom of inheritance. Since it is found in the Bible, most Christians may feel that it is an important practice that has to be strictly followed. In Zimbabwe, in some cultures a woman is supposed to become the brother's wife even though her husband may have died of AIDS and AIDS. This also applies when the woman has HIV and AIDS. An understanding of culture according to Airhihenbuwa (2000) is very important in influencing behavioural change since culture can shape an individual's understanding of health concepts as drugs and treatment and illness are all culturally constructed. Reinforcing positive attributes of culture in the classroom can make students to identify with cultural strengths against a situation where there is focus on negative attributes of culture.

The relationships between men and women and the widely shared expectations and norms within a society about male and female behaviour heavily impacts on HIV and AIDS. Jackson (2002:13) points out that the major driving forces behind the spread of HIV and AIDS are:

*Coerced sex, gender based violence, rape, disempowerment of women, male spending power and female poverty driving them into commercial sex, male ethos of not taking over responsibility, masculine stereotypes that endorse a double standard between male and female. (Jackson ,2002:13)*

These gender inequalities which play a key role in HIV and AIDS issues can also be found in literature since according to Karl Marx, literature is a form of art which represents reality. Socialization which is a result of the social aspect of gender is also held responsible for some gender inequalities that prevail in society. The school as an institution which contributes to socialization can play the role of correcting these misperceptions through the teaching of Shakespeare's works.

In Zimbabwe, males and females are trapped in social expectations of gender roles and behaviour. Men are expected to have more knowledge and experience regarding sex and this puts them at risk as it prevents them from getting information and admitting where knowledge is lacking. It also encourages denial of risk (Gupta: 2000). There is therefore a need to revisit these roles and look at

men and women who have not lost their state and such males and females could be found in Shakespeare's characters that can be used to teach young boys and girls about these issues.

## DISCUSSION

Romeo and Juliet is well known as one of the greatest love tragedies in the world and the love between Romeo and Juliet has not been equalled in art. Eventually, the deaths of these two bring the families together and make them realize the pettiness of their rivalry. As You Like It is a love comedy in which Shakespeare among other themes compares court life with natural countryside and it ends with marriages between Oliver and Celia, Orlando and Rosalind, Silvius and Phoebe and Touchstone and Audrey. The play according to Hill (2013) reveals the enraged stupidity of older people and the reaffirming gaiety and resourcefulness of young people which brings out centrality of relationships between men and women which can help young people to prevent themselves from HIV and AIDS. Anthony and Cleopatra is a historical tragedy about Mark Antony, one of the Roman triumvirs' relationships with an Egyptian Queen, Cleopatra. Hamlet is a revenge tragedy about Hamlet, an enigmatic character who is supposed to avenge the death of his father and it ends with Hamlet perishing trying to avenge his father. These plays raise contemporary issues such as relationships, love, arranged marriages, death, sex and appearance and reality which are at the core of HIV and AIDS education. Structurally, these plays can be used to teach about HIV and AIDS since in all Shakespearean plays redemption occurs in Act V which is the final act. Act V could be interpreted as the final act which is needed in the global fight against HIV and AIDS.

## RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMITMENT

Form Three and Form Four students are young people aged fifteen and above and are at the stage of their development where they begin to explore different sexual relationships. In a study carried out in Zimbabwe by Kim et al (2001), it was found out that sexual debuts normally start at the age of fifteen. A study of the experiences of Romeo and Juliet in Romeo and Juliet can help young people understand and learn a lot about relationships and about HIV and AIDS awareness. Most youths are prone to infatuations but here, Romeo and Juliet's relationship prove that it is not just a passing emotion but a mature lasting relationship.

In the Balcony Scene that has become popular to students and teachers of Shakespeare, Romeo associates Juliet with sunlight. Juliet "*is the sun*" (11.ii.3). Juliet is the light that frees him from darkness of his perpetual melancholia. This goes along with the popular lovers song "*You are my sunshine*" which is very common in Zimbabwe among people in love. In turn, Juliet compares their love to lightening, to show that as the lightening is a glorious break in the blackness of the sky, so too is their love: a flash of wondrous luminance in an otherwise dark world; a world where her every action is controlled by those around her. The world has one source of light and it is the sun. Therefore, Romeo is professing that Juliet is his one and only love and source of happiness. There is no reference in the play to the two lovers choosing to have another partner, not even for experimenting and experience as is common with most young people today. Shakespeare paints a good picture of the possibility and importance of having one partner and being faithful to him/her

which is very safe in this era of HIV and AIDS. Romeo and Juliet, most importantly teach all lovers about commitment which is important, possible and most practical in today's HIV and AIDS world. Romeo will die for Juliet and Juliet will die for Romeo. If everyone particularly the young people, can take up Shakespeare's example of real faithfulness and commitment then HIV and AIDS can be reduced.

Overshadowing the love of Romeo and Juliet is the pain, the grief, the terror of the struggle of love against evil destinies and a thorny world. The people around Romeo and Juliet do not understand their love and it seems they do not even know what it is. According to Mercuticia, love is a negative emotion that has to be aggressively dealt with. He associates it with violence as manifested in the two speeches he makes:

*If love be rough with you, be rough with love, Pick love for picking you and you beat down love” (1 IV 27-28) and*

*Alas ,poor Romeo, he is already dead, stabbed with a white wench's black eye ,run through the ear with a love song, the very pin of his heart cleft with blind love-boys butt-shaft, and is he a man to encounter Tybalt?.(11.iv 13-16)*

It is therefore, not surprising that some students who like Mercuticia do not understand the nature of love and what is going on between Romeo and Juliet. Such students can be taught about the meaning of true love which makes one to remain faithful and committed to one partner. Belsey (1967:227) observes that

*Love is a necessary ingredient of heroic drama and it is above all the cintilising power of love which is taken for granted. Virtuous heroes need the complimentary love of a virtuous woman to tame their fiery nature. Masculinity is strong and resolute, feminine tranquillity and moral sensibility soften the ruthlessness of a masculine world.*

The above quotation can be referenced to Coriolanus in Shakespeare's Coriolanus. His wife the gracious, Virgilia is sheer femininity and her main attribute is silence. No man can withstand him and only one woman can plead with him. In yielding to her, in feeling the ultimate modicum of feminine tenderness, even in its silence, the strongman becomes as it were –a child. His better character or good side is brought out through the relationship he has with the women around him. It is important to note here, that Coriolanus has just one love, his wife. Young people can draw from these relationships in their lives as youths and even as adults that they should stick to one partner. It does not only make one a better person, but one stands to avoid sexually transmitted infections such HIV and AIDS and Herpes

From a disease standpoint, William Shakespeare's world was arguably the worst place in time and history. His world was overcrowded, rat infested, rampant sexually promiscuity, haunted by plague in 1563, 1579 and 1579, outbreak of smallpox in 1562 and there was syphilis, Typhus and malaria which threatened to wipe out the Elizabethan population and lower the average life expectancy to 35 years. Such diseases in Shakespeare's world can be compared HIV and AIDS.

## ARRANGED MARRIAGES AND RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON MATERIAL GAINS

Traditionally and culturally, parental interference in children's relationships is quite common and in most instances parents involvement could be catastrophic. In Romeo and Juliet Old Capulet's dream is to extend his matrilineal line. If Juliet marries Paris the man he chooses for her, then his socio-political security is guaranteed. For him, their wedding offers a promise that his line will continue through his own time and because of this, he effectively exerts his authority over Juliet. Montague, on the other hand, wants his son to enforce his continuing image in patrilineal succession and to fight in his feuds.

Today's parental interference does not only stop at arranged marriages but may also include spiritual or sacrificial unions. In most cases, parents do not consider the sexual past of the person who is usually old. Such unions according to Kim et al (2001) make women vulnerable to HIV and AIDS since older man have been shown to have higher chances of being infected by HIV and AIDS. Young people in such situations can learn from Juliet who vehemently refuses to follow his father's dictates, revealing a strong willed and mentally liberated character. In daring to challenge her father, Juliet embodies a new type of woman who is needed today, a young woman who can stand up to the negative traditional practices such as wife inheritance. In today's world any young person who has Romeo and Juliet's resolve can find it easy to withstand peer pressure on issues such as, early sex and drug use which usually leave young people vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

Some parents are evil and in As You Like It the characters of Oliver and Fredrick bring out the evil nature of man. Oliver is jealous +because his followers esteem Orlando more highly than him. Frederick cannot understand how Rosalind could be better liked by people more than his daughter. Through the behaviour of the infected Frederick, young people can realise and learn that cruel adults who are HIV and AIDS positive may rape very young girls who are as young as three. Such people can offer young girls and boys gifts and money for unprotected penetrative sex. These people according to Ng'anga and Ngugi (1997) also believe that by having sex with a young virgin girl, they can be cured of HIV and AIDS and can also improve their businesses. It is also important to note that the love between Romeo and Juliet is not based on material wealth. Most relationships that young people get into today are centred on material things such as money and gifts. Romeo and Juliet can teach young people that real love does not consider material gains.

In Anthony and Cleopatra after the death of Antony's wife, Agrippa suggests that since Antony is now a widow and Octavius has a sister, Octavia, Antony should take Octavius to be his wife; he and Octavius will, thus become brother and all petty jealousies will vanish. This looks like a political arrangement but in its true sense, it is an arranged marriage. Antony is unable to stay true to Octavia; he flies again to "*his Egyptian dish*" even though he is formally and publicly married to her. If Octavia was a young girl who is HIV and AIDS free, she is placed in a very dangerous position in marrying Antony. First, Antony had Fluvia and then Cleopatra. Secondly, he cannot be faithful to the new young wife, but goes again to his mistress. Octavia is placed at a very high risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Students can learn that such polygamous marriages and relationships are risky.

In Hamlet, Hamlet is surprised to find his mother already married to his uncle by the time he returns to Denmark from college. What is disgusting to him is the speed with which she rushes into another man's arms after his father's death. In today's life Claudius' inheritance of Gertrude could be quite risky but a culturally permitted move. If Hamlet's father was infected, Claudius would also get infected and the whole family may succumb to HIV and AIDS infection.

## ABSTINENCE

The Elizabethan era had young people who were involved in relationships as girls and boys and it is important to note that sexual urges do not disappear through will power alone. While it is unrealistic to expect the majority of young, healthy, sexually mature males and females to live indefinitely in abstinence, abstinence deliberately chosen, freely striven for, should inspire the life and behaviour of unmarried people and when it arises from healthy sexuality it can become the first line of defence against HIV and AIDS. Abstinence, fidelity and condom use are the three main ways to avoid infection (UNAIDS: 2004). Abstinence approach is relevant to school going people because it is concerned with teaching young people that ,

*...abstaining from sex until marriage is the best means of ensuring that they avoid infection with HIV, other sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy.*  
(Abstinence and Sex Education: 2010:18).

The Elizabethan Romeo and Juliet have a love relationship that is obvious in its commitment, yet there is no mention in the play of their indulging in sex. In As You Like it also there is not even a suggestion of young people getting involved in sex. Some young people believe that getting physically involved in sex is the surest sign of commitment, yet according to Ng'anga and Ngugi (1987) it is not. Self control is very important as it entails one's inclinations and desires to the services of reason. As young boys and girls they should not be bothered by appearances but instead use reasonable reflection to direct their thoughts. Romeo and Juliet can teach that abstinence which is the surest way to prevent HIV and AIDS can be practised by healthy youths. Shakespeare's message seems to be very clear that there should be no sex before marriage.

In Antony and Cleopatra, Antony is so captivated by Cleopatra that he loses all sense. When Antony's Navy is forcefully opposing Caesar at Actium, he violates his "*experience, manhood and honour*" (111 x.23) by following Cleopatra when she changes direction. He even condemns himself "*for rashinies...For fear and doting*" (111.x.1475). Doting is a word which is used throughout the play to denote his desertion of reason for Cleopatra and it is this doting that leads to his downfall. In today's world, Antony's desire and his inability to control himself could have led him into HIV and AIDS infection. He realises his loss of control and even remarks, "*...i have lost command*" (1.23). Young people should learn from Antony about the consequences of failing to govern one's sexual behaviour and should abstain from sex before marriage. The characters of Anthony and Cleopatra can be used to teach about staying faithful.

Teaching about Abstinence can include teaching the social, psychological and health gains to be obtained from refraining from sexual activity (Abstinence and Sex Education: 2010). Students can also be taught on the moral expectations of not having sex until marriage when they should then be a mutually faithful monogamous relationship and how to reject sexual advances. They should be taught about factors that increase the vulnerability to sexual advances such as drug and alcohol use and the harmful psychological and physical effects of premarital sex.

## **MARRIAGE AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

All Shakespearean comedies end with marriages and it seems by bringing the marriages at the end of his plays, William Shakespeare has a special message to deliver. In As You Like It Orlando's love is initially extravagant as shown by the love verses on trees. He gets educated out of his hyper-romantic notion of love and is brought out into the real world, the only world in which a successful marriage can work.

Characters in Shakespeare only get married after acquiring self knowledge. Before his conversion in Arden ,Oliver in As You Like It is shown to be evil .He deals harshly with his old servant Adam and is weaned off from this evil nature before he finds love and by the time he gets married ,Oliver is a good man. Phoebe also has to learn to understand the real person before she gets married. Silvius is so overpowered by love for Phoebe that he cannot even attend to his business and he is transformed. All these transformations mean that before one can get into a relationship, they need to look at themselves and understand themselves. Adolescents are at a stage when they are unaware of whom they really are and according to Tsvere (1999) they are at a stage where they are discovering themselves. William Shakespeare seems to be saying that one can only get into a good relationship after understanding oneself. Young people should not rush into love relationships and marriages since they can get exposed to the risk of HIV and AIDS infection. It is better to wait and grow up first before making decisions about amorous relationships.

In As You Like It, three pairs of lovers are juxtaposed to show that marriage is a symbol for a perfect union of mind and body. The physical disguises and deceptions adopted by the characters are a visual symbol of the inner disguises that people erect around themselves. Young people should not rush into marriages or serious relationships until they are mature enough to understand what they are getting into. As mature people they can discuss their HIV and AIDS status, Voluntary Counselling and Testing and Male Circumcision and condom use with partners before having sex.

## **APPEARANCE AND REALITY**

The theme of appearance versus reality is brought out in most of Shakespeare's works through the power of language and rhetoric as well as the fallibility of the human perception, to corrupt the truth and shape appearance to be different from reality. The most common example of appearance versus reality in William Shakespeare's plays is found in how the plays are performed, that is, the theatrical gambit where men or boys, girls or women disguise themselves as women and men. The fact that women were not allowed on stage and female roles were played by males during

Shakespeare's times shows how in today's society appearance versus reality has an overreaching presence. Issues of boys' actors playing the roles of women can also be used to teach about homosexuality which spreads HIV and AIDS. A person who is infected can look and feel perfectly healthy for many years while infected by the HI virus. Those infected could be anyone, rich or poor, white, coloured or black, close friends and even relatives. The only way to find out that someone is infected by HIV and AIDS is by taking a blood test. Most young people have the same problem that Orlando in As You Like it portrays as they believe that if they fall in love with someone then that person is perfect. The greatest danger among young people is the lack of experience which makes young people to become blind once they fall in love. When Rosalind meets Orlando disguised as a man, Orlando does not recognise his lover. The fact that Orlando can be in close proximity to his love and not recognise her shows how according to Hill(2013) it is easy to communicate with people and yet fail to perceive their true nature. This issue of appearance and reality is very important in HIV and AIDS Education because a healthy looking individual can have HIV and AIDS. Young people can learn from Shakespeare that what seems to be, may not be what it is, so they have to be wary of appearances.

Hamlet pretends to be mad .When he speaks to the King he uses the style of a half-crazy ally and he cruelly treats Ophelia but with his Mother he is gentle and persuasive. Hamlet gives a more gentle treatment to his mother which further highlights that he is not really mad although he appears to be made. The appearance and reality of Hamlet's situation is also very important in HIV and AIDS communication. Young people need to be very careful about the outlook appearance of people. Some people pretend to love ,some pretend to be healthy, others pretend to be offering assistance when all they want is to lure young people into unhealthy relationships. The treatment that Ophelia receives at the hands of Hamlet is a good example. As a young girl Ophelia is smitten by the attention she is receiving from Hamlet. Laertes her brother warns her that Hamlet does not love her but his love for her is lust and she should guard against it. Since she loves Hamlet she clings to him as she looks up to him as for support in married life. Hamlet however never seems to see her as more than an example of womanhood, and his bitter attacks addressed to her in particular are really directed towards women in general. Young girls tend to learn a lot from Ophelia for if her involvement with Hamlet had been more intimate, she would have been left with an unwanted pregnancy, HIV and AIDS or a sexually transmitted infection. Ophelia was too quick to fall for Hamlet before taking her time to discover the true nature of the man.

In Antony and Cleopatra, Cleopatra is a queen, a woman of dazzling beauty, who seems to be witty but there is nothing positive to learn from her as far as her sexuality is concerned. It seems Antony is more attracted to her because of her beauty and if she were living today, it would obviously be risky for Anthony to have a sexual relationship with her. Cleopatra had a previous relationship and has her own child and she could be potentially infected by HIV and AIDS. The way she employs her '*woman's art*' according to Hill (2013) to gain Antony's attention spells out her experience and reinforces her as dangerous. For example, she goes out of her way to even fake illness just to grab Antony's attention. Today, beautiful young girls who have been through many relationships can also entice young man. In order to avoid the risk of HIV and AIDS, both young boys and girls

should learn to say 'NO' as well as to accept a 'NO' for an answer. The fatal inability to say 'NO' to a woman or man shows Antony's weakness and causes his downfall.

### **CULTURAL ROLES IN THE ERA OF HIV AND AIDS**

The perceptions and roles of men and women in society are very significant. Beliefs such as men do not cry can also be glimpsed in Romeo and Juliet. After murdering Tybalt, Romeo hurls himself to the floor of Friar Lawrence's cell in tears and the Nurse is surprised to see Romeo in such a state. It seems Verona, like most people nowadays, regards passive abandonment to grief as normal in women but unusual in men. This can be related to acute emotional reactions in people if they are unprepared for HIV and AIDS Test. Crying for such people can be therapeutic as it may help them to understand and accept their situation. If as shown in this scene, people are not allowed to cry, they may end up worse off.

In Antony and Cleopatra Philo is indignant at Antony's dotage who has so degenerated that he has become," *the bellows and the fan to cool a gipsy's lust*" ( 11,34) because he now has a mistress. In this scene, Antony receives a letter with important sad news that his wife, Fulvia is dead. Although Antony dismisses the people around him to be alone with his broodings, his wife's death only stirs in him, "*a dormant sense of duty*" (Harrison: 1951) .What is happening in this scene serve to highlight Foreman's (1951:88) observations about men, that,

*"The global AIDS pandemic is driven by men. Men have more opportunity to centre and transmit HIV; men usually have more than one woman....."*

Although Fluvia is described as having been difficult, Antony is not supposed to be with another woman whilst she is still living. Young people should know that a '*real man*' cares enough about his wife to be faithful to her and by caring for others he will also be caring.

Socially and culturally constructed roles and behaviour ascribed to men and women also make young boys and girls vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. Social constructions of masculinity and femininity make boys and girls feel the need to conform to social prescriptions of male prowess, submissiveness and fertility leading them to engage in early and unprotected sex .UNAIDS (2008) reported how youths who have never had sex are laughed or jeered at and because of the fear of being excluded, stigmatised or rejected by their peers, young people can indulge in early unprotected sex. Equipping young people with negotiation tools found in Shakespeare's plays to counter peer pressure and societal norms and expectations can go a long way in curbing the spread of HIV and AIDS.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study carried out showed that it is possible to teach young people in a Literature in English lesson about HIV and AIDS using William Shakespeare's works. This is mainly based on the view that William Shakespeare is an artist who wrote about life's experiences and the people who live that experience. The issues that are contemporary to HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe have to do with the general living conditions of people and these issues can be found in almost all of Shakespeare's

plays. The only limitation in this study is that not all issues relating to HIV and AIDS can be found in one play as it takes several of them to consider all the issues.

Teachers and students can thus, take up these issues as they appear in any of the plays they are studying as an opportunity to teach about HIV and AIDS. The researcher here does not recommend a thirty minute lesson recommended by the Ministry OF Education Sports, Arts and Culture dedicated to teaching or learning about HIV and AIDS. Instead teachers and students should be aware of these issues as they read Shakespeare. In order for students to fully grasp the plays they study in class, sometimes it is important for them to act out the plays themselves. In acting out these plays, it is important to make adjustments which include issues about HIV and AIDS in the plays. Pupils can be told to act out new and different situations which include the possibility of HIV and AIDS issues in one of the characters. For example, pupils can act out what they think would have happened if say, Gertrude in Hamlet was HIV and AIDS positive.

Besides discussing social issues relating to HIV and AIDS, students may be asked to write poems based on the play. This can include adding HIV and AIDS to the situation and then asking students to write poems about a character or situation. For instance, what if Octavius in Antony and Cleopatra finds out that Cleopatra is HIV positive a year after his agreement to the marriage of his sister Octavia to Antony? Through writing such a poem students may feel the regret that Octavius may feel and so in their own lives they will consider their own vulnerability as well as other peoples vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.

A study of Shakespeare's plays as carried out in this research has shown that almost any situation that people meet in life can teach them about HIV and AIDS. Teachers can play a very big role once they themselves are informed first about HIV and AIDS in changing the attitudes of the youth in the era of HIV and AIDS. The challenge still remains to all practising teachers to include HIV and AIDS issues across the curriculum and when students realise the composite approach to HIV and AIDS issues from the Mathematics teacher, Building Studies teacher, Fashion and Fabrics teacher, Shona teacher or Accounts teacher, they are likely to change their behaviour.

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