Out of Crisis: Discourses of Enabling and Disabling Spaces in Post-2000 Zimbabwean Literary Texts in English

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ABSTRACT

This research centralises the underutilised 'tragic edge' and dialectics of exile' perspectives in the analysis of black- and white-authored narratives that came out of post-2000 Zimbabwe. These narratives are *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava, 2009); *An Elegy for Easterly* (Petina Gappah, 2009); *Writing Free* (Irene Staunton [Ed.], 2011);*We Need New Names* (NoViolet Bulawayo, 2013); *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician* (Tendai Huchu, 2014); *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* (Catherine Buckle, 2001); *The Last Resort* (Douglas Rogers, 2009); *This September Sun* (Bryony Rheam, 2009); and *Lettah's Gift* (Graham Lang, 2011). The texts depict a post-2000 Zimbabwean period that is characterised by various forms of turmoil which give rise to exilic sensibilities in terms of the narratives' thematic concerns and in terms of the aesthetic choices of writers. Dialectically speaking, moving out of, and into, crisis are discrepant movements happening simultaneously on the same space and in one text so that those who move, and those who do not move, are afflicted by the turmoil of existing out of place. This makes problematic the notion of globalisation and the freedoms of nomadic experiences that it has ostensibly ushered. The study critically analyses how these texts depict crisis-induced exile (both physical and symbolic), the [ambiguous] transgression of physical and symbolic borders in the search for enabling spaces and the consequent struggle with issues of space and belonging in a globalising world (which is epitomic of the postcolonial condition) but in which, paradoxically, issues of race, nation and identity remain at the fore in determining who "we" are. I deploy McClennen's 'dialectics of exile' theory in the reading of the texts because of its recognition of the dialectics and tragic edge of exile. Also central to this research is the use of Lefebvre's concept of space and Geschiere's notion of belonging. Since space, as Lefebvre has theorised, is in a continuous state of flux due to human action of producing and reproducing, constructing and deconstructing, inventing and re-inventing it, the argument that is foregrounded in this thesis is that the non-fixity of space spells an endless search for it by the characters in the selected narratives which complicates their sense of belonging. This also makes moving out of crisis a paradox since it spells moving into crisis. Also important is the centrality of representation as a symbolic exemplification of globalisation or its nemeses – race, nation and other like shibboleths that are usually associated with pre-modern sensibilities. While the inclusion of black and white writers in the same canon is done as an expression of a post-racial spirit, this study also centralises the politico-aesthetics of representation. Thus, how white writers represent black people, or how black writers represent white people, is critical in understanding the nature of the globe and the everyday spaces on which people circulate. The whole idea behind the dialectic is the simultaneity of the existence of contradictory phenomena. The deployment of the dialectics of exile theory therefore facilitates the conclusion that the globe should be understood dialectically in terms of contradictory phenomena like the pre-modern, modern and postmodern existing on the same space and influencing the politico-aesthetic regimes that the writers of selected narratives deploy and the ambiguities of the movements that the characters undertake. As a consequence of reading the texts from this perspective, and especially by closely deploying the methodological tools I have chosen, I suggest that any reading of exile narratives and theorisations of the postcolonial should be done with an awareness of the importance of space and belonging and the dialectical nature of the globe.

DECLARATION

I declare that **Out of Crisis: Discourses of Enabling and Disabling Spaces in Post-2000 Zimbabwean Literary Texts in English is my own work,** that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Tanaka Chidora **December 2017**

Signed.....

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Someone told me that I should just take that bold step, even when the evidence around me says I shouldn't, and everything else would fall into place. The way things fell into place testifies to the existence of God.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND, CRITICAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Contextual Background

Globalisation, Migration, Exile, Diaspora and the Postcolonial Theory.

Prominent academic and public debates on the Zimbabwean diaspora and the crisis that engendered it have, on one side, focused on the contribution of the 'crisis' (characterised by acute economic downturn and political turmoil that began in the late 1990s) to the unprecedented levels of migration (Raftopoulos, 2009). The other side has focused on the lives of Zimbabweans outside Zimbabwe and the transnational nature of their existence (McGregor and Primorac, 2010; Crush and Tevera, 2010; Pasura, 2011). These studies have followed contemporary trajectories in the study of migration in a globalised, de-territorialised world. Gilroy's work on multiculturalism (1987), and the post-colonial theories of such scholars as Said (1978), Bhabha (1994), Nuttall and Mbembe (2007), Spivak (2010) and Selasie (2013) are all challenging race, language, physical boundaries, nationalism and national identity for a transnational existence characterised by hybridity of identities, multiculturalism and place polygamy. The visions of these theorists are caught up within statist politics and essentialist and nativist discourses and sensibilities in multiplicities of location and temporality that represent the "paradox of our time" (Glick-Schiller, 1994:1).

The general belief that globalisation has given humans beings and things greater ability to circulate freely around the earth (Cunningham, 2004) thereby transforming borders into sites for the construction of amalgamated identities has ushered in the view that the centrality of the nation in organising human life is under serious threat. However, as this thesis seeks to prove, to think of globalisation in terms of over-arching, large-scale processes and ignore what happens in-between, would be tantamount to creating an ahistorical narrative of change. For instance, one of the most dominant theorisations of globalisation depicts it in terms of the expiration of the supremacy of the nation-state and its replacement with a global formation (Albrow, 1997). Globalisation, if we follow Albrow's approach, is the exhaustion of modernity

(this means globalisation collocates with '*post*' words) and the introduction of a diverse and polycentric epoch where the territoriality of the nation-state no longer governs relationships so that human relations are brought "into relation with the extent and materiality of the globe as a whole" (Albrow, 1997:115). There is here a diminished sense of the external. The new epoch ruptures itself from history. While Albrow's theory has its own merits, my argument is that this process should never be understood in voluntarisitic terms. Human beings try very hard to hold on to place, to history (whether authentic or manufactured) and to various associations that, even while the world is moving in the direction Albrow points, still give particular human beings the sense of 'we' against 'them', an awareness of the external whose demise Albrow connects to globalisation.

Scholte's (2005) theorisation of space in globalisation studies uses two terms: transplanetary connectivity and supraterritoriality. These refer to relations that transcend territorial boundaries. These relations also entail "four shifts in social structures": moves from "capitalism to hyper-capitalism; statism to polycentrism; nationalism to pluralism and hybridity in identity; and rationalism to reflexive rationality" (Scholte, 2005:136; Oke, 2009:320). According to Oke (2009:320), the supraterritorial relations Scholte speaks of "have aspects of transworld 'simultaneity', meaning they extend across the world, and 'instantaneity,' meaning they move anywhere in no time." Identities are removed from place; they become non-territorial. This corresponds with the formation of diasporas and nonterritorial identities like gender which all encourage supraterritoriality (Scholte, 2009:146-9).

Again, we find in Scholte's theory the notion of sytematicity that is "the ghost in the machine" (Oke, 2009:323). The intricacy of historical transformation, of human relations (political, economic and social), needs to be acknowledged and the dangers this complexity and human relations pose to communities, individuals and the world be examined. As Pletsch (1979:345) observes, the idea that nations "share the same cultural morphology" is difficult to support. As Oke (2009:324) states (and this is the position I take), "[g]lobalization is neither the steady march of history nor the outcome of changed social spatiality." Space is not a blank slate on which globalisation takes place. The texts chosen for this research combine to communicate this viewpoint very well in the difficulties the characters face in trying to negotiate their ways on global and local spaces that are phobic to intrusion.

I feel that to take a revolutionary stance in our eulogisation of globalisation and the dynamics it has unleashed without taking a serious look at how globalisation might have made borders even more important again is to miss the point. The narratives I have chosen for this research depict traumatic experiences that communicate to us globalisation's 'hunger' for

human sacrifice in its heralding of a new era. While many theories of globalisation give it homogenising power, it might be misleading to think that the transformation of place necessarily leads to placelessness and alienation (D. Williams, 2002:357). In fact, critics of globalisation like Kunstler (1994) and Mander and Goldsmith (2001) actually demonstrate how globalisation actually provokes movements towards localisation. Globalisation may actually mean that place-bound identities are more rather than less significant. The transgression of borders through globalisation is likely to cause a deliberate inward search for authenticity, a deliberate evocation of a sense of belonging to a place, especially "when place meanings appear to be threatened [by those] from 'outside'" (D. Williams 2002:357). A crowded, global village is likely to provoke communities to make room for themselves only by any means necessary or unnecessary.

In trying to transcend the nation, postcoloniality comes close to dismissing all essentialist discourses as fetishised abstractions. However, if globalisation has unbound nations, the increase in migration, principally from the Global South to the Global North, and the agitations of Global South nations against the hegemony (perceived and real) of the west, has generated a rebounding of borders in which the globe has become gated again (Cunningham, 2004) so that globalisation can be thought of in terms of in terms of the globalisation of 'gates'. The rebounding of borders – both physical and metaphorical – is something that persists in an era in which they are considered to be 'transgressable'. While cultural and racial diversity are widely accepted as characteristic of this age, the persistence of borders, racism and intolerance has taken centre stage in the attempt of nation-states to control both national and international landscapes. Studies in new racism, or neo-racism (Lentin, 2000:94), for instance, have attempted to shift the focus from an anthropological understanding of racism that incriminates pre-modern sensibilities that depended on bio-logic to an understanding of racism that is informed by contextual politics. For instance, in Lentin's study, "[t]he persistence of racism and the success in various countries of far-right wing parties with a strong anti-immigrant manifesto is of significant concern" (2000:94). This is demonstration of the need to contextualise postcoloniality within multiplicities of spatial positions and temporality. The question then would not be focused on whether the essentialist discourse is authentic or not and pre-modern or not. Instead, the question is: "[w]ho is mobilising what in the articulation of the past, deploying what identities, identifications and representations, and in the name of which political vision and goals?" (Shohat, 1992:110). These political goals, in most cases, have to do with inclusion and exclusion, and belonging and not belonging. It is within these contradictions that narratives chosen for this research are located. Thus, a non-

universalising, differential study of narratives emanating from specific geo-political local (Zimbabwe) and foreign (South Africa, UK, USA) spaces is important in the understanding of the "tragic edge of exile" (McClennen, 2004:ix; Zeleza, 2005:10).

While hybridities and multiculturalisms can be rightly deployed as relevant conditions of the global order, they run the risk of remaining in the realm of perfect ideals with too many realities militating against them. The globe (a village, scholars say) has, contrary to its depiction as a village, rarely seen the harmonious orchestration of humankind as contained in the dream of multiculturalists. The relationship between multiculturalism and practice seems to reflect culture as having retrogressed into an "ideological battleground" (Wallerstein, 1989:5). There are "deep and increasingly complex structurally grounded disjunctures and conflicts characteristic of modern capitalist society" (Alund and Schierup, 1991:1-2). What Wallerstein observes means that more often than not, culture has been used to explain difference and division instead of commonality and harmony. Culture, in many ways, is harnessed not only to be used in the age-old debate of racial superiority and inferiority based on skin colour but also to marginalise difference. While Gilroy, for instance, is aware of these disjunctures, his writings are an advocacy for scholars to understand the damage racisms are doing to democracy.[1] One of these damages is done through 'defensive solidarity' which is similar to rarefied and alienated racial categories that are further dangerously reduced to essentialised nativisms that Said sees in many anti-colonial nationalist movements.[2] While the warnings of these two need urgent acknowledgement, the world continues with difference becoming a global *problematique*.

It is important to follow Gilroy's argument of the politicisation of cosmopolitan and cultural discourse as the *nemesis* against the achievement of cosmopolitanism itself. The changes that have come with globalisation have diminished the meanings and ambitions of these terms. For instance, the discourse of human rights and the godfatherly position of the west in these issues rob them of the universality they must have in order to be true to the spirit of the time. In this way, human rights become just one of the many legal methods of regulating human behaviour without recognising difference. Interventionist policies that transgress sovereign territories and 'benevolent discourses' that justify brutal occupations continue to

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[1] *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), for instance, is a movement away from ethnic absolutism to transnational cultural construction.

[2] A postcolonial scholar would, for instance, reject 'identitarian thought' that identifies with the fixity of nationality, tradition, religion and language. This line of thought is the basis of Said's *The Politics of Dispossession*: *The Struggle for Palestinian Self Determination* (1995).

divide the world into the Civilised and the Other. The Civilised intervenes into chaotic spaces of the Other. In other words, the Other (difference), becomes a marker of the civilised status of the intervener. Difference, therefore, continues to be an issue across the globe.

For instance, Gilroy's presentation of the migrant in Britain conveys not only the reach of British imperialism but also its failures. Immigrants are unwanted reminders of imperialism. The migrant body arrives in a Britain that offers it generous measures of fewer economic opportunities, denuded working institutions, and subtle but effective institutional racism. Institutional discrimination – a collared politician masking his/her racism more benignly, or heroic populist defense of 'national culture' – masks what used to be overt racism and exclusionism. Multiculturalism becomes a method of micro-managing diverse groups represented by tick-boxes regardless of their wishes. This is so because in most cases, there is a projection of what diverse groups look like and how they should be treated. This, of course, does not diminish Gilroy's defense of the battered image of multiculturalism.

One of the issues militating against multiculturalism, argues Scott (1992:14), is the failure of its theorists and proponents to understand that identity is not natural, that it is not a "matter of biology or history or culture", an inherent "part of one's being", but constructed. People, argues Scott, are not "discriminated against because they are [really] different" but "difference and the salience of different identities are produced by discrimination, a process that establishes the superiority or the typicality or the universality of some in terms of the inferiority or atypicality or particularity of others" (1992:14-15). This agrees with Hall's insight on blackness as "something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found" (1987:45). To historicise identity is to contextualise it within the processes of the production of power and conflicts. Power and conflict are ongoing processes in the globe and difference has been used to fuel them well. The primary texts chosen for this research will be analysed from this understanding.

Since this study utilises literary texts, it is also essential to look at the implications of postcolonial theorisation on creative writing. Works of art and literature are very central in the articulation and performance of diasporic, transitional and postcolonial identities (Abu-Shomar, 2013). Thus, identities and prospects for critical engagements beyond the 'closed' aesthetics of the nation-state narrative seem to be contained in migrant, diasporan literature. Postcolonial discourse, it is argued, "concentrates its energies on 'mixed', 'in-between' texts because they not only signify but seem to encourage and give support to cultural interaction" (Boehmer, 2005:242). This interaction, as Boehmer points out, will remain the article of faith upon which postcolonial criticism will be premised on for a long time to come. While I am

aware of the power and value of this faith, I also intend to reveal cleavages, dissonances and dissensions within texts chosen for this research with an awareness that a text can also be a mode of resistance and may, for that reason, militate against the visions of postcolonial faith. This sense of discrepant attachments, however, may offer a more nuanced reading of differences and subterfuges that in the end do not inhibit the interaction and mixing of cultures. Revealing these discrepant attachments in the texts, however, remains a key objective of my research, not in order to encourage the abandonment of postcolonial visions, but as a way of decoding some of the issues that need to be factored into any postcolonial discourse.

Diasporan literature, it is believed, does not treat reality "as an authoritative end but rather as an ongoing and becoming, and as a continuous process with heteroglossic and polyphonic implications and intentions" (Abu-Shomar, 2013:2). To be postcolonial, a writer has no option but to hybridise, a hybridisation arising from a transition from national rootedness to wanderings and peregrination, and from located writings to writings of 'not quite' and 'in-between'. Energised migrancy is a ubiquitous condition of postcolonial writing especially among writers of once colonised nations. This is why in the post-2000 period, as Boehmer (2005:227) observes, "[t]he generic postcolonial writer is likely to be a cultural traveller, or an 'extra-territorial', than a national." This kind of writer is ex-colonial by birth, "'Third World' in cultural interest, cosmopolitan in almost every other way, she or he works within the precincts of the Western metropolis while at the same time retaining thematic and/or political connections with a national, ethnic, or regional background" (Boehmer, 2005:227).

The enabling conditions for such writing include cultural interaction and diasporic spaces with such standard subjects as cultural interaction and metaphysical collision. A transnational aesthetic, argues Boehmer (2005:227), will, predictably, "itself produce a hotchpotch, a mosaic, a *bricolage*". This mosaic has been celebrated as the emancipation of voices, a technique that disassembles power, "a liberating polyphony that shakes off the authoritarian yoke" (Boehmer, 2005:232). It is a literature that is historically weightless. The migrant writers, being rooted in the land of adoption and retaining memories of the land of birth, have, opening up before them, new cultural encounters that extend creative possibilities. Dislocation, in this case, ceases being an impediment but becomes a stretching of cultural and aesthetic experience. This is the 'freedom' postcolonial writing and theorisations speak about. Straddling many worlds, and emanating from different cultural riches, the migrant novel is said to be restlessly crossing borders and bringing about, in the words of Boehmer, a "busy congruence of disparate cultural forces, usually taken as characteristic of cosmopolitan

narrative" (2005:235) that has succeeded in, like its creator, breaking free from traditional narrative forms.

Straddling many worlds, in which one belongs nowhere, writing becomes the only 'home' available. Writing becomes a venture to both understand the world and survive in it as Nandan (2000:48) points out: "[i]t has become […] not only the enigma of survival, but a way into the world, a solid mandala. Writing, though fragile and vulnerable, is the only home possible." What we understand of the world from this kind of literature arises from this literature's "coherent representation of the lives of disporians, as well as of the global-local nuances of the transitional era" (Abu-Shomar, 2013:8).

While postcoloniality stresses writing as the only 'home' available and the paradigmatic impossibility of creatively, racially, ethnically or nationally returning to one's 'native land', "the essential cultural things (customs, mores, rituals, material modes of production) are eternally threatened by foibles, idiocies, hubris, and universal limits of our human capacity to share space and resources equitably and charitably across lines of simple difference" (Baker, Dovey and Jolly, 1995:1048). Most postcolonial literatures receive much critical acclaim and awards from metropolitan centres (in some cases the writers stay in these), maybe as an example of the west's cultural openness. However, this openness is given here (advances, publicity, prizes) and withheld there (restrictions on immigration or economic aid) (Boehmer, 2005). This is bound to effectively keep, in Boehmer's words, "a cultural map of the world as divided between the richly gifted metropolis and the meagrely endowed margin" (2005:233). True hybrid writing is that which is said to have succeeded in bridging the gap. While a bout of imagination can achieve that, the ability of migrants to bridge that gap remains a traumatic experience with successes and failures because human beings have a limited capacity to share. The point is, the postcolonial vision needs to be possessed but with an awareness of the limits of non-colonising, non-xenophobic cohabitation.

The texts chosen here communicate that difficult position and require recognition. White characters, victims of a specifically post-2000 black nationalism led by Robert Mugabe, still yearn for a Zimbabwean space to which they cannot belong according to the politics of the time.[3] Black characters move out of what patriotic discourse views as 'authentic' Zimbabwean space (Primorac, 2006:7-8) to an 'inauthentic' foreign space, thereby risking being labelled as

[3] On 18 April, 1980, the day Zimbabwe gained formal independence, Robert Mugabe's speech was reconciliatory, calling white people (former beneficiaries of racist Rhodesia) to play a part in the nation-building process. The post-2000 period saw Robert Mugabe reneging on this promise by embarking on a racialised land reform programme in which white-owned farms were usurped and given to 'landless' blacks ostensibly to reverse the misdeeds of colonialism.

sell-outs who no longer belong to the nationalistically imagined community of Zimbabwe. But would they belong to whichever foreign space they go? A *disabling* space is understood here to be referring to a confining space which does not allow one to go far because one is excluded from it or because it is going through various forms of turmoil. An *enabling*, homely space (perceived as foreign land) becomes a likely choice.

Also central to my choice of literary texts is the fact that all of them are borne out of crisis, that is, the politically-motivated post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis. These bodies that are on the move because of, and sometimes into, a precarious existence bring to mind Butler's idea of 'precarious life' which is enunciated in her 2004 publication, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Precarity, which speaks of induced destitution, inequality and disposability, is summed up in one word – derealisation – which, according to Butler, points to the process through which and the condition in which;

> …certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized, that they fit no dominant frame for the human, and that their dehumanization occurs first, at this level, and that this level then gives rise to a physical violence that in some sense delivers the message of dehumanization that is already at work in the culture (Butler, 2004:34).

So the movement that is depicted in these literary texts should be understood at two levels: 1) physical movement from zones of derealisation since it is through derealisation that precarity is reached; 2) metaphoric movement from spaces that represent derealisation. In this case, the movement is in the form of creative writing and thematic concerns that attempt to disfigure the narrative of derealisation that post-2000 Zimbabwean politicking centralised. The subjection of derealised and precarious lives to violence (both physical and symbolic), poverty, death and non-recognition depicted in these texts locates the narratives in crisis spaces and thus the conclusions that will be drawn from this research are locatable within the context of crisis.

This study borrows from Lefebvre's idea of space as socially constructed, a political and conceptual instrument of thought and practice, and also a means of control, domination and authority (Lefebvre, 1974; 1991). The study also utilises Geschiere's idea of *belonging* (2009) and its attendant concepts of *autochthon* (native) and *allochthon* (stranger). For this research, belonging will specifically be understood in terms of identification which is "a feeling of relationship, of being a part of a family or a home, a sense of connectedness" (Reynolds Whyte, 2005:157). More specifically, this study focuses on the processes of inclusion and exclusion that shape characters' sense of belonging to a space, whether foreign or local, writers'

representations of these processes and how characters negotiate their existence in the face of such inclusionary and exclusionary politics. The resurgence of strong racial, ethnic, nationalist and xenophobic exclusionism in a world perceived to be modern and global may represent what Glick-Schiller describes as "the paradox of our time" (1994:1). In such a world, exile cannot be regarded as a smooth process.

Aims

This research analyses selected white- and black-authored post-2000 Zimbabwean narratives.[4] The white-authored narratives include *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* (Catherine Buckle, 2001), *The Last Resort* (Douglas Rogers, 2009), *This September Sun* (Bryony Rheam, 2009) and *Lettah's Gift* (Graham Lang, 2011). Black-authored narratives include *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava, 2009), *An Elegy for Easterly* (Petina Gappah, 2009), *We Need New Names* (NoViolet Bulawayo, 2013) and *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician* (Tendai Huchu, 2014). A collection of short stories, *Writing Lives* (Irene Staunton [Ed.], 2011), with stories by both white and black authors, is also be used. While the stories emanate from the post-2000 period which is the focus of this research, they also represent the concerns of this research in that they grapple with issues of crisis-induced exile, both physical and symbolic, the transgression of physical and symbolic borders in the search for enabling spaces and the consequent grappling with issues of belonging in a globalising world but where, paradoxically, issues of race and identity remain at the fore in determining who "we" are.

These texts reveal various and sometimes contradictory exile complexes that call for critical analysis. These black- and white- authored texts enable a multifaceted study of home and diaspora where, previously, understandings of the term diaspora, in postcolonial discourses, have been limited to formerly colonised people migrating to the Global North.[5]

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[4] While it seems myopic to distinguish between white- and black-authored narratives in a thesis that, as part of its justification, seeks to go beyond these dichotomisations in the canonisation of Zimbabwean literature and deconstruct racial essentialisation in the process, my use of these terms stems from how they are central in the unfolding of Zimbabwean history and the writing and criticism of literature in the same. At the same time, it should be noted that black and white are not just about skin pigmentation but about positioning, and sometimes being positioned, in Zimbabwean history and in Zimbabwean literature and its criticism. Thus my use of these terms is meant to contextualise them within a space-time on which their deployment (as skin pigmentations and as positions) has been made central.

[5] Ella Shohat (1992), for instance, comments on the ambiguous spatio-temporality that imbues the 'post' in 'post-colonial'. The intentions of the users of this term have necessitated convenient ignorance of this ambiguity. Focusing on Global South Diasporic experiences (in the Global North) alone without focusing on Global North Diasporic experiences (in the Global South) limits the scope of postcoloniality and creates the assumption that the

This research is motivated by the acknowledgement that the dialectics of exile are ubiquitous and a more representative approach is needed. I therefore utilise these texts to investigate the depiction of the exile motif that characterises selected white-authored and black-authored texts about Zimbabwe as a diasporan space and also Zimbabwe as a space that forces exits by its citizens to form Zimbabwean diasporas elsewhere. In doing so, I will be able to offer myself the opportunity to describe and explain contradictory exile and spatial complexes between black characters and their white counterparts. Both white and black characters experience space in various ways in line with how the politics of belonging are played out in these spaces. Describing and analysing how both black and white characters experience their diasporas, both physical and metaphorical, will open spaces for more critical discourse on exile and literature in a way that transcends the binarism of Global North and Global South. I also analyse the ambivalent fate of the exiled as they grapple with various conflicting situations in their lives, chief among them being their struggle with issues of belonging to spaces and the dilemma of the choices to return home or remain in exile to revise their definitions of disabling and enabling spaces. What is apparent is that the authors' representations of the ideologies of space, belonging and exile are complemented by particular politico-aesthetic regimes under which they submit themselves. Politico-aesthetic regimes also point to the possibility of the selected texts being both literal and metaphoric enabling and disabling spaces as much as the physical geographies of the depicted characters. This means that the audience targeted by selected writers is both an enabling and disabling space which plays an important role not only in the writers' thematic concerns but also on how they present these issues, that is, their choice of literary tools and strategies.

It is important to note that two of the texts chosen here are autobiographical (*African Tears* and *The Last Resort*) so that the danger of reaching generalisable conclusions derived from factual and fictional narratives is there. However, there is a dynamic that proves to be productive across the boundary of the genres in which the chosen texts are located. The dynamic is that both fictional and autobiographical narratives have a controlled subjectivity and both make deliberate and selective representations based on the motive of the writer. In the words of Howarth (1974:365), "[i]n writing his story [the autobiographical writer] artfully defines, restricts, or shapes that life into a self-portrait – one far different from his original model, resembling life but actually composed and framed as an artful invention." This gives

only people experiencing dialectic tensions of exile are formerly colonised people. The search for enabling spaces cannot be limited to formerly colonised people alone.

the autobiographer the leeway to make him/herself the protagonist of the story and manipulate it to suit motive without necessarily restricting his/her narrative to historical accuracy. This agrees with the observation of Eakin (1985:5) who encourages us to shift

> …our thinking about autobiographical truth [and] accept the proposition that fictions and the fiction-making process are a central constituent of the truth of any life as it is lived and of any art devoted to the presentation of that life. Thus memory ceases to be…merely a convenient repository in which the past is preserved inviolate, ready for the inspection of retrospect at any future date."

Eakin's encouragement is, therefore, based on the belief in the indissoluble link between the "art of memory" and the "art of imagination" (1985:6). This consideration is what allows me to reach conclusions that can be generalised across these genres.

Rationale

Exile is not a new phenomenon to Zimbabwe but what makes the post-2000 period a unique experience in Zimbabwe is the quantity of exiles and the quantity of literature about exile. It is estimated that 3 million or more Zimbabweans are living in the diaspora, and the number should be more now with more children born outside Zimbabwe.[6] Concerning the quantity of literature about exile, one critic is of the view that "the steady outpouring of narratives about leaving Zimbabwe…cries for adequate recognition and evaluation" (Chirere, 2013:*kwaChirere*). Besides these valid observations by Crush and Tevera and Chirere, the criticism of literature in Zimbabwe is still more backward-looking than forward-looking in the sense that many full-volume critical works on Zimbabwean literature still utilise the tradition set by Musaemura Zimunya of grounding any understanding of Zimbabwean literature on colonialism without venturing beyond that.[7] There is need to understand Zimbabwean literature on the basis of postcolonial realities which include disillusionment, migration and globalisation. This is what makes exile literature a worthy pursuit.

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[6] See *Zimbabwe's Exodus* by Crush and Tevera (2010).

[7] *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (1982) criticises Zimbabwean literature (that is, black-authored texts) on the basis of black people's colonial experiences. Subsequent full-volume works (the most recent was written by George Kahari in 2009) still follow this tradition.

What is of critical importance in this research is the inclusion of white writers who sometimes find it difficult to be recognised as Zimbabwean writers by some black Zimbabwean literary critics.[8] Literature by white writers in Zimbabwe has been largely disregarded by Zimbabwean critics who exclude it from the canon of what is called Zimbabwean literature. Many critical works from Zimbabwe do not include white authors and their definition of Zimbabwean literature limits these studies to literary texts authored by black Zimbabweans. While critiquing Doris Lessing's works, (Chennells, 1990) points out that the cultural nationalism of literary criticism in Zimbabwe criticised Lessing on the grounds that her works fail to imagine the Zimbabwean nation.[9] The white Zimbabwean novel, for ideological reasons contained in the cultural nationalist literary tradition, has been studied by fewer researchers from Zimbabwe.[10] This study is important because it brings both black and white writers together and uses their exile narratives to construct an inclusive understanding of the politics of belonging to Zimbabwe and the world.

Finally, this research places itself at the centre of critical discourses that have emerged in the age of globalisation which view nationalism, national identity, race and national borders as concepts that have atrophied because of modernity. However it is apparent that transnational identity, multiculturalism, postcoloniality and hybridity of identities are also being affirmed in the midst of shibboleths of the past that exile literatures confirm: race, nationalism, national identity and national borders still matter in the politics of belonging. Time and again, human beings seem to fall back to these parochial paradigms to justify who belongs and who does not. In an age of massive migration, the question of who belongs and who does not certainly needs

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[8] The tradition of literary criticism was absent in Rhodesia. White writers of the Rhodesian era were actually untheorised writers. The first full volume of critical work, *Those Years of Drought and Hunger*, emerged in 1982 and was written by a black Zimbabwean, Musaemura Zimunya, who focused on black Zimbabwean literature written during the colonial period and this in itself was confirmation of the belief that Zimbabwean literature in English is literature published by black Zimbabweans. The tradition is followed by subsequent critical publications on Zimbabwean literature in English. All of them, including *Those Years of Drought and Hunger*, begin with an exploration of colonialism and the evils of white settlerism and therefore locate Zimbabwean literature in the confines of marginalised black people and not white people. What is, therefore, called the Zimbabwean novel is the 'black' Zimbabwean novel.

[9] Chennells' observation captures the critical apathy induced by the ideological orientation of cultural nationalism in Zimbabwe that constricts the borders of what can be called Zimbabwean literature.

[10] Kaarsholm (1991) attempts this in the study of war novels from Rhodesia and Zimbabwe in 'From Decadence to Authenticity and Beyond: Fantasies and Mythologies of War in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, 1965–1985,' in *Cultural Struggle and Development in Southern Africa* but the focus of the book was not literary criticism so that this choice was only made because it was definitely convenient for the publication. The 2005 *Versions* (Muponde and Primorac) attempts to bridge this gap by inviting authors who looked at Zimbabwean literature in its multivalent groupings that included black and white groupings. *Versions*, as its name suggests, is actually a reaction to this absence of recognition of other versions of Zimbabwean literature in the criticism of literature in Zimbabwe and in the process a rejection of a collection of classifications imported from Rhodesia as the central organising principles of Zimbabwean literature in English.

close scrutiny and literary texts chosen for this research are important in analysing this paradox of our time.

Background

The History of Migration in Zimbabwe

One of the most well-known migrations in the history of migration in Zimbabwe is the pre-colonial Ndebele migration into Zimbabwe in the 1830s which was a result of the Zululand *mfecane*. Mzilikazi's Khumalo moved across the Limpopo into what is called modern-day Zimbabwe and claimed the south western part of the country which is now called Matebeleland (Rasmussen, 1978; Etherington, 2001). The most interesting aspect of the settling of the Ndebeles in Zimbabwe is how they finally came to be regarded as *belonging* by the Shonas they found inhabiting the land. It is important to remember that the Ndebele had broken away from the Zulu Kingdom and conquered the Shona less than half a century before. Technically, they were perceived as not belonging but they could be forgiven because the "settlers" had been equally ruthless to both ethnic groups.[11]

The second wave of migration, soon after the Ndebele one, involved European settlers. Theirs culminated in the most told history of Zimbabwe – colonialism. Between the 1880s and 1890s, the British South Africa Company consolidated its imminent conquest of the lands of the Ndebeles and Shonas through a series of treaties and concessions (especially with Lobengula) that were backed by a Royal Charter, the Queen of Britain's own endorsement of the company's intentions to colonise the land. The company began its rule in 1890 when its Pioneer Column marched to Fort Salisbury (now Harare). The country was formally named Southern Rhodesia in 1898 after the defeat of the Ndebele and Shona in the 1896 uprisings.

By 1980, when Zimbabwe gained its independence, migration had become institutionalised. According to Pasura (2011:148), "[d]efining who should move, when, why and where was part of the Rhodesian government's efforts to control and exploit people, and this may be applied to the whole of southern Africa." Mobility was racially managed and

[11] What is called *First Chimurenga* in Zimbabwean historiography is an amalgamation of two seemingly unrelated uprisings against white settlers by black people. The first was the Anglo-Ndebele war, which the Ndebele lost. The second was the Anglo-Shona war, which the Shona lost. Therefore, both the Ndebele and the Shona found themselves with a common enemy, which conveniently made the belonging-ness of the Ndebele less difficult.

produced a generation of migrant worker-peasants among black people. The *wenera*[12] generation emerges from this scenario (Ranger, 1970; Mlambo, 2002). This type of migration involved men who left their families in Rhodesia because "the strict influx control laws prevented their families from moving with or subsequently joining these migrant workers" (Adepoju, 2003:7). They were housed in single-sex hostels whose conditions were appalling and became breeding grounds for crime and violence (Adepoju, 2003). The South African gold mining industry, then a racially-controlled industry run by a minority and worked by the majority, was built on massive supplies of low-paid black African labour. The high levels of migration at this point "are the product partly of a shifting macro politico-economic history of colonial taxation systems and decline of communal area economies [and] inter-state agreements for migrant labour to South Africa's mines…as well as deeper pre-colonial histories of shared language and ethnicity" (Manamere, 2014:92). But, as Manamere points out, the decisions to migrate go beyond economics:

> As the historiography of regional migrant labour has elaborated, cultural life and economic contexts are enmeshed in complex ways, such that the subjectivities of migrants themselves, the aspirations that they express and the socio-cultural life in both sending and receiving contexts reflects an entanglement of cultural and economic domains… From the late nineteenth century, many young rural men in…Zimbabwe came to see their movement across the border as a necessary 'rite of passage', and step to marriage and social adulthood… As Native Commissioners observed in relation to Chiredzi's Shangaan labour migrants, for a male Shangaan youth to become a 'man' he must have "rubbed shoulders with workers in South Africa", braving the dangers of the journey and the hardships of migrant life in the township compounds. On return, the migrant could demonstrate the knowledge and assets that bore witness to his status and achievements, making him marriageable and fulfilling the demands of provider that are central to the status of adult masculinity and the roles of husband and father (2014:192).

These migrant workers, popularly known as *majubheki*,[13] usually returned to rural Southern Rhodesia with enviable (in the context) amounts of money, and other enviable luxuries like bicycles and suits. Being a mine worker, therefore, became enviable and a source of a higher social status back home. During the war, being transported by air to the mines even improved the already higher social status.

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[12] The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (also known as WNLA or simply '*Wenera*') was a recruiting agency set up by the South African apartheid regime for migrant workers from the Southern African region.

[13] Usually, South Africa is simply referred to as *Jubheki*, or *Joza*, by Zimbabweans in reference to Johannesburg or Jo'burg, one of the most popular cities of South Africa in which most Zimbabwean migrants are found.

Among these *majubheki* were others who chose not to return and eventually sought to belong to South Africa by marrying among South Africans. In doing so, they were creating spaces for themselves. This means for these migrant labourers, their place of work had become their home, but that home had to be created; the space they eventually called home had to be produced through marriage. These migrants were called *zvichoni* (those who have gone for good) because they lost contact with their relatives in Rhodesia.

Another wave of migration involved those seeking educational opportunities outside the Rhodesian colonial system. This was a generation of university-educated black Rhodesians or those black Rhodesians seeking university education outside Rhodesia. Theirs was not just a quest for tertiary education; it was also an escape of sorts. For instance, Lucifer in Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1975) is going overseas in search of education. The trip comes at a time when Lucifer is disenchanted with a home (his home village Manyene and Rhodesia) from which he feels alienated. His quest is not an innocent quest for knowledge, but it is a quest for an enabling space, a space that would lend him agency to cause something to happen in his life. Lucifer, in a way, becomes an archetypical representation of the generations of the 60s and 70s who went to foreign lands using education as the magic word to escape the colonial space called Rhodesia. These recipients of colonial education began to regard their future as lying somewhere else. They were like George Lamming's characters in *Water with Berries* (1971): "From the earliest discovery of ambition [the West Indian emigrants] had realised that their future would have to be found elsewhere. Childhood was a warning; and school was a further proof. From the beginning they had been educated for escape" (Lamming, 1971:69).

In the 60s and 70s, most black Zimbabweans who migrated to Britain, had no intentions of settling there permanently. Most were academics who had received scholarships to go and study in Britain and others were political refugees. The 'myth' of a pilgrimage back to the place of origin was then a common feature of diaspora discourse. Soon after independence, the discourse of returning home was very popular. Olley Maruma's *Coming Home* (2007) is a pertinent example. However, there are some who practically chose not to return, uncertain of the promise of independence.

There were others who also migrated out of the country to come back as combatants in the second *Chimurenga.* These migrated to Mozambique, China, Tanzania, Zambia, Russia and other countries that were helping black nationalists who were fighting against the Rhodesian forces at the time. In terms of Zimbabwean nationalist politics, these are the most

(if not only) eulogised migrants. They are not only called patriots; their migration even earned them the most used title in Zimbabwe's politics of belonging: 'sons of the soil' (autochthons).

Independence brought its own forms of migration. Blacks were moving in, not only into the country but also into the suburbs that were previously occupied by white people. Whites were moving out, not only out of the country but also out of the suburbs that were suffering an influx of eager black Zimbabweans. Even at this point, black labour migrants continued to trek down South where they not only offered their labour in the South African mines and farms but also integrated themselves into South African communities through marriage or the lawful or unlawful acquisition of citizenship (Sisulu, Moyo and Tshuma, 2007:554). Others continued to regard themselves as citizens of Zimbabwe and therefore came back occasionally or sent remittances back home.

The *Gukurahundi* massacres,[14] however, were a prophetic prologue to the politics that would define Zimbabwe, where neither black nor white mattered much. It witnessed the migration of both white and black refugees, about 4 000 to 5 000, to Europe, South Africa and Botswana (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger, 2000:192, 195-197). Most of the black migrants were from the Matebeleland and Midlands provinces who were feeling the heat of the militantly exclusionary and violent politics of the new dispensation.

The 90s, the years of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), also witnessed the out-migration of skilled and semi-skilled Zimbabweans out of the country to Botswana, South Africa, United States, Australia and the U.K.[15] The severe hardships brought about by ESAP motivated the migration of many professionals especially teachers, nurses and doctors. It is also the same period that saw a rise in female cross-border traders to South Africa and Botswana because of their comparatively successful economies in the region and proximity to Zimbabwe.

The above-mentioned migrations involved, in the case of black Zimbabweans, relatively small numbers of migrants who were pre-dominantly male and young. In terms of scale, the post-2000 wave saw an unparalleled, exceptional level of migration of the young, middle-aged and old, males and females of all skin colours, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled,

[14] *Gukurahundi* was a militarily-executed crushing of perceived dissidents in the Midlands and Matebeleland areas by Robert Mugabe's Korean-trained Fifth Brigade (which was known as *Gukurahundi*) in the early eighties soon after the independence of Zimbabwe on 18 April, 1980. The death toll caused by this act is estimated to be at around 20 000.

[15] ESAP was a neo-liberal economic policy developed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international organisations like the World Bank to be used to treat those economies that were thought to be in bad health in order to replace rigid economic policies with more liberal ones for the purpose of economic growth and growth of the private sector. The results of these policies in Zimbabwe were largely negative. Pursuing the reasons at this juncture would be too digressive.

legal and illegal and every kind of migrant that Zimbabwe's situation could conjure up. In the early 2000s, the migration of suddenly landless former white landowners and their dependants was more visible. After 2005 however, especially after the militarily executed *Operation Murambatsvina*[16] and electoral violence, the numbers of migrants moving out of Zimbabwe increased.

In 2008, the estimated number of Zimbabweans living outside amounted to around 5,4 million Zimbabweans (Chemhere, 2017). The number should have gone up by now especially given the fact that the level of migration continues to increase without any signs of abatement and also because (in the South African case) it is often undocumented. The exceptional increase in the levels of migration from Zimbabwe to all parts of the world makes diasporisation a very recent phenomenon in Zimbabwe. Prior to 2000, there was no conspicuous Zimbabwean diaspora to merit a lot of scholarly attention. The post-2000 decade, however, has seen massive out-migration of black Zimbabweans, mostly to South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Given the fact that the most consistent recipients of migrants are South Africa and UK, it is imperative that I look at the factors that make these two ready destinations for migrants. The relaxation of the protocol on migration in SADC as a region and between Zimbabwe and South Africa has made South Africa emerge as the new centre of economic attraction, not only for Zimbabwean migrants, but for many migrants from the region (Akokpari, 2000:79). South Africa is, by far, the largest recipient of Zimbabwean migrants due to its proximity to Zimbabwe and a relatively well-performing economy in the region (Muzondidya, 2008:2). In fact, according to Muzondidya (2008), Zimbabweans contribute the largest percentage of foreign nationals living in South Africa. Its proximity to Zimbabwe makes it the most suitable destination for those without passports who are known as border jumpers. Besides, the 'almost-everyone-is-going-there' syndrome certainly plays a part in the continued migration to South Africa. The continued encounter between those who have gone to South Africa and those who stayed behind, especially at Christmas, is likely to be accompanied by new migrants in January of the following week.

While some have gone to South Africa in search of work and occasionally come back to Zimbabwe, others have completely relocated with their families to South Africa, most particularly those whose movement is motivated by political reasons. For those who have been granted refugee status or asylum, going home is no longer easy and their stay in South Africa

[16] This was a militarily-executed campaign to rid the city of perceived illegal structures. After its execution, many people were left homeless. The operation, in fact, created a humanitarian crisis.

borders on permanence. The growing tide of Zimbabweans legally and illegally crossing into South Africa has led to the tightening of security along South Africa's borders and an increase in the number of deportations. This means for 'border jumpers', occasionally coming back home to face the same ordeals of jumping the border when going back is not a very palatable option. This means spending more time in South Africa. The fortification of South Africa by the crocodile-infested Limpopo, across which illegal immigrants sometimes swim (Rutherford and Lincoln, 2007), and a 200 km stretch of electrified fence and the restrictive immigration measures controlling the influx of labour migrants means that those who manage to sneak into South Africa would rather brave this hostile environment than come back to an uncertain home.

In the case of the UK, the irony lies in Mugabe's statement: "Blair keep your England and I will keep my Zimbabwe" (cited in Mangena and Mupondi, 2011:57). Yet figures suggest that by 2010, an estimated 200 000 black Zimbabweans had found home in the UK (Pasura, 2010). The attraction of the UK does not only lie in its economy but also in the political safety (by virtue of its distance from Zimbabwe and its oppositional stance to the Zimbabwean government) it offers ostensible political migrants, possibly from the main opposition party in Zimbabwe, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and other alleged antagonists of the state. Zimbabwean migration to UK offers an interesting case study because it has a longitudinal element which is apparent in the three waves of migration identified by Bloch: "[t]he return migration of the white Zimbabwean minority after independence; migration following the massacres in Matabeleland in the 1980s; and, most recently, the migration of mostly black Zimbabweans, who comprise 98 per cent of the population, for economic and/or political reasons" (2008:4).

Getting to the UK is achieved through various means which Pasura (2011:150) calls "routes". These include "the visitor route, the asylum route, the student route, the work-permit route and the dual nationality or ancestral route" (Paura, 2011:150). Most of the migrants are documented. A few used to be documented but are now not. The transition from documentation to lack thereof is most visible among those who arrived in UK after 1997 (Pasura, 2011). This was because of tighter and restrictive British immigration policies. In the words of (Ranger, 2005:411), "[i]t was no longer good enough to turn up at the airport, as nearly all the asylum-seekers had done, with a passport and a plane ticket." This means the formation of the Zimbabwean diaspora, like the Jewish and Armenian diasporas, was a product of traumatic and catastrophic processes.

The enormity of Zimbabwean migration to the UK can be captured in the figures of those who applied for asylum in the UK. In fact, 'asylum-seeker' became a derogatory term

coming from the mouths of white British citizens. Between 1996 and 2006, about 19,370 Zimbabweans had applied for asylum in UK (Pasura, 2011). From 1997 onwards, refugee and asylum statistics reveal an increase in applications for asylum. This shows that Zimbabweans were realising that 'asylum' was the magic word to get into the UK. However, with time, 'asylum' lost its magical appeal and prospects for migrants in the UK became "increasingly differentiated by hardened legal barriers, restricted access to asylum, and filtering by selected skills" (McGregor, 2008:466). This 'filtering' provides an interesting dimension for the study of the paradox of exile in the sense that exile is not open to all. There are instances where exile experiences defy existing theories. For instance, one of the most recurring accusations against the perceived assumptions of postcoloniality is that it is theorised by scholars who are welcome in most parts of the globe, in which case, their theorisations only capture their own experiences and not those of the ordinary, unschooled migrant. One of those voices is Zeleza's. Writing a critique against Said's theorisation in *Out of Place* (1999) and *Reflections on Exile* (2003), Zeleza (2005:10) points out that Said's exiles are "cosmopolitan intellectuals"; the rest (who are not writers, artists, intellectuals, political activists or chess players but are, in the most extreme case "large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance" (Said, 1999:181) are phony, undeserving of the true pathos and majesty of exile experience (Zeleza, 2005:10). Zeleza's objections against Said and most postcolonial migration theorists is that they are elitist and clearly show "strong class biases" (2005:15). Where would we place Chikwava's narrator in *Harare North* and the rest who are in irregular circumstances? He (Chikwava's narrator) certainly does not make the cut of a cosmopolitan intellectual of Chikwava's stature. Chances are that the UK would welcome Chikwava in a friendlier manner than his narrator.

The 'crisis' and migration in the post-2000 decade

What is important here is the contextualisation of the exploration of the crisis within the scope of this research. One of the most central events during this period is the land reform programme which was premised on race and belonging. The land reform programme should be understood, in the context of this research, as one of the most indispensable tools in the exclusionary power politics of Zimbabwe's post-2000 period. Delgado (1989:2438) argues that "[t]he dominant group justifies its power with stories [and] stock explanations that construct reality in ways that maintain their privilege." What we have here are nation-based ideas of race that have degenerated into rudimentary and retrogressive practices of cultural nationalism,

informed more by myths than by social enquiry for the purpose of positioning and [dis]positioning, inclusion and exclusion, belonging and [un]belonging. Therefore, what we call 'patriotic narrative' is a narrative endorsed by ZANU—PF to take the position of sanctioned truth.[17]

There are many reasons given for the land reform: reversing colonial imbalances, for instance. When it comes to the crisis, Magosvongwe (2010), in line with patriotic discourse, refuses to call it a crisis. Whose crisis, she would ask? According to whose definition? Raftopoulos is one of the scholars whose essays in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008* (Mlambo and Raftopoulos, 2009) do not question whether it was a crisis or not and goes on to look for the origins of the crisis itself. Magosvongwe (2010) questions Raftopoulos (and all scholars who think like him) on why, in his search for the origins of the crisis, he trivialises matters of paramount importance and foregrounds the trivial ones. One of those issues is the land redistribution. It is worth noting that while some would call the land reform with another name, say 'chaotic land invasions', Magosvongwe has chosen to call it "land redistribution" (2010:7). Now that land has featured in this thread, it is also worth noting that if we follow Magosvongwe's line of thought closely, we will arrive at a point where she would declare that the crisis (if we can call it that, for convenience) is embedded in the historical land question that began in the late 19th century. Magosvongwe is a literary critic whose analysis fits perfectly within the cultural nationalistic critical schema developed in Zimbabwe as the most dominant literary critical theory. This theory also fits perfectly into ZANU—PF's nationalist rhetoric that casts white settlers as Zimbabwe's only problem.

A lot has been written concerning the 'Zimbabwean crisis'. The most common trajectory in these studies is concerned with the causes, manifestations and effects of the crisis. The crisis of the late 1990s to the post-2000 decade manifested itself mostly in the form of severe scarcity of food, uncontainable inflation, a practically comatose economy, unemployment, underpaid labour, severe brain drain, the general disintegration of infrastructure and social amenities and serious electoral and political violence. The causes of this situation "fall desperately — and untidily too — between an oppositional view and the establishment/government view" (Chirere, 2010:*kubatana.net*).

[17] Ranger gives the flagpole elements of the patriotic narrative in Zimbabwe by focusing on how ZANU—PF captured the writing of history by giving a monolithic version of it on TV, radio and state-controlled newspapers. This monolithic version includes the heroic acts of guerillas and the brutalities of colonialism but omits the brutalities of the ZANU—PF regime (Ranger, 2004).

There is the 'patriotic' version and the 'oppositional' version as far as this crisis is concerned. The patriotic version (also called the 'patriotic narrative') is largely a statement of the problem endorsed by the state. The crisis, according to patriotic history, is the result of "illegally imposed" sanctions which were imposed because, according to the patriotic narrative, Zimbabwe had embarked on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme to reverse historical, racially-motivated colonial land imbalances that began with the usurpation of the right to own land from black people to white people. This version of 'patriotic' history does not cast ZANU—PF as the villain but as a victim of international political machinations. The issue of 'targeted sanctions' therefore becomes central to this version of the 'crisis' as explained by patriotic narratives. Where people accuse the ruling party of marginalising its people, the party would accuse the relentless west of marginalising Zimbabwe in the fraternity of equals.

However, as we have already demonstrated, this version of history, coming from ZANU—PF, has failed to convince some scholars on the basis of ZANU—PF's alleged unequalled edition of history, memory and commemoration for hegemonic intentions. Thus, for some, the origins of the crisis can only be traced back to ZANU—PF. This is the view that is held by, mainly, the Morgan Tsvangirai faction of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC—T). They see the 'crisis' as a manifestation of another crisis, the 'crisis of governance'. For them, the ZANU—PF government has failed dismally to be at the centre of the administration that runs the affairs of Zimbabwe. This view is what we can safely call the oppositional view.

The blaming of 'foreigners' who have become citizens is not unique to Zimbabwe and did not begin and end with Zimbabwe. Hitler's annihilation of Jews, Idi Amin's expulsion of Indians, or South Africa's Zulu King Zwelithini's comments that are believed to have fuelled xenophobia in 2015, are case studies of how being cast as a 'foreigner' (an allochtonous citizen) can become a curse.[18] Thus, the late 1990s saw race becoming a spurious, yet indispensable, political asset for ZANU—PF. This was necessitated by ZANU—PF's waning political fortunes especially in the wake of the failed and economically and socially disastrous adjustment programme that left the majority of citizens worse off after it than before it. ZANU—PF needed a scapegoat, an agenda that would catalyse its continued hold on power.

[18] King Goodwill Zwelithini's public utterances (2015) in which he compares foreigners to lies who must pack and leave the country are cited as examples of anti-foreigner statements by public figures that betray the lack of progress South Africa has made in dealing with xenophobic sentiments and actions since the erupting of such in 2008. Being identified as a foreigner, therefore, becomes a curse in such instances. Of course, one has to take into account the history of race as a colonial invention as well, that is, not all foreigners occupy the same space in the global racial imagination, and have the same access to means of escape.

Race provided that agenda. It has become a vital aspect in ZANU—PF's hegemonic infiltration of the lives of black Zimbabweans. In a country where even boarding a commuter omnibus is a highly politicised act, race has become the main mediator of the lives of Zimbabweans, the most ready explanation for their plight, and the mediator of a future of sovereignty that only ZANU—PF with its 'patriotic' anti-racist stance can give. Morrison (1992:63) sees race as having a "utility beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely embedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before." This observation best captures the Zimbabwean situation during the post-2000 era.

A comparison of 1980 and 2000 would reveal glaring disparities between Mugabe's earlier conciliatory approach and the later racial intolerance of the 2000s. Once a darling of the west and favourite of philanthropists, Mugabe's transformation into a serious anti-white 'revolutionary' is an object of wonder to many scholars. How did such a transformation come about?

In terms of opposition, ZANU—PF cannot be said to have encountered any real shock prior to 2000. It is actually believed that in the first decade, in those years of euphoria, almost everyone was ZANU—PF. The first real shock that ZANU—PF experienced was its loss in the constitutional referendum of 2000. The referendum was on a constitutional amendment that would have greatly expanded the powers of the president. The "No" vote, which constituted a 57% margin, was not expected by ZANU—PF. With the elections around the corner, ZANU—PF got a warning that it could really lose the elections. Any facade of democracy, that manifested itself in the 2000 referendum, was systematically torn down to thwart any threat of any challenge to ZANU—PF's power. According to Coltart *(*2007:*davidcoltart.com)*

> Since the 2000 Referendum Zimbabwe has experienced the systematic tearing down of the elaborate façade of democracy carefully constructed by Zanu PF in the first two decades of its rule; in direct correlation to its sense of vulnerability Zanu PF started gradually eroding civil liberties. In doing so Zanu PF has acted reactively rather than in accordance with a deliberate, well calculated plan, implemented in accordance with a well-defined ideological vision. The only underlying premise has been the need to do whatever is necessary to hold on to power. Zanu PF has achieved this by employing two broad tactics, firstly by attacking whatever institution is deemed to support the opposition, and secondly by maintaining its core support through the acquisition of assets for the benefit of its supporters.

Therefore, following Coltart's reasoning, the land reform was not a proactive programme initiated by ZANU—PF; it was a desperate attempt to benefit its supporters and retain their

support, mainly the war veterans, who were a strategic group that could determine the direction of votes. At the same time, it was punishment against white farm owners and their black farm workers for voting "NO". Destroying the livelihood of this population would not only reduce opposition but would also destroy opposition funding. But in order to give such a move legitimacy, a racist discourse had to be employed in which the politics of belonging was invoked.

The referendum proved that it was possible for ZANU—PF to lose power. The only way to retain it was through violence. Thus, the parliamentary elections of June 2000 and the presidential elections of June 2002 were marred by violence. In fact, the Land Reform Programme (some prefer land invasions) coincided with the elections of 2000 so that no effective opposition could be garnered from people who were on the verge of or already losing their farms. There were reports of murder of white farmers and opposition activists. When farmers and MDC approached the courts for redress, they found the judiciary already taken care of by the ruling party. This control of the judiciary could be seen in what Coltart (2007:*davidcoltart.com*) describes below:

> By mid-2001 the Chief Justice, Antony Gubbay, had been hounded out of office and replaced by a judge sympathetic to government. The original judgement obtained by the CFU was reversed and the newly constituted Supreme Court rubberstamped government's blatantly unlawful land reform programme. During the same period two Acts were passed by Parliament, the Rural Land Occupiers (Protection from Eviction) Act and The Land Acquisition Amendment Act to give "legal" cover to those in illegal occupation of farms.

Thereafter, any electoral challenges brought by the opposition were brought as a legal formality when in actual fact nothing would come out of them. This meant that in matters of political import, many people saw it as futile to legally challenge the ruling party. This would pose a serious security threat to many.

During this period, the discourse of the enemy was revived. The discourse of who "we" are took centre stage and the politics of belonging and not belonging became a contested space with ZANU—PF, having the most dominant hegemony, setting the pace. While opposition media saw farm invaders as 'thugs' and 'criminals', official media saw them as 'sons of the soil claiming their birth-right'. Race played a central role in Mugabe's narrative. He saw white people as Britain's 'kith and kin' who by inference did not belong to Zimbabwe. 'Our people' were black Zimbabweans, 'children of the soil', descendants of Nehanda.

However, it also important to note that in post-independence Zimbabwe politicking, the person who does not belong sometimes does not need to be white; the person who does not belong is the one who stands in the way. This means opposing ZANU—PF or dreaming of laying one's hands on the national cake without the blessing of ZANU—PF is synonymous with standing in the way. The exclusionary politics of ZANU—PF, therefore, set its sights on those of black skin popularly known as sell-outs. The discourse of the sell-out is as old as Zimbabwe's *chimurengas* and being labelled one is tantamount to treason of the highest order. Being a sell-out is commonly referred to as siding with whites against black aspirations which are said to be represented by ZANU—PF. Yet, Zimbabwe's "politics of suffering and smiling"[19] indicates that in the circus that is sanctified as revolution, being a sell-out has to do with opposing power hunger. Caught in such a circus, with all the ingredients of a disabling space and acts of exclusion, many Zimbabweans sought an escape route in migration.

Literature Review

This section reviews existing literature at three levels that are central to this thesis. The first level is the evolution of the exile motif in Zimbabwean literature in English. The second level is concerned with how the politics of exclusion and inclusion also manifests in how Zimbabwean writers, both black and white, have gone about the process of creating and criticising narratives through mutual exclusions thereby perpetuating the black/white taxonomy through which Zimbabwean literature is created and criticised. This is important especially in the study of the politics of space and belonging. The third level is concerned with how the primary texts have been analysed by critics especially with regard to the issues of exile (both physical and symbolic), space and belonging. Lastly, I will demonstrate the kinds of gaps that this study will fill in the existing literature concerning the issues under study.

The evolution of the exile leit-motif in Zimbabwean Literature

As early as the 1970s, Zimbabwean writers in English were already using the exile motif in their writings in which the central characters would respond to a crisis in their homeland by physically or psychologically exiling themselves. The most notable of these

[19] These words form part of the title of Patrick Chabal's *Africa: the Politics of Suffering and Smiling* (2009).

writers are Charles Mungoshi (*Waiting for the Rain* [1975]) and Dambudzo Marechera (*House of Hunger* [1978]). This is the period that inspired Zimunya's ground-breaking critical work, *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (1982), which was a comprehensive and first-ever analysis of black Zimbabwean literature in English by a black Zimbabwean. The analysis of fiction in *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* is based on the belief that there was colonially-induced hunger among Zimbabwe. Thus, in analysing those years, Zimunya (1982:4) says, "[t]he absence of freedom and happiness (for blacks in colonial Rhodesia), the destruction of culture that ensued, alien domination and the consequent loss of identity caused something metaphorically akin to drought." Zhuwarara (2001:14) captures the central cause of exile in these texts when he says that the pre-independence texts of Mungoshi and Marechera represent "a generation that was born into a racially-tortured era with its attendant insecurities, anxieties, humiliations and complexes which gave rise to a mood of despair and bitterness crystallised into a deep sense of exile from the land which, according to tradition, has the capacity to renew life and nourish growth both physically and spiritually." Therefore, the racially-tortured colonial era of Zimbabwe is the setting of these two important texts in Zimbabwe's literary history and both physical and psychological exile are central to these texts. Thus, when the central character in *The House of Hunger* says, "I got my things and left" (Marechera, 1978:1), he is expressing an exilic sensibility central to the characters of the literature of this period by black Zimbabweans in a way that reminds one of the popular endings of such Caribbean texts like Lamming's *In the Castle of my Skin* (1953) or Naipaul's *Miguel Street* (1959).[20] What these Zimbabwean pre-1980 publications do not afford us is the chance to follow the central character to exile beyond the physical borders of Rhodesia. This is the gap narratives from 2000 and onwards tend to fill.

Independence encouraged a plethora of writings which began with stories about the war and the need for it followed by the celebratory mood of the 80s. Novels about war that quickly come to mind are *The Non-believer's Journey* (Stanely Nyamufukudza, 1981), *Harvest of Thorns* (Simmer Chinodya, 1989) and *Echoing Silences* (Alexander Kanengoni, 1997). Unlike their counterparts who wrote in Shona and celebrated the war and even foretold a glorious future of national sovereignty and prosperity (*Zvairwadza Vasara* [Gonzo Habakuk Musengezi, 1984]; (*Zvaida Kushinga* [Charles Makari, 1985]; *Mutunhu una Mago* [Vitalis

[20] In these two narratives, the narrator ends his account of growing up in the Caribbean with his departure from what he had known as home.

Nyawaranda, 1985]; *Gukurahundi* [Munashe Pesanai, 1985][21] and many other Shona war novels or novels about war), these writers did not 'glorify' the war and they certainly did not 'glorify' the reasons for which it was fought. In fact, they seem to have preferred the theme of post-colonial disillusionment that Marechera explored when he wrote *The House of Hunger* (1978).

There is also the 1981 poetry collection, *And Now the Poets Speak* (edited by Musaemura Zimunya and Mudereri Kadhani). The poetry collection is euphoric. The title itself implies that the poetic voices that had been repressed (imagined away) for all those years of colonial repression have finally been unleashed, not against the new government, but in celebration of the new black rule. This is the most hopeful depiction of independence in Zimbabwean poetry. Thereafter, the affirmation of hope is difficult to find in Zimbabwean literary texts in English. Chirere (2010:*kubatana.net*), understandably, bemoans the disappearance of hope in Zimbabwean poetry. He says, "[m]y worry though with Zimbabwean poetry since *And Now the Poets Speak* of 1981 is the prevalence of melancholy. Our poets are yet to find an idiom that redeems regardless of the well-known woes." One might look at this collection with a little bit of nostalgia. It sounds like a poetic symphony – poetic voices harmoniously blending in an anthem of celebration never heard before among black Zimbabweans except on 18 April 1980 when the country got its independence. Beyond that, Zimbabwean poets seem to be obsessed with despair and disillusionment.

An inventory of poetry collections that came after *And Now the Poets Speak* will reveal the origins of Chirere's worry. While Chirere expresses worry about the melancholy in Zimbabwean texts and poetry, he does not profess to be free from that same melancholy. For instance, his short stories in *No More Plastic Balls* (edited by Clement Chihota and Robert Muponde, 2000) carry that trademark melancholy he is worried about. The texts that characterise the first decade of Zimbabwe do well in supporting this standpoint. These include poetry anthologies like *Red Hills of Home* (Chenjerai Hove, 1984) and *On the Road Again* (Freedom Nyamubaya, 1985). These poetry collections fall within a Zimbabwean post-independence period characterised by despair, sadness and pessimism. By the time Hove wrote *Bones* (1988), the feelings of betrayal Hove had as a sensitive writer had been crystallised into an array of characters neglected by a post-colonial government made up of flamboyant personnel while those who fought for the land and for whom the war was ostensibly fought fail

[21] Shona novelists seem to have internalised the art of collusion bequeathed them by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau while some novelists who write in English continue with the subversive tradition that was perfected during the colonial period through outside publishing.

to find solace in the new dispensation. This just demonstrates how the local space might have already developed into a crisis-ridden one in the eyes of the writers so that by the time the post-2000 decade arrives, the characters they create are more outward-looking, if not physically but psychologically.

The second decade of independent Zimbabwe is relatively silent although a few poetry and short story collections found their way out of publishing houses. The most dominant voice during this period is Chenjerai Hove with his poetry collections, *Rainbows in the Dust* (1998) and *Blind Moon* (2003), both of which are scathing attacks on the government. Hove throws away all self-censorship for a more direct approach that many believe is the reason for his protracted exile until his death in 2015. Another poetry collection to emerge during this period is Thomas Bvuma's *Every Stone that Turns* (1999). Bvuma, for instance, is an ex-guerrilla. Like the late Freedom Nyamubaya's *On the Road Again*, this collection has, as its central theme, the problems of post-colonial Zimbabwe being caused by failure of local leadership and the evil machinations of foreigners, especially western foreigners. Bvuma writes like an ex-guerrilla in this collection. The hope he wants to portray in this collection, against the apparent contradictions of independence, is consistent with the (especially post-2000) function of the war veterans in acting violently at the behest of the ZANU—PF government in its bid to violently take farms in the name of completing an ostensibly uncompleted revolutionary process. Thus, Bvuma's hope sounds conceited and comes as a surprise. In fact, when he justifies the problems faced by the country in the second decade by saying under every stone that turns there are things to be dealt with – meaning that each country has its own problems – one is left without doubt as to the kind of 'education' Bvuma has received.

Some short story collections also emerged during this period, the most notable being Muponde and Chihota's *No More Plastic* Balls (2000), a collection of stories whose characters are trying to come to terms with post-colonial economic, social, political and moral decadence. However, the most notable feature of the second decade is the conspicuous absence of writings of the quantity that characterised the 80s. This lull is obviously not replicated in writings in the vernacular with the most prominent publications being *Masimba* (edited by Chiedza Musengezi, 1996), a Zimbabwe Women Writers project, *Mapenzi* (Ignatius Mabasa, 1999) and a few others. What seems very common among these though is that they seem to skirt politically sensitive issues. *Masimba*, a Zimbabwe Women Writers project, centralises gender issues. The most prominent Shona novel to take post-independence ambivalences head-on is *Chakwesha* (Herbert Chimhundu, 1991). Otherwise, most novels in the vernacular continued with the sanctimonious preaching established by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau. The lull on

the literary front was inevitable because "there was enough in the post-war atmosphere to encourage active self-restriction" (Kaarsholm, 2005:4). Another notable feature of this decade is the absence of exile in the thematic concerns of the literature. This was to change in the post-2000 period.

Olley Maruma is another writer who tried a more positive approach in *Coming Home* (2007) in which an exiled black Zimbabwean comes back home towards the end of the war and in the six-month transition period demonstrates a lot of hope for the future of sovereign rule.[22] However, considering that the novel was written in 2007 at a time when leaving Zimbabwe was considered the best option available by many Zimbabweans (both black and white), one is bound to view the novel within the confines of the ZANU—PF nationalist trope that glorified Zimbabwe (regardless of the all too obvious chaos) and demonised foreign spaces.[23] He drags the home of the past and foists it on the unhomely present and legitimises, in the process, the parochial identity paradigms that operate in determining who belongs and who does not. What Maruma does in the narrative is what Muponde and Primorac (2005:xiv) call "entering the future by re-enacting the past in ways which are far from being purely discursive." According to Nyambi (2012:141), *Coming Home* has a political significance which is "tied up with its subtle political hegemonic function in which it celebrates and props up the ZANU (PF) government's revived race-inspired nationalism."

The post-2000 period, known as 'the decade of crisis', saw the advent of a new wave of literature whose main concerns were the disrupting effects of the 'crisis' on individual lives so that individuals had to make very serious, personal choices in order to survive. Unlike nationalist literature in which individual action had to do with mass concerns or the nation, this post-2000 literature is about the individual as a victim of circumstances and the individual then making personal choices to survive. One of those choices is exile. Others include prostitution (*Highway Queen* [2010] by Virginia Phiri, for instance) at the peril of contracting HIV, migrating back to the village (the 2005 clean-up campaign, *Operation Murambatsvina*, saw a lot of this), hustling/*chikorokoza* which involved black market money-changing and fuel selling, vending, gold panning at all costs and anything to feed the belly. However, exile is the leitmotif of this literature, showing the condition of those who suffer and the radical choices

[22] The late Olley Maruma was regarded as a fierce nationalist whose television programmes like *Voices* echoed the dominant ZANU-PF ideology.

[23] In a 2017 study I carried out with Sheunesu Mandizvidza titled 'Utopian and Dystopian Homecomings in Olley Maruma's *Coming Home* and Shimmer Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns*', we look at how Maruma's narrative is reducible to ZANU-PF rhetoric given the fact that when it was written in 2007, the space that he calls home was going through various forms of dystopia.

they make when they no longer feel secure in their homeland. Among such texts are these that have been chosen for this research: *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava, 2009), *An Elegy for Easterly* (Petina Gappah, 2009), *We Need New Names* (NoViolet Bulawayo, 2013), *Writing Free* (Irene Staunton [Ed.], 2011) and *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician* (Tendai Huchu, 2015). The texts are about exile and in some cases the authors themselves live in exile. The exile is caused, in part, by the crisis back home.

Zhuwarara observes that hunger and drought are the recurring leit-motifs of Zimbabwean literature in English (2001:51). Zhuwarara's observation here is consonant with the post-2000 period where these leit-motifs are, among other factors, central to the genesis of the disabling space Zimbabwe has become. A disabling space in this case is an inward-pressing space. In the case of Zimbabwe, political independence becomes only a flipside of this pressing so that even in the post-independence period, the need to break free from this constricting space (Primorac, 2006) becomes more obsessive than during the pre-independence period. The view of Zimbabwe as a disabling space emanates mainly from the ordeal of living through post-2000 political instability and economic melt-down. In contrast, the foreign space is therefore perceived as an enabling space because it offers the exilic individual the chance to escape these ordeals for a more economically and psychologically rewarding existence, at least in the view of the exilic individual.

The late 90s and the post-2000 decade saw Zimbabwe entering a period that has come to be associated with the "millennial crises" (Mangena and Mupondi, 2011:48). The 'crisis' consisted of social, political and economic upheavals (Raftopolous, 2009: 201) and reduced Zimbabwe to a "confined space" (Mangena and Mupondi, 2011:48). This confined, inward-pressing space provoked an unprecedented level of out-migration by Zimbabweans to what Assal and Manger would call "enabling spaces" (2006:11). So, in essence, the post-2000 sprouting of exile literature and the Zimbabwean Diaspora that inspired this literature are results of 'forced' migration. The diaspora becomes a land of opportunities, an enabling space.

There are many sources that document what happened to Zimbabweans during this period, both in the local and diasporic spaces. One of the major sources of this information are the post-2000 narratives. According to Mangena and Mupondi (2011:49), "[o]ne of the clearest voices on Zimbabwe's political, social and economic failure between the late 1990s and 2009 and the subsequent scattering of Zimbabweans almost all over the world is that of the 'tellers of stories.'" One of the most prominent features of these narratives is their subversion of nationally-consecrated narrative paradigms and standpoints. Primorac (2010a:249) observes that in these narratives, "the very notion of Zimbabwe as a bounded and territorial entity is

radically destabilised." A brief outline of what constituted nationally-consecrated narrative paradigms is imperative here.

Zimbabwean literature has for long been caught up within the heated political discourses concerning Zimbabwe as a nation. The ZANU—PF-led government has used the media to create the upper and lower limits of the version of history that it condones. This, as I have pointed out earlier on in this chapter, is what Ranger calls "patriotic history" (2004:218). The implication of "patriotic history" is that history can be denied, or allowed but only a monolithic trajectory of it. History was and is important in Zimbabwe. The implication is that the edited and omission-ridden history that is told, the selective memory that is used to tell that history and the complete array of iconographies and rituals used in the remembering of this history are all meant to help in the imagining of a particular and exclusive version of Zimbabwe. Patriotic history, therefore, has people it legitimises and others it de-legitimises. This is why any study of patriotic history in Zimbabwe cannot ignore concerns that centre on violence, belonging, memory and silence. In the politics of belonging or not belonging, this, too, is very important. All this has a very important literary connection that I would like to point out. The ascendancy of ZANU—PF to power on April 18, 1980 also ushered in a form of narrative that dominated literary spaces.

Patriotic narratives, as they are called, eulogised the new black government and propped up its so-called socialist agenda.[24] Any dissenting voices were silenced. For instance, Joshua Nkomo's *The Story of my Life* (1984), published in London, was banned in 1985. The reason why texts by the likes of Chinodya, Nyamufukudza and Hove were not banned was because of the subtlety and fictionality with which the narratives were written as compared to the autobiographical nature of Nkomo's narrative. The period soon after independence therefore was supposed to see a rise in the dominance of the patriotic narrative.

However, the examples of Hove, Chinodya, Nyamubaya and Nkomo show that the disillusionment that Marechera had pre-figured in *The House of Hunger* was already being felt in the very early years of independence and some authors were crossing borders of sorts by refusing to be contained within an essentialist socialist agenda being presided over by a corrupt oligarchy. However, patriotic narratives were still there and were to become more important especially in the post-2000 period when the reality on the ground contradicted the patriotic discourse of post-2000 politics. Thus in the post-2000 period, there is a steady supply of such books in the form of, *Coming Home* (Olley Maruma, 2007); *Chimurenga Protocol* (Nyaradzo

[24] There is a proliferation of such a discourse in Shona narratives of war and the *Chimurenga* agenda.

Mtizira-Nondo, 2009); *A Fine Madness* (Mashingaidze Gomo, 2009); *The Rebel in me* (Agrippa Mutambara, 2014), *Whose Land is it Anyway?* (Benjamini Sibangani Sithole, 2016) and many others which, by revisiting the war and its much touted ideologies, were acting as extensions of the post-2000 ZANU—PF mantra. In these texts, the patriotic narrative is given the position of sacrosanct truth. Home is depicted as a glorious space and if there is any turmoil, it is because of the machinations of 'Britain and its allies'. This is not the case with the narratives chosen for this research.

Most post-2000 exile narratives are products of exiled Zimbabwean writers.[25] The diaspora, in a way, frees them from the self-censorship that beguiles those left at home. Unlike the nationalist narrative that reveals a readiness to defend ZANU—PF's nationalism, with its exclusionary and backward-looking identity paradigms, the post-2000 exile narratives are not only products of dislocation, they also dislocate themselves from the limitations of ZANU—PF's nationalist spaces. This, post-colonially speaking, is "post-national" in nature (Muponde, 2015:129). The hypocrisy of independence has provoked in Zimbabwe an increase in narratives whose writers are migrant in nature and have shaken off the authoritarian yoke through both physical and metaphoric migration.[26] The writings therefore contain the inevitable exile motif and the 'freedom' it brings. Freedom here reflects the varieties of freedoms the writers enjoy – ranging from freedom from hunger, abuse and shackles of political intolerance, to freedom from nationalist narrative conventions. In a way, it is a crossing of borders. It is here that the condition of these writers can be said to be postcolonial. This, too, deserves a brief outline.

The writers whose narratives are the subjects of this research are Zimbabweans resident outside it, that is 'outside' in the physical sense and 'outside' in the metaphorical sense. They reflect the condition of millions of the world's population:

> The late twentieth century witnessed demographic shifts on an unprecedented scale, impelled by many different forces: anti-imperialist conflict, the claims of

[25] Exile here should be understood both in its physical and metaphorical meanings. While some might be physically in exile by choice (Petina Gappah, Brian Chikwava, the nomadic NoViolet Bulawayo, Christopher Mlalazi, Rosa Tshuma) or by force (the late Chenjerai Hove), some experience exile in their desire to transgress the ideological borders of patriotic narration.

[26] Said's "traveling theory" (1983:226), for instance, has been appropriated by theorists to say that theorising or thinking can be essentially mobile. For example, Clifford (1989:1) sees theorising as "leaving home". There is an attitude here of intellectual disengagement and dissent. All of these can be viewed as distributaries of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Deleuze's Nietzschean concept of 'nomadic thinking' (1977) or the Foucauldian 'aesthetics of transgression' (Foucault, 1984). Thus, exile can be physical and metaphoric. While physical exile is the main focus of this thesis, metaphoric exile also needs to be analysed. How do writers transgress borders aesthetically (what I called politico-aesthetic regimes)? Of interest, therefore, is whether pre-modern signifiers like race are not reflected in the politico-aesthetic regimes authors choose to submit themselves under to show that the world is truly postcolonial and post-modern.

> rival nationalism, economic hardship, famine, state repression, the search for new opportunities. Uprooted masses of people streamed across and away from Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Sierra Leone, Burma – and, more recently, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Iraq. According to the United Nations, some 100 million people in the world today qualify as migrants – that is, live as minorities, in states of *unbelonging* (Boehmer, 2005:226 – emphasis mine).

What Boehmer calls 'states of unbelonging' is a strand that is also central to this research and will be looked at in the course of this chapter. What needs to be clarified here is the exile status of writers because it is here that the focus of this research can be established.

For reasons extending from professional choices to political intolerance, writers from Zimbabwe, both black and white, have participated in "the twenty-first-condition of energized migrancy" (Boehmer, 2005:226). These include Chenjerai Hove, Brian Chikwava, Petina Gappah, Noviolet Bulawayo, Tendai Huchu, Christopher Mlalazi, Douglas Rogers, Cathrine Buckle, Graham Lang, Bryony Rheam and many others. These writers, though holding on to thematic and/or political associations with a Zimbabwean background, can be said to be 'extra-territorial' travellers rather than national ones. Their condition is a necessary and enabling one for the supply of postcolonial migrant literature.

What is of interest here is the reception of these literatures and writers in the west. Boehmer observes that "[b]oth postcolonial narrative and narrative criticism are situated in the increasingly more heteroglot yet still hegemonic western (or Northern) metropolis" (2005:229).[27] The literatures, in most cases, are products of retreat by writers back to the old colonial master's metropolis. Plagued by various ills described in one word as 'crisis', Zimbabwe's post-2000 period presented Zimbabweans with conditions for both physical and symbolic exile. The response by writers was retreat to richer, less repressive places in the world, most particularly the west, and also retreat to less repressive ideological spaces. For writers, this move met positive response: the pen has a way of writing paths to freedom.

It is, however, central to this research to find out if the same could be said for the ordinary, border-jumping thousands who feature as characters in some of these narratives, with no fame nor artistic works with which to strike concessions in these new spaces. These are the same exiles Said writes about when he states that these "large herds of innocent and bewildered

[27] Writers who operate from a position of physical or metaphoric exile have been called liars and sell-outs in the official annals of Zimbabwean discourse. Their successes in former colonial capitals have even compounded this negative perception. For instance, the late Chenjerai Hove has been called a liar by the late Alexander Kanengoni, who, ever since *Echoing Silences* (1997), seemed to have reformed his discourse to suit that of the system. In one of his articles in the ZANU PF newspaper, *The Patriot*, Kanengoni (2015) called Chenjerai Hove a liar who thrived on the self-imposed exile and lies about Zimbabwe to strike financial concessions in foreign countries.

people requiring urgent international assistance" (1999:181) do not have the artistic solitude and spirituality and the true pathos and majesty of the exilic condition. Therein lies the tragic edge of exile that might not readily avail itself to our gaze in the lives of writers but is so glaring and obvious in the lives of millions of non-writing migrants. In general terms, by securing this move and having their works received in the metropolis (and having the added advantage of winning a Caine Prize, for instance), writers have a more privileged migrant status, a cosmopolitan condition that has won them acceptance and a more comfortable position in the wider globalised, neo-colonised world. The question, however, is whether this audience is not a 'disabling space' on its own, constricting the writer's narrative strategies. This question will be answered in the course of this research. The acceptance of their literatures by the metropolitan elite is in itself a "suggestive instance of the appropriation by Europe and America of resources in the Third World" (Boehmer, 2005:231). That the same western powers with lethal military power and economic dominance have accepted this literature, published it and gone on to give it prizes and publicity can be interpreted as evidence of cultural openness and the coaxing of the margin to the centre. The paradox and tragic exile lie in the withholding of the same openness in other areas like immigration and economic aid. Globalisation in this case accentuates differences; it makes clear the dividing line between the rich and gifted western metropolis and the impoverished and meagrely gifted margin.

Another interesting feature in the evolution of the exile motif in Zimbabwean literature are the dichotomised configurations of exile that are loyal to structural workings of race. These configurations seem to be addressing specific yet contradictory dynamics within the same geographical and temporal space using paradigms that refuse to rupture themselves from the colonial relationship between blacks and whites. Non-colonising co-habitation as a post-colonial condition is not very visible in the narrative styles of both black and white-authored narratives and the canonisation of these narratives. They, in other words, continue to exile each other away in their works and in the canonisation of their works using colour as an analytical framework.

Exclusions and inclusions in Zimbabwean Literature in English

The White character and critic in Black Zimbabwean Fiction

Literature by black Zimbabweans, before and after independence, has for long been racially conscious. The black/white dichotomy has mediated representations and conceptions

of action and agency in Zimbabwean literature for so long that it is difficult to understand Zimbabwean literature without falling back on the black/white prefixes. This explains the uses of these racially-conscious prefixes in this research. In colonial Rhodesia and independent Zimbabwe, blacks and whites lived side by side but led completely different lives. Their literatures, too, existed side by side but never managed to be canonised together. Thus, the representation of white characters in narratives by black authors is "fleeting and tenuous" (Style, 1984:55).

Writing, or reading, about people who do not exist in their own exclusive racial and class realm has never been comfortable for both black and white Zimbabweans.[28] Despite the reconciliatory speech of Robert Mugabe in 1980, bringing the two races together in everyday social experiences has remained a dream, yet it is the everyday that matters most. One of the most important aspects within the critical race theoretical paradigm is that race still matters (Hacking, 2005:102). It may not be in the constitution; it may not be institutional; in fact, it may have been scientifically refuted as a legitimate biological concept and marginalised in much political and public discourse, but race has proven to continue being a powerful social construct and tool. Its value goes "beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely embedded in *daily discourse* that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than before" (Morrison, 1992:63 – stress mine). This 'daily discourse', outside the constitutional and institutional erasure of racism, is an arena where even exile assumes many of its 'tragic edges'.

The value of literature lies in the fact that it is representation. The representation of whites in fiction written by blacks is a representation of the everyday exiles that these two 'forced' each other into. Style (1984:55) observes that:

> Much of the black avoidance of white characters, of course, stems from a certain cultural distaste created by the class divisions of the society. Black writers have not tended to like writing about whites, nor have black readers particularly wished to read about them. Writers prefer to deal with familiar material. Just as Henry James wrote about middle to upper class American cosmopolitans, and D. H. Lawrence (notwithstanding Lady Chatterly) was happiest with characters from the Midlands' working class, like Ursula Brangwen, so, blacks have been most comfortable writing about blacks.

[28] Even for texts written in vernaculars, especially texts written through the encouragement of the Rhodesian Literature Bureau, the characterisation of white people required more than just creativity. The bureau was a censorship and publishing tool which made sure that characterisation of whites was effectively blocked. Therefore, popular authors like Patrick Chakaipa, Paul Chidyausiku and Thompson Kumbirai Tsodzo made themselves sanctimonious preachers of moral issues among black people. In such tales, the white man "appears and disappears like a disembodied dream" (Style, 1984:57).

In the plots of most black Zimbabwean narratives, the white character is almost a non-event; a fleeting glimpse of an undeveloped shadow is afforded the reader and nothing beyond that. For instance, in a 2015 novel by Philip Chidavaenzi, *The Ties that Bind*, the most comprehensive description of a white character in a novel where most of the businesses are owned by white characters is as follows:

> Alexander Franklin was a wiry, ill-looking man who walked with a pronounced limp. But sitting at his desk in a severely-cut black suit, he had authority stamped all over him. He had extremely penetrating steel grey eyes and a deep suntan. On his head was a mop of blond hair (Chidavaenzi, 2015:124-5).

In this case, using the law of semantic prosodies (Louw and Carmela, 2010), I am persuaded to take the 'slim/thin' version of 'wiry' because it collocates with the other 'negatives' in the description: 'ill-looking', 'pronounced limp', 'severely-cut', 'steel grey eyes' and other relatively positive words but which are 'forced' to assume negative connotations because of their collocative association with the 'negative' words listed above. Alexander Franklin is put upfront, described in mildly derogatory terms in spite of his achievements, and then discarded for a fuller exploration of the world inhabited by black characters. There is enough suggestion that this character will never appear again in the future.

Style (1984:56) also cites censorship by the Rhodesian government as contributing to the conversion of fleeting references of white characters into literary convention. Political suppression hardened cultural avoidance. He cites the success of the Rhodesian Literature Bureau (formed in 1953) as the reason behind this aesthetic. In other words, not having subversive nationalist tendencies became an established Literature Bureau aesthetic which at its maturity did not even require the help of direct tools of suppression. The bureau encouraged 'clean' narratives especially in indigenous languages. This explains why two of Zimbabwe's classic novels, *Waiting for the Rain* (1975) and *The House of Hunger* (1978), were published outside the country. The trend (of publishing outside) continues even now with the post-nationalist, migrant novel.

While the opportunities offered by the bureau were irresistible, subversive characterisation and thematic concerns were resisted. The writer soon learned the art of self-censorship:

> Black writers found the opportunities offered by the Bureau difficult to resist. But, again, it meant that characterization of whites was blocked. Since for blacks to write about whites (and whites about blacks) demands a difficult cultural leap, an approach via the path of political invective often is the most promising. It provides a creative lubricant. But censorship and publication opportunities barred this…In such tales and studies, the white man appears and disappears like a disembodied dream. Arguably, this is, or was, the reality of then Rhodesian society. The white and black either clashed head-on, with the white handing it out and the black having to take it, or else passed each other like ships in the night. So, black writers were truthful, and yet superficial. They correctly reflected one aspect of reality of the interface, but were inhibited from getting under the skin of another race (Style, 1984:57)

That these two races lived on the same geographical space (inside Rhodesia and Zimbabwe) where they imagined each other into exile did not help matters. Even independence seems to have failed dismally to help matters. In fact, for Style, the coming of independence did not "encourage literature, but [the] release [of] pent-up resentments, distracting serious literary aims" (1984:59). In other words, what Style is pointing out is that freedom from censorship only allowed writers to try to redress the case of the black race by offering rewrites of settler interpretations of Rhodesian history in ways that were more political than literary.[29] Censorship, therefore, persisted in the minds of the authors.

Even white writers from Zimbabwe (with their conscious or unconscious deployment of the elements of Rhodesian discourse in their writings) seem to have failed to rupture themselves from the limitations of their being white in Zimbabwe. That few white Zimbabwean writers (the most notable among them is Dorris Lessing) have achieved international acclaim is testimony to this. This transgression of narrative conventions, stylistically, thematically and in terms of characterisation, is the mark of the climate of postcolonial migrant writing. The task remains to explore whether the narratives chosen for this research have managed this break from the limiting shibboleths of the past.

This black/white dichotomy is even more visible in the tradition of literary criticism that has come to be associated with Zimbabwe. One of the most recurrent elements of criticism of literature in Zimbabwe (and Africa at large) is African cultural nationalism. Spearheaded by the likes of Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ibwekwe Chinweizu, Okot p'Bitek, Vimbai Chivaura and other black African cultural nationalists, this literary critical tradition was premised on the influence of colonialism which they used to interpret experiences captured in

[29] For instance, Stanlake Samkange's *On Trial for My Country* (published outside London, away from the censorship of the Rhodesian Literature Bureau) calls Mzilikazi, Lobengula and Cecil John Rhodes to stand on trial and narrate the colonisation of Zimbabwe over and over again, but this time from a black perspective.

texts. The overwhelming concern with the establishment of colonial influence on African experience captured in particular texts has closed all other avenues of interpretation and reduced all experiences captured in texts to a black/white obsession. With cultural nationalism having a strong collocative relationship with ZANU—PF, creative writing and criticism have become embroiled in an incestuous affair which has narrowed intellectual scope in Zimbabwe, something which even the proliferation of universities in Zimbabwe has failed to detoxify.

As it is, blackness and whiteness have dominated literary criticism by some black Zimbabweans. What cultural nationalism has done, however, is to naturalise a single version of critical theory as the only one that can be used to explain Zimbabwean literature. This means for criticism to (ad)venture beyond the black/white dichotomy, in which the former are suffering from the syphilis of the coming of the latter, to a post-nationalist, post-colonial imaginative space, there is need to diversify it. The immediate problem is that creative writing and literary criticism have political value that comes in handy in the process of creating propaganda that has to do with belonging and not belonging. This process relies on creative writing and criticism to help it to apportion the blame for the 'crisis' to no one but the oppressor. Skin colour plays a central role. This is what Wylie (2009:151) calls "the schizophrenias of truth-telling."

One of the most lasting legacies of this kind of literary criticism in Zimbabwe is the exiling away of literature by white writers from the canon of what is called Zimbabwean literature. An inventory of single-author full-volume critical works published on Zimbabwean literature would definitely reveal that the selection criteria was overly sensitive to skin pigmentation:

• *The Search for Zimbabwean Identity and Ufuru* (George Kahari, 2009) which is a revised edition of his 1981 publication.
• *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (Musaemura Zimunya, 1982)
• *Teachers, Preachers and Non-believers* (Flora Veit-Wild, 1993)
• *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (Rino Zhuwarara, 2001)
• *African Oral Story-Telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English* (Maurice Taonezvi Vambe, 2004).

All of these critics made the assumption that Zimbabwean literature was black and so they exiled all white writers from their critical works. Even Veit-Wild, with her obsession with

Marechera's writings, seems to have gotten the cue. Her teachers, preachers and non-believers are all black Zimbabweans.

Primorac's study of Zimbabwe's critical literary tradition has unearthed what she calls a "two-fold absence" (2006:50). One aspect of this absence has been a systematic study of these texts as strings of texts linked by race. The novels by white Zimbabweans are conspicuous by their absence, for obviously ideological reasons. Primorac (2010a:251) makes this observation:

> Following independence, 'white' writing has not been officially recognised as part of the Zimbabwean literary canon. It can only be hoped that, one day, discussions of racially demarcated Zimbabwean fictional traditions will be fully integrated in Zimbabwe as well as in South Africa.

This demarcation summarises the demise of fictional criticism in Zimbabwe. The absence of a post-nationalist, post-colonial/poststructuralist erudition in the literary critical landscape of Zimbabwe can be attributed to the ideologically and politically loaded categorisation of Zimbabwean literatures according to race and thematic concerns. The first publication to overcome that, however, is *Versions* (2005) edited by Primorac and Muponde. This publication is a product of a multi-faceted and ambivalent reading and categorisation of Zimbabwean literature which transgresses racial and ethnic divisions which have previously beleaguered literary criticism in Zimbabwe to come up with a collective discourse whose discursive appeal is different from previous collections. It disfigures the homogenising tendencies of cultural nationalism.

The parochial tendencies of cultural nationalism and its exclusionary tendencies reach their zenith in a critical polemic against white literary critics of Zimbabwean literature. Chennels and Veit-Wild have received the brunt of this criticism and one is persuaded to factor in the colour code into the whole equation. Critics of European extraction, Chennels and Veit-Wild, are usually associated with Europe's cultural agenda of approaching the manifold world realities from the snobbish point of European universality which shows their cultural commitment to "[European] supremacy…expansion and…the destruction of other cultures" (Ani, 1994:23).

Chiwome is one of the black Zimbabwean critics who lashes out at white critics of the black Zimbabwean novel for being European. Chiwome believes that Veit-Wild's reading of the black Zimbabwean novel is deficient because it "detracts from the historicity of the art towards esoteric formal jargon [which] makes the art in question more of an artefact than a

dynamic aspect of culture" (1994:10). While Veit-Wild lauds her own approach for proposing "fresh, more detailed and more varied methods to analyse…new [black Zimbabwean] literatures because they are less rigid, less classificatory than previous ones" (1992:4), Chiwome thinks that such European approaches to Zimbabwean literature are part of a conspiracy to derail the cultural development of Zimbabwe: "[i]n the context of a country which is on the threshold of development and which is desperately trying to build a sound culture from a heritage full of contradictions, the most interesting approach is the one that attempts to make human beings more human" (Chiwome, 1994:9). Chiwome's approach here is that of cultural nationalism which sees the critical approach of black Zimbabwean literature by white critics as an aspect of the Europeanisation of Africa to the detriment of African development.

Chiwome is not alone in the critical bashing of Veit-Wild. Vambe (2004) regards Veit-Wild as not having enough knowledge to confer on her the liberty to be a critic of black Zimbabwean writing. In her periodisation of Zimbabwean writers into 'generations' in *Teachers, Preachers and Non-believers* (1992), Veit-Wild is accused by Vambe for being rigid and not understanding the fluidity and 'multi-facetedness' of consciousness among black Zimbabwean writers and this reductionist approach over-simplifies more complex levels of consciousness among these writers. In the same 1992 volume, Veit-Wild traces the development of black Zimbabwean writing and the influence of the Rhodesian Literature Bureau. In doing so, Vambe believes that Veit-Wild was according "unlimited power to colonialism" (2004:94). This is also echoed by Gwekwerere (2013:59) who believes that, "[t]he rallying contention in Chiwome's [or possibly Vambe's] metacritical discourse on Veit-Wild's criticism of the black Zimbabwean novel is that the perception of colonialism as magnanimous to Africa affirms its foundational myths about African backwardness." By doing so, Veit-Wild is accused, as her white European background is believed to make her do, of keeping black Zimbabwean writers on the margins as subalterns who do not speak. The absence of an analysis of oral art forms in Veit-Wild's 1992 book is treated with contemptuous criticism by Vambe who interprets it as a Eurocentric treatment of the inaccessible as non-knowledge. Knowledge for Veit-Wild, according to Vambe's criticism, becomes only that which is accessible to the European. Gwekwerere (2013:64) supports Vambe when he points out that,

> The negation of African orature in the development of African literature is an indispensable factor in the syntax of European cultural imperialism in Africa. Veit-Wild's volition to invalidate African orature is tied up with the European cultural commitment to efface African-centred ways of managing and

> explaining phenomena. The objective in such erasure of African-centred discursive implements is to project Europe as sole holder of the right to determine the framework of values on the basis of which the world should be run.

Chennells, a former University of Zimbabwe's Department of English lecturer, also gets himself in the line of fire. His collaborative editorial work with Veit-Wild (*Emerging Perspectives on Marechera*, 1999) and their overwhelming praises for Marechera, whom most black Zimbabwean critics have drowned in criticism for being Eurocentric, are used as evidence of their unAfrican, anti-black Zimbabwean conspiracies. By declaring that "Marechera's was an intelligence which refused to be contained within the confines of the cultural nationalism of the 1970s and 1980s" (Chennells and Veit-Wild, 1999:xvi), Chennells and Veit-Wild expose themselves to vitriolic criticism for defending a black writer whose ideological standpoint has been a subject of scorn by some black Zimbabwean critics since Zimunya's ground-breaking *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (1982).[30]

Primorac is also thrown into the fray for being disconcerted by not only black Zimbabwean critics but also by other black African critics who think that Marechera sold out on a whole continent. Being a graduate of the University of Zimbabwe's Department of English seems to have furnished Primorac with an insider's knowledge of the manner of the teaching of criticism in the department. Her conclusion is that literary criticism in the department can be captured by two words – nativism and Afro-radicalism. She believes that these two have "underpinned the teaching of African literature at the University of Zimbabwe in the 1980s and 1990s [and] legitimised the condemnation-through-interpretation of writers such as Soyinka, Marechera and Vera" (Primorac, 2006:9). The vitriol increases when Primorac suggests an interpretation of Zimbabwean literature that frees it from racial biases. She believes that a 'proper' reading of Zimbabwean literature "would concern itself with the modalities of reinventing a being-together situation in the racial sense" (Primorac, 2006:8).[31] As it is, criticism of Zimbabwean literature by many black Zimbabwean critics is reductionist and mimetic, Marxist, Soviet-styled, rigid and closed and betrays in generous quantities privileged versions of historical truth (Primorac, 2006:40). For this, Primorac is accused by Gwekwerere (2013:79) for lacking the ability "to see beyond the indispensability of European-originated

[30] Gwekwerere (2013) attacks Chennels and Veit-Wild for thinking that Marechera is the most exemplary black Zimbabwean writer without questioning how his literature advances the agenda of black people.
[31] Gwekwerere (2013) actually believes that Primorac is following in the footsteps of Chennels, Veit-Wild and Mcloughlin who are all white critics of black Zimbabwean literature.

critical criteria in the discussion of the black Zimbabwean novel. This makes her critical work hegemonic." She too becomes an operative in Europe's clandestine conspiracies against Africa.

I am persuaded to say that before reading their critical work, Veit-Wild, Chennells and Primorac have one thing militating against them: skin colour. They are white. And because literary criticism has to do with space, voice and authority, the three are, first and foremost, not supposed to lead in the criticism of black Zimbabwean literature because, one is made to believe, it does not speak for them but for blacks. This is the conclusion Gwekwerere (2003:234) makes after an exhaustive research into the lack of qualifications by white critics to write literary works about black Zimbabwean texts:

> They credit black Zimbabwean novelists who are amenable to European literary tastes while undermining those who subscribe to the African nationalist struggle for freedom. By and large, the critics' comfort with Eurocentric critical criteria, standards and models, their conception of the European factor as indispensable in the rise and development of the black Zimbabwean novel and aversion to Afrocentric theories of literature and the African nationalist struggle for freedom interlock to lend credence to the view that although white critical thought on the black Zimbabwean novel is fraught with contradictions of its own, and is amenable to some versions of black critical thought on the literary episteme in question, it participates significantly in the perpetuation of European cultural hegemony in the age of "travelling theories [and] travelling texts".

At the heart of this belief by Gwekwerere is the exclusionary tendencies of cultural nationalism as an aspect of literary criticism in Zimbabwean literature. The white individual in the black Zimbabwean novel and in the criticism of the same remains an alien, an outsider who should not partake in the cultural production of Zimbabwe. The difficulties of sharing the same cultural space and exiling each other in the process replicate themselves in other practical fields like migration as shall be demonstrated later in this chapter.

The Black Character in White Zimbabwean Literature

While black writers have shortcomings in their depictions of white characters in their works, white writers are equally deficient in their depictions of black characters (Style, 1984:55). The most internationally acclaimed white Zimbabwean writer, Lessing, even treats, in *The Grass is Singing* (1973), the principal black character like a terrifying symbol in the psyche of the white community. While it seems as if Lessing is critiquing how blackness functions in the white psyche, she does not do anything in her narrative to redeem the black

character from this reductionist depiction. When the narrative ends with the black character killing his white mistress (Mary) for no apparent reason, Lessing accentuates the terror that is associated with blacks. This deficient depiction of black characters has come to be associated with what is popularly known as the Rhodesian discourse. Before exploring these deficient depictions, it is imperative that we look at the genesis of this deficiency in white writers.

The conquest of land that took place in the 1890s, in which guns played a central role, was not enough for white settlers. A sense of entitlement (belonging) had to be cultivated. They had to feel at home in the colonies. Literature helped this process. Writing helped them create an enduring sense of belonging and helped create what R. Williams (1979:133) refers to as "structures of feeling," that supported and strengthened the empire. But this had to be done by exiling away the black people they found on the land. McDermott Hughes observes that in the Zimbabwean (or Rhodesian) case, whites had to monopolise "the land but amid black masses" and were never able "to make their presence seem natural […] they avoided blacks, preferring instead to invest themselves emotionally and artistically in the environment" (2010:xii). This meant that if there was any relationship with blacks it was purely exploitative; the socialisation and identity-making of white people was negotiated through land and not the people that peopled that land before the coming of whites. It was a case of imagining blacks (whom they called natives) away. In doing this, they were creating space.

The property claim and self-image of white writers rested heavily on the image of an absent native whose presence on that environment did not confer worth. The 'tribes' that European settlers found in "wattle and thatched huts" (Gayre, 1972:214), did not, in the eyes of the settlers, actually occupy the land; rather they ranged over it. Given the fact that the African savannah of Zimbabwe became an object of affection by the inhabitants of the Anglophone diaspora in Africa, the implication here is that their sense of belonging involved racist tendencies that were not only part of an everyday social existence, but that became constitutional. By imagining away the native, the white settler's attention was turned to the environment: to the land, soil and water.

This circumvention of the so-called black masses who 'ranged over' the land became a preference for many white settlers and writers; they preferred not to focus much on the 'native masses' whom they found on the land. They even chose not to live with them and came up with a plethora of Land Acts and segregationist laws that created a space for white settlers that they would not share with black people. Thus, even though they lived side by side, the two races led completely separate lives. However, this non-social, environmental connection also meant that

white settlers "swam in the ocean of social knowledge without getting wet" (McDemott Hughes, 2010:5). In other words, they lived in social exile.

Concerning literature by white settler writers, Lessing (cited in McDermott Hughes, 2006:271) rightly observes that it is "literature of exile, not from Europe, but from Africa." McDermott Hughes (2010:4) agrees that colonial literature "promoted a selective assimilation to Africa": selective because the settlers loved the land and not the natives they found on the land. They (white writers), therefore, lived in social exile but still chose to be oblivious of that. The minimisation and exclusion of black characters in the settler canon whose principal idiom was escape from African 'natives' while embracing African land, became the *sine qua non* of white settler writing. This was to prove detrimental to their comfort. Given the fact that they remained a minority with the detestable name, *colonisers*, the *original occupants* (blacks/majority) of the *land* would continue to view them as 'strangers' (allochthons) with no natural right to the land.

This exclusionary sense of belonging on the part of the white settler through the character of Esmè, an Italian immigrant, who says:

> "For the majority of people, *whites*, I mean, the whole point of living in this country is to avoid the sight of other human beings … If we could press a button and pulverize the humans who happen to spoil the view, we'd happily press it. That's the whole point of going on safari, isn't it?" (Marciano, 2009:194)

Esmè's critical approach here is not only aimed at the white settler who enjoys the savannah by pretending that blacks are not there; it is also aimed at the discourse of an empty continent ready of the taking.[32] The Conradian images of black, stare-eyed cannibals do not confer worth to 'native' Africans. For instance, in *The Heart of Darkness*, Marlow describes his encounter with blacks thus:

> "They howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you, was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough, but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of first ages – could comprehend." (2004:117)

[32] This is how the idea of *terra nullius* was deployed in places like Australia. *Terra nullius* is Latin for 'nobody's land.' British occupation of Australia which commenced in 1788 was premised upon this law even though Australian Aborigines had occupied this land for over 50 000 years.

The implication is that these 'wild creatures' are on the land, but they do not 'occupy' it. The land that became Rhodesia was thus caught up in what McClintock calls "anachronistic time", which "is a zone stuck in a permanently anterior time" (2005:41, 30). This depiction of Africa swept Africans with their cattle and cultures from whites' imagination.

Belonging that did not seek horizontal connection with black people was perilous. White settlers, in the event of a shift in power, which is exactly what happened in Zimbabwe in 1980, would find it difficult to hold rights or be considered citizens in Zimbabwe. The people whose land was settled upon certainly held a stronger claim to belonging and disregarding them was not very wise. Where politicians would find the position of whites an indispensable tool for the gaining of power, then the whites would be pursued by the curse of the minority. The post-2000 Zimbabwean Land Reform was premised on the belief that "[l]and properly belongs to those with certain ethnic roots" (Shaw, 2003:85).

After independence, expelled from politics and having shed much of their racism, the exclusionary habits continued. Instead of a horizontal comradeship with blacks, whites continued their escapist relationship with nature by discounting the Other. This means even though their prejudice was not visible it still was insulting. Caught off guard by the nationalism of Zimbabwe's independence, whites' continued hold onto the Rhodesian discourse could not immunise them against the anti-white sentiment of Zimbabwe's controversial land reform programme.

Many novels by white Rhodesians and white Zimbabweans demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the Other, or if there is any modicum of knowledge, it is prejudicial knowledge based on Rhodesian myths concerning the Other. I have already, in the first paragraph of this sub-section, shown how *The Grass is Singing* is also marred by such silences concerning the Other. One of Lessing's memoirs, *Going Home* (1957), in which she describes her trip to Rhodesia in 1956, carries the inevitable ecological, belonging-via-the-landscape trope:

> [The best in the early settler] did not come to take what he could from the country. This man loved Africa for its own sake and for what is best in it: its emptiness, its promise. It is still uncreated (Lessing, 1957:15).

To say the land was empty and uncreated is to make its inhabitants invisible people. It is also to make white people 'own' it and belong to it. This also redefines the country as the landscape, soil, plans and animals and not the people who were already on the land.

African Laughter (1992) by Doris Lessing brings to the fore the discourse of the landscape which is seminal to the Rhodesian discourse. The landscape, as I pointed out, is

useful to white writing because it is through it that they create a sense of belonging. Their belonging, therefore is ecologically and not sociologically constructed. In *African Laughter*, we come face to face with Lessing, the conservationist. She lauds white farmers for being conservationists:

> [W]hite farmers.. these days are all conservationists to a man, woman and child ... This concern for the land impressed me. These reformed pirates and landgrabbers know about inventions and discoveries from every part of the world. They experiment, they innovate (Lessing, 1992:93-4)

Since any process of sociological belonging was not important, white writing could dispense with any attempt to really make black characters dominate their writing. If they did feature, they would only feature as objects of white writers' points of view thus making the characters subordinate to the hegemony of the Rhodesian discourse.

For instance, *Come Break a Spear* (1980), by Ivan Smith, is a novel about the Rhodesian war that led to independence on 18 April 1980 told from the perspective of a white protagonist, Ben. While the novel is about the war, the plot revolves around Ben and his boyhood friend, Phineas, a black boy. It seems Smith tries to break with the limitations of the Rhodesian discourse through a representation of an inter-racial friendship. However, it is also obvious that Smith only ends up at the level of trying. Their friendship demonstrates how much Ben does not know of the Other. The following excerpt from the novel explains this observation:

> Under the trees [Ben] extends one thick slice [of bread] holding it in one hand to show that it is a small gift. Phineas claps gladly and takes the bread in two hands, politely indicating the gift is so big that it needs both hands (Smith, 1980:7).

What Smith fails to understand here is that Phineas is not using two hands because the gift is literally big; he is using two hands because that is the culturally acceptable way of receiving a gift among black people. At the same time, Smith is perpetuating a myth: the myth is that black people are recipients of bread and by extension culture, and white people are providers. The myth becomes a statement of the happiness of blacks under white rule. This demonstrates the failure of some white writers to go beyond the Rhodesian discourse.

Come Break a Spear has a small number of black characters whose worldview is bequeathed to them by their white friends. The other black characters, like the subversive,

educated fighter, Felix Muchagara, are depicted as communist-manufactured psychopaths whose motivation for fighting is psychological rather than political. In other words, the political initiative to fight could not be theirs. They are not capable of that. This is a demonstration of the lack of understanding of the Other in white-authored narratives. Perpetuating such a discourse entails a rejection of any national identity pioneered by blacks on the pretext that any win by black fighters was a win of communism because blacks lacked any in-born political ambitions. This entails difficulties for white Zimbabweans to integrate into the postcolonial state meaning that they would only inscribe their identities onto the landscape by bypassing the sociological path, a method that is seminal to the Rhodesian discourse. This also entails a European diaspora in two ways. First, any belonging that is sought ecologically and not sociologically occasions some social exile. Second, by seeking belonging through the landscape and not through the popular national identity route of ZANU—PF nationalism, white writers were also creating a diaspora of sorts. Diasporas, therefore, can be created aesthetically. It remains to be analysed therefore whether white writers chosen for this research do subvert this trope in the name of postcolonial multiracialism and multiculturalism.

Post-2000 narratives by white Zimbabweans

Rhodesian discourse politicking is also at the centre of the accusations levelled against Catherine Buckle's *African Tears*. Manase in *White Narratives: The Depiction of post-2000 Land Invasions in Zimbabwe* (2016) observes that *African Tears* is Buckle's own displeasure at land invasion but based on settler perceptions of the African as disorderly, indifferent to the landscape and lacking in proper agricultural practices. Thus, according to Manase, Buckle utilises culturally-based paradigms of power that, in a globalised postcolonial world, are becoming archaic. However, Manase also celebrates the text for subverting the monolithic and nativist discourse of land monopolised by ZANU—PF nationalism.

For Pilossof (2009), *African Tears* continues with the discourse of the landscape-minus-black-people which is an indelible aspect of the Rhodesian discourse and the Africa-on-sale narrative style of adventure stories by white adventurers in the dark continent of Africa, hence the title, *African Tears*. Thus, according to Pilosoff, "the unbearable whiteness of being" in Africa is the problem with white writers; there is nothing in Africa that really makes them belong (2009:635). They are only weighted to Africa by their memories but without fully belonging to it.

Lettah's Gift by Graham Lang has not been subjected to any academic criticism. The same applies to *The Last Resort* by Douglas Rogers. No full-fledged academic analysis has been given on the narrative except short reviews by readers which mostly utilise the 'heart of darkness' trope and the heroic white character who hammers some civilisation into the dark setting.[33] Nevertheless, Manase has written briefly about it in his 2016 *White Narratives*. His analysis mainly focuses on the dislocating nativisms of post-2000 ZANU-PF politicking and survivalist strategies conjured by the central white characters. As far as *This September Sun* by Bryony Rheam is concerned, only a short review written by Ndlovu (2013) is available. According to Ndlovu, *This September Sun* is about belonging, about finding a home and affection at both family and national levels. Ndlovu observes that what makes *This September Sun* an important narrative is its focus on the everyday, on things that do not make headlines as a way of challenging popular perceptions about white people in Zimbabwe.

The absence of any rigorous analyses of these four texts definitely calls for more critical analyses, a gap which this research seeks to fill. At the same time, reading them as diasporic literature offers a much needed diversion from the reading of diasporic literature as that written by writers from the global south who are based in the global north. These writers are diasporic too in the sense that they are based in the global south but trace their 'origins' to the global north. Thus issues of exile and belonging and the dialectical nature of the experience are equally important in the analysis of these narratives beyond the limiting scope of the Rhodesian Discourse which has prejudiced any other readings of the narratives.

Post-2000 Literature in English by black Zimbabweans and the Crossing of borders

Recent studies in post-2000 Zimbabwean literature in English written by, especially migrant, black Zimbabwean writers have focused on how the literature re-imagines the nation by liberating it from essentialist and nativist Manichaeism particularly in the circumstances of the country's incessantly growing diaspora shaped by forces of polarity. These publications, according to Muchemwa, are alternative, postcolonial narrations by a new crop of writers which have ushered in a "moment of erasure leading to re-inscription" (2011:398). This re-inscription comes out of the decline of nationalist aesthetics and its nativist and essentialist connection with the land for an urban and global outlook. Therefore, the new literature, in Muchemwa's analysis, is a movement of sorts from an aesthetic of the past (nativism) to an

[33] From the hardcover edition.

aesthetic of the now (postcoloniality) which also encapsulates a re-inscription of identities in the now.

The narratives, as Muchemwa points out, also explore transnational connections of Harare: the Harare-Johannesburg link (*Writing Free*, 2011); ties with North American and European cities (*An Elegy for Easterly*, 2009 and *We Need New Names*, 2013); and the Harare-London connection (*Harare North*, 2009 and *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician*, 2014). This connection marks both the symbolic and geographical migration of Zimbabwean literary creativity which brings into sharp focus "lines of connection, reconnection and disengagement" (Muchemwa, 2011:401). Engaging itself with connection between scattered diasporic communities stuck in foreign spaces and their cities of origin which are located in Zimbabwe, these narratives, argues Muchemwa, "are also important contributions to a literature from and of the city that is increasingly displacing a literature of the land that has been associated with the valorisation of nativist cultures" (2011:401).

Muchemwa also contends that these publications are an imaginative treatment of the battles over the control of [Zimbabwean] space that had become ideologised. This ideologisation of space manifests itself in the dispossession and displacement of marginalised populations from urban economies and spaces. *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009), *Harare North* (2009), *Writing Free* (2011) and *We Need New Names* (2013) narrate these displacements from urban and farm spaces and economies. White-authored narratives also narrate farm displacements. Following the logic of Muchemwa's argument, the imaginative narration of these battles for and over ideologised space are a subversion of the monolithic and essentialist ideology of space spawned by the violent ethnic nationalism of Zimbabwe. In other words, the narratives are a terminal articulation of the politics of nativism and Afro-radicalism for the purpose of challenging the existing national imaginary. The movement of characters, therefore, takes on symbolic meaning which is that of "flight from constructions of ZANU-PF sovereignty and its politics of difference and exclusion" (Muchemwa, 2011:404).

Primorac's analysis of black-authored Zimbabwean narratives from the post-2000 period is focused on the erasure of borders and distinctions, both physical and symbolic. These texts, as Primorac points out, laugh at the notion of autochthonous African authenticity (2010a:252). Primorac believes that Gappah and Chikwava have actually achieved transnational literary status considering the international recognition of their works and the awards they have won.

Robert Muponde's 2015 publication, *Some Kinds of Childhood: Images of History and Resistance in Zimbabwean Literature* also includes a study of childhood in *We Need New*

Names premised on notions of 'postnational childhoods' or 'postcolonial postchildhoods'. The most basic tenet 'postnational childhoods' or 'postcolonial postchildhoods' that come out in Muponde's analysis of *We Need New Names* is "the robust rejection of the nation-state and its national identities" and "the wistful acceptance of the possibility of superseding the inhabitable nation-state with other forms of identity and politics and therefore redeem it…" (2015:141). In his analysis, Muponde casts migration as a symbolic act of moving out of the borders of a monolithic, anti-colonial, negative nationalist identity. Thus, Muponde celebrates the migrant child-narrator, Darling, because migration has allowed her to enlarge and enrich "her perspectives by viewing history and space as collages of experience and timespans." Thus, the postnational moment is "that space and time when the nation-state 'no longer matters', even fleetingly and imaginatively and has no positive political and cultural significance to those it constitutes as its subjects" (Muponde, 2015:142). Therefore, the children migrate out of the reach of the nation and its cultures and 'get lost' in the cultures of other countries because of the collapse of the material and metaphorical integrity of their nation-state. Muponde consequently links the roots of the Zimbabwean Diaspora to this period of the collapse of the material and metaphorical integrity of the nation-state, a period characterised by "political effervescence and deflation, dislocation and loss, and the consequent refiguring of the idea of sovereignty, the nation and nationalism inside and outside the geographical territories of Zimbabwe" (2015:149). Thus, Muponde celebrates that moment of a superseded imaginary and the process of its supersession regardless of whether that process is accomplished or not.

The symbolic supersession of the national imaginary is also celebrated in *Writing Free* (2011) even though no conceited scholarly attention has been given to the collection. In her blurb, Staunton celebrates the collection's authors for writing freely and exploring freedom in its varieties ranging from freedom from an intractable tyranny to freedom from narrative convention. In other words, the writers are symbolically engaged in a migration of sorts, hence the title *Writing Free*. Apparent in Staunton's blurb is the belief that narrative conventions and other forms of ideological and spatial formulations are disabling and therefore 'writing free' entails the writers moving out of disabling spaces and in the process superseding all forms of constriction including nationalist ones and giving themselves the opportunity to say not what all can say but what many others are unable to say.

Concerning Huchu's *The Magistrate the Maestro & the Mathematician*, there is again an absence of critical writings except reviews by readers. Ajayi (2015) sees the novel as a story about lonely Scotlanders who lend their monikers to the title of the novel in order to communicate immigrant experiences. What makes Huchu's novel interesting is how it features

the "fortunate lot" of "notable thinkers, intellectuals, skilled labourers and academics" (Ajayi, 2015:*wawabookreview.com*). Such characterisation by Huchu dovetails with the focus of this research, that is, analysing these narratives for that tragic edge that is absent in postcolonial celebrations of the exile experience. The fact that no critical work has been written on Huchu's narrative also provides more need for this research. The same applies to *Harare North*, *An Elegy for Easterly*, *Writing Free* and *We Need New Names*, which, as the review of primary texts has revealed, are usually analysed from a celebratory perspective of subverting monovalence but without getting into the representation of the migrant experience in the text which, as contained in the focus of this research, contains a tragic edge to it in a global village where people are overcrowded and are continuously inscribing themselves on space and defining and redefining who 'we' are.

Methodology and Theoretical Tools

McClennen's dialectics of exile

McClennen professes that the inspiration behind the writing of her book, *The Dialectics of Exile* (2004), was the playful way that exiles had been "appropriated by theory and stripped of their tragic edge" (McClennen, 2004:ix). The ludic co-option of the nomad, the migrant, by postmodern theories as a representative of life free from pain and limiting boundaries was for her refuted by accounts of migrant life that were in themselves "a practical denial of theoretical claims that represent these experiences as utopic" (McClennen, 2004:ix). Describing the exile as a being freed from the oppressive burden of national identity is, for McClennen, flawed. First, even if it were possible to be truly transnational, "most of us recognise that globalisation does not lead to a power-free, liberated, multicultural state of being" (McClennen, 2004:1). Second, "the exile's material existence in a world that requires visas, passports, and so on, in a world, that is, where the exile is forbidden to cross particular geographical boundaries, cannot be understood as existence free of the repressive nature of nationalism" (McClennen, 2004:1). She views the de-historicisation of the term 'exile' and its separation from reality as contributing to this flawed thinking.

McClennen's standpoint can be reiterated by pointing out how theorisations of exile have, of late, separated it from the anguish and pain that usually accompany it and that a metaphorised and abstracted reading of exile ends up denying exile experiences their historical

particularity. This notion of particularity is the same that is echoed by Shohat (1992:100) in her criticism of postcoloniality where she says that there is need to contextualise it within multiplicities of location to avoid blanketing particularistic events and conditions under one theory thereby running the risk of coming up with something that is not representational, something like "free-floating, anti-historical, incommunicable, untraceable, relativistic identity" whose proliferation is evident in many postmodern theories that associate writing and cultural identity with exile (McClennen, 2004:1). For McClennen, there is need to be able to identify how "cultural identity [is] caught between abstract theories of boundary-free identity, the politics and problematics of representation, and the painful realities of exile, authoritarianism and social marginalisation" (2004:2).

It is because of the insufficiency of existing exile theories that McClennen saw the need to come up with a theory of exile writing that could account for its complexity and inherent contradictions. This theory also needed to go beyond the binaries that dominated exile theorisations: of exile as a liberating state and exile as dominated by nostalgia and yearning for the lost nation. For her, both binaries must be held in irresolvable tension in a way that does justice to exile. McClennen argues that, "[l]iterature of exiles contains a series of dialectic tensions revolving around central components of the exile's cultural identity: nation, time, language and space" (McClennen, 2004:2). The centrality of space has been popularised by Lefebvre and I will look at it later in this section. When we get to understand the exile's experience of the nation as dialectical, it becomes possible for us to explain the tensions between nationalism, transnationalism, globalisation, counter-nationalism, and anti-nationalism which are all present in selected exile texts.

Exile has many facets and emphasising one at the expense of other facets robs it of its more serious implications. Regarding the facet of time, being displaced is like being moved from the "present" of one's country's historical time and assuming the historical time of another space. McClennen points out that "dialectic tensions [exist] between [various] versions of linear/progressive/historical time and [the] experience that exile is the suspension of linear time" (2004:45). The dialectics also occur between the recognition that time is primordial and cyclical, linking all exiles across the globe, and the realisation that time is fractured and relative (McClennen, 2004:46). Exiles are forced into exile due to their sense of being displaced from the historical time of their specific locations yet they also feel, once they are outcast, that the legitimacy of the historical time of their new locations is also questionable.

Linguistically, exile literature depicts the relationship of writers to language both as a source of power and pain. Language is caught in a dialectical tension between its multifarious

potentials – regionality versus universality; meaningfulness versus meaninglessness; powerfulness versus uselessness; authoritarianism versus liberation; communicative versus misleading power and so on. These contradictory depictions of language also mean that the exile cannot have a sense of having 'arrived' since his/her deployment of language can never acquire total freedom since it is deployed on spaces that have their own particular linguistic codes.

The spatial dialectic forms the central core of this research because it relates to how exiles see spaces as either confining or liberating. Spaces are inhabited by "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1992:1) whose imaginations are either stretched wide to accommodate and encourage solidarity, or are shrunk to eschew difference. The dialectic tensions between utopian and dystopian spaces, and their simultaneous existence, are central to exile narratives and the irresolvability of this tension is what lends the 'tragic edge' to exile. The 'dialectic', a central component of McClennen's theory, points to the existence of contradictions "simultaneously with the same text" (2004:43). A more fluid reading of such texts is, therefore, provided by the dialectics of exile theory because of its recognition of these dialectical conditions existing simultaneously in the same text. The recognition of such contradictions, and how they lend a tragic edge to the experience of exile as represented in selected texts, is central to this thesis. The question is: beyond the ludic celebration of exile in metaphorised discourses and theorisations, what is it that textual representations give us? The answer lies in reading selected texts from McClennen's theoretical perspective.

What a comparative and sometimes holistic analysis of white- and black- authored narratives allows is a problematisation of the appropriation of exile by postcolonial theorisations that celebrate this condition. What white and black narratives allow here is a historicised, place-specified and individually-focused analysis of exile so that the term, 'exile', does not remain a de-problematised marker of a postcolonial (and other 'posts') condition. It enables for the realisation of many instances in this world of contradictory, and sometimes multifarious, positions existing together, on the same space, at the same time, in the same text. Emotions that come with exile are conflictive so that no magic wand of exile as freedom can account for the multifarious nature of exiles' experiences. In fact, McClennen's theory is also in dialectical relationships with other postcolonial exile theories, simultaneously agreeing while disagreeing (a key feature of this thesis) with them. This simultaneity is what can sufficiently capture the exile experience in non-absolutist terms, a simultaneity manifesting itself, for instance, in a character or writer defining themselves as belonging and not belonging

to a local or foreign space. Such a simultaneity also calls for a re-vision of what it means to be post-modern and post-colonial. In fact, it calls for a re-vision of the 'post'.

Geschiere's concept of Belonging

This research also borrows from Geschiere's concept of belonging, a concept that he outlines in a book that seeks to address the "return to the local" in a world that is believed to be globalising (2009:1). The trend towards postcolonial transnationality, hybridity and cosmopolitanism has eclipsed the globalisation of belonging. There seems to be a paradoxical relationship between globalisation and retrogression back to the local "in unexpected forms and with equally unexpected force" (Geschiere, 2009:1). In this global sprouting of what have been thought to be archaic forms of belonging, Geschiere identifies two very important concepts: *autochthony* ('born of the soil'— the highest form of belonging, hence the 'most authentic') and *allochthony* ('stranger' – not born of the soil).

While *autochthony* has a certain primordial quality to it, it has the habit of turning up anywhere, everywhere, any time, without a clear connection, especially because of its "naturalising quality" which makes it "the most authentic" form of belonging (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001:658-9). In fact, *autochthony* has, because of its 'naturalness', the quality of the soil. Notwithstanding that, underneath this soil-like self-evidence lie pregnant forms of ambiguities and inconsistencies that, combined with its essentialist nature, make *autochthony* a dangerous model of belonging in a world in which people are always asking who "we" are. According to Geschiere, regardless of all these inconsistencies, *autochthony*'s global spread makes it a "truly global phenomenon" (2009:2). It triggers struggles (intellectual and violent) between 'self-styled' autochthons and 'strangers'. These 'autochthons' and 'strangers' are in some cases citizens of the same country. The *allochthons* are regarded as the 'Other' with no right to 'go further' than the *autochthons* in various aspects of life. Case studies that quickly come to mind include Hitler's genocidal extermination of Jews, Idi Amin's violent and deadly expulsion of Asians, the Rwandan genocide and, most recently, Zimbabwe's land reform which involved invading white-owned commercial farms and giving them to black people ('children of the soil' – a political cliché), or xenophobic and Aphrophobic attacks in South Africa in 2008 and 2015 in which Africans were called *Makwere-kwere*.[34] All of these were premised

[34] This is a derogatory term used by South Africans to refer to foreigners that they consider to be inferior to them.

upon the belief that there were some people whose relationship to the country was 'autochthonous' while the rest were 'strangers'.

In Ivory Coast, the struggle between *authochtones* and immigrants not only became violent but assumed the seriousness and innocence of national policy. In an operation called Operation National Identification launched by Laurent Gbagbo in 2002, all Ivorians were obliged to return to their village 'of origin' where they would be registered as citizens. It seemed logical that everyone had a village. Not having one, or confessing to have originated from Abidjan (the country's megapolis), was considered as evidence of being an immigrant and that would result in the loss of citizenship. As the 'director of identification' claimed:

> Whoever claims to be Ivorian must have a village. Someone who has done everything to forget the name of his village or who is incapable of showing he belongs to a village is a person without bearings and is so dangerous that we must ask him where he comes from" (cited in Marshall-Fratani, 2006:28).

The violent form taken by these struggles for the exclusion of 'strangers' points to the fact that similar issues of belonging all over the world have become highly explosive and contain enough emotional appeal to trigger xenophobia, ethnic cleansing and war. For instance, the claim that South Africa was being 'soiled' by strangers (uttered by King Zwelithini in 2015) helped trigger an Afrophobia that was already fermenting under South Africa's social landscape.

The discourse of *autochthon*, as Geschiere observes, has turned such questions as "*who belongs?* and, *how can one prove belonging?* into truly worldwide concerns" (Geschiere, 2009:6). While originally it was used in situations of 'indigenous people' and 'disappearing cultures' (for example when speaking of Australian Aborigines who are a minority), it is no longer limited to peripheral areas and even majority groups defend their positions in its name. This trend makes belonging an interesting topic and unravelling its general conundrum in a globalising world and as expressed in literary narratives is one of the objectives of this research.

The increasing transnational mobility of people is happening at a time of the persistence of the nation-state "that succeeds through a wide array of forms and processes in grafting itself onto increasing globalisation" (Geschiere, 2009:21). Thus, the nation-state is not 'withering away' as theorisations of postcoloniality and globalisation are wont to make us believe, but the nation-state is providing frameworks created by its historical emergence for globalisation to take place. The continuing importance of national and immigration controls and other forms of control gives autochthony and other identity paradigms a powerful impact in global

developments. While these forms of belonging are usually considered as parochial, hence 'traditional', evidence shows that they are modern. For instance, the politics of belonging in the postcolonial state has colonial precursors. This means, as Gesciere concludes, belonging is a product of "(post) colonial state formation" (2009:22) and cannot be said to have a pre-colonial mode. This means autochthony is becoming a very strong ingredient of identity politics in the world.

In Europe, the growing panic occasioned by the growing distrust of immigrants is contrary to its (although half-hearted) migrant-support policies in earlier decades of migration. Thus, in politics, phrases such as "migrant problem" are accompanied by suggestions of new forms of control. Even in America, where democracy is thought to have embedded itself in American policy, such university programmes like "citizenship studies" clearly demonstrate the centrality of belonging in modern citizenship debates. Recently, Brexit[35] opened the eyes of many people to the non-permanence of British multicultural policies concerning migrants.

Belonging is all about needs. According to Geschiere (2009:31), "[autochthony] has the unfortunate tendency to fix what is in constant flux (which is exactly what its protagonists are striving for) and it often acquires teleological implications, suggesting that there is a basic need for a group or a person to produce a clearly outlined and unequivocal identity." It can be used in an essentialised way or it can be used in contexts where it assumes "overtones that correspond to an actor's approach" (Geschiere, 2009:31) where identities are shaped or invoked to further certain interests. Different needs therefore have different identities. This has led G. Baumann (2004:18) to come up with "grammars of identity and austerity." This means there are different ways of relating to the 'Other', the 'stranger', and this suggests various shifts from one 'grammar' to another depending on the need. The question asked by Shohat (1992:110), therefore, becomes relevant. Who is deploying which identities for which reasons? Whether the reasons are valid or not, the bottom line is that the obsession with who belongs and who does not, to social, religious or national spaces, gives exile a tragic edge.

When Geschiere used the term, 'belonging', he was concerned with addressing the challenges of a world that 'pretends' to be globalising; pretends because the concomitant obsession with belonging that many countries are experiencing makes belonging a 'globalised'

[35] A referendum was held on the 23rd of June, 2016, to determine whether the UK should remain in the EU. The results were in favour of the UK leaving the EU. One of the reasons why voters opted for Brexit was the issue of national sovereignty. This goes against the unification of the world that multicultural pundits ostensibly agitate for. Brexit, therefore, becomes about who enters and leaves the UK because people migrating from other countries to the UK are seen as interfering in the state of affairs of a country that does not belong to them and depicts a UK that actually wants to be left alone.

concept with highly charged and very dangerous slogans and catchphrases.[36] So while the world is ostensibly globalising, localist discourses seem to be also globalising and seriously challenging discourses of multiculturalism in the sense that localist discourses of autochthon seem to be used in agitations for purified forms of citizenship. This search for the pure actually points to the abrupt and dramatic change in the definition of who belongs and who does not, and also portends the continuous and unending search for who belongs and who does not, a search that is more about political needs than anything else. This is how I have situated this research.

Belonging, as a conceptual framework, is used to explore how conflicts, inclusions and exclusions are capable of shaping an individual's sense of belonging. That space is socially constructed (Lefebvre, 1974) actually provides the basis for any inquiry into the unstable and transecting horizons of belonging, unstable and transecting because belonging is relational and emotive, always existing because there is the Other, the stranger, the allochthon. Thus, belonging as a concept demonstrates the tensions that exist between 'us' and 'them' and because the definitions of 'us' and 'them' are always shifting according to needs, belonging is prone to unending alterations. Such a concept is therefore important in exploring narratives about exile where the exile's exit from and entrance into particular social spaces may need to be understood in the context of this framework.

At the same time, belonging should also be understood not only in terms of people-invoked inclusions and exclusions but also in terms of affective complexes that "create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of words and bodies" (Ahmed, 2004:117). Such affective dimensions can be used to understand, for instance, xenophobic emotions against foreigners who are employed in a country where unemployed youths (autochthons in this case) bear the brunt of the effects of unemployment. The body of the Other, for instance, becomes a threat, or is imagined as one, a replacement in fact, of the autochthon. These affective dimensions contribute to the politics of belonging in a way in the sense that they fuel negative attachments to the perceived Other and positive attachments among those who perceive themselves as 'owning' the same space leading to the perception of the Other as committing a crime through

[36] For example, Donald Trump's most used 2016 campaign catchphrase is, "Let's make (We need to make) America great again." This is not just a campaign catchphrase; Trump's eventual victory might be interpreted as the victory of white primacy over multi-racial democracy especially given the fact that most of his tirades were against non-whites and foreign others As Bouie (cited in Wermund, 2016:*politico.com*) argues, the America that Trump promised was the America of his youth which many grown-up white Americans who voted for him were missing. Of course this was not the only decisive factor in Trump's victory but at least it allows for the contextualisation of this victory within the ongoing discussion of the rebounding of nation and racialised consciousness in current politicking.

his/her proximity to a space belonging to its 'owners'. Sometimes, this takes on economic dimensions leading to what Ahmed calls "the materialization of bodies" (2004:124), which provokes the containment of those materialised bodies through the economy of fear (of the ominous presence of the Other). Migration should be understood also within the context of these affective dimensions, dimensions that, as this study will reveal, also contribute to the continuous and irresolvable production of space in a world where definitions of belonging and not belonging remain central even against postcolonising discourses of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, hybridity of identities, place polygamy and so on.

Lefebvre's theorisation of space

Lefebvre (1974; 1991) sees space as related to society. His argument is that society creates space. He gives a very relevant example:

> An existing space may outlive its original purpose and the raison d'etre which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, reappropriated and put to a use quite different from its initial one. A recent and well-known case of this was the reappropriation of the Halles Centrales, Paris's former wholesale produce market, in 1969-71. For a brief period, the urban centre, designed to facilitate the distribution of food, was transformed into a gathering-place and a scene of permanent festival – in short, into a centre of play rather than of work – for the youth of Paris (1991:164).

What he calls re-appropriation is a spatial practice in which the environment can be modified in order to satisfy human needs and possibilities. This means human beings can physically alter the landscape for re-appropriation. The building of a dam for example, or fencing of whole tracts of land and calling them game reserves, or invading those game reserves during a period of political turmoil in order to give them to, in the Zimbabwean case, 'children of the soil', are all paradigmatic examples of the re-appropriation of space. This also has to do with belonging to that space. According to Lefebvre, any capitalist false consciousness is not related to time but space. This is because all 'concrete abstractions' like ideology, the state, classes, do not exist independent of space. He demands, "What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and kinks it makes use of, and whose code it embodies?" (Lefebvre, 1991:44). This means that space does not exist as an *a priori* condition

of the concrete abstractions that exist on it; pre-existing space is modified, edited, and organised according to specific requirements.

Space, according to Lefebvre, "is produced by dynamic interrelationships between representations of space", representational space, and practices "over time" (Lefebvre, 1991:41-52). Physical space is organised and interpreted as a product of social translation, transformation and experience. Therefore, space is a construct like all other social constructs and is produced from the application of human labour. This is where 'dialectical' reason is established in the sense that social and spatial relations become inter-reactive. A society forms a spatial agreement about its spaces and places by conforming every individual inhabiting those spaces to particular norms and codes of conduct. Culture becomes as important as politics (power and its institutions). A single example is a monument like, in the Zimbabwean case, 'The National Heroes Acre' where liberation war heroes are buried. This acre is deployed as a referent that Zimbabweans [should] identify with. Each individual who 'truly belongs' to Zimbabwe must subscribe to that image of membership and acknowledge the history it represents. This makes it practical and concrete. In short, before the Heroes Acre invaded Warren Hills (where it is situated in Harare), nature had created the hill as a space, which was later turned into Warren Hills as abstract space; Warren Hills Heroes Acre was also later created and produced by human beings as an abstract space as well. This agrees with Lefebvre's conclusion that such an abstract space as I have just given as an example above alienates people from space and facilitates political control.

In his review essay of Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991), Molotch (1993:887) explains that the simple interpretation of Lefebvre's iterations is that,

> [H]umans create the space in which they make their lives; it is a project shaped by interests of classes, experts, roots, and other contending forces. Space is not simply inherited nature, or passed on by the dead hand of the past, or autonomously determined by "laws" of spatial geometry as per conventional theory. Space is produced and reproduced through human intentions, even if unanticipated consequences also develop, and even as space constrains and influences those producing it.

The act of producing and re-producing space that Molotch mentions points at a process which, like belonging, is unending. So space is not just neutral, a vacuum waiting for life to transpire on it. It is, in Molotch's words, "an interlinkage of geographic form, built environment, symbolic meanings, and routines of life" (1993:888). So a piece of land for which people may fight should also be understood, if we follow Lefebvre's thinking, in terms of the reality that

organises it. Thus space is produced and constituted with reality; any reality that fails to be inscribed on space becomes abstract. As Lefebvre observes, any ideas, beliefs, ways of life and even symbols of life "which do not succeed in making their mark on space, and thus generating (or producing) an appropriate morphology, will lose all pith and become mere signs, resolve themselves into abstract descriptions, or mutate into fantasie ... the production of space – has nothing incidental about it: it is a matter of life and death" (1991:417). Space therefore is a result of human actions and a cause of human actions. This makes it an emotive concept.

The value of Lefebvre's theorisation to this research is that it supports the trajectory that this research takes. The movement from 'perceived' (and produced) disabling spaces to 'perceived' (and produced) enabling spaces with their own discourses is trapped within the dialectical logic of the politics of the production of space. In such a scenario, exile can be read with an awareness of McClennen's warning: it can have a 'tragic edge' to it.

Conclusion

In summation, the research is concerned with the analysis of the representation of exile experiences in selected post-2000 white- and black-authored narratives. The research is particularly focused on how both white and black characters experience their diasporas. The use of 'white' and 'black' is not only for convenience but is informed by how these dichotomies have influenced creative writing and criticism in Zimbabwean literature. Of importance is how even in representation, black and white authors reproduce or attempt to subvert these dichotomies through mutual exclusions or inclusions. The importance of this strand lies in the fact that the research is an attempt to demonstrate how, even as the world becomes global and postcolonial, exile (both as experienced and imposed) continues to be an abiding feature of postcolonial experience. Exclusive representations in literature and canonisations of these literatures are symbolic manifestations of the gating of the globe. In such a scenario, the celebratory mood of postcolonial diasporisation, hybridisation and multiculturalism needs to be checked by theorisations and criticisms that acknowledge this irresolvable exile dialectic and its tragic edge. This is what the analysis of selected texts seeks to achieve.

The second chapter will explore the narratives of the displaced descendants of a colonial diaspora, exiled white Zimbabweans. These include *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* (Catherine Buckle, 2001), *The Last Resort* (Douglas Rogers, 2009), *This September Sun* (Bryony Rheam, 2009) and *Lettah's Gift* (Graham Lang, 2011). The analysis of these

narratives will reveal that even as they try to negotiate a sense of home and belonging, many of them continue to reproduce a "deep and colonially-rooted ambivalence towards notions of Africa, home and belonging" (Primorac, 2010b:203). These narratives mourn the decline of white rural lifestyle and the exiling of white people due to exclusionary politics but the narratives, either purposefully or accidentally, reveal the racism, patriarchy and 'exiling away' of black characters upon which this lifestyle was based. Thus, belonging is relative to the Other. However, this chapter also explores the 'lines of flight' that some of the authors use in order to go beyond the whiteness-and-landscape trope as a way of universalising and de-racialising issues of exile, identity and belonging.

The third chapter will analyse depictions of home in black-authored narratives. These are *An Elegy for Easterly* (Petina Gappah, 2009), *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava, 2009), *Writing Free* (Staunton, I [Ed.], 2011) and *We Need New Names* (NoViolet Bulawayo, 2013). These depictions are generally centred on a home (Zimbabwe) that is no longer offering anchorage to the people who perceive themselves as belonging to it. Opting out from such a disabling space in search of an enabling space outside the suffocating limits of the country's border becomes a welcome option for many. Yet, even in what is perceived as a disabling space, the politics of belonging are played out. Racist exclusionary politics seems to have reduced the enemy to the white ex-colonial descendent, but a closer reading of these narratives shows that the question is not whether one is white or black; the question is whether one stands in the way. Therefore, even black characters seem to be struggling with the issue of belonging to what they have hitherto called home. The chapter will also analyse how the politico-aesthetic regimes under which these authors have submitted themselves work as metaphors of dislocation and non-belonging and how these regimes also communicate a search for alternative belongings (both physically and symbolically) outside the constrictions of home and its monovalence. What this chapter will reveal is that exile and its tragic edge do not begin when characters exit what they call 'home'. In fact, various exits by these characters are provoked by experiences of exile at home.

The fourth chapter will explore how those characters who run away from the inimitable tumult negotiate either the politics of the new landscape and how they grapple with issues of belonging to these spaces. What is it that the characters do to belong to the new spaces that they have occupied? How do they relate to the landscape and to the people on the landscape? Texts to be analysed include *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava, 2009), *Writing Free* (Staunton, I [Ed.], 2011), *We Need New Names* (NoViolet Bulawayo, 2013) and *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician* (Tendai Huchu, 2014).

In the fifth chapter, I utilise a more panoramic view of all the texts chosen for this research. Thus, in the fifth chapter, I acknowledge the exile's escape from the suffering of his or her homeland but with an awareness of the conflicts and contradictions this escape engenders. Home and the foreign space seem to be equally treacherous. The binary logic of home as disabling (already challenged by white nostalgic characters who want to come back) and the foreign space as enabling is heavily challenged. The exile experience becomes just a function of the transnational paradox, globalisation's dark underbelly. Migration and the promises of an enabling environment are analysed in this chapter with an awareness of the antinomy and ambivalence latent in the whole process. Just like at home, the exiles are still locked in the same crises of belonging, within the politics of exclusion and identity. Thus, exiles may look at the ground and see that they no longer stand on the same physical ground as before, and look at the sky and discover that they share the same sun as the rest of the world. I will reference all the texts chosen for this research but this time from the perspective of critically analysing the characters' attempts to belong, to subvert the essentialisms that keep them outside. A close analysis of the politico-aesthetic regimes under which the authors submit themselves is also vital because through these ideologies we get an understanding of whether the authors themselves have freed themselves from the essentialisms of the past that, postcolonially speaking, are not supposed to have a place in a world that is ostensibly globalised. This also involves their deployment of narrative strategies.

The final chapter is the conclusion in which I will evaluate the major highlights of this research especially focusing on how writing about and analysing narratives of exile should continue to be done from an awareness of the tragic edge of exile. This chapter will affirm the value of McClennen's dialectics of exile, Geschiere's concept of belonging and Lefebvre's theorisation of space as useful conceptual and theoretical tools that should be utilised in postcolonial theorisation to explain why the world that is going global is also becoming gated. Recent questions on immigrants in Europe and xenophobic events in particular parts of the world need to be explained by theories that are propounded by theorists who are aware of the realities in multiplicities of location without rashly waving the magic wand of 'postcolonial', 'globalised', 'multicultural', 'hybrid' and 'Afropolitan' in a world where the representations of exile experiences in literature continue to foreground their abjection and not their salvation.

CHAPTER 2
IN SEARCH OF HOME IN THE EUROPEAN DIASPORA – POST-2000 WHITE ZIMBABWEAN WRITING AND THE POLITICS OF BELONGING

Introduction

This chapter explores the narratives of exiled white Zimbabweans who are displaced progenies of a colonial diaspora. These include *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* (abbreviated *AT*) (Catherine Buckle, 2001), *The Last Resort* (abbreviated *LR*) (Douglas Rogers, 2009), *This September Sun* (abbreviated *SS*) (Bryony Rheam, 2009) and *Lettah's Gift* (abbreviated *LG*) (Graham Lang, 2011). I will analyse how these narratives deal with issues of home and belonging in a politically volatile environment of ultra-nationalistic re-definition of

space and belonging. I will also explore whether the narratives are mere extensions of the Rhodesian aesthetic or whether they adventure beyond it.

However, it is also my argument in this chapter that the writing of belonging in post-2000 white-authored Zimbabwean narratives does not happen in a vacuum but is closely connected to the unfolding events during this period, the most prominent of which was the invasion of white-owned commercial farms that began sporadically in 1999 but which, in 2000, gathered enough momentum to attract the attention of international media. The narratives chosen for this chapter, therefore, need to be read in the context of the events of this period when issues of identity and belonging took centre stage in legitimising and de-legitimising the land invasions (euphemistically known as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme) and claims of ownership of land by both black and white Zimbabweans. Therefore, the criticism of white-authored Zimbabwean writing will partly make use of the interface between land and whiteness, through which white Zimbabweans are anthropologically studied and through which white-authored narratives are usually read. I said 'partly' because, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the reading of belonging in white-authored narratives in the context of whiteness and landscape aesthetics serves to foreclose other avenues of interpretation and appreciation of white-authored narratives.

Even though I will partly use the critical tools mainly used in reading whiteness and landscape to interpret these narratives, I will also argue that the reading of issues of belonging by inhabitants of the European diaspora in Zimbabwe has been overtly obsessed with the desire to debunk elements of the 'Rhodesian discourse', a study spearheaded by Anthony Chennells in 1982, and later taken up by Ngwabi Bhebhe and Terence Ranger in 1995 and Rosemary Moyana in 1999. Even where some critics profess to be offering alternative interpretations of these narratives (Harris, 2005; Pilosoff, 2009; Primorac, 2010), they remain embroiled in the politics of whiteness and landscape and fail to offer alternative interpretations of these narratives. This monologic criticism fails, therefore, to acknowledge the lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that some authors exploit to escape the hegemony of the 'Rhodesian discourse'. This means belonging can be negotiated through other means.

The choice of texts in this chapter has been done in a way that offers a spectrum on which white authors' grappling with issues of belonging can be read, starting with the narrative in which landscape, whiteness and belonging are more apparent and ending with the narrative in which landscape and whiteness are either peripheral or non-existent. This is meant to provide a nuanced reading of exile and belonging among inhabitants of the European diaspora that pays

attention to multiplicities of voices without lumping all white-authored narratives under one taxonomy called the Rhodesian discourse.

The Rhodesian Discourse, Black Nativist Belonging, Politics and the Scapegoating of Whiteness: An analysis of Buckle's *African Tears*

Buckle's *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* (2001) is one of those texts that were written when the plight of white farmers in Zimbabwe's post-2000 land invasions was making international news. This plight, which attracted international media attention, also created a market of sympathetic readers for memoirs (like Buckle's) based on this catastrophe. Unlike Douglas Rogers, Graham Lang and Byrony Rheam who write from a position of physical exile, Buckle writes from her farm in Zimbabwe, a farm which she is on the verge of losing completely. This makes her writing assume an immediacy and heat that is compounded by the fact that *African Tears* is a memoir, a record of events that really happened to Buckle. However, even though Buckle is not in geographical exile, she is also experiencing it through the alienating effects of Zimbabwe's politics that segregates people's access to land by invoking skin colour.

Without downplaying the traumatic effects of this ZANU—PF-inspired exercise, this sub-section seeks to critically analyse Buckle's memoir with the intention of unravelling how the politico-aesthetic regime Buckle subscribes to is inscribed with the heated politics of belonging and not belonging to the land. Buckle's writing, like the rest chosen for this research, focuses on 'home' and by writing home, Buckle gives to her readers what Harris (2005:103) calls "inscriptions of whiteness/descriptions of belonging." In Buckle, we see the complication that rises from the dialectic between the political and the personal, between the writing of white identity and what Harris calls "writing the self" (2005:103). What we see in Buckle's memoir then is the interface between memory and politics. The individual's art of memory in this case is however different from psychological theories that focus on the individual. In this case the individual's memory of what blackness is doing to land and whiteness represents the collective, and can therefore be regarded as "collective memory" (Paez, Basabe and Gonzalez, 1997:150) which are "those memories of a shared past that are retained by members of a group, class or nation." Paez et al. believe that the phrase, "collective memory",

> refers to shared memories of societal-level events, especially extreme, intense events that have led to important institutional changes. Collective memory rests on events that have an impact on collectivities and have driven them to modify their institutions, beliefs and values […and these] emotionally laden events attract more attention and are better remembered than other more neutral events (1997:150).

Collective memory has its own repertoires – "oral stories, rumours, gestures, or cultural styles, in addition to written stories and institutionalised cultural activities" (Paez et al., 1997:150). As Paez et al point out, the collective memory of politically motivated catastrophes, in this case the land invasions, is "socially distributed memory" (1997:150) because the psychic is always necessarily embedded in the social. While in the context of the land invasions narratives like Buckle's may be excluded from what is considered Zimbabwean literature in terms of canonisation or in terms of the stories told therein being suppressed in public, the events of the post-2000 land invasions are likely to be remembered as historical archives or told as oral traditions. This means that in the case of Zimbabwe's controversial land reform, the official and much touted narrative of redressing colonial imbalances is replaced by the belief that the invasions were politically-choreographed by Mugabe using his reserve army of war veterans, race as an indispensable tool, and whiteness as a scapegoat for his selfish craving for power. Such a story, while appearing in the memoir of Buckle, is individually remembered by Buckle herself while at the same time bearing all the repertoires of the public.

This, significantly, is what has led to the re-generation of the phrase 'Rhodesian narrative' to refer to "twenty-first century narratives by displaced descendants of a colonial diaspora – that is to say, multiply, culturally displaced subjects, or exiled white Zimbabweans – [which] have modified and reproduced [the Rhodesian] narrative tradition, using it as a tool of political critique aimed at Robert Mugabe's regime" (Primorac, 2010b:202). While the writers of these narratives, who identify themselves as Zimbabwean, try to adapt their sense of home and belonging to conditions of crisis and exile engendered by ZANU—PF ultra-nationalism, their narratives continue to reproduce "a deep and colonially-rooted ambivalence towards notions of Africa, home and belonging" (Primorac, 2010b:201). This is what I want to pursue in this sub-section with regard to Buckle's narrative. While she seeks to subvert ZANU—PF ultra-nationalism and essentialised identity politics by showing that the whole exercise was only meant for the political survival of Mugabe, Buckle subscribes to the style of writing synonymous with the Rhodesian narrative which, as I have demonstrated in the first chapter, plays a central role in foregrounding colonial suppositions which demonise the black Zimbabwean. For instance, *African Tears* tries very hard to speak on Buckle's eligibility to

own a farm and the blacks' ineligibility to own one. Her descriptions of squatters on her farm border is a wholesale dismissal, not only of their ability to farm, but of their civility too:

> Squatters began moving back on our farm, cutting thatching grass and roofing their huts. This caused enormous amusement when one of the squatters arrived with a donkey. He openly cut trees in our gum plantation and used the donkey to pull them to the hut he was building in the field above our dairy. Squatter and donkey slept together in this partially built hut at night and during the day my cattle grazed innocently all around his new complex (*AT*:168).

While this memoir is a record of what actually transpired during the land invasions, the methods used in telling the story, the choice of words and the recording of impressions are all Buckle's own choices. Therefore, the portrayal of the invasions as some sort of circus, where a squatter arrives with a donkey, and sleeps with the same in a hut, juxtaposed with the more serious business of Buckle's dairy, innocently grazing cattle and well-planned gum plantation (this one being recklessly destroyed by invaders to build, of all things, huts), is bound to put a dent on the black Zimbabwean's ability to coax the soil to produce and feed the whole country as the white farm owner is probably doing.

Buckle's representation of the black Zimbabwean's ability to produce using the soil may be a product of some real case studies by Buckle or any other researcher on the failure of black Zimbabweans to farm commercially, but evidence from the memoir itself shows that black workers working for white farmers are actually privy to the methods used to make the soil produce.[37] Many instances, Buckle tries very hard to demonstrate that Stow Farm is a product of concerted manual efforts on her part to make it productive. This agrees with an observation made by Pilosoff (2009:628):

> Furthermore, one of the most damaging criticisms of this white myopia concerning their own hard work relates to farm labour. While one can readily acknowledge that many white farmers did work hard themselves, although some very conspicuously did not, all farmers depended utterly on the labour and exploitation of black farm workers to make whatever land and enterprise they undertook viable and successful.[38]

[37] In fact, a recent research by Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart (2012) in *Zimbabwe Takes back its Land* reveals otherwise.

[38] There are many researches that reveal the ineptitude of some white farmers. For instance, Clements and Harben's *Leaf of Gold: The Story of Rhodesian Tobacco* (1962). Also see Rutherford, *Working on the Margins: Black Workers, White Farmers in Postcolonial Zimbabwe* (2001), for more on black workers.

Buckle's argument is that Stow Farm is a product of her hard labour, taking the typical claim we also see in Rogers' *The Last Resort*, for instance, that when she bought the farm it had nothing and she began from scratch, investing through "heartache and back-breaking work to get this farm going" (*AT*:96). She confesses that "the farm was extremely run down and we knew that we had a long road ahead of us to get it up and running … Ian had no choice but to find work outside Zimbabwe and I ran the farm alone, continually living on the breadline in a collapsing and very dilapidated house" (*AT*:96). While there might be no basis for disputing Buckle's claim, its recurring presence in many white-authored, post-2000 Zimbabwean narratives makes it a trope that should not be taken lightly.[39] It is clear here that Buckle is subscribing to a popular trope used by white memoirists, that the farm is a product of their own concerted efforts to get it running. She even claims, like Rogers in *The Last Resort*, that the land was not suitable for farming since it was rocky, hilly, and the soils were poor but their love for land and the environment made them persevere. The elements of this trope are evident in this claim:

> We hadn't inherited anything and life had been a happy and continual uphill struggle to get to where we were now. We both had a deep love for wildlife and Zimbabwe's exquisite countryside and with our farm we had managed to capture just a tiny part of it. This little farm was going to be the legacy we would leave to our son. Ian had planted hundreds of indigenous trees. We had reedbuck, duiker, steenbok and even kudu on the farm. The birds were exquisite, attracted by Ian's wild fruits, and in a three-month period I recorded of 100 species of birds in our garden. The little piece of our heaven was to be for Richard and it broke our hearts to think that we may lose it all for someone's political survival (*AT*:112).

Before Buckle bought her farm in 1990, she had applied for permission to purchase the land from the government. The government issued her a Certificate of no Current Interest (*AT*:12) which showed that the government had no interest in that particular piece of land she wanted to purchase. This makes her indignation against the reforms very legitimate. However, the quotation above shows that even though her claim to the land is legitimate, she still aligns herself with the discourse of pre-1980 Rhodesia. In her romanticised descriptions of farm life

[39] *Foredoomed Is My Forest: The Diary of a Zimbabwe Farmer* (Richard. F. Wiles, 2005); *The Last Resort* (Douglas Rogers, 2009); *Lettah's Gift* (Graham Lang, 2009); *Paradise Plundered* (Jim Barker, 2007); *Jambanja* (Eric Harrison, 2006) are some of the narratives that repeat this trope. There is no acknowledgement of the exploitation of the labour of black people in these successful farming ventures so that it appears to the reader as if the success was entirely dependent on the owners' hard labour. The argument of these memoirists might have some justification but its recurrence tempts the reader to think that this is part of the Rhodesian Discourse.

(*AT*:112), animals and nature feature more prominently than black people. The meticulous recording of bird species attracted by Ian's wild fruits becomes ironical in the sense that the efforts are not sublimated towards really knowing black people (beyond little acts of philanthropy) and their land-owning patterns towards a redressing of land-owning imbalances. Her statistical evidence of white farmers losing land is not sensitive to the land-owning patterns, that is, it does not take into account whether the farmers owned the land before or after independence. Also, she exonerates every white farmer from the 'sins of the fathers' by believing that these farmers should not be victims of sins committed over a hundred years ago by their forefathers. Therefore, by reducing the whole drama to a politically-choreographed phenomenon, Buckle is in a way oblivious to the grievances of ordinary black people against whom the pre-independence and post-independence systems had unleashed repressive measures. According to Pilosoff, Buckle's logic

> is oblivious to the fact that independence had only been achieved 21 years previously, and many of the repressive actions against black people taken by the settler state remained in place until the very end of white minority rule. This oversight is quickly forgotten however, when the arrival of independence plays to the white farmers' advantage. The well-versed response is that the majority of white farmers, some estimates put it as high as 80%, bought their farms after 1980, and thus carry none of the historical baggage or guilt that came with owning pre-independence farms, regardless of their background or where they would have secured the funds or resources to do so. Even if they did buy their land before 1980, […] the government, with over 20 years to resolve the land issue, had not done so, which white farmers often, and rather conveniently, viewed as absolving them of all guilt and responsibility (2009:629).

What Pilosoff is hinting at here is that in Buckle's narration of her hard work and how it developed the farm, and in her exoneration of fellow white farm owners of the guilt of the sins of their forefathers, she is keeping blacks at the periphery. What it means then is that as long as the system is working for her and other white farm owners, Buckle's conscience would not be pricked by black people who remain trapped in the colonially-created reserves. The incestuous affair between the Mugabe-led regime and its colonially and nationalistically ingrained repressive tendencies and the four thousand plus white farmers kept black people at the periphery, mostly as farm-workers and not farm-owners.[40] This is why the danger of losing land jolts Buckle into an awareness of their failure as white farmers to do something about the

[40] Figures suggest that by 2000, there were 2 million farm workers in Zimbabwe and 4500 white commercial farm owners (Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart, 2012)

land issue. She therefore tries to give herself and other white farmers a modicum of guilt for not doing something about the land:

> As farmers we were all to blame for the position we now found ourselves in as our land were invaded. When the list came out in 1997, we all made a lot of noise, alternatives were offered and suggestions were made but basically we left it up to someone else to sort out (*AT*:12).

Romanticisation or idealisation does not only involve farm life and nature (gum trees, duiker, kudu, birds etc); it also involves labour and race relations. The depiction of Emmanuel is of a "loyal and trusted worker who has been with [them] almost a decade" (*AT*:23). While reporters who visit Stow Farm ask specific questions about Mrs Buckle, Emmanuel answers them in a way that shows that he and other workers are personally involved as the conversation below demonstrates:

> "Is *Mrs Buckle* afraid?" they asked him.
> "Oh no, *we* are not afraid here."
> "Is *she* worried about her safety?"
> "Oh no, *we* are not worried here."
> "Are the war veterans nearby?"
> "Oh no, they are far away" (stress mine) (*AT*:23).

The reporters seem to be concerned about Mrs Buckle yet Emmanuel throws himself and other workers into the answers he gives to the reporters. This might be important to Buckle, a way of proving the colour-blind relationship that exists between the workers and their employer even though it is obvious here that the questions asked by foreign (and white) reporters were not colour-blind.

We also encounter, in *African Tears*, the depiction of Jane as a happy black servant whose relationship with her mistress is race-blind.

> So far all the workers are staying strong and as most have been with us for almost the whole decade we've been here, they are not giving up yet. Particularly Jane, the woman who runs our little store, deserves a medal. She has put up with the squatters' intimidation every day. Three of the squatters have taken to standing in the store and just staring at her – sometimes 2 – 3 hours at a time. I've offered to close the store and send Jane on leave but she wants to keep going. She's broken out in a nervous/stress related rash all over her neck but remains cheerful and determined (*AT*:43).

While Jane and Emmanuel demonstrate a colour-blind relationship with their employer, that relationship still has a maternalistic and condescending tinge to it. Buckle fails to utilise, before the farm invasions, that relationship to fortify her claims of belonging to the farm. Instead, she

remains the maternalistic and condescending benefactor of these black workers. In terms of connection to the land, however, she utilises nature and only invokes these glorious relationships between herself and the farm workers in the post-eviction romantic visions of the land, which, at this point, was too late. Otherwise, for her, the workers are industrious and faithful and do not harbour any interests that have to do with owning the land.[41]

The depiction of faithful, industrious workers (who are not featured when white memoirists confess of how they improved the land from scratch) is a cliché in some white memoirs as shall be seen when I analyse *The Last Resort.* Buckle's own writings, therefore, can be viewed as part of the discourse of the "White Man's burden and colonial visions of Africa".[42] What we see in *African Tears* is a collection of white farmers trying to do all they can do to feed 'Africa' while Africa is doing everything it can to destroy those efforts.

I find it prudent, therefore, at this stage, to begin with Wiles' own grievance against the naivety of the African as a starting point to my analysis of Buckle's vision:

> My own scenario is but a miniscule representation of the total scene in Zimbabwe and indeed the whole of Africa. There is absolutely no hope that Africans will succeed in putting together anything worthwhile. They are unable to anticipate. They cannot administer. Responsibility is still a foreign word. Whatever they touch ends in ruin (Wiles, 2005:171)

The verdict passed against Africa by Wiles here is motivated by his experiences in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is subsumed into Africa and Wiles' memoir ceases to be about Zimbabwe but becomes a polemic against the Africans. This is racist. His claim that the African mind is different, in many respects, from the European one is a racial and anthropological discourse that has its roots in Hegel.[43] While Buckle is not as overtly racist as Wiles, her claims still find their confirmation in Wiles'. Her statements bear the hallmark of the 'colonial visions' discourse that sees the progress of black people as being tied inextricably to the philanthropic and industrious work of the white Zimbabwean. She says,

> So now I knew the fate of our farm, potatoes, tobacco and a tuck shop – all to be undertaken by a group of unemployed youngsters, who were in their nappies

[41] J.M. Coetzee, in *White Writing* (1988), writes about the pitfalls of white pastoral writing in which the writers connect more to nature than to black people.

[42] Rudyard Kipling wrote the poem, 'The White Man's Burden' (1899), as a hymn to U.S imperialism in the Philippine islands. He views the civilising of the Other, the half-child, half-devil, as the burden of the white man.

[43] Hegel's 'African' is not yet a historical being. He lies beyond self-conscious history and is enwrapped in darkness. He has not reached the level of realising his being; he's still like a wild animal that needs to be tamed.

> when the war of Independence was being fought, who between them couldn't afford even a pack of cigarettes, let alone tools, implements, fertilizer or anything that went into running a business. What a crying shame, I thought, that youngsters could have been led up the garden path like this. Where did they think the government was going to find the money to get them started, it didn't even have money to buy fuel to run its own vehicles (*AT*:74).

Buckle here discredits the would-be-owners of her farm and casts herself as the only one with the ability. However, the narration of things that would be taken by the would-be-owners – potatoes and tobacco – puts a dent on her account in the sense that it discredits her claim that the land was not even suitable for farming. The preponderance of potatoes and tobacco on a farm whose owner claimed that it was not conducive to farming definitely makes the narrator a dubious character. She too becomes a participant in the politicking that Mugabe and company are part of. The discrediting of the credentials of enemies is an aspect of the politics of belonging.

The quotation above also demonstrates how, in her construction of her legitimacy as a farm-owner and her de-legitimation of the black would-be-owners, Buckle turns a blind eye on history. She is sure no one (especially these black 'kids' in their 'nappies') can maximise the land like her and other white land owners. She ignores how pre-independence white farmers received considerable support from the Rhodesian government. These farmers were supported through legislation that made available prime, agricultural land for the farmers to choose and an array of other subsidies and benefits all helping to catalyse the development of agricultural enterprises.[44] She forgets to narrate how white farmers continued to receive favourable treatment from the new black government which feared a repetition of the Mozambican crisis.[45] According to Pilosoff (2009:628), "[w]hite farmers, and particularly the tobacco farmers, were vital to the country's economic survival and growth, and were thus protected by the new (black) Zimbabwean government, despite land inequality remaining a pressing concern for vast swathes of the rural and urban populations." The question is, if would-be-black farmers were to be presented with the same conditions that supported the growth of white-owned agricultural

[44] The Land Apportionment Act, 1930, and The Land Tenure Act, 1969, for instance, were all meant to make prime and fertile land available for white farmers while marginalising black people. Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart (2012) observe how Rhodesian farmers were beneficiaries of huge subsidies which the newly settled black farmers are not benefiting from.

[45] In his introductory chapter in *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition – 1980-1986*, Mandaza observes how economic turmoil as a result of radical changes in Mozambique prevailed over the black Zimbabwean government's will to commit itself to any radical changes that included a radical land reform.

enterprises, would they fail to maximise production? Would they not, like white farmers, provide Zimbabwe with both good and bad black farmers?

Buckle's references to Hitler in her descriptions of Mugabe, and Mugabe's own statement that in his fight for the sovereignty of his people he was ready to be "Hitler tenfold" (Mugabe, 2003), parallels "white Zimbabweans' experiences under Mugabe to those of Jews in Nazi Germany thereby dehistoricising whiteness in this particular context and erasing the complex history of colonisation that has informed white Zimbabwean identity thus far" (Harris, 2005:106). By showing what blackness is doing to whiteness, Buckle, in one stroke, dehistoricises race and racial history. Her nostalgic and curative pilgrimages into the past through her memories of past splendour and racial harmony idealise, dehistorisise, deracialise and depoliticise her presence in Zimbabwe and makes a strong case for her belonging. The discrepancy between this idealisation and the profound racial tensions and separations that characterised blacks' and whites' existence in Zimbabwe makes Buckle's narrative blind to broader political and national issues. Of course, it should also be acknowledged that Mugabe's sudden capricious revocation of his reconciliation drive for a politically-convenient and radical land reform allowed white writers like Buckle to re-imagine a past that "exculpates white Zimbabwean involvement in racial tensions through dehistoricising that identity" (Harris, 2005:107). While in the South African case, exculpation is achieved through confession for reconciliation and multiculturalism,[46] in the case of white Zimbabwean memoirs it is achieved through an exposition of what blackness is doing to whiteness.

Buckle confesses that she wrote *African Tears* for Zimbabweans of all colours to know what it was like (*AT*:v). She sees the writing of this memoir as her own political and social responsibility "and [seems] to believe that redemption is achieved through the process of making public what [she] has experienced in Zimbabwe" (Harris, 2005:107). This ties in with what I pointed out at the beginning of this section, that the individual's rehearsal of memory has a collective function. McArthur (1992:650) defines a memoir as a

> [w]ritten record of people and events as experienced by the author; a form of autobiography that gives particular attention to matters of contemporary interest not closely affecting the author's inner life. It is not a formal personal history, but an assembly of memories.

[46] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa was a court-like body that was assembled to spearhead a process of restorative justice through the confessions of both the perpetrators and victims of gross human rights violations during the apartheid era – (Truth) for the sake of restorative (and not retributive) justice (Reconciliation). Perpetrators had the chance to plead for amnesty from both criminal and civil prosecution.

While this definition captures the essential qualities of a memoir, it fails to capture the essence of Buckle's memoir which often slips into the autobiographical.[47] Harris (2005:108) makes the same observation with regard to Peter Godwin's memoir:[48]

> Godwin's text is not only a memoir – it often slips into the autobiographical mode in which the writing self, or the writing of the self, seeks to explain and justify as well as to inform (and is) often confessional. This slippage allows for interesting associated slippages […] between belonging and ownership; between description of landscape and inscription of the self into that landscape; between the confession and exculpation and redemption; and between the writing of the experiences of the white Zimbabwean and the claiming of Zimbabwe as home.

The inscription of the self onto the landscape is not a phenomenon that begins with Buckle or Godwin. It is an inextricable aspect of the Rhodesian discourse which helps to "manufacture, codify and help reproduce group identities related to race and nation" (Primorac, 2010b:203). Buckle's narrative and those others cross-referenced in this section are extensions of the 1970s settler-authored novels, autobiographies and memoirs that performed the cultural role of contesting for space with and marginalising Zimbabwean nationalist claims. While the post-2000 narratives do not particularly enunciate the notion of Britain/England as home as do the narratives of the 1970s, they also partake in the politics of belonging of the narratives of the 1970s which seek to remove black people from the land by by-passing them in descriptions of whiteness and landscape. The Rhodesian discourse that manifests in these narratives appears as an antithesis of Mugabeist nationalism.[49] While the Mugabeist discourse in Buckle's memoir peddles an anti-white, essentialised Zimbabwean identity based on blackness, the Rhodesian discourse reifies white belonging through an idealised notion of land. What we have therefore are two binaries of belonging: Mugabeist nationalism and the Rhodesian discourse. The mutual contestation between these two nationalist cultural practices has led Shutt and King (2005:262) to observe that "Africans necessarily became part and parcel of white Rhodesian identity."

The reworking and redeployment of nationalist cultural repertoires by the Mugabe regime since 2000 has also led to the reworking and redeployment of the Rhodesian narrative. Buckle's narrative, written in opposition to the violent land seizures by the Mugabe regime, is

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[47] Buckle does not specifically refer to *African Tears* as a memoir although it is popularly regarded as such.
[48] *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (Peter Godwin, 1996).
[49] Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) has described what he calls 'Mugabeism' which is a conglomeration of the various meanings of Mugabe as liberator, oppressor, democrat, anti-democrat, anti-imperialist, Machiavellian dictator, champion of socio-economic rights, taker of socio-economic rights and all the contradictory and ambivalent shades of a man whose speaking and acting go in different directions.

a "neo-Rhodesian" (Primorac, 2010b:204) one stream-lined in order to accommodate the process of bringing whites from the margins where they had been relegated by the 'revolutionary' meta-narrative of Mugabe.[50] This relegation of white Zimbabweans to the margins, therefore, means that Buckle and other memoirists are narrating their stories from a position of exile. Buckle is exiled from Stow Farm and from the Zimbabwean nationalist imagination even before she has vacated the farm. Therefore, her attempts at reclaiming her belonging have to be done by demonising the same imagination that exiled her. The attempts also have to be done through "inscriptions of whiteness [on the land]/descriptions of belonging" (Harris, 2005:103). Even in her polemics against the excesses of ZANU—PF it is obvious that Buckle cannot write the landscape out of her. Her nostalgic reminiscences bear the hallmarks of these "inscriptions of whiteness".

Buckle also specifies the kind of friends Richard has: black children of her farmworkers. However, there is an ironic tinge to their laughter: the farm is a piece of heaven being reserved for Richard alone: "[t]his little piece of our heaven was to be for Richard and it broke our hearts to think that we might lose it all for someone's political survival" (*AT*:102). This nostalgia is already exclusionary. The multicultural celebration of the laughing children is subverted by the exclusionary inscription of Richard's name on the land at the expense of his multicultural childhood society. In fact, Buckle reminisces: "I stopped when I got to Richard's tree. As the trees had grown up, Richard had carved his name into the bark of one of the gums" (*AT*:87). This remembered landscape of Stow Farm, with its Edenic innocence, ignores the social exile that the white farming community had put itself into and had chosen to conveniently ignore by seeking belonging through the land. When a black squatter also writes his name, "J A R" (*AT*:171), on the bark of one of the trees, Buckle had to "swallow very hard to stop the vomit."

Buckle's relationship with the community of blacks surrounding her farm is not a social one; it is a philanthropic one. She confesses that Edward, the resident war veteran on her farm, has been a friend of the family for ten years during which time Buckle would perform a number of philanthropic works that include "giving money for *their* independence celebrations" (stress mine) (*AT*:97). This means Buckle would rather own the land than *their* independence. She

[50] Such a relegation starts after 1990 but becomes more prominent from 2000, when the construction of the nation became more oriented towards the ethnic and vernacular (common descent and ancestry, common 'history', common culture, myths, family ties etc) than towards the civic (law, institutions and territorial boundaries). These indigenous and vernacular elements find their ultimate expression in what I discussed in the first chapter as 'patriotic discourse', which is a systematic monovalent construction of history around Robert Mugabe and ZANU—PF for the sake of positioning them and removing those who are detrimental to their survival, more visibly white people, but in actual fact anyone who stands in the way.

fails therefore to commit herself to performative acts that make her belong socially. She recognises the existence of her black neighbours in the communal lands but without closing the social distance. Therefore, she territorially belongs to Stow Farm but socially she is an outsider. This means she is blind to the fact that it is not nature alone that makes people belong but the political, social and other aspects of life.

While Buckle's indignation at the invasion of her farm is justifiable, especially because it was triggered by Mugabe's capricious about-turn after promising that white farmers would continue farming undisturbed, the expression of this indignation still falls within the parameters of the politics of inclusion and exclusion. It has the basic elements of excluding black people from the land in order to cultivate her own belonging. She might have overcome her own territorial exile by loving the land, but she fails to overcome her social exile. In fact, the paramilitary approach of Mugabe's land reform only fuels Buckle's commitment to environmentalism. I have pointed out how Buckle painstakingly records the number of bird species that are attracted to Ian's wild fruits. I have pointed out her indignation at the reckless pillage of her eucalyptus and her hysterical anger at the hunting expeditions carried out by the squatters on her farm which later go a notch up to the extent of hunting her cattle. It becomes evident therefore that there seems to be a symbiotic relationship between whiteness and nature and a destructive relationship between blackness and nature in that whiteness conserves, blackness pillages. This corresponds with the observation that "race and nature work as a terrain of power" (Moore, Kosek and Pandian, 2003:1).

Dams also feature in a variety of white memoirs including in *African Tears*:

> Then we went down to our little dam and that was even more shocking. Once more densely enclosed with trees, the surrounds are now sparse and cold wind blew through the haven where our cattle used to drink. The dam wall has broken and water gushes out, with no sign that our liberators had even attempted to repair the breech – great farmers they would be. The entire surface area of the dam is covered with thick, chocking, suffocating, Azolla weed. Floating and bloated in the water is a dead animal and at that sight I can't take anymore and leave Ian and the workers trying to get it out (*AT*:172).

I do not intend to exonerate the squatters for their penchant for destruction and pollution; however, Buckle's ecological stewardship is an example of what it took for her to belong to the place. Suddenly, the dam, animals and trees bulk large whilst blacks shrink small because that is what their relationship with white people is like and also because of what they are doing

to the environment that white people used to create "structures of feeling" (Williams, 1979:133). This is what Comaroff and Comaroff (2001:651) refer to as "post-racist racism".

Buckle's *African Tears* is a vehement criticism of Mugabe and his rent-a-crowd youths as well as his war veterans. It seems like Buckle's struggle is against these three only; the rest of 'well-thinking and intelligent' Zimbabweans are depicted as content. The way she depicts the invaders as "marauding gangs" or "wild dogs" (*AT*;80) speaks against the probability of them being well-thinking and intelligent. The "war veterans" in the inevitable blue overalls and straw hats, wielding sticks and axes (not hoes), whose children she had given sweets (*AT*:96), are described as drunks, unemployables and intoxicated layabouts, amongst an array of vitriolic names that she gives to these invaders. In a fit of anger, she writes:

> Seeing these… Drunks for what they really are – unemployed and probably unemployable, layabouts totally intoxicated with 8 weeks of anarchy. Never have I hated people as much as I hate these maggots (*AT*:104).

Her rant is similar to that of a character in Marciano's *Rules of the Wild* who explodes: "Africa is a fucking drunk Kikuyu in a Nissan" (2009:164-165).[51] Such a description of black people is not only racist and, in the Zimbabwean context, is capable of contributing to Mugabe's own "simplified critique of neo-colonialism" (Primorac, 2010b:213).[52] The unemployed unemployables spearheading Mugabe's paramilitary reform are not only hungrier than white farmers, fighting for food like "wild dogs" (*AT*:80); they are also more violent, greedier, dirtier and more destructive than white farmers. They are even more inefficient and incapable of running farms than white people. The essential differences between white farmers ('us') and black 'invaders' ('them') is apparent here.

The depiction of farm occupiers as war veterans or ZANU—PF-hired troublemakers, or gullible dupes intoxicated by Mugabe's rhetoric, is an attempt to divest the invasions of credibility and legitimacy thereby eliminating the would-be black owners of the farms from those farms. However, Buckle might be ignoring the fact that there might be genuine supporters of the 'land reform' and actually able farmers among these squatters with a credible and legitimate interest in farming. Her belief that genuine Zimbabweans hated what was happening

[51] The rant is done by one of Marciano's white characters when a colleague dies in a road accident involving a Kikuyu-driven truck. This represents explicit racism.

[52] Mugabe's simplified critique of neo-colonialism manifests itself in what he calls the Fast Track Land Reform which, according to him, was meant to reverse neo-colonial land imbalances. In his criticism of neo-colonialism, Mugabe incriminates the west (usually Britain, America and their allies) for causing the suffering of Zimbabweans through 'illegal' sanctions. This simplistic view exonerates Mugabe and makes him appear as a victim and not a villain.

lacks empirical evidence. The only evidence is of letters to her or to editors of newspapers, letters which may not represent the sensibilities of all Zimbabweans concerning the 'land reform'. According to Pilosoff, Buckle forgets to "admit that white farmers attracted a great deal of hostility because of the isolated lives they led, their wealth and often because of their real or perceived racial prejudices" (2009:626). This means some of the hostilities might not even be products of intoxication but genuine hostilities generated by white farmers' exclusive habits. Buckle, therefore, fails to contextualise her memoir within a broader discussion of her wealth and living standards in comparison to the community of blacks around her who finally invade her farm.

Emphasising how 'useful' whites are to Zimbabwe (which is often called 'Africa') because of their ability to produce food for it; emphasising how they began from scratch to tame the rocky and hilly wilderness through consistent and hard work; emphasising how there is no link between them and colonialism; are "not merely apologist accounts for white farmers, often trying too hard to clear their history and justify their position, but narratives that seamlessly adopt a range of assertions and themes that marred colonial literature about and from 'Africa'" (Pilosoff, 2009: 631). It seems Buckle and other white farmers are saying they have done everything they could for 'Africa' but the bush in its people refuses to be tamed. Buckle's story is one of the many that might have attracted the sympathy of foreign readers but such stories of white adventure in an Africa peopled by blacks with unlimited methods of misrule works to further exile white Africans from an Africa they want to regard as home.

Rogers' Drifters and the De-historicisation of Race: An Analysis of *The Last Resort*

Writers whose works have been looked at and cross-referenced in the previous sub-section have all provided identical backdrops to their narratives. These almost invariably include polemic and hysterical writings against Mugabe, the despot, and his relentless army of crazy, drunk and youthful 'war veterans' who have literally trashed the country by seizing white-owned land and, in the process, converted it into a basket case. The list of the infrastructures of such narratives is long. What makes Rogers' narrative unique is that, instead of the usual representation of what blackness is doing to whiteness due to white conspicuousness among a mass of black people, in this memoir, the two colours are not made to stand against each other.

Both blacks and whites alike are portrayed as victims of exclusionary politics so that those who does not belong are the ones who stand in the way.

The Last Resort was written by Douglas Rogers as an account of his parents' relentless hold on their backpackers resort, Drifters, from the beginning of the land invasions in 2000 to 2010. While holding on to Drifters, they transform it into a clandestine refuge for those victimised by Zimbabwe's ruling party's exclusionary politics. These include former white landowners and black supporters of opposition parties. Other residents include Drifters' black workers and black professionals from Mutare who need lodgings in the area. Drifters, in a way, and the valley surrounding it, become microcosmic representations of Zimbabwe. It is not only a multi-racial society; it is also multicultural in a post-modern sense and represents a post-colonial vision of multiculturalism where racial, religious and political differences do not warrant exclusion. There is a high level of tolerance among the inhabitants of Drifters. The mosaic array of individuals at Drifters with their own numerous differences does not cause any disorder. For instance, there is John Agoneka, a suave guide-cum-gardener whose long beard speaks of his apostolic beliefs. His apostolic disposition, however, does not stop him from enjoying peaceful moments of oneness with the weed-smoking Murandas (John Muranda and his wife, Naomi) and Douglas:

> One night, after we'd given up trying to get the signal to work, I was shocked when John Muranda pulled out a twist of newspapers filled with dried marijuana leaves and began to roll the fattest joint I've seen in my life…Mrs John sat on the reed mat laid out on the packed red dirt yard in front of the shack, her legs stretched out toward the fire, her head wrapped tightly in a bright red scarf. She looked like a shy, retiring grandmother. She turned out to be the biggest dopehead of us all. When handed the joint she would close her eyes, inhale for a minute until her face seemed about to explode, and then exhale in short bursts, like a puffing dragon, finally letting out a loud cackle with the last of the smoke, scattering the fruit bats from the trees…John Agoneka didn't touch the weed, either, just as he didn't drink…As Mr and Mrs Muranda and I passed the joint between us, Agoneka told me how he used to take backpackers on daylong hikes up the Chikanga Mountains… (*LR*:82, 83).

What is apparent here is that Agoneka's strong apostolic beliefs and the unapostolic marijuana disposition of his friends have not rendered him unfriendly; he is part of the group and they all enjoy each other's company. In any case, marijuana smoking here takes the aura of the most eulogised 'drug' in Jamaica for its herbalistic and spiritual effects and its power to give its takers a strong penchant for 'one love'.

The description of Naomi as she sits on the red mat corresponds with the stereotypical characteristic of an African woman. She sits on a reed mat, the African woman's prized kitchen artefact, and has her head ensconced in a tightly wound scarf, just like a respected daughter-in-law. However, her marijuana-smoking prowess subverts these stereotypes. The fact that Douglas rates her the 'biggest dopehead' of them all is itself an ordination of Naomi into the fraternity of genderless equals with no gender-inspired inclusions and exclusions. Naomi's 'traditional' figure and its subversion thereof through genderless camaraderie and marijuana-smoking corresponds with Appiah's analysis of the sculpture labelled *[Yoruba] Man with a Bicycle*:

> It matters little whom the work was made for; what we should learn from [it] is the imagination that produced it. Man with a Bicycle is produced by someone who does not care that the bicycle is the white man's invention: it is not there to be Other to the Yoruba Self; it is there because someone cared for its solidity; it is there because it will take us further than our feet will take us; it is there because machines are now as African as novelists…and as fabricated as the kingdom of Nakem (1991:357).

The most striking aspect of *Man with a Bicycle* is that he is Yoruba (traditional) but with a western artefact that signals modernity. That sort of amalgamation, which in Naomi's case involves the stereotypes of a Zimbabwean daughter-in-law and the simultaneous subversion of those same stereotypes by being a dopehead, is what makes Naomi a symbolic figure.

This amalgamation also characterises the descriptions of 'Becks' and 'Saddam', two nameless black boys who are only identified by the names above due to the figures imprinted on their shirts, who would come to the Drifters bar to watch TV from their parents' new farms. The two kids' parents might be beneficiaries of an inward-looking, west-hating land reform, but the kids seem to be victims of it. They do not even want to be there; all they want is the TV:

> The only people not drinking were two downcast youths, no more than twenty years old, sitting on stools in a corner, arms crossed, watching the TV. One wore a Hawaiian-style shirt, except instead of palm trees it bore the many faces of Saddam Hussein. The other had on a soccer shirt emblazoned with the face of David Beckam (*LR*:70).

Beckam, a European football star, and Hussein, an Iraqi political dictator emblazoned on a Hawaiian shirt, provide a global, cross-cutting mosaic that represents the gaze of these young men. Their gaze goes beyond the borders that are constructed around them, both physical and

cultural. While they are inevitably enmeshed in Zimbabwe's land politics premised on racial differences, their gaze is not as inward-looking as the politics of their leader. Therefore on that same land, they do not perform in the cultural nationalism that befits the land nationalism of the time. This corresponds with Diouf's analysis of postcolonial African youths. According to Diouf, "[i]n its cultural and political versions, the nationalist project sought to do two things: to maintain the frontier between elders and juniors that characterized traditional African values, and to put young people at the center of its plans for economic development and national liberation" (2003:4). While this talk of young people as the future for Africa rages on, the paradox is that such a future is only conceived of as coming through the strong and tyrannical supervision of elders. These elders are responsible not only for the nationalistic birthing of the nation but also its nationalistic death. Young people are left with no alternative except to avoid the infrastructures of development laid out for them by the elders because the elders have proven to be failures and recalcitrant tyrants whose talk of youths as the future is hypocritical because they refuse to give the youths a chance to construct that future. The youths inevitably become transnational. The failure of nationalist models whose rhetoric speaks of the children as the future, and yet does not confer the benefit of constructing that future to children, has not only provoked the youths to move out of nationalist ideological and physical spaces but has also negatively alchemised them from being the 'future' (as nationalist narratives are fond of saying) to being a 'threat'. This is where one locates 'Saddam' and 'Becks'.

The disposition of Becks and Saddam subverts the 'return to origins' of Zimbabwe's race-inspired land reform. Further subversion is provided by the Commissar's failure to find a path to the burial grounds of the ancestors which he professes to frequent. This happens when he agrees to give Douglas a tour guide's trip to his (the Commissar's) ancestral mountain:

> We set off, but we didn't get far. The path petered out into a thicket of thorns twenty yards in. We tried to go under but got scratched and retreated. We tried to go around but ran into a huge boulder. It stank of baboon shit. Flies swarmed us. We turned back to look for another way (*LR*:191).

The Commissar is part of ZANU—PF's propaganda machinery that is meant to conscientise the masses to know the way of the party, ZANU—PF's way. As part of its propaganda, this machinery is fond of tracing the history of the people back to forefathers like those who built

the Great Zimbabwe,[53] or to the nationalist mother of the nation, Nehanda.[54] In other words, they agitate for an essentialised identity that is traced back to the black ancestors of Zimbabwe. Falling outside that identity framework, ostensibly by virtue of skin colour or by selling out, is reason enough for one to be a victim of the politics of belonging. This tracing of a whole nation's roots to a common ancestor is what the Commissar is enacting in the presence of Douglas. This act is not only led by the Commissar but it is also sanctioned by a spirit medium (*LR*:148-152). Spirit-possession is one of the favourites of nationalist historiography especially given the fact that Nehanda was a spirit medium. This gives legitimacy to the construction of identities that stretch back into unwritten time. The fact that they fail to find the road to the burial ground, however, is Douglas' own subversion of this nationalist construction of essentialised identities. In a way, Douglas' vision is postcolonial.

The Commissar's search for a burial ground where even his pre-colonial ancestors ostensibly lie is against the belief that the spread of western power through colonialism has brought new people into the world of capitalism in which they remain even after the end of direct colonial domination. A postcolonial vision subverts any call for the return to an undiluted and pristine pre-colonial past. According to this vision, such a return is not only impossible but quite dangerous. While the Commissar behaves as if there is a dividing line between pre-colonial and post-colonial, postcolonially speaking that interconnectedness (a keyword in postcolonial theorisation) is still there, the complex mixing of different cultures and temporalities (Abrahamsen, 2003:196), something akin to McClennen's dialectical theory of exile. The meaning of Africa, therefore, or the west for that matter, is not fixed and has no essence. It is this lack of essence in terms of the meaning of 'Zimbabwe' that makes Rogers' vision postcolonial.

The foregrounding of such 'return to origins' discourses in African politics has been well theorised. According to Chabal (2009:30), "[o]f all the issues connected with the study of African societies, none has been more problematic than that of identity." Identity in this instance should not be understood within the context of such limiting concepts as ethnicity, religion and occupation because they are not the key markers of identity. What matters politically in each particular historical and physical setting (and this changes over time) is what should inform research into identity. This transience of factors related to identity is what makes

[53] The name Zimbabwe is derived from the Great Zimbabwe ruins which are found in Masvingo, a town that lies to the South of the country. The ruins feature in nationalist discourse as evidence of the autochthony of blacks.
[54] Nehanda is a spirit medium who is reputed to have led the uprisings of 1896 against settler occupation of Shona land. The uprising was thwarted and Nehanda was executed. It is said that before her execution, she said that her bones would rise to wage another war. Nationalists point to the liberation war as a response to the call of Nehanda.

identity an un-fixed phenomenon, hence the use of the word 'belonging'. Prevailing economic and political circumstances can be used to explain exclusive land redistribution and not differences between blacks and whites because, as Chabal explains, "differences have always been present in African societies" (2009:64). In any case, as Douglas demonstrates through the Commissar's aborted attempt to lead them to his ancestors' burial ground, 'origins' can be a case of political mythical reality more than genetic reality.

The issue of ancestral burial grounds is important in the politics of belonging. Being buried on land is a symbol of belonging to it. Graves are usually used to claim belonging to a land:

> Burial is important not just because it is a key element in the cycle of life but also because it makes manifest and keeps alive the concrete link between the individual, the community and the land with which it is identified. It is thus the core of individual and collective identity, which defines the relationship between the person and the group, or network. A properly executed burial reinforces the collective sense of belonging, without which the person is not fully human and the community is not fully complete (Chabal, 2009:49).

Writing about issues of belonging in Ghana, Busia recounts how the announcement of death in a newspaper is done as an act of legitimising the deceased's burial on the land because he/she belongs to it. These announcements give legitimacy to the deceased to be buried in a given space through the offering of "an archaeology of family and community, locating the deceased person in his or her distinct lineages and communal associations" (Busia, 2006:24). This archeology of family and community is offered through a list (in the newspaper) "of the other members of the lineages (aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, children and in-laws, grandchildren, nephews and nieces) and the chief mourners – such people as are significant to the life and ceremonies though they may not necessarily be blood relations" (Busia, 2006:24). Such a curatorial and archeological excavation of the deceased's lineages is a funeral ritual without which it is difficult to locate the deceased within the community. The insinuation here is that there are some bodies which are not legitimate and which do not belong even in death.

Therefore, the Commissar's 'ancestral burial ground' should be understood in the context of seeking legitimacy and delegitimising those whose ancestors do not lie on the same ground. Of course it should be noted that the Commissar's claim originates from the belief that the land had belonged to his ancestors who had been dispossessed by white settlers. However, it should also be noted that history can be used or abused. In his thesis concerning heritage, Matenga (2011: 108) is of the belief that there should be a heritage theory which states that, "it

is about how the present shapes the way in which we look at the past, rather than how the past shapes the way we look at it ourselves," that matters. The Commissar has chosen, at this point in time, of all times, to look at the past in this way and to choose the kind of narratives to foreground. In doing so, he is not only making invalid the Rogers' claims to belonging to the valley, he is making himself the indisputable leader of the newly settled farmers, delegitimising Chief Mutasa (whose skin colour should have, beyond any reasonable doubt, made him belong) in the process. However, the Commissar's failure to find a path through the *lantana camara* growing at the foot of the mountain represents the fraud surrounding the claims of 'origins' upon which the land invasions were premised. In any case, the outlawing of Chief Mutasa, the rightful leader of the valley, who was also sympathetic to those who were losing their land, is Rogers' final nail in the coffin: the whole episode is politically choreographed. The Commissar's use of the machete to clear a path to the burial ground takes on a symbolic meaning; that of the violence meted on the body to clear a way to power. Those who are in the way are *macheted* out of it. In one stroke, Rogers de-historicises race. It is not the issue. The issue is power.

Being buried at home is considered important. This is a serious case of *belonging* and being 'at home' even in death. Where a human being belongs "assumes urgency at…death" (Reynolds Whyte, 2005:154) and the grave site is a matter of serious concern. In Zimbabwe and most parts of Africa, bodies are rarely embalmed. Usually, they are buried in graves. It is not just that home means something; according to Reynolds Whyte (2005:155), the question should be, "how does home mean?" This question problematises the meaning of home in the sense that it is no longer about what home means generally but "how it is made to mean in situations of vulnerability and death" (Reynolds Whyte, 2005:155). Issues concerning burials and burial grounds are raised by people who have a stake in matters where burial and burial grounds are indispensable.[55] This makes burial a "smokescreen" (Gordon, 1995:884), something that is invoked in matters where material gain is at stake. This is where one locates the Commissar and the whole system behind land invasions. The 'son of the soil' discourse and the clichéd and tautological reference to the heroes and heroines whose blood flowed on the land create a case of incontestable autochthony that excludes Rogers, all white people and

[55] Joost Fontein's 'Graves, Ruins, and Belonging: Towards an Anthropology of Proximity' (2011) traces the contestations for the ownership of Boroma Hills in Masvingo, Zimbabwe, between local chiefs and a white man, George Sheppard, the owner of a lodge called *Ancient City*. His burial in the Boroma made the local leaders accept him as one of them. His ghost is actually reputed to be roaming the hills.

all black people like Chief Mutasa who do not support the party. There are objectives and concerns in the way home and burials are invoked by those who find them useful.

During his conversation with Douglas, Walter, the ex-combatant-cum-soldier-cum-intelligence agent, parrots the system's language of seeking legitimacy through history, not just history but history of the war:

> Rogers junior…tonight we have spoken of whoe. Let me be certain with you. There are three political parties in this country, but only one part has a *history*. Only one party went to whoe: ZANU-PF. How can you feel if some puppet party comes and has no history of whoe and wants to rule? We fought for this country, we cannot just give it (sic) (*LR*:238)

Walter is here taking the patriotic history stunt that is also behind land invasions and the construction of the sell-out discourse in Zimbabwean politics and literature. According to Durham and Klaits (2002:780-81):

> Political activism…has, perhaps, been most prominently linked to the death ritual through the use of ancestral figures in nationalist movements. On the other hand, Benedict Anderson has famously noted the irony that the powerful imaginary of national identity is often built up around those whose identities are unknown - the tombs of unknown soldiers, the unknown others for whom young men go to war in imagined fraternal sympathy. Known or unknown, commemorations for the dead serve to summon the living into national communities, or into ethnic ones, and may also suggest the nature and degrees of belonging to a community defined by the dead.

At the national shrine of the dead nationalist heroes whose tombs are ingredients for the construction of ZANU—PF's exclusive nationalist imagination, the National Heroes Acre, there is one tomb of the 'unknown soldier'. Though unknown, his tomb is playing an important role in the exclusive nationalism of the party. The appropriation of living and dead bodies in seeking legitimacy is something Mbembe explored in detail in his seminal, *On the Postcolony*, when he speaks of the postcolony as an "economy of death" (2001:115). This means the living and dead bodies of patriot and sell-out, friend and enemy become indispensable tools in the construction of *the history* of the nation and the legitimation of power.

The claim that the white people occupying farms in 2000 confiscated them from blacks in the 19th century is also delegitimised by Rogers. This is where my use of *belonging* instead of *identity* becomes relevant. Rogers claims that he is as Zimbabwean as John Muranda and John Agoneka. He knows no other country except Zimbabwe:

> Listen to this. Just listen to this. *Go back to Britain?* I am not British! My people have been on this continent for three hundred and fifty years! I never set foot out of Africa until I was fifty years old. My own mother never left it once. My father only left twice – to fight fascists in Europe. Go back to Britain? My grandfather fought *against* the British in the fucking Boer War for Christ's sake…I am not British. I am not British (*LR*:35-6).

Rogers identifies himself as Zimbabwean. He is frustrated because of the one that is being foisted upon him. However, what is at work here is not *identity* but *belonging*. Belonging is in the present continuous tense because it is an ongoing process. In his speech as the Prime Minister of the new Zimbabwe on 18 April, 1980, Mugabe speaks of reconciliation and even urges white Zimbabweans to continue farming.[56] This means in the 1980s, they *belonged*. However, in 2000, these Zimbabweans became a perceived threat because of their support for MDC (Movement for Democratic Change), an opposition party that, for the first time in twenty years, made ZANU—PF panic. White Zimbabweans' support of the opposition did not change their *identity*; it only changed their *belonging*. In any case, even some black Zimbabweans, who could have *belonged* beyond any reasonable doubt, are deemed as not belonging in the process. In the nationalist meta-narrative, he/she who does not belong is the one who stands in the way. For instance, the MDC has been routinely accused of being stooges of western governments. This does not change their *identity* as Zimbabweans; it only *un-belongs* them from ZANU-PF's nationalist imagination.

What we see here is the incontrovertible fact that belonging is not a project that can be fully achieved; it is a continuous process and its tools are unequally deployed (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten, 2006:3). The witch-hunt for white aliens in the land invasions from 2000 onwards did not end with the dispossession of land from whites. ZANU—PF's proclivity for witch-hunting even sought to exclude those who dabbled in opposition politics. However, in 2014, with no more whites and opposition politicians considered a threat, the witch-hunt took on a bizarre turn; it became inward-looking.

What this means is that anyone found outside the prescriptions of ZANU—PF, whether white or black, whether ZANU—PF or MDC, was (and is) imagined out, exiled out even, of the nation. These patriotic memories and imaginations (which imaginations and memories are also selective and entirely dependent on the pressing needs) of nationhood revolving around

[56] An excerpt of the speech reads, "If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend and ally with the same national interest, loyalty, rights and duties as myself. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you. Is it not folly, therefore, that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten" (President Mugabe's 1980 Speech).

the figure of Robert Mugabe mean that belonging could not be outside Robert Mugabe and this inevitably defines ZANU—PF politics in terms of clientelist syndicates and patronage with Mugabe the centre of these networks.[57] This explains the serious party purges that took place during Mugabe's era and that had seen many senior members with the effrontery to imagine a post-Mugabe era being exiled out of the party.[58] Some even went on to lose land, not because they are not Zimbabwean, but because they no longer *belong* to ZANU—PF. This, therefore, sheds more light on the events of 2000 which have seen the Rogers and other white farmers losing land – it was because of the *political* needs of Mugabe. These political needs have largely to do with power as evidenced in his continuous un-belonging of fellow 'comrades' including those with what are considered to be impeccable liberation credentials.

The politicisation of differences, whether racial or political, during this period, has led to the re-drawing of contours of belonging and not belonging, inclusion and exclusion, but with the race card playing a prominent role in people's engagements with space and matter. The race card, a powerful tool in the hands of Machiavellian machinists, should not, however, be understood using the 'dry logic' of the ruler and ruled where the ruler controls how people think. Douglas discovers with shock that it is an emotional issue during one of his many conversations with the ex-combatant-cum-soldier-cum-intelligence agent, Walter:

> It was something I often lost sight of. When one saw the failure of the regime, the corruption and cruelty of its leaders, it was easy to believe that their constant invocation of the liberation war was an act – a diversion from the fact that they had lost control and simply wanted power for the sake of it; for money, for riches, for protection from the crimes they had committed. But listening to Walter that evening, I realised it was no act at all. They were *believers*. They had suffered, sacrificed, seen comrades killed; they had survived the bombs and bullets, and unleashed their share of the same in fighting back. But in winning and ending white rule, they had earned a privilege that those who never fought – Morgan Tsvangirai, for example, could never have: the *right* to rule. The war might have ended twenty-seven years before, but to men such as Walter it was still very much alive. And I realised then that there could be no easy solution (*LR*:238).

[57] The ousting of Mugabe in November 2017 means that ZANU—PF has a new figurehead, for now, in the form of the new president, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa.

[58] Between 2014 and 2017, when Mugabe was still in power, a lot of ZANU—PF politicians including former Vice-President, Joyce Mujuru and other senior party officials like Didymus Mutasa, Nicholas Goche and Webster Shamhu, were booted out of the party. In November 2017, less than two weeks before the ousting of Mugabe, Mugabe fired his second in command, Emmerson Mnangagwa, for seemingly standing in the way of Mugabe's hold on power or the ascendancy of his wife, Grace Mugabe, to the apex of ZANU—PF politics.

This sort of problem for which Douglas sees no easy solution is something that cannot be solved by appealing to the idealistic discourse of multiculturalism. It is a belief inculcated into the psyche of many people of Walter's calibre. While many scholars have looked at the rise in the predominance of themes of ethnicity and identity in a globalising world, and what Billig (1995:6) calls "banal nationalism", which is a "paradoxical increase in the importance of a communal belonging based on cultural heredity in an age seemingly defined by cross-national communication and knowledge of the Other" (Lentin, 2000:92), the interface between this and race has not featured prominently, ostensibly because of the need to foreground the possibility of a multicultural, globalised world without discouraging it with tales of the dangers of difference. The land reform project in Zimbabwe institutionalised race, but Walter's testimony points to the fact that it is also individually-based. We have here a scenario where "[daily], the nation is indicated, or 'flagged', in the lives of its citizenry" (Billig, 1995:6). The white Zimbabwean, a minority in his/her own diaspora, is a victim in an age that is believed to have moved beyond 'race' as a categorisation of human groups. However, the fact that difference can no longer be defined in biological or racial terms is unhelpful here because it is merely a semantic change. The attitudes in everyday spaces might not have experienced any serious metamorphoses. Concomitant racist discourse continues to be an everyday phenomenon in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Despite the academic ambition to look beyond 'race', the world has "witnessed both an increase in the observable forms of racism and a reanalysis of the prevalent discourses characterising its self-understanding" (Taguieff, cited in Lentin, 2000:92).[59] The discourse of multiculturalism and tolerance has featured prominently in the world, but the prominence has been limited to policy and public spaces; the private predominantly remains untouched. This is where one locates Walter and a whole array of 'believers' plucked from ordinary spaces whose belief in the non-belongingness of the white Zimbabwean may not need to be triggered by political events to manifest itself. How can such racism in 'banal' spaces be dealt with? Are these not the spaces that are wont to supply humanity with xenophobes? Are these not the same spaces that give exile a 'tragic edge?'

Visible differences have determined not only discourses but everyday reality, what Essed calls, "everyday racism" (Essed, 2001:176). Noble and Poynting define "everyday

[59] In *The Force of Prejudice: Racism and its Doubles* (2001), Taguieff, for instance, encourages a re-thinking of racism premised, not on the view of human communities that are biologically distinguished, but on the new forms of racism that veil the purer (biological) form of racism, which are the subtle forms of cultural discrimination and stereotyping. Such forms of racism are at the centre of arguments by migrant activists within the politics of migrant rights and integration. Lentin, however, calls for a reframing of racist discourse that does not neglect intersectionality and politics.

racism" as "experiences of routine marginalisation which structure the lives of migrants: the exaggeration of cultural difference, the use of stereotypes and racist jokes, and so on" (2010:493). The interpersonal treatment of difference has significance insofar as it relates to issues of national belonging. The experiences of racism, no matter how institutionally outlawed racism has been, in quotidian spaces and ways, has a cumulative and reinforcing effect so that in times of politicking, where race can be handy, the groundwork on which to invoke race has been laid in the practice of "the little things of racism" (Noble and Poynting, 2010:493). Everyday encounters are bound to produce larger structures of power. In fact, the two levels (everyday encounters and larger structures of power) are mutually reinforcing. The relationship between the white farmers and their workers and the surrounding community of blacks can also be looked at as the 'little things' that cumulatively led to the larger events of overt racism during Zimbabwe's land reform. Although Walter is being used by the system, what he represents is the consciousness of people who may not even reap benefits from post-2000 ZANU—PF politicking but who still retain the racial consciousness that ZANU—PF needs to legitimise its actions against white farmers. Walter's support of the system is pushed more by his belief that whites do not belong than the benefits the system confers on him. For example, he confesses his disillusionment to Douglas:

> I am not sure whether it was the sight of these bedraggled people or perhaps the thought that there he was, a war hero twenty-seven years after the fact, sitting in the car of a white man and accepting paltry handouts from him, but the soldier turned to me then and – doubt written over his face, all the bravado of war gone – said: "I could have been *somebody*."
> I wasn't sure what he meant, but it sounded like a line from a movie.
> "Sorry, Walter?"
> "I could have been somebody, Rogers junior, but I didn't get an *education*. I went to whoe at age thirteen. Can you believe it? I was but a child. Thirteen years. I had no schooling. But today, these ministers, they have many houses, many cars, much money, and what do I have? Still I am just a simple soldier" (*LR*:239-240).

Walter, as he rightly points out, is just a simple soldier who has not benefited directly from post-liberation war politics. Logically, he would not support a system that keeps him as an underdog. But he supports it still because his *racial* beliefs as a simple man are stronger than his disillusionment.

This everyday racism, which, as I have pointed out, is reinforced by and also reinforces power structures, manifests itself in simple attitudes and simple actions that help cultivate it. For instance, the land invasions were also motivated by the misconception that white farmers

were *rich*. The belief that invading a white man's farm would automatically confer riches on the invader is actually a racially-inspired misconception but it was still there among the ordinary people. For instance, the fact that Douglas gives Walter US$20 and is thanked so profusely that Walter takes Douglas' hand and kisses it (*LR*:239) just serves to entrench the belief that white people have money and black people do not. The light skin, in the eyes of ordinary black people, becomes evidence of riches. People with such attitudes can easily be mobilised for a political gimmick euphemised as land reform. This attitude manifests itself when, after seeing Walter off, Douglas' car is swarmed by a "a dozen skinny kids, barefooted, mud-stained urchins, none more than sixteen years old, all pushing their hands through the driver's side-window…" (*LR*:240).

However, to see these racial attitudes in mundane spaces as being rampant in black people is to be biased. White people have their own racially-affirming attitudes. For instance, when the author visits Zimbabwe at the beginning of the tumultuous land invasions, he fails to recognise black people who had cooked for him and served him during his previous visits. When he is greeted by John Muranda, his father's bartender, Douglas fails to recognise him even after Muranda reminds Douglas of the pizzas he had made for him two and a half years earlier. He also fails to recognise John Agoneka even though Agoneka recognises him. Douglas' own silent exclamation at being recognised, "*He* knew my name, too? What was it with these guys?" in a way objectifies the two Johns. The two only become permanent fixtures in Douglas' mind because of the crisis his parents are going through. Otherwise if it were not for the crisis, the two Johns would have remained shadows in Douglas' world. This confirms my observation in Chapter 1 that writing by black and white Zimbabweans (or Rhodesians) relies heavily on mutual exclusions. However, it seems like in *The Last Resort*, Douglas is more culpable of these exclusions in *real life* than the two Johns.

Douglas' attitude towards Zimbabwe reflects those of many white memoirists towards Africa. In fact, the subsumption of every African country into 'Africa' is an aspect of the typification of Africa which takes on the form of reduction and equalisation of African in all its diversity into one typical 'country'. This corresponds with Pilossof's (2009) observation that some white writings about Africa have just lumped different places in Africa into 'Africa' as if they are all the same. The Africa of adventure stories is also reproduced by Douglas, an Africa we have come to know as Conrad's 'heart of darkness' or Hegel's 'pre-historic' mass. His comment, "I was always looking for the exotic in Africa" (*LR*:49), when he interviews his mother concerning the sickness of Philip, his parents' servant, and the rumour of his being bewitched, makes Africa a "homogenous entity that can be talked of as a 'thing'" (Pilosoff,

2009:232). When Philip finally dies of AIDS two weeks later, the Rogers' do not attend the funeral because Philip was the fifth member of their staff to die of AIDS and "they were getting used to it" (*LR*:50). This makes Philip a nonentity/non-human. In any case, the deaths from AIDS are depicted as some of the horrors of Douglas' Africa, as "another thing that happened out there" (*LR*:50) in the jungle of Africa where all things habitually go wrong. Wainaina's cynical attack against the writings about Africa makes sense here:

> Always use the word 'Africa' or 'Darkness' or 'Safari' in your title…Note that 'People' means Africans who are not black, while 'The People' means black Africans…In your text treat Africa as if it were one country…Don't get bogged down with precise descriptions. Africa is big: fifty-four countries, 900 million people who are too busy starving and dying and warring and emigrating to read your book. The continent is full of deserts, jungles, highlands, savannahs and many other things, but your reader doesn't care about all that, so keep your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular (Wainana, 2006:*granta.com*).

The title, *The Last Resort*, corresponds with Wainana's sarcastic advice to include 'Africa' or 'Safari' or 'Darkness' in the title. Calling it *The Last Resort* is typical especially with the 'Safari' connection. Besides this being a 'Rhodesian' phenomenon, it could also be that 'Africa' as a subject-matter by a white writer sells. Pilosoff (2009:632) observes:

> Apart from this being merely a problematic way of looking at the continent and its people, such a viewpoint is also a strategic marketing tool because 'Africa' sells. Westerners can relate to and identify 'Africa', not necessarily Zimbabwe, Malawi, Chad or any other remote 'African' country of indistinct blackness. This is evidenced not only by 'African' authors writing to the West, but also by the large number of travelogues about 'Africa' published by travellers and writers from the West.

The Africa of 'Tarzan', of adventure writing, is what Douglas sometimes offers us. He even regrets not having seen that sort of Africa before:

> During these nights I started to think of the few times I had begrudgingly visited my parents, and I wondered why I hadn't ventured beyond my perch in London more often. It wasn't so bad out here. I could have written about it. I was a travel writer, after all, and my parents ran a tourism business (*LR*:54).

However, it is also prudent to note that the title *The Last Resort* can also be read as a pun or double-entendre in that it may also refer to Rogers' father's last resort to remain on the resort and to make it continue running. He commits all sorts of 'last resort' acts that include

running a short-lived but lucrative marijuana business with John Muranda, running a clandestine lodge for those who want to enjoy the contrivances of extra-marital affairs away from the prying eyes of the public, supporting MDC politicians, trading in South African Rands, finding black market fuel and other numerous survival tactics. This pun is what makes it unjust to view Rogers' memoir as wholly a product of the Rhodesian discourse. He goes beyond Rhodesian discourse politicking although he does not manage to fully escape its traps.

Douglas uses a template for white memoirs on Africa used before by Fuller (*Let's Not Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 2003) and Godwin (*Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa*, 1996). The typical story that follows this template is of white children growing up in a blissful rural setting full of innocence. This innocence sometimes extends to black children who are usually the innocent friends of innocent white children. Douglas even depicts that innocence in his celebration of the massacres of Chimoio and Nyadzonia:

> 'We've killed twelve hundred, we're going to win the war! We have killed twelve hundred, we're going to win the war!'
> I was nine years old (*LR*:198)

Pilosoff (2009:633) provides an interesting inventory of such stories:

> The children grow up in a wondrous rural setting, blissfully unaware of the war and the racism of the settler state in which they live, until dramatic enlightenment is forced upon them at the time of independence. Through this experience they grow, realising the errors of their parents' generation (who can't be expected to change; one just has to accept them and their quirks, for which read 'racism'). They then try to make their way in independent Zimbabwe, but the misrule and destruction of the paradise of their childhood forces them to leave, while their parents have no option but to stay because 'Africa is so entrenched in their blood'; they feel compelled to see out the madness that ensues.

Douglas inserts himself into "colonial-era ideologies by writing about [his] 'African' [childhood] with a mixture of nostalgia and anxiety, and both [evoke], at best, an uneasy sense of belonging" (Primorac, 2010b:211). The nostalgia avails itself to the reader when Douglas, for instance, passes by places that remind him of his childhood, or places that used to be beautiful but are now decrepit:

> To get to the path up the Commissar's hill we took a road through Fairbridge Park, another now forlorn and decrepit suburb of Mutare. It was the road we used to take to the drive-in on the western outskirts of town. Though the drive-

> in was long gone, bulldozed to make way for housing, childhood memories returned effortlessly to me (*LR*:189).

The Africa entrenched in the blood of the writers' parents (a typical aspect of these writings) is echoed by Douglas' father's fuming against being called British by the exclusionary Mugabe (*LR*:35-6). He fumes that he would not go back to Britain because he is not British and he has never set his feet outside Africa. When he finally sets his feet outside Africa with his wife to attend Douglas' wedding in the USA, Douglas makes it clear to readers that the couple looks out of place in the concrete and automobilised spaces of the Global North. Apparent in Rogers' fuming is the lumping of where he is into a single continent – Africa. Yet when he speaks of Europe, he mentions Britain by name. This sort of lumping that ignores the nuances, a lumping that is apparent in the naming of the novels, is in itself an act of imagining away. Why, for instance, would Rogers be specific about Britain but say 'Africa' to talk about Zimbabwe? Why would 'Africa' be more visible to him than Zimbabwe? Why also, would Douglas go on a hunting exercise for the exotic in Africa when apparently he is in Mutare, Zimbabwe?

That Rogers is a descendant of a generation that meted out various injustices on black people is mitigated by his apparent humanity and passion for his country. His world is now filled with black people yet in his reminiscences of the period before the tragedy of ultra-nationalist segregation struck, blacks seemed to occupy the periphery of this world. In fact, Douglas is shocked by the array of black acquaintances who now people his father's world because they were not there before. Even though they were there physically, they were shadows in a world peopled by white farmers. These include John Muranda whose likeness to Mr. Rogers Douglas tries very hard to point out to the reader:

> They had formed an unlikely partnership, the patrician white farmer and the Honde Valley kraal headman, but they were in many ways similar personalities. When I'd first seen John twiddling the dials of my dad's old radio, determined to find the right station and furious when he couldn't, he reminded me exactly of my father. They were both headstrong, determined, and intellectually cunning: they could both play the game (*LR*:86).

However, that apparent comradeship between Muranda and Rogers has a paternalistic tinge to it. Douglas confesses that John (Muranda) must have figured out that if the war veterans succeeded, everything would disappear (*LR*:86). This 'everything' includes a house, a job, a salary, regular food, cheaper beer and a marijuana supply. What we see here is belonging, albeit through paternalistic methods. The future of the black Zimbabwean is inextricably tied to his

white benefactor in a way that gives credence to Pilosoff's observation that, "[t]he post-eviction romantic visions of the farm spill over to glorify the relations between the farm workers and labourers and the farmers. The labourers had no problems, issues or worries and are presented as happy, industrious workers who were always content under their benevolent, white employer" (2009:630). Such glorifications of black-white relationships are rampant in white Zimbabwean writings – in those of Buckle, Godwin, Wiles, Fuller, Lang, and many others.

While Douglas tries to depict it as a horizontal comradeship, a deal even, the paternalism hidden beneath this veneer of solidarity is apparent. Even those who dabble in the politics of change in the form of MDC activists still find refuge with Mr. Rogers. This philanthropic work is in itself a statement that gives legitimacy to Rogers' claims of belonging. One of these activists' first outfit to parliament, which happened to be his first ever outfit, comes from Mr. Rogers (*LR*:311). However, even though what Rogers does here (helping an MDC activist with an outfit) is an act that will give legitimacy to his case of belonging to Zimbabwe, it further complicates his position in the uneven landscape of the politics of Zimbabwe. The criteria for belonging is not static; it is shifting depending on the needs of the time, especially political needs. While his camaraderie with Muranda and Pishai (the MDC activist) is meant to provide a strong case for his belonging, it actually makes available enough arsenal to shatter that case. In a country where not supporting the ruling party is an act of un-belonging oneself, then white farmers' alignment with those who no longer belonged was wont to push them further beyond the margins into oblivion.

While Douglas tries very hard to subvert the infrastructures of the Rhodesian narrative in order to de-historicise race, he finds himself inadvertently restricting his storyline to them in many instances. For example, Douglas also falls prey to the romanticisation of the farm before the invasions, where all connections and "happy memories revolve around nature and animals" (Pilosoff, 2009:629). While Douglas divests this connection to nature of the overdone religious reverence we find in Wiles or Buckle, he still fails to break from it. First, the front cover of Douglas' book features an albino frog. While this frog does not talk or contribute notably to the unfolding of the narrative, it is still prominent on the cover. This is how the albino frog is introduced into the narrative:

> I dumped my bags and joined my parents in the living room for tea just in time to see an albino frog – pale white, with bulging eyes – hop directly into the middle of the living room floor from the veranda. I leapt out of my chair in fright.
> "My God. Look at that thing. How can we get rid of it?"

> "Oh, don't mind," Mom smiled. "He's just passing through."
> The frog stared at me, unblinking, its translucence utterly out of place on the dark tan of the carpet. Then, sure enough, it hopped steadily on through to the dark porch (*LR*:43).

Later, during one of his visits, Douglas finds that in an interesting case of inversion, the albino frog had become a permanent resident of the house, making a territory for itself

> on the rim of the copper coffeepot that hung next to the egg rack. I still found the creature disturbing, but my mother had grown rather fond of it. "He disappeared for a while but then he came back," she smiled. "He's so determined" (*LR*:66).

The albino initially represents an unwanted presence akin to the body of an unwanted immigrant. But Douglas' mother's accommodation of it can certainly be read in the context of multicultural visions.

Second, there is the usual narration of what farm invasions are doing to animals:

> And then he saw it as clearly as if it were a day: a giant full-grown antelope, a magnificent bull eland, with tall twisted horns like acacia branches, grazing in the long grass beside the fence. His heart was pounding. *Jesus. An eland!*
> He had presumed the settlers – the Commissar's men – had killed every last one of them, but now one had showed itself. It stared at him with those magnificent sad eyes and he stared straight back. He had never felt so much pity for a mere animal before, and yet so much love for one, so much elation that something out there – something *else* out there – was surviving (*LR*:131).

This description lifts the incident from the level of the mundane to the spiritual; through the spiritual Rogers' connection to the land, his belonging to it is established. What we have here constitutes the usual infrastructures through which white belonging to land is constructed – nature. In many instances, a religious tone is invoked in narrations that feature descriptions of nature in the form of trees or animals. Buckle uses such a tone to talk about her eucalyptus. The emotional attachment to nature which manifests itself in Rogers' reaction, and which manifests itself artistically in the works of some white writers in Zimbabwe, is meant to create an enduring sense of belonging. When Rogers sees the eland as "something *else* out there" which has survived like him, his next decision is to stay and survive, to enforce his belonging even as the system that the Commissar supports is bent on un-belonging him.

Regardless of these shortcomings, *The Last Resort,* at least, tries to subvert the usual sacrosanct narrative standards of the Rhodesian discourse. It invites a more nuanced reading of issues of race, power, space and belonging.

Lettah's Gift and the home that never was

Lettah's Gift (Graham Lang, 2011) is about a grown-up male white narrator who grew up in Rhodesia as a boy, migrated with his parents to South Africa during the colonial period, and finally to Australia where his mother dies. His mother leaves a will in which she instructs the narrator, Frank, to go back to post-2000 Zimbabwe to give to their black maid from the Rhodesian era a substantial amount of money. There is a sense in which Frank's mother has been assailed by interminable guilt during her lifetime emanating from her treatment of their maid, Lettah, during the Rhodesian era. The substantial amount bequeathed represents her posthumous wish to assuage her decades-long guilty conscience. Frank's journey back to Zimbabwe becomes not only an opportunity to find Lettah but also an encounter with a place he used to call home and a motley array of Rhodesian and post-Rhodesian white citizens with varying degrees of belonging and not belonging in Mugabe's 2008 Zimbabwe. It is also an opportunity to confront what has become of his boyhood country in the hands of its new black owners. The land of his boyhood, as he soon finds out, or as he already knows, excites "no sense of belonging" because "nothing is as it was" (*LG*:3).

There is nostalgia in him, a strange nostalgia invoked by coming to this oasis of his past. That nostalgia is not his alone. It is shared by the variegated array of white Zimbabweans who feel that the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe was not seamless and might have left them in various states of non-belonging. The country they had known – Rhodesia – is now another place – Zimbabwe (*LG*:3). Even the Que Que he used to know is now Kwekwe, another place. Upon entering Zimbabwe, the narrator decides to visit his family's former farm and home. His experiences at the farm, however, become microcosmic representations of the exclusivity of black power in Zimbabwe. The farm has now been occupied by black people who seem to be egged by Frank's presence on the farm and his tourist penchant for photographs:

> They glance at me with strange expressions. Angry, unintelligible mutterings in Shona. A man wearing frayed remains of a peaked cap peers into the lens of the camera. Brandishing a knobkerrie, eyes wide beneath the black plastic visor of

> his cap, he feigns at me, grunting 'Heeyah!' I lower the camera, smiling uneasily. The man walks away, mouthing indignant words, slapping the ball of his knobkerrie against his palm (*LG*:4).

This makes Frank justify his nostalgia. Seeking the place of his childhood is only necessitated by the mission to deliver the gift of money otherwise he is content with *not* belonging to this place. In fact, Frank demonstrates that even when he stayed in Rhodesia, he did not really relate to black people; their customs and language remained alien to him because even now their mutterings in Shona are "angry, unintelligible." He does not understand the land's ways and unwritten semiotic codes, one of which includes not carrying a camera. In fact, Frank soon realises that he does not belong to both the white (they resent him for being an 'outsider') and black communities and ends up asking himself, "What am I?" (*LG*:143). He sees himself as an Australian of African descent who is quite content with declaring himself Australian any time. According to him, the umbilical cord that had tied him to Africa was cut long ago (*LG*:4).

The country he sees now is full of black people circulating in various geographies of poverty, sickness (AIDS, usually) and violence. It also seems like knobkerries and axes are inevitable implements among the black people Frank encounters in Zimbabwe reminding one of the Commissar's machete in Rogers's *The Last Resort* or the inevitable overalls and straw hat in Buckle's *African Tears*. The axe, symbolically, represents more than just an implement. It is a representation of the apparatus of dismantling, the destruction of the Rhodesian order which, ironically, seems to be the only thing the new system has done well. The Coles' former farmhouse, a representation of Rhodesia now liberated, is falling apart:

> The house is now completely dilapidated. The corrugated iron roof sags and is rusted through in places, broken windows are patched with cardboard, a door hangs askew. Detritus lies everywhere, mostly old car parts, within the perimeter of a high security fence. The backyard is strewn with old car parts, hulks in various stages of disembowelment (*LG*:8).

The axe's destructive potential, which seems to have symbolically created a dilapidated country, is brought to a climax when the Baldwins, Frank and Hazel attempt to go and sprinkle Vic Baldwin's ashes in the river of his former farm. There, they encounter their former servant, Shilling (it takes excesses of exertion for the Baldwins to remember this name) whom the Baldwins remember as Baboon but are no longer at liberty to call him with such a name in Zimbabwe (*LG*:270). They are now aware of the perils of whiteness and the privileges of blackness (but a ZANU—PF kind of privilege) in Zimbabwe's politics of belonging. Of course,

the privileges are not cast in stone. They are fluid; in most cases their fluidity limits them to perils for longer periods of time. The axe is put to use by the ex-servant when the Baldwins approach him with the joviality of familiar friends. It whacks Hugo Baldwin's face bloody and is joined by other axes in attempting to dismantle the Baldwins' car:

> Suddenly Shilling and his men are around us, brandishing their weapons. Eyes wide, teeth barred, shouting and taunting. One of them strikes the bonnet with an axe, the blade breaks through the metal and remains lodged. A deafening banging as they pound the roof with knobkerries (*LG*:272).

The dismantling of cars is a recurring motif in this narrative. Frank himself ends up being an automation *enfant terrible* with his numerous hiccups with cars. However, it is his description of the dismantling of cars at Jervis's garage that legitimises the symbolic meaning of the dismantling of cars which I have pointed out above. Cars recur in this narrative in "various states of disembowelment" (*LG*:8). The axe (representing violence) has done its part in leaving scars on the landscape of the car. Lettah's permanent smile, for instance, forced on her by the forced removal of her lips during *Gukurahundi*[60] by Mugabe's soldiers (*LG*:297), represents the violence meted out on the human and physical geography in the perilous politics of Zimbabwe. It seems as if the new black power is interested in dismantling systems and landscapes to a level where belonging to them becomes an over-ambitious venture. Jervis' garage is a symbolic representation of this with its countless dismantled engines and broken anvils that cannot be re-assembled:

> Ah, the dreaded broken anvil. I'd forgotten the countless times I had heard this same solemn myth when I lived in Africa. In my reckoning, if you melted down all the broken anvils that must litter the African veld you would have enough raw iron to build another Sydney Harbour Bridge (*LG*:202).

At a symbolic level, the broken anvils, if melted, can build another bridge. Frank seems to be suggesting a more tolerant system in 'Africa' that gathers 'broken anvils' into one, a system of multiculturalism which reduces the gap between people the way a bridge connects two disparate places.

[60] My introductory chapter has a section that gives a brief history of *Gukurahundi*, a Fifth-Brigade-led operation in Matebeleland between 1983 and 1987.

Now that I have spoken of multiculturalism, I find it prudent to pursue it a little further using Milton's house as a symbol. Milton Oglivy is Frank's white friend who practises law in Bulawayo. He is married to Ruby and they have an adopted black son called Vernon. They also stay with a maid called Precious whose children, Geldof and Rosie, are under Milton's care and live a privileged life not different from Vernon's. They even go to the same school in the same car with Vernon. The mixture of black and white and privileged and underprivileged is a subtle criticism of the racial division within radical cultural nationalist discourse, ZANU—PF's included. Milton even has no qualms with accommodating Frank, who, frankly speaking, has overstayed his welcome because of his anti-teetotaller character and his numerous automation mishaps, one of which involves Milton's car. Milton even refuses to leave Zimbabwe because he feels Vernon and Ruby (Milton's white wife) belong to Zimbabwe because they were born there and should not be uprooted (*LG*:150).

However, the enclave of Milton's walls is in itself a case of being uprooted. His house, though a multi-racial, multicultural centre, looks like an island when compared to the world outside its walls. The walls are a border on their own that needs to be jumped by those with dreams of a meal with green pumpkin leaves:

> I wake to a commotion. Precious is shouting: 'Hayi! Hayi! Wena! Aibo!' Dogs in the neighbouring property begin a riot of barking. A flurry of footsteps. I wrench open the bedroom curtains. The rising sun blinds me momentarily, then I find myself staring into the face of a stranger running past the cottage with a pumpkin under one arm – stolen, I assume, from Milton's vegetable patch (*LG*:130).

The man does not belong to Milton's space and his act of stealing attracts the indignation of Precious, Milton's maid, and the ire of Milton's neighbours' dogs. The issue here is that Milton has created an enclave for himself and his family and Precious's family away from the madding crowd. This gives his space a foreignness that makes the invader a 'stranger'. Whether there are physical walls or not, Milton's space, like any other home, is meant to accommodate its owners and those who are recipients of the owners' benevolence. The invader, therefore, in entering Milton's space in search of food because of its perceived abundance, becomes a symbol of all those who are fleeing constricting spaces to lands of perceived abundance. Milton's space is a land of perceived abundance. The stranger's entry into this space is not seamless. It is traumatic and attracts various forms of prejudice (Precious) and security

measures (dogs) like deportation. This definitely puts a limit to the multiculturalism of Milton: it is reserved for the 'lucky' ones like Vernon and Precious and her children.

Precious and her children in fact pay a price to remain beneficiaries of Milton's multiculturalism. Milton gratuitously enjoys vestiges of Rhodesian white master-black servant relationships as the conversation below demonstrates:

> '…Precious! Brings baas[61] Frank's porridge!'
> 'Yebo, nkosi!'[62] Precious calls back from the kitchen.
> 'While some definitive colonial sounds remain unchanged,' I say.
> Milton gives me a wry look. 'She's got a job and a place to stay. That's more than most Zimbabweans can claim these days' (*LG*:33).

This same trait is found in Vic, the ex-Rhodesian whose forced eviction from the farm is the only thing that separates him from Rhodesia. He is a manifestation of Rhodesians who refuse to transform with the times. He sticks to the 'kaffir'[63] discourse even in a Zimbabwe where sensibilities are expected to have changed. According to him, "I'll call a kaffir anything I damn well like" (*LG*:52). Jervis, the white mechanic who deals with Frank's automation mishaps, calls Zimbabwe 'kaffirdom' (*LG*:138). Brak and the Baldwin boys use the racist term 'munt'[64] to describe black people. Even though Milton is subtle, his superiority complex, manifesting overtly in Vic, is discernible. That proves the limits of his multicultural society.

Throughout the novel, there is a subtle but consistent effort to rehabilitate the (former) Rhodesians and absolve them of their responsibility as individuals. The narrator's parents are always portrayed as having stood somewhat outside the Rhodesian world, its abuse and power structures. Whenever they behave differently, that is, like racists, the narrator lets the reader know that in that respect his parents were no different from other Rhodesians, suggesting, in the process, that in all other ways, they were not 'really' Rhodesian. When we learn, towards the end, that his mother, Lydia, was very much a Rhodesian as she saw Lettah first and foremost as a servant without voice, desires and agency of her own ("servants did not disobey"), she is once again absolved by the elderly kindly servant who tells us that "it was her country that made her" and that Lydia is, hence, not responsible as an individual. She (Lettah) says to Frank,

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[61] 'Baas' was the name that was used by black people to refer to their white master in Rhodesia and even after independence. Baas is Afrikaans for boss.
[62] 'Nkosi' is Ndebele for 'King'.
[63] 'Kaffir' is a racist, insulting and derogatory term used to refer to black people by whites in Rhodesia and South Africa.
[64] 'Munt' is a derogatory term that refers to a black African.

> Please do not carry guilt. Your mother was made by our country. It is time to move forward. This money of which you speak, Lydia's money. I am thankful that I was in Lydia's thoughts when she passed away. In this she has in some way overcome the history that separated us (*LG*:304).

The absolving of Lydia, therefore, represents the author's own deliberately constructed postcolonial vision of breaking from the shibboleths of the past. However, the narrative demonstrates that the break with the past is never seamless. There are vestiges of the old that carry over into the new.

Even horrible Vic who demonstrates recalcitrant incorrigibility as a Rhodesian in 2008 Zimbabwe is somehow washed clean by his death, which allows those around him to idealise him in retrospect and by the subtle notion that he was, throughout his life, misunderstood and that there was a lot more to him than his cruelty. Vic is a Rhodesian who refuses to die. Even though he is evacuated from his farm, he fails to enter into Zimbabwe (*LG*:157). The farm is a miniature Rhodesia whose usurpation from Vic is expected to create a new platform for more tolerance towards blacks. It creates the opposite. Vic retains the sensibilities of white settlers found in Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* whose fear of the 'black peril' emanates from their paranoid protection of the white woman's image of perfection from being soiled by black virility. His warning against Clara's swimming excursion at the pool in the presence of Jeremiah, their black gardener, can be understood in this context (*LG*:49). He believes strongly that Rhodesia was a good country well-run by whites until "the kaffirs came along and ballsed everything up" (*LG*:51). When Frank narrates the state he found the Coles' former Que Que house in, Vic remarks: "What did you expect? That, my Aussie friend, is what kaffirs do. Bugger things up. We make, they break" (*LG*:52). Vic is to Rhodesia what Mugabe is to Zimbabwe. They both seem to agree on *Operation Murambatsvina:*

> 'Those bloody market stalls were just clogging up the streets with their junk. It's about time someone cleared them out. We never allowed it in the old days, did we?' (*LG*:53).

With such extremists before independence (Vic) and after independence (Mugabe), the likelihood of a just, multicultural and multiracial society is stifled.

However, even this racist, mono-cultural, mono-racial Rhodesian is put in a position where he is forced to win the love and sympathy of the readers. He dies. He dies a heroic death while trying to save Hazel from the attack of a black thief. Milton sums it up thus:

> The old bigot never seemed to twig that he was powerless. He seemed blissfully ignorant that when Rhodesia changed to Zimbabwe power also shifted from whites to blacks. Ja, Franco, I thought a lot of things about Vic Baldwin, and most of it negative. But then he does the knight in shining armour caper. He comes to the rescue of his damsel, Hazel. His courage is tested and he is not found wanting. It kind of redeems him, don't you think? Makes us realise that there's more to people than we think (*LG*:253).

The narrator's rhetorical questions, "How did he win my father's respect? What had I missed in this man?" find their answers in Milton's eulogy to Vic.

The array of Rhodesian characters in the novel are given a humanity that betrays the inhumanity of Rhodesia as a country and colonial system. Frank's grandfather is certified as a good man by the son of his former servant: "My father worked for your grandfather, Mr Cole. Long ago. He said Nkosi Metcalf was a good man" (*LG*:91). The Rhodesian hippy, Hazel, Lydia's Rhodesian friend, shows all the signs of tolerance and non-conformity to some Rhodesian standards that might have made her an oddity in Rhodesia. In fact, Hazel subverts all the images of a perfect white Rhodesian woman that were peddled by the guardians of the Colour Bar. She was the only white person Frank knew who proclaimed herself to be African at a time when Rhodesia was British (*LG*:42). She was a Rhodesian anomaly who did not shave her armpits and occasionally braided her hair like a Ndebele maiden. She harboured notions of racial equality that made fellow white Rhodesians during the colonial period shake their heads behind her back. Unlike some characters in the narrative, she admits to the racism of Rhodesia. Her friendship with Lydia is however broken by Lydia's jealousies. Even liberality suffers from the curse of intolerance. She is commendable for admitting that Rhodesia was a racist creation. She says,

> Your mother and I were *Rhodesian* girls, for heaven's sake! Our sisterhood was exclusively white, dear boy. I am honest enough now to admit that black people were never included – never even considered! – in my childhood notions of soul-connectedness (*LG*:98).

While Hazel's admission is commendable, it reeks of self-righteousness.

Even though Hazel cuts a likeable figure, especially when one considers her tolerance towards Vic, a man who is disparately different from her in terms of temperament and racial sensibilities, she too fails to go beyond the system that made her and evinces its vestiges in 2008 Zimbabwe. Hazel's love for African craft is an abstraction that does not translate to her inner sensibilities and everyday life. African craft is first and foremost a business whose aim

is not just to satisfy her tourist love for African craft but to make profits. She makes a case for her shop, Zambezi Pride, when she says that the black female weavers outside her shop depend entirely on her shop because she gives them commissions for their work (*LG*:141). She is a white saviour in the mould of Buckle in *African Tears* or Rogers in *The Last Resort*. The depiction of white businesses as humanitarian centres for the benefit of poor black people is an abiding feature in white Zimbabwean fiction and an ingredient of Rhodesian discourse. In trying to create a home for white people in Zimbabwe through this argument, the authors alienate white people further because of their perceived wealth and exclusive lives in the midst of a mass of suffering black people.

Hazel is also culpable of the clichés of Rhodesian discourse, for instance, the one where white people declare that they paid for their land legitimately and were the only ones who knew the art of producing food. She says,

> You forget that whites in this country are no longer British colonials. They're African, born and bred. They have a right to be here. You forget that white farmers paid for their land legitimately. They or their forbears spent a lifetime paying off the loans. You forget that white farmers once fed the nation and half of Africa. They provided stable employment to hundreds of thousands of people (*LG*:96).

The notions that they bought the land, that they feed the nation and half of Africa and that they provide stable employment is a well-worn argument in white Zimbabwean narratives. The contribution of white people to the food industry of Zimbabwe and half of Africa implies that the black inheritors of farms and political power are making no such contributions.[65] To buoy up this claim are numerous descriptions of misery and wretchedness given by Frank as representations of reality in post-2000 Zimbabwe. There is never a description of a happy Zimbabwean with healthy skin and round cheeks except where the Zimbabwean is in the care of a white benefactor like Precious, Vernon, Geldof, Rosie and Vera or is a villain like Dlomo. The rest are listless ghosts, the walking dead, crisscrossing the tortured geography of Zimbabwe. Only the oppressors like Dlomo are happy. Wherever Frank encounters black people, the inevitable description goes like this:

[65] Terrence Ranger's *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study* (1985) explores the development of the peasant option in Zimbabwe and how this option managed to challenge settlerist policies of wage labour. Many peasants were very productive thereby subverting settlerist policies of impoverishing black people in order to attract them to white-owned farms for wage labour. In many cases, peasants managed to feed themselves by growing food crops while many white farmers concentrated on cash crops like tobacco. So to say white farmers were responsible for feeding the country is an overstatement from Hazel.

> We have passed several squatter camps flanking the road; mud huts and makeshift shanties surrounded by meagre plots of brown, withered maize. People emerge languidly from these dwellings to watch us pass by, heedless of the dust swept up by the car. The only animals we see are a few dogs scavenging around the settlement, starving wretches with tails between their legs (*LG*:269).

His first encounter with the new black farm owners on their former farm also attracts the same descriptions of wretchedness (*LG*:9-10). What we witness is an intersection of Frank, Hazel and Vic, three people who seemed different but who are now united in their agreement that the inheritors of Rhodesia, the people who named it Zimbabwe, have fallen short of earning their positions. As Hazel explains concerning Fort Rixon,

> This all used to be prime cattle country. Now look at it. Nothing! Aside from the few tick-infested beasts we saw this morning, have you seen any cattle? The fraud of these land invasions is just so tragic. That imbeciles like Dlomo inherit these beautiful farms (*LG*:95).

Apparent in her statement is the belief that Rhodesia was Eden and she, like Vic and Brak, is trying to come to terms with Zimbabwe. She even confesses that she recognises Zimbabwe but she does not feel a part of it (*LG*:101).

Brak's bravado is similar to Vic's. The transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe leaves scars on his inscape. He pays dearly for trying to defend the European diaspora in Zimbabwe. It is in Brak that the tragic edge of exile reaches its highest level of melancholy. He has a recurring dream of killing a hapless black guerrilla (*LG*:222). Brak killed out of the conviction that Rhodesia was supposed to be. He killed because he hated the black system. He confesses that he even hates them now when he looks at "the fuck-up they have made of this place" (*LG*:222). In this Brak sounds like Vic. However, the interminable guilt of Brak at having killed the helpless guerrilla ironically gives him a humanity that stands out as an island in the sea of his bloodied life. The excruciating angst in his voice as he narrates the story to Frank makes him an object of pity. In a way, Brak appears to the reader as an object of pity regardless of the cruelty of his existence in the army. Brak, in fact, criminalises the machine (his army unit and the whole Rhodesian system) for all the killings he has done. However, if Brak was a product of the machine, his encounter with the helpless guerrilla away from the influence of the machine was supposed to call for the exercising of his humanity. This he fails and he pays for it for the rest of his life. Frank uses Brak's story to make a very important observation: "Brak's

story is not the first of its kind, nor will it be the last" (*LG*:225). This is a very important observation in the sense that it problematises such noble visions like multiculturalism and tolerance not because the visions themselves are bad but because there will always be cases of people sacrificing their bodies for noble and ignoble causes, some of them requiring the destruction of life. Such people usually value life in hindsight, in the aftermaths of killing. Therefore, there will never be multiculturalism or tolerance in an 'arrived' sense because people like Brak are not the first, neither will they be the last. This makes exile a tragic experience in a world where people are wont to develop convictions that militate against tolerance and multiculturalism.

When it comes to a grasp of the politics of belonging, Frank has an open-mindedness that makes him read the situation more objectively. For instance, Frank makes reference to the onomastic process of place-naming and likens it to the chameleon nature of Zimbabwe:

> In the far distance, I can just make out the blue outcrops of the Matobo Hills, hazy in the last light. I muse over the confusion of names for this rocky wilderness – Matobo, Matopo, the Matopos. A small reminder that Zimbabwe is a chameleon still changing colour (*LG*:117).

This, symbolically, means paradigms of belonging are shifting and are not cast in stone. While the essentialism of Mugabe initially seems to be favouring black people, it becomes clear that it only favours those who do not stand in the way. Frank grasps this very clearly:

> When it comes to the question of whites claiming their right to Africa, his racist essentialism is blunt: whites are not indigenous to Africa, therefore can never be African. Africa is for Africans. Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans. Except that it's not just whites who are excluded from belonging. In his rants there are the millions of black Zimbabweans, referred to as 'excess' people or the 'nation's trash', that also bear his wrath (*LG*:143).

Therefore, the issue ceases to be that of black and white. States of non-belonging are reached by standing in Mugabe's way. In such a circus, Frank finds it difficult to pin down where he belongs. He asks himself, "What am I? Born in a country that no longer exists. Born in Africa nonetheless" (*LG*:143). What Mugabe is doing is confusing identity with belonging. According to Yuval-Davis (2004:217), "[b]elonging [cannot] be reduced to identities and identifications." This corresponds with the argument of Crowley (1999:22) that belonging is a 'thicker' concept. Derrida's treatise, *Of Hospitality* (2000), brings to the fore this *problematique* of belonging,

identity and identifications through the host/stranger dichotomy. Apparent in Derrida's treatise is the acknowledgement that the dichotomy between stranger and host is not a natural one; it is arrived at contextually where the master of the house, the one who wants to be master 'at home', defines the delimitations of his/her hospitality, decides to receive or not receive whoever he/she likes or does not like there. According to Derrida, "[a]nyone who encroaches on my 'at home', on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy" (2000:53-4). Apparent here is the collusion between hospitality and power. Power here gives the host the chance to filter, choose, exclude and mete out violence. Being foreign, therefore, may not necessarily be a natural state of affairs. This is what makes *belonging* a thicker concept especially because of its susceptibility to regulation.

What Mugabe is doing, therefore, is constructing high walls around belonging by invoking identity, which, unfortunately, is something that cannot capture the essence of belonging. Yuval-Davis (2004:220-221) rightly explains,

> Therefore, neither citizenship nor identity can encapsulate the notion of belonging. Belonging is where the sociology of emotions interfaces with the sociology of power, where identification and participation collude, or at least aspired or yearned to. Like other hegemonic constructions, belonging tends to become 'naturalized' and thus invisible in hegemonic formations. It is only when one's safe and stable connection to the collectivity, the homeland, the state, becomes threatened, that it becomes articulated and reflexive. It is then that individual, collective and institutional narratives of belonging become politicised. And it is often the Right that exploits the love and hate, fears and hopes that are evoked in these situations in order to build higher walls around the boundaries and borders of the national collectivity and to mobilize the people towards exclusionary politics.

In this politicised belonging, even those who are deemed 'black' and 'Zimbabwean' enough to belong find themselves excluded from the sociology of power, identification and participation. The politicisation of belonging by Mugabe, his naturalisation of it, is an attempt to mobilise people towards exclusionary politics. This makes belonging very perilous.

The sisterhood of Lydia and Lettah is presented to the reader as an ideal situation. Even their names bear the same initial 'L'. This makes them 'daughters' of the same motherland since their horizontal camaraderie gives the impression of women who relate to the land on non-prejudicial, natural terms. However, as I have pointed out, it is an unfamiliar motherland because it does not have the motherly nature to nurture the sisterhood of Lettah and Lydia. The

systems of the motherland stand in the way. It is a system that puts Lydia on a pedestal that militates against any horizontal camaraderie between her and Lettah. Lydia is, therefore, forced to see Lettah as the underdog. Lettah and Lydia are therefore not allowed to cross borders, not physical borders per se but border zones into other areas of life. One would expect the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe to bring Lettah from the margin where underdogs roam in states of non-belonging. However, Zimbabwe is also an unfamiliar motherland for Lettah. It further peripheralises her. The gang-raping and hacking off of her lips by Mugabe's soldiers during the *Gukurahundi* giving her a perpetual stigma of the perpetually smiling *uMahleka*, who covers her mouth in a rag and exists between hiding and begging on the streets (*LG*:297), is an act of violent exclusion. *Gukurahundi* itself is an act that is synonymous with the word 'cleansing', a word around which are 'echoing silences'[66] in Zimbabwean ZANU—PF political discourse. Frank muses on the hideous nature of the word when Brak remarks that clean air should be bottled up:

> There is something miraculous, cleansing about it. The smell of expectation, newness. Of hope. But then I'm reminded that the word *cleansing* can be anyone's metaphor. Murambatsvina. Gukurahundi. The removal of people, a different cleansing. Final solutions lurk in purity (*LG*:176).

The essentialised discourse of moving back to a purely Zimbabwean race proves to be not only impossible but potentially dangerous and harmful for both white and black Zimbabweans. It connotes *cleansing*, a word that sounds genocidal. The essentialised, nativist and militarist obsession with pure Zimbabweanness is however a political manoeuvre by Mugabe which serves to make more perilous the politics of belonging as Lettah's demise demonstrates. The cultural document that is invoked to cut Lettah's lips and gang-rape her, the cultural document that was used to transform black Zimbabweans into the walking dead at ZANU—PF re-education camps like the one headed by the maniac, Dlomo, fulfils the observation of Adorno and Horkheimer (cited in Gur-Ze'ev, 2005:24) that "there is no cultural

[66] In 2016 Zimbabwe, the focus shifted radically from the perceived white oppressor to the perceived black enemy of the state. The 2016 #ThisFlag Movement led by Pastor Evans Mawarire and Mugabe's aversion against it should be understood in this light. #ThisFlag was a movement that dominated social media and the streets and was meant to be the basis for agitation to make the government of Zimbabwe more accountable and transparent, to make Zimbabwe habitable again through responsible government, a government that shuns corruption. #ThisFlag as a movement, was a movement of people who were fed up with the distance between what the flag of Zimbabwe stood for (hope, development, prosperity) and where Zimbabwe was (joblessness, closed industries, hopelessness). Mugabe, however, was of the view that such people were not "us". This demonstrates the continued invocation of the politics of belonging even long after those who were deemed not to belong were divested of their land.

document that was not a manifestation of barbarism."[67] Zimbabwe, therefore, becomes a product of warring essences, a broken country with a broken independence, captured symbolically by the spluttering coloured lights of a broken sign that Frank sees festooned with birds' nests that break the name Zimbabwe into "*Zim…bwe In..pe.dence 1980*" (*LG*:104).

Frank shrewdly concludes that Africa was never a home for white people for the simple reason that even though they lived in it they never saw themselves as Africans. According to him,

> Personally, I don't see how we can truly belong anywhere outside Europe. We don't have a claim to any place outside of Europe that goes beyond a few centuries of colonial rule. That's nothing compared to cultures that have existed here for thousands of years. It may seem perfectly logical to you to claim Africanness, but to blacks we will always be interlopers. When whites were in charge, did we ever call ourselves Africans? No, we called ourselves Europeans, British, whatever – never Africans. Sounds a little contrived to start now, don't you think? (*LG*:170).

What Frank is saying here is that Zimbabwe was never a home for white people. Even when it was called Rhodesia, it was never their home.[68] Theirs was Europe. They only belonged to Rhodesia because Rhodesia belonged to Europe. The Union Jack was a symbol of that belonging. Singing 'God save the Queen' was a performative act that made them British. According to Frank, "as little Rhodesians, we roamed these hills free inside our colonial cage. Innocent in the withered hand of Empire" (*LG*:174). This means they were never at home in Rhodesia and are also not at home in Zimbabwe. Rhodesia was a home that never was. Frank expresses this symbolically by referring to a dream that incessantly haunts him. He dreams about having a wife and kids but losing the wife in the dream, "parting forever from the wife I never had" (*LG*:171).

If Rhodesia was never their home, and if Zimbabwe is not their home, then where is their home? Frank does not see Australia as home, neither does he see Africa as one. He sees Australia as an option where one does not live with the burden of "perpetually defending [his/her] right to exist, like people in Africa seem to do" (*LG*:169). However, as far as belonging to a place is concerned, Frank does not want to give it serious thought. He refuses to

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[67] The diasporic philosophy of the Frankfurt School was premised on not being at home at all costs, which entailed epistemological inquiry that was not place-bound, nativist and essentialist. Making a home out of essentialised thinking or cultural documents implies barbaric acts against alternative thinking and bearers of such thinking.

[68] In *The Grass is Singing* (Doris Lessing, 1950), Mary Turner's experience of the unrelenting heat of the veldt makes her connection to nature a tormenting one. It is as if the nature of Africa has rejected her. She, therefore, does not relate well with the landscape around her and remains unexplorative.

"get all pumped about place and belonging." In this, Frank seems to have succeeded in unmooring identity from place. However, his refusal to identify with Africa seems to be stemming from revulsion. The Zimbabwe he depicts is a despicable place and he prefers Australia any time, not as a home but an alternative. He however forgets the lesson Milton seems to have learnt very well – the world is a treacherous place. It may present us with democracies that make Zimbabwe appear like hell, but in-between those democracies are traumas that get one's head out of gear. According to Milton,

> I've thought about leaving. Often. Finding a nice little democracy somewhere in the world to settle down and live happily ever after. The trouble is I really don't think the so-called Free World out there is quite what it's cracked up to be. Nothing solid about it. Too full of fuck-all… Democracy. Freedom of speech. All very nice. The problem, boyo, is that democracies have just ended up in a chaotic free-for-all in which only the rich and the intolerant thrive. A nebulous mess (*LG*:150-151).

Milton does not have illusions about Zimbabwe. But "at least truth is clear" there (*LG*:151). Right and wrong are clear regardless of the fact that they are done in excess. But to have illusions about the Free World where right and wrong are not clear is something Milton rejects.

What both of these men are expressing, unconsciously, is that one cannot be at home both in the physical and epistemological sense. Throughout the narratives analysed in this section, there are concerted efforts to claim Zimbabwe as a home. The pervasive nostalgia in these narratives is a clear demonstration of this. Nostalgia has to do with returning home and longing but the irony of it all is that it is a "longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy" (Boym, 2001:7). Nostalgia, in the case of these narratives, is evidence that what was once called home has ceased to exist or never existed. As I have pointed out, the community of ex-Rhodesians in this narrative existed in a Rhodesia that was not African. It was a Rhodesia that was moored to Europe. Therefore, in the present Zimbabwe, they exist in states of non-belonging. Any attempts to Africanise themselves will not be without their shortcomings. The past lacks enough substance to forge a strong sense of belonging. It is a past that must be remembered yet it also has to be forgotten with all its exclusionary and racist tendencies. In one of her poems in *Chronicles of the Hostile Sun*, Brand's persona states that, "[t]he past is also something that hovers in our imaginations. And it repeats, and sometimes we can see it and sometimes we can't see it, and sometimes it's forgotten deliberately, or unconsciously. But it is this crumbling thing" (1984:47).

Frank refers to the Zimbabwean heat and dust as hostile, as if he has never experienced it before. The emotional sense of the heat creates a sense of not belonging. Frank complains: "The heat is oppressive; heavy; my shirt is damp with sweat" (*LG*:47). Clara also complains: "This bloody heat is killing me" (*LG*:48). This makes Zimbabwe an unfamiliar 'motherland' to the ex-Rhodesian community. This again has similarities with the experiences of Mary Turner in Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* where the oppressive heat of the Savannah bears the ingredients of the colony rejecting her.

Escaping the drudgery and mundane world of Zimbabwe: An analysis of *This September Sun*

This September Sun (Bryony Rheam, 2009), just like *Lettah's Gift*, is a fictitious narrative about a young, white female protagonist, Ellie, living in Britain, who literally comes back to the Zimbabwe of her childhood for her grandmother's funeral in order to search into her grandmother's past to unravel family secrets that make her discover truths about her 'home'. The book is divided into three parts. Part One deals with the formative years of Ellie's life. It ends with the gruesome murder of Gran. Parts Two and Three make use of Gran's diary entries from 1946 to 2004 shortly before her murder at the age of seventy-seven. The entries provide information to the jigsaw puzzle of Gran's life and, by extension, Ellie's and the lives of her family members. Throughout the narrative, the most recurring issues revolve around the protagonist's difficulties to negotiate a sense of belonging in Zimbabwe or Britain. She is, in the words of Coetzee (1988:11), "no longer European, not yet African." Such a condition is akin to the condition of double consciousness first enunciated by W. E. B. Dubois.[69] She has an idealised image of a space that offers a kind of escapism from what she perceives to be the drudgery and decades-long mundane existence of the white community in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. She wants to escape Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, and does at first, to a space of her

[69] In simple terms, Du Bois' 'double consciousness' (*The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903) refers to the psychological conflict incumbent upon an individual trying to reconcile his/her African heritage with an up-bringing in a society dominated by Europeans. In the case of white Zimbabweans, it is the challenge of reconciling their European heritage with an upbringing in an African society where the once-dominant minority (in terms of politics) Europeans are now a minority (in terms of numbers and politics). In post-independence Zimbabwe, the white minority have to become reconciled to the diasporic nature of their presence. However, unlike the black individual of the Boisian double consciousness, the contradictions of diasporic whiteness are usually available, to a certain degree, for utilisation to the advantage of white people. They remain with the ability of deciding, the amount of Africanness or Europeanness they can claim. Therefore, even though whiteness is at the edge in postcolonial Zimbabwe, it does not necessarily communicate the depth of the Boisian black diaspora.

fantasies, London. She wants a stimulating environment and believes it exists overseas. However, London too seems to have failed to offer her the desired escape and she does not fit in there either. Her case is that of perennial rootlessness. It has constant departures but without any fixed arrivals. She vacillates between London and Zimbabwe, and Mark's flat and Mandy's in London. When her narrative ends, she has made up her mind to go back to Zimbabwe, to use her grandmother's house with Tony and make fish and chips for Bulawayo.

This September Sun combines the past and the present in a narrative exchange that makes the Rhodesian past and the Zimbabwean present "inhabit shared time and place" (Tagwirei, 2014:112). The Rhodesian past is occupied by Ellie's grandmother and her love secrets while the Zimbabwean present is occupied by Ellie. However, this separation creates an ambivalent situation, something that is akin to McClennen's (2004) idea of dialectics and simultaneity, something that corresponds with Bastian's "recognition of difference within the 'same' moment of time" (2011:152). The narrative has two voices – Ellie's and Gran's – which resembles Bhaktin's reflection that "two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (1981:252), minimum because there can be more layers, more voices, which is what drives hybrid thinking. However, unlike other narratives that evoke the Rhodesian past in order to stake claims to belonging to the Zimbabwean present, Rheam's re-invention of the Rhodesian past is different from the narratives in this chapter in the sense that the putatively 'glorious' Rhodesian past is severely undermined by the drudgery and mundane world of it. What Rheam offers here is a reading of white Zimbabwean writing that subverts the uniformity and hegemonic coherence that is usually associated with it for a more nuanced reading of alternative possibilities that offer lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) from the usual stereotypical dead weight of colonial writing that is usually characterised as white Zimbabwean writing.

While disproving the uniformity of white Zimbabwean writing is not the purpose of this chapter, it serves to support one of the reasons why this research was undertaken, that is, to look at exile and postcolonial conditions from multiplicities of location without limiting myself to monolithic narratives and theorisations. Rheam offers another location from which to look at white Zimbabwean writing and the politics of belonging without completely getting embroiled in the hysterias of farm ownerships and invasions. However, I used 'completely' here to show that she does not totally rupture herself from the politico-aesthetic regimes she tries to subvert. Her story though can be read as a subversion of the perception of the universal laager mentality pinned to white Zimbabwean writing and as a revelation of the personal tragedies of individuals who find themselves in the European Diaspora. Both Gran and Ellie

do not evince the frontier spirit that is usually associated with white Zimbabwean writing. If there is any frontier the characters seek to [ad]venture onto, it is the frontier of gin and tonic. They are just two ordinary women, the first one hiding love secrets in a diary and the second one seeking a space where she can finally belong and stop being restless. Ennui characterises their worlds, interspersed intermittently with cups of tea, sundowners and illicit affairs. Such a reading of white Zimbabwean writing as a "multiplicity of intersections" (Even-Zohar, 1979:291) is an area that, beyond this research, needs more critical attention in order to create space for the re-writing of "dialogue and the carnivalesque into what may easily be read as repressed, ideologically narrow texts" (Tagwirei, 2014:39).

The multiplicity that Rheam jolts us to an awareness of is captured in her Gran's accounts of the war. Scholars who have analysed white-written accounts of war have negatively interpreted them as aspects of European diasporan conspiracies to delegitimise black Zimbabweans and all the things they fall back on to give legitimacy to themselves, like the war. War has been excessively used in the ZANU—PF nationalist meta-narratives that are deployed to determine who belongs and who does not. It is "the singular expression of nationalism in Zimbabwe" (Muwati, Mutasa and Bopape, 2010:153). The 'official' account of war by ZANU—PF has been considered the most vocal of all accounts so much that divergent narratives of war like Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns* (1989), Nyamufukudza's *The Non-believer's Journey* (1981) and Kanengoni's *Echoing Silences* (1997), or Ingrid Sinclair's film, *Flame* (1996),[70] have been at the end of brutal attacks by cultural critics[71] because they feel uncomfortable with alternative renditions of war. The point I am making here is that there are always possibilities of destabilisation, though not completely, of established discourses so that no dialogue should be considered as final. The rendition of war by Rheam, though brief, destabilises accepted critical approaches to white Zimbabwean war narratives. First, let me

[70] *Flame* is regarded as a controversial film. Set in Rhodesia during the Rhodesian bush war, the film pays tribute to the black female guerrillas in the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA). The film is regarded as controversial especially because of its portrayal of wartime rape of female guerrillas by unscrupulous male guerrillas. To compound the controversy, the film depicts, much like *Harvest of Thorns*, the contradictions of Zimbabwe's independence, especially the departure from collectivist principles of the war and the gravitation towards authoritarian rule. Such a depiction is against the grain of nationalist discourse in Zimbabwe which relies on editions and omissions ('echoing silences) for the legitimation of post-independence leadership epitomised in the 'selfless' African icon, Robert Mugabe. The rape scene angered the war veterans and the police confiscated the film and declared that it was seditious and vulgar. However, after a global campaign against this confiscation, the film was returned to the producers.

[71] In 'Mugabe's Neo-sultanist Rule: Beyond the Veil of Pan-Africanism' (2015), G. Moyo provides a list of such 'palace intellectuals' in the form of Paris Yeros, Tafataona Mahoso, Kenneth Manungo, Jonathan Moyo, Claude Mararike, Godfrey Chikowore, Vimbai Chivaura, and Sheunesu Mpepereki, culturalists, historians and political analysts who have played a part in propagating the image of Mugabe as a hero and liberator and anyone standing against him or what he stands for (politically, literally, and symbolically) a sell-out.

give a summary of how the majority of white Zimbabwean war narratives are usually written and read.

Bhebhe and Ranger in *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War Vol. 2* (1995), for instance, insist that there is a disjuncture between how white writers and black writers depict the war. They believe that black representations of the war focus on the effects of the war on ordinary black people – peasants, to be precise – while white representations focus on the military tactics of Rhodesian forces. Because of this, white accounts of the war are said to demonstrate a serious lack of understanding because of their exclusively military focus, as if the war could be won through military might alone. Chennells (1982:142) also believes that white narratives of the war are littered with "myths about Africans", like their lack of battlefield intelligence, which become part of the "Rhodesian discourse". Moyana (1999), too, believes that white narratives about the war also denigrate blacks and takes away from them the legitimacy to belong. She, for instance, says "[i]n telling the story of the Second Chimurenga, Denys Roberts's voice is sarcastic, Peter Stiff's denigrating, Angus Shaw's amusing and cynical, Bruce Moore-King's mournful and Tim McLoughlin in his novel, *Karima*, pessimistic" (Moyana, 1999:368). Therefore, the foundations of white belonging were shaken by how their war narratives were criticised because, as I have pointed out, it was war that was used as a premise for belonging and not belonging. Whites, therefore, featured in war narratives as *villains* of the war and its aftermaths and not as *victims*. *This September Sun* alludes to the war in a manner that depicts ordinary white people as victims of the war.

While Buckle, Douglas and, in part, Lang, have resorted to making a case for white belonging through land, Rheam focuses on an array of urban white characters, some of whom are victims of the war. Gran's secret love story involved a son called Jeremy, born out of her affair with Lloyd Cadwallader (whom everyone is deluded to think is an uncle). He grew up thinking that Ellie's grandfather was his *real* father. Jeremy died during the war and for a long time Ellie believed that he died in action just like in the movies. As Ellie goes through the photos of Jeremy, especially the army ones, there is a sense of heroism that Jeremy is made to assume.

> In one, he sat upon what looked like a hillside, looking out, away from the camera towards the horizon. His hands rested loosely on his shins and he was squinting slightly. His gun lay beside him. In another, he smoked a cigarette. In another, he sat outside a tent. This was the one in which he seemed the happiest for he smiled. I wondered how long it was after that that he was killed (*SS*:154).

This, too, reads like the photo of Brak in Lang's *Lettah's Gift*:

> The last image I have of him is in a photograph that came with a letter – the last letter – he sent during the war, long after my family had left Rhodesia. It's not an easy image. Brak is standing with a group of soldiers in a bush clearing. Two helicopters wait in the background, their blades spinning, the air thick with dust. Beyond the helicopters are some big granite kopjes. Brak and the other men are laughing. They look like savages, like wild men – filthy and unkempt; sweat streaks their faces; one has a bleeding hand. Brak's pale blue eyes shine vacantly. He is wearing the non-restrictive gear that Rhodesian soldiers preferred – a short-sleeved camouflage shirt, shorts and running shoes, no socks. Ammunition pouches around his waist. No headgear. He leans on his rifle as casually as those cowboys and soldiers did in the movies we watched long ago. And there, poking into the picture in the background near one of the helicopters, are the sprawled-out legs of a corpse. No face, no body – just bloodstained khaki trousers and bare black feet (*LG*:12).

However, these heroic depictions – like in the movies – do not last long. In Lang's narrative, Brak becomes a traumatised case. In Rheam's narrative, Jeremy commits suicide. This means there is no singular perspective concerning the war. The "fantasy of bravery and hope" (McLoughlin, 1985:12) for which white narrations of war are demonised is effectively compromised here thereby compromising ZANU—PF meta-narrations of belonging through war. Whites were, as the message appears to us, also victims.

However, the war is just another feature in the background. *This September Sun* is about the lives of two women who live in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. Their stories lack the meta-thematic appeal of Buckle, Lang or Rogers and become stories of two ordinary women living in a space in which they do not contribute to the larger scheme of things. These are the kinds of women whose deaths would not appear in a newspaper or attract international headlines like Buckle's (in the event that she dies during the farm invasions). In fact, Gran dies at the hands of a black burglar and she does not make international news because she is not a farmer. According to Ellie,

> My grandmother's death never made international news. After all she did not live on a farm, nor was her murder thought to be politically motivated. The news teams did not flock to the scene of the crime or wait to interview my mother. It wasn't worth their while for it did not involve the war veterans or provide material to point at an incompetent police force (*SS*:185).

When Ellie talks about Gran's death to some friends in England, they all assume that she was murdered on a farm (*SS*:323). The point is, what happens to inhabitants of diasporan spaces

who do not become international news? Would their stories invade the spaces that are occupied by stories that make international news? Rheam is here offering alternative stories that happen in mundane spaces away from official spaces. The story sounds like the death of Mary in Dorris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1973). The newspaper report (Lessing, 1973:1) is perfunctory and nonchalant because Mary is not big news. This lends a tragic edge to the condition of 'ordinary' migrants in everyday spaces and coheres with Zeleza's criticism of Said's demarcation of the kind of exiles who should celebrate this condition – chess players, poets, novelist, political activists and intellectuals – whose new world, according to Zeleza, is unnatural and whose unreality resembles fiction (2005:9). In fact, for Said, the true exiles, the ones who deserve the true pathos and majesty of the condition and experience of exile are not "large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance" (1999:181) but cosmopolitan intellectuals, mathematicians, chess players, musicians and writers. This is what Zeleza does not agree with. While Gran does not require international assistance, her death would not attract international attention like Said's. Hers is the tragic edge of exile.

Rheam's offer here is subversive because it disfigures the infrastructures of narratives that celebrate the frontier spirit. Gran is not a frontierswoman. She is just another bored Scottish girl who got married to a white Rhodesian and got widowed as a teenager and got stuck in Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) because of a tumultuous, decades-long adulterous affair with Lloyd Cadwallader, a married man. Ellie is Gran's protégé, her granddaughter, who is just as bored and living in a permanent exile from self, her immediate white society, from Zimbabwe, from Africa and, ironically, from her land of escape, England. Such a story is difficult to pin down into the neat taxonomy of Rhodesian discourse.

The interlocking narrations of past (represented by Ellie's remembrances and Gran's diaries) and present lack the obvious 'good, old days' tinge that characterises many narrations of childhoods and pasts as we have seen in *African Tears, The Last Resort* and *Lettah's Gift.* The past-present in this case "becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living" (Bhabha, 1994:7). While in other accounts like *Lettah's Gift* some white individuals like Vic demonstrate a serious fixation with Rhodesia that makes them fail to enter into and belong to Zimbabwe, in *This September Sun* that fixation is not overtly there. It is there in some individuals of course, like Ellie's grandfather, but the reason of his fixation is not clear because Rheam makes him a peripheral character who does not contribute much to the story except as a cuckold. In fact, the fact that he is divorced by Gran closes spaces for any Rhodesian character

in the story. However, it is imperative that we look first at this Rhodesian who refuses to die and other elements of Rhodesia before we move to other issues.

On the day of Independence (18 April, 1980), Ellie's grandfather burns the British flag and runs all over the yard with it.

> By the time we noticed my grandfather was missing from the circle around the cake, he had lit the stolen Union Jack and came running out in front of us, spinning furiously round and round in circles with it. He was turning so fast that the flames looked like a giant Catherine wheel, a great golden loop of fire. Then he let out a long deep mournful cry of sorrow that sounded like the very call of death and sent a chill through us all… I see my grandmother run out of the house to our macabre entertainer, screaming at him, her voice like hot oil, hissing and spitting and boiling, 'I hate you! I hate you!' As she reached him, he threw back the burning flag and it fell onto her, the flames reaching out like fingers to catch hold of her skin (*SS*:2).

Gran survived the incident with a dark and ugly scar under her forearm which took on the shapes of a teapot and the map of Zimbabwe. She was proud of the mark and thought of it as the price she had to pay for her freedom. The incident also convinced her to divorce grandfather. Their divorce, however, meant the disruption of a Rhodesian routine of lunch, afternoon naps and tea[72] so that for the young Ellie, the afternoons "stretched empty and dreary with a longing that could not be filled" (*SS*:5). What she is missing is not Rhodesia but her grandmother. That is why Ellie believes that everything was to be judged within the context of her grandmother leaving and setting up her own home and this, too, could be judged in the context of her grandfather's macabre performance of mourning for Rhodesia. That refusal to enter into Zimbabwe and the dangers it portended (one of them being burning Gran with the Union Jack) meant that Gran, like Zimbabwe, had to exile grandfather so that for the rest of his life he "felt betrayed by both his country and his wife, both of whom left him for greater things" (*SS*:64). Henceforth, the central characters would be Ellie and Gran. At the same time, the burning of the Union Jack symbolises the fact that Rhodesia is just a flitting nebulousness to which Gran never belonged, a nebulousness which also communicates the transience of belonging.

[72] This routine emphasises the conditions and contradictions of belonging and not belonging to Rhodesia. It also overtly manifests itself in the Union Jack, a symbolism of British nationalism, being hoisted and fluttering in the winds of Zimbabwe away from Britain. It is like Frank's observation in *Lettah's Gift*, that they continued to salute the Union Jack and sing 'God Save the Queen' to demonstrate how they did not actually belong to Rhodesia but were just caged in the "withered hand of Empire" (Lang, 2011:174). In a way, it is a precursor to the dilemma of belonging that Ellie experiences.

However, this does not mean that Gran has put a wedge between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. It only means she does not have the inflexible fixation with Rhodesia that grandfather has. She is open-minded enough to appreciate what was good about Rhodesia without necessarily wanting to go back to Rhodesia:

> Was Rhodesia bad? I am not sure. Not all of it, surely? I find myself longing for clean streets, spotless public toilets, a competent police force. What has been gained? Independence. A shallow word in a country where freedom of speech is not allowed. Did we treat black people as badly as they treat each other? Surely not, I long to say. But maybe it is not enough to be well-fed or looked after.
>
> Somewhere one wants an acknowledgement: I am human. More than: You and I – we are equal (*SS*:276).

Gran remembers the past, just like grandfather. However, grandfather denies the present. Gran does not deny the past and the present. While in official narratives the present is regarded as a dissolution of the past and superior to it (Shih, 2005:98),[73] Gran remembers it in order to tell the difference. The utopian call to forget the past is a participation in the "metaphysics of presence" (Derrida, 1993:226), a denial of difference. As I have pointed out, it is ironic that whites are called to forget the past while blacks are called to ritualise and remember it. However, the past blacks remember is carefully selected to divest it of all dystopian elements. Remembering exists side by side with forgetting certain aspects.[74] For white minorities in Zimbabwe, they have to "forget or discard memories incompatible with the State's narrative, thereby suppressing dialogue necessary to, and productive of, reconciliation" (Fisher, 2010:226). Colonialism works in the same logic as independence and Rhodesians are also guilty of this exercise. According to Kaarsholm (1989:85), "the mobilisation of historical mythology has played a prominent part both in relation to the endeavours of white colonisers to appropriate and legitimise power and to the battle of African nationalists to take it away from them and install themselves as rightful rulers." This is why Primorac (2010b:201) regards the Rhodesian discourse's reproduction and revival as closely connected to the need to critique

[73] Mugabe's 1980 speech calls for the erasure of the past from memory. Ironically, while whites are expected to belong by forgetting all things Rhodesian, it is the past that ZANU—PF falls back on to give itself legitimacy. This creates a narrow space for remembrance for whites and this makes the perpetuation of the Rhodesian discourse a challenge to the narrow restrictions of ZANU—PF remembrance.

[74] In the first chapter, I dwelled much on Ranger's analysis of patriotic history and I find it relevant to this process of systematic and choreographed remembering and forgetting by ZANU—PF. What it therefore means is that there is no patriotism outside of blackness. In Zanu PF parlance, Whiteness in Zimbabwe is not synonymous with patriotism. Gran's scar, therefore, which has the shapes of a teapot and Zimbabwe (*SS*:3), is her own privatised monument of patriotism that does not make it into official archives of ZANU—PF.

Mugabe's ultra-nationalism and essentialised identity politics. The two, therefore, are engaged in a serious tug of war. However, reading *This September Sun* gives one the feeling that this tug of war is not the centre of the lives of the two central characters – Ellie and her grandmother. Theirs are stories that are usually not 'remembered' in the larger schemes of things in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. They are their own private stories happening in a space where 'bigger', newsworthy stories of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe are happening. In this case, the stories of Gran and Ellie are stories of both Rhodesian and Zimbabwean subalterns which will never be dominant. This is because their remembrances are not as public as, say, Buckle's. Gran's diaries are only private, meant to be read by Ellie alone.

The past dialogues with the present in the private lives of Gran and Ellie. This dialogue cannot be used as part of the collective memory of whites without committing a heinous crime of trespassing. Ellie reads Gran's diaries as a way of coming out of her own exile. The shift between Gran's past captured in her diaries and Ellie's present gives *This September Sun* the qualities of postcolonial travelogues which "stem from a personal urge to solve some inner conflict" (Ropero Lopez, 2003:53). So Ellie's travels vacillate between the past and the present, Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, and England and Zimbabwe, in her quest for self-recognition and belonging. Hers is an inner conflict that engenders self-exile. However, unlike most dominant travel writings, the stories of Ellie and Gran are difficult to appropriate as Rhodesian or anti-Zimbabwean propaganda. Zimbabwe, Rhodesia and England are just backdrops of Ellie's very personal and subjective concern. She has a perennial obsession with her own personal belonging and rootlessness which she tries to solve via the private than the public, via the personal than the collective. Her volition is often her pursuit of self-comprehension, illuminating what Holland and Huggan (2000:14) call "a conflicted sense of belonging and allegiance."

Ellie's self-examination inevitably entails digging into wider social and historical issues. The subjectivity of the reserved, self-exiled Ellie combines with the gradual awakening of her social consciousness. *This September Sun* therefore is Rheam's exercise that is akin to what Phillips (1997:143) calls "unmapping […] mapped" worlds. It dismantles the North-South dichotomy in the sense that both are mundane and full of drudgery. When her grandmother's lover, Miles, decides to go to England, Ellie is sure that he would die there because "nothing stills a broken heart, I know that myself, not even the cold *vacuum* of England" (*SS*:42, stress mine). This same England she now knows as cold and empty was once an object of her fantasies which slowly became a prison:

> Here was everything I had ever dreamed of. England was a melting pot of people. It had absorbing culture, it had art, and above all, it had books. There was no pressure to conform, no need to be anyone but myself. It is strange to realise now that freedom, or an idea of it, is something that exists in one's mind. The England of my arrival was the same England as fourteen years later, yet by then it had become a prison (*SS*:121).

Travel has allowed Ellie to come to the conclusion that what she has been looking for all her life is within her. Defining her home is not a process external to her. According to Korte (2000:170), "[t]o many postcolonial travellers ... the question of defining one's home still seems to be more urgent than for other travellers, and the search for a home may even be their primary motive for travel." Ellie, therefore, is searching for a home. Her institution of a dialogue between the past and the present is part of her quest to be at home somewhere. However, she discovers that one can only be at home in oneself. She feels as though she does not fit anywhere because she feels alienated from everything. Her sense of separation from the world, the feeling, of not only belonging, but of not knowing how (*SS*:100) can only be dealt with by connecting to self (*SS*:127).

Another important aspect of Rheam's narrative is the meaning of whiteness. In the narratives that I have looked at prior to this one, whiteness is connected to land. The criticism of these narratives also centres on how whites achieve belonging through nature. McDermott Hughes has researched extensively into this issue in *Whiteness in Zimbabwe* (2010) and his anthropological thesis has gone a long way in foregrounding issues of 'whiteness', 'landscape' and 'belonging'. Their belonging to the landscape is done through farming, aestheticising it through literature and art and conserving nature through game reserves and resorts. A simple inventory of the things I have listed here in *African Tears*, *The Last Resort* and *Lettah's Gift* reveals this propagation of the conviction of belonging. Buckle's attachment to the land (*African Tears*), Rogers's resort (*The Last Resort*) and Hazel's African Craft Centre (*Lettah's Gift*) are all aspects of the processes of propagating the conviction of belonging by whites using terrain-aesthetics that exclude black lives from a mastery of the game of belonging. In the previous three narratives, one gets a feeling that the array of white characters in the narratives think that blacks are not like them thereby jeorpadising hopes of any cosmopolitanism, even an awkward cosmopolitanism. A cosmopolitanism that crosses physical borders but fails to cross colour borders is undoubtedly worse than awkward.

My point is that studying whiteness through land only is a limiting exercise. If the racism of the whites we have so far studied like Vic in *Lettah's Gift* or Buckle in *African Tears* is connected to land, to what do we owe Ellie's grandfather's racism? He is a die-hard

Rhodesian and racist yet he does not own land, neither does he overwhelm himself with poetry of any kind. Land-aesthetics is not something he subscribes to. He just hates blacks. In one of his rants, he says,

> Look at Zambia, look at Malawi, Look at Mozambique… The end [is] near. Soon we would all be sitting in huts, eating *sadza* and relish with our hands, smelling like a pig's backside (*sic*) (*SS*:63).

Ellie's grandfather loves cars and bets that he will never be driven by a black person: "There's no way I would let that silly bugger drive me an inch out of the garden… He's just learnt to control the hosepipe, never mind drive a car" (*SS*:64). Rheam is offering us another possibility of reading whiteness without embroiling ourselves in land politics. This is another line of flight for her. Ellie's grandfather's racism has nothing at all to do with an aestheticised connection to the landscape. In his response to McDermott Hughes's anthropological thesis, Wylie (2012:184) states that his own father's racism had nothing to do with land and this was actually true of the majority of whites in Rhodesia who were urbanites, industrialists, technicians and businessmen:

> …their attachment to and understanding of nature or the land as such was superficial and confined to momentarily reproducing their urban lifestyle at a salubrious holiday resort in Caribbea Bay or Inyanga. Of the 270,000-strong white population at its 1970s peak, perhaps only 20,000 lived actively off the land as farmers, and only a few hundred as active conservationists attached to national parks or private conservancies. The majority source and expression of Rhodesian racism, I suggest, will be found rather in conceptions of rationalism, post-Enlightenment governance, commercial honesty, literacy, industrial prowess, and related aspects of a technocratic modernity.

Wylie goes on to give the example of the former Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith's memoir, *The Great Betrayal* (1997), in which, despite Smith himself being a farmer, nature makes a few appearances. Rheam's *This September Sun*, therefore, is meant to open up possibilities of reading whiteness without reducing it to the simplicities of land. According to De Kock (2010:23),

> …surely, in a context of heterogeneity as marked as that in southern Africa, the signifier "whiteness" (along with all its proxy signifiers), despite equally persistent tropes of sameness and rock-solid marks of identity, must be regarded as a shuttling moniker, a hot potato variously juggled and differently handled, grasped, welcomed or rendered problematic across time and space.

The persistent trope of sameness that white Rhodesians have constructed around themselves and through which they and their descendants are read certainly hides heterogeneity both at the "diachronic-historical and synchronic-individual" (Wylie, 2012:185) levels.

Various behaviours exhibited by Gran, grandfather, Ellie's parents and Ellie herself cannot be subsumed under racism and whiteness. The array of characters above do not exhibit a particular and coherent brand of whiteness and if we are to read them under such a narrow brand, we are bound to miss the complexities, individualities, differences and ambivalences that characterise their lives. Rheam therefore has subverted whiteness as an interpretive category and Ellie seeks her belonging without using the 'usual' infrastructures of whiteness that are associated with the Rhodesian discourse. The cohesion of white people that is usually associated with the politics of belonging is not there in this narrative. This makes Rheam's narrative a call towards a contextualised and not essentialised reading of whiteness, a vision that is also part of the objectives of this research. If there is any allusion to nature in this narrative, it is to 'this September sun' and the memories it holds. This appreciation of the September sun, regardless of its heat that elsewhere (*The Grass is Singing*, for instance) would have made white characters complain, is a personal one and not typically white. Elsewhere, in other narratives, the landscape is not as accommodating and has engendered various responses.[75] How such variegated responses can be sublimated into a coherent politics of belonging points to a lassitude of research and a penchant for generalisations which Rheam seeks to subvert using her narrative.

Conclusion

Central to my reading of Buckle, Rogers, Lang and Rheam was a combination of the content of the narratives and what, in my introductory chapter and in the introduction to this chapter, I have called politico-aesthetic regimes. Therefore, the content of the narratives and the methods of communicating that content and the connections of these with the socio-cultural, historical and political experiences of the authors or their characters in their quest for belonging were central to this chapter.

The re-invention of the Rhodesian discourse in its critique of the essentialist and nativised politics of Mugabe's post-2000 Zimbabwe dominated my criticism of Buckle's memoir, *African Tears*. In this narrative, the interface between landscape, whiteness and

[75] In *The Grass is Singing*, for instance, the landscape contributes significantly to Mary's nervous breakdown.

belonging is apparent. While Buckle professes to be narrating events as they actually happened, it becomes apparent that her narrative bears the hallmarks of the Rhodesian discourse which puts white people at the centre of the land and relegates black people to subaltern spaces. That in her narrative black people exist either as farm workers or villains is a testimony to this marginalisation. She further marginalises them by de-legitimising the invasions and labelling them as the political schemes of Mugabe using war veterans and rent-a-crowd youths. However, she, in her quest to urgently make a case for her belonging, becomes blind to the multifarious nature of attitudes among black people, that there were actually some black people who sincerely believed in the authenticity of the exercise. This is something that Douglas acknowledges very well in *The Last Resort.*

Even though *The Last Resort* succeeds in this way, it occasionally falls into the traps of using the clichés of the Rhodesian discourse when the author tries to make a case for whites' belonging to Zimbabwe, belonging which is achieved via the land. The pastoral, therefore, refuses to leave the narrative of Douglas because he uses the same infrastructures of belonging that are usually used in white writing. Douglas takes part in the same politics of belonging that Mugabe uses as a scapegoat for his exclusionary politics.

Lang's narrative is fictional. It focuses on reconciliation that is done through the assuaging of a decades-long guilt conscience of a white woman who seeks this appeasement by posthumously leaving a huge sum of her money to her black former maid. *Lettah's Gift*, unlike *African Tears* and *The Last Resort*, communicates the multivalent voices of an array of white characters with various modes of belonging and various attitudes to Zimbabwe. While in Buckle and Douglas, belonging is connected to essentialised notions of whiteness and landscape, in Lang's narrative, there is a call to overcome history and bring together all the 'anvil heads' of Zimbabwe to build a bridge that connects people. However, this is not an uncomplicated, healthy and unproblematic call – the narrator recognises the perils of belonging, the endless quest by humanity to fulfil causes that inevitably lead to loss of life so that the value of life is only appreciated in retrospect of power and privilege remain unchanged. So, the narrative does not end in any 'arrived' sense.

This September Sun is different from the other narratives in the sense that it grapples with issues of belonging and home through a romance mystery and not through the usual narrations of landscape and whiteness. The personal search for familial affection and the hankering for belonging to both Zimbabwe and England are communicated through the ordinary and the everyday, "all that [which] doesn't make headlines" (*SS*:59). The narrative's 'lines of flight' lie in the fact that the protracted polarisation between black and white which

influenced Buckle, Rogers and Lang is absent. The racial tensions that are seriously connected to the land and dominate the first three narratives are not given prominence in this narrative. In a way, this challenges assumptions about being white and Zimbabwean at the same time, which some white writers like Buckle, Rogers and, to a lesser degree, Lang, have played a part in peddling. Race becomes less and less important as one reads the romance mystery.

CHAPTER 3
THE HOUSE OF HUNGER: DEPICTIONS OF HOME IN POST-2000 BLACK-AUTHORED NARRATIVES

Introduction

This chapter analyses depictions of home in *We Need New Names* (abbreviated *NN*) (NoViolet Bulawayo, 2013); *Harare North* (abbreviated *HN*) (Brian Chikwava, 2009); *An Elegy for Easterly* (abbreviated *EE*) (Petina Gappah, 2009) and *Writing Free* (abbreviated *WF*) (Irene Staunton [Ed.], 2011). Of importance to this chapter is Zeleza's (2005:1, 11) definition of exile[76] which he sees as "an existential and epistemological condition, a spatial and temporal state of being, belonging, and becoming…in its material and metaphorical contexts"; and "a material process which entails flight from the 'here' of home to the 'there' of a foreign abode, a transnational movement from one's native land to another…which can also be metaphorical, referring to artistic representations of alienation from familiar traditions" (*sic*). While flight is generally viewed as physical departure from one place to another, this chapter also explores those metaphorical and artistic flights that both the writers and their characters undertake in their search for modalities of action and expression away from disabling cultural, ideological and artistic spaces that threaten to hem them in.

Exile and diaspora, as this chapter posits, do not begin when individuals physically exit home; they begin in one's 'home' country. This conception of diaspora in fact closes the gap between home and foreign space in the sense that both are diasporic in their own ways. To define the Zimbabwean diaspora as peoples of Zimbabwean descent and heritage living outside Zimbabwe is to limit the scope of diaspora. The texts chosen for this chapter depict not only characters living in states of non–belonging in the space they call home but also demonstrate diasporic sensibilities in those spaces they call home.[77] In other words, they are dislocated even

[76] Exile here connotes diaspora. Although a distinction between the two can be expressed, the traditional Hebrew expression for the Jewish condition, *galut* (diaspora) is roughly translated as 'exile' (Wettstein, 2000:4). In fact, diaspora, exile and migration are concepts that connote various forms of dislocation. Sometimes, diaspora functions as a generalised rubric for many postcolonial concepts like displacement and homelessness, exile, 'home', multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, identity questions, race, sexuality and gender. For the purpose of this study, 'diaspora' and 'exile' are made to acquire the same meaning.

[77] Anyaduba (2016:513) expresses discomfort with essentialised notions of the African diaspora popularised by Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, 1993), notions that only recognise European-occasioned diasporas. Moreover, these notions have also encouraged an impoverished view of diaspora in terms of turmoil-provoked physical displacements and movements. Anyaduba argues that diaspora should not just be thought of in terms of dispersion to non-African locations, especially the west, but should also include diasporas formed within the continent itself from physical and non-physical displacements.

before they physically exit home to diasporan spaces. Being the Other is virtually the condition of the characters in these narratives which depicts the circumstances of many citizens of the globe regardless of their skin colours, race and places of birth. The world of departure and, as I will analyse in the next chapter, the world of arrival, are both in constant flux so that in both worlds, the individual remains caught between the 'Here' and the 'There'. Even 'arrival' itself is denied the individual. The politico-aesthetic regimes under which the writers submit themselves demonstrate this diasporic sensibility.

'Disabling spaces' are therefore analysed in their multiple forms as spaces that hem in the artist; or spaces whose material impoverishment drives the individual to physically look for an enabling space. They can also be understood as spaces whose cultural and identity paradigms have failed to attract faith from the individual and force the individual to look for new forms of culture and identity. The achievement of independence in Zimbabwe and the attendant nationalist projects have both fallen short of being adequate and relevant. The family, the community and the nation, all of them occupying a central place in Zimbabwean nationalism, have become carriers of ideologies that aid the nationalism of ZANU—PF even in periods of crisis. Crises attract outward movements as people look for new spaces or new alternatives even within the same old spaces, sometimes by producing new spaces from the old. ZANU—PF nationalism seeks to deny people that chance to search for alternatives away from its monopolistic hold on history thereby creating only a patriotic version of history. This demonstrates the sort of disabling space that the writers in this chapter seek to escape.

The bankruptcy of the nationalist project manifesting in the post-2000 economic and political crisis and causing massive and unprecedented levels of migration also entails ideological and creative reorganisation that circulates outside the limiting and constricting claustrophobics of nationalism. Migrant writers and migrant characters, both metaphorically and physically, represent this search for alternative spaces outside the one offered by nationalism with its parochial paradigms of belonging. As Peel (1995:587) observes, "[n]arrative empowers because it enables its possessor to integrate his memories, experiences and aspirations in a schema." Looking beyond cultural, nationalist and national borders physically, literarily and iconographically is in itself a way of moving out of disabling spaces to enabling ones. My analysis of the texts I have chosen for this chapter is informed by this perspective.

Circulating in Geographies of Non-belonging: An Analysis of *We Need New Names*.

We Need New Names extends a subversive literary tradition that one finds, most prominently, in Marechera and Vera. Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger* (1978) is a pre-figuring of the crisis of the post-independence nation in that the central character seeks to circulate outside the geographies of the nationalism of the 70s which brutally ushered in independence in 1980. Marechera's narrative technique (a stream of consciousness riddled with flashbacks) and narcissistic sensibility shred the 'logical' linearity of nationalist narration which ZANU—PF nationalism is fond of.[78] In this narration, children are regarded as the future but in most instances they are urged to remember the past. This means the future of the children is inextricably connected to the past of the elders and the present that is being overseen by the same elders. In such a scenario, the children are denied the chance to construct their future.

The massive presence of children in geographies outside nationalistic ones has been the focus of Muponde's recent publication, *Some Kinds of Childhood: Images of History and Resistance in Zimbabwean Literature* (2015). A 'father slayer' in his approach to fatherhood and the nation, Muponde is overtly interested in how childhood in Zimbabwean literature is constructed to deny nationalism its ventriloquism. This means where children are called to remember the past of elders, and to access a future tyrannically presided over by elders, Muponde would rather prefer children to move out of the infrastructures used in the construction of their future and construct their own infrastructures outside the spaces dominated by elders. Muponde demonstrates how Zimbabwean literature is fraught with narratives of slain fathers. Two classic novels, *Waiting for the Rain* (Mungoshi, 1975) and *The House of Hunger* (Marechera, 1978) pre-figure the crisis of fatherhood, or father-induced crises, in post-independence Zimbabwe.

Waiting for the Rain and *The House of Hunger* problematise the future nation by questioning the basis of its formation. The crisis in these texts is the crisis of fatherhood and father-induced crisis, a crisis that is both ideological and physical so that the basis of the future nation's formation is questionable. So the sons are depicted as moving out of the spaces of the fathers, a movement that is both physical and ideological. If Rhodesia has failed to be a home

[78] This logical linearity is visible in the compartmentalisation of ZANU—PF politics into *First Chimurenga* (uprisings against settler colonialism in the 1890s), *Second Chimurenga* (the guerrilla warfare of the 1960s and 1970s) and *Third Chimurenga* (land invasions and company take-overs) all of which are meant to put ZANU—PF at the centre of Zimbabwean politics.

for these sons, Zimbabwe does not seem to be a preferred destination for them so that Marechera announces a negative verdict of the future nation, graphically presented in the form of flying toilet paper (1978:38). This means Marechera even doubts Zimbabwe – its 'what' and 'when' – and the identity paradigms connected to it just as he doubts the legitimacy of his father. This means he will never be fully home.

Many times when studying exile narratives, critics make the mistake of reading these narratives in the "linear schema of migration; a linear progression from an original (located) subjectivity to one that is transnational (dislocated)" (Moji, 2015:182). When reading these two classic texts and many others that make the canon of Zimbabwean literature, it becomes apparent that exile in Zimbabwean literature is a transition from an unoriginal (dislocated) subjectivity to another unoriginal (dislocated) subjectivity.

Dislocated and excluded subjectivities litter the pages of Zimbabwean literature. The founding of the nation in 1980 by fathers whose legitimacy Marechera and Mungoshi doubted meant that some subjectivities never managed to be completely at home.[79] Subsequent post-independence texts depict dystopian homes and homecomings except those that are specifically written as political projects to communicate elusive utopias.[80] Early post-independence texts like *Harvest of Thorns* (1989) and *Echoing Silences* (1996) depict ex-combatants who fail to come back to the home they helped to create when they departed to the war. Vera's *Without a Name* (1994) denies the appropriation of human bodies for the legitimation of Zimbabwe's ZANU—PF's patriarchal nationalism. The female protagonist, Mazvita, is raped by a liberation fighter who calls her *'hanzvadzi'* (my sister) in a pastoral setting. A pastoral setting is usually nationalistically appropriated to depict an original, untainted and prelapsarian setting with pure identities. In ZANU—PF nationalism, the village is regarded as the repository of traditional values and everyone worthy to be called Zimbabwean must have one. The raping of Mazvita in a setting that plays a dominant part in the production of essentialist identities is an ironic way of subverting the centrality of this setting and prepares Mazvita for her final transgression

[79] Considerations of fatherhood in Zimbabwean literature and politics have undoubtedly played a role in what Winter (2005:454) calls 'gender implication' which is the "process by which opinion on political issues becomes entwined—in political discourse and in citizens' minds—with considerations of gender." For instance, what role does motherhood play in Zimbabwean literature and politics? The gendered framing that characterises approaches to Zimbabwean literature runs the risk of associating power with fathers only and excluding mothers and their impact.

[80] Olley Maruma's *Coming Home* (2007), for instance, reads like a nostalgic conception of home that legitimises the only nationalism that has monopolised the politics of Zimbabwe, that is, ZANU—PF nationalism. Thus, the homecoming of such an intellectual like Simon, the narrator, with his overtly nationalistic sensibilities, legitimises ZANU—PF nationalism as a magical crystallising ingredient for a utopian Zimbabwe (Chidora and Mandizvidza, 2017:57).

of the borders of it. Her invasion of the cityscape, 'without a name', is an act of transgressing the identity thrust upon her by a nationalism that raped her. Like the children of Vera's *Without a Name*, Mazvita chooses to circulate in a geography that frees her from the limitations and crises of Zimbabwean nationalism and its parochial identity paradigms. While Mazvita sheds her name, the children in *We Need New Names* are looking for different names.

Why do they need new names? Is it coincidental that many of the characters who opt out of crisis in black-authored Zimbabwean literature are almost always young? These children, supposedly beneficiaries of nationalism, are victims of a family, nation and state crisis. The condition and future of young people in Zimbabwe are heavily influenced by an interaction of both local and foreign pressures – a backward-looking, elderly-managed nationalism[81] and an encroaching global culture. The failure of the nationalist enterprise in Zimbabwe which, even in its failure, continues to oversee the integration of youths from being children to being patriotic adults, provides various frustrations for youths and has had several consequences on youth cultures and aesthetics. The youths, touted as the future, reincarnate in elderly discourse as threats to the culture and communitarian values of the nationalist project.[82]

Questions surrounding queer futurity, raised by Edelman, in relation to the child are pertinent here. According to Edelman, governing a future that is invested in the image of the child is hypocritical if the law denies, say healthcare, to the adults that these children will become (1998:29). The "figural children", displayed terroristically as the future (a future which remains "a day away"), to the detriment of the present, betrays the "fetishistic reification" (Edelman, 1998:27) of a child (future) who refuses to grow up and depicts the nation as trapped in eternal childhood. The re-incarnation of the children of the state as threats to this fetish is understandable in this context.

This means the children disrupt the rites of passage that seek to appropriate them as subjects and objects of the nationalist projects of the elders. In this, they become father- and mother-slayers. According to Diouf (2003:4), "[i]n this new situation, the construction of youth as 'the hope of the world' has been replaced by representations of youth as dangerous, criminal,

[81] At the time of writing, Zimbabwean nationalism is presided over by a 93-year old president and a collection of elderly ministers.

[82] The irruption of a musical genre, Zimdancehall (with its associated violence and unrestrained sexuality and love for drugs), on the public sphere has been associated with moral panic among the elders. Fred Zindi, a professorial music analyst, has been consistent in his polemics against this genre as a destroyer of culture in his numerous articles in the ZANU PF-controlled daily newspaper, *The Herald.* However, like many popular cultures of resistance that are assimilated by the very culture that they are trying to resist, the fact that this nascent genre seems to be "carrying" the many new radio stations in Zimbabwe which are however politically neutered due to their connections to the ruling elite (e.g. ZiFM and StarFM) points to the detoxification of some of the subversions carried by this genre so that there seems to exist, on the same space, collusion and resistance.

decadent, and given to a sexuality that is unrestrained and threatening for the whole of society." Their movement out of nationalist zones is also symbolic of their movement to the cities and the west, a movement that is accompanied by ideological adjustments.

The children in *We Need New Names* are no longer a priority to a nationalism whose propagators are concerned with maintaining their power. The prestigious status they are given in the sugar-coated discourse of children as the future is not complimented by action that gives them the future and this is reflected in their destitution, the somatic and intellectual destruction of systems that give these children prospects of a life and a future "and the massive and aggressive presence of young people on the streets, at public garbage dumps, and in urban and rural undergrounds" (Diouf, 2003:5). Destitution, Pordzik suggests, is a concept that denotes a serious lack of resources but in cultural terms it means "doing without" or "a state of precariousness or non-membership" (2012:19). The children's non-membership to a nationalism that has made them destitute means that they have to facilitate their own membership to their own constructed spaces. Thus, the childhood subjectivities of Darling and her friends (Chipo, Sbho, Stina, Bastard and Godknows) are therefore facilitated through dislocation and re-location – dislocation from spaces of elderly supervision and re-location to their own spaces of urban undergrounds where they clandestinely hit the suburb of Budapest to steal guavas (*NN*:1), or where they steal shoes from a dead body hanging from a branch in order to buy Lobels bread and assuage their hunger (*NN*:18). The choice of Lobels, a brand of bead whose ownership represents global capital, is telling in the sense that it represents an outward gaze by the children.

The leitmotif of re-naming (Moji, 2015:181) in *We Need New Names* is of great significance. Names have a property-like potential to trade, transact and strike concessions and social value. The construction of the children's own spaces or geographies of non-belonging also allows them to transact with the globe outside the limits of the centre. Thus, in their 'Country Game', the children already know country names that have more trading power. These they call 'country-countries':

> But first we have to fight over the names because everybody wants to be certain countries, like everyone wants to be the U.S.A. and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France and Italy and Sweden and Germany and Russia and Greece and them. These are the country-countries. If you lose the fight, then you just have to settle for countries like Dubai and South Africa and Botswana and Tanzania and them. They are not country-countries, but at least life is better than here. Nobody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Iraq, like Sudan, like Haiti, like Sri Lanka, and not even this one

> we live in – who wants to be a terrible place of hunger and things falling apart? (*NN*:49).

The children's dislocation, political disillusionment and material lack in their own 'kaka' country engenders the growth of their exilic consciousness and the invasion of the local by the global. The invasion of the local by the global is also apparent in the violent rupture of kinship ties brought about by *Operation Murambatsvina* during which Nomvuyo loses her son – Freedom – beneath the rubble (*NN*:67). This brings BBC and CNN (newsmongers with a global hegemony over narratives) cameramen to the local space and the tragedy of having their houses destroyed is placed within a global narrative of disasters like a "fucking tsunami" (*NN*:67). Destitution and non-membership open up spaces for imagination where the children contemplate their membership not only to far-away global cities like Destroyed Michigan (Detroit-Michigan) but also to immediate places like Budapest, an imagined suburb in the imagined Bulawayo of *We Need New Names*.

The naming of places is very significant. The shanty town inhabited by Darling and her friends is ironically called Paradise while the neighbouring, white-dominated affluent neighbourhood is called Budapest. Paradise is described by the children as a 'kaka toilet' whilst Budapest is like "a different country altogether" (*NN*:12). The onomastic process of naming being used by Bulawayo here is both denotative and ironic: Budapest denotes a European city whilst Paradise is an ironic representation of hell. Budapest is where the children go for guava-stealing expeditions and therefore the narrative is riddled with endless departures from Paradise to Budapest. Like Marechera's opening sentence in *The House of Hunger* (1978), this one too begins with departure: "We are on our way to Budapest … Getting out of Paradise is not so hard" (*NN*:1). Their expeditions to Budapest are not without their consequences. The constipation that the guavas provoke makes excretion an act that is as painful as giving birth to a country: "We just eat a lot of guavas because it's the only way to kill our hunger, and when it comes to defecating, we get in so much pain it becomes an impossible task, like you are trying to give birth to a country" (*NN*:16). While living on the margins, where, because "nothing is, everything is a deal" (Pordzik, 2012:21), allows for an aesthetic achievement that is volatile and beyond expectation, the experience of the margins for the children has a painful edge to it captured symbolically in the painful act of defecating excretion flecked with guava seeds.

However, the act of defecating in the open, regardless of the labour-like pains associated with it, has symbolic meaning beyond the immediate act of relieving oneself of guava-ridden excrement. The pain of birthing a country is almost symbolic of the celebrated

pain of birthing Zimbabwe narrated in ZANU—PF renditions of war leading to the triumph of 18 April 1980. Therefore, independence is portrayed as having ushered in prosperity and peace. However, Darling's narrative shows that underneath the veneer of freedom lies Freedom, Nomvuyo's child buried underneath the rubble of a bulldozed house, or Bornfree, a teenager born in a free country in which he is not free and is killed for demanding to see that freedom, or the children circulating in insecure geographies of non-belonging, or absent family fathers and nation fathers who leave their children to move along obscure paths of the bush and migration and urban and shanty-town undergrounds. In *Some Kinds of Childhood* (2015), Muponde traces back the symbolic presence of defecation in black-authored Zimbabwean literature to Marechera (*The House of Hunger*, 1978) and Hove (*Bones*, 1990). The open defecation that is fetishised in *The House of Hunger* and *Bones* and profusely described in *We Need New Names* points to the mass production of open defecators by both a racialised dislocation in the colony and the destructive and dislocating potential of 'Blak Power' seen in the wrecking of the land in the postcolony. Muponde, therefore, sees the site of defecation as "a location of deep, unresolved social, and political tensions" (2015:159). Therein lies the crisis. It is the crisis of the post-colonial administration's failure to "make the human right to sanitation and dignity non-negotiable" (Muponde, 2015:161).

In Muponde's anlysis (2015), Budapest and the bush allow for the free-flow of imaginations of possibilities of existence beyond the limitations of Paradise – going to South Africa, for instance, in order to come back and buy a house in Budapest; getting married to a man from Budapest in order to finally live there; or stealing shoes from a corpse in order to buy a loaf of Lobels bread. The spaces these children occupy, like the bush, are unoccupied and allow for the stretching of their imaginations. A house in Budapest out of which an elderly white couple is evicted by ZANU—PF militia presents them with an empty bedroom and an empty bed which gives the children an opportunity to "do the adult thing" (*NN*:127). The spaces these children occupy escape the logics of family and ZANU—PF surveillance and become their own geographies of delinquency and resistance – Budapest, the bush, the guava tree of Budapest, craggy and rugged landscapes of Fambeki, the cemetery, and even the in-between-the-shacks spaces of Paradise. They become spaces of possibilities for development outside conventional logics of success, outside the national territory and its histories of bloodied flags (*NN*:143). One may even extend this discourse to de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* and his idea of the subversion of "urbanistic systematicity" (1984:105) that walkers of the city instigate. The question is whether these subversive movements and circulations are patterned or random. Are they in any way mapped or reflective of certain cartographies of occupying

urban space? Following de Certeau's iterations, the movements may elude legibility because, in de Certeau's words (1984:95), the city is "prey to contradictory movements that counterbalance and combine themselves outside the reach of panoptic power." Thus, the procedures that organised the city, the formal cartographies of occupying the city, are found at a point of deterioration. This is what Paradise represents.

However, Paradise's proximity to Budapest, and the children's consistent access to Budapest, represent those urban practices and illegitimacies that panoptic power was supposed to suppress. Individual modes of spatial re-appropriations in the city, therefore, subvert the order for which the city's landmarks were created so that the bush becomes a place for ER,[83] or crying or even open defecation, all of which are practices, accidental and illegitimate, and rare 'turns of phrases' that elude the discipline that is intended to monitor the cartographies of the city. An example of such a rare 'turn of phrase' is the children's transformation of a freshly evicted white couple's house into a zone of childish role play that also includes sex and other grown up people's acts.

These developments have an inclusivity that makes paradoxical the exclusivity of ZANU-PF nationalism. Guava-stealing is a site for the pooling of creative energies that Bastard is sure can be channelled to more lofty causes like stealing bigger things inside the houses (*New Names*: 10). Defecation is not a stigmatising event; it is an inclusive one and based on tolerance which those who prescribe solutions do not have. Muponde (2015:161) sees the guava-stealing and open defecation exercises as having a "cross-cultural and cross-racial appeal, and might be the ultimate marker of the integrity and dignity of a postnational nation-family (unlike the volatile land-economy populism)." Darling and her friends symbolically escape the nationalist discourses that restricted them and move into the cleavages opened up by the national and familial crises of absent and uncaring fathers. In fact, when a father finally invades Darling's space and steals this freedom, she prays for his death.

Fatherhood is a trope in Zimbabwean literature that, as Muponde's 2015 critical work, *Some Kinds of Childhood*, demonstrates, closes the door to other trajectories of interpretation that privilege resistance and freedom in the study of childhood subjectivities. Thus, "concern for the natural vulnerabilities of childhood is displaced or augmented by concern for socially-constructed vulnerabilities" (Mayall, 1994:4). Thus, an abusive father or mother (in Marechera's *The House of Hunger*, 1978, for instance, or Charles Mungoshi's *Coming of the*

[83] This is a game that Darling and her friends play in which they imitate an American medical drama with the same name aired on NBC from 2004 to 2009. For the children however, it is not just a game because they actually attempt to abort Chipo's pregnancy in the name of ER.

Dry Season, 1972) excites interpretations that focus on social dystopias brought about by colonialism.[84] However, alternative interpretations may open our eyes to how "children possess an impressive desire to map their own destinies in the uncertain power vacuum created by an essentially eroded traditional African family, which can no longer fend for itself or give visionary guidance to its children" (Muponde, 2015:107). Thus, the children in *We Need New Names* have an agency which their fathers do not have. Not only does the crisis afford them a chance to give themselves new names, it also enables them to use the bush, a space where men go to cry, as a space of agency and imagination. The bush supplies men with a secret space to do what they would never do in public:

> Generally, the men always tried to appear strong; they walked tall, heads upright, arms steady at the sides, and feet firmly planted like trees. Solid, Jericho walls of men. But when they went out in the bush to relieve themselves and nobody was looking, they fell apart like crumbling towers and wept with the wretched grief of forgotten concubines *(NN*:76).

That men are weeping in a space in which the children are strong is itself a symbolic representation of the rulers of these geographies of non-belonging – the children. In another instance, the AIDS-ridden body of Darling's hitherto absent father excites the children to take their agency a notch higher:

> Then Stina reaches out and takes Father's hand and starts moving it to the song, and Bastard moves the other hand. I reach out and touch him too because I have never really touched him and this is what I must do now because how will it look when everyone else is touching him and I'm not? We all look at one another and smile-sing because we are touching him, just touching him all over like a beautiful plaything we have just rescued from the rubbish bin in Budapest. He feels like dry wood in my hands… (*NN*:103).

The child not only wills the death of her father but also disembodies him and speaks of him as a 'plaything' and 'dead wood'. When she finally comments about the light in her father's sunken eyes as if he had swallowed the sun, the alienation of the father from this space becomes complete. After all, the cadaverous father has been an inconvenient and burdensome presence militating against the child's mobility in geographies she knows best because she had to watch over him. The father's relegation to marginality is a symbolic act for it is meant to represent

[84] Musaemura Zimunya's *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (1982), Rhino Zhuwarara's *An Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (2001), Maurice Vambe's *African Oral Story-telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel* (2004) and George Kahari's *In Search of Ufuru* (2009) all analyse the dystopian home by overtly looking at the colonial connection

the disfiguring of authority and tradition that keep the child at the margins. This authority is not only represented by the familial father but also by the national patriarchal system, and both suffer from various forms of crisis and induce a variety of crises of their own. Because children no longer believe in them, they construct their own paths out of this crisis, a symbolic act of migration which, as the children grow up, also entails conquering vast swathes of physical space and many physical/psychic and cultural boundaries.

The violence being meted on the father's body, ravaged by AIDS, is part of a checklist of violent catastrophes that the child remembers of the nation and that speak of pain and the violent images that remind her of when fathers come into contact with children, women and other fathers. Thus, Bornfree's macheted body, a victim of endless deliveries of blows that children mimic in the cemetery, is a victim of fighting fathers and fathers who do not want to have their spaces of power invaded by those who question their power. The language of father-slaying and exclusion that Darling deploys in speaking of her father actually repeats the sequence of violence through which those at the margins relate to the centre. The alienation between father and daughter humorously brought out when the comeback father refers to Darling as "my son" (*NN*:90) helps Darling's depersonalisation and castration/emasculation of her sick father. If we contrast this with the aggressive likeness Darling and her relatives have with their grandfather – "like my grandfather's face was a folded fist and all our faces were collected like coins inside it" (*NN*:24) – one sees in the relationship of Darling and her father the brutal end of a genealogy, the disconnection with the past, the freeing of identity from shibboleths of the past. Commenting on the relationship between a father and a son in Charles Mungoshi's short story, 'Shadows on the Wall' (1972), Muponde states that the son has "adopted an intractable position against his father's efforts towards reconciliation" (2015:110).[85] There is a similarity between this boy's attitude and Darling's. She prefers an absent father or even a dead one. Like the boy in 'Shadows on the Wall', Darling only gets closer to her father when she imagines his inevitable death and, therefore, her relationship to her father's corpse when she imagines his death "could easily be the relationship between a corpse and an undertaker" (Muponde, 2015:110). The celebration of her father's death is like the celebrations that greet the death of a political father.[86] This opposition to the configuration

[85] 'Shadows on the Wall' is a short story in Charles Mungoshi's collection, *Coming of the Dry Season* (1972), in which the son of divorced parents is indifferent to his father's attempts at attracting his attention and forging a father-son relationship.

[86] For instance, every time social media circulated hoaxes of Robert Mugabe's death, some people expressed their joy and prayed for it to be true. His eventual resignation in November 2017, brought about by military action, was met with wild celebrations in the streets of Zimbabwe's towns.

of fatherhood also facilitates the child's ability to circulate in spaces that separate her from parental control.

This rupture between the adult and the young also communicates the homelessness of the young hemmed in by 'adultist' controls and supervisions of childhood enacted by adults who "view the terminal identity of the child as adulthood" (Muponde, 2015:111). However, because no "unified place of safety" (Cucinella and Curry, 2001:197) exists for the child with/and the adults, the child prefers being without adults and tries to look for her own spaces of safety away from the crisis-ridden spaces of adults. Thus Darling hates spending the whole day watching over her father, or with her guardian, Mother of Bones, or on top of Fambeki at the church of Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro. Even the name of the prophet, Mborro,[87] denotes phallic violence meted by mischievous adults on helpless child receptacles.[88] All these adult spaces have no safety for the child. For instance, when Darling and pregnant 13-year old Chipo witness an exorcism exercise by the Prophet, Chipo is reminded of what her grandfather did to her:

> Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro prays for the woman like that, pinning her down and calling to Jesus and screaming bible verses. He places his hands on her stomach, on her thighs, then he puts his hands on her thing and starts rubbing and praying hard for it, like there is something wrong with it […] He did that, that's what he did, Chipo says, shaking my arm like she wants to break it off […] He did that, my grandfather, I was coming from playing Find bin Laden and my grandmother was not there and my grandfather was there and he got on me and pinned me down like that and he clamped a hand over my mouth and was heavy like a mountain, Chipo says, words coming out all at once like she is Mother of Bones. I watch her and she has this look I have never seen before, this look of pain (*NN*:*40*-1).

This absence of safety in the church where a woman is raped by a prophet in front of the congregants or at home where Chipo is raped by her grandfather prompts Darling to offer Chipo a space of escape when she says: "I can also see she wants me to say something, something maybe more important, so I say, Do you want to go and steal guavas?" (*NN*:41). Guava-stealing is primarily meant to assuage their hunger but it symbolically represents self-reliance and the ability to build a world away from the violence-ridden spaces that adults occupy.

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[87] This name is a corruption of the Shona name that refers to a penis.

[88] The conceptualization of the postcolony in sexualised terms dominates Mbembe's chapter, 'Aesthetics of Vulgarity', in *On the Postcolony* (2001). Following Mbembe's arguments, the domination of people by those in power (the colonial power yesterday, and the savior-turned-oppressor today) can be understood as phallic.

The vital dislocation from adult space, a dislocation which is both chosen and forced, means that the children are experiencing exhilarating exiles in the country that they are told is theirs even though they reject it when playing the Country Game. Even the adults, children too of political fathers, experience this exile in a 'forced' sense, forced because they are forced to live without change and are violently ruptured from their homes by *Operation Murambatsvina.* Thus, they live in a Zimbabwe that subjects them to various layers of exile. Later, while ruminating in America, the grown-up Darling reflects on these layers:

> There are three homes inside Mother's and Aunt Fostalina's heads: home before independence, before I was born, when black people and white people were fighting over the country. Home after independence, when black people won the country. And then the home of things falling apart, which made Aunt Fostalina leave and come here. Home one, home two and home three…When someone talks about home, you have to listen carefully so you know exactly which one the person is referring to (*NN*:192).

For Darling, before the grown-up American home of 'Destroyed Michigan', there are two homes: home before the shanty town of Paradise and home in Paradise. For her, the first home was the best because it had a real house, her parents were employed, she had clothes to wear and everyone was happy. After that came Paradise which was all "tin tin tin" (*NN*:191). No collective home exists for these characters. They all occupy various postcolonial spatialities and temporalities of exile while negotiating passages between old 'homes' and new ones. The negotiation is never complete though. An exile situation, as Cucinella and Curry (2001:201) argue, "is not resolvable, only recurrent and aggravated."

Away from adult spaces in the bush, the children, on one of their guava-stealing excursions, stumble upon the corpse of a woman hanging from a branch. Bastard decides that they should steal the woman's shoes in order to go and buy Lobels bread. This act of transgressing the territory of the dead symbolically represents the demystification of adult-imposed taboos. They do this also when they clandestinely watch the funeral proceeding of Bornfree's burial atop a tree in the cemetery with the elders unawares. In doing so, the children escape the borders of traditions that hemmed them in. They come to grips with the past and get rid of this past's hold on the present in order to reformulate their search for new names. The children have also, in one stroke, defied the authority of instruments of law and order by not reporting the dead body to the elders and the police. In their geography, they escape law and order, taboos and prohibitions. Open defecation, as I have pointed out earlier, is another privilege they confer upon themselves in the bush. While open defecation is commonplace in

most rural communities in Zimbabwe, amongst the adults and children alike, its presence in an urban setting where open defecation is against urban sanitation regulations and the spatial discipline of urbanity is an expression of the subversion of the constructed order and indulgence in prohibitions and deviations in a geography which is not designed for open defecation. This geography allows the children to try out new identities, to try new names, and in the process to interrogate the authority of systems that preside over their existence. This is what Lassen-Seger calls "carnivalesque displacement" which "[puts] the fictive child in a position where he/she can playfully try out a new subject positions, and where the very authority the child has escaped from can be interrogated" (2006:148).

Lassen-Seger's carnivalesque displacement is where one locates the blurring of the borders between fantasy and reality brought out more succinctly when the children act out the killing of Bornfree. In enacting this, the children assume masks: the mask of Bornfree, the mask of Bornfree's mother and the masks of ZANU—PF militia deployed to kill Bornfree. These masks take on the Bakhtinian "two world condition" (Bakhtin: 1984:6) by their strict separation from the official. However, the separation does not take the Bakhtinian separation of the everyday and the carnivalesque; the lines of separation are blurred. This is why when BBC reporters who had stayed behind after the burial are shocked by the children's play and ask, "What kind of game were you just playing?" Bastard replies, "Can't you see this is for real?" (*NN*;144). While Bakhtin sees the carnival as offering "a second life" (1984: 6) which is free from dogma and the extrapolitical, I am persuaded to see the children's play as emerging from a particular socio-political event, which is the killing of Bornfree and his burial. Their play, enacted in the very cemetery and at the very grave Bornfree is buried, creates not a second world but is caught within the singular world of ZANU—PF violence and the impossibility of political change for the people of Paradise. The sometimes pornographic and violent games the children play are all reactions to particular events and global orders and cannot therefore be understood in the strict separation of the everyday and the carnival. According to Muponde (2015:146), "the children's game(s) [are] a way of amplifying, exposing, questioning, and normalising a childhood shaped by a haunted and violent historiography." The image of the bloodied flag of the country speaks of this haunted and violent historiography. The territoriality that holds people within the space upon which a bloodied flag flutters in the wind is resisted by these children as they circulate in spaces of non-belonging, outside an inflexible and violent territoriality.

Their circulation outside this territoriality also means that the children have to reach out to multiple spaces in order to construct their identities. Migration is, therefore, constructed as

liberatory displacement. For instance, their migration from Paradise to Budapest liberates them from their incessant hunger. Sbho dreams of getting married in Budapest. Bastard dreams of South Africa. Darling dreams of being taken to 'her' America by Aunt Fostalina. The representation of children in *We Need New Names* goes against the belief in an original, untainted subjectivity which 'return-to-origins' advocates yearn for. I will use two incidents from the narrative to support this. The first one is when the children (Darling, Sbho and Forgiveness) try to help Chipo abort her pregnancy. They assume new names in order to do that:

> This is what they do on ER, Sbho says. I think, *What is ER*? I cannot remember, so I just keep quiet. Forgiveness doesn't say anything either, and I know she too doesn't know. I saw it on TV in Harare when I visited Sekuru Godi. ER is what they do in a hospital in America. In order to do this right, we need new names. I am Dr. Bullet, she is beautiful, and you are Dr. Roz, he is tall, Sbho says, nodding at me (*NN*;82).

Another incident is when they visit a shopping mall being built by the Chinese and one of the Chinese foremen says to them:

> We build you big big mall. All nice shops inside, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Versace, and so on. Good mall, big, the Chinese man says, flicking ash off his cigarette and looking up at the building. We laugh and he laughs as well and Fat Mangena laughs as well. Give us some zhin-zhongs. We got some before, Godknows says, getting straight to the point (*NN*:46).

These are all spaces from which the children can borrow. According to Moji (2015:184-5), "[t]hey are 'porous' beings, who absorb and make their sense of the combined influences that surround them through fantasy – ER – and the creation of a translational 'glocal' language – zhing-zhongs."

However, these influences not only communicate the children's ability to borrow, they also communicate the subaltern nature of their country and themselves in global power relations. They beg for *zhing-zhongs*, which are in fact cheap Chinese trinkets whose durability is dubious. The global brand names the Chinese promise to bring for these poor people of Paradise represent symbols of global capital that fuel the children's aspirational fantasies. However, their serious condition of lack is brought out in the fact that even when they get access to these global brands, they get access to castaways of global brands. For instance, Bastard's faded Cornell University T-shirt, does not indicate that Bastard can access Cornell

University; he does not even have access to the local spaces of academic improvement! Moreover, their fantasies are challenged by adult reality. For instance, Darling's father comes back from South Africa a cadaverous figure, reduced to a skeleton by AIDS. Her cousin, Makhosi, gets a lung disease from working in the mines. This is the same South Africa to which Bastard boasts he will go: "I'm blazing out of this kaka country myself. Then I'll make lots of money, come back and buy a house in this very Budapest" (*NN*:13). Darling occupies a more enviable position because she has Aunt Fostalina in America, an America the children jostle for during Country game. However, the realistic truth underneath this dream of migration is that it leads to illness and family breakdown. Above all, the global economic inequalities that govern the porosity of the local space are brought out more succinctly in the advertisement of the traditional healer:

> VODLOZA, BESTEST HEALER IN ALL OF THE PARADISE AND BEEYOND WILL FIX ALL THESE PROBLEMSOME THINGS THAT YOU MAY ENCOUNTER IN YOUR LIFE: BEWITCHEDNESS, CURSES, BAD LUCK…PLEASE PAYMENT IN FOREX ONLY (*NN*:27).

Forex, like Bastard's Cornell University T/shirt, becomes a currency associated with their "social precarity" (Moji, 2015:184) rather than the countries from which it comes. This social precarity is also brought out in the hilarious but solemn awareness the children have of their hunger when they violently react to the effrontery of a cheese-munching British-Zimbabwean woman who asks them to say *cheese* during a photo shoot when they actually do not know what the cheese tastes like. The same happens when the children are playing ER. Their access to a televised land of plenty in a shanty town takes the form of a fantasy. However, like the cheese, sometimes this global fantasy is unknown: "I wish I had a stethoscope, Dr Bullet says, which I don't know what it is" (*NN*:84). This lack of knowledge portends tragedy, a tragic edge that manifests in the actual attempts to live those fantasies through migration.

Even though the children invade Budapest to quench their hunger, and even though they circulate in geographies that give them a modicum of freedom, their incessant and insatiable hunger refuses to be silenced. The children's ceaseless quest for survival means that they will never arrive even when they dream of migrating and escaping. The failure of the Paradise-Budapest migration to offer them permanent succour is a premonition of the gritty reality of migration which is usually hidden beneath linear narratives of migration that reproduce the discourse of freedom and easy upward mobility. In a way, the children's

experiences in Paradise are precursors of diasporic realities, or they are in actuality diasporic experiences.

Fragmented Geographies of the Cityscape in *An Elegy For Easterly*: The Fallacy of Collective Belonging.

With the exception of two stories ('Mupandawana Dancing Champion' and 'Our Man in Geneva Wins Euros'), Gappah's collection of short stories is centred on the city of Harare. As the title of this subsection indicates, Harare as a cityscape contains fragmented geographies that make the concept of collective belonging a fallacy. *An Elegy for Easterly* reads like a challenge on the nation's remembering that gyrates around a homogenous, male-dominated narrative of nation-building preached as sacrosanct gospel by Zimbabwe's ruling party, ZANU—PF. This patriotic history is distorted to justify brutal ZANU—PF clampdowns on opposition. Such a history relies heavily on distortions, animated silences, decided selections and elisions in order to maintain the status quo. Belonging is also made to evolve around such a patriotic version of history. All identities that justify belonging also emanate from this patriotic version of history.

Therefore, the hegemony of this patriotic history and its antithetical alternative histories mean that a collective belonging is difficult to pin down and what comes out of that are versions of belonging or *belongings*. What this sub-section will demonstrate is that because belonging is a product of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, its contiguousness with a geographically bounded locality is broken. Because belonging takes place as versions, this sub-section will demonstrate that, as a collection, *An Elegy for Easterly* interrogates the fallacies and perils of collective belonging peddled by patriotic history and articulates the crisis of belonging and the tragic alternatives that emanate from this crisis which give rise to belongings (or terrains of belongings) that are, in fact, exilic in nature. Instead of the deterritorialisation of belonging to excite feelings of freedom, it may actually create the hunger for reterritorialisation. The belongings that various groups in the cityscape then cobble together through the extremes of postcolonial urbanism, nationalism and urban orality create serious entanglements that not only reject essentialist constructions of identity but heighten the crises and perils of belonging. *An Elegy for Easterly* is a humorous collection of short stories but the humour cannot detoxify/sanitise the tragic nature of the existence of the characters who occupy the urban scape that is common in all of the thirteen short stories. The search for alternatives

is meant to be an enabling one, a move out of confining spaces. The irony is that the alternatives have their own forms of confinement which lend a tragic edge to the characters' search for alternatives. Sometimes, the movement out of confining spaces to other confining or disabling spaces is not a product of choice but, rather, coerced banishment (Cucinella and Curry, 2001:198).

The inhabitants of Easterly Farm in 'An Elegy for Easterly'[89] (*EE*:27) are products of coerced banishment given the military name of *Operation Murambatsvina* which, officially, was a governmental move to clear illegal structures from the city. This clearance of spaces upon which inhabitants of Easterly Farm[90] based their belonging is in itself an act of banishing them for being 'illegal' and the loss of the spaces they called 'home' entails the "overt pathos of exile [which] is loss, sorrow and nostalgia" (Cucinella and Curry, 2001:198). This pathos is never resolved in an 'Elegy for Easterly' because when the story ends, the government has unleashed a new wave of demolitions:

> When the morning rose over Easterly, not even the children noticed Martha's absence. They were running away from the bulldozers. It was only when Josephat and his wife had almost reached Chegutu that the bulldozers, having razed the entire line of houses from *Mai*James to *Ba*Toby, having crushed beneath the house from which Josephat and his wife had fled, and having that of the new couple that no one really knew, finally lumbered towards Martha's house in the corner and exposed her body, stiff in death, her child's afterbirth wedged between her legs (*EE*:51-2).

This relentless running from unrelenting bulldozers means that these people will never belong, that their belonging will never take place in an 'arrived'/complete sense and that they will be forever looking for alternatives. The observation of Cucinella and Curry is relevant here: "[e]xile literature exposes the layers of pain experienced by the exile at the time of separation as well as the pain experienced in an ongoing way. By many accounts, the exile experience remains irresolvable, recurrent, and aggravated" (2001:198).

While I am persuaded to acknowledge Edwards' (cited in Cucinella and Curry, 2001:198) invitation to acknowledge the freedom of banishment in the sense that it confers to the banished "adventure and discovery", I am also open to the persuasion that exile means not belonging and continuously searching for alternatives that may not be arrived at. Banishment has made *Mai*Toby innovative. She has a sewing machine powered by a generator. *Mai*James

[89] This is the title of one of the short stories in *An Elegy for Easterly*.
[90] Easterly is a fictitious version of the 'farms' to which landless urban dwellers were dumped after their houses were demolished during the infamous *Operation Murambatsvina*.

operates a phone shop from her house and "walked her customers to a hillock at the end of the Farm and stood next to them as they telephoned" (*EE*:30). In fact, *Mai*James is so innovative that she has two mobiles into which she inserts one sim card after another to see which one has the best reception. However, using *Mai*James's mobile telephone service exposes one to the risk of being the topic of gossip. Even though these women have set up businesses in this space of Easterly Farm and have the whole of Easterly as a marketplace, they still have to move when new demolitions take place and Easterly Farm goes under the bulldozers. Their new belonging is unstable and temporary and liable to be tempered with by forces beyond their control. Their destinies, much as they want to construct them on their own, are partly products of a system on a relentless quest to banish them, not only from the cityscape it presides over through an exclusive nationalism but also from the very geographies of banishment it has relegated them to.

Another very interesting aspect of 'An Elegy for Easterly' is the farm setting. The farm is a geography whose centrality in Zimbabwean politics has been complemented by narratives and nationalist critical interpretations of literature that centralise land. *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (Zimunya, 1982); *An Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (Zhuwarara, 2001); *In Search of Ufuru* (Kahari, 2009) and other articles and book chapters have repeatedly centralised land as key to the understanding of Zimbabwean literature in English. This has directly or indirectly legitimised ZANU—PF discourses that give a logical linearity to its struggles to remain relevant to Zimbabwe. The farm has been used as a symbol of the country, so that the racist injustices enacted on it were deemed to represent the racist injustices enacted in the country. If the country was a colony, then the farm was a miniature colony. This means the land became a central symbol in ZANU—PF's nationalist imaginary. Doing away with white farmers and giving land to its autochthons (black Zimbabweans) remains ZANU—PF's most celebrated achievement regardless of the plethora of problems this has attracted.

Gappah, however, exposes the hypocrisy of ZANU—PF-peddled land discourse. The farm is not what it seems. If, during its ownership by white settlers, it was a miniature colony, this time it is worse. Before I look into how Gappah exposes the hypocrisy of the land discourse, I want to briefly outline how this tradition of subverting a popularly peddled symbol has been utilised by some Zimbabwean authors before Gappah.

The discourse of land in Zimbabwe represents a cultural homeostasis that ignores tensions, fissures and questions. The pastoral, farm setting, with its assumed harmony and romantic coherence, is more foregrounded than internal eruptions and fissures that unsettle the

balance of the enclosure of the farm. Where the dystopian eruptions and fissures are more prominent, then it is more fashionable to blame something or someone without which or without whom the farm is a glorious place.[91] The tradition that Gappah utilises here, visible most prominently in Vera's *Without a Name*, is a tradition that communicates dissonance from the meanings of the farm authorised by Zimbabwe's patriarchal nationalism. Vera's narrative, for instance, does not only expose the cracks in the polished body politic of Zimbabwean nationalism but plays around with the image of the farm and the idyllic pastoral environment of pre-independence Mubaira Communal Lands as a way of expanding the warehoused womanhood of Mazvita to geographies beyond these male-dominated ones. Mazvita is raped in a pastoral setting by a freedom fighter thereby casting doubt on this romantically idealised setting. She runs away and meets Nyenyedzi whose poetic connection to the farm takes after the religious, autochthonous connection that features in nationalistic theorisations of land. The sexual ministrations of Nyenyedzi have a tenderness that is linked to mushroom growing from the land, thus speaking of Nyenyedzi's sexual aesthetics as having a deep connection to the land. The logical conclusion would see Mazvita staying with Nyenyedzi forever but she runs away from him, to town, because she prefers the anonymity (being 'without a name') that getting lost in the cityscape affords her. However, she does not make it in the city because the binary arrangement of 'rural' as disabling and 'urban' as enabling is something that cannot be logically sustained, a position that I am taking throughout my analysis of all the texts chosen for this research.

The farm that Gappah alludes to in 'An Elegy for Easterly' and also in 'At the Sound of the Last Post' disfigures the rhetoric of 'Our Land, Our Inheritance'[92] because, as these two short stories demonstrate, the farm is where any assertions of indigeneity are only meant to legitimise kleptocracy and dispossession. The dispossessions that take place in urban spaces (*Operation Murambatsvina*) and farm spaces (dispossession),[93] therefore, demonstrate the re-imaging and re-imagining of both spaces "premised on treating the 'other' as filth to be disposed of with military violence and brutal efficiency" (Muchemwa, 2011:401). This represents the ideologisation of space. Muchemwa (2011:401) goes on to observe that "[i]n the biopolitics of the postcolony, the medical discourse of filth provides justification for the

[91] In this case, the white farmer is blamed for these dystopian eruptions.
[92] This statement was inserted in almost every audio-visual jingle that sought to glorify the centrality of ZANU—PF in land politics. The most prominent jingles were done by a singer called Tambaoga whose lyrics all aped ZANU—PF nationalism.
[93] In 2015, newly settled subsistence farmers were evicted from a farm in Mazowe to give way to Grace Mugabe when her husband was still the president.

dispossession and displacement of marginalized populations from urban spaces and economies." This dispossession and displacement (banishment) is not only limited to urban economies as Muchemwa observes above, but also enacted on rural or farm economies as seen in 'An Elegy for Easterly'.

In 'At the Sound of the Last Post', the wife of an absent corpse being buried at the National Heroes Acre reminisces on what it took for that fake burial to take place. It took getting a farm and other perks. This nameless widow makes ZANU—PF's most celebrated 'achievement' a sham in the sense that it is not a collective national venture but a preserve of those who bury each other at the National Heroes Acre. In this case, the National Heroes Acre has a 'national' name although there is nothing national about it or those who lie there. The shrine and the act of burying a selected few on it demonstrate the historical exclusions that beleaguer the imagination of the nation in Zimbabwe. While narrations of the First *Chimurenga*, Second *Chimurenga* and Third *Chimurenga* are based on the exclusion of inhabitants of the European diaspora who have been tainted by colonialism, in Gappah's short story, the exclusions are even done against those who also have the soil, bone and blood connection that is so important in the construction of autochthonous belonging. This time, it is no longer about the totemless Other (whom I looked at in Chapter 2) who is dispelled, marginalised and expelled but the black person who is considered as filth in the biopolitics of the postcolony. The giving of farms, as demonstrated in 'At the Sound of the Last Post', shows the aetiology of politically-licensed excesses which, against all acceptable logics, even take on the form of the bizarre as the burial of an empty coffin and the elaborate rituals put into this exercise demonstrate. The discourse of *Chimurenga* heroism not only gives them access to a few acres of land to be buried on but also gives them acres of land to live on together with access to national resources, material and symbolic. Even linguistic resources are appropriated for use by a few. For instance, when the Mupandawana Dancing Championship (abbreviated MDC) is held in the eponymous short story 'Mupandawana Dancing Champion', the organisers of the competition are asked by ZANU—PF to find another name because the abbreviation of the championship (MDC) rhymes with that of Zimbabwe's main opposition party. This constriction of language is meant to thwart what Punter (2000:30) calls "the possibility of language" to mean. If words are decipherable, they are, as Punter points out, susceptible only to being read wrongly.

The cityscape in Gappah's short stories is home to various layers of characters in various degrees of belonging and not belonging. The fallacy of the collective is brought out more succinctly in Gappah's depictions of the city. The city spaces range from Harare, growth

points and squatter camps (these razed to the ground by bulldozers) in which some perform daily miracles to survive and others dance for opaque beer and a bottle of whisky; very few live exclusively as politicians and policy makers in the 'heart of the golden triangle' with their families and multiple mistresses. While the diasporan character is regarded as uprooted from home, the anomie of those who are at home in *An Elegy for Easterly* is akin to homelessness and deprivation, and communicates the precarious and even tragic edge of citizenship. The characters in 'An Elegy for Easterly' are externalised from both the city (the space the fetish lives on) and the farm (the space the fetish ideologises and hegemonises to be able to live in the city). In depicting such an externalising nationalism, Gappah contests "the postcolonial state fiction of re-arranging geography in pursuit of the purity and security of an autochthonous nation-state" (Muchemwa, 2010:136).

If collective belonging is depicted as a fallacy, even collective non-belonging is also a fallacy. The assumption in diaspora studies is that of the diaspora being a unified field. That same assumption is present in discourses of 'victims' or 'suffering masses'.[94] Diaspora, exile and non-belonging are not experienced collectively and uniformly: there are 'cleavages' and 'slippages' that give a dialectic tension to these conditions. Even in their states of non-belonging, Gappah's characters experience a polarisation of their circumstances which makes some victims of others who are in the same state of non-belonging. Thus, the grisly act of Josephat's wife taking Martha Mupengo's new-born baby in 'An Elegy for Easterly' could be interpreted in this light. Martha is an outsider in a community of outsiders:

> It was the children who first noticed that there was something different about the woman they called Martha Mupengo. They followed her, as they often did… (*EE*:27).
>
> It was the children who called her Mupengo, Mudunyaz, and other variations on lunacy. The name Martha Mupengo stuck more than the others, becoming as much a part of her as the dresses of flamboyantly coloured material… (*EE*:31).

If we envisage the inhabitants of Easterly Farm and various other groups in *An Elegy for Easterly* who, like the children in *We Need New Names*, are circulating in transitional and provisional geographies of non-belonging, as occupying a diasporic space in their homelands, then Martha Mupengo is occupying a position of exile outside that diasporic space. This makes

[94] Marxist thinking, for instance, is premised on the belief that the oppressed class is a collective one called the proletariat class.

Martha's condition among these externalised characters more tragic. The tragedy reaches its climax when she gives birth on a rainy night that is followed by a morning of demolitions. Josephat's wife takes the baby and in a grisly act, disconnects the child from its mother:

> She looked around for something with which to cut the cord. There was nothing, and the baby almost slipped from her hands. Through a film of tears she chewed on Martha's flesh, closing her mind to the taste of blood, she chewed on the cord until the child was free. She wiped the blood from her mouth with the back of her hand (*EE*:46).

The child was free from Martha because Josephat's wife chewed them apart, but this freedom entails new forms of attachment that may not mean freedom. The 'arrived' sense is not there in the baby's new freedom. A few hours after the child's birth, its new-found parents are already on the move away from relentless bulldozers. The child's life would be a migratory one. However, it is also debatable whether the baby would have survived without this grisly intervention. It is obvious that the bulldozers would have buried the baby under the debris of demolished structures. In that respect, the subject must always navigate and negotiate layers and conditionalities to freedom.

The failure to arrive anywhere haunts Gappah's characters. Easterly Farm in 'An Elegy for Easterly' and Mupandawana Growth Point in 'The Mpandawana Dancing Champion' are "transitional, narrow, depleted and failed urbanities" (Muchemwa, 2010:139) which indicate the failures of the postcolonial nation-state. Those who cannot be accommodated in the city, or those who have to exit the city in order to die like Mudhara Vitalis in 'The Mpandawana Dancing Champion', have marginalised and deferred identities and exist in transitional spaces that one visualises through the bureaucratic voice that banishes them: "Allow them temporary structures, and promise them real walls and doors, windows and toilets" (*EE*:32). However, as Muchemwa indicates, the cityscape of the failed postcolonial state allows for the problematisation of "fixed notions of home and identity that constellate around urban and rural space so as to provoke new ways of imagining city identities, while re-working the idea of the nation as imagined…or invented" (Muchemwa, 2010:136). In other words, the fissures that occur because of this failure allow for the re-imagination and reconfiguration of geographies of identity outside the nationalism that presides over this failure.

The 'collective', a favourite for nationalistic rhetoric in Zimbabwe, is challenged in these stories. The most intriguing challenge is offered when Gappah juxtaposes the emaciated

and calloused feet of the sister of the dead hero and the shoes of the president's wife in 'At the Sound of the Last Post':

> She makes as though to jump into the grave, and is stopped by her daughters. She stumbles into the President's wife, the Second First Lady, who soothes her with a perfumed hand to the shoulder. As Edna heaves dry sobs against the black silk of the Second First Lady's suit, my eyes travel down to Edna's shoes. She really should start investing more money in her shoes; her unshaped peasant's feet require something stronger than *zhing-zhong* plastic leather shoes to contain them (*EE*:8).

The description above communicates differing fortunes between the peasant and the Second First Lady which in itself communicates the variegated nature of the inhabitants of the cityscape. This speaks against notions of the collective that are peddled by the nationalism of the nation-state. The collective here speaks of 'coherence', that is, the coherence of the subjects and the coherence of the spatial map they exist on. Gappah's narrators lack coherence. The subject, in Gappah's stories, even though black and fitting into the essentialist category of those who belong, cannot be conceived of as being at the centre. This corresponds with the observations of Deleuze and Guattari (1987:204) that the subject is produced as a mere residuum, "individual or group, we are traversed by lines, meridians, geodesics, tropics, and zones marching to different beats and different in nature." The parallels between the tectonic world and the human one of dispossessed and displaced human beings drawn by Deleuze and Guattari is intriguing. The variegated population of broken, tired, exploited, dying and tectonically drifting people who fill Gappah's pages, colonised yesterday, and freed by an oppressive and dispossessing nationalism today, speaks of multiple violences enacted on the population and soil of the nation-state. The tragic edge in this sort of exile is the failure of the subjects, even in their marginalisation, to escape the vicious and ugly invasion of their geography by state apparatus represented in 'An Elegy for Easterly' by the bulldozers.

The reference to history, therefore, in what Behdad (2005:6) calls an "amnesiac nation" ('At the Sound of the Last Post':17), makes official history dubious. Gappah's 'At the Sound of the Last Post' can, therefore, be read as a deconstruction of official history. The history being narrated at the burial is all false, hence Esther's assertion that the nation is amnesiac. The husband being eulogised as a gallant fighter by a president whose eyes are misty, according to Esther, "never held a gun in his life [and…] knew nothing of the forests of Mozambique where the guerrillas trained" (*EE*:21). This hidden history is further contested in 'Midnight at the Hotel California' and 'The Maid from Lalapanzi'. Both short stories bring in something new

in the form of urban modern orality which challenges official historiography. For instance, the sexual harassment of female guerrillas, given the euphemism, "keeping guerrillas company at night" (*EE*:167), is narrated by Blandina, an ex-guerrilla and now a housemaid. She fails to get married because she is not a maiden. Blandina thinks that her loss of virginity was sanitised by the war:

> …and he said he could not marry someone who was not a maiden and she said but he knew all the time because she told him about the camp in Mozambique and how she kept the guerrillas company and my mother said Blandina, and *Sisi*Blandina said but it was not my fault that is what we were told to do… (*EE*:171).

Her history as a war veteran, useful when in the hands of those who can use it, fails to strike marital concessions for her. In 'Midnight at Hotel California', we are provided with a trickster, hustler, dealer, jack-of-all-trades, urban story-teller, connoisseur, raconteur and collector of bizarre urban case studies. This jack-of-all-trades uses "a frame narrative" (Muchemwa, 2010:140) to dabble with a subject dear to Robert Mugabe's political rhetoric: homosexuality.[95] Urban orality represents new spaces of narration and renditions of history that subvert official narratology. *Sisi*Blandina also fits in this category of urban orality.

Gappah's short stories demonstrate the continual crisis of control in a post-colonial state. The lives of the characters in the short stories are not immune to the control of the fetish. Only a few characters, like the hustler in 'Midnight at Hotel California', seem to modify the system in order to use it for their own benefit. The rest, however, are victims of "an *imaginary* of the state [that makes] it the organiser of public happiness" (Mbembe, 2001:31). Because the fetish put itself at the centre through violence, it uses violence to remain at the centre. The geography of the city therefore is of violent displacements and dislocations which also entail entanglements that provide the subject with ad hoc, transitional and provisional identities. Their existence in these spaces entails no legally codified obligations between the state and themselves and, therefore, the state can act with impunity without any recourse to what is justified and what is arbitrary. The sudden displacements of the inhabitants of Easterly from the urban space of Harare and from the failed urban space of Easterly Farm demonstrate the arbitrariness of the postcolonial state.

[95] Robert Mugabe is reputed to have unapologetically stated that gays and lesbians are worse than pigs.

However, not all characters are victims. Some also participate in the legitimation of the fetish's control. According to Mbembe (2001:42), "[w]here material incentives [are] not enough to induce unconditional submission, 'spontaneous' obedience, or evidence of 'gratitude' on the part of those subjected, there [is] massive resort to public coercion." As Mbembe's observation demonstrates, public coercion is resorted to when material incentives are not enough. This means material incentives are part of the tools the fetish uses to legitimise itself. Political pay-offs play a huge role. A substantial number of individuals are given utilities and these become members of a patronage network that leads to the "proliferation of public and semi-public bodies and policies concerned with recruitment, the allocation of salaries, benefits and perks" (Mbembe, 2001:44). The short story, 'At the Sound of the last Post', demonstrates this very well:

> He would have been considered a failure, Rwauya, with his two O levels, but he is just the sort of person who thrives in this new dispensation, where to keep ahead is to go to every rally and chant every slogan. Even with all the patronage that is meant to oil his path to success, he has run down two butcheries and a bottle store, and, of six passenger buses, only one remains (*EE*:13).

Even the fake burial of Esther's husband is facilitated by political and material offers to Esther that would keep her silent: "So the bargain was sealed: for a seat in the new Senate, and a farm in my own name, I would close my mouth and let them bury wood and earth in his name" (*EE*:23). The allocation of utilities and enjoyments to a few inhabitants of the 'Golden Triangle'[96] transforms the fetish into a machine for the creation of inequalities and various forms of exile which speak against the official discourse of one, happy and blessed Zimbabwean family. Esther concludes her ruminations at the fake burial in 'At the Sound of the Last Post' thus:

> The land is one of plenty with happy citizens. The injustices of the past have been redressed to consolidate the gains of the liberation struggle. And in that happy land, I will be a new farmer and senator (*EE*:24).

One cannot miss the sarcasm in Esther's voice when she speaks of happy citizens.

[96] In Gappah's short story, 'In the Heart of the Golden Triangle', the 'Golden Triangle' refers to an affluent neighbourhood where rich politicians and their families (and their girlfriends) stay.

A very interesting aspect of Gappah's story is the observant nature of her narrators. They seem to be endowed with inimitable ways of describing situations, of questioning, of playing with the discourse of power and demystifying it. Writing seems to have given Gappah the chance to create characters who engage with questions of politics, identity and citizenship "beyond the limits of fratricidal ethno-nationalism" (Muchemwa, 2010:144). The observant *Ba*Toby who jokes that "before the President was elected the Zimbabwe ruins were a prehistoric monument in Masvingo [but] now extend to the whole country" (*EE*:33); the witty story-teller and raconteur who plays around with two subjects dear to the President: homosexuality and land reform (*EE*:257; 272-3); the nonchalant Esther who plays around with images of the penis, belly, vagina and mouth in order to mock power in 'At the Sound of the Last Post'; and the humorous teacher in 'The Mpandawana Dancing Champion' who indirectly laughs at how power appropriates human bodies for its legitimation (the appearance of the President's picture on the same page with news of the death of Mdhara Vitalis is a symbolic representation of this appropriation), all play around with and mock power. All of these narrators and characters allow the reader to laugh at power and its impropriety.

In *An Elegy for Easterly,* one sees a fictional affirmation of Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* (2001). The thrust of Mbembe in his exposition is the delegitimisation of resistance, hybridity and agency. In other words, the characters I have mentioned above have the ability to laugh at power and demystify it. But according to Mbembe, that is as far as they can go. While Bakhtin (1984:48) sees the grotesque and obscene as acts performed by the dominated, acts that "disclose the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another world, another life," which makes it an aesthetic of resistance, Mbembe is of the view that the 'zombification' is mutual and has left both the dominant and dominated impotent (2001:104). This mutual zombification is a result of the ability of the led to demystify power, to mock it, to play with, to domesticate it but without necessarily escaping or resisting it. Gappah's narrators, therefore, laugh at the same power with which they share the same space. The postcolonial subject participates in two activities – in the rituals that fetishise the postcolonial regime, and in the deployment of talent for play and for fun (Mbembe, 2001) like participating in a sham burial while at the same time demystifying those rituals and the powers that feed from it.

Thus, the extravagance of the regime, a symbol of prestige, feeds off the postcolonial subjects' bodies to disempower them and increase their docility. This, however, does not produce resistance. It produces an entanglement that can only be understood using the logic of "conviviality" (Mbembe, 2001:110). This logic explains the absence of resistance, disengagement and disjunction because both the dominant and the dominated are inscribed

within the same episteme. Those who laugh, or fart, or convert the state's ruthlessness into a confectionery of fictional (*An Elegy for Easterly*), WhatsApp or Facebook jokes,[97] are not resisting (that is, if we faithfully follow Mbembe's logic of conviviality); they are only kidnapping power, not to overthrow it but to make it, unwittingly, examine its vulgarity. Social media and the internet as mediums of satire and critique have their possibilities and limits. While they allow for a space for the critique of power, the potential setback lies in how such critique may not be sublimated into action.[98]

However, *An Elegy for Easterly* provides us with an inventory of characters moving, either symbolically or physically, even though their countries of destination sometimes electrify their dreams.[99] When we understand Zimbabwe as a place of bizarre and exaggerated performances that subvert and mangle state power, we also begin to understand exile as a pragmatic of survival. Veiled in this pragmatic of survival, and other pragmatics of survival like baroque practices, is resistance against power on the body. The complexity that characterises the postcolony, which Mbembe bids us to understand outside the binarisms of power and resistance, is undone by Mbembe when he divests it of intentional structures beyond mere masochisms and negative dialectics. Yet, these are sub-layers of resistance and pragmatics of survival, of which exile is one. Exile is just one of the multivalent, rational responses to power. It is an expression of agency. Mbembe divests the postcolonial subject of this agency because, according to Mbembe, totalitarian regimes do exactly that. But the emergence of the Zimbabwean diaspora points in the opposite direction. In literature, even in the Zimbabwean context which is the object of this research, the circulation of people (migration) is a literary motif. *An Elegy for Easterly* contains characters to whom constricting space provide with an impetus to migrate. 'Something Nice from London' (*EE*:75); 'Our Man in Geneva Wins Euros' (*EE*:133); and 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai' (*EE*:207) are all stories some of whose characters choose migration as a pragmatic response to 'disabling' situations.

[97] Zimbabwean Facebook and WhatsApp users have consumed or created viral messages that are meant to laugh at and make fun of presidential misdemeanours. For instance, Robert Mugabe's fall at the airport after one of his numerous visits abroad in 2015 has been the topic of many internet jokes. Some of his images were even photo-shopped to heighten the humour.

[98] For instance, #ThisFlag and #Tajamuka are 2016 movements that largely used social media and the internet to mobilise people against the Robert Mugabe administration. While the posts of these two movements got many hashtags, likes and views on social media and the internet, the movements did not attract as many people when it came to actually marching on the streets. So social media may give people a 'voice' but people need to be organised by people into a revolutionary movement.

[99] Gappah uses this word in 'An Elegy for Easterly' as an allusion to electric fences that act as a borderline between Zimbabwe and Botswana.

Whether this migration would offer them the enabling environment they are looking for is the subject of another chapter.

The Treacherous City of Harare: The Transience of Patriotic Belonging in *Harare North*

In *Harare North* (2008), Chikwava figures the cityscape as highly politicised. So the novel goes beyond representations of people migrating from one place to another but represents the city as a site of struggle. Chikwava's choice of the city and his depiction of it as highly politicised problematise nativist approaches to Zimbabwean identity so dear to Zimbabwean nationalist historiography. The bush and the military camp, both spaces for the forging of a nationalist Zimbabwean identity, are replaced by the city and in doing so, Chikwava makes remote the liberation struggle whose continued use by ZANU—PF to construct a nationalist, autochthonous Zimbabwean identity seems hypocritical. My argument in this sub-section is that the choice of the city unmoors identity from place in the sense that Harare as a post-imperial, postcolonial city is malleable for use in reconfiguring "the coordinates of both a physical city and ideas of home and belonging" (Muchemwa, 2011:402). Harare, as a space of mobility, and also as a fluid space on its own, inhabits the North (London) and the South (Johannesburg) and this creates possibilities for the construction of multiple identities and the transgression and deconstruction of the physical space called home. The fluid city allows for the relocation of negotiations of identity beyond the conceptual framework of autochthon which, in Zimbabwe's parochial Mugabeistic nationalism, is limited to the 'rural' soil. However, I also argue in this sub-section that *Harare North* focuses on displacement from the city or nation. The displacement unveils the politics of the potential localities sought by the displaced. The displacement is unsettling: it unsettles both the displaced and the city. The post-colonial city of Harare and the post-imperial one of London are linked, not as opposed disabling and enabling spaces respectively, but as sites where the socially and culturally invisible and voiceless (subalterns) try to speak against the grain of nativism, exclusion and xenophobic threats in both cities. This explains Chikwava's choice of symbols, images and language, all of which are appropriated from the world of the dispossessed and marginalised.

Chikwava's narrator represents those who are disregarded and invisible in authorised discourses regardless of whether they are victims or supporters of a system that silences and

repudiates their visibility. Some may be supporters of the regime, but only at the level of foot soldiers who cannot be trusted as ventriloquists of the system. So they too, like victims, are silent. To unveil these silenced supporters and victims to the reader, Chikwava reveals a wider understanding of the subaltern by concentrating on the effects of spatial separations, dislocations and disorders. As such, his subjects are detached from the hegemony that lords over the organisation of the city. The possible freedoms of independence (which are supposed to entail a rupture from colonialism) are not enjoyed in Chikwava's Harare. Marechera, in *Mindblast*, characterises the city in the same way as Chikwava is later to when Grimknife observes that, "[the] white settlers had created it (Harare) as a frontier town for gold and lust, lurid adventures and ruthless rule. The black inheritor had not changed that. Just the name. From sin-city Salisbury to hotbed melting pot Harare" (1984:91). This suggests a wholesale importation of urban power structures from the colony to the postcolony. As such, Chikwava's views of the city have a bearing on any postcolonial theorisation that celebrates the subversion of the colony or of national identity. The colonial city still lingers around the postcolonial one. Arguably, the colonial city initiated the politics of deprivation, dislocation and marginalisation that has sustained the same rationality and comes to shape the postcolonial urban space. As such, the township violence and trauma one finds in Marechera's colonial Vengere Township in *The House of Hunger* (1978) still persists in the postcolonial city: "Me I tell them I have been harass by them boys in dark glasses because I am youth member of opposition party" (*HN*: 4). Corruption continues still in the city:

> By now I know that the police is full of traitors that want to protect them enemies of the state. Soon they start telling Comrade Mhiripiri that for US$1000 they can make my docket disappear. If that can happen, the court cannot do nothing and soon my troubles go away (*HN*:20).
>
> …and US$4000 to sweet that pack of them hyenas that chase me around Zimbabwe wanting to catch me until I have to run away here because I don't have the money that they want so they can make my troubles go away… That's what Comrade Mhiripiri tell me and he is trustful man (*HN*:18).

Given this, it therefore appears that *Harare North* foregrounds the fundamental role of charlatans that have strayed from their folk-hero prominence, a prominence they were given after appearing to be on the side of the masses. By dominating the urban space and fracturing houses in the city with a mad showmanship in what is called *Operation Murambatsvina,* these trickster figures appear to the reader as villains of which the narrator is one. What is interesting

though is that the narrator assumes the role of the system's ventriloquist without the system's approval. This allows Chikwava to unveil the silenced history of the regime.

The narrator acquires the trick of outmanoeuvring one's adversaries from Comrade Mhiripiri, his Green Bomber leader and teacher (and his swindler), by resorting to what one might call linguistic terrorism. Political terrorism is also a means used to outwit opponents in the city. The motif of the novel, "punishment is the best forgiveness" (*HN*:19), expresses this violence on language as a pertinacious disarticulation of symbols and referents in postcolonial Zimbabwe in which the urban space, controlled by vicious machismo represented by Comrade Mhiripiri, is transmogrified into a perilous and unreliable space. This triggers movements out of the city to sometimes very distant rural areas or to the diaspora and back as characters try out different livelihood options. This, therefore, entails new encounters and new modalities of existence in the places and countries the characters struggle to regard as home.

The narrator figures Mugabe, his hero, as a violent storm and by doing so he unwittingly allows himself to be used to focus on the failure of the postcolonial state's regime to re-conceptualise the nation. The narrator's second dream seems to offer a solution to these faulted imaginaries. As part of their survival drills, The Green Bombers (the narrator's group of youth militia) visit a village (*HN*:113-114). While in the village they engage in a game of *tsoro*[100] with the villagers in which the losers pay the victors. The youth brigade scores a winning streak that is achieved through trickery and rigging and this unsettles the inhabitants of the village who are saved by an elderly man who begins to win back all the things they had lost. In response, the losing youth brigade appends the guidelines of the game to include violence. What Chikwava seems to be doing here is awaken the sense of consciousness in the repressed subject; what is to be done is rise against the faulted system and find space in the city. More so, by appropriating and transforming English, namely the language of the most powerful and wealthy black Zimbabweans,[101] Chikwava seems to be using the narrator to provide an alternative vision, a different vision, a space in the city even, in the struggle against repression.

There is an interesting thread I want to re-connect to concerning Grimknife's (in *Mindblast*) theorisation of post-Salisbury Harare. There are connections and continuities between colonial Salisbury and postcolonial Harare. The legacy of Salisbury lives on in Harare and manifests itself in colonial methods of governance that rely on violence, greed, excessive accumulation of material wealth, emptying and vacuuming of subjects, cannibalistic cultures

[100] This game is an ancient Zimbabwean mathematical strategy board played by two people.
[101] The former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, is popular for his English tastes, impeccable dressing and flawless English.

of destroying citizens in the name of 'forgiveness' (a linguistic form of violence that the narrator ceaselessly refers to), corruption and madness all of which are mixed in a hotbed melting pot of the postcolonial city of Harare.

The narrator's marriage to the Green Bombers is his way of getting nearer to those spaces where one partakes of the regime's collection of privileges and impunities:

> If you is back home leading rubbish life and ZANU-PF party offer you job in they youth movement to give you chance to change your life and put big purpose in your life, you don't just sniff at it and walk away when no one else wants to give you graft in the country even if you is prepared to become teaboy. Me I know what I have to do when the boys come to take me in they van: the people's shoes, broken belts and all that kind of stuff, I toss them out onto the pavement, give my stall one kick and it fall over easy. That's it! Me I jump onto the van as it speed off. I'm free (*HN*:17).

What the narrator calls freedom is the liberty to participate in the spaces of the city as the harbinger of 'forgiveness', which in actual fact means violence. The narrator sees his joining the jackal breed as a way of getting everything that he has been excluded from before he becomes part of the breed. In order to get this, the narrator has to let go of his own personhood and assume an identity foisted upon him by a state ideology of normative identities and suppression of expressions of individuality. Outside the state-supplied identity of Green Bomber, the narrator's life is beleaguered by insecurities and fears. In other words, the ZANU—PF state has the resources to buy the narrator's obedience and gratitude. What he needs are economic things but which the state has converted into what Mbembe (2001:46) calls "political things." The speed and bravado with which he jumps onto the truck to assume a new identity speaks of a distinct style of political improvisation and "multiple changes of speed in both mental and material movement" (Pucherova, 2015:160). The transitional and provisional nature of these identities (because very soon the narrator would be divested of the protection of this new identity and be on the run) mean that he is alienated from both the state and the self.

The narrator's desire for majesty and 'big purpose' in life makes him a participant in the postcolonial semiotics of power which is not meant, like in the colony, to make citizens more productive, but which is meant to discipline their bodies. This means the participation of the narrator in the grotesque autocracy of the postcolony makes him an accomplice, yet when he goes on the run, he becomes a victim. The lines between victim and victmiser become blurred here: the tropical storm that is Robert Mugabe and the Green Bomber and jackal the

narrator becomes are both participants in their own mutual zombification. Both of them pursue wrongdoing to the point of obscenity and shamelessness: the narrator is obsessed with punishment as the best forgiveness whilst Robert Mugabe's own version of truth is likened to a snake that makes people run away. The narrator and Mugabe, therefore, become representations of the postcolonised subject and the fetish respectively. The narrator, as a postcolonised subject, acts in a contradictory manner that both undermines and affirms power: "The real inversion takes place when, in their desire for a certain majesty, the masses join in the madness and clothe themselves in cheap imitations of power to reproduce its epistemology [...]. It is precisely the situations of powerlessness that are the situations of violence par excellence" (Mbembe, 2001:133).

The postcolonial city is, therefore, "a void or absence, a place of non-being; the multiple, ambiguous and fluid identities of Africans who have inherited corrupt forms of power; the conviviality of the victims with the oppressors and the resulting 'zombification' of both; the obscenity and grotesque character of power; and the ludic character of resistance" (Pucherova, 2015: 62). The conviviality is brought out in the way the narrator plays with power. He runs to London where he claims that he is running away from Mugabe, then he informs the reader that the Mugabe story is just some 'jazz number' he is spinning to get into 'Harare North' because he is a die-hard supporter of Mugabe. In this, he both flirts with and resists power.

The narrator even makes his own contribution towards the re-education of those who do not know history because he knows "heaps of history" (*HN*:19). This is not just history, but a particular version of history. Re-education is meant to punish those who do not adhere to this collection of historical narratives that are used to flatter the fetish. The violence is meant to protect the vocabulary of the fetish. The postcolony, as Mbembe (2001) points out, is presided over by the *commandement* which defines itself as a fetish. The fetish is power-hungry; and keeps a close network of those with the power or those who help bring it. The power is not only in the person of the president who feeds on applause, flattery and lies (Mbembe, 2001:111) but also in the agents of the commandment – the party, the soldiers, policemen, officials, administrators and dealers and middlemen and, in the case of *Harare North*, youth militia. These give the fetish autonomous power in that it becomes unaccountable to anyone but itself. In such a scenario, Mbembe observes, "one should not underestimate the violence that can be set in motion to protect the vocabulary used to denote or speak of the *commandement*, or to safeguard the official fictions that underwrite the apparatus of domination, since these are essential to keeping the people under the *commandement*'s spell, within an enchanted forest of

adulation that, at the same time, makes them laugh" (2001:111). In this case, what for the ruled may seem funny, like welcoming the president at the airport every time he comes back from his numerous trips abroad, and attracts their humour, is, for the regime, a sacrilege. And such a sacrilege requires punishment, which the narrator calls the best forgiveness, which affords the regime the opportunity to appropriate the bodies of its subjects in the stylistics of power. The act of making a postcolonial subject's body disappear, killing it or even subjecting it to a prison term, enables the laying out of a hermeneutic of madness, pleasure and intoxication. The offering of death can be witnessed with spices of pleasure. The beating of a sell-out (an opposition party member) can be accompanied by ululations, whistles and expressions of pleasure from postcolonial subjects who can face the same predicament some time later in life thus underlining the precariousness of that postcolonial subjectivity.

Chikwava's narrator is an interesting representation of the politics of the postcolony. He has a skewed sense of reality. For instance, when his mother's people are moved from their land to give way to a diamond firm, the narrator complains: "This village, Mother's family have been there since 1974 when they was moved from fertile land in Mazoe because the land have been given as reward to some British Second World War veteran. Now they have to move again?" (*HN*:74). But then, he dismisses it as anti-government propaganda: "I don't want to hear no more of this propaganda. I have read everything and I know what to believe" (*HN*:119). This accords with Mbembe's observation that in the convivialities of the postcolony, the government will end up not hiding its bizarre intentions but will leave it to the citizen to distort the truth for it and this distortion becomes "the dominant modality of transactions between the state and society, or between rulers and those who are supposed to obey" (Mbembe, 2001:129) in a play of pretensions. While the narrator in *Harare North* demonstrates to us that he is seeing through the propaganda, he willingly takes part in this distortion, especially before his escape to Harare North, as long as he gets the security he needs.

The city of Harare is where the narrator writes himself into the city but this by genuflecting to a tyrannical group identity of Green Bombers who, in themselves, are an invention of ZANU—PF. In this case, the space of postcolonising Harare fails to offer the narrator's self "a functional measure of 'true' liberation from the repressive tropes and dogmas of the past" (Ngara, 2011:217). The inheritance of a violent governance ethic by the new political urbanites from the colonial *commandement* means the people's circulation in the city is governed by physical and socio-economic boundaries. The labelling of some as filth that can be cleared out in a militarily-executed *Operation Murambatsvina* denotes the treachery of the city and its refusal to offer inhabitants a measure of fixity:

> Another letter for Shingi arrive from MaiShingi. She bawl that the government have send bulldozers to demolish people‘s houses and they new four-roomed house have been demolished in second wave of Operation Murambatsvina. Now many people become homeless, Zimbabwe is no more, she cry. Me I don‘t have no sympathy for Zimbabwean people because they have spend lot of time throwing they tails all over trying to vote for opposition party (*HN*:204).

The filth in this case refers to opposition party supporters. The city, therefore, is politicised and as such, is a confined and disabling space.

Operation Murambatsvina here offers an interesting antithesis to the modern and postmodernist buzz-words like democracy and property rights. The introduction of multiparty politics in Zimbabwe has also increased the need by the present hegemony to limit political competition. These attempts are sugar-coated with discourses of democracy and the constitutionality of arbitrary actions like the outlawing and destruction of people's houses. What makes it even more tragic is the sincerity of the actors like the narrator. Even though he can be regarded as a dubious character and Chikwava's way of laughing at power, the inspiration behind his creation points to Chikwava's shock at the sincerity of those who flirt with power. The narrator is morally wrong but his sincerity is shocking. I pointed out the power of such sincerity in my analysis of the character of Walter in Douglas Rogers' *The Last Resort*. A collection of such believers certainly makes the city a volatile space.

Of interest is how the narrator's access to citadeship – "the right to the city" (Puccel, 2002:99) – is achieved through the denial of rights to others. Puccel's concept of "the right to the city" contains within itself two rights: "the right to *appropriate*" and "the right to *participate*" (2002:99). These rights speak of belonging. Fenster (2005:219) sees "the right to appropriate" as being "in the sense of the right to use, the right of inhabitants to 'full and complete use' of urban space in their everyday lives. It is the right to live in, play in, work in, represent, characterize and occupy urban space in a particular city." The right to participate, as Fenster further explains, entails "the rights of inhabitants to take a central role in decision-making surrounding the production of urban space at any scale whether the state, capital, or any other entity which takes part in the production of urban space" (2005:219). Citizens should participate in institutionalised control over city life, its politics, management and administration. This accords with what Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten (2006:6-7) say of belonging, that "belonging is where the sociology of emotions interfaces with the sociology of power, where identification and participation collude." In the politicised city, Lefebvre's "right not to be classified forcibly into categories which have been determined by the necessarily

homogenizing powers" (Lefebvre, 1976:5) is heavily challenged by how power relations in the city or nation affect the possibility to appropriate and participate in city life. *Operation Murambatsvina*, even in its legality and constitutionality, that is if they exist, undermines perceived opposition party members[102] or desperate homeowners' right to the city.

The feeling of having the right to the city in this case is supposed to be created by "the possibilities of daily use of urban spaces" (Lefebvre, 1991:222). This accords with de Certeau's connection of 'use' and 'belong'. To be able to use space in everyday life activities is part of appropriation and territorialisation because "space is a practical place. Thus, the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers" (1984:117). Walking in the city overcomes alienation. The accomplishment of the right to use creates a feeling of belonging to the city. *Harare North*'s account of *Operation Murambatsvina* as a way of dealing with the 'enemies of the state' demonstrates the usurpation of the right to use because of political identity. Their right to perform life in the city, what Bell (1999:1) calls "performativity" and "belonging", is undermined by the denial of their everyday ritualised use of space engendered by *Operation Murambatsvina.*

The urban infrastructures of Harare are crowded with unemployed youths with no 'big purpose' in life. However, even in the inflationary economy of the post-2000 period, the roads are still crowded with motorists. The narrator's new dance with the Green Bombers allows him an upward mobility. With the Green Bombers, they exert violence on transport infrastructures in order to create a way for themselves. The way out of congestion is created through violence:

> Tom is putting his foot down giving the jackal more fire and threading his way through them traffic lanes, trying to put himself in good position for when the traffic light turn green. Everything feel alive. Other drivers flee out of the lanes. Original Sufferhead curl his lip over his broken tooth and let out one shrieking sound that make hair on your back stand. Then he shout: 'Keep foot down on the juice, Tom, if anything happen we is here to witness everything for you if police ask questions!'
>
> The jackal is jumping crazy across them lanes; other drivers don't know what to do. They push down on they horns with frightened faces as the jackal advance. Yes, those was the days (*HN*:18).

The description above communicates a sense of spiralling congestion, chaos and noise in the city. The jackal breed do not only contribute to the spiralling congestion but also violently find their way out of what they have caused.

[102] One of the sub-texts to *Operation Murambatsvina* is that it was targeted at destroying perceived opposition party strongholds that were usually found in the city.

The work of Galtung (1969:170-171) draws a distinction between direct violence (inflicted by an actor) and indirect (structural) violence (inflicted by no actor):

> Whereas in the first case these consequences can be traced back to concrete persons as actors, in the second case this is no longer meaningful. There may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances.

The violence in the city, whether structural or indirect, "is most explicitly expressed in situations where resources are unevenly distributed, a condition that manifests in the unevenly developed infrastructure of postcolonial cities" (Boehmer and Davies, 2015:398). The power to decide on the distribution of these limited resources and unevenly developed infrastructures is also, as Boehmer and Davies point out, unevenly distributed. Thus, as we have seen in an *An Elegy for Easterly*, some live in the shanty town of Easterly, a provisional space, while others live in the 'heart of the golden triangle'.

Structural violence is normally invisible, pervasive and insidious. Even when the all along silent Shingi smashes someone's face with a brick (direct violence), it is apparent that the invisible, pervasive and insidious violence (that manifests itself in Shingi losing work) has driven Shingi to breaking point:

> Then when Shingi come to the beerhall after losing graft someone make big mistake of making fun of him by saying now that he have no more liquid paraffin, maybe his family going to start using cooking oil on they skin. Because he don't do talk, Shingi jump into this style of big quiet vex. Now everyone start going kak kak kak and Shingi don't know how to deal with this and soon pull out of his pocket the oldest style in the book; you know when someone get upset by someone and they don't know how to deal with it except to play out they is now possessed by old family spirit. Shingi groan, spit and growl until them veins in his neck writhe under the skin like fat worms, and the guy that make fun of Shingi is still laughing because he think this is big pretence. But before he know it, Shingi have pick up half brick and hit him square on his face (*HN*:60).

For that Shingi gets a six-month prison term. The prison further constricts the individual's mobility and is a cesspool of violence:

> I don't want to leave the country because I have not visit mother in two years. But I have to go because I know what Chikurubhi Maximum Prison is like; I have been there before and it is full of them people that carry likkle horrors such as them sharpened bicycle spokes and they want you to donate your buttocks so they can give you Aids; if you refuse then bicycle spoke go through your

> stomach like it is made of toilet paper and you is bleeding inside all night and have no chance of making it to the morning. No one want to go there again. Life is not fair me I know after they hold the spoke to my heart (*HN*:21).

The narrator even thinks that Shingi might have contracted HIV during his six-month prison term (*HN*:154). In trying to negotiate their ways around the infrastructures of the city, the characters run the risk of ending within the walls of the most dangerous of urban infrastructures – the prison. Even though Shingi has escaped the claustrophobics of the southern city, he has not exorcised himself of the effects it had on him. The narrator soon finds out, too, that even if he has 'escaped' the violence of the southern city's prison walls, 'Harare North' is an extension of 'Harare City', that the northern city has immense potential to be a southern city.

Writing Free and the Crossing of Borders

Writing Free (2011), as the title suggests, is a crossing of borders of sorts that takes place at various levels. The writers in this short story collection cross racial, political and ideological borders. This crossing of borders represents the actual physical crossing of borders to other countries in the post-2000 years. As the title suggests, the act of writing free denotes the act of unmooring one's creative abilities from the limitations of race, political ideologies, tradition, parochial identity paradigms and insular narrative convention. In other words, writing free denotes a variety of freedoms brought about by the crossing of borders. One of these freedoms is the *freedom* to narrate the problems of Zimbabwe without the fear of persecution or censure. Another form of freedom is *the freedom* to experiment with new narrative techniques thereby breaking narrative taboos and freeing one's creative energies. This symbolic and physical exile in the writers and their characters calls for an investigation into the factors that engendered it.

According to the editor of the collection, Irene Staunton, the idea of *writing free* is to "offer a small provocation, a small challenge to writers to extend their boundaries, to think something through from a lateral perspective, to approach a topic differently, to turn a perspective inside out. Good writing searches beneath the superficial exteriors, seeks for insights that resonate, reaches beyond the known, the clichéd, the tendency to evade what is hard to confront" (2011:vii). What Staunton's challenge to the writers and conception of writing translates into is freedom of speech. The Zimbabwean short story tradition is a tradition of secrecy, understatement and ambiguity that was handed down from the colonial period and

reflects the similarity of the colony's repressive structures and those of the postcolony. Quietness, violence, creative resistance and the fog of fear that blinds writers are all characteristics of a space presided over by the *commandement* and its structures. The absence of a protest in everyday spaces against, say, the demolition of houses, mirrors the absence of artistic articulation that challenges the system, the claustrophobias of living in Zimbabwe and the pervasiveness of [un]freedom. *Writing Free* therefore means writing is not free in Zimbabwe especially where patriotic portraiture and sycophancy are regarded as real writing. Where writing is arrested by posturing, reluctance to interrogate and moribund creativity for the sake of seeking legitimacy, *Writing Free* speaks of departure, of migration from this *disabling* space to an *enabling* space in search of greener pastures and artistic licences to create anything.

What is symbolically interesting about this collection is the commitment of the writers to narrating the unsaid and those things that cannot be said in patriotic discourse. The dissonance that is not condoned in patriotic discourse is what we encounter in *Writing Free*, ostensibly because the writers are *free* to write what they want. Firstly, the short stories were written by both black and white Zimbabwean writers and this multiracial canonisation of short stories defeats the mono-racial canonisation of literature that is characterised by racial exclusion in many of the critical works on Zimbabwean literature. Secondly, their freedom to write is actually an aspect of exile aesthetics: exile is energising and empowering, although this is not always the case. These writers, in other words, have refused to find a home in the environs of patriotic narrations, and therefore find home in the multiply resonant ambivalence of rootlessness and deracinated homes. While some of the writers like Ignatius Mabasa, Blessing Musariri, Sekai Nzenza and many more might be resident in Zimbabwe, they still could be read as diasporic because of the diasporic aesthetics of refusing to be limited by singular narratives regardless of the pain on the body such creative rebellion can invite. Irene Staunton, the editor of the collection, is notorious for imposing how writers who feature in any of her collections should go about their business. In other words, she is a dictator of themes. However, in this collection, she invites writers to write freely, to extend their boundaries, to say not what we can all say, "but what we are unable to say" (Nin, cited in Staunton, 2011:vii). In this way, she allows the writers to enjoy a diasporic experience in the creation of their stories.

It is not only the dictatorial editor who gives these writers freedom; the writers themselves offer themselves *freedom* of expression in a space that has seen those who have

tried *freedom* of expression not enjoying *freedom* after expression.[103] Trudy Stevenson (cited in Wylie, 2009:153), after a stint in hospital having been violently manhandled by state apparatus, writes:

> The Zimbabwe regime…literally trembles in its shoes at the very idea that a group of 30 or 40 women might feel free enough to organise a tea party…. Heavens above, they might start complaining about the cost of bread or mealie meal! That won't do, at all.… But women don't only complain, they also laugh and joke, and that could be even worse! They might laugh at the crowd of riot police sweltering in the hot sun at the corner.

These writers are not only writing in a space that violently crushes dissonance, they are also writing in a space where truth has been commandeered and truthfulness itself crushed. In such a scenario, literature occupies the unenviable task of coming closer to truth-telling (Wylie, 2009:152). *Writing Free* is a creation of an imaginative space to challenge the "extraordinarily prohibitive conception of national belonging and [the] severe closing down of spaces for discussion of citizenship, economic transformation and democratisation" (Raftopoulos and Savage, 2004:xix–x). Thus, the incestuous relationship that exists between creative writing and literary criticism has limited the scope of intellect and engagement. Writers have found themselves censoring themselves even before state apparatus overtly does so. Only those writing from outside (Gappah, Bulawayo, Chikwava, Mlalazi and others) seem to have succeeded in escaping the encumbrances of self-censorship. The writers of this collection of stories, however, are forthright in their depiction of home sometimes without necessarily being physically away from it. Thus, *Writing Free* speaks against the leaders of Zimbabwe and many of the stories contain the stock list of the Zimbabwean situation – inflation, poverty, breakdown of social services, political violence, corruption, rampant underpaying of civil servants, nepotism, police brutality, dictatorship, water shortages, power outages and many others.

[103] The late Chenjerai Hove (writer), Thomas Mapfumo (musician) and Tony Namate (cartoonist) have all been exiled because of their freedom of expression). Recently, an activist of the 2015 Occupy Africa Unity Square movement, Itai Dzamara, 'disappeared'. The Occupy Africa Unity Square Movement was meant to lobby for the resignation of the (now former) president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. Of late, the leader of #ThisFlag Movement (a movement that used social media to mobilise people to protest against state excesses), Evans Mawarire briefly exited the country to America for safety. When he came back, he was arrested at the airport.

The Crisis Stories

As Kirsten (Staunton xi) explains, *Writing Free* "can be seen as a celebration of the will to survive and adaptability of Zimbabweans in the face of difficulties." Therefore, the crisis has engendered various survival strategies which also entail the process of becoming, of moving away from fixed identities to constantly changing ones. The negotiation and renegotiation of identities engendered by the crisis dispute claims of a fixed Zimbabwean identity and instead assert that Zimbabwean identity is a process of becoming, which is not about the past alone, but about how people live now and evolve to become newer and much more complex every day. The short stories in *Writing Free* dispute the claim of fixity.

'Running in Zimbabwe' (Brakarsh) is, as the author claims, "[a] story about the desire most people have for freedom, and how the oppression present in Zimbabwe insinuates itself into every action of life. Love, a sense of belonging and the social fabric which bonds neighbours and relatives together can dilute the poisons that have mixed into the motions of our daily lives" (*WF*:*ix*). The story contains the flagpoles of the Zimbabwean crisis – power shortages, water shortages, food shortages, police brutality, corruption and the underworld of crime. It connects the lives of three people whose identities fluctuate with the crisis – Ada Schimdt, a German single mother of two with a perfect schedule for each day who soon discovers that a perfect schedule rarely survives in Zimbabwe; Michael Stone (this is one of his several aliases), a diamond dealer; Professor Bernard Pochaya who soon finds out that his academic achievements had to be shed for a new identity that would allow him to navigate the uncertainties of Zimbabwe: "He felt angry and humiliated. Here he was, a full professor, head of department, winner of international awards and he was waiting in this long line like an earthquake victim, holding a dented, green plastic container" (*WF*:5).

In Michael Stone's haste to get to a rendezvous, and in Ada Schimdt's haste to go and collect her children from school (both of them are physically running in Zimbabwe),[104] a collision occurs. It attracts a crowd of people who, having nothing worthwhile to do in Harare, are attracted by almost anything. The collision also attracts the ubiquitous police. Both the police and the crowd discover that Michael Stone has diamonds. Michael Stone throws one diamond into the crowd and another to the police, gets into his car and speeds off. Ada Schimdt, dazed by the collision and immobilised by a sprained ankle is picked by Professor Bernard

[104] The metaphorical dimension to this points at the endless but hasty search for a place, a search that can be thought of in terms of running.

Pochaya who has also escaped arrest during police violence against protesters. He tells her, "I think it's time to stop running" (*WF*:10), and the story ends with a promising relationship between the two. Even though the Arab Spring uprisings that recur as a refrain in the story are subtly suggested as providing answers to the Zimbabwean crisis, Brakarsh suggests what he foregrounds as the greatest solution of all, that is, "love, a sense of belonging and the social fabric which bonds neighbours and relatives together [and which] can dilute the poisons that have mixed into the motions of our daily lives" (*WF*:ix). There is also the suggestion of a multicultural, multi-racial and tolerant society prefigured in the potential relationship between Professor Bernard Pochaya and Ada Schimdt.

While this resolution demonstrates the faith Brakarsh has in the potential for the reshaping of racial attitudes among both black and white Zimbabweans, it has elements of life as we wish it and not life as it is. This means it has an article of faith which drives the cosmopolitan spirit, a spirit that says that race should not matter, and interracial marriages should not excite questions concerning race. However, as the argument concerning the "little things of racism" is concerned (Noble and Poynting, 2010:493), ideals that drive post-racial thinking usually, because of their over-reliance on faith, fall short when it comes to dealing with racism in every day spaces. Thus, the vision of Brakarsh should be evaluated in this context.

'An Intricate Deception' (Mandishona) is a story that uses a new and dystopian family to show the dystopian and eternal childhood of the nation. Muponde (2015:144), in his analysis of childhood (both physical and metaphorical) in *Some Kinds of Childhood*, alludes to what he calls the "pull of the nation [which] is paradoxically towards endless youthfulness…" and "the ever young nation". This "prolonged childhood and delayed adulthood" (Muponde, 2015:144) is what Mandishonha depicts in 'An Intricate Deception' in the sense that George's fatherhood is delayed, first by Sophie's miscarriage and plunge into drugs and secondly, by his disagreement with Helen and an ominously impending divorce. His two attempts at being a father both result in very serious dystopias. The dystopian families that George tries to build are Mandishona's cultural critiques, parodies and denunciations of the idea of the nation-family, especially the existing one of a nation-family born out of anti-colonialist politics persistently remaining in eternal childhood and refusing to grow away from that. The disruptions of any possibility of family for George through Sophie's miscarriage and drug addiction and his disagreements with Helene are in a way 'displacements' of the ultra-nationalist idea of Zimbabwe as one, unified family, an idea so dear to cultural nationalism.

The utopia of family-as-nation is countered by the dystopia of a fissured, unhappy and flawed family.

The link between a dystopian family and a dystopian nation is brought about through the way Mandishona weaves the narration of the nation into the narration of the family. As George makes his way to the bar after exchanging harsh words with Helene, flagpoles of the Zimbabwean situation make their way into his ruminations: a farting tramp (*WF*:55);[105] malnourished street kids (*WF*:55); the sticker of a careering car with rowdy youngsters written, "*Don't Steal: The Government Hates Competition*" (emphasis in original) (*WF*:56); "the city's largest referral hospital – a depressing structure of grey bricks, asbestos roofs and vast and endless corridors" whose deterioration is a result of "man-made confusion" (*WF*:56). There is also a subtle suggestion that the anti-Gaddafi rebellion in Libya could offer a leaf or two to Zimbabweans weighed down by a dictatorial system. George hooks up with Sophie at the bar and goes with her to her apartment. By doing so, he cheats on Helen. His cheating is an intricate deception, but so is politics, "a game of intricate deceptions" (*WF*:58). The events in North Africa, however, reveal to him that most of the time, intolerance breeds intolerance. He rushes back home with the realisation that tolerance is the sacrifice that brings freedom because "*freedom without sacrifice is like a mirage in the desert"* (emphasis in the original) (*WF*:64). This story is a subtle and nuanced suggestion that the politics of belonging is perilous because human beings can be intolerant and uncompromising.

Following Geschiere's conceptualisation of autochthony (2009:2), issues of belonging and the peril of intolerance here find their way into a narration that is predominantly about domestic disagreements, thus denoting the ubiquity and pervasive nature of belonging and its perils. That a mere switching on of the television reveals the centrality of issues of belonging is telling. The effects of this television experience manifest in how the resolution of George's dilemma reads like an acceptance of how being right, and pulling people to one's side, is in itself an expression of one's hatred for diversity. This is a proposition by Mandishonha which, as I have pointed out earlier on, is an article of faith, faith that human beings have the capacity to be more tolerant.

'Danfo Driver' (Musiyiwa) is the story of a boy who escapes poverty through his imagination. Danny is an unhappy child, in an unhappy family and this spells an end to his

[105] Farting has been used as a subversive trope by some Zimbabwean writers to symbolically centralise those private issues that are trivialised by an oppressive nationalism that hems in the individual who is looking for freedom. In Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger* (1978), boys like Edmund experiment with various ways of farting while other students are caught in the 'isms' of Zimbabwean nationalism. Its subversive potential is like that of open defecation in *We Need New Names* (2013).

childhood (Muponde, 2006).[106] His is a dystopian childhood in a dystopian family-as-nation setup. The father is virtually absent. That is where the crisis is. Father-killing (patricide) is a recurrent feature in Zimbabwean literature.[107] Sometimes it takes the nature of not including the father-figure in a story, or peripheralising him, or making him die during the course of the narrative, or sometimes by creating characters who move out of the spaces manned by fathers. Danny does not have a father and his mother sometimes makes him a victim of punches and kicks that at one point knocked him out after Danny had asked for school fees:

> He had stopped reminding his mother about the school fees because the last time he did so she beat him so badly he thought he would die. She had punched him, and when he fell, she had kicked him and she had kept on kicking him until he passed out and she left him on the floor.
>
> She was gone for many days (*WF*:106).

Danny uses this dystopic childhood in order to fire up his imagination and envisage himself as a commuter omnibus driver plying the City-Chitungwiza Road and solving the crisis of poverty that haunts his family. In the same vein, the author uses this dystopic childhood "as a metaphor of creativity and a mode of critical thinking" (Muponde, 2006:520).

Like the adults in Marechera's *The House of Hunger*, Danny's mother does not provide the child with protection from the vicissitudes of life and violates the innocence of the child the same way the father of the narrator in *The House of Hunger* knocks out his teeth with a fist. However, Danny uses those dystopias that also include an immobile, scrappy minibus, to construct his own "utopia and fantasy of resistance and rebirth" (Muponde, 2006:520). Danny's childhood story symbolically represents a subversion of the family-as-nation. Childhood ceases being a transient moment in the life of an individual but becomes a portrait of multi-dimensional nature of the child's exixtence. The narrative is a subversion of the national story of a unified and happy family of autochthons. It is a rethinking of the modes of narrating the nation. The childhood of Danny is therefore unexemplary and runs contrary to the nationalist portrayal of heroic children that one finds in some sections of black Zimbabwean literature.[108] The childhood vulnerabilities that manifest themselves in Danny's life because of a

[106] Muponde's 'Unhappy Family, Unhappy Children and the end of Childhood in Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger*' (2006) analyses in *The House of Hunger* this trend we have seen in 'Danfo Driver'.
[107] *Waiting for the Rain* (1975) peripheralises the father; *The House of Hunger* (1978) has a father character who is a cuckold; in *Harvest of Thorns* (Shimmer Chinodya, 1989), a boy goes to war in order to escape his father's regime.
[108] Wilson Katiyo's *Son of the Soil* (1976), for instance, subordinates the child to the nationalist cause. The child is deprived of a life of his own to serve the purpose of fathers.

dysfunctional family-as-nation shoot down the idealisation of a Zimbabwean family ethic that one finds in nationalist discourse.

While the absence of the father in Danny's life is a symbolic denial of "the talismans of fatherly power" (Boehmer, 2005:27) that one finds in nationalist historiography, the presence of the mother, what Boehmer (2005:27) calls "motherly influence", does not invert the script in his life. As far as the inversion of scripts is concerned, the mother only inverts the script of patriarchal hegemony and institutes in its stead matriarchal hegemony. The reason why the inversion of the patriarchal script does not lead to the inversion of Danny's childhood script is that the mother annexes to herself the aesthetics of patriarchal oppression and vulgarity. Like the patriarchs, the matriarchs are also emblems of what threatens childhoods. The mother is a far cry from the totemic 'Mother' of 'Mother Africa' or that one of Senghor's negritudinal musings[109] who is nurturing and life-giving and is glorified by nationalism. This one decimates life.

Children are mirrors of their parents. In *The House of* Hunger, Peter takes the sexual notoriety of his mother. The narrator becomes an exile in the world of books and a serious masturbator, all to the detriment of nationalist sonship which relies on the resilience and resourcefulness of sons for its rhetoric. While one may be tempted to consider Danny as a flipside of *The House of Hunger* sons in that he muses of positively helping the family by becoming a *Danfo* driver, the place of *danfos* in Zimbabwe spells further movement to the margins by Danny.[110] Danny's choice is a move towards zones of spatial and moral chaos that annihilate the cosmology and idyll of the nationalist unified family. The taboos that oil the machinery of nationalist rhetoric are shattered by the behaviour of family parents who in themselves are representative of nationalist parents. This coheres with Muponde's (2006:524) observation that,

> The family is portrayed as a place of memory in which the child is held hostage by violent forces embodied by parents. The hostility of the family-space to the child's sense of rooted certainty is instanced by the adults' unending betrayal and shattering of taboos.

The child's existence is therefore that of exile and not belonging.

[109] Leopold Senghor's poems make a link between the mother, earth, Africa and night and in the process deny any rethinking of the woman outside the spaces of nationalism.

[110] *Danfos*, or kombis as they are popularly known in Zimbabwe, are negatively viewed by city planners and officials as a nuisance. Many running battles occur between kombi practitioners (touts and drivers) and the police on a daily basis.

That is not all there is to the story of Danny. Musiyiwa achieves two things in one stroke: the depiction of dystopian childhoods in Zimbabwe and also the political critique of the Zimbabwean situation. We are told that the minibus was rundown and Danny guarded it like a wizened gnome: "They tried to get him to allow them to take turns at the steering wheel. They did not succeed" (*WF*:107). The minibus is a symbolic representation of Zimbabwe and the driver (Danny) represents a president who refuses to relinquish power and give others a chance despite running the country into the ground and despite the empty rhetoric of *"zvichanaka chete"* ("it shall be well no matter what") inscribed on the bus. As long as Danny is the driver, there is no chance of things being well no matter what. It is in this unrelenting obsession with control that Danny mirrors fathers and mothers. This spells doom for everyone except for those who want to think beyond Danny's *danfo* to become nurses, doctors and so on. This act of thinking beyond Danny's *danfo* is symbolic of the process of moving out of confining spaces to enabling spaces.

'When the Moon Stares' (Christopher Mlalazi) and 'The Missing' (Isabella Matambanadzo) explore the perils of political intolerance and non-belonging. What is interesting about these stories is how, when they are read side by side, they demonstrate the irresolvable and cyclical nature of violence and exile. 'When the Moon Stares' is a story about the early years of Zimbabwe's independence and the government-sanctioned violence against perceived enemies of the state. It reflects the political violence of the early 1980s known as *Gukurahundi*. The short story subverts the discourse of 'returning' to Zimbabwe and 'returning' Zimbabwe to 'sons of the soil' that logically justifies the fight for independence that ZANU—PF lauds itself for spearheading. If we also understand returning to Zimbabwe and returning Zimbabwe as 1) a return to a home that the liberation struggle created for black people, and 2) as re-enfranchising black people who were disenfranchised by colonialism, then this short story demonstrates how both projects suffered ruination before they were realised. In fact, they were realised but there was a serious redefinition of belonging that took on very serious and violent overtones if the name *Gukurahundi* is anything to go by. The cleansing by fire that happens when Uncle Genesis and his whole family are burnt to ashes demonstrates this perilous redefinition of belonging in the postcolonial state. The characters in this short story fail to arrive at home. Even the child (a glimmer of hope, the sign of a future) who is rescued from the burning ruins of Uncle Genesis' homestead, is rescued to see, as one may conclude, ruination another day. Nothing is certain in this postcolonial home.

The fact that such perilous redefinitions subsist even in the post-2000 period demonstrates the unending nature of the politics of belonging and space production and calls

for a rethinking of any utopian celebrations of arrival. 'The Missing' is a story narrated by the dead that reflects the political violence of the post-2000 period. There seems to be a continuation/re-enactment of the dystopias of the post-1980 period in this story about post-2000 politically-motivated cleansing-by-fire. A husband and his wife who pay a visit to the village are burnt inside the house and the perpetrators of this cleansing converse among themselves:

> They kept coming to complete the cremation. Stoking the flames with diesel, petrol and other flammable agents. They even had acid.
> 'Cook them good and proper.'
> 'This country belongs to us and no one else.'
> 'We will show them all that we are the powerful machine of liberation.'
> 'We must finish them all. All of them' (*WF*:72).

The fact that the liberators are the devourers speaks of the non-fixity of belonging and human relations. Also, the story provides an interesting dimension in the sense that it is narrated from a position of forced exile but in this case an exile of death.

The juxtaposition of the two stories demonstrates the intransience of violence and political intolerance in Zimbabwe. In both cases, the violence is against fellow black Zimbabweans who have alternative (or even neutral) political beliefs and fail the test of political belonging. In such cases, the place of refuge is the foreign land as demonstrated by 'Time's Footprints' by Ethel Kabwato in which a man exits Zimbabwe and leaves his wife being gang-raped by youth militia. The man goes to London. The recurrence of violence means that "present struggles echo past ones, and future goals magnify past victories" (Muponde and Primorac, 2005:xiv). It also means the nation remains forever young and refuses to [ad]venture beyond its childhood. Therein also lies the crisis which forces people into various forms of exile that range from physical exile to that sort of exile where individuals look for modalities of action outside the prescribed ones.

The search for new modalities outside the tyrannical spheres of power is what Ignatius Mabasa tackles in 'The Novel Citizen'. In this story, a mad man who pretends to be a character from a novel complains about the dictatorial tendencies of the writer who kills characters willy-nilly and mechanically and tyrannically drives the plot towards an ending that is tragic for the characters. The writer against whom the novel citizen complains takes on the nature of Mbembe's *commandement*, wielding power with an "adequately harsh firmness" in order "to tire out the bodies of those under it, to disempower them not so much to increase their productivity as to ensure the maximum docility" (2001:110). The tyrannical writer, Judas Zino,

exercises raw power and takes on methods of action in which he is autonomous and accountable to himself. In other words, he is "arbitrary to the extent that [he] reflects only upon [him]self" (Hegel, cited in Mbembe, 2001:110). What the novel citizen is looking for are alternative fictions:

> Most writers are weak. They can't stand being challenged by the characters they think they have created. They want control. There is no democracy in novels – we are victims of the pen-wielding writer because through the pen the writer has the power to determine what you say, even if it is not what you wanted to say (*WF*:46).

His search for alternatives, however, exposes him to the violence that is deployed to protect the official fictions of the tyrannical writer:

> In this situation, one should not underestimate the violence that can be set in motion to protect the vocabulary used to denote or speak of the *commandement*, and to safeguard the official fictions that underwrite the apparatus of domination, since these are essential to keeping the people under the *commandement*'s spell (Mbembe, 2001:111).

While in Mbembe's postcolony, citizens are caught in a convivial relationship with power, the novel citizen refuses to have such a convivial relationship with the tyrannical writer. The result is eviction:

> He paused and swallowed hard before resuming. "You see these scars on my back?"
>
> I nodded, wanting him to talk rather than ask me questions.
>
> "They're the result of Judas evicting me from our home, from the novel. He became angry with me, he said I was a stumbling block – like a stubborn donkey standing in the middle of a road flapping its long ears and not heeding insults. Stupid Judas. Anyway, it doesn't matter anymore, I'm dying tonight: that is what Judas has planned (*WF*:50).

By trying to intentionally dismember the God that Judas aspires to be, the novel citizen is evicted from the novel. The same way people go missing, or are raped, or have their houses torched while they are inside, the novel citizen is neutered and evicted because he is thought to be disfiguring the order of the fetish of the writer. This also is a lesson for other novel citizens to heed the order of the writer or, if they want to play with it, to play with it convivially, or

vulgarly even, but without disfiguring it. The death of this citizen, formally planned by Judas, is the means through which he can publicly demonstrate how he owns the bodies of the citizens of his world and how he can exterminate them for the remembrance of those citizens who think they can stand against his official fictions. The world of the novel becomes like that of the postcolony: "*an economy of death*" (Mbembe, 2001:115).

Petina Gappah's 'Miss McConkey of Bridgewater Close'[111] is a story that tackles the problems of freedom that comes without letting go of the memory of pain. Miss McConkey used to be a headmistress at a former 'whites only' school. She represented all the trepidations of racism that made black people tremble. Years later in independent Zimbabwe in a supermarket, Miss McConkey's money is short by five hundred million Zimbabwean dollars.[112] The black people in the supermarket consider Miss McConkey with disparagement although Zvamaida, the narrator, even though momentarily discouraged by the memory of Miss McConkey's repressive racism, finally helps her with the money. The 'whiteness' that we see in this story is a post-independence 'whiteness' that inhabits a space with racial sentiments that are national in an everyday sense. It is different from pre-independence 'whiteness' in the sense that it inhabits a space in which its present exclusion is exacerbated by its past dominance in the colony. Gappah's story communicates the nuances and paradoxes of race in everyday spaces regardless of the political and institutional laundering of it in multicultural discourses. The existence of Miss McConkey as an inhabitant of the European diaspora in Zimbabwe is therefore not without its own tragic edges. She is a white insider living on the outside.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at depictions of 'home' in *We Need New Names* (2013), *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009), *Harare North* (2009) and a multi-authored collection of short stories, *Writing Free* (2011). Many of the characters in these texts fail to fully belong to the Zimbabwean 'home' for various reasons. Even those who seem to have struck concessions soon find out the transience of belonging, especially political belonging. What connects these texts is how the circulation of the characters in geographies of non-belonging is complemented by a subversive literary tradition which, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, is most

[111] This short story originally appeared in *Writing Free* in 2011 although it was later included in Petina Gappah's 2016 publication, *Rotten Row*.
[112] The period depicted in this story is a hyper-inflationary one.

prominently associated with Marechera. The search for new modalities of expression by the writers manifest in their characters' search for new modalities of action outside the geographies that are overseen by an oppressive system. This search by the characters, motivated by their condition of not belonging, pre-figures the physical exile that many of them would undertake. Their belief that home hems them in, is stifling and disabling, finds expression in their ideological choices and pragmatic survival strategies, one of which is migration to what they perceive as enabling spaces. Whether the creative success of the writers in symbolically subverting an oppressive and parochial system is complemented by the successes of their characters in completely escaping home and finding new homes (and by extension, new names) elsewhere forms the central concern of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

EXILE AND BELONGING IN FOREIGN SPACES

Introduction

This chapter makes use of *Harare North* (Chikwava, 2009), *Writing Free* (Staunton [Ed.], 2011), *We Need New Names* (Bulawayo, 2013) and *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* (abbreviated *MM*) (Huchu, 2014) to argue for a reading of exile experience that is premised upon the fact that the characters' escape from disabling spaces cannot be read as having culminated in any 'arrival' in the perceived enabling spaces. The movement of characters across disparate physical and social spaces, from a once familiar environment which had become unfamiliar due to various forms of turmoil, to a completely unfamiliar one, is, according to Gagiano, like a spiritual journey of thousands of physical miles (2000:2). The angst precipitated by the unfamiliar space home had become is what they are running away from. The new spaces, however, have their own perils, because belonging is a perilous process. The exiles find themselves contending with issues of cultural identity and belonging in an environment that does not only 'other' them from itself but also 'others' them from themselves. They, therefore, try to adapt to their new environment but there are risks and difficulties incumbent upon this process of trying to adopt new norms, symbols and values "that constitute the cultural currency that is shared" by everyone in their new environments (Nwagbara, 2010:161).[113]

Belonging is performed because it is rarely conferred naturally. The characters find themselves mobilising various strategies in an attempt to make themselves belong. Belonging is here understood as fitting in the new space without being made to feel like an outsider. This involves both "the participatory dimension of citizenship… [and] … the emotional dimension of identification" (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten, 2006:3) without being regarded as the 'cultural other'. This chapter is therefore an analysis of various characters' efforts, at both the physical and symbolic level, to achieve a sense of belonging to the 'perceived' enabling spaces.

[113] This is a strand that I will pursue in the next chapter.

The Abject Nationalist in 'Harare North'[114]

My analysis of *Harare North* in this chapter is twofold: first is the politico-aesthetic regime of abjection that Chikwava uses as a symbolic representation of what I will analyse second, that is, the narrator's utilisation of abjection as a way of constructing alternative belonging to 'Harare North'. Abjection (Kristeva and Lechte, 1980) is a concept that denotes the condition of being an outcast, of living on the margins in states of non-belonging, criminality, homelessness, speechlessness and powerlessness because, as Kristeva and Lechte explain, abjection manifests in "existences [that] are founded on *exclusion* (stress in the original, 1980: 129). Rose explains abjection thus:

> Abjection is a matter of the energies, the practices, the works of division that act upon persons and collectivities such that some ways of being, some forms of existence are cast into one of shame, disgrace or debasement, rendered beyond the limits of the liveable, denied the warrant of tolerability, accorded purely a negative value (cited in Nyers, 2003:1074).

The narrator in *Harare North* is faced with supposed imminent incarceration for beating opposition party members[115] and flees to London to gather together US$5000 that is needed to clear the charges. The narrator's (mis)perception of the foreign space is brought out in the bravado with which he talks about his endeavour: "I just want to get myself good graft very quick, work like an animal and save heap of money and then bang, me I am on my way back home" (*HN*:6). That the foreign space is a safe haven from the turmoil of home is a popular perception among those who have not ventured beyond the confines of home. Even the narrator used to have such a perception especially when his friend, Shingi, emigrated to 'Harare North' before him:

> But all this don't affect Shingi because now he have even make it as far as Harare North and all them beer-mouths is stuck in they hovels in the township bawling they eyes out because price of everything jump up zillion per cent and they can't even afford or brew now; all them big stomachs gone, they belts is down to they last holes but them trousers is still falling down, big fat cheeks now gone, they heads is thin and overcrowded with teethies (*HN*:11-2).

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[114] '*Harare North*' is not only the title of Brian Chikwava's debut novel; it is also the name that is given to London by Zimbabwean migrants which is a way of saying that London is just an extension of Harare considering the number of Zimbabwean migrants in London.

[115] This is provides an interesting dimension to the transience of belonging, something I will look at in the next chapter. Suffice to say, beating opposition party members in Zimbabwe does not usually attract the kind of perdition that made the narrator run to 'Harare North'. The fact that it happened to one who constructed his own belonging through violence is evidence of the temporariness of belonging.

The narrator is an abject, someone jettisoned into a life of displacement by the upheavals back home. If given a chance, he would not have traded the life of the jackal breed[116] for the parasitic nature of his London existence. He occupies that extreme level of abjection characterised by unskilled jobs, insecure legal status and fear of deportation. His experience of Britain is mediated by exclusion. When he gets work, for instance, he finds it in irregular spaces where he is not guaranteed protection from harm. At one point, the narrator and a group of other contract workers are not given their money and because they do not have relevant papers, they fail to agitate for it and go to their squats jobless and empty-handed. The narrator, and others in his condition are therefore excluded from the rights of citizens. This exclusion echoes such philosophical concepts like 'states of exception' (Bigo, 2007) which speak of abjection because of banishment. McGregor explains 'states of exception' as:

> legal spaces akin to that of homo sacer in Roman law, which are occupied by categories of people dehumanised and reduced to 'bare life', stripped of their rights as citizens and legitimately exposed to injury or harm, whose relationship to the state is through their banishment; they are included solely by virtue of their exclusion (2008:472).

The narrator is made aware of his status as an inhabitant of legal spaces of detention right on his first day in 'Harare North' when he is detained at the airport until Sekai, who is the wife of the narrator's relative (Paul), reluctantly saves him. However, the narrator utilises that abjection for his own good and coupled with his skills as a jackal breed graduate, he negotiates his way around these abject spaces.

The narrator, like a parasite, learns to adapt to the rhythms of the surrounding environment. To begin with, he does not have a name and he is not named. He mistrusts Londoners, whether native or immigrant, and so not disclosing his name is like a deliberate act of not disclosing private details to people one cannot trust. His distrust for Londoners emerges in various episodes. When the narrator gets a job cleaning in a chic shop, he gets uncomfortable with a group of boys whom he thinks are laughing at him. Like a jackal breed graduate with an atrocious affinity for violence, he threatens to chase them away. He also does not trust Dave

[116] The jackal breed refers to the Green Bombers (graduates of the National Youth Service), a youth militia group of which the narrator was a member back in Harare. Although the youth service is regarded as 'national' in official discourse, its key mandate is to serve ZANU—PF interests.

and Jenny, two homeless Londoners who move into the London squat (*HN*:167-168). He fails to trust Shingi's mother, whom he nicknames 'Old Hen', after her numerous calls and demands for remittances. In short, the nameless narrator's number one rule in the abject spaces of London is to never trust anyone, including his own friend, Shingi. He quickly throws away any emotional feelings of friendship and subscribes to the dry logic of the importance of money and time in Harare North:

> [L]ike many immigrant on whose face fate had drive one large peg and hang tall stories, Shingi had not only become poor breadwinner but he had now turn into big headache for me. When it became clear that our friendship is now big danger to my plan, me I find no reason to continue it, so I finish it off straight and square (*HN*:1).

It is not only Shingi who gets relegated; even those who are perceived as wasting the narrator's time through cultural contrivances are also brushed aside: "Time is everything in Harare North, you don't just call someone like you is back home and just talk talk talk without purpose. Get to the point" (*HN*:218). Ironically, this is the same rule he tells Shingi and had Shingi followed it to the letter, he would not have taken the narrator in: "That kind of style we have to put inside bin, I tell Shingi. It important to pay big attention to some of them subtly things. I know how these things work. Also keep the native way down in the hole because if he jump out he can cause disorder and then no mother is safe in all of Harare North…" (*HN*:147). The narrator is telling Shingi to get rid of 'native ways' like cultural generosities and fails to see that Shingi takes him in due to the same contrivances the narrator wants him to throw away.

Like a parasite that has adapted to the surrounding environment, the narrator lives off the sweat of others. Sekai is pitted against the narrator because he finds out about her illicit affairs with the Russian doctor. The narrator in turn fleeces Sekai of a lot of money. He lives parasitically off her for some time and even learns to do the same with Shingi, his friend, under the guise that he would make him win over Tsitsi, a seventeen-year old single mother who is squatting with them. However, he shatters Shingi's dream of getting Tsitsi by bringing a Polish prostitute for Shingi in the full view of Tsitsi. The London squat also houses Farai, a prayerful young man, and Aleck, the administrator who is reputed to be having a very good job. He is also the 'landlord' of the house and extorts a lot of money from Shingi, Farai, Tsitsi and the narrator as rentals in order to acquire a residential stand or two back in Harare. However, it turns out that Aleck is an opportunist. He does not own the house but it was left in his care by foreign friends who had no hope of coming back. It also turns out that he does not have a very

good job but is a BBC.[117] The narrator, in his usual parasitic manner, uses this information against Aleck who, out of embarrassment, vacates the house. This means the narrator practically takes over the house. He even plans to defraud Shingi's relatives of US$5000, a scheme which does not succeed. Such parasitic relationships are not only part of 'Harare North'; they are also the reason the narrator flees Harare. It turns out that the US$5000 that is demanded by his Green Bomber (National Youth Service) commander, Comrade Mhiripiri, to clear charges against him, is just one 'jazz number' Comrade Mhiripiri is spinning against him.

The narrator's methods of thinking, speaking and acting among fellow migrants and among natives place him in underground (both physical and symbolic) spaces of Harare North. Besides being at loggerheads with almost everyone in his life, the narrator is also engaged in a battle with English, which results in the political act of creating his own language of abjection.[118] Since it is transgression of a rule that gives rise to abjection (Lochrie, 1991:128), the narrator's contravention of the rules of English is a symbolic act of searching for alternative belonging in a Harare North that has notified him since the first day of his arrival that he does not belong to it. Alternative belongings require alternative languages and the narrator's messy concoction of Zimbabwean, British and Jamaican (patois) Englishes accords with his inhabitation of the dark alleys of the Harare North society. In this, the narrator seems to be attempting to transgress the terms of his exclusion from the language and culture of Harare North. His "accurate misuse of English" (Kociejowski, 2011:56) is what makes his story a political act of transgressing what Britain holds dear – its language – as a way of creating new rules for his belonging.

Chikwava's narrator's voice is a voice of unreliability, not only because it accurately misuses English, but also because he says one thing to mean another. For instance, 'forgiveness' is a virtue, but the narrator loads it with all negative connotations of the dark arts of ZANU—PF politicking which include beating up opposition members or even making them disappear. Because the narrator tells us, right from the start, that he is illegal, and consequently, an abject, his story becomes hard to believe especially when the audience wants to understand it outside spaces of abjection. He refuses to lend his voice to the art of being believed. He is therefore what Noxolo (2014:300) calls the "unreliable narrator". The narrator's unreliability

[117] BBC is an abbreviation for a derogatory phrase, British Buttock Cleaners, used to refer to Zimbabweans who work in care homes.

[118] Does this language in any way ameliorate or mediate the feelings of not belonging? This is a very important question because it seeks for the evaluation of abjection and its languages by focusing on whether it solves exile's dialectic. However, since this chapter is concerned with exploring characters' attempts to belong, I will evaluate abjection and its languages in the next chapter.

is in itself a political act, an act of transgressing laws, rules and conventions, for is transgression not the rule of abjection? The unreliability of the narrator comes from what Rimmon-Kenan (1983:100) calls sources of unreliability, which are "the narrator's limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme." For instance, the narrator uses Shingi's passport, National Insurance Number and mobile. In short, he passes off as Shingi. In this, he lies to others and to himself. His unrepentant support for the system that discarded him after using him to mete out 'forgiveness' to its enemies is actually a problematic value-scheme.

The inspiration behind Chikwava's narrator is also an ambivalent real-life Ugandan whose story is riddled with contradictions. Chikwava recounts,

> One day I found myself talking to this Ugandan, a perfectly normal figure, striped shirt, cap, quite handsome, and then he started telling me these stories which were quite incredible, about how he had been in Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. What happened is that he got captured by government forces and [was] imprisoned for a while. Something went odd with the trial. He did not go to prison but he had to leave the country and so he came here, claiming asylum. Anyway, even after spending a whole year here, he still had this strange yearning to be back out there with Kony, carrying his AK47. Although he must have been a killer, he didn't talk about it. It got me thinking about how many other people like him had claimed asylum. I knew there were Rwandans somewhere about, so I figured there must be Green Bombers as well (cited in Kociejowski, 2011:56).

Like Chikwava's narrator, this real-life young man is also very unreliable. As Chikwava confesses to Kociejowski, "[w]hat I found odd was that he did not see anything wrong with what he was saying. I wasn't sure whether he didn't know or was just putting on an act for me, but I found it quite hilarious" (2011:56). On one hand, this unflinching ambivalence demonstrates Chikwava's use of unreliable narration as a symbolic representation of the agency of those who, in official spaces of asylum, would be considered passive victims of the dark arts of African politics. However, the narrator seems to have taken his abjection by the collar to use it as a point of agency. On the other hand, this ambivalence is also a representation of the insecurities and traumas of abjection. This second strand forms one of the many strands of my next chapter.

The unreliability of the narrator is also a symbolic method of communicating the untidiness and inconsistencies of life while using that untidiness and inconsistency as a point of strength. In other words, by being "reliably unreliable" (Wood, 2009:7), Chikwava's narrator becomes a symbol that laughs at the hypocrisy of the neatness and consistencies that

he finds in the British system on the first day at the airport. That the magic word, 'asylum', did not work to get him a passage into Harare North points at the hypocritical demands of consistency and tidiness the British asylum system imposes upon those who run. It seems then that the narrator's affinity for unreliability is a symbolic way of penetrating the system by giving it what it flinches at. This is where abjection is loaded with symbolic power by Chikwava. The narrator enters 'Harare North', and stays in it, via abjection. This entrance through abjection is also seen in how Zimbabweans locate themselves (and are located) in the UK.

While moving to the UK is considered as a mark of status, the Zimbabwean migrant quickly adapts to the change of locality so that the movement can be seen in contradictory terms. The adaptation includes subjection to abjection, to dirty, dangerous and demeaning work, what Mbiba (2005:11) calls the three Ds. This explains why many Zimbabweans are concentrated "in locations where old people are concentrated" or where "care services are needed" (Mbiba, 2005:6). Sometimes, those taking up the 'BBC' jobs employ the strategy of locating in remote parts where those services are needed as a way of avoiding being seen by other Zimbabweans doing a job that is considered demeaning back home:

> All over the country in small and remote agricultural towns chances are that a black person one comes across may be Zimbabwean. Cleaning toilets and care work (derogatorily labelled "BBC' – "British bottom cleaning" – by Zimbabweans back home) is something most people would not want to be identified with in Zimbabwe. So those doing such work initially sought employment in remote places where there was a low risk of meeting travelers likely to report this back home (Mbiba, 2005:6).

In areas where such kinds of jobs are found there is a preponderance of Zimbabweans. Others also stay in areas that are in close proximity to these jobs, areas along the Lower "Thames, such as Greenwich, Woolwich, Belvedere and Erith" and "metropolitan areas of the UK like Birmingham-Coventry-Wolverhampton area, the Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Doncaster areas as well as Glasgow," with some Zimbabweans also being found "in [the] Slough area (now referred to as 'kwaChirau' – an area in Mashonaland West province of Zimbabwe, whose name rhymes with the pronunciation of 'Slough') [and] Reading, Luton, Leicester and Bedford" (Mbiba, 2005: 6).

Chikwava's protagonist survives in Harare North through exploitation of others. He does not attempt to form any integral forms of solidarity with Sekai or Shingi. Because his experiences in Harare North are mediated through a pervasive cult of abjection and other

related '-jections' like 'rejection' and 'dejection', the narrator does not attempt to provide a more cheerful alternative that involves being part of a group. He prefers the path of the *umgodhoyi*, the mangy, village dog. That disgustingly unassimilable image of the Other that the narrator uses to refer to himself, together with the "language of radical desublimation"[119] (Jay, 1994:239), mean that those who want to stop his progress or retrogression can only do so by invading those spaces of abjection, which is almost impossible because the narrator's goals, which reek of the pungent smell of impurity, take him away from those who can stop him.

The narrator's legitimacy is a legitimacy that is achieved through the mobilisation of abjection. He is able to claim and re-signify that abjection for himself. This accords with the observation of Jay (1994:241) when he says "[t]hat abject identifications are effective in disrupting 'normativeness' suggests that power exists for those who (re)claim it." This is how symbolic legitimacy and intelligibility are achieved, that is, by exploiting those spaces, both narrative and physical, that are antithetical to purity and perfection.

Trying to find a place: Analysing Huchu's multilateral depiction of exile

This sub-section looks at Huchu's *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician* (2014) and how two characters in the narrative, the Magistrate and the Mathematician, perform their belonging to Scotland. The narrative traces the lives of three Zimbabwean men in Scotland who are experiencing various layers of exile. Their struggles have to do with the complexities of belonging as they try to find space for themselves in Britain. The three of them try various paths until their paths collide melodramatically and tragically. In this chapter, I will look at two, the Magistrate and the Mathematician. I will look at the Maestro in the fifth chapter because his disposition and thought patterns depict him as someone who is ill-fated right from the beginning so that the most possible reading of the Maestro can be located in the fifth chapter where I read the texts in terms of what exile does to people, and not in terms of what people do to belong as is the focus of this chapter. I will start with the Magistrate.

[119] The language of radical desublimation is fundamentally delirious language. In *Harare North*, it reaches its highest level when the narrator is drawn inexorably into the vortex of madness.

The Magistrate

The Magistrate is an elderly man who has migrated to Scotland with his family which consists of a wife (*Mai Chenai*) and a daughter, Chenai. 'The Magistrate' is a title that is consonant with his Zimbabwean profession. Since moving to Scotland, he is no longer a magistrate although characters like Alfonso still refer to him as 'Magistrate'. The continued use of an identity that has failed to offer him a place in Britain is a source of disappointment for him. It is like falling out of the middle class and still retaining an identity that reminds him of the grim details of that fall: "Falling out of the middle class was harder on him than he could have imagined" (*MM*:47). It is not just a fall out of the middle class; it is also a fall into the abject spaces of British care homes, derogatively referred to as British Buttock Cleaning (BBC). However, the abjection does not even begin when he gets into the British Care Homes but in his Scottish abode where he has assumed the role of babysitter, cook and toilet cleaner, jobs which, back home, would have exposed him to the ridicule of his peers:

> The house was a woman's domain. Now he found himself questioning the conditions under which the maid worked for him. The first time this had occurred was when he was bent over, brush in hand, cleaning the toilet bowl. In his entire life, he had never imagined himself carrying out such a humiliating task (*MM*:5).

The feminisation of men has potential for displacement and alienation, especially displacement and alienation that have social overtones. In the case of the Magistrate, the displacement is in his downward spiral from skilled to unskilled work while retaining only the title of his former skilled work. This provides its own dialectic tension for him. At the same time, his movement from skilled to unskilled work can be read as his "encounter with the British class system" (McGregor, 2008:476) which limits opportunities for belonging and makes him miss "long-cultivated notions of respectability and traditions of public service" (McGregor, 2008:473). Sometimes these notions interrupt the flow of conversations with others who, in Zimbabwe, would have been considered to be below him, but who now seemed to occupy positions of benefactors, like Alfonso, a family friend whom he considers as his young brother. After a heated debate on technicalities of soccer during one of their frequent moments of watching soccer, he muses about Alfonso thus: "How could a man be so capable of challenging incontrovertible evidence put right in front of his eyes, the Magistrate wondered" (*MM*:4). Relating with others in purely magisterial terms limits the Magistrate's chances of integrating himself into the class of other Zimbabweans in Edinburgh. In other

words, one pre-requisite for his own integration is the shedding of his Zimbabwean class consciousness because this is a totally different space with its own semiotic codes.

The Magistrate's failure to feel located in Edinburgh also arises out of his culture shock which is exacerbated by the fact that his daughter, Chenai, is more British than Zimbabwean. This culture shock, aggravated also by absence from the traditions of his culture, gives the Magistrate a constant sense of estrangement and loss of dignity and ruptures and distorts the Magistrate's behaviour and practice. He is a magistrate who does not practise on the bench but is confined to cooking, making the bed and gardening, or introspecting.[120] Exile for the Magistrate portends discontinuities and refractions from which it is difficult to forge a new identity and a sense of belonging. He is cut off from his roots, land and past because, in Said's words, "exile…is fundamentally a discontinuous state of being" (Said, 2003:140). This makes the Magistrate a lonely man; he is so lonely that his wife and daughter seem to be living in a world of their own. The Magistrate appears to us, therefore, as a character who has not yet come to terms with where he is now and lives in a state of non-belonging. He migrates to have a better life and forgoes his status back home in the hope of reclaiming it in the new land. This does not happen. What happens instead is bewilderment at the new demands of his new 'home'. The new place asks too much of him which, in actual fact, is as good as losing what defines him for the sake of integrating himself into Scottish society. He reads his alienation through his daughter, Chenai, who, by virtue of having grown up in exile since she came from Zimbabwe as a toddler, seems to have become part of Edinburgh. The Magistrate is shocked to discover how Chenai has drifted away from his space when Chenai, in her sexual deviance, is caught by the Magistrate performing oral sex on a Scottish boy:

> The girl sleeping upstairs could not be his daughter. She wasn't the little girl he had brought pink ribbons for just a few moments ago. Some supernatural agent full of mischief must have swapped his little girl for this…this succubus. The boy must have forced her. But, no, he had seen it with his own eyes. She was undeniably a willing participant. There was real skill, craft, in the rhythmic motion of her head (*MM*:141).

The Magistrate becomes an exile from Chenai, his daughter. She *belongs* in her surroundings, she is part of them, whereas he, the Magistrate, is always out of place. He does not know what

[120] Zadie Smith's novel, *White Teeth* (2000), explores these changing social codes that rupture behaviour and practice occasioned by movement from past stabilities or roots to the present through various complex and unstable routes. This tension between roots and routes that Smith captures is akin to the Magistrate's attempts to negotiate his identity in Edinburgh after a disrupted Zimbabwean past.

it is like to grow up in Edinburgh. Chenai knows. She even knows how to naturally speak herself into the place whereas the Magistrate does not know. He is even shocked by her heavy Scottish accent when she comments on a novel she was reading: "Dad, if this guy cannae be bovvered to learn proper English, why did he write a novel?" (*MM*:4).[121] Part of the reason why it seems as if Chenai seamlessly belongs is because the novel predominantly dwells on three characters – the Magistrate, the Maestro and the Mathematician – whose psychological dispositions become known to us through the author's inordinate focus on them. We only know of other characters through these three so that our understanding of, say Chenai, is mediated through the Magistrate's conversations with or thoughts about her. From their conversations and from what the Magistrate thinks of her, it seems that Chenai has no problems with being in Edinburgh. She does not seem to be experiencing the same turmoil that afflicts her father.

The Magistrate feels he is losing his child to 'western culture'. He feels that Chenai is not closer to his Zimbabwean culture but is ultimately closer to the western antagonist. Chenai lives under one sky, the Scottish one, which is what the Magistrate is scared of because he feels the values of Scotland cannot raise his daughter into the kind of daughter he wants her to be. So he tries, abortively, to socialise her the Zimbabwean way by teaching her Zimbabwean ways, like calling Alfonso '*babamudiki*' which means 'father', and constantly asking her what she wants to do when she grows up, a programme which he soon abandons because he realises with shock how different their values are:

> He'd stopped asking Chenai what she wanted to do after school. Her answers varied wildly from beauty therapist, to make-up artist, occasionally nursing, to a number of sinister sounding prospects that filled his heart with dread. He wanted her to go to university, do law, or any useful degree outside the humanities and build a safe stable life for herself. He thought about his own mortality; she would need something solid once he and her mother were gone (*MM*:93).

The Magistrate's nostalgias for Zimbabwean upbringings for his child are not without problems. It is as if the Zimbabwe he left behind was pristine so that the space of Edinburgh he now inhabits should occupy the extreme end of antagonism against the space he left behind. This is a very problematic and Manichean value system by the Magistrate because the western space he now inhabits and the Zimbabwean space he left behind are not unproblematically antithetical and the ways the two overlap in a world that has and is globalising constitute

[121] This novel is *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava, 2009) which is written in a mixture of Shonglish (Shona that is directly translated to English), patois and British English.

interstitial or liminal zones of commonality. Thus, there cannot be pure Zimbabwean culture because such a notion is atavistic.

The Magistrate looks at Chenai as if she is a stranger or of different blood. Conversely, Chenai's behaviour constantly tells the Magistrate that this is the 21st century, and 21st century is not just temporal, but also spatial. In other words, The Magistrate is constantly reminded that this is Scotland and not Zimbabwe. A typical conversation between the two goes like this:

> The Magistrate: Can you print the news for me from the computer?"
> Chenai: From the internet (*MM*:94).

Chenai finds every opportunity to correct her father and remind him of the technological advancements that are in their new home or, in this case, the names that are given to things.[122] The fact that she is getting 'western' education exacerbates this and worsens the Magistrate's alienation and estrangement from his daughter and Scotland.

Chenai is actually capable of being read through Afropolitan lenses especially if the Afropolitan aspect of her identity is that which can be read in the context of that refusal for identity to be explained in terms of what Eze (2014:240) calls "purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference only to Africa." So in terms of Eze's understanding, Chenai is A, B, X and Y and cannot be understood in terms of A standing in Manichean opposition to X. She cannot go back to a native place that the Magistrate wants her to go back to.[123]

Chenai is part of what Rumbaut (2004:1162) would call the "1.5 generation".[124] Her formal education begins in Scotland and so she qualifies to be a member of the 'one-and-half' generation. Time in Scotland for Chenai, therefore, does not only refer to length of acquaintance with Scottish life but is also a measure of the various cognitive developmental stages she goes through from the time of her migration. Chenai experiences serious contextual dissonance between her Edinburgh world and the world of her parents. Thus, there is a lot of parent-child conflict going on, especially between her and the Magistrate. Because Chenai's mother is virtually absent from home (when she is present, she is usually sleeping), any potential conflict between her and Chenai is not very apparent. In fact, it is the Magistrate who is virtually 'bringing up' the child although it is also apparent that Chenai has other paradigms

[122] In *We Need New Names*, part of Aunt Fostalina's frustration comes from the fact that words are pronounced and things are named differently in the U.S as compared to what she had internalised when she was in Zimbabwe.
[123] I will look at this aspect in the fifth chapter in the section where I write about post-diasporic identities
[124] Rumbaut coined the term with reference to Cuban youth and the dynamics of identity formation in adolescence and believes the term best applies to children who migrate with their parents from the country of origin after they reach school-going age but before reaching puberty, that is, roughly at 6-12 years.

of 'growing up' that are more central to her life so that the Magistrate's own paradigms are only peripheral as the following incident demonstrates:

> Chenai was lying on the sofa, absorbed by gyrating, near naked babes performing around a hunk lounging on a deckchair. They wiggled their bottoms and flashed their big breasts at the man who sang so fast that the Magistrate couldn't understand the content of his lyrics, save for the word 'bitches', which he repeated at intervals with great vehemence.
>
> "So, this is what the kids are listening to these days." Alfonso reached into his coat pocket.
>
> "I'm not a kid anymore. I'm fifteen." Chenai rolled her eyes.
>
> Music forms memories. The Magistrate, who was often transported back to some point in the past when he heard a familiar tune, shuddered to think that Chenai's memories would be formed by this soulless, commercial music. Alfonso picked up the remote and changed the channel.
>
> "Hey, I was watching that," Chenai said, sitting up.
>
> Alfonso tossed a Kit Kat to her. "It's time for football."
>
> "But I am watching my music, pal."
>
> "Show some courtesy, he is our guest. And, don't call him 'pal', call him Babamudiki[125] Alfonso. Okay?" The Magistrate felt his daughter had been here too long. Already her speech had a slight Scottish inflexion, those rolling Rs, the coarse tongue, guttural Gs (*MM*:2-3).

Not only is the Magistrate estranged from his daughter, he is also estranged from his wife. Mai Chenai, the Magistrate's wife, works long hours and is rarely at home. This has put a rift between her and the Magistrate. Unlike the differences between the Magistrate and Chenai, interspersed by moments of comradeship, the differences between the Magistrate and his wife have a way of reducing him to an obsequious houseboy before the financial might of his wife. They have also contributed to very long periods of sexual drought that the Magistrate cannot remember the last time they were intimate with each other. Depending on his wife has emasculated the Magistrate and is a source of frustration. A typical confrontation between the two, during which the Magistrate is typically on the losing end, goes like this:

> The Magistrate was so lost in the moment, drifting in the interstices between the chords, that he did not see Mai Chenai standing in her dressing gown by the doorway.
>
> "Nhai, Baba Chenai," she said startling him. Her eyes were red. She was tired from her shift.
>
> "I'm sorry, I didn't see you."

[125] In the Shona culture of Zimbabwe, *Babamudiki* is the title given to one's father's younger brother or someone who is younger than one's father and, literally translated, it means 'younger father'.

> "Turn that stupid music off.[126] Some of us have to work, you know." She turned her back on him and went back up the stairs. The house fell back into silence. He knew her words would play over in his mind all day. He picked up his keys and left the house, slamming the door on his way out (*MM*:29).

Such a confrontation would make the Magistrate regret the choice of coming to Scotland: "I never wanted to come here in the first place," he would mutter angrily (*MM*:29). This means his exilic condition is a 'forced' one and contains within it a tragic edge. He is alienated from his family and from his new environment. The only way to reconcile himself to his wife is to work like her, but work in this instance means letting go of the sensibilities that his title confers to him and subjecting himself to abject work in the 3Ds.[127]

The landscape of the Magistrate's past is absent in his new 'home'. The language, climate, manners, movements, jokes and social relations are all new to him in this new landscape. The Magistrate finds that he has no 'rights' over the markers of this landscape, a truth which hits him when he tries to complain about the weather during a banal conversation with a 'native' neighbour:

> He was mowing the lawn when John, from number seventeen, popped his head over the fence.
> "Alright pal," John called above the roar of mower.
> "Morning." The Magistrate turned the mower off.
> "Great day for a barbeque."
> "The sun isn't even out."
> "Don't jinx it now. This might be the only decent day we have this summer."
> The Magistrate nodded, then shook his head. He didn't have a suitable reply. He had yet to fully master that most subtle of British arts, talking about the weather in great detail. The nuance and dull observation required completely escaped him (*MM*:91).

The Magistrate misses the cue in this conversation because it is different when done in his culture. For him, it is normal to complain about the sun not being out, but the landscape is

[126] What the Magistrate's wife calls 'stupid music' is music sung by Zimbabwean musicians that the Magistrate carried from Zimbabwe.

[127] The confinement of the Magistrate to the 3Ds, away from the spaces of magisterial work for which he trained, represents the phenomenon of deskilling, devaluation and non-recognition of migrants' foreign credentials (Bauder, 2008). Such a phenomenon confines immigrant professionals to the lower segments of the labour market. In some instances, professional immigrants undergo retraining or re-professionalisation to improve their professional opportunities. However, in the case of the Magistrate, we do not read of any retraining taking place. Mbiba (2005:10) identifies what he calls a short, 'conversion', course for immigrant Zimbabwean nurses that enables them to as full nursing professionals. Sometimes, as Mbiba points out, for carers the training is given on the job. It could be that the Magistrate used the later route although it is not indicated by the author. However, the relegation to 3Ds is common in the Zimbabwean diaspora and, as Mbiba (2005:11) observes, it is a traumatic situation that accelerates depression, stress and high blood pressure among immigrant Zimbabwean men.

different here and requires that he treats as normal things that are alien to him. There is no one way to respond to the new landscape and its cultures and so every day there is a shock awaiting him because the cues that he expects in his relationship with his daughter and the Scottish world are missing.

Landscape and belonging are concepts that denote perspectives of particular territories and the relations and identities associated with those territories. As in Lefebvre's idea of space, landscapes assume particular arrangements of values, behaviour and aesthetics through which people practise belonging. Landscapes are not, therefore, just physical but metaphysical, psychological, cultural and political. Human belongings can be "defined in and through these landscapes, by a measure of [their] connection or alienation to them" (Offord, 2008:5). The landscape, which I have pointed out as not just physical, provides the expression of a language that gives meaning to life. In other words, "belonging consciousness"[128] (Offord, 2008:8) is given content "from the materials of landscape produced by human interaction with society and its environment" (Offord, 2008:7). Where belonging to a space has to do with belonging to a polity and its imagined, metaphorical and material associations, the Magistrate's experience is that of failing to belong because he has failed in the performative acts (some as simple as talking about the weather!) that write him onto the landscape. He, therefore, has to seek belonging through his own private means, that is, by conjuring the things of home onto the landscape.

In this narrative, the Magistrate inscribes the music of home (Zimbabwe) onto the landscape of Edinburgh.

> He got on the bus, switched on his Walkman[129] and caught a song halfway through. He laughed at the irony of Chimombe singing, 'Zvikaramba zvakadaro, ndinotsika mafuta, ndiende Bindura, handina zvinoera.'[130] Now this song would fix his memory to the 14 going past the Craigmillar high rises, which stood at the edge of the estate, a stone's throw from Peffermill (*MM*:71).

[128] This is a conceptual thread that I will pursue in the next chapter when I look at the inevitability of the trauma of belonging and how this trauma has no 'closure.'
[129] The fact that he is still stuck with the Walkman dates him in an anachronistic way.
[130] The late James Chimombe was a musician who specialised in a fusion of the fast paced Zimbabwean genres called sungura, jit and jazz. The song that the author quotes makes reference to Bindura, a mining town in Zimbabwe, which is where The Magistrate comes from. The lyrics cited in that passage can be translated thus: "If things remain like this, I am not going to wait, I will just drive off to Bindura." The yearning for home or a known place of belonging is quite apparent in the coincidence of these lyrics and the Magistrate's frame of mind.

Music and musical performance play a role in place-making because they do not just reflect "pre-existing cultural structures, but rather [the] activity through which culture is created, negotiated, and performed" (Solomon, 2000: 257).[131] The Magistrate uses Zimbabwean music in order to inscribe himself on the earthly landscape of Edinburgh while also inscribing Edinburgh on the landscape of his mind. Because his *topophilia*[132] (Solomon, 2000:273) is with Bindura, a *topophilia* that came from walking on it until he had a mental map of the whole town, he tries to regain the sense of place that Bindura[133] offered him by looking at Edinburgh with the eyes of a Bindura-dweller, and the music of Bindura. According to Hufford (1987:16), "Sense of place literally begins with the senses." The Magistrate's sense of hearing is therefore invoked in order to allow the inscription of Bindura on Edinburgh.

The Magistrate's relationship to the landscape accords with anthropological and geographical explorations that call for the understanding of the interplay of the senses in the cultural patterning of perception.[134] Thus, the Magistrate does not just restrict himself to hearing, but he also has an urge to touch objects, to feel them and connect to them. This explains why he has an aversion for buses. He wants to conquer the city by walking on it and touching its objects:[135]

> Travelling on the bus, he did not feel quite the same intensity traversing the city as he did while walking. It altered his perception of space at a mental and physical level. On his morning walks, he felt tiredness in his muscles, the full topographical awareness of how he was oriented on a gradient, a connectedness not possible at the same level of consciousness on the bus (*MM*:48).

The point here is how circulation in automobilised time-spaces[136] affects The Magistrate's sense of place, and consequently, sense of self.

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[131] The interface between music and identity is very commonplace in ethnomusicology. However, the participation of music in the social construction of space is something that is not very obvious at first.
[132] Yi-Fi Tuan (1974) uses this term to describe the affective bonds people have with places
[133] Bindura is being used in this instance as a place and as a representation of home.
[134] Yi-Fu Tuan (1974) actually divides landscapes into various categories according to the senses like 'landscapes of smell', 'landscapes of touch', etc.
[135] Walter Benjamin, and Michel de Certeau (1984), separately, have said a bit about flaneurism and the value of walking. What is common in their iterations is the attempt to understand city life through chunks and pieces of urban life, which should speak for themselves, and not through the conventional linear narrative of the planned city. I looked at de Certeau considerably in Chapter 3. Benjamin's flaneur (whom he theorised at the height of modernism in the 1920s and 30s, especially in The Arcades Project [1927-40]) is an ambiguous figure who is at home in what is not home, who internalises the physical world of objects so that his internal life becomes like a clock. Like Benjamin's flaneur, the Magistrate wants to feel the landscape to internalise it, and this is all part of the city dweller's and the exile's anxieties and desires.
[136] In 'The "System" of Automobility' (2004), Urry writes of how modern communication technologies allow us to experience virtual migration in the manner in which the Magistrate experiences it on the bus.

Thus, in this most prosaic and routine experience of life, the Magistrate participates in the politics of place. His participation is, however, not communal but private. Of interest is the psychological process through which the Magistrate ascribes meaning to a place that is a source of his estrangement in order to conquer it and affirm his own sense of personal identity and add meaning and purpose to his life. To be able to describe a place on the premise of what the Magistrate knows of Bindura (both his hometown and a placeholder for home) is to demystify a foreign space in order to make it familiar and in the process, have authority over it and eventually be part of it. This is a very political process regardless of the fact that it is being done privately. According to D. Williams (2002:354),

> Ideas like place attachment (feelings of affiliation and identification) and related notions such as sense of place (more inclusively, the meanings people ascribe to a place), are necessarily political because (a) place meanings create and structure social difference (serve to define us and them, locals and outsiders) and (b) claims of what belongs to a place (what kinds of meaning and practices are deemed authentic to the place) are often invoked to assert power and authority over place.

The authority of the author in his close and authoritative descriptions of Edinburgh are symbolic of the Magistrate taking control of his perception of place, that is, he sees and feels the place according to his own terms and not those of the Edinburgh community, which is a very political act. In that way, music becomes a vehicle for embodying the Magistrate's self in Edinburgh and Edinburgh in self.

To the Magistrate, the Craigmillar rises[137] and many other places he fuses with the music of home become what Armstrong (1971:26) calls "affecting presences". According to Solomon (2000:274), "To say a place is an affecting presence is thus to recognize that…to name a place is to call it into being by identifying it as an entity separate from the surrounding space – in a sense, to create the place." His sense of hearing *makes* the place in order for the place to make *sense* to him. This is what Solomon calls *sense of place*. To make a place sensible through music is to say that the very materiality of sound, that is, its sensible qualities make tangible and objectify the experience of place in a way that can be perceived by the senses. However, if we are to interpret the lyrics that the Magistrate pastes on the Edinburgh landscape ("If things remain like this, I will drive off to Bindura"), he does not seem to be making notable headway in making sense of the place.

[137] These are blocks of high-rise buildings.

This physicality of music, its tone and timbre, is an aspect of 'rhythm analysis' popularised by Lefebvre in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004). Lefebvre takes his cue from music to argue that space and time share some fundamental rhythmic features. Music is shaped by a configuration of reiterations (tones, timbres, stresses, durations), sequences (long-shot followed by shot-long or vice versa) and the pauses between them which are of varying lengths. Spacing allows music to have measurement and it is this ability to be measured that separates music from simple noise. The analogy with space rests on the understanding that musical measures depend upon both circularity and linearity. Everything is, therefore, cyclical repetition through linear repetition.

However, as the lyrics of James Chimombe's songs cited by the author suggest, this process of making sense of place is not as clean as one may think because for the Magistrate, Bindura's absence from Edinburgh is more pervasive than its presence through music. If we are to interpret the lyrics that the Magistrate pastes on the Edinburgh landscape ("If things remain like this, I will drive off to Bindura"), he does not seem to be making notable headway in making sense of the place. Therefore, the Magistrate's integration into the physical and social landscape of Edinburgh is not seamless. While he attempts to conquer Edinburgh's physical landscape privately through music and tries to reduce the distance between himself and his wife by occupying abject spaces of care homes in order to appear to be doing something, his sense of estrangement from Edinburgh is not lost. It seems as if a surprise is always waiting and the culture of Edinburgh will forever remain a theatre of the absurd for him. Further analysis of this irresolvable exile dialectic will be provided in the next chapter.

The Mathematician

The Mathematician, Farai, is a young doctoral researcher who fits the label of a cosmopolitan African and seems to have succeeded in exorcising himself of the estrangement that afflicts the Magistrate.[138] In Farai, we see someone who, in the words of Said (2003:139) lends "dignity to a condition legislated to deny dignity – to deny an identity to people." To understand Said's argument, one has to look at what Farai is not. Farai is not part of an unaccountable mass of people catered for by UN agencies and non-governmental

[138] The cosmopolitan, according to Appiah (1997:618), is "attached to a home…with its own cultural particularities, but [takes] pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other different people." This kind of cosmopolitan "imagines that in such a world not everyone will find it best to stay in their natal patria, so that the circulation of people among different localities will involve not only cultural tourism (which the cosmopolitan admits to enjoying) but migration, nomadism, diaspora."

organisations. Farai is not a default member of "large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance" (Said, 1999:181). He is not a peasant without prospects of going back home. He is not armed with a ration card and an agency number. He is not an unknown fellow spending years of loneliness in Edinburgh. He is a cosmopolitan intellectual. He is a Global South intellectual who has made it to the Global North academe. What makes Farai fit the identity of a cosmopolitan is his ability to recognise others as equal beings and build bridges of connection between them. He lives with Brian, a Zimbabwean whose successes with women are nowhere near Farai's, and Scott, a Zimbabwean migrant whose radical opposition political views would never be compared to Farai's disinterested political views and whose dismal performances with women make Farai his complete opposite. Farai also has a white girlfriend, Stacey, who vacillates between living with her mother and Farai. This list of Farai's housemates also includes Mr Majeika, a rabbit whose disposition makes him almost human. In short, Farai is tolerant and his abode in Edinburgh is a miniature multicultural society. In fact, he is so multicultural and tolerant that he does not have any problem with Stacey's porn background and confesses that he would not have any qualms with Stacey pursuing a career in that field (*MM*:85). He is also so tolerant that when Scott cooks Mr Majeika as a surprise to make up for his rant against Farai because of his political disinterestedness, Farai, despite his sentimental attachment to Mr Majeika, makes a reconciliatory joke out of it, whereas Stacey is screaming and talking of calling the RSPCA:[139]

> Farai fishes around the stew, inspecting bits of floating limbs, trying to reconcile them with their furry friend who was running around in the hutch a few hours ago.
>
> 'How did you do it?'
>
> 'A blow to the back of the head, like that, blam.' Scott motions with his fist. 'Quick and painless. Humane.'
>
> Farai picks up a piece of Mr Majeika's hindquarters, sniffs and takes a bite.
>
> 'He was a tasty bastard,' he says. They laugh. Brian digs in and finishes off his dinner. Scott joins in as well. 'I'm still pissed off. Stacey ain't going to stand for these kinds of shenanigans. But, there is no use in wasting him now.' Farai watches the corridor, fearful that Stacey might come out of the bedroom. He dreads to think what she would do if she saw him eating Mr Majeika (*MM*:193).

[139] Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Farai, therefore, has the basic qualities of a cosmopolitan citizen which include, to quote Held's (2010:230) baseline, "moral egalitarianism and reciprocal recognition of the equal moral respect of every person," and, in Ronnstrom's (2011:260) words, a just assumption of "obligation and responsibilities to other people."

Farai, like the Magistrate, is a migrant but the difference is that Farai is an international student migrant.[140] His experiences abroad as a student are a biography of sorts that chronicles his personal development and growth outside the sedentary borders of a particular place. His potential for devotion to many places is captured by Stacey when she complains, "It's like, won't it be awkward for you going places with me, when you're Doctor Farai PhD, and I'm just the girl who works in a shoe shop?" (*MM*:85). This means Farai has all the potential to be what Appiah (1997) calls a cosmopolitan patriot. The way to understand Farai is not to pin him to a geographical place and one-dimensional social and cultural spaces like, say, the Magistrate. Even the way he is almost everywhere – on virtual space, video-game space and many other technological spaces – shows a young man who is more outward-looking and subscribes to various modalities of action and existence.

Farai appears to us as a young man with a plethora of skills and intercultural competencies that include mixing with and relating to people from different cultural, religious, ethnic, educational, economic and social backgrounds and more tolerance and open-mindedness. These might have ostensibly been acquired as a result of studying abroad. He also has other competencies that are similar to those identified by Weibl (2015:39) among immigrant intellectuals, which include "establishment of friendships (with students and locals of diverse backgrounds) [and] increasing self-confidence, self-esteem and independence (as the outcome of the move, relocation, integration and adaptation into the host society)." His positive attitudes to a widening of his horizons through cross-cultural relationships contain, in Weibl's (2015:39) words, "a transnational element, because of the appreciation of many diversities, which can be both resident or non-resident, to the host-country." For instance, after breaking up with Stacey after stumbling upon her having sex with Scott, Farai starts dating an Indian girl. Farai's identity, therefore, cannot be said to be static and exclusive to national borders. This is where his integration into the Edinburgh society seems more seamless than the Magistrate's.

[140] International Student Mobility (ISM) is increasingly becoming a popular field of global mobility and migration studies.

Farai lives the life of what Pels (1999:63) calls a "privileged nomad". His life fulfils the minimum requirements of such a life as outlined by Pels:

> It has become a cliché for connoisseurs of postmodern sensibility to say that we live in a world of flux, where mobility, experimentation and transgression have turned into core signifiers of the daily management of lifestyles. To seek adventure, to live the experimental life, to probe the limits of one's identity, has become a singularly powerful motif in popular and elite culture alike, ranging all the way from 'low' transgressions and kicks such as bungy-jumping, drug use and sexually promiscuous holidays towards more costly and rarefied pursuits such as surfing the internet, high-tech mountain climbing, mobile phoning, continuous cosmopolitan travel, transgenderism and intellectual 'nomadism' (1999:63).

The kind of lifestyle outlined above by Pels is associated with the precarious experimentalism of nineteenth century artists and it was called Bohemianism.[141] However, in Farai's world, it has, in Pels's words, "trickled down and become more democratically accessible" as a "fully legitimate and subsidised social sanctuary" (1999:63). The fact that Farai can feel at home in these bohemian spaces of Edinburgh makes him feel at home in Edinburgh. Vacillating between virtual spaces of communication technology, Edinburgh restaurants and bars, eccentric circles of writers and professors and the funded spaces of university education, Farai is the quintessential postmodern exile through whom exile's key terms ('place called elsewhere', 'on the move', 'in transit', 'in diaspora', 'hybrid identities', 'living between the worlds', 'ambivalence', contingency', 'diffraction', 'monstrosity' and so on) are celebrated and sacralised. Farai, therefore, cannot be read in the context of postcoloniality's nemeses: 'native', 'immobile', 'rooted' or 'sedentary'.

Farai's seamless integration into various facets of Edinburgh life – night, day, university, park, restaurant and the virtual spaces of video games and internet and social media communication – is consonant with modern life. In other words, he is not as bound and fixed as the Magistrate. We do not see in Farai the horrors of a character who is looking for a home because wherever he sets his foot that is where his home is. Therefore, he refuses to be hemmed in by the dichotomising effects of political parties from home which have trapped the Magistrate and Farai's compatriot, Scott.

Because Farai's entry onto cosmopolitan spaces is through university education, let me at this juncture analyse Farai as an intellectual and as a stranger. Farai's intellectual experience

[141] Bohemianism is an unconventional lifestyle that involves musical, artistic or literary pursuits characterised by lack of permanence and fixed ties. Bohemians are also called wanderers, adventurers or vagabonds because they do not adhere to fixed ties.

as a mathematician and doctoral researcher in Edinburgh agrees with the postcolonial axiom: "truth is homeless, and homelessness, in reverse, breeds truth" (Pels, 1999:167). His condition, which, unlike the Magistrate's, does not make him a melancholic character, is that of disassociation from 'home' and its cultures and 'better visions.' While Scott dreams of a better Zimbabwe (utopian home), Farai knows that any hope for a utopia is not only impossible but also a stupid idea. Therefore, the myopias of Scott do not afflict Farai. In fact, Farai's homelessness is a condition of reflexivity and objectivity which give him access to larger truths. Below is a snippet of an argument between Farai and Scott which demonstrates how the two are diametrically different:

> 'The MDC is having a meeting at St John's in a couple of weeks and I want you guys to come with me so we can do something', Scott says.
>
> 'You wanna do something from 10000Ks away?' Farai stifles a laugh.
>
> 'At least we're trying. What about you, Farai? You are so quick to sneer and dismiss people who are doing their best. What have you done for your country, motherfucker?'
>
> 'Language please, dude. The difference between you and me is, I'm going home after my PhD to run a business. *You*, on the other end, are stuck here working your dead-end job in a call centre, so forgive me if I don't agree with you on sanctions and bullshit that might harm my ability to run a business, employ people, and make a *real* business on the ground.'
>
> 'Cheap shot', says Brian.
>
> Scott leaps up from the sofa, points to the screen, veins strained on his neck and temples. His eyes look like they are going to pop out. Spittle flies out of his mouth when he speaks.
>
> 'You're full of shit, man. Just because you come from money doesn't mean you have to look down on the rest of us to make a difference—'
>
> 'The only difference you fuckers make is how you start acting all brave when you get here. If you wanna make a real difference, I will buy you a 1 way ticket home' (*MM*:87).

Scott is a fanatic of beliefs; Farai is not. Scott dreams of a utopia; Farai does not. Scott speaks like a spokesperson of the 'nation'. This is what makes him a tragic figure, in the sense that he is in exile physically yet at the epistemic level he is not. This gives his exile a tragic edge. He cuts a very melancholic figure just like the Magistrate. However, Scott's melancholy is worse than the Magistrate's in the sense that he (Scott) believes. At least the Magistrate's experiences have taught him a few things that have necessitated his attempts at adjustment; Scott remains an adamant and fanatic believer in a utopian nation called Zimbabwe led by President Morgan Tsvangirai.

Farai's disinterested and detached engagement with the issues of home gives him a unique competence to engage in political controversy without losing his head. Scott views Farai as an outsider, someone whose feet are not on the ground because he is not doing something to make a difference. In other words, Farai lacks Scott's 'situatedness' which makes him, in Scott's eyes, unreal, and his judgement a thesis on incompetence and abstract verbalism. However, unbeknown to Scott, the amalgam of detachment and involvement that Farai is endowed with allows him to fulfil Simmel's (1950:405) description of a stranger: "He is freer, practically and theoretically; he surveys conditions with less prejudice; his criteria for them are more general and more objective; he is not tied down in his actions by habit, piety, and precedent." Simmel's description above approximates with the character of the rootless intellectual of Farai's calibre. He thrives on marginality (detachment) without any firm anchorage in the social order. Pels (1999:69) believes that the social basis of such a character is "sufficiently differentiated to prevent confinement within a parochial group view, which enhances the expression of and negotiation between a multiplicity of perspectives." Thus, when Farai agrees to go to the MDC meeting, it is not out of fanatic belief in the opposition party. When he engages in a chaotic fight at the meeting it is not out of fanatic belief in a system that is being fought for. He is fighting to help Scott who is not endowed with enough physical power to fight. There is also an element of fighting for fun.

Farai is a detached intellectual. Even his dissertation on the corruption of the elite in Zimbabwe is not being carried out of a firm commitment to bettering things in Zimbabwe. It is being carried out with what Pels (1999:69) calls "impartial partiality" which is a supersession of "the partialities of social and political thought in a dynamic synthesis." Farai's rebellion is not only caused by his being an intellectual; he also rebels against certain intellectual rules of his own intellectual peers. This accords with Bauman's (1991:93) postulation that

> …first and foremost, and most blatantly and most poignantly, they [intellectual strangers] are strangers in relation to the *fellow members of the knowledge class*…the universality they seek out of the opposition to that very particularity for which their very own knowledge class (the class which they reject and by which they are rejected) serves them as the prototype.

Therefore, when Farai chooses a doctoral research area that defeats the logics of mathematics, his supervisor is not impressed:

> Farai's doctorate is on the Economic Incentives for Sustaining Temporary Hyperinflationary Environments. He wishes he could add an extra 'S' word at the end so the acronym kinda sounds like testes; that way, when people ask what he does, he can say he's in the adult industry. Prof Marlow initially wanted him to do something on game theory, because the department is full of game theorists.
>
> 'This is a PhD, not freakonomics,' the Prof had said.
>
> Farai argued that it was a subject worth exploring (*MM*:65).

It is clear, therefore, that Farai wants to distance himself from the monolithic game theorists in the department. In fact, he confesses his love for being a "detached academic" (*MM*:65). So where others, like Scott, are victimised by the "routines of monovalence" (Kristeva, 1991:16), Farai has the advantage of distance; he distances himself from the group so that, as Pels (1999:69) theorises, "the interval that separates him both from the others and from himself enables him, if not to dwell in truth, at least to relativize and self-relativize."

Lastly, I want to demonstrate how *strangerhood* is used by Huchu to subvert the dichotomy between *allochthon* (stranger) and *autochthon* (native). Every Monday morning, Farai goes to drink coffee at Elephant House. Every Monday, he sits at the same table with an old man. The two do not know each other's names but they are united by their strangerhood. At one point, they had an epic encounter of silence that lasted two hours:

> They are two strangers and meet here every Monday morning, following the same ritual, staring each other down until one of them speaks. Last winter, they had an epic encounter lasting 2 hours. Finally it was Farai who broke. Its's a pointless exercise, but 1 they enjoy. And they still don't know each other's names (*MM*:23).

In this encounter, there is no definition of white or black, Scottish[142] or Zimbabwean; the encounter is between two strangers who are united by their strangerhood and not separated by their particularities thereby fulfilling Bauman's intellectual prophecy, "If everyone is a stranger, no one is" (1991:97).

Thus, in terms of being able to find a place, Farai seems to have mastered the art of transnational, postcolonial living and seems to be enjoying the true pathos of exile. However,

[142] There is no proof that the old man is Scottish although one can surmise from Farai's rumination that the old man is Scottish because of his adept command of stock conversation subjects like the weather, or his adroitness at moaning which Farai thinks is an "essential ritual here, and a learnt art. One must find at least half a dozen things to complain about before breakfast" (*MM*:24) Of course, an immigrant can also say this and one cannot conclusively say the old man is a proven Scottish.

it remains to be seen whether this 'freedom' is absolute in the sense of having freed him from the limitations of national identity. This is a thread I will pursue in the fifth chapter.

Writing Free: In Search of Freedom and belonging in Foreign Spaces

In this sub-section, I will analyse the attempts of selected characters from two short stories in *Writing Free* to construct a sense of freedom and belonging in the foreign spaces they have run to. The two short stories are 'Shamisos' by Noviolet Bulawayo[143] and 'African Wife' by Emmanuel Sigauke. What is of importance is the analysis of what Suvin (2005:117) calls "the central problem for the immigrant" which is captured in this question: "[t]o belong: what to, how, at what price?" In 'Shamisos', the central character changes his name in order to 'belong' to the xenophobic spaces of South Africa. In 'African Wife', the central character marries a white American in order to acquire a Green Card – United States residency. What these two characters are trying to do is kinship performative adaptation. Performative adaptation are the attempts by the exile towards obligatory change which may also entail shedding aspects of the exile's life that do not augur well with the new space or its inhabitants for the purpose of belonging.

In 'Shamisos', Method, a university graduate from Zimbabwe, goes to South Africa to look for work. He is fashioned with a new South African identity that would make him belong before finding work as a garden boy:

> Method wants to tell her that his name is Method; that Xolela is not his real name, but he knows he can't do so. Xolela appears on his South African ID; the picture is his, but the name is not. It was chosen by the tall thug Method paid for the document. An unkempt youth with a scar above his left eye, raking fingers through his long dreadlocks while observing Method with bloodshot eyes.
>
> 'Method? As in, what? A way of doing things? *Mara* what kind of name is that?' Method had not known how to answer.
>
> '*Mara* you need a real name. One that makes you belong, y'understand? From now on you'll be Xolela. Xolela Mabaso!' And, just like that, as if he were picking something discarded on the street, Method acquired a new name, which he now uses for all things official (*WF*:78-9).

Method's loss of his name is akin to the loss of a part of his identity for the sake of belonging. In this new space where the subjectifying and constituting elements of home are absent, where

[143] For this short story, she uses the name, NoViolet Mkha.

the little things like being called by one's own name are not there, Method has to become Xolela Mabaso.

Method's new name and the South African ID book that bears the name are part of what Caldas-Coulthard, Carmen and Alves Fernandes (2008: 122) call "multi-modal" resources that materialise identities. It is not only the name that Method changes: he also changes the things he says, does, gestures, postures, wears, possesses and creates for the sake of belonging. For instance, when Madam gossips about him on the phone in French, Method pretends not to understand French.

> She's still on the phone. He thinks of what she said about him, not knowing he could understand her. If he were at home, he would have grabbed her phone and slapped her with the back of his hand. But he's not at home… (*WF*:76).

Xolela is already identified as Method but in order to survive in South Africa, he has to adopt a new identity and a new identity position. Therefore, in a situation where he could have slapped the woman for saying humiliating and debasing things about him, he assumes a posture of ignorance. In other words, Method can slap a woman who belittles him; Xolela cannot. Method hates lesbian women like Madam, especially the woman who wears men's clothes and sleeps with Madam; Xolela does not. This is all part of Method's multi-modal positioning. In the end, Xolela is not just a name; it becomes something that Method must perform. Rhodes, Scheeres and Iedema (2008:229 call this "identity enactment" or "identity management."[144]

Method's migration to Xolela is a metaphoric representation of the physical journey he undertook from Zimbabwe to South Africa on foot.[145] It is not easy to cease being Method to become Xolela just as it was not easy to make up one's mind to migrate to South Africa:

> The journey to South Africa, to Eden Park, is a trying one, so the foreign settlement dwellers regard each other with unspoken understanding because they know what has been endured. First, years of gathering courage, followed by painful partings and days or weeks on the roads crammed in the back of poorly ventilated trucks. Crocodile-infested rivers are fearfully crossed and

[144] While Rhodes, Scheeres and Iedema (2008) used identity enactment or management in the context of organisations, where, for instance, managers have to manage workers' identities, I am using it in the context of characters trying to mobilise a set of strategies to live according to their identities.

[145] Jonathan Nkala's one-man play, *The Crossing* (2009), features these difficulties that Method recounts. According to (Flockermann, Ngara and Roberts (2010:27), the play can be read as a "coming-of-age" story where a "young man leaves home and embarks on a journey involving a series of rites of passage," or, in this case, a series of crossings.

> hungry animals evaded in order to squeeze through the barbed-wire border fences while fleeing border agents (*WF*:80).

Yet, this migration, at both the physical and symbolic levels, speaks of the porosity of borders, both physical and symbolic. They (borders) are, in the postcolonial sense, crossable, especially where the potential rewards are *perceived* as outweighing the potential risks.

Physically crossing into South Africa is not, therefore, enough and there are other crossings like name-changing that Method needs to undertake, as well as the attendant identity-management mechanisms that he has to muster. What makes Method's condition complex though is the intricacy of 'otherness' in South Africa epitomised in what Murray (2003:446) calls "the shape-shifting modalities of a racialized 'otherness'" or "alien otherness." According to Murray, "[t]he paradox of this 'alien otherness' — something that is anchored in the body and yet somehow invisible, requiring constant vigilance and complicated strategies of detection — is that it ultimately generates fantastic plots of conspiracy." Therefore, since Method's alien otherness is somehow invisible – but all the same visible to the vigilant and detecting eyes of the locals – he has to close all the possible routes of detection which include his name and his behaviour. Xolela and all the identity-management mechanisms attendant to that name are therefore Method's strategies of closing routes to detection.

Method's presence in South Africa is challenged by "the incessant, cacophonous rhetoric about 'illegal aliens' — the unwanted presence of 'outsiders', the pejorative images associated with them, and arguments about expelling or seeking accommodation with them" (Murray, 2003:447), and so he solves his anxieties of belonging by adopting a South African name, Xolela Mabaso. The name Method is very predictable.[146] It is so Zimbabwean that some locals would develop hallucinatory paranoias of alien invasion of their space by "cunning tricksters, scheming swindlers, and skilled mercenaries of all stripes who take advantage of opportunities to commandeer resources that are denied ordinary South Africans" (Murray, 2003:447-8). Therefore, Xolela Mabaso is Method's way of running away from existing as a mere stereotypical Zimbabwean, a harbinger of anarchy and peril. It remains to be seen though if Method's manning of routes of detection saves him from the perils of not belonging.

[146] Brown (2015:*csmonitor.com*) explores the predictability of Zimbabwean names, especially in South Africa. One Zimbabwean respondent who lives in South Africa, Last Sibanda, says, "However long you are here, even if you have a South African passport like I do, the police look at the name on your ID and they know you are not from here."

In 'African Wife', the narrator is a Zimbabwean who migrates to America using the Green Card route.[147] He marries a white American woman although his 'mentors' are of the view that he should have used other routes:

> My mentors say I'm too new at everything, period. Enias, the Kenyan, insists that my bad judgement began in Zimbabwe; I should've waited to leave the country until I have already gotten admitted by a university. He tells me I could have come on my own, without the help of some woman, but he doesn't understand that she's not just some woman. I fell in love with her the first time we met in Chimanimani. Enias laughs when I mention love, and reminds me that there is nothing wrong with marrying just for the green card (*WF*:127).

The narrator, Fati, also (like Method) crosses two borders: the physical border that surrounds the United States and the racial border in the United States. It is apparent though that his 'mentors' have only managed to cross the physical border. In other words, they have only connected to the postcolonial spirit of physical exile and not its symbolic manifestations. It is apparent that Enias would support the ideology of love had Fati married a black, Zimbabwean or even African woman. This means he, even after travelling, is still caught in the age-old conventions of marriage identified by Root (2001:1), which are: "*Marry within your race. Marry someone of the opposite sex*." Fati, therefore, seems to be well-equipped for a postcolonial, cosmopolitan existence characterised by interracial relationships and marriages that break down stereotypes due to increased interaction and familiarity.

Fati indulges in performative adaptation which involves the exile performing within the semiotic codes of the host country. Besides marrying a woman who is 'native' to the space, Fati also performs acts that are synonymous with those who are 'native' to the space. These include joining the neighbourhood watch committee:

> …My wife had thought I might network better by joining the Folsom Neighbourhood Watch group. She wanted me to gain experience doing something for the neighbourhood. We attended the planning meeting and met new people, who made me feel comfortable (*WF*:135).

[147] A Green Card is a permanent resident card granted to an individual who has gained authorisation to live and work in the United States permanently. There are different ways of acquiring this card. One can acquire it by being sponsored by a family member who has become a permanent resident of the United States or by an employer in the United States. Others get them through the asylee or refugee status or any other humanitarian programme. In the case of the narrator in 'African Wife', the card is acquired by marrying a white American woman.

Already, Fati seems to be enjoying the fruits of acceptance in this new space because of how he has managed to perform within its semiotic codes. Joining the Neighbourhood Watch group is actually a way of integrating into America, of being part of it. When Fati is asked by Simon why he has joined the group, he replies, "I want to protect America, that's all" (*WF*:135). In other words, Fati has not only become American but has become local to it. This thread accords with Taiye Selasie's argument, ('Don't ask where I'm from, ask where I'm a local', 2015). Her argument is that we cannot use nationality to understand human beings because nations are invented. She advocates for 'local' experiences because that is where real life happens. To understand Fati using the lenses of Selasie, we do not need to impose Zimbabwe on him. Who Fati is can only be understood by looking at his local experiences. So when Fati says he wants to protect America, that declaration should not be challenged by the suggestion that he is from Zimbabwe.

Performing Adaptation in *We Need New Names*

The third part of *We Need New Names* (2013), titled 'How they Worked', features a more grown-up Darling who has finally managed to migrate to the space of her fantasies, 'Destroyed Michigan' (Detroit, Michigan), in the USA. Darling migrates to the land of her fantasies, Destroyed Michigan (Detroit, Michigan) in the United States on a visitor's visa. She stays with her aunt, Fostalina, and her aunt's Ghanaian husband, Uncle Kojo. She soon finds out that she cannot go back to her home country because she would not be able to come back to 'her' America. She realises this when Messenger, one of the inhabitants of Paradise,[148] comes to America seeking asylum. He brings a gift of guavas for Darling from some of her childhood friends. While eating the guavas, Darling is assailed by a strong nostalgia for home and asks Aunt Fostalina if she could be allowed to visit even for two weeks. Aunt Fostalina reminds her that since her visitor's visa has expired, she might just as well get out and "kiss this America bye-bye" (*NN*:191). She therefore chooses to stay in America as an undocumented immigrant. However, the fact that she sees her journey to Zimbabwe as a visit also points to how she is adapting, albeit contradictorily, to seeing America as her home.

However, her stay in America also opens her eyes to what it takes to live in it. Aunt Fostalina and her son, TK, become the 'models' through which Darling discovers how far one has to go in order to belong. She is shocked to discover that even though aunt Fostalina is her

[148] Paradise is the shanty settlement that Darling left behind in a fictitious city in Zimbabwe.

mother's twin sister, she does not look as beautiful as her mother. Aunt Fostalina has adopted the stereotypical western image of body style, a style that is abhorred by Uncle Kojo who sees nothing beautiful in "a woman with no thighs, no hips, no belly, no behind" (*NN*:154). He says the same about his son, TK, who has become more 'American' than 'African'. He accuses him of wanting to be like "these raggedy boys standing around corners and smoking things and talking profanity because they are too stupid to realize how easy they have it?" (*NN*:154). What Uncle Kojo does not realise is that Aunt Fostalina and TK have made up their minds to adapt to America. For TK, this is a project that has less difficulties for him because he was born in America. He is not even part of what Rumbaut (2004:1162) calls the "1.5 generation"[149] because he (TK) did not migrate to America after reaching school-going age; he was born in America. It is therefore natural for TK to see himself as American. He even enlists in the army and goes to Afghanistan to fight for America, something that baffles Uncle Kojo because he does not see himself as American. For Aunt Fostalina, however, fitting into America also involves accepting the humiliating position of being rendered powerless through her failure to fully pronounce (though she can spell) American brand names.

Darling too knows that living and fitting in America also means sounding American, what Frasinelli (2015:717) calls "living in translation". This is what Darling says:

> the TV has taught me just how to do it. It's pretty easy; all you have to do is watch *Dora the Explorer*, *The Simpsons, SpongeBob, Scooby-Doo,* and then you move on to *That's So Raven, Glee, Friends, Golden Girls*, and so on, just listening and imitating the accents. […] I also have my list of American words that I keep under the tongue like talismans, ready to use: *pretty good, pain in the ass, for real, awesome, totally, skinny, dude, freaking, bizarre, psyched, messed up, like, tripping, motherfucker, clearance, allowance, douche bag, you're welcome, acting up, yikes* (*NN*:194).

By the time Darling calls her mother, she sounds so American that her mother ridicules her: "Hehe-he, so you are trying to sound white now!" (*NN*:204). Even her old friend, Chipo, pours scorn on her: "[t]hat stupid accent that you were not even born with, that doesn't even suit you" (*NN*:286). These scornful observations notwithstanding, Darling seems to have successfully performed living in America. Her mastery of the American accent stands as a marker of her partial adaptation to America on the one hand, and disconnection from her motherland on the other. The cultural differences Darling and other characters encounter everyday make their

[149] Earlier on in this chapter, I cited Rumbaut's phrase in my discussion of children who migrate after reaching school-going age. These children acculturate more easily than their parents.

everyday life in America "a continuous act of translation and self-translation" (Frasinelli, 2015:717).

It is important, however, to note that language here does not only refer to what is spoken; it also refers to kinetic processes – habits, attitudes, temperaments – that can be interpreted as linguistic in nature. The move to the United States does something to the linguistic bravado with which Darling narrates her experiences in Paradise. During an interview with Cameron (2013:*lareviewofbooks.org*), Bulawayo states that,

> The older Darling is more subdued, understandably because she has to be — her move is such that she has to forge a new self to exist in the US, and that self is without all of the voice and spunk we encounter in Paradise because those are things that come partly from the location and who she is there.

That shift from bravado to a more subdued narrative temperament, more obvious in the toned down use of satirical devices, is a metaphoric representation of the linguistic adjustments Darling has to effect in order to 'fit' into America. In another interview, author Bulawayo confesses, "I went to America at the age of 18 … you get there and America makes you realise that you are not really one of us" (Obioha, 2014:*allafrica.com*). The habits, attitudes and temperaments of America (its weather, for instance) and its people all provoke the characters to make some adjustments in order to fit. Whether the attempts to fit birth untroubled, unproblematic and seamless belonging is the main focus of the fifth chapter. As part of the adjustments, they need not to say what they want to say; they have to play into the American image of Africa as part of their performance to fit, to give America something that can make them strike concessions with it. The label 'African' also remains their selling point. For example, Darling is at one point asked by a white American woman about the part of Africa she comes from: "What part of Africa? ... Is that the part where vultures wait for famished children to die?... Is that where dissidents shove AK-47s between women's legs?" (*NN:*237). Moji (2015:187) calls this a "clichéd schema of questions" because they represent the popular tropes through which Africa is viewed from outside. Yet, it is that clichéd schema of questions that Darling and other characters like her play into by not even trying to correct the misconceptions because, according to Darling, "[w]e were not using our languages [so] we said things we did not mean; what we really meant remained folded inside" (*NN*:140). Even though they need 'new names', they let the inhabitants of the new space name them and the new names they hunger for remain trapped inside. They stay in America by allowing it to name them. This is in keeping with the observation by Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn (2006:3) that, "[b]ecause

others usually name us, the act of naming … ultimately will act upon, a social matrix. Individual lives thus become entangled – through the name – in the life stories of others." And so to survive in America, to fit in it, she has to speak the language it expects of her, the language that is not unique to her but is part of people that are seen collectively as inhabitants of one country called Africa. As I have said, language is not just words uttered by the mouth. Whether this adaptation to America and what it demands her to say and not to say and her disconnection from her motherland can be treated as resolving the exile dialectic in her life is something that will be looked at in the next chapter.

Speaking, slimming and joining the American army in Afghanistan are not the only methods of adapting to America; even working manually is a method of adaptation. In order to live in America, the characters learn to work like slaves. Even though the jobs are underpaid, seasonal and precarious, they are their best shot at staying in America. Darling confesses, "[w]hen I am not cleaning the toilets or bagging groceries, I'm bent over a big cart like this, sorting out bottles and cans" (*NN*:251). The section, 'How they Lived', is an interlude between the first section of Darling's experiences in Paradise and the last section where she recounts her experiences in 'Destroyed Michigan'. Because the migrants are undocumented as shown in 'How they Lived', they opt for underpaying jobs against which they cannot speak because the restrictions of physical mobility imposed upon them because of their lack of documentation also translate into lack of voice. This echoes the precarious condition of the narrator in *Harare North* who, even after working, does not get paid because the employers take advantage of his lack of documentation and threaten to report him to the police if he dares pester them for his salary. He is unceremoniously fired after that. Not speaking is in itself a way of trying to fit into America, a way of retreating into a corner somewhere, to live without disturbance and to ultimately adapt to the demands of America upon the migrant.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed attempts by characters in *Harare North*; *The Magistrate, The Maestro & The Mathematician*; *Writing Free and Other Stories*; and *We Need New Names* to forge a sense of belonging to the foreign spaces they have escaped to. The realisation that the new spaces require new methods and new performances of belonging provokes a variety of strategies from the characters in order to create a sense of belonging. In *Harare North*, the narrator continues down the inexorable path of abjection, drifting more and more to the margins

because that is his best option under the circumstances. The Magistrate in Huchu's novel invokes the musical rhythms of home in order to create in the mountainous terrains of Edinburgh a space that mimics home. In 'Shamisos', the central character finds a new name and a new identity card as a way of escaping the pejorative images associated with Zimbabweans in South Africa. By dumping Method for Xolela, he gets closer to being South African in the eyes of South Africans themselves. At least, that is what Method thinks. In 'African wife', the narrator marries a white American woman and acquires the American green card. He even performatively adapts to America by joining the Neighbourhood Watch Committee for instance as a way of connecting to America. In *We Need New Names*, various characters try various strategies of belonging: slimming, speaking, enlisting in the American army, marrying white women, working or remaining silent against precarious working conditions. Whether these methods will resolve the exile dialectic that afflicts these characters is the subject of the next chapter. Another question that needs to be asked, and for which the next chapter of this research will provide an answer, is: Does the fact that these characters are black impact in any way the manifestations of their belonging within the new foreign spaces; maybe in ways that would be different for white 'African' migrants?

CHAPTER 5

THE ANTINOMY OF EXILE

Introduction

The overriding concern of this chapter is an evaluation of characters' efforts to enter into foreign spaces through the various strategies that I explored in the fourth chapter. While the fourth chapter merely outlined the efforts of characters to belong to the new spaces of exile, this chapter evaluates these efforts by foregrounding the factors that militate against the characters' efforts and how representations of characters contribute to the depiction of exile as an antinomy. Have the characters' movements from perceived constricting/disabling spaces to perceived enabling spaces allowed them to go far? Have strategies to belong to these new spaces culminated in the resolution of the exile dialectic and tragic edge that may afflict those who move? Have characters' movements across disparate spatialities and temporalities led to any 'arrival' of sorts? And at a symbolic level, do we see that arrival, especially in the way, for instance, black and white writers represent races that are not their own in their works? Do we see a crossing of borders and an arrival of sorts in these representations? This chapter is therefore an attempt to address these issues. Also, instead of looking at each narrative singly in each sub-section, this chapter utilises a panoramic view of all the texts so that relevant textual examples from all the texts will be cited in each sub-section.

Harare (in the) North

While references to 'Harare North' are based on the understanding that London in particular, or the Global North in general, are just extensions of Harare because of the population of Zimbabweans living there, Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009) provides an interesting representation of place-naming and the antinomy of exile that manifests itself in the ambivalence of the exile's attempted escape from a constricting space called Harare to an enabling space called 'Harare North' (London). While nicknaming London as 'Harare North' may represent the exile's onomastic attempt to conquer a foreign space, it also represents the exile's failure to completely dissociate from Harare. What it means therefore is that the exile's attempt to escape Harare suffers a stillbirth because Harare reproduces itself in London. This

is a very ambivalent situation with the potential of making the condition of exile irresolvable. What exacerbates this condition is the exile's memory of home as a disabling and exiling space and the realisation that Harare (in the) North contains, in profuse measure, the terrors of 'home'. This sub-section therefore studies 'Harare North' and 'Harare (in the) North' as metaphors of an irresolvable exile dialectic by making overt reference to *Harare North* while also making cross-references to other texts chosen for this research.

Harare North can encourage interpretations that are based on the pre-supposition that the nationalist's abjection in 'Harare North' is caused by his refusal to shed his nationalism for a cosmopolitan outlook that engages the world beyond the parochialism of the nationalist state. However, it is also apparent that what the narrator in *Harare North* holds on to is not just what he wants to keep but what others impose on him. One of these things is history: "I lie on my bed listening and wearing my past like it is some very tight gown; I don't want no one tugging at it" (*HN*:176). When the past is like a tight gown it means it is constricting and the narrator is expected to explore options of shedding such a disabling past in order to be able to go far. However, the irony is that the narrator is not just how he sees himself but how inhabitants of the land see him. These inhabitants are also responsible for giving him that tight gown and the narrator seems to prefer holding on to it than accepting the hypocritical benevolence of those who are tugging at it because, for him, they are also responsible for that same past in the first place. The narrator's constant reference to the British-Zimbabwean colonial past can be understood in this context. And the new identity they want to give him is that which mimics the exploitation of the past when Britain colonised Zimbabwe in that "[i]mmigrant people's contribution to this country is equal to one Mars bar in every citizen's pocket every year" (*HN*:24). So he consciously chooses to hold on to his past. He does not want to let go of it. He actually prefers to hold on to it instead of being freed from it by someone else "tugging at it". The identity of an immigrant seems to persist even if the narrator were to shed his gown and wear a new one. In 'Shamisos' (*WF*), Method's migration to Xolela Mabaso does not save him from xenophobic indulgences of the inhabitants of the host country. This is so because 'Harare' has invaded many of the options that some of the characters have due to its ability to turn up in the North or the South.[150] Some of the characters are therefore understood in terms of where they come from not in terms of where they are local to at that particular point in time.[151]

[150] However, this does not mean that Harare/home is a monolithically negative experience, even at the level of metaphor for all emigrants. For some characters like Ada and Professor Pochaya in 'Running in Zimbabwe' (*Writing Free*), for instance, it is the space in which they find love.
[151] In the previous chapter, I cited Taiye Selasie's discomfort with that question.

Darling, in *We Need New Names*, captures this very well when it becomes apparent that it is not just Harare that shows up in Destroyed Michigan but the whole of Africa, the South in the North. She brings this out more succinctly in the "clichéd schema of questions" (Moji, 2015:187) she is asked in a bathroom by a white American:

> I am washing my hands and admiring my interesting face when a voice says: Are you from Africa too?
>
> …Then she asks me what country I am from and I tell her.
>
> It's beautiful over there isn't it? she says. I nod even though I don't know why I'm nodding. I just do. To this lady, maybe everything is beautiful.
>
> Africa is beautiful, she says, going on with her favorite word. But isn't it terrible what's happening in the Congo? Just awful.
>
> Now she is looking at me with a wounded face. I don't know what to do or say, so I fake a long cough just to fill the silence. My brain is scattering and jumping fences now, trying to remember what exactly is happening in the Congo because I think I am confusing it with another place, but what I can see in the woman's eyes is that it's serious and important and I'm supposed to know it, so in the end I say, Yes, it's terrible, what is happening in the Congo.
>
> …Tell me about it. Jesus, the rapes, and all those killings! How can such things even be happening? she says…
>
> I mean, I can't even – I can't even process it. And all those poor women and children. I was watching CNN last night and there was a little girl who was just – just too cute, she says (*NN*:174-176).

It is at this point that we realise why the narrator in *Harare North* calls his past a 'tight gown', because inhabitants of the host land refuse to see the exiles through their own alternatives but through where they come from, or through the immigrant identity, thereby making the characters' escape to 'Harare North' and 'Harare South' very ambivalent and dialectic.

On his first day (that is, if we do not count the detention days), the narrator in *Harare North* realises with shock that 'Harare North' has made people completely re-invent themselves. Paul's letters to the narrator before he goes to London depict an agreeable relative but when the narrator gets to London, his first lesson is that people "reinvent complete" (*HN*:127) when it becomes apparent that Zimbabwean hospitalities are cumbersome and have to be abandoned by many characters including Sekai, Paul's wife:

> We have our first difficult moment when we get to the train station and she expect me to buy my own ticket. That's when it sink into my head that she have turn into lapsed African, Sekai. Me I am a guest and there she is, expecting me to buy my own ticket on the first day? (*HN*:5).

Another character who has changed is the old man from Tulsa Hill Estate who "have reinvent complete; you will never think he is Zimbabwean if you don't know him" (*HN*:127). Chikwava explains why characters abandon these qualities of home in 'Harare North':

> …in the big city, cultural generosities cost time and money, the two things that the city dweller is perpetually short of. So perhaps it's understandable when they dispense with some things that are of intangible utility (Chikwava, 'Writing Pains':*african-writing.com*).

The irony, however, lies in the characters living in a perpetual state of lack (they lack both time and money) in an environment that they perceived as enabling. The narrator himself, a parody of a staunch nationalist and cultural icon, soon realises the fallacy of holding on to Zimbabwean cultural contrivances and quickly assumes the discourse of those who live life at its hustle-and-bustle level: "Time is everything in Harare North, you don't just call someone like you is back home and just talk talk talk without purpose. Get to the point" (*HN*:218).

While liable to being read as a potentially empowering act of hybridisation,[152] this act of re-inventing by characters also communicates Kristeva's view of abjection in terms of human reactions to an impending termination of meaning, aggravated by confrontation with "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules" (1982:4). Kristeva calls this "the Real" and its eruption can be caused by unwilling cues of our own transience (a corpse, or faeces, for instance). In the case of the characters who re-invent, they get reminders of the frailty and abjection of their positions in 'Harare North', frailty and abjection that are aggravated by unnecessary encumbrances like cultural contrivances from back home.

This abject condition that manifests itself in how Zimbabweans are located (and locate themselves) physically in 'Harare North' and in British social discourse comes out more clearly in the symbolism of the chestnut tree in Brixton. This is a place where migrants go to congregate probably because they have nothing to do. This gives them the appearance of tramps. The irony though lies in that Chikwava's chance encounter with one of them leads to the birth of *Harare North*.[153] Kociejowski (2011:60) captures this irony more succinctly:

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[152] Hybridisation as a concept draws from the Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which, in identity studies, is usually deployed as an antidote against the essentialism that is associated with nativist identity paradigms.

[153] According to Chikwava, the narrator in *Harare North* was inspired by a chance conversation he had with a former soldier of the Lord's Resistance Army which is led by a cultic figure in the form of Joseph Kony. The ex-soldier, who had claimed asylum, still professed to miss his time in the LRA and wished he would be back in Uganda with Kony and his AK47.

> One day, beneath that tree which grows in Brixton, Chikwava fell into conversation with a man absolutely crazed who, later, transmogrified, would enter, indeed command, the pages of his book. It was also, if one wishes to take a more fatalistic view of the matter, an encounter that would transform his fortunes. That said, Chikwava is now glad to be shot of that voice.

While we do not know how the boy who inspired Chikwava's art fares in 'Harare North' (maybe he ends up like the narrator, a madhouse candidate because of the pressures of 'Harare North'), we know that that encounter transformed Chikwava's fortunes and makes exile and the abject space of the chestnut tree in Brixton an enjoyable experience. Thus, one begins to understand why Said (1999) would say that the true aesthetics of exile is a preserve for a special class of people. That Chikwava finds transforming the chestnut space in Brixton into art a freeing exercise in the sense that it allows him to create a story out of it and affords him the chance to enter the fraternity of postcolonial narrators does not translate into freedom for the characters under the chestnut tree.

At one point, Chikwava's narrator speaks of himself as *umgodoyi*, which means an unwanted and sick village dog:

> I walk on the white line with suitcase on my head. Nothing can hit my head. I feeling like *umgodoyi* – the homeless dog that roam them villages scavenging until brave villager relieve it of its misery by hit its head with rock. *Umgodoyi* have no home like the winds. That's why *umgodoyi*'s soul is tear from his body in rough way. That's what everyone want to do to me, me I know (*HN*:226).

This gives him an unsanitary and abject quality.

What is interesting to note though is that the medicalisation of one's condition in abject terms is a feature, not only of 'Harare North,' but also of Harare. Gappah's 'An Elegy for Easterly' for instance, shows how human beings are represented in medicalised terms in the discourse of *Operation Murambatsvina* (Remove Filth). Representing human beings as filth medicalises their condition. According to Muchemwa (2010:401), "[t]he term '*murambatsvina*' (dirt) comes from a hygienic discourse that turns citizens into filth and masks the violence that destroyed homes and livelihoods." The link between 'filth' in Harare and '*umgodoyi*' in 'Harare North' communicates the ubiquitous and pervasive nature of Harare. This pervasive nature of Harare is also communicated through Shingi's diseased existence in 'Harare North', an existence that begins in the prison spaces of Harare where, according to the narrator, Shingi contracts HIV/AIDS by having infected bicycle spokes inserted into his anus

by prison bullies. In 'Harare North,' Shingi is 'dying' not just from the effects of 'Harare North' but also from the effects of Harare. Shingi's condition in Harare and 'Harare North', just like that of the narrator, is a medicalised one.

One of the most recurring tropes in *Harare North* is that of *mamhepo* (literally – winds). The idea is that the winds or avenging spirits (*ngozi*) can operate from a distance so that there is no escaping them even if the characters change their physical location. By the end of *Harare North*, the spirits have invaded the text so much that we begin to sympathise with the narrator when he lyrically laments: "The winds is howling through house of stones, tall trees is swaying and people's lives beginning to fall apart, everything start to fall apart now and they think that me I can solve all they problems?" (*HN*:204). The reason why we sympathise is because even as the winds are howling through 'house of stones' (Zimbabwe), they are also howling through the narrator's head even as he walks on the streets of 'Harare North'. The same happens to Tshaka in *We Need New Names*. His connection to the home he left behind through historical nomenclatures like Tshaka, an assortment of parodies of antique African artefacts and through performances of African aesthetic art at various functions, only serves to exacerbate his distance and disintegration into a psychiatric case.

Ngozi, which also means the sins of the past, especially those of murder, catches up with the culprit. Harare represents what the narrator has run away from including the victims of his Green Bomber philosophy of 'forgiveness', which, in actual fact, means severe bodily violence on or even extermination of suspected 'enemies' of the state. The stresses that Harare is going through (winds) through the political sins of the fathers reproduce themselves in the head of the narrator, a son of the fathers, in 'Harare North' as *mamhepo*. The narrator has killed and maimed at the bidding of the fathers, but only to become a fatherless tramp on the streets of 'Harare North' which, ironically, does not save him from the effects of what the fathers do at home. The pervasive nature of the fathers is captured right on the first page of the novel: "On front page of every one of them papers President Robert Mugabe's face is folded in two. I can still identify His Excellency" (*HN*:1).

The brutality of the narrator's experiences in 'Harare North' catalyses his retreat into the basest of sensibilities one of which is his callous rejection of Shingi, his childhood friend and, in the circumstances, benefactor:

> [L]ike many immigrant on whose face fate had drive one large peg and hang tall stories, Shingi had not only become poor breadwinner but he had now turn into big headache for me. When it became clear that our friendship is now big

> danger to my plan, me I find no reason to continue it, so I finish it off straight and square (*HN*:1).

The imagery of one large peg being driven into one's face to describe Shingi's condition communicates violence. The irony though is that the narrator is the one who feels the headache. Even though he has Shingi's passport, National Insurance Number and mobile phone because Shingi is 'dying', this does not divest him of the face of pain. In fact, his condition is worse than Shingi's because he does not know "what kind of mouth Shingi is going to starting throwing around if he ever recover . . ." (*HN*:2). In this case, Shingi has a mouth to throw around even though he is dying but the narrator, who is not dying, and who has confiscated documents that position him to access asylum rights, continues to wear the face of pain, a face that is "vulnerable to the violence of circumstance" (Noxolo, 2014:300).

The narrator is ostensibly fleeing from prosecution for beating an opposition party member back in Harare and hopes to make enough money to go back and pay his way out of persecution. This means, even in Harare, he is like *umgodoyi*, an unwanted citizen, unwanted by the victims of his brutality and, ironically, unwanted by the system that made him a brute for its own survival. He is a Green Bomber and that name alone, besides being the name of the youth militia, also excites images of flies feasting on a decomposing corpse or on human excretion. However, in 'Harare North', and for the majority of his narration, the narrator is merely trying to survive, an attempt that proves futile by the end of the novel. Even for those who have been in 'Harare North' for longer, the circumstance of literally fighting for survival persists. One of these fights turns nasty when Shingi, now a drug addict, fights for food with a homeless tramp and ends up in hospital. When the story ends, Shingi is still in hospital, 'dying'. The narrator's struggle to survive, to earn a living and to relate with those around him keeps him on the fringes of both the British society and the Zimbabwean society in 'Harare North'. His parasitic nature makes him an outsider, a mangy dog (*umgodoyi*) among both fellow Zimbabweans and the British society itself.

The irony is that this narrator, a newcomer, with his heavy, un-British accent and broken English, tries to teach Shingi, who came earlier than him, how to beat the system:

> That kind of style we have to put inside bin, I tell Shingi. It important to pay big attention to some of them subtly things. I know how these things work. Also keep the native way down in the hole because if he jump out he can cause disorder and then no mother is safe in all of Harare North. Don't say, to them English people, 'How can I get to Animal Something?' when you want to say, 'How can I get to Elephant Castle?' (*HN*:147).

The pre-requisite for assimilation which he outlines for Shingi is absent in exorbitant measure in himself. He fails to speak himself into the system. Even though he speaks like someone who has conquered the system, the narrator is doomed to abjection. Like many of the characters in the narrative, the narrator comes with a perception of London that is free of the influences of Harare, where money magically finds its way into someone's hands.

> They carry bags full of things and heads that is full of wonders of new life, hustle some passage to Harare North, turn up without notice at some relative's door, only to have they dreams thrown back into they faces (*HN*:5).

The disjuncture between how 'Harare North' is perceived from Harare and how one actually experiences it is something the narrator fails to come to terms with. He discovers that even invitations to come to 'Harare North' by those who are already there and pretend to be having a good time are not sincere because they know fully well "the British High Commission don't just give visa to any native who think he can flag down jet plane, jump on it and fly off to Harare North" (*HN*:6). According to Chikwava,

> Sometimes you think of that disjuncture between how people in Zim see England and how Zimbabweans here see it. They have this idea everyone in this first world country is having a great time and that this is where everything is. Meanwhile, you come across all these people struggling to survive, juggling three or four jobs at a time, sleeping for only three hours. In that most Zimbabwean way, people coming here choose not to talk about their difficulties…It is quite hardcore (cited in Kociejowski, 2011:59).

While the narrator is suspicious of Londoners, Londoners are also suspicious of him and thus making the narrator's relationship to London ambivalent. From the very first page of his narration, distrust and suspicion form the backdrop of his experiences. These two (distrust and suspicion) are imported from Harare and are also inherent in a society that has been receiving too many migrants. For instance, when the narrator walks down the street, he has to shove his way past a group of mothers who are standing on the pavement with their pushchairs and they give him loud looks (*HN*:1; 157; 225). The narrator also gets a job as a chip shop cleaner and is alien to the spiteful attitudes of London kids who make fun of him and he threatens to chase them away (*HN*:98). In Harare, he would have dealt with this easily, Green Bomber-style, but this is a new space whose semiotic codes complicate things for him. He is even more suspicious and distrustful when Dave and Jenny, two homeless Londoners, move

into the house (*HN*:167-168). What baffles him is how such homeless and poverty-stricken people can find time to protest for the rights of whales when they cannot even feed themselves. It looks like London has many surprises for him. However, the narrator tries in some instances to undercut this suspicion and distrust through conviviality.[154] His relationship with the owner of the chip shop is definitely convivial (*HN*:172).

The narrator's emigration to London lands him in a space whose semiotic codes are alien to him and therefore fails to earn a degree of acceptance. He remains on the margins like the village *umgodoyi*. He does not even know the kind of performative acts required to give him a modicum of belonging. Considering that he was at the centre of things in Harare as a harbinger of violence, his condition in Harare North is what Triolet (cited in Tabori, 1972:17) calls "the existence of a poor relation" where one is "forced into humility, into a marginal life"; thus meaning he will not be able to go far in his quest to gather together US$5000 to cover for his crimes back home. Going far in this case means fulfilling one's dreams. Because London denies him that opportunity, it becomes as disabling as Harare itself and so what the narrator perceived as an enabling space is actually a photo-trick, an illusion. This supports Frischauer's verdict that, "They [the foreign-born] may go far – but not too far" (cited in Tabori, 1972:403).

"Out of Place"[155]

Even though the characters studied in the previous chapter go to unimaginable lengths in order to 'belong', they still experience the same classificatory discourses that provoke what Suvin calls a "sense of feeling alien and out of place, a widespread unease sometimes deepening into despair that seems so intrinsic to other experiences of modernity" (2005:107). The characters had exited home because it was becoming a strange, disabling space. However, their arrival in foreign spaces does not resolve their alienation. There remains a huge rift between the home they left (which, ironically, was no longer there) and the new space they occupy. However, going back home is not an option because that home is no longer there.

Darling in *We Need New Names* is confronted by this truth when Aunt Fostalina unflinchingly avails it to her during one of Darling's bouts of nostalgia. She tells her that if she goes back to Zimbabwe, to Paradise, she may just as well kiss America goodbye. This is a

[154] Conviviality is a term that Achille Mbembe uses in *On the Postcolony* (2001) to describe the process through which both the dominant and dominated are inscribed within the same episteme.
[155] This sub-title is inspired by Said's *Out of Place* (1991).

choice Darling is not prepared to make because going back home means confronting the same horrors of things falling apart, of Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro fleecing money from congregants and raping some in public, of national fathers blooding the national flag in the name of 'Blak Power', of grandfathers raping granddaughters and the horrors of excreting guava-speckled excrement and feeling like giving birth to a country. In any case, going back home will mean confronting emptiness because only Chipo remains from the group that used to make numerous exits to Budapest to steal guavas; the rest have migrated like Darling – Godknows, Bastard and Stina. With eyes coloured by foreign experience, Darling decides that she will stay in her America, endure the alienation as long as she is eating. She, like the Magistrate in Huchu's *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician*, remains sorrowed by the feeling of estrangement, of something left behind.

However, it is important to note that what the characters' sense of loss does not begin when they migrate. It began long before they migrated. This is succinctly captured in Darling's musings about the 'homes' in people's heads: in Mother of Bones' head; in Aunt Fostalina's head and in her own head. The Magistrate's memory of Zimbabwe in Huchu's narrative is a memory that ranges on a spectrum from a stable, respectable existence to a tumultuous and embarrassing one. This means the Zimbabwe he left no longer had the home he was looking for. This does not mean that Edinburgh offers him that home: he remains a magistrate without work, bearing only the vestiges of the past home while existing out of place. He is alienated from his wife, his child, the Scottish weather and the landscape; the latter is only relatively conquered by conjuring the music of the home he misses and pasting it onto the landscape. When he finally gets a job, he sees no difference between himself and the maid he used to employ during his days as a respectable magistrate in Bindura, Zimbabwe. What is even scarier for the characters is the thought that what they have left behind has been left forever. Many of the characters fail to come to terms with this. Thus, the narrator in *Harare North* continues to hold on to the idea of raising US$5000 and, with his characteristic bravado, getting out of 'Harare North' very fast. However, as the story comes to an end, the narrator is heading towards abysmal depths of madness and thus sealing his fate in the unaccommodating spaces of 'Harare North'.

The black- and white-authored texts chosen for this research depict not only the stories of individuals but the story of a nation forcing its children into socio-politico-economic dislocation because of the serious wreckage brought about by political brutality and cultural essentialism. The stories, however, are not just about a space called Zimbabwe; they are also about the fragility of space (space is always in a continuous flux and belonging is never

achieved in an 'arrived' sense) and the devastation and alienation this can bring on an individual. Njogu and Muriiki (2013:1-2) capture this alienation when they point out that,

> This state of affairs may result from a devastating upheaval of one destructive weight or another, which puts the individual in a tragic situation which he neither understands nor controls. This leads to a depersonalization that shatters his emotional harmony with himself, his experience and his society. In dislocation the people are either pummelled into oblivion by forces too powerful to withstand, or else try heroically to resist the cataclysmic dehumanization resulting from the cruelty of man against men.

The experiences of the characters in the texts chosen for this research are experiences that make them exist 'out of place'. The characters therefore exist in nostalgias; in the 'homes' they miss. In the case of Buckle (*African Tears*) and the Rogers family (*The Last Resort*), it is the pastoral and idyllic past when land and nature responded to their ministrations, when people knew how to maintain borders between black villages and white-owned farms. For Darling in *We Need New Names*, the nostalgia is for a home that had a bathroom and a toilet and a bedroom for her to sleep in. All these homes exist in the past and in the aching memory of the characters. Jim Barker actually calls this home "Paradise" which is plundered and lost in the unstable politics of Black Nationalism.[156]

The characters experience exile and alienation in both their physical and psychological manifestations. Even the Magistrate's attempt to overcome psychological dislocation by pasting the music of home onto Edinburgh in Huchu's *The Magistrate, The Maestro & The Mathematician* does not save him from feeling that he is standing on unfamiliar territory. The various acts of recalling a past and a place by the characters is evidence of the psychological festering and what Njogu and Muriiki (2013:5) call "mindblasts" which arise out of spatial removal. Spatial removal here does not only mean removal from physical space. For instance, for a character like Fati in Sigauke's 'African Wife' (*Writing Free*), removal does not only entail being exiled from the Zimbabwean space, it also means being exiled from the social space of exiles with whom he thought he shared some kind of solidarity. While this removal does not necessarily take on physical dimensions, it is still 'removal' because it is effected by symbolic acts that alienate Fati from the group. The group of seasoned immigrants like Enias, the Kenyan, and Makombo, the Zimbabwean, subtly remove him from their space through implicit acts. At one point, Makombo

[156] *Paradise Plundered: The Story of a Zimbabwean Farm* (2013).

> …enters the house and returns with three bottles of beer. He seems to have forgotten that I drink, too. Or maybe he now thinks the unemployed don't deserve a little beer (*WF*:128).

For Fati, this experience of being out of place takes on serious dimensions when his wife also expresses her aversion to 'African' gatherings:

> I know she's at home, perhaps snooping through my papers. We argued again this morning and I would rather not see her for some hours. She doesn't like these African gatherings. No, that's not true, she loved them once – she introduced me to them – until we began to fight, and now whenever she argues with me, she's arguing with the whole African continent. I don't want her here anyway. When she's around, I'm so conscious of being with her that I don't enjoy myself (*WF*:134).

Fati feels he cannot plant his feet firmly on the ground when he is with his white wife among black Africans yet even when he is alone with them, he still feels as if he is trying to plant his feet firmly on thin air.

One of the experiences that also communicates the placelessness of the characters stems from their location in the diaspora which, as I have pointed out in the third chapter, begins even in those spaces they perceive as their homelands. The diaspora as contained in a foreign physical space only exacerbates a diasporan trepidation that would have been experienced at a symbolic level in what the characters perceived as their homelands. According to Kehinde (2009:2),

> The threshold of Diaspora is revealed as a zone of trepidation, whereby the subject (the writer) faces two places at the same time […] On the one hand is the memory of home, and on the other, the agonies of desolation. He thus experiences a form of hyphenated or dual identity.

The characters' existences are multi-layered and communicate existences that are experienced in terms of being out of place, with nowhere to return and with nowhere to go. If there is anywhere to return or to go to, the characters will not arrive there in the 'arrived' sense, but will continue to exist out of place. This is why for all the narratives chosen for this research, there is no 'homecoming' of any sort. Many, like the narrator in *Lettah's Gift*, or Rambanai in Gappah's 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai (*An Elegy*) just come home to exit it very fast. The

narrator in *Lettah's Gift* declares, "The shock of being back is such that I am not quite *here*" (*LG*:14).

One of the most convenient assumptions that were made by the Mugabe regime was that white Zimbabweans had a home elsewhere outside Zimbabwe, especially in Britain. In fact, Mugabe's stance was that white people should go to their home. This was his most consistent stance during the post-2000 land invasions.[157] However, a reading of *The Magistrate, The Maestro & The Mathematician*; *Lettah's Gift; This September Sun* and *The Last Resort* interrogates the fallacy of this generalisation by Mugabe. In *The Last Resort*, when Rogers and his wife visit the U.S for the wedding of their son, Douglas, they do not only look out of place, they also feel out of place and cannot wait to go back to their resort in the heart of a volatile and politically tumultuous Zimbabwe, a Zimbabwe that is also becoming a battlefield of essentialist politics that makes them feel out of place. According to Coetzee, most whites "are no longer European and are not yet African" (1988:11). This is a very uncomfortable position and for Ellie in Rheam's *This September Sun*, the shock of not being European shatters her illusions about Europe, illusions that she had nursed since childhood and which she had used to buffer herself against the psychological turmoil of not being African.[158] The realisation that she occupies neither Africa nor Europe portends serious nervous disturbances for her and ends up shattering her friendships and relationship. As for Frank in *Lettah's Gift*, his early departure from Rhodesia to South Africa and then Australia seems to have prepared him for the life of a nomad both in terms of physical occupation of a place and symbolic occupation of the mind (his mind) by a belief. Frank's nonchalance concerning life and issues around him seems to have created a buffer zone around him against the mental shatterings that arise out of the destructions of long-held illusions. In other words, Frank is more prepared to exist out of place because he has concluded that that is the nature of the world. Other characters seem not to have embraced it although some like Ellie (*This September*) finally do so after long struggles to find a home. As for Buckle and the Rogers family, they are convinced that they must be at home at all costs in Zimbabwe and the irony is that even as they try hard to fight for home, their black contemporaries represented in post-2000 narratives are radically re-interpreting home in a way that makes them want to exit it.

[157] In *The Last Resort*, Rogers disputes this by saying that his home is and has always been Zimbabwe.
[158] In *The Grass is Singing* by Doris Lessing, Mary Turner hankers after news and magazines from 'home' (England). Her delusions are similar to those of Ellie in the sense that both actually think that they have a home elsewhere.

Another character for whom existing out of place has serious consequences is the Maestro, a white character in Tendai Huchu's *The Magistrate*.[159] This novel is like the story of three men told separately but interlocking in very subtle ways. Each character represents a section of the story dedicated specially for him. The sections dedicated to the Maestro are very dense and un-paragraphed, a technical way of matching the Maestro's dense thought processes with form. The Maestro's discomfort with the world, whether Zimbabwean or British, lands him in the world of books in an attempt by the Maestro to put his feet on something solid. In that world of books, it becomes apparent that he cannot find his footing because he starts reading two or three books at the same time, a symbolic representation by the author of existing out of place in multiple ways with no place to call home. The Maestro ends up burning all his books because he realises, while reading them, that each of these books was just a "jumble of words with which he had no connection…" (*MM*:173). After burning them, and throwing out everything from the room, "he curled up on the carpet and cried himself to sleep" (*MM*:175). His eventual death after tramping in the cold seems to suggest that his only place, the only place where he might not feel out of place, is the place of death.

The act of the Maestro losing himself, losing his footing on a place, is communicated in a very dense manner by Huchu to demonstrate the mental anxieties that arise when body, self and world are displaced.[160] These anxieties are manifestations of the fact that the material and immaterial in terms of the human geography may not be coherent packages after all and so perceptions of space should also take this into cognizance. This will actually create an "awareness of how these bodies always possess interior dimensions of experiencing, feeling, hoping and fearing (and perhaps of being alienated or belonging)" (Philo, 2014:286). The Maestro's experience of the world demonstrates the importance of interior and affective dimensions in studies that have to do with alienation and belonging. The discord between these interior dimensions and the exterior ones makes the Maestro an insecure body, a body that

[159] The Maestro is a character whose Zimbabwean background is not provided in the text by the author. However, in his last moments before death, the Maestro confides in Tatyana concerning his past which is made up of rivers, mountains and sunshine.

[160] Body/self/space displacement (insecure bodies) is an aspect theorised from Alexander Romanovich Luria's (1902–1977) work with the journal entries of Leva Zazetsky, a 23-year old Russian soldier who suffered damage to "the left parietal occipital region of his brain, seriously affecting his visual-field perception, motor coordination, memory and also more conceptual capacities for combining objects, gestures and actions" (Philo, 2014:284). Zazetsky's experience of the world became one negotiated through visual chaos, chaos that threatened to make him get 'lost', literally, until through Luria's assistance, he found a way of finding sense in this chaos through continuously jotting down scribbles about his multiple embodied experiences of living. In the case of the Maestro, he seeks explanations of body/self/space displacement from books, a method that contributes to his further displacement until he is lost.

requires to be stitched back to a secure one. The Maestro's attempt to do this through reading further damages him beyond stitching. He experiences this discord thus:

> The scary thing, the Maestro realised, was not the falling, but what happened after the fall, Nothing, not even the nothing of the darkness of night or the nothing of emptiness; those were something at least, those were nothings that could be measured by the absence of a particular thing, and so they had an essence on them, a core beyond the event horizon. Not this, this was an incomprehensible Nothing, the nothingness of non-existence, beyond consciousness, a Nothingness that was not something… This for the Maestro was the reason he read these books, to try to make sense of life… (*MM*:43).

This Nothingness communicates the lack of essence in the Maestro himself, the lack of a core beyond the life horizon, a lack that is both incomprehensible and alienating. The Maestro, therefore, fulfils the basic characteristics of an insecure body that has to be stitched back together. However, because he does not trust people, he loses the chance to be prevented from getting 'lost' that presents itself before him through Tatyana and only embraces it towards the end when it is too late. So he tries to live in the pages of the books, trusting these spaces more than the spaces of human beings:

> Almost without thinking, he ran his fingers along the cold spine of a book. Of late, he found himself preferring the company of his books to the companionship of people. Tatyana was virtually his only friend, if he could call her that. Everyone else has forgotten him or given up on him once he'd withdrawn, almost as though he'd quietly sunk into quicksand that no one else could see… There was something safe in the white pages of a book. A book could be opened and set aside. It could be read and reread, each time a new, deeper meaning deciphered. People, well, people were harder to read. So much was hidden in the twitch of the brow, a sweaty palm, the tenor of the voice, subtle gestures, and the things left unsaid. People were moving, dynamic, inconsistent in a million ways (*MM*:44).

It is as if he finds his own 'enabling' spaces where he can strike a balance in books. This, however, proves futile when he later burns the books and cries himself to sleep. It is apparent, therefore, that the Maestro's body is a point of disjuncture between the senses of the self and senses of shared collectivities with other selves.

Many of the characters in the narratives chosen for this research depict a sense of loss and not belonging that begins in their perceived homes and does not end in the new spaces that they had perceived as enabling. This obtains for both white and black characters. For instance, before Gran comes to Rhodesia as an 18-year old girl (*This September*), she is already in an

exile of sorts in Scotland, a feeling that persists even when she comes to Rhodesia to get married. Her illicit, decades-long affair with Lloyd Cadwallader is, in a way, partly a product of her lifelong search for somewhere solid to perch, a physical place and a spiritual one too. This shows that belonging is not just about material fulfilment. For instance, the characters in Gappah's 'In the Heart of the Golden Triangle' (*An Elegy*) are living a 'golden' life in a Zimbabwe that is beleaguered by turmoil. However, the relentless boredom that afflicts them communicates the disjuncture between the exterior, materialistic world and what Philo (2014:288) calls the "parliament of selves" which is more like the 'house of assembly' that makes up the inscape of a person. What is being intimated here is the issue of bodies/spaces "spread across and constituted within a diversity of spaces, real and imagined, exterior and interior, scrumpled, scrunched, squeezed, scattered, rolled out, torn apart and blown away," a state of affairs that is both "playful and deadly serious" (Philo, 2014:287), communicating the tragedy of existing in a space that is becoming insecure in its interior and exterior dimensions. Existence, therefore, becomes mediated through experiences of being out of place. This is something that Frank (*Lettah's Gift*), Ellie (*This September* and Darling (*New Names*) seem to have come to terms with. Darling's resolve to stay in America regardless of the feelings of alienation, because at least she can eat as much as she can, is arrived at after coming to terms with the condition of exile that she will never be at home again in her life. This agrees with Ndlovu's (2016a:134) observation:

> Bulawayo's main character and the many other migrant characters resent the situation in their countries of origin and they migrate as a result. However, the irony is that they also bemoan what they sense to be a state of estrangement and economic exploitation in the developed countries where they have sought refuge. Ultimately, Bulawayo's narrative does not imagine for its characters any existence that recognises migrancy or staying put in Africa as having any possibility of opening up new and ultimately positive ways of being.

In that regard, just like in *Harare North* or *The Magistrate, The Maestro, & The Mathematician*, the characters experience conditions that are unlike those of their Afropolitan and cosmopolitan creators because they remain, to quote Ndlovu (2016:140), "vernacular [cosmopolitans]" who are actually underprivileged postcolonial subjects.

The Perils of Abjection

In the previous chapter I looked at how the narrator in *Harare North* finds his way into London through abjection, through how he locates himself in the backstreets of London, through how he spends more time in his own mental backstreets and also through how he breaks the English language to use it in a conventionally inexpressible manner. The character in *Harare North* is epitomic of the dialectics of boundaries, boundaries between victim and victimiser, between a character who excites pity and a character who excites repugnance, between knowing and naivety. However, because there is no resolution to this existence, abjection becomes the best way to characterise the forlorn state of his existence than any cheerful alternative. It is at this stage that abjection becomes perilous. This sub-section therefore will analyse how abjection as an alternative that manifests in various characters in various texts is also depicted as having limitations.

What I have called 'the perils of abjection', that is, the tragic edge of abject actions that are symbolically liberating, is motivated by the fact that those abject actions can cause harm to the geography of the human body. Thus, there are forms of abjection that are nonthreatening to the body of the abject (for instance, Darling's coming to terms with the conditions of existence that America offers her in *We Need New Names*), but there are others that are very dangerous. This observation connotes with the reservations of Bernstein (1992:29) concerning the universalisation and celebration of abjection without contextualising it within particular specificities:

> …the sweep of Kristeva's account elides its specificity, so that her abject is hypostasized, functioning as a global concept that, depending on the circumstances, can be regarded, as at once a force, a condition, a drive, or a kind of frantic reaction in the face of mortality. [An] analysis of abjection that can move without hesitation from Oedipus at Colonnus to taboos associated with menstruation, and then to the Holocaust, seems to me to abandon, by overextension, the explanatory force of the term.

What Bernstein is arguing for here is the recognition of the need to contextualise abjection and be able to categorise it into versions that suit each context without universalising it. Thus, while at a symbolic or even cultural level particular abject actions are regarded as liberating, their implications when they are assimilated to biological categories should be understood. For example, what are the implications of eschewing washing one's hands in a cholera-ridden environment all for the sake of overcoming one's phobia of abjection? The factoring in of the

biological in a cultural discourse is done here with the understanding that they are simply equivalent. This agrees with Jay's (1994:242-3) observation that, "[a]lthough the boundary between biology and culture is not as firm as was once imagined and many overlapping discourses structure both, it is by no means clear that they are simply equivalent." In the same vein, to speak of the culturally stigmatised (like the migrant) using the same discourse that is deployed when speaking of unwanted bodily wastes like vomit or faecal matter with the benign intention of actually reversing the normal hierarchy may in actual fact achieve the opposite. For instance, when Chikwava's narrator begins to see himself through the eyes of purity, he sees himself as *umgodoyi*, an equivalent of Honwana's 'mangy dog' in 'We Killed Mangy Dog'.[161] When abjection reaches the level of that which has to be exterminated it comes as no surprise when the narrator is inexorably drawn towards the madhouse. That is a perilous and tragic state of things. Like Jay (1994:243), one is forced to admit that, "[e]ven the apotropaic, pre-emptive invocation of abject symbols as a way to defuse their power of horror is not certain to have the desired result." Being *umgodoyi* ceases to be a liberating state of affairs at this stage.[162]

The perils of abjection lie in its deployment aesthetically in literature. For instance, *Harare North* is born out of the abject condition of a former child soldier living in exile in the UK and frequently seen under the tree in Brixton, an abject space. What we see in Chikwava's art is the transfiguration of the abject into an aesthetic object but without necessarily transfiguring the condition of the abject. The same applies to the chewing of the umbilical cord off Martha Mupengo by Josephat's wife in Gappah's 'An Elegy for Easterly' (*EE*). While this might also be interpreted as a perverse act of mercy since Martha Mupengo is, after all, mentally challenged and dying, and also since the child is Josephat's anyway, the blood that is gushing out of the dying Martha Mupengo and the umbilical cord being chewed vampirishly off her by Josephat's wife constitute the biological ingredients of the abject. This places Gappah's art on the level of abject art but how does it transfigure the condition of Josephat's wife or the condition of the people of Easterly? It may confer to Josephat's wife the benefit of being a mother but the lengths to which she goes to achieve that state makes her a vampire. Jay (1994:243) has this to say concerning abject art:

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[161] 'We Killed Mangy Dog' is the title short story in the collection that bears the same name by Luis Bernado Honwana (1969).

[162] However, there are certain symbolic inversions of the term 'dog' that actually give it liberating power in, for instance, in Hip-hop or even Kwaito subcultures. In these sub-cultures, the term appears as "dawg" in Hip-hop or "inja yami" in Kwaito. Could *umgodoyi* not be such a similar use of the trope? The difference with the deployment of the term in *Harare North* is that this is a dog whose only respite comes from the extermination of life and not glamorous continuation of it.

> A no less troubling question arises from the paradoxical incorporation of abjection into the realm of the aesthetic. For how can the artist avoid the sublimating elevation of abjection into precisely the idealized state it is supposed to undermine? In other words, is "abject art" perhaps an untenable oxymoron, little more than an eye-catching label in the never ending search for new ways to accrue cultural - and perhaps economic capital? Although the quasi-sacred space of the museum can be apparently contaminated by introducing real (or even simulacral) excrement, impure bodily fluids, severed body parts and the other examples of abjection and base materialism, its institutional power is such that the abject object is nonetheless transfigured into an aesthetic one.

The migrant character's existence in abject space may, therefore, have unwanted results as in the case of the narrator in *Harare North*. Even Shingie's survival in abject spaces, demonstrated more clearly in his wrestling encounter with a tramp after invading the tramp's rubbish dump for food, demonstrates the perils of abjection and, by extension, the tragic edge of exile.

When writers like Gappah, Chikwava or even Bulawayo (Darling and her friends' experiments with open defecation qualify in the realm of abjection) utilise abjection in their artworks to produce award-winning literary productions, the question is, what is abject about it?[163] For instance, how is agency claimed in *We Need New Names* through open defecation? The agency might be there at a symbolic level, but what does open defecation entail for those whose existence is already perilous? Do they not worsen it by making the space of their existence a danger to themselves? The characters remain, as the novels of these three demonstrate, inhabitants of abject spaces so that there does not exist a state of perfect desublimation for them. In other words, they remain inhabitants of a world in which people and systems, whether they migrate or not, keep them under some power of restriction and distinction.[164] This power of distinction can take the form of symbolic language, patriarchal law, immigration law or, in the case of the Maestro in Huchu's narrative, the formal organisation of the body (the exterior and interior parliament of the body). What, therefore, can be celebrated as the power of abjection in migrant narratives like these is, in Bernstein's (1992:181; 233) words, "the texture and rhythm of our daily routines and decisions, the myriad of minute and careful adjustments that we are ready to offer in the interests of a habitable social

[163] While abject art does not necessarily need to be so repulsive as not to be read, the lived situations that inspire it are sometimes so repulsive as to be avoided.

[164] The authors of the narratives being made reference to here do not claim to have romantic ideals or utopian visions. Yet, the narratives are also written using lived realities of post-2000 Zimbabwe as raw materials. Their depictions of the fates of those who move, physically and symbolically, creates a dialogue with the reader that enables for the interrogation of existential realities.

world." The celebration of alienation, exclusion and repudiation as necessary evils for the valorisation of abjection in migrant narratives undermines the resistance of migrants to exclusion, alienation and various forms of repudiation. In other words, while a reader who has an affinity for the abject may see Chikwava's narrator's movement towards the realms of the unwanted village dog, or Josephat's wife's vampirish chewing of the umbilical cord, or Darling and her friends' open defecation, as acts of empowerment or enablement to counter-disempowerment or disablement, these acts may actually not constitute performances of coming up with anything "approaching an ethical response to challenges to the human dignity [that abjection] tries so hard to subvert" (Jay, 1994:247).

It is against this backdrop of the perceived futility of such aesthetics in changing the human condition that Mbembe (2001) ridicules the aesthetics of vulgarity which can also be understood in the same context as the aesthetics of abjection. The reason why 'abjection' and 'vulgarity' can be understood as being the same is in how Mbembe theorises vulgarity. He theorises it using the Bakhtinian concept of the grotesque and obscene which he sees as "the province of ordinary people" (2001:103). What aesthetics of vulgarity do is that they mutually 'zombify' the *commandement* (the regime that feeds on power) and its subjects and speak to the destruction, complicity and decay that characterises African existence. The *commandement*'s images for the fetishisation of itself are manipulated by its subjects who de-sublimate these images into things they can play with, not only out of the earshot of the *commandement* but sometimes within the same spaces the people are gathered to celebrate and consume the *commandement*'s images. This collapsing of the borders of where the subjects manipulate the images of the *commandement* is similar to how, for example, Chikwava's narrator invades *Harare North*, and sometimes official spaces like the Palace of Westminster,[165] through abjection. In the case of Chikwava's narrator, the most dominant description of Westminster that he gives features a toilet. This perception of Westminster through the image of a toilet is a feature of abjection. In the same vein, Mbembe's aesthetics of vulgarity would feature, within the official spaces of the *commandement*'s fetishisation, the rigid phallus of the president ready to make contact within vaginal fluids, or torrents of watery faecal matter making contact with a septic tank, or a loud fart quivering between the buttocks, or discourse that points to the president's right "to capture and redistribute spoils" (vaginas, faeces, farts, urine) (Mbembe, 2001:106). It is in this concentration on these biological

[165] The Palace of Westminster houses the parliament of the United Kingdom. The site originally used to be a place for the primary residence of Kings of England.

categories of power for the purpose of giving it unwanted interpretations that aesthetics of vulgarity become similar to Kristeva's concept of abjection. Where this vulgar state of existence is not a choice but a default state of affairs, and where this state is not amenable to elision, we can say there is no de-sublimation of abjection.

Where Mbembe differs from Kristeva is in his understanding of the question of whether these acts by ordinary people have oppositional logic or resistance in themselves. He sees the postcolony as a hollow pretence, an unreality. Aesthetics of Vulgarity do not remove power; they are only a confirmation of how the postcolonial world is hostile to continence, frugality and sobriety. According to Mbembe (2001:110),

> Those who laugh, whether in the public arena or in the private domain, are not necessarily bringing about the collapse of power or even resisting it. Confronted with the state's eagerness to cover its actual origins, they are simply bearing witness, often unconsciously, that the grotesque is no more foreign to officialdom than the common man is impervious to the charms of majesty.[166]

As such, abjection may only serve as a reminder, in Bernstein's words again, of "the texture and rhythm of our daily routines and decisions, the myriad of minute and careful adjustments that we are ready to offer in the interests of a habitable social world" (1992:181), and not as containing serious oppositional logic.

The abject cannot, however, be completely ruled out although this has to be done with an awareness of the perils of abjection. As McGregor (2008) demonstrates in her article on Zimbabweans occupying abject spaces in the UK, these Zimbabweans should not just be imputed with the qualities of victimhood but also with those of agency. However, she strongly warns against romanticisation of resistance and informality that such analyses may invite. The fact that abject spaces remain attractive for many irregular migrants is for her a sign that abject spaces can be navigated with a certain degree of success. For instance, the Magistrate's choice to go and work at a care home actually revives his marriage and makes his stay in Edinburgh more endurable after that (*The Magistrate*). While the notion of being a BBC is scorned by the narrator in *Harare North*, it is also apparent that Aleck, the head of the London squat where the narrator stays with Shingi, has identifiable gains from it if the fact that he has bought residential spaces and is building houses in Harare is anything to go by.

[166] Is there any cheerful alternative to this? Mbembe does not seem to provide it in *On the Postcolony.* In fact, his last words in *On the Postcolony* point to an existence that becomes complete because of a hybridised presence of "uncertainty, chance, irreality, [and] even absurdity" (2001:242).

Again, a look at Mbembe's aesthetics of vulgarity and how other scholars see oppositional logic in it may serve my intention of salvaging the empowerment and resistance that one may find in abjection. The oppositional logic is apparent in what Mbembe, although he does not believe in it, says:

> Thus we may assert that, by dancing publicly for the benefit of power, the 'postcolonized subject' is providing his or her loyalty, and by compromising with the corrupting control that state power tends to exercise at all levels of everyday life, the subject is reaffirming that this power is incontestable – precisely the better to play with it and modify it whenever possible … (2001:129).

While Mbembe sees only conviviality and no oppositional logic and resistance in these acts by postcolonised subjects, the question is: what is the purpose of modifying power if it is not to resist it? (Weate, 2003:35). If vulgarity has the power of modifying power, then abjection may also be loaded with its own forms of empowerment. Why would one choose abjection or abject spaces if the purpose is not to be enabled and empowered? We must, therefore, be able to distinguish between positive abjection (that whose purpose is to achieve particular goals) and negative abjection (that whose participants remain mired in endless de-sublimation with no light at the end of the tunnel).

In the absence of legal/juristic institutional recognition, is abjection not an alternative strategy for survival? For example, a common feature/trope amongst Zimbabwean (and other) undocumented migrants in London is that of the *chipoko* (ghost) which means 'non-person' because they do not have hope of legally acquiring the correct papers to live and work in the UK. They fashion a kind of sustainable existence. Some even thrive and are able to sustain family members at home or even build and invest. This is not ideal but it shows that there is not always the dark tunnel without light at the end.

However, these gains cannot mask the stresses of abjection that accompany those like the Magistrate who migrate to the UK with notions of respectability. The Magistrate even adamantly holds on to the magistrate identity and spends most of his time ruminating on the misfortune of having to depend on agents like Alfonso for work in care homes. The sight of a dead old woman disconcerts him, demonstrating how he is ill-prepared for life in abject spaces:

> The Magistrate discovered Joan Dowler's dead body. It was a bright day in August. She lay on her bed, peaceful at last, having escaped from the medicine that had imprisoned her shell in the world of the living for far longer than it should have. Her passing so disturbed the Magistrate the he withdrew to the

> staff room. He could not understand why the death of this woman with whom he had no relationship would affect him so deeply. Was it her suffering that caused this pain he felt? Perhaps it was the fact that in a house with many people, she had lived completely alone and died alone (*MM*:123).

At the same time, while figuratively tearing up Britain, as Chikwava's narrator does, and breaching its walls of prohibitions (including messing with its English), is liable to being read as a potentially empowering act, it is, in fact, an act that shows the ubiquity of abjection that manifests itself in the need to confront Harare wherever one goes. Tearing down aristocratic and metropolitan London and showing that it is no more worse than Harare, and postcolonising it in the process in a way collapses the borders of disabling and enabling spaces, but makes abjection work, not only as alternative empowerment sometimes, but confirmation of the continuous state of abjection, which does not reach complete desublimation, that humanity finds itself in in a global world (village) where people are becoming overcrowded. The human body, therefore, "as an expressive origin, as corporeal schema, symbolic capacity and, above all, as a historical agent" (Weate, 2003:32) is replaced by the Foucauldian body which, in abject terms (although Foucault was not speaking of abjection), is "a meaty slab for writing on" (Weate, 2003:32), a slate whereon is written "the process of history's destruction of the body" (Foucault, 1984: 83), leading to decay. Thus, we see The Maestro and his insecure body being drawn inexorably towards being written by death and decay the same way the narrator in *Harare North* is inexorably drawn towards mental decay, madness. Even Farai (*The Mathematician*), a more cosmopolitan character, is only a body upon which the Zimbabwean *commandement* writes its history of violence.[167] Abjection becomes what the characters are forced to become, not in order to resist, but because the system has jettisoned them into this condition in order for them to decay.

The abject, therefore, while demonstrating the failure of the boundary, or its collapse (given that he/she is always there, an illegal migrant, a demonstration of the porosity of the system that wants to keep him out), also demonstrates his/her own failure to completely invade spaces of those that want to keep him/her out. Failure is, therefore, not only of the system but of the migrant him/herself. The failure of the narrator in *Harare North* to gather the US$5000 needed for his crimes back in Zimbabwe to disappear is a case in point. In the same vein, Method's ('Shamisos') eventual xenophobic death before even writing a letter to his mother demonstrates the perilous demise of the abject.[168]

[167] The demise of Farai is a strand that I intend to pursue under the sub-heading, 'Technologies of Watching'.
[168] Jonathan Nkala's *The Crossing* (2009) offers an interesting counter-narrative to this.

Policed Borders, Gated Globe: the spanners in the wheels?

In this sub-section, I look at how the policing of both physical and symbolic borders is represented in various texts under study and how that manning of borders contributes to what McClennen (2004) calls the 'tragic edge of exile'. While the postcolonial spirit celebrates the porosity of borders, observations that will be made in this sub-section are meant to identify the factors that militate against this spirit.

In *We Need New Names*, Darling's migration to Detroit, Michigan is not seamless and easy because it requires her to shed some aspects of her existence and beliefs. These include charms prepared by Mother of Bones for her. The airport dog, itself a technology of watching, sniffs and barks them out. The same applies to Tshaka whose brandishing of a makeshift spear and utterance of African incantations are interpreted by the American police, themselves technologies of watching, as embryonic manifestations of terrorism. The paradox is that the same Tshaka is allowed to do the same in some spaces like weddings or cultural festivals without being labelled a potential terrorist. This brings to mind the arguments of Fish (1997:378) on boutique multiculturalism.[169] Boutique multiculturalists accept and engage selectively with other people's cultures. They appreciate the culture of others but reject it exactly at the point where it matters more to its devoted members. This means boutique multiculturalism cannot accept the fundamental values of the culture it tolerates.

In the case of Tshaka and Darling, therefore, the challenge is whether their beliefs and values and the objects that symbolise those beliefs and values, should be allowed to exist in an America that does not, frankly speaking, belong to them. Tshaka ends up in a mental asylum because he is not understood. Later on, he is killed because he is not understood. It becomes clear, therefore, that the multiculturalism that can benefit Darling and Tshaka is that which remains at the level of the boutique, that is, at the level where the culture of these two is packaged and commodified into something that the owners of the host country consume as an exotic gift from those guests who are benefiting from their generosity. This same boutique regard for the exotic also manifests itself when Darling (*New Names*) is requested to say a few lines in her mother tongue by one American woman in the toilet. The response of the woman

[169] Fish gives the name boutique multiculturalism for that which "is characterized by superficial or cosmetic relationship to the objects of its affection. Boutique multiculturalists "admire or appreciate or enjoy or sympathize with or (at the very least) 'recognize the legitimacy of' the traditions of cultures other than their own; but boutique multiculturalists will always stop short of approving other cultures at a point where some value at their centre generates an act that offends against the canons of civilized decency as they have been either declared or assumed" (Fish, 1997:378).

is, "Isn't that beautiful?" which, in a way, expresses the extent of her boutique appreciation of cultures other than her own. The boutique multiculturalism ends at that point where the guest, like Tshaka, is perceived as a threat.

This line of argument also brings to mind Derrida's talk on hospitality, especially on the fallacy of unconditional hospitality, that is, that kind of hospitality which does not demand adherence by both the host and hosted to conditions, norms, rights and duties. Yet, transgression of laws and conditions is actually *the* law of hospitality, unconditional hospitality. However, as Derrida argues, this unconditional law of hospitality needs the laws of hospitality (the conditions, duties and rights of both the host and the hosted),[170] "which, however, deny it, or at any rate threaten it, sometimes corrupt or pervert it. And must always be able to do this" (2000:79). It is in perverting the law of hospitality through laws of hospitality that one finds the European Diaspora in Zimbabwe becoming a zone of trepidation for its citizens as demonstrated in *African Tears*; *The Last Resort* and *Lettah's Gift*. The antinomy between hospitality and inhospitality, their simultaneous existence, their dialectic existence, that demands, for example, that Tshaka cease performing incantations that are part of him for the sake of being a non-traumatising guest, also speak of the simultaneous and dialectic existence of inclusion and exclusion both of which rest on the whims of people. Following Derrida's thinking, the laws of hospitality (these are locatable in the context of the politics of hospitality), therefore, can be invented singularly for the purpose of micromanaging diverse populations of visitors and also sifting through them to determine who gets in and who does not, and to separate the desirables from the undesirables. For instance, ZANU—PF's laws of inclusion and exclusion, as demonstrated by the researched texts, capriciously change due to political needs, rhetorically including white people in 1980 and excluding them during the political needs of the post-2000 period. The same laws are edited to further exclude other black people who are deemed detrimental to the political needs of the oligarchy. For example, in 'The Missing' by Isabella Matambanadzo (*Writing Free*), a couple is burnt to ashes because they come from a town where they are ostensibly opposition party supporters. The same is narrated by Mlalazi ('When the Moon Stares') who focuses on a fictional short story representation of the *Gukurahundi* which was a militarily executed cleansing of the chaff, or a removal of the

[170] Derrida's concept of hospitality has Socratic origins so that Derrida's *Of Hospitality* is a philosophical re-reading of *The Apology of Socrates*. This re-reading by Derrida in the context of contemporary issues like immigration raises issues concerning the genuine ethics of unconditional hospitality (which Derrida calls the Law) and the politics of conditional hospitality (which Derrida calls the laws of hospitality). In the politics of hospitality, the host is the one who encounters the guest; however, the close proximity between 'host' and 'hostage' also translates to the close proximity between 'hospitality' and 'hostility'.

unwanted. The same removal of the unwanted is narrated by Bulawayo in 'Shamisos' when Method is burnt to death in xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

For Fati in 'African Wife', it becomes apparent that his credentials as a Zimbabwean graduate are frowned upon in America. Even participating in Neighbourhood Watch Committees in a neighbourhood that he does not feel a part of does not seem to open borders for him. He remains an outsider even to his American wife, a wife who also remains an outsider to the community of Africans with whom Fati shares a modicum of solidarity. The physical border that characters find difficult to cross is also representative in many ways. It represents other borders after it that characters may have difficulties with crossing. For instance, the failure by Chikwava's narrator to utter his way into 'Harare North' through the 'magic' word, 'asylum', is one of the many ways through which border policing is demonstrated. If they find difficulties in entering, they are also likely to find difficulties in mobility after entry as demonstrated by Chikwava's narrator whose sojourn in mental backstreets is symbolic of the physical restrictions that impede his movement.

For those who manage to cross the physical border into UK, the realisation is that several other borders spring in front of them and restrict their movement so that they do not seem to go far. Sometimes the border presents itself linguistically. Language here does not just mean the language of oral communication that is spoken in the host country. Sometimes it refers to the unwritten codes, beliefs, behaviours and the like. Does the exile, for instance, have the right to talk about the weather with a native citizen? The question is whether the exile would 'go far' in this sense. The Magistrate in Huchu's narrative fails to go far in this regard when he demonises a weather condition that the inhabitants of Edinburgh idolise. In *We Need New Names* Darling too discovers, rather embarrassingly, that there is a lot in America's language that she does not know when she spanks a white kid at a wedding in Detroit, Michigan.

In a country where freedom is considered sacrosanct, the exilic being, with or without proper papers, seems to be forever looking over his shoulder, or looking for a way in. Exile, therefore, might entail going to a faraway country where the exile is not expected to go far. The immigrants go with notions that the local space does not allow them to go far because it is disabling and they perceive the foreign, faraway place to be an enabling space that would allow them to go far. 'Going far' on one level means succeeding in the purpose for which the exile migrated to a faraway country, yet on another level it also means going far in what can be called 'performative adaptation' which entails 'fitting into' the culture of the host country and being treated and behaving like any other citizen of that country. It is no surprise then that characters like Aleck and Sekai (*Harare North*) have only disdain for the local space they have left behind

while trying to find glory in the foreign one they now inhabit. The feeling is that London will help them forget their chequered, benighted past and embrace them into a world where all is fine. Unfortunately, such a clean break with home is nigh impossible and almost unconsciously, naming London 'Harare North' is not just an attempt at familiarity; it is an admission at a subconscious level that they have not successfully crossed the border.

For the Magistrate, coming from a conservative background and remaining conservative for a larger part of the narrative, seeing his daughter performing orals sex is something he finds difficult to accept. In a way, he polices his own borders. He does cross that border at last to allow Chenai to marry her boyfriend but it is apparent that he accepts because he is far away from home and also because that is one of the few limited options he has to save his own marriage. For most parts of the narrative, it seems as if Chenai and *Mai* Chenai are ordering their lives in their own way and peripheralising him in the process. In many cases, shibboleths and new identity paradigms keep running into each other in a way that militates against all these visions of a global, multicultural space characterised by hybridities. Caught between these two quandaries, the migrant's condition is bound to become that of dilemma. Having condemned home as disabling, some of the characters in the selected narratives soon find out that both home and the foreign space have their own limits. The furthest the Magistrate can go, for instance, with his 'Magistrate' title, is a care home. The furthest Fati can go in 'African Wife', for instance, is the Neighbourhood Watch. The furthest Method can go with his degree in 'Shamisos' is garden boy. Chikwava's narrator only goes as far as being *umgodoyi*, a mangy village dog.

Aesthetic Regimes: Metaphors of gated borders and enabling and disabling spaces

This sub-section is concerned with an evaluation of the aesthetic strategies that are deployed by the authors and how these strategies reflect or militate against their search for enabling spaces. Also important is how these aesthetic regimes, which include character choices and representations, mirror or silence the postcolonial (and other posts) spirit. In order to achieve this, I will look at the audience of these writers before venturing into issues of representation. Here, I will look at how black writers represent white people and how white authors represent black people, and whether such representations reflect a world that is opening up, a world where people are not paranoid about who "we" are.

Audience

Among the authors chosen for this research, Brian Chikwava, Petina Gappah, Tendai Huchu, NoViolet Bulawayo, Christopher Mlalazi, Graham Lang, Douglas Rogers and Bryony Rheam write from a geographical position of exile. While their existence in foreign spaces cannot be regarded as a direct result of crisis, there is no doubt that the complex influence of various factors, including crisis, played a part in their decisions to relocate to foreign spaces. In those foreign spaces, the writers are overly concerned with writing Zimbabwe although their readership is mainly foreign. Even those who write from Zimbabwe like Catherine Buckle or Irene Staunton (editor of anthologies) also seem to be targeting foreign readers. Thus, the writers seem to be 'moving' out of crisis by deploying narrative strategies that appeal to a reading market that is beyond the borders of Zimbabwe. While this sounds like 'writing free', like moving out of crisis, the act of 'writing free' itself is a move into crisis especially because it entails the employment of literary strategies that prohibit the kind of freedom that the writer is looking for.

This takes us to Wainana's (2006) satiric essay on how to write Africa. Wainana's inventory of the elements of a stereotypical African story are, on the surface, humorous, but surprisingly constitute the plots of many popular and prize-winning stories like 'Hitting Budapest' in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* or Petina Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly*. All of the narratives chosen here contain all, or some, of the contents of Wainana's inventory: 'Africa' in the title; an Africa of high temperatures, dust, grasslands, sunsets, an Africa of emigrating , warring, bony, starving, sick (of AIDS) and dying blacks, corrupt politicians, loyal servants, warlords, inefficient travel guides, children with sagging bellies and flies buzzing around them, rotting dead bodies, rape, prostitution, and very intelligent animal characters who are well-rounded and complex (Wainana, 2006:*Granta.com*).

We Need New Names has starving, semi-nude children, open defecation, a rotting corpse, dead bodies (Freedom and Bornfree, and the woman who is found hanging in the forest), an AIDS-ravaged body in the form of Darling's father, *Operation Murambatsvina* and rape. *Harare North* has youth militia (Green Bombers), violence (in the form of forgiveness), AIDS, *Operation Murambatsvina*, corrupt politicians, starvation, inflation and a plethora of other 'third world' ills. *An Elegy for Easterly* has corrupt politicians, *Operation Murambatsvina*, naked bodies, dead bodies, rape, squatter camps, violence and a plethora of

other 'third world' ills. *Writing Free* contains the same inventory as the texts above. *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician* contains the same inventory as well. All of these texts feature characters who move around with the strides of migrants. The same applies to *The Last Resort*. It features a benevolent white family in the midst of chaos, land invasions, AIDS-ravaged blacks, semi-naked children selling stones by the roadside, an inefficient travel guide in the form of the Commissar (the pun is: how can he conscientise others when he bungles an expedition?), corrupt and violent politicians, prostitutes, loyal servants and very intelligent animals in the form of the albino frog and the duiker. *Lettah's Gift* and *African Tears* have similar characters and themes. *This September Sun* at least peripheralises these issues by focusing overly on the private lives of Ellie and her grandmother. Issues of the post-colonial crisis of governance in Zimbabwe make cameo appearances but it is obvious that the narrative is not concerned with these issues.

While these issues cannot be dismissed as mere sensationalised stories (given their historicity that is backed by the background section, and also given the fact that two of the texts, namely *African Tears* and *The Last Resort*, are autobiographical), one cannot also dismiss the value of such themes in western markets. This means these stories were written in exactly the same way sensationalised African stories are written for a western audience. This makes these stories predictable. The common denominator of these stories is their employment of what Habila (*theguardian.com*) calls "the African aesthetic of suffering." The stories are so predictable that Habila, in his review of *We Need New Names*, observes:

> NoViolet Bulawayo's new novel, *We Need New Names*, is an extension of her Caine prize-winning short story, "Hitting Budapest", and yes, it has fraudulent preachers and is partly set in a soul-crushing ghetto called Paradise, somewhere in Zimbabwe. Yes, there is a dead body hanging from a tree; there is Aids – the narrator's father is dying of it; there is political violence (pro-Mugabe partisans attacking white folk and expelling them from their homes and chanting "Africa for Africans!"); there are street children – from the ranks of whom the narrator, Darling, finally emerges and escapes to America and a better life. Did I mention that one of the children, 10- or 12-year-old Chipo, is pregnant after being raped by her grandfather? (2013:*theguardian.com*).

It seems as if the Africa that sells is the Africa described in the narratives chosen for this research, an Africa whose common theme is suffering. The texts make ample use of what Ndlovu (2016b:30) calls "condescending stereotypes" about Zimbabwe as "an artistic convention."

However, a conclusion such as the one above runs the risk of being absolutist thereby closing doors for the simultaneous existence of artistic acquiescence and rebellion which is most visible in *Harare North*; *Lettah's Gift*; *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician*, and *We Need New Names*. For instance, the use of broken English in *Harare North* "reflects the prejudiced perceptions and expectations of the novel's potential Western readership. The reader is able to recognize and laugh at the use of broken English because of his or her own language competence; at the same time, the reader is in turn lightly teased for his or her laughing – for the condescending attitude, and the attribution to the African of the role of exotic 'other', that this laughing arguably cannot entirely avoid" (Ndlovu, 2016b: 31). The same applies to the incident in which Aunt Fostalina fails to buy a product over the phone because she cannot pronounce the name properly, or Darling's anxiety over the way she pronounces words. In *Lettah's Gift*, Frank's valorisation of the west and demonisation of Zimbabwe is challenged by Milton who believes that at least in Zimbabwe what you see is what you get whereas in the west, dangerous attitudes and plans are hidden behind a façade of 'democracy'. The fact that Frank only finds his creativity in Zimbabwe is Lang's subtle critique of the dry and uninspiring logic of the west's demands on African writers. Huchu's characters cannot be reduced to the stereotypes that make Wainana's inventory. They are more complex and intelligent and have concerns that locate them beyond the herds of refugees in dire need of international assistance.

Nevertheless, if we are to conclude that "this new writing…that has emerged in a vacuum created by [western] judges and the publishers and agents over the years, and which has begun to perpetuate itself…has proven itself capable of winning prizes and book deals and celebrity" (Habila, 2013: *theguardian.com*), then it means that the creative writing space has been created for these writers, and this portends a move out of and into crisis. Such creative constrictions cannot be thought of as wholly enabling. Thus, in terms of the dialectics of exile, the simultaneous existence of 'enabling' and 'disabling' becomes visible here. In fact, put in terms of McClennen's dialectical theory of exile, this creative writing space is enabling at the same time that it is disabling.

Black Characters in White-authored novels

Having demonstrated the persistence of policed borders and a gated globe in how an array of characters from selected texts experience both physical and non-physical borders, and

having demonstrated how the selection of narrative strategies is both enabling and disabling (and thus demonstrating the recalcitrance of borders), I now intend to demonstrate how writers themselves, through representation, or through the politico-aesthetic regimes they submit themselves under, also perform in gating the globe and policing borders. In order to achieve this, I will look at how white-authored narratives represent white characters and how such representations symbolically erect borders manned either consciously or unconsciously by the writers themselves.

In the literature review section of this research, I have looked at how the black characters' presence in white-authored narratives is predominantly represented via the prejudices of the Rhodesian discourse which centralises white perspectives of the world, that is, the Rhodesian world whose organisation revolved around white principles. I demonstrated how representations of black people in white-authored narratives are consonant with the politics of white belonging in Rhodesia which prefers a state of belonging which is achieved environmentally through nature than sociologically through the people whom they found inhabiting the land. In the second chapter, I looked, in passing, at how selected white authors also seem to be reviving, either consciously or unconsciously, the Rhodesian discourse especially in their representations of black characters. This makes them perform, in a way, the process of policing the racial border.

One of the methods through which one can detect the haunting presence of race in narratives is through an investigation into whether the colour of the character's skin plays a central role in how the author wants us to understand that character. In white-authored narratives analysed in this study, such a representation is prominent. In *African Tears*, *The Last Resort* and *Lettah's Gift*, black people are associated with pillaging while white people are presented as being more sensitive to the environment. Black people are not only destructive; their hygienic habits are also questionable since they are presented as being given to excreting everywhere. In Rogers' *The Last Resort*, black people have emptied the bush of the last squirrel so that when Rogers' father has a rare encounter with a duiker, it provokes very deep emotions in him. The impression is that the world of Zimbabwe is hurtling towards insanity and only white people know how to save it. For Buckle, only white people know how to feed a nation; black people do not know how. Such a representation of characters mediated by race is crucial in our understanding of the significance of race in the twenty-first century, a period which is seen as being synonymous with a migration away from nativist, racist and essentialist relationships, a move that is also symbolically represented by physical border crossings, diasporisation and exile. However, as these texts demonstrate, consciously or unconsciously,

white authors seem to be policing the border of race by associating their experiences with race and reducing our understanding of these experiences to the neat binaries of blackness (associated with disorder, pillaging, and violence) and whiteness (associated with reason, order, peace and development).

The only good black characters in the three texts listed above are those living with or in close proximity to white people. These seem to have escaped the debased nature of their fellow black people. In a way one gets the sense that these characters are being 'showcased', that is, they are made to be in order to convey a message. It is, therefore, not coincidental that such token blacks are only found living in close proximity to white people as workers: Buckle's farm workers, Rogers' servants, or even Lettah in Lang's *Lettah's Gift*. It is surprising that Rogers even begins to see a likeness between his father and John Muranda, a likeness that seems to have been borne out of Muranda's proximity to Rogers. Such depictions of black people as 'good' people only when they are within the orbit of a white character should be treated with suspicion because they are tied to the Rhodesian institution of white superiority and sanity against black inferiority and disorderliness.

There is also a depiction of the stereotypical Africa of disease and suffering. In *The Last Resort*, one of the workers of the Rogers family dies of AIDS. Douglas' mother receives the news with nonchalance because, according to her, the dead man is not the first and will definitely not be the last. In *Lettah's Gift*, the diseased citizens of Dlomo's compound have the appearance of the walking dead. The only black characters who seem to be happy are the black oppressors or those who live with white people like Precious and her children. The blacks in Buckle's narrative are also hygienically deficient and pose a serious health threat on the once clean farm. Depictions of this nature, in the words of Mboti (2009:264), "[turn] Africa into a synonym of catastrophe."

Buckle's workers (*African Tears*), John Muranda, John Agoneka, Naomi and Walter (*The Last Resort*), and Lettah, Precious and Vernon (*Lettah's Gift*) are raised by a creative process of writing that deprives other black characters the privilege to speak for themselves except as villains or victims or beneficiaries of white characters' philanthropy. Those black characters who appear different, in a positive way, from the rest are 'caused' to be such by the writers as exhibitions of how white characters are capable of bringing sanity into the world of black characters who do not seem to have the ability to do that on their own. Such a sentiment as subtly expressed in these three narratives agrees with sentiment of colonial historians on the origins of the Great Zimbabwe ruins which Zimbabwean nationalism attributes to the ancestors of 'children of the soil'. One historian, Gayre (1972:214), vehemently questions,

> How on earth could the knowledge that their [Bantu's] ancestors had raised such mighty works, developed a huge mining industry, had enormous agricultural works in the Inyanga terraces, and imported goods from China, India, Arabia, Venice, and elsewhere, have been lost to the mass of the Bantus if, in fact, their ancestors have been involved in the creation of such civilisation? We might also ask why some of it had not rubbed off on them in some significant and perceptible manner? Why have we not people who are still building such works, sinking such mines, smelting gold, bargaining with overseas traders for exports of the mineral, and haggling over the quality of imported pottery? Why, when the Europeans arrived, did they find them in their wattle and thatched huts?

Thus, black characters only seem to be enterprising and sane when in the presence of white characters. This is a very condescending attitude on the part of the writers and exposes the limitations of their attempts to subvert race.

The racial undertones that are unearthed after a meticulous reading of white-authored narratives demonstrates the great divide that exists between whites and blacks in Zimbabwe. It is either the blacks are depicted as chaotic, insensible layabouts (Buckle) and sex-crazy drunkards (Rogers, Lang) or as 'noble savages' in the form of Buckle's farm workers, Rogers' servants, Agoneka and the Murandas or Lettah in *Lettah's Gift*, who fulfil the roles of children, faithful servants and buffoons. What surfaces, therefore, is the idea that blacks are being viewed from the other side of the great 'racial' divide and not from within. There is a them-and-us attitude in these narratives.

White characters in Black-authored narratives

Black-authored narratives under investigation in this research seem to continue with the legacy left for them by pioneer black writers, a legacy of writing which excludes white people or, if it includes them, portrays them as villains, snobs or racists. There seems to be confinement to class and race-inspired avoidance of white characters in some black-authored narratives under investigation. There seems to be a lot of influences from relationships of the past that sway how and why blacks represent whites the way they do or do not represent them at all in works of fiction. According to Fox (2012:1), "[t]he country to experience the most recent crisis of white representation is Zimbabwe. With its own unique history of colonial rule and liberation, whiteness has emerged as a particularly challenging and ferocious issue." In fact, whiteness does not only impact representations of whites in black-authored narratives, it also

impacts how they are critiqued.[171] Being *simply* white has a bearing on how whites experience being in Zimbabwe and how they are ultimately represented in black-authored literary works.

Gappah's 'Miss McConkey of Bridgewater Close' (*Writing Free*) features a former colonial white educationist, Miss McConkey, a die-hard and recalcitrant racist who refuses to accept the help of a black character, Zvamaida, who happens to be her former student. When she finally accepts her help in a supermarket, she does not say, "Thank you." One may argue that Gappah is merely creating a typical anachronistic white Zimbabwean but the question becomes why? How does her character represent all white Zimbabweans? In Chikwava's *Harare North*, the white characters are rude kids giving the narrator a bad time, or two homeless tramps whose relationship with the narrator and his friends is parasitic. In *We Need New Names*, the white characters are stupid young girls who walk around with dogs that they dress in pink, or sexual perverts who prey on desperate migrant black women like Aunt Fostalina, or snobbish white women who think that Africa is one country. The depiction of white people remains tenuous even in post-2000 narratives by migrant writers. White characters remain curious glitches in a plot that these black writers seem glad to handle without white presences. In short, reading the above-mentioned black-authored Zimbabwean novels is to read a world of blacks regardless of the fact that some of the settings are British or American. Even in a setting in which they pre-dominate, white characters find themselves shallow and unsubstantial, obliterated, with protrusions of whiteness here and there on story surfaces that are predominantly black.

In other instances, the white character is a donor. Such donor presences are conspicuous in Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Sekai Nzenza's 'The Donor's Visit' (*Writing Free*). In these instances, the relationship between white and black characters follows the pattern captured by Kristen Cheney, during her visit to an urban neighbourhood in Kampala, Uganda:

> My presence in the barracks always elicited excited cries of "Mzungu" (white person) from the children, most of whom were not yet old enough for school. They rarely left the barracks and so rarely saw white people. Their mothers would often point me out to them when they saw me coming, so that by the time I reached them, the children were lined up along the rutted dirt road as if for a parade (2008: 26).

[171] In the Literature Review section of this thesis I embarked on a meta-critical analysis of major critical works on black-authored narratives in Zimbabwe and how they demonstrate that the critics' understanding of the texts is mediated by race.

The status of a white person is, therefore, in the words of Fox (2012:2), "challenging and disruptive", as if their skin colour carries with it substantial symbolism and association. For instance, Chikwava's narrator's shock at seeing two white tramps, Jane and Dave, in Brixton represents the long-held notion among blacks that whites are rich. Against a complex landscape of whiteness and power, whites find themselves having to negotiate their identities not only on the physical, cultural and political landscape but also on the textual one. Their challenging and disruptive presence is sublimated onto the text where handling a white character seems challenging and disruptive so that writers resort to fleeting and tenuous representations that are based on stereotypes. For instance, in Gappah's short story, the narrator's evaluation of a white character is based on her own long-held notion that she is a racist and not on what she, the white character, thinks. We do not get to know the reasons for her actions except those that the narrator imposes on us. Gappah, therefore, seems to be reifying conceptions of whites by blacks as domineering, powerful and racist. She demonstrates the failure by some black writers to penetrate the psychology and affective temperament of the white character. The presence of white characters as donors in some of black-authored narratives under study here, like Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and Sekai Nzenza's 'The Donor's Visit' (*Writing Free*), testifies to this conception. Whiteness seems to be etched on the mind of the writer so that even as the writer seeks to challenge it, he or she ends up reifying it.

Petina Gappah's representation of the white lady of Bridgewater Close is also part of the resistive power through which black people look at whites. As Magubane (2004:113) states, for many black people during the colonial period, gazing upon whites "became oppositional, a means of contestation and confrontation, and a critical part of the politics of refusal." The persistence of this oppositional gaze into post-2000 representations of white people also speaks of the persistence of racial and cultural borders that exist between black and white Zimbabweans. This means colonial ideas about white people still continue and these impact on how blacks and whites relate in a world that is supposedly migrating towards the multicultural and cosmopolitan villagisation of the globe. Therefore, there is need for a rethinking of the implications of movement in this ostensibly multicultural village that continues to be characterised by recalcitrant perceptions of white and black that continue to be the spanners in the wheels of a borderless village. These perceptions represent the everyday experiences of race which, according to Fox (2012:6), "are a major arena in which global power relations play out." This agrees with Turner's (1980:112) observation that "the surface of the body seems everywhere to be treated, not only as the boundary of the individual as a biological and psychological entity but as the frontier of the social self as well." While, logically, Turner's

observation should not be recklessly applied to a period a couple of decades after it was made, the fact that representations of whites as seen in this sub-section, or representations of blacks, continue to be mediated by race calls for continued awareness of the recalcitrance of race and symbolic acts of border policing which both have implications on the migrant's circulation in the village.

The challenge, therefore, is to adventure beyond the exclusive ethnic elite representation of white people that characterises the politicisation of whiteness in Zimbabwe. The question is, do representations of whites in black-authored narratives mirror the everyday perceptions and political profiling of white people? Is whiteness represented as power and something that should only provoke oppositional and resistive acts? Is whiteness made to mediate in the writer's creation and reader's understanding of a white character? As I have demonstrated with the selected stories, whiteness is central in the creation and the reader's understanding of a white character and for most of the narratives the answer to these questions is, "Yes."

However, not all writers demonstrate this (conscious or unconscious) act of racial border policing. For instance, our understanding of Huchu's character of the Maestro (*The Maestro*) is not mediated by race. The Maestro is communicated to us not as a character who experiences a variety of turmoils because he is *simply* white but because he is a human being with an insecure body. It is only towards the end of the novel when other characters are debating what to do with his body that we learn that the Maestro is white. However, the fact that these black Zimbabwean migrants take it upon themselves to give him a proper burial demonstrates the falling away of racial boundaries that keep people apart and the absence of self-appointed inspectors who police the line. It is, however ironic that the boundaries fall away when the Maestro is dead. This though can be explained by the fact that the Maestro's introspective life in Edinburgh did not allow for the existence of horizontal relationships with other human beings, whether white or black. There is therefore an absence of racial border monitors in Huchu's novel so that the stories of the Magistrate, the Maestro and the Mathematician are made to appear to us as stories of human beings jettisoned into a life of exile by the vicissitudes of existence and not by the colours of their skins.

Technologies of Watching[172]

This subsection analyses how the migrant's escape to a perceived enabling space is countered by the fact that the migrant is watched by technologies of watching or what we can call panopticons[173] deployed to steal his/her freedom. These panopticons can be human or non-human. The understanding of the globe as a village means that those who circulate within the village cannot adventure out of it. In other words, the village is a closed system crowded with human bodies. The concept of panopticons, denoting a prison institution where prisoners are under surveillance, relates to how the architecture of the global village allows for the surveillance of human bodies and even allows for the choosing of human bodies to put under surveillance.

When Chikwava's narrator arrives in 'Harare North', and when Darling (*New Names*) arrives in America (a country she used to call 'My America'), we are made aware of the fact that they are part of a huge population of human bodies that have to be kept under control and under serious observation so that their entry into host countries is not a 'disappearing act' but an entry into a space that is open to geometric observation. The security at the airport, which includes a dog that sniffs out Darling's consortium of 'home-grown' medicinal and protective solutions against the vicissitudes of foreign lands, is a demonstration of the panoptic ordering of human populations. This too explains Tshaka's eventual demise (*New Names*). He is under constant surveillance, a surveillance that also seems to have led to the recommendation that he needs a psychiatric unit, and eventually a surveillance that seems to have concluded that what is going on in Tshaka's head is not good for the security of America. So Tshaka is killed because his enactment of particular cultural and ritualistic contrivances is misinterpreted by those who survey and assume the operation of surveillance.

While this analysis of the presence, under surveillance, of the narrator in *Harare North*, and Darling and Tshaka (*New Names*), seems to be subscribing to a limited view of panopticism "in terms solely of the state and state apparatus" (Foucault, 1980:158), Foucault is of the view,

[172] This title is inspired by Foucault's ideas of surveillance and punishment in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979) in which he theorises the acts of watching and being watched both for for the regulation and control of human bodies.

[173] The concept of panopticons was coined by Jeremy Bentham (1791) to refer to prison architecture that facilitates surveillance. However, this concept can actually be linked to Foucault's iterations in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) in which he contends, while using Bentham's concept, that watching is part of the continuing trajectory of subjection. Central to Foucault's iterations is the idea of controlling human populations in this modernised and digitalised world. Jeremy Bentham, who is credited with coining the term panopticon, uses panoticism in relation to a penal building whilst Foucault uses it to refer to machinery of power that can work across extra-penal territories.

and rightly so, that power "is quite different from and more complicated, dense and pervasive than a set of laws or a state apparatus":

> I don't want to say that the State isn't important; what I want to say is that relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the State . . . The State is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality, the family, kinship, knowledge, technology and so forth. (Foucault, 1980:122)

The extension of panoticism to linkages of power that capitalise on the body, family, knowledge, kinship, and sexuality almost affiliates with Raymond Williams' iterations on hegemony.[174] This subversive presence of power gets to the level where being visible and being watched are internalised or interiorised by the subject so that the watcher needs not watch. Chikwava's narrator reaches that level when he, on his own without being pushed, relegates himself to the backstreets to escape detection. His existence in London is accompanied by a continuous process of constantly looking over his shoulder to check if he is being followed. For Darling, it is the restriction she imposes upon herself of not going back to Paradise to visit because doing so, as Aunt Fostalina bluntly points out, is tantamount to kissing America goodbye. It becomes a case of the prisoner becoming his/her own observer.

The subversive presence of power even manifests, Gestapo-style, in how the 'prisoners' watch each other and how even inspectors are caught. The narrator, in *Harare North*, a former watcher himself, finds himself being caught and having to hustle his way to 'Harare North' to pay his way from the spaces of observation. It is a tricky endeavour whose climax is reached when the commander of the watchers, Comrade Mhiripiri (now MFH), also seems to have become a victim of role swap and is found in the same predicament as the narrator, the difference being that Mhiripiri at least has no more illusions concerning their Green Bomber identity and has 're-invent complete'. Both the narrator and MFH, former watchers, also become victims of a system that utilises and organises human bodies for a variety of reasons. Their bodies, once tools for the perpetuation of the system, have outlived their relevance and so are jettisoned out of it. Their migrant status, therefore, is negotiated in the midst of a variety

[174] Raymond Williams (1977) uses the Gramscian term, hegemony, to refer to dominating (and not domination since it is an ongoing process), but dominating which pervades the whole process of lived activity, lived identities, relationships, assignments, distribution of energies, our shaped perceptions of ourselves and the world and meanings and values that constitute and are constituted by social practices. In short, those being dominated view the world around them as the natural world. But this 'natural world' is not static. Therefore, Williams would rather have 'hegemonic' (an ongoing process) and not hegemony (abstract, static and totalising).

of surveillance "assemblages"[175] (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987:155) or 'micropticons' that lend their supposed escape a tragic edge. The existence of such assemblages, these degrees of singularities in an abstract diagram called the globe, of which they are both part and victim, in one text and one life, is what makes us understand McClennen's idea of the dialectic and, hence, tragic edge of exile.

Farai's migration from Harare to Edinburgh in (*The Mathematician*) invites us to think of it as an escape from a disabling space, Harare. He appears to us as a free spirit, someone whose circulation in space is seamless. His dexterity in negotiating social, academic and virtual spaces places him on top of the more conservative Magistrate and the introspective Maestro. However, his demise at the hands of a Zimbabwean undercover intelligence operative, Alfonso, who, all along appeared like a helpful and harmless migrant, points to how the free flow of human bodies and even ideas is now accompanied, not with dichotomised categories of the permitted and the prohibited, but, in this case, by the management of an open series in which events are allowed to take place and judgements are made at that point as to whether the events are desirable or not. In the case of Farai, who all along was not even a target of Alfonso's covert operations but the Magistrate, his doctoral thesis on the advantages of maintaining a hyperinflationary environment in Zimbabwe is certainly deemed undesirable by Alfonso. This leads to Farai's death. At the same time, the fact that the Magistrate's actions are all choreographed by Alfonso, the operative, takes away agency from the Magistrate and sublimates the politics of surveillance to the bizarre where even the private acts of individuals are not only under scrutiny but also triggered by the watcher. At this stage, one can safely say the Magistrate has not escaped because Zimbabwe still runs his affairs using a human technology of watching and control.

Yet, if we go back to Deleuze and Guattari's 'semiotic code' (1987), we understand even a more bizarre situation that migrants in selected narratives find themselves in. For example, in Bulawayo's 'Shamisos' (*Writing Free*), Method performs what we can call nomenclatural migration in an attempt to fit into the South African space he finds himself in. As the dealer who processed his papers observed, there was need for something that would make Method 'disappear' into the crowd, to become part of the human flow of South Africa.

[175] Deleuze and Guattari use this phrase in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) in which they build on Foucault's notion of Panoticism. For these two, an assemblage consists of two sides. On one side is the formalisation of expression and on another the formalisation of content which makes it a machine-like assemblage of bodies, in short, a combination of semiotic and physical systems. While this seems more affiliated to a system of language, Deleuze and Guattari believe that this semiotic model can actually be used to understand more abstract political and social phenomena.

This is expected to provide Method with cover against visibility. It is thought that the name Xolela would give Method a nomenclatural integration into a society that, without that integration, is bound to, in the process of lived activity, watch him as a stranger. In this daily process of lived activity, Xolela is watched and under surveillance from those who consider themselves autochthons, an activity of surveillance that is xenophobic in nature and a far cry from the depiction of Johannesburg as a cosmopolitan city. It is also a repudiation of all that which is considered foreign and 'outsider'. This is a highly politicised sentiment but which is closely connected to the hegemony of bourgeois South Africa and the impoverishment of its majority who are made to think that those who are 'alien' steal their wealth. Ironically, white South Africans are considered as having more access to wealth but, unlike in Zimbabwe, are not considered alien to South Africa. This might explain why they are not victims of the xenophobic sentiments that are targeted on 'foreigners'.

Besides trying to integrate through a change of name, Xolela (also known as Method) tries very hard to mind his own business, to keep himself to himself. He even rejects the attentions of his boss after hacking his toe with a hoe. The old cook from Mozambique attempts to reduce the distance between them by trying to engage in workplace banter, a gesture Xolela shrugs off. He would rather converse with his mother's over-demanding letters. He is a lonely and deeply insecure body despite hijacking the name Xolela for the purpose of belonging. His insecurity arises out of the failure to coordinate the outer and inner parliaments of his body, a failure that culminates in the hacking of his toe with a hoe. However, the activity of surveillance, diffused into some of the autochthons of South Africa, shatters the myth of Xolela's private and intimate world. His intimate moments with his mother through her letters are macheted away by bloodthirsty xenophobes during a violent and fiery invasion of the squatter camp in which Xolela lives. The public and the private are here forced to amalgamate perilously, leading to tragic outcomes.

What makes McClennen's idea of the dialectic more relevant to this research is the simultaneous existence of this kind of surveillance in what is perceived as an enabling space and what is perceived as a disabling space. For instance, in Matambanadzo's 'The Missing' and Mlalazi's 'When the Moon Stares' (*Writing Free*), we find that same act of watching and inflicting pain, an act which demonstrates how the system has converted those who occupy everyday spaces into technologies and objects of watching. This watching and infliction of pain is in itself a push factor influencing the migrant's choice to run to a perceived enabling space, an act which, in these narratives, is an exercise in futility because the activity of watching is ubiquitous.

The Antinomy of Exile

While the antinomy of exile can be understood in the context of what I have already termed 'Harare (in the) North', it also denotes the exile looking back at Harare while in the North or South. At the same time, it denotes the incorrigible 'I', the 'I' that persists even after ostensibly hybridising, the 'I' that remains umbilically tied to a place and time, to a country, the 'I' that the new space reminds the migrant of through the inevitable question, "Where do you come from?" This sort of antinomy creates a situation akin to the Boisan double consciousness except that this time there are many layers of consciousness, both temporal and spatial, captured more succinctly in *We Need New Names* when Darling muses on the homes that are in people's heads. In both the European and Zimbabwean diaspora there seems to be a failure by the characters to arrive so that they exist in a state of in-betweenness, unable to exist comfortably in the host country. This is but the first level of reading this antimony. The second level has to do with nostalgia, but not the kind of nostalgia that has to do with the sad mood triggered by missing a home that exists no more, but that which has to do with "present anxieties refracted through the prism of the past" (Dlamini, 2009:16). This is the kind of nostalgia that dwells on the ruins of the past and can be described as "the shattered fragments of the past" (Dlamini, 2009:18).

Harare North seems, from a superficial reading of it, to be about a Zimbabwean migrant's experiences in London. However, for greater parts of the narrative, the narrator seems to be pre-occupied with an absurd combination of Zimbabwean events: electoral violence, dictatorship, inflation, hunger, *Operation Murambatsvina* and a plethora of other tumultuous occurrences happening in his country of birth. As in Sharma's (2001:600) evaluation of Rushdie's migrant narratives, one can also say that the narrator in *Harare North* is "obsessed with the space of the nation he had moved away from and the failures of its nationalism." This is an obsession that runs like a thread in the black-authored narratives chosen for this research, namely *We Need New Names*, *An Elegy for Easterly*, *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician* and some short stories in *Writing Free*. The writers' incestuous familiarity and engagement with the places where some of them and their characters have come from may actually demonstrate the failure by both the writers and their characters to rupture themselves from the 'nation'.

Darling's experiences (*New Names*), firstly in an imaginary Zimbabwean squatter camp called Paradise and later in an imaginary American place called 'Destroyed Michigan', put less

emphasis on that indissoluble link between Zimbabwe and the mother node, U.S.A. In other words, the character of Darling and the writer of Darling's story do not give themselves the postcolonial role of interventionists in the cultural sphere of an ostensibly multicultural America. They seem to be connected more to the 'home' they left behind and about which they seem to be speaking. If Darling engages America, it is on how different and unfamiliar it is. Only TK, Aunt Fostalina's son, seems to have developed the ability to intervene in American politics by going to Afghanistan as an American soldier, an act that Darling pours mockery on and which leaves Uncle Kojo a depressed man. The same desire not to intervene manifests in the narrator in *Harare North* who thinks that the 'Save-the-Whales' activism of Jane and Dave is a waste of time. In *The* Magistrate, the activism of some of the characters, especially the Magistrate, Scot and Alfonso, is aligned to the politicking back 'home' in Zimbabwe. In Sigauke's 'African Wife' (*Writing Free*), Fati joins the Neighbourhood Watch, ostensibly to keep the neighbourhood safe, but in reality because he is nagged into doing so by his American wife. When the migrants from various parts of Africa gather, they look at Fati's wife with suspicion, a separatist attitude that demonstrates their ambivalent presence in America – a place of escape, but not a home. Their association is more an attempt to clutch at something from what they still view as home. The migrants, therefore, seem to avoid what Sharma (2001:607) calls "the deliberate forgetting of other existences" and do not seem to be obsessed with accruing stashes of cultural capital that would make them belong. The narrator in *Harare North* does not seem to be eager to acquire a method of speaking that would make him a well-mannered British citizen. Darling (*New Names*) seems to be going the Uncle Kojo way, which is looking back at the home she left behind. She refuses to indulge in what Aunt Fostalina does to belong. In terms of the Magistrate, an invocation of the music of home is what it will take for him to experience a modicum of home. The Magistrate keeps referring to the cultural values he left behind and feels like the absence of those cultural values has placed him at the periphery of his family's affairs, a feeling that is verified when Chenai tells him, in unequivocal terms, that she is old enough to run her own life.

The groups of migrants in 'African Wife'; *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician*; *Harare North* and *We Need New Names* hang out together as Zimbabweans or as Africans. In *Harare North*, the London squat and the tree in Brixton are where migrants congregate as Zimbabweans and as Africans respectively. Likewise, Farai's house in Huchu's novel is actually a congregation of Zimbabweans. Alfonso also seems to be a thread, albeit a technology of watching, that brings almost all the Zimbabweans in Edinburgh together for politics, work, church or funerals. In Sigauke's 'African Wife', the migrants gather as Africans,

a group of suspicious migrants that treats Fati with contempt because of his white, American wife. Such selective gatherings reflect sensibilities that are homebound. Most of the migrants in these narratives express this homeboundedness by entertaining thoughts of their eventual return, thoughts that surface more explicitly in the narrator in *Harare North*, the Magistrate (*The Magistrate*) and Method in 'Shamisos' (*Writing Free*). For the Magistrate, any thoughts of settling in Edinburgh for good appear treasonous and as acceptance of defeat. In other characters, the thoughts of home are implied. In *We Need New Names*, Darling's encounter with guavas sent to her by her friend trigger a desire to journey back to Paradise. The political activities of Scott (*The Magistrate*), for instance, reflect a deep-seated desire to return to what he perceives as home which he believes can actually be made more homely through diaspora-based political engagement. For most of them, the 'home' they exited remains central while the host country in which they reside now remains marginal in their consciousness. Thus, they exist in binary or ultra-ambivalent terms, a structuring that signifies Bhabha's *heimlich* pleasures of the hearth versus the *unheimlich* terror of the other (Bhabha, 1990:2). In short, many of the characters refuse to be British, or American or South African. For Method in Bulawayo's 'Shamisos', the refusal to be anything else haunts him till death so that he dies exclaiming, "My name is Method" (*WF*:85).

Even the Magistrate's attempt to fix the music of 'home' onto the landscape of Edinburgh can be understood as an ambitious attempt to transform Edinburgh itself into Mt Darwin and Bindura, two towns in Zimbabwe, because the Magistrate has failed to transform himself and fit. Thus, his attempt to 'Zimbabweanise' Edinburgh, an attempt that is also symbolically represented through the nomenclature, 'Harare North', in *Harare North*, can be read as a product of his nostalgia for home precipitated by his failure to arrive in the host country. Thus, for the Magistrate, migration is the reason for his frustrations, for his failure to control his daughter, for his estrangement from his busy wife, for his feminisation and for his descent into abject spaces of care-giving. His excess of memory is in stark contrast to Chenai's lack of memory because Chenai is now a black British youth, someone existing in some post-diaspora of sorts.[176] For Chenai, if one has to live, then it is good to live *here*. She is unlike the Magistrate who is always looking back, not only to a Zimbabwe he left behind, but also to a life he used to know, a life he thought he had mastered, a life that is unlike this one whose

[176] The next sub-section will focus on this concept and how it fits in certain representations of particular characters in selected narratives.

body- and mind-altering effects are alienating. His failure to master new technologies is also symbolic of this backward-looking sensibility which Chenai interprets as backwardness.

The characters demonstrate to us how they are uneasy members of the Zimbabwean diaspora and how the dream of actually travelling back home remains etched on the horizon. Whatever goals the characters have in foreign lands are usually inhibited by the haunting "loss of something left behind" (Said, 2003:173) so that their reminiscences are usually riddled with memories of home. It is as if they will never escape home, or even choose not to, in their new diaspora home. That incorrigible 'I', with its roots in a physical place and a particular time, refuses to let go. This is a trait that is present in exorbitant measure in the Magistrate (*The Magistrate*) and Method ('Shamisos'). These two characters seem to hold on to the nomenclatures they brought from home, a symbolic act of looking back precipitated by failure to enter and to arrive in the new space. This new space appears to them as neither home nor the journey's end.

Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity' (1994) is usually deployed as an antidote for such recalcitrant sensibilities as evinced by the Magistrate and Method. However, this concept is actually a weak antidote against the essentialism of the 'I' and cannot be a solution for what Fuss (1989:xi) calls "the belief in invariable and fixed properties which define the 'whatness' of a given entity." Nwagbara goes on to evaluate this concept and concludes, in a way that I agree with, that the concept

> …does not diminish the weight of jaded existence, which is the mental fixation of such exile for changing his social space; it rather heightens his trepidation and crisis. Thus, even though the "Third Space" is a site which does not pander to the whims of cultural fixity or monolithic origin […] it does not still offer fulfilment to the exile (Nwagbara, 2010:159).

Thus, the characters seem to portray, in their experiences, the antinomic nature of exile.

When the Magistrate (*The Magistrate*) reminisces about the music of home and conjures up its landscapes in his mind, or when the narrator in *Harare North* speaks of his days in the Jackal Breed, or when Darling (*New Names*) nostalgically misses the guavas of Budapest, the impression we get is that the migrants are actually realising the good they have lost. Of course this loss should be understood as twofold, or even fourfold if we follow Darling's musings on the homes that exist in people's heads. It is twofold because they lost the home even before they exited it, and also because they miss it after exiting it. The loss of the familiar,

what we can call culture shock,[177] is what precipitates the accentuation of the exile's angst. We see such angst in, for instance, the Maestro in (*The Maestro*), in Darling, especially in that moment when she represents her inner angst by plastering the wall of her bedroom with raw graffiti (*New Names*), Tshaka in his descent into madness (*New Names*), the narrator in *Harare North* whose demise almost follows that of Tshaka, or in the Magistrate (*The Magistrate*). We are also given a premonition that Fati's ('African Wife') future will be angst-ridden if his relentless frustrations are anything to go by. Therefore, even though the exile seems to have escaped the suffering of his/her homeland, the mental and social atrophy cultivates a sense of nostalgia, of looking back to a place and a time that, in the new circumstances, might have been a less unbearable evil.

The antinomy of exile demonstrated by these characters is aptly captured by Soyinka (Soyinka, cited in Nwagbara, 2010:164) when he speaks of a "state of tension where the mind simultaneously embraces an anchor in foreign territory yet ensures that it stays at one removed from the alien milieu." This simultaneity in the act of embracing and rejecting (rejecting home for a foreign space only to embrace home in a foreign space) is at the centre of McClennen's dialectics of exile theory which speaks of the simultaneous existence of contradictions which makes exile an irresolvable condition, thus giving it a tragic edge. Many exiles entertain what Nwagbara (2010:167) calls "punitive reminiscences" which is more of a wish to be in that space, before the fall that provoked exile, which some exiles remember through music, or through homes that exist in their heads, or, in terms of Huchu's 'At the Cross Roads' (*Writing Free*), through recounting childhood shenanigans. For the narrator in *Harare North*, the reminiscences are more bizarre; he wishes for the days of the 'jackal breed', when he used to mete out forgiveness on helpless human bodies.

I have read these antinomies from the perspective of nostalgia as a sad mood occasioned by missing the past, or a place; but they can also be read using the proposition of Dlamini, a proposition that even though there are no monumental pasts to miss, or even though pasts cannot be monumentalised (Dlamini, 2009:18), they still constitute the bits and pieces that make the life of the exile. According to Dlamini (2009:12), there are people for whom "the present is not the land of milk and honey, the past not one vast desert of doom and gloom, and the ancient past not one happy-go-lucky era. For many, the past is a bit of this, the present a bit of that, and the future hopefully a mix of this, that and more." Thus, Darling's (*New Names*)

[177] This phrase was first used in 1951 by Cora DuBois, and in this case refers to the exile's disappointment with the new environment which he/she tries to fix into a home.

fond memories of her guava-eating expeditions with her friends do not define all there was to Paradise, because there were also moments of hunger and sadness. Yet, the food she eats in America, which is part of the reason why she stays, cannot adequately deal with the inner problems that she vents on the wall of her bedroom using graffiti. Likewise, the narrator in *Harare North* remembers the days of the shoe cobbler life which did not contain glowing detail while also remembering the days of the 'jackal breed' with fondness. His present existence in London has bits of adventure that includes wooing Sekai and playing Shingi; it also contains days during which he moves about with the face of pain. This collection of bits and pieces of the present and the past thus communicates a nostalgia that cannot be associated with entirely missing home. In fact, if we are to follow closely the idea of dialectics of exile, then what we have is the simultaneous existence of nostalgia as missing a place and time (the past) and nostalgia as "present anxieties refracted through the prism of the past" (Dlamini, 2009:16).

In this sub-section, I mentioned, in passing, the affective dimensions of exile. At this point, I want to connect these to what I will call 'the incorrigible I'. The argument here is that exile is also an individual phenomenon, a function of the self. For instance, with Tatyana and many well-meaning neighbours around him, one would expect the Maestro (*The Maestro*) to move out of his shell, to put his feet firmly on the ground. This does not happen. This is because the definition of the self "must be made by ways of pointing out the differences that separate a particular person from the social class to which he belongs" (Boldor, 2005:40). In this case, elements are not grouped according to sets of similarities; they are, in fact, not grouped but considered in their own individualities. Therefore, descriptions of people shift or are nullified radically when people describe themselves. In exile literature, the references of the 'I' either shift or are nullified in two dimensions that were identified by Boldor (2005:41). First is where the exile says, "I no longer belong there, but here" (a shift). Second is where an exile says, "I no longer belong there, but I don't belong there either" (a nullification). In the second case, there is a lack of arrival in any primary reference system so that the exile acknowledges his non-belonging to any 'native' community. This echoes Kristeva's view when she asks whether the decision to become an exile can actually be the exile's: "[s]hould one recognize that one becomes a foreigner in another country because one is a foreigner from within?" (Kristeva, 1991:14). This is where, to a larger degree, one places the Maestro (*The Maestro*), and, to a lesser degree, Darling (*New Names*).

The Maestro is an exile from within. It seems as if his intrinsic psychological makeup is more responsible for that than being displaced from a familiar physical and social environment or 'home'. His inner parliament is at odds with the environment of people and

nature and is in sync with the world of books. This, however, is short-lived and the Maestro opts out altogether. Darling, on the other hand, seems to have a certain nonchalant relationship with her surroundings which is interspersed with numerous moments of bravado, like stealing guavas (which guavas make excretion as painful as birthing a country), doing the adult thing, going to the shopping mall with her friends in Destroyed Michigan, or watching porn in the basement with the said friends.

Otherwise her experiences speak of someone whose surroundings are shrouded in alienating sadness. For instance, at one point, Darling and her friend are referred to as broken bottles. At another, they steal shoes from a corpse to buy Lobels bread. At yet another point, Mother of Bones' church turns out to be worse than the pain of excreting guava-speckled faeces when Prophet Mborro rapes a woman to the accompaniment of the congregates' fierce fire-begging singing. In Destroyed Michigan, the pain of missing guavas, the menial work, the snow falling with unrelenting intensity or Darling's own mental pariah (demonstrated when she covers the wall of her room with raw graffiti) are also examples of this inner sadness that follows Darling to America. She seems to have a certain kind of comradeship more with Uncle Kojo and Tshaka, two individuals whose entries into America seem to have suffered stillbirths, than with Aunt Fostalina or TK.

It is in this context that we can also begin to understand the antinomy of exile not only as having the memory of home but also as the simultaneous existence of home and exile, a state of simultaneously being and not being at home, of belonging and not belonging, and of being situated in a primary reference point and being outside it. This means, as Tsaaior (2011:100) states, home and exile are relative to each other and share "only a thin line of distinction between them." However, the bottom line here is that this simultaneous existence of two realities actually shows that it matters where one lives, which explains why the world still talks about exiles and refugees. How individuals also experience space depends on particular affective dimensions so that what we call the simultaneous existence of home and exile means two things: firstly, where particular individuals are at home and outside it, and secondly, where particular individuals are physically exiting home while others are coming in or fighting to stay in it. This clearly captures exile's dialectic.

Locating TK, Chenai and the Descendants of the European Diaspora: Towards a Post-diaspora?

In line with Rumbaut's argument concerning the "1.5 generation" (2004:1162), TK (*New Names*) and Chenai (*The Magistrate*) can be understood as existing beyond and against the diaspora. This is because while their parents are experiencing the diaspora and its ambivalences that include rootlessness, these two seem to have arrived to a place which they identify with and in which their actions are not conceitedly deployed in order to belong. They act because they belong there. At the same time, they seem to exist at a level of disarticulation, that is, at that point where they do not want to articulate diasporic experiences, or use the home that was left behind by their parents as a reference point. For descendants of the European Diaspora like Rogers and his wife (*The Last Resort*), or Catherine Buckle (*African Tears*), this disarticulation takes the form of consciously denouncing and standing against what they are forced to treat as their home (Britain) by Mugabeist nationalist discourse. This sub-section is devoted to analysing these manifestations of post-diasporic sensibilities in selected characters from selected narratives and evaluating whether such a linear understanding of human existence and movement in terms of home (pre-diaspora)-diaspora-post-diaspora is tenable.

There is a lack of continuity between the generation of migrants who exited home and the generation that was born after entry into the diaspora. Thus, TK (*New Names*) cannot be read as an extension of Uncle Kojo the same way Chenai (*The Magistrate*) cannot be read as an extension of the Magistrate. They both refuse to exist in terms that are represented by their parents. In the case of the Magistrate, it is the belief that his culture expects children to behave in a certain way, like addressing elders with respect, something that Chenai has problems with, especially with regard to her relationship with Alfonso. Chenai's disarticulation of these ideals places her against the Magistrate, against the Magistrate's experience of home and against the Magistrate's experience of the diaspora. The Magistrate's acute lack of technological dexterity further relegates him from Chenai's world so that he exists from the periphery whereas his daughter exists from the inside. Chenai's home is, therefore, Edinburgh. She even gets married to a 'native' Edinburgh citizen. Thus, where the Magistrate comes from can actually be regarded as Chenai's foreign space whilst Edinburgh is her home. Chenai's recognisable Scottish accent, with no trace of Zimbabwe in it, places her against the Magistrate who continues to yearn for a single point of lost origin. That yearning is completely absent in Chenai. She does not have anything to remember about a lost home and chooses to ignore the memory of her father. She only indulges her father's memory, like during the instance when

they do gardening together, in order to strike concessions with him. Otherwise it is apparent that she is not in search of nuggets to use in the future, probably in her new home with her Scottish husband.

This practice by Chenai entails the displacement of Zimbabwe "as a point to which diaspora constantly refers" (Gopinath, 1995:313) because Chenai is self-consciously Scottish. She possesses immense possibilities of asserting her membership to and locating a space in the national culture of Scotland. Getting married to a Scottish man is an example of such an assertion of location. Unlike her father, the Magistrate, who is haunted by thoughts of what Gopinath (1995:313) calls "redemptive return", and a nostalgia for Zimbabwe as a site of origin, Chenai's relationship with Edinburgh is not that of someone occupying a stop-over destination but someone occupying a home from which she does not envisage a departure back to her grandparents' country.

This is also the same condition in which we find TK (*New Names*) in relation to his relationship with his father, Uncle Kojo. TK refuses to use his father's memory of home, or his diasporic experiences, as reference points. TK's life begins in a place which he considers a home, that is, Detroit, Michigan, in the United States. Like Chenai, he does not remember any originary culture or originary site; his reference point is where he is local to. So instead of following his father's dressing styles, which include flowing robes of kente cloth, or his mother's desperate performative acts of looking American, TK looks seamlessly American. So, wearing his pants slightly above the knees with the boxer shorts arrogantly sticking out, or spending almost the whole day in his room playing video games, or joining the American army in Afghanistan can all be read as acts of disarticulation or as acts of being against the diaspora in a way. In that regard, TK and Chenai can be read as post-diasporic subjects.

In white-authored narratives, we witness this same act of standing against or disarticulating the diaspora by descendants of the European diaspora. The arguments of Buckle, for example, in which she posits that she and other white farmers were feeding the nation, represent the reconfiguration and re-imagination of the nation in which Europe is displaced as an originary site and homeland. Thus, in the process, Europe is written into the diaspora as yet another diasporic location and not an originary homeland or the signifier of origin for which the descendants of the European diaspora are yearning. Thus, when, for instance, Rogers and his wife go to the U.S. for Douglas' wedding (*The Last Resort*), we are made aware of their isolation from the hustle and bustle of the tarmacs of America and how they miss home. The look conspicuously out of place, as if the soil of Vumba is screaming out their 'otherness.' This is a very interesting, especially in the context of Rogers' vehement disagreement with Robert

Mugabe's classification of him as British. Thus, when Rogers and his wife are in the U.S., it is as if Zimbabwe has actually exported another commodity to the U.S. in the form of Zimbabwean identity epitomised by the Rogers family.

There is a way in which white-authored narratives represent the act of re-signifying the nation and the whiteness that constitutes that nation, but this time under conditions that contain extreme constraints. These constraints come from the post-2000 ZANU—PF nationalist project which foregrounded the nation as 'historically black' (Manase, 2016:130). Still, even amidst those constraints, Rogers and Buckle define their Zimbabwean whiteness, as opposed to the European whiteness Mugabe was forcefully conferring upon them with his ultra-nationalist rhetoric, as an indelible aspect of the nation. This alternative and re-signifying performance of whiteness agrees with what Butler (1993:241) expresses:

> Performativity describes [the] relation of being implicated in that which one opposes, this turning of power against itself to produce alternative modalities of power, to establish a kind of political contestation that is not a 'pure' opposition, a 'transcendence' of contemporary relations of power, but a difficult labor of forging a future from resources inevitably impure.

It is an act of trying to find coherence and stability by dealing with the problem they find themselves in. That problem is that of finding themselves descendants of a diaspora with no originary site of origin anymore. This places Buckle and Rogers in post-diasporic realms. The question can also be asked: are they Afropolitans as defined by Selasie (2013)? Their obsession with fixity denies them that identity, but Ellie (*This September*) and Frank (*Lettah's Gift*) and their placelessness which makes them unidentifiable in Manichean arrangements of A against X can actually be placed in Afropolitan contexts.

The post-diasporic moment can also be captured in the continuous intersections and interpenetrations of nation and diaspora and the subsequent instabilities of the borders of the two. In white-authored narratives, especially in *Lettah's Gift* and *This September Sun*, we get the feeling that Frank and Ellie are not locatable in terms of home and diaspora. They do not seem to have originated from somewhere. They do not seem to be yearning for a home from which they originated. In other words, they are borderless. In fact, the whole global village is like a diaspora for them so that on it, we cannot locate a space to which the two are dreaming of eventually returning. They were born to search for a place but which they do not seem to find, and if they eventually do, it is a compromise that is riddled with uncertainty. For instance,

in *Lettah's Gift*, Frank's choice of Australia is provisional in the sense that he will live in it for as long as he is respected and tolerated. He says,

> I liked Australia. I felt at home in my new country and barely missed Africa. Australia offered a safe future, along with social and political freedoms hitherto unknown to me. It seemed to cut people like me, whose minds wander, a bit of slack (*LG*:20).

If Frank is enjoying what he has hitherto never enjoyed, it then means that Rhodesia and South Africa never really made him belong. Nevertheless, Australia's offer appears provisional in the sense that Frank will stay in Australia for as long as he sees a safe future with social and political freedoms.

For Ellie (*This September*), she is born to wander with no memory of a previous home except that Scottish one whose memory is bequeathed to her by her grandmother through her diary entries. Even that one is not a home in the strictest sense because her grandmother seemed to have been born to run away from it. That is why the family tree is cut as soon as grandmother exits that home so that Ellie's family tree begins with grandmother, a Rhodesian. She grows up dreaming of another home elsewhere (England), and when she tries to make it a home, she finds that her fantasies about it were just that – photo-tricks. She finally journeys back to Zimbabwe in a compromise of love and acceptance, a compromise that also negotiates the past and its memories in order to start somewhere in the present. That forgetting of the past, of any home, is actualised at that moment when Ellie ceases to feel her grandmother anymore:

> One day I couldn't feel her any more and I knew then what I had to do. I had to leave my little hole where I had hidden away. The answer was not in the Spritualist Church, nor was it in my academic article on 'The Rise and Fall of White Zimbabwe'. The answer was in life, in living.
>
> And so it is time for me to go. A new beginning? Back to the beginning? A car door shuts, a phone rings somewhere in the house, not with the short sharp insistent trill I have heard for the last few weeks, but with something like the soft rush of water on a beach, or the long calm call of crickets on a summer's night. Go, it says, go now.
>
> For the first time in a long time, my thoughts are on the future, not the past. I see the clear blue water of the Mozambique Channel, I see the fish restaurant in Bulawayo, Gran's house with the garden full of flowers, the wide open sky stretching on and on and on. I will learn how to cook expensive meals, how to serve customers with a smile, how to run our own business. I will learn which flowers to plant when, how to read the vagaries of each season's passing and, who knows, I may even learn to dive (*SS*:360).

Here, we do not see Ellie reconciling herself with what we can call a home in the sense of a geographical and cultural space; she reconciles herself with life so that life becomes that home. Her vision of the Mozambique Channel and Gran's house actually speaks of the multiplicity of location that the life she has reconciled herself to entails. This, too, is a post-diasporic moment for her.

However, it should be noted that these post-diasporic dimensions of characters analysed in this sub-section should not be understood in the logic of a linear progression from home to diaspora to post-diaspora. The explosion of boundaries between nation and diaspora sometimes may mean that nation and diaspora may end up looking alike in their exclusive and inclusive tendencies so that, in terms of McClennen's dialectics of exile, there is no resolution in sight. The diaspora may be integrated into the nation or rejected, something that descendants of the European diaspora in Zimbabwe have experienced at the hands of Mugabe. Thus, it remains to be seen whether the post-diasporic moment of Chenai and TK encompasses a permanent arrival or is actually part of the simultaneous and dialectical existence of contradictory phenomena.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed the factors that militate against characters' attempts to conquer and belong to foreign spaces. Reading these texts from the theoretical perspective of the dialectics of exile, the politics of belonging and the production of space has allowed for the recognition of the lack of closure in the characters' efforts to be at home in what they called their homes and what they now try to view as their 'new' homes. Thus, their efforts to cross borders, both symbolic and physical, are militated against by various factors which include the failure to completely exit home, the perpetuity of existing out of place both at home and abroad, the perils of existing as an abject and the ubiquity of technologies, both human and impersonal, of watching and micromanaging human beings. The characters analysed in this chapter experience various forms of turmoil some of which are motivated by the fact that their fate is in hands other than their own. This is particularly apparent in white-authored narratives where the fate of the inhabitants of the European diaspora depends on the whims of 'nationalists' and 'revolutionaries'. Inhabitants of the Zimbabwean diaspora experience such exclusions especially through how inhabitants of the host country continue to view them within the context of a constricting past, a past that Chikwava's narrator refers to as a 'tight gown'. The contradictions of the present homes make the characters miss homes of the past and imaginary

homes that exist in their heads so that their consciousness, beyond the Boisan 'double consciousness', becomes multi-layered. However, I have also acknowledged possibilities of moving beyond or against the diasporic experience by locating some characters in the post-diasporic moment. It remains to be seen though if post-diaspora as a condition is a permanent one in a world where space is in a continuous flux. Our understanding of the experiences of the descendants of the European diaspora might be used to dispel any celebrations of 'arrival' that post-diasporic conditions might entail.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

THE IRRESOLVABLE EXILE DIALECTIC: MCCLENNEN'S DIALECTICS OF EXILE

Introduction

The thesis set out to critically analyse representations of characters' movements from perceived disabling spaces to perceived enabling spaces in selected white- and black-authored Zimbabwean narratives of the post-2000 period. Most importantly, the study sought to situate the analysis of these texts within the context of postcoloniality and its associated concepts like exile, diaspora, hybridity, globalisation, multiculturalism, Afropolitanism, cosmopolitanism and other 'posts' vis-à-vis the continued existence, in a globalised and globalising world, of such concepts like nation, nativist and essentialist belonging, race, and border policing (symbolic and physical). McClennen's 'dialectics of exile' theory (2004) was deployed in the reading of the texts. Also central to this research was the use of Lefebvre's concept of space (1974; 1991) and Geschiere's notion of belonging (2009). Can space, which, as Lefebvre's theorisation has shown, is in a continuous state of flux due to human action of producing and reproducing, constructing and deconstructing, inventing and re-inventing it, be neatly categorised into enabling and disabling spaces so that human beings can actually move from one space to another in a way that resolves the exile dialectic (and in the process create belonging) that such movements trigger? Most importantly, how do these characters' experiences in diasporic spaces inform our understanding of the postcolonial world and its celebratory discourses of cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, Afropolitanism, hybridity of identities and other postcolonial keywords against the demons of essentialism, racism and nation-based belonging?

Discussion of Findings

In order to situate my study within postcoloniality, I used Chapter One to explore postcoloniality and its associated concepts mentioned above and their implications in our understanding of exile, space and belonging. I also critically explored the dangers of utilising postcoloniality as a magic wand that can be used to wave away 'shibboleths of the past' that concern themselves with categorising people into those who belong and those who do not. Sometimes, these shibboleths appear in discourses that concern themselves with 'returning to origins' or nation-based categorisations of human beings. Can migration then be regarded as movement out of constricting space to a space of freedom? Can space be dichotomised in that way? Can diaspora as both physical and epistemological terrain totally disarticulate homebound attitudes and discourses? What do we say then of characters' discrepant attachments to the same space as evinced in diverging movements of white and black characters into and out of the Zimbabwean space respectively? Such questions called for a theory that recognised such dialectical tensions occasioned by the simultaneous existence of contradictory conditions on the same space thus making space enabling at the same time that it is disabling. This explains my choice of McClennen's 'dialectics of exile' theory and its centralisation of the concept of the 'tragic edge of exile'. McClennen's theory is meant to factor in the painful and irresolvable aspects of exile into the ludic postmodern trope of exile which is characterised by celebration of exile. It is in the context of these concerns that the texts chosen for this research were analysed.

Chapter One also analysed the centrality of 'whiteness' and 'blackness' in Zimbabwean history and literature (both its writing and criticism). While this research sought to go beyond these categories in the postcolonial spirit of subverting such limiting identity binaries, their centrality in Zimbabwean history, politics and literature required that the texts be read with this awareness. Also, one of the objectives of this research was to find out how the politico-aesthetic ideologies of selected authors subvert or are trapped in 'whiteness' and 'blackness'. How are blacks depicted in white-authored narratives? How are whites depicted in black-authored narratives? The first chapter demonstrated that the history of creative writing and criticism in Zimbabwe was heavily influenced by impoverished, prejudicial and racially-mediated depictions and interpretations of literature. The canonisation of Zimbabwean literature by many eminent black Zimbabwean writers omitted white-authored narratives. This finding motivated the researcher to find out whether black and white post-2000 writers manage to [ad]venture beyond these limited practices in the postcolonial spirit of multiculturalism and multiracialism.

Chapter Two focused on the analysis of narratives by descendants of the European diaspora, namely *African Tears* (Catherine Buckle, 2001), *The Last Resort* (Douglas Rogers, 2009), *This September Sun* (Bryony Rheam, 2009), *Lettah's Gift* (Graham Lang, 2011). The chapter demonstrated how white characters are coming into or fighting to stay in a space that is not only being exited by black people due to crisis but a space on which xenophobic and racialised land politics is being practised. Such a scenario of discrepant attachments calls for a rethinking of disabling and enabling spaces. The complication that arises is: is home only home when there is no crisis? If that is the case, why do white characters remain attached to a home whose politics of belonging is perilous to them? This question summarises one of the objectives of this study. This brought to mind Ahmed's 'Affective Economies' (2004) in which she brings in the dimension of a place being *felt* as home. Here, home becomes a sensory world of smells, sounds and the dust on which feet walk. For white characters, Zimbabwe, especially the farm, is the world they know, a world which is familiar to their senses, hence the struggle to stay, or the journeys back to it. Bodies inhabit spaces, and bodies belong to individuals whose experiences of space cannot be subsumed under one universal rule. This partly explains the discrepant attachments to the Zimbabwean space between white and black characters. Migration therefore, as the second chapter demonstrated (especially when the texts are read in relation to black-authored texts), involves complex and contradictory dynamics that McClennen captures in her deployment of the dialectics of exile theory.

Central to this chapter was an investigation into whether the politico-aesthetic regimes white writers submit themselves under help in transgressing the limitation of race and parochialism. The attempts of Buckle, Rogers and Lang to make race not count in their depictions of the post-2000 period and black people were militated against by how the Rhodesian discourse which impoverished their depictions of black people kept interfering with their representations so that they only succeeded to subvert race in a very limited way.

This September Sun, on the other hand, is more concerned with the self-absorbed and neurotic white community of postcolonial Zimbabwe. The community's mishaps, scandals, dreams (fulfilled, deferred and crushed) and fears are brought into the open through the epistolary and memoiristic narrative that Rheam weaves together from Ellie and her grandmother's diary entries. It focuses on the minute details of ordinary people's lives, in this case ordinary white people's lives. Blacks only feature flittingly as servants at Miles' dusty bowl of a farm, or at Lloyd Cadwallader's house, or in conversations/diary entries about black leadership in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Otherwise *This September Sun* seems to focus more on how individuals are shaped by history and also, more importantly, by the little things that

happen to them. In doing so, *This September Sun* succeeds in subverting the tropes of the Rhodesian discourse which thrives on prejudicial representations of black people as invisible, barbaric, chaotic and dull.

Chapter Three focused on depictions of home in *An Elegy for Easterly* (Petina Gappah, 2009), *Harare North* (Brian Chikwava, 2009), *We Need New Names* (NoViolet Bulawayo, 2013) and selected short stories in the Irene Staunton-edited collection, *Writing Free* (2011). The selected texts depicted home as undergoing a variety of crises that range from economic and social issues to politically-volatile issues of belonging. The parochial and reductionist binarisms of post-2000 politicking that reduce citizens into either patriots (and ultimately autochthons) or sell-outs (and ultimately allochthons) reveals that the exiling away of whites from nationalist political discourses exists side by side with the exiling away of other black people from the post-2000 political imaginary because they stand in the way. The person who does not belong is the one who stands in the way. Exiling away can take the form of exclusion from the discourses of autochthons or physical termination like we saw in *We Need New Names* when Bornfree is murdered for wanting change; or the murder of a couple in 'The Missing' (*Writing Free*) whose house is set on fire by those who deem themselves to be the owners of the country while they are sleeping inside because they are deemed sell-outs; or the physical torture of the human body in *Harare North* in the name of forgiveness. However, this torture of the 'unbelonged' human body is not a post-2000 phenomenon. In Mlalazi's 'When the Moon Stares', the performance of violence on the human body in the perilous politics of belonging takes place in the post-1980 period, soon after the country's independence, thus testifying to the observation that the postcolonial condition's paradox is the revival of modes of belonging that are not only pre-modern but were also thought to have atrophied with globalisation.

Chapter Three also centralised the argument that exile does not begin with movement in the physical sense, that is, it is not only the movement from an original place of belonging to an unoriginal place of not belonging. The texts analysed in this chapter demonstrate that the characters are already in exile way before they actually make physical movement of crossing the physical border from Zimbabwe to the world out there. There are many other crossings (physical, enforced, psychic and aesthetic) that demonstrate how the existence of the characters is mediated by exilic sensibilities. In 'An Elegy for Easterly' (*An Elegy*), the characters' search for a place to call home in the physical sense is relentlessly militated against by how they are viewed in medicalised terms as 'filth' that has to be removed in what is called *Operation Murambatsvina* ('Remove Filth'). The relentless visits of the sanitisers which seem to continue beyond the story, especially because the story ends with another sanitisation of space being

done, means that their presence as unsanitary bodies is not resolved. This implies that they are not at home in what they regard as home so that their only home is a destination to another place which, as the story ends, does not exist. The place from which they view themselves as having originated is the most unfamiliar. Being at home in the physical sense and not being at home in how one experiences it exist simultaneously in this sense, a dialectic condition of two contradictory conditions on the same space. This complicates the notions of 'being at home' and 'leaving home'. When being at home and leaving home become simultaneous (the children in *We Need New Names*, for example, perform numerous departures and returns), the binary arrangement of enabling and disabling spaces becomes problematic. When coupled with discrepant exilic movements of black characters moving out or not connecting with home emotionally, while white characters, regardless of the exiling latency of post-2000 ZANU-PF rhetoric, connect emotionally with a home they are being denied, this binary arrangement is further complicated.

Chapter Three also demonstrated how not belonging is sometimes sublimated into an aesthetic of resistance by the authors themselves or manifests in symbolic acts by the characters, acts that have a resistance ethic to them or enrich the text. For instance, the collection of short stories, *Writing Free*, is a celebration of the freedom of not belonging being transformed into an act of writing free. One short story, 'The Novel Citizen', symbolises this by using a novel character who has escaped the tyranny of the writer to tell his story the way he wants. *Harare North* symbolises this by using a mishmash of Zimbabwean English, British English, Shonglish and patois. In a way, this is hybridity, or an act of existing in many homes, what we can call place polygamy. This also demonstrates that no home is absolute or final, that sooner or later, one has to look for new homes, or *new names*. The look for new modalities of action, or alternative geographies of belonging, is also symbolically represented by the characters. The children in *We Need New Names* literally and symbolically circulate in alternative geographies and appropriate alternative symbols in their search for new names. In 'Danfo Driver' (*Writing Free*), the child character even chooses a dumped and rotting *danfo* as a new space in which his agency, which agency his mother sometimes literally whips out of him, is restored or innovated. So exilic sensibilities, as Chapter Three demonstrates, actually assail the characters long before they move complicating the binary arrangement of home and foreign space.

Chapter Four focused on an analysis of the actions of characters in spaces considered foreign and how they seek to integrate themselves through physical and symbolic actions into these spaces. The narrator in *Harare North* leads the life of the abject, and even reduces the

English language, the language of the new space, into an abject language. He occupies the mental, social and physical backstreets of London, beyond the reach of the legal, and like a parasite, he saps from others like him – Shingi, Aleck, Sekai and Paul – and throws away the sensibilities of brotherhood because, according to him, the new space does not require them. In *The Magistrate, the Maestro & the Mathematician,* the Magistrate conjures the music of the home he left behind and pastes it on the landscape of Edinburgh. The Magistrate experiences difficulties with relating to the new social and physical space of Edinburgh. This failure to 'arrive' in Edinburgh also contributes to the strained relationships between him and his wife and daughter. The Magistrate, however, tries to achieve a modicum of belonging to the new environment by remembering the music of the home he left behind in Zimbabwe and pasting it onto the landscape of Edinburgh. This means the Magistrate's sense of place and memory inhere in a landscape, thus making landscape a cultural construct. He also accepts his downwards traffic to the realm of the abject and gets into care work and this improves the relationship between him and his wife who seems to have adjusted quickly to the demands of the new space.

In *Writing Free*, I utilised two stories, 'Shamisos' and 'African Wife'. In 'Shamisos,' the central character crosses the physical border between Zimbabwe and South Africa but realises there are other crossings that need to be done in order for him to make it. One of those crossings is nomenclatural: he migrates from Method (his Zimbabwean name) to Xolela Mabaso (a South African name that appears on a forged identity book). This makes him perform identity management so that he would be seen as Xolela, the South African, in the event of surveillance. In 'African Wife', Fati marries an American woman in order to access the Green Card (U.S.A citizenship) and goes on to do other performative acts like joining the Neighbourhood Watch Committee to protect his America. In *We Need New Names*, Darling confesses that they worked like slaves as a way of integrating themselves into America. Sometimes, they had to acquiesce themselves with the clichéd schema of American conceptions of Africa, like thinking that Africa is one country, where AK47s are shoved between the legs of young girls. They play along with that identity because the hosts have to be pleased; they need to strike concessions with the hosts, to give them something they do not have. Others like Aunt Fostalina go on diet regimes in order to slim and be made in the image of what they consider the American woman.

In Chapter 5, I evaluated the methods utilised by the characters to belong to the new spaces, an evaluation that also allowed me to make various conclusions concerning the postcolonial celebration of movement. One of my observations is summed up in the title

Harare North, which, in the context of evaluation, I renamed 'Harare (in the) North'. The argument is that the characters' escape might not be an escape actually because Harare turns up in the North, in the supposed enabling space. For instance, the abjection with which the narrator in *Harare North* invades London was as much a way of surviving in Harare as it is in London. In the same way, Darling in (*New Names*) quickly realises that it is not just Paradise that turns up in the North but the whole of Africa especially given the fact that she has to answer to a clichéd schema of questions concerning the whole of Africa. The treatment of some of the characters in medicalised terms as filth in Harare finds its way into the new space, perceived as 'enabling', in the form of xenophobia, for instance, or the characters' circulation in abject spaces. Abjection itself was evaluated as a perilous state of being and in the texts it does not lead to a total desublimation because the characters who circulate in such spaces remain in such. Thus, the characters seem to have run only to remain where they were.

Also, the characters' perceived escape is actually not an escape because, in globalist terms, the world is a village, a panoptic one in fact, where the body is under surveillance. This makes the globe a closed system in which, even as characters search for enabling spaces, their circulation is monitored by human and non-human technologies of watching. The fate of Farai (*The Mathematician*) who dies in Edinburgh at the hands of a seemingly harmless Zimbabwean operative who decides that Farai's research is dangerous to the politics back home, is a case in point. The demise of Method ('Shamisos') testifies at the perversity of watching. But even back home, the watching is relentless and has ready foot soldiers like the narrator in *Harare North* flush out enemies of the state. Watching itself takes on the form of some bizarre border control in which globalisation takes on the practice, not of open and porous borders, but globalised border control. The policing of borders is even symbolic and manifests itself in representations of white characters by black authors. The representations are usually characterised by 'absent' white characters or impoverished and sometimes clichéd depictions of white characters. We have also seen that Tendai Huchu's text (*The Magistrate*), however, manages to (ad)venture beyond this by developing a white character (The Maestro) of whom our understanding is not mediated by race. It is only when the narrative comes closer to the end that we get to know that he is white. This puts Huchu in the same realm as Rheam and Brakash, white authors whose depictions of black characters are not mediated by race.

Chapter 5 also demonstrated how for some characters, the experience of space is usually through the trope of being 'out of place' both at their perceived home and the perceived foreign space. For the Maestro (*The Maestro*), this experience is further exacerbated by the fact that he is an insecure body, someone whose outer and inner parliaments are not in sync. This

experience of the Maestro makes it important to consider the affective, that is, the interplay between space and emotions in issues that have to do with exile. At the same time, we also have to think of how entry into spaces might not have any finality that calls for a celebration. The antinomic nature of exile does not just manifest in placelessness but also sometimes in how characters miss old homes, past homes, even when a return to such is impossible.

Implications for exile and postcolonial studies

The porosity of borders, a condition celebrated in postcolonial theorisations, reveals its ugly underbelly in the invasion of London by Harare, an invasion that demonstrates how national and transnational orders are domains, not of teleological progress, but of continual struggle and negotiation, formation and break up. The local (Harare) and the international ('Harare North) become the same in their treachery. In a crowded world where Harare can turn up in the North any day and any time, it means the exile's attempt to achieve freedom through escape only serves to make manifest the tragic edge of exile. Harare and 'Harare North' collapse the borders of enabling and disabling spaces. What we end up seeing is not just the problem of existing in Zimbabwe or in the diaspora; what we see is the problem of existence itself, of finding a place in life, of resolving the irresolvable dialectic of living out of place. Therein lies the tragic edge. In such a scenario, it becomes an overgeneralisation to dichotomise space into 'enabling' and 'disabling' because in most cases the 'enabling' and 'disabling' nature of a space has to do with how characters experience space and how they relate to it in terms of the politics (of belonging to it) of the times.

For instance, the condition of the Maestro (*The Maestro*), an insecure and placeless body, calls for a re-vision especially in the context of postcolonial celebration of movement. Movement might actually trigger more placelessness and insecurity "in a world which is growing ever more insecure precisely because the churning of its peoples and related predicaments has now reached a level previously unknown in terrestrial history" (Philo, 2014:287). This distorts the division between 'enabling' and 'disabling' spaces, between war and peace, between the Global North and Global South so that existence becomes an everywhere war. This is the essence of McClennen's 'dialectics of exile' theory (2004), this simultaneous existence of contradictions. What it means to be human and to survive on a planet called earth is not a Zimbabwean or African problem but a global one. The battering of the human body by change (climatic, economic, political, social) has the potential of making

human beings exist out of place anywhere in the world regardless of skin colour. Even perpetrators of violence on the human body like the narrator in *Harare North* are themselves insecure; life unleashes its own violence on them. Sometimes that violence arises out of their fear of their own insecurities.

The inability to locate oneself in a place that runs in these narratives, while metaphorically denoting that placelessness, fragility and vulnerability are the only home possible, is a physically taxing condition communicating "endless displacements, lack of connection, alteration, disintegration, and dissonances" (Abu-Shomar, 2013:9) which characterise the lives of those who are jettisoned into a life of exile both at home and in foreign lands. Representations of the lives of inhabitants of Zimbabwe in Zimbabwe and in foreign spaces place them within a ubiquitous existence of placelessness, ubiquitous because placelessness, for the characters, is a condition that prevails both at home (perceived as disabling) and in foreign spaces (perceived as enabling). So whether one is in Easterly (*An Elegy*) or 'Destroyed Michigan' (*New Names*), the feeling of being 'out of place' is common. Whether one is white in London (The Maestro in *The Maestro*, for instance, or Ellie in *This September Sun*) or black in Zimbabwe, existing out of place is a mutual experience. Yet, dialectically speaking, some may actually experience the sense of belonging where others feel that they are out of place.

The depiction of the existence of various characters as being mediated through experiences of being out of place in spaces perceived as enabling and disabling is based on the fact that there is no, in the words of Cucinella and Curry (2001:197), "unified moment or place of safety [that] exists for post-colonial [subjects]." They are perpetually not at home, physically and symbolically, so that what they are running away from, that is, the feeling of not belonging, of not being able to go far in a perceived disabling space, is aggravated in the perceived enabling space. The experience of existing out of place that is communicated in these texts relates to the observations of Cucinella and Curry (2001:198) concerning exile literature:

> Exile literature exposes the layers of pain experienced by the exile at the time of separation as well as the pain experienced in an ongoing way. By many accounts, the exile experience remains irresolvable, recurrent, and aggravated.

The "irresolvable exile dialectic", a prominent concept in McClennen's (2004) 'dialectics of exile' theory, is, therefore, a recurrent feature in the texts that I researched on

Important to note is the fact that home is a place that characters want to have, to possess, to belong to, to escape from and to escape to, but it is not equally available to all. Buckle

(*African Tears*) and Rogers (*The Last Resort*) want to belong to a post-2000 Zimbabwean home that the black characters are exiting. For both the black and white characters, home remains elusive. Staying and leaving, coming and exiting, both actions provoke some degree of exile and alienation. Thus, the characters' existence can be understood as being 'out of place' and calls for a rethinking of exile by contextualising it in particular histories, temporalities, spatialities and affects.

There are some assumptions from globalisation scholars that may also need to be revisited. As indicated by many globalisation scholars, globalisation, though stretching back into time, is post-modern in its present form (Albrow, 1997) because it marks the exhaustion of modernity and the transition to post-modernity. The commodification of culture, for instance, is regarded as a post-modern phenomenon because it marks a break from exclusivity (Appiah, 1991), a distancing of the ancestors. In this, the *post* in 'post-modern' is the same as that in 'post-colonial' (Appiah, 1991). In an on-the-move, on-the-make, high-speed globalisation (Friedman, 2004), the exclusivity of place and its inhabitants is said to be transgressed so that what we call the globe is traversable, "a world not of borders, but a space of flows, a world in motion" (Cunningham, 2004:330). Mobility and fluidity are, therefore, said to characterise this world.

This seeming *traversability* of the world has opened up sensibilities that are attendant in many theoretical formulations that deal with migration and globalisation, sensibilities that have foregrounded issues of "itinerant subjectivities, multiple subject positions, and *identity* as a site of cross-cutting and fluid social practices" (Cunningham, 2004:331). Borders become metaphorical sites for the fabrication of hybrid identities. In this case, identity and meaning are unmoored from place. In pre-modern societies, meaning and identity were locally constructed and constrained. The assumption is that modernity is said to have freed them because places have been transformed according to the dictates of market economics. Beyond the obvious liberation of economic activities from the constraints of place, modernity is also said to have also liberated individuals "from local ways of life, community mores and parochial society" (D. Williams, 2002:355). Modernity is said to have made possible rapid acceleration of exchange, communication and movement across space (fluidity and movement). It has detached meaning from places and has enlarged individuals' possibilities of contesting meanings and identities attached to immediate and faraway surroundings so that sovereignty is now the province of the individual. The geographically bounded conception of home and culture now is said to have been replaced by circulation which, interestingly, is said not to disrupt normal settled life (D. Williams, 2002:356). Singular place identities and geographical

rootedness in a world where people, cultures, objects and images migrate is said to have certainly become problematic. How do people construct coherent and stable identities in a world in which people and ideas habitually circulate for various reasons? This has given rise to Bhabha's notion of hybrid identities and other phenomena like post-racialism.[178]

Again, I feel that to take such a revolutionary stance in our eulogisation of globalisation and the dynamics it has unleashed without taking a serious look at how globalisation might have made borders even more important again is to miss the point. The narratives I have chosen for this research depict traumatic experiences that communicate to us globalisation's 'hunger' for human sacrifice in its heralding of a new era. I need to point out that while the theories of globalisation outlined above give it 'homogenising' power, it might be misleading to think that the transformation of place makes place-rootedness less important (Williams, 2002:357). In fact, globalisation may make place-bound identities more significant although this does not mean that they are absolutely achievable. The transgression of borders and the standardisation of the world is likely to cause a deliberate inward search for authenticity, a deliberate evocation of a sense of belonging to a place, especially "when place meanings appear to be threatened [by those] from 'outside'" (Williams, 2002:357).

Opposing the seductive imaginations of 'our globe' as a village where people, colours, hybridities and cultures kaleidoscopically converge is the feeling that globalisation has engendered feverish attempts by human beings to separate and divide themselves according to where they come from. While some still want to view "nations and their borders as having been unbound", others would like to believe that since 9/11, "nations and their borders" are experiencing, so to speak, "a kind of 'rebound' both in terms of their symbolic salience and in terms of how nation-states are asserting control over national and international landscapes" (Cunningham, 2002:332). Cunningham goes on to site the post-9/11 political rhetoric of George Bush, of making *our* borders *safe* for globalisation, as a case in point. Border management, as Bush's rhetoric conveys, becomes the new order of managing the planet. Cunningham sums it more precisely when he speaks of:

> the aspirations and anxieties of a new kind of global subject—a subject who might have, at some level, participated heavily in the mythologies of a global

[178] Post-racialism is theoretically meant to capture an environment devoid of racial preferences. For instance, the election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the U.S is said to have heralded post-racial America to the world. In this research, such notions of post-racialism surface, for instance, in Buckle's narrative (*African Tears*) where she demonstrates a certain camaraderie with her black workers, as if to say, race matters not anymore. However, such notions of post-racialism need to be critically analysed in the context of how blacks and whites experience space in those areas where they do not dominate.

> nomadism, but now, particularly post 9/11, is sobered, more attuned to the excesses of an unregulated globalism. This subject's consciousness is being re-oriented toward a sense of the need for enclosed mobilities, regulated transnationalisms, and monitored rather than simply flexible sovereignties. (2002:332)

Thus, borders still show the role of the nation-state in territorialising global orders; they are a kind of counter-icon since they are deployed as a token of security by authoritarians in a world that is dangerously interconnected and they might even emerge as the next floating signifier of globalisation.

It is also important not to be misled by "flows', 'fluidities', 'mobilities' and 'hybridities' into assuming that porosity is the end all of globalisation; those words can also connote boundedness, exclusion and a systemised regulation of movement. Flows can be structured and stratified to generate exclusion and inclusion. The presence of global inequalities mean that some benefit while others do not. This means nation-sates remain important in these flows. They are important in shaping not only our lives but also our mobilities. The presence of negative words like 'deportation' in the politics of migration is an example of this shaping power of the nation state. Power has a long history of being administered from the centre or edge (as in borderline) depending on the demands of the times, or from a flow or restriction thereof. What we see in the texts chosen for this research are the difficulties of crossing borders, not only physical borders but border zones into other areas of life – social, political and economic.

Again, instead of seeing the mobility of people in the context of a revolutionary glorification of the dynamics of post-modernity, it is also good, as these texts have demonstrated, to think of human mobility as a result of profoundly horrific and dislocating events that make them reluctant migrants. Going to the west is not a joy ride because the west has a regularised set of borders which encircle centres of wealth. Going to Zimbabwe is not a sight-seeing venture too especially where the affirmative stamping of the authority takes on the form of machete-wielding mobs. Border crossing, in this case, takes on a politicised meaning. Theorising transnationalism in a way that problematises the attainment or lack of attainment of the transnational self, it is my argument, can gain a great deal from exploiting narratives by and about migrants which, in many ways, do not assume the revolutionary and heralding-of-a-new-era tone of many globalisation pundits.

While hybridities and multiculturalisms can be rightly deployed as relevant conditions of a global order, they run the risk of remaining in the realm of perfect ideals with too many

realities militating against them. The globe (a village, scholars say) has, contrary to its depiction as a village, rarely seen the harmonious orchestration of mankind as contained in the dream of multiculturalists. The relationship between multiculturalism and practice seems to reflect 'culture' as having retrogressed into an "ideological battleground" (Wallerstein, 1989:5), to that level where 'us' (autochthons) and 'them' (allochthons, or strangers who need 'our' hospitality) remain central in ordering human bodies in the global village. Also, the fact that the law of hospitality (Derrida, 2000) depends on laws of hospitality (or lack of hospitality) which in turn depend on the whims of people like politicians and 'revolutionaries', or even everyday people in everyday spaces, is in itself evidence of how it is possible for unbound nations to be on the rebound, for porous borders to be policed and for the globe to be gated again in the name of such political rhetorics like "keeping the borders safe for our globalisation." In that case, borders should be understood as being policed and the globe gated which, in themselves, are the spanners in the wheels of postcolonial utopias. To cross these policed borders and to transgress this gated globe requires one to transgress the laws of hospitality, laws whose owners are ready to defend even to the point of death. Borders as geographic, political, economic, social and cultural institutions, both visible and invisible, demonstrate that not everyone is a participant in the interconnections that are said to characterise the globe, thus demonstrating the centrality of the nation-state in regulating mobilities in a period when the influence of the nation-state is celebrated as having somewhat atrophied due to global interconnections.

The existence of other borders beyond physical borders problematises movement. It makes exile an issue that goes beyond mere physical space to include a whole plethora of labyrinths that manifest themselves physically and spiritually – the exile's failure to cross borders even after crossing the physical ones. In fact, even as diasporas are formed, they still bear the nomenclatures of an origin from outside the host country. Thus, the texts chosen under analysis in this research originate from or speak of the European diaspora in Zimbabwe or the Zimbabwean diaspora elsewhere outside Zimbabwe. The various African diasporas that have emerged show the national differentiations that follow the formation of such diasporas so that even against their will, exiles continue to be identified through where they come from, a situation that has triggered Selasie ("Don't ask where I'm from, ask where I'm a local," 2015) to argue that such tendencies are myopic because an individual should be identified by where he/she is local and not where she comes from. However, as has been maintained in this research, Selasie's call is an aspect of those postcolonial ideals which have a utopian futurism, an article of faith in fact, and a spirit (not politics) that can be crushed by the realities that obtain

on the ground. Some of those realities are that in a world where circulation is closely monitored by policed borders, both physical and symbolic, where circulation requires a passport and a visa, one's freedom cannot, therefore, be said to be realised apart from national identity (McClennen, 2004). This is where exile's tragic edge also lies.

The implication of celebrating exile, a celebration that provoked McClennen's (2004) search for the tragic edge of exile, is that all human beings are capable of being equal and free. However, such a celebration is motivated by a moral commitment which chooses to ignore the dialectical and simultaneous existence of open and closed boundaries and the dialectical and simultaneous existence of ideal and non-ideal conditions in the world. This same simultaneous existence of the positive and the negation of it is at the centre of Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2015) coinage – Mugabeism – which is his method of explaining how the ideal and the non-ideal can exist in the same individual (Robert Mugabe) at the same time, locked in dialectical opposition while existing simultaneously. Such simultaneous and dialectical experiences need to be properly understood and deployed in studies concerning exile and, in this instance, closed and open borders, and an open and gated globe, both conditions existing simultaneously so that there is no complete atrophying of one to lead to the other. This is the essence of the dialectics of exile theory.

Therefore, what postcolonially speaking, is a manifestation of the free circulation of bodies and minds does not point to the disappearance of the securitisation of space but a more nuanced approach to this securitisation which sometimes works more with the opening of space for the circulation of human bodies than with the confinement of the human body in space. The precarious nature of being a migrant in a society in which surveillance is, in a more nuanced way, part of the everyday demonstrates the tragic edge of exile. This demonstrates the futility of escaping home and nation in an age that is ostensibly considered to be leading 'home' and 'nation' towards their inevitable atrophy.

Also, an analysis of the individual's affective world also leads to an understanding of exile in the context of the self which in a way situates such a study in specificities of individuals without generalising issues. For some, exile is to be celebrated because it is a freedom of sorts allowing the individual to arrive at a clearer conclusion about issues. For others, however, as the texts chosen for this research demonstrate, exile occasions serious nostalgias, anguishes and alienations. Sometimes, it is the simultaneous existence of freedom and bondage, nostalgia and forgetting, anguish and peace (this comes out more clearly in Darling, *New Names*) that gives credence to McClennen's dialectics of exile theory. This also explains why as some are moving out of what they perceive as disabling spaces, others (especially as demonstrated by

white authors) are fighting to stay or come into the vacated spaces. This is because affective dimensions differ. The rhetoric of an interconnected, globalised, transnational world naively by-passes these mental and affective dimensions that insist on gaining traction on human beings.

Thus, instead of waving the "magical wand of 'post-colonial'" (Shohat, 1992:105) to encapsulate the globe as a whole, this study has revealed that studying narratives from specificities of geography and history can help scholars from reducing the globe to a generalisable whole. The crisis narratives that I utilised in this research testify to this simultaneity of being out of and in crisis so that space cannot be generalised as being wholly in crisis or out of it. Spaces are in continuous flux and construction so that there are multiple and simultaneous forms of understanding and relating to space. This transforms the global village into a field populated by diasporic spaces that continue to interlink with and sometimes be influenced by the politics of nations. One can even factor in the post-diaspora in this conception, not as the erasure of diaspora, but as something that further complicates this dialectic of exile. Such an awareness as I have evinced in this chapter calls for a more nuanced approach to such postcolonial concepts as exile, diaspora, multiculturalism, Afropolitanism, cosmopolitanism, hybridity, post-nation and so on. What is being encouraged here is an awareness of the recalcitrant nature of nation, nationality, national identity, nativism and other like shibboleths of the past and their dialectic relationship with the postcolonial ideals mentioned above. Such a dialectic relationship portends a simultaneous existence and not a 'doing-away-with' that the celebratory tone of many postcolonial concepts contain. The exploration of the characters' experiences in exile has shown that the past matters even when it does not, that identity matters, the nation matters, the 'I' matters, where you are matters – all these things matter even while they do not. This is the whole idea behind the dialectic, that is, the simultaneity of existence of contradictory phenomena. Because of this, exile should be studied within this matrix of simultaneity in order to appreciate the depth of the struggles of those who move or do not move at all.

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