

**THE UNSETTLING OF COLONIALIST AND NATIONALIST SPACES: JOHN
EPPEL'S WRITINGS ON ZIMBABWE**

By

THAMSANQA MOYO

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

In the subject

ENGLISH

At the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Supervisor: DR. R.A. Musvoto

June 2018

DECLARATION

Student Number: 55747701

I declare that **THE UNSETTLING OF COLONIALIST AND NATIONALIST SPACES: JOHN EPEL'S WRITINGS ON ZIMBABWE** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature.....

Date.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisor, DR R.A. Musvoto, for the patient and tireless advice, encouragement and guidance during the course of this research. I also had the immense pleasure of working with the cooperative staff of the UNISA library that was always on hand to assist with academic material that was needed for the completion of this study. There was also the UNISA Financial AID Bureau that offered me a bursary which soft-landed me and without which the completion of this study would have been difficult in these hard times in Zimbabwe. So, to them, I extend my thankfulness. Special mention goes to the members of the Department of English and Media Studies, especially Professor K.Z. Muchemwa, for prodding and challenging me to finish the study. I also thank my valued friends for the moral support rendered. To my wife, Silalelisiwe Ncube, my kids, Nombeko Sinothando Moyo and Mongameli Mziwandile Moyo and my father, Desire Moyo, I extend my appreciation for all the support. Lastly, to God is the glory.

ABSTRACT

The Rhodesian and Zimbabwean space-time involved the creation and adoption of hegemonic discourses that influenced ways of behavior, thinking, perceiving reality and particular ways of identity construction based on mystifying nationalisms. In raced and politically charged spaces, such grand narratives depended, for their currency, on stereotypes, essentialisms, domination and dichotomization of 'nation as narration'. The metanarratives of the two spaces functioned as discursive tools for the legitimation of particular forms of exclusions, elisions and distortions. As discursive and polemical literary tools, these discourses always found sustenance and perpetuation in the existence of a different other. In other words, these constructed narratives sought to use difference as a basis for scapegoating and naturalizing racial, economic, political and resource asymmetries in the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces. Power was wielded not in the service of, but against, the majority who are marginalized. This study explores John Eppel's writings on the constructions of both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe as ideological spaces for the legitimation of power based on class, race and politics. I argue that Eppel's selected writings are a literary intervention that proffers a satirically dissident critique of the foundational myths, symbols and narratives of Rhodesian and Zimbabwean space-time. The study argues that Eppel offers literary resistance to unproblematized identity compositions predicated on socially constructed but skewed categories that limit the contours of belonging and citizenship. The Rhodesian space is viewed as a palimpsest upon which is overwritten the Zimbabwean patriotic discourse that also authorize racism, marginalization, power abuse and other forms of exclusion. In examining Eppel's satiric disruption of both spaces, I use certain strands of the Postcolonial Theory that problematize issues of nation, identity, race, tribe and power. Its usefulness lies in its rejection of fixities, of absolutes and in its general counter-hegemonic thrust. I therefore invoke the theorizations of Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Maria

Lara, Paul Gilroy, Mikhail Bakhtin and Benita Parry. These form the theoretical base with which the study confronts Eppel's writings on Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. The focal texts used are: *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009), selected short stories in *White Man Crawling* (2007) and *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn* (2004), *The Holy Innocents* (2002), *Hatchings* (2006), selected poems from *Spoils of War* (1989), *Songs my Country Taught me: Selected Poems 1965-2005*(2005) and *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road* (1992). I conclude by arguing that Eppel creates a fictional life-world where race, origin, politics, class and culture are figured as polarizing identity markers that should be re-negotiated and even transcended in order to materialize a more inclusive multicultural society. To the extent that both the colonial and post-independence eras cross-fertilize each other in terms of occlusions, creating hegemonic narratives, resort to race, violence, silencing and erasure of certain subjectivities, Eppel advocates the 'hatching' of a new national, moral and inclusive ethos that supersedes the claustrophobia of both spaces.

KEY TERMS

- Nation
- Rhodesian identity
- Master fictions
- Grand narratives
- Self-validation
- Rhodesianism
- Chronotope
- Mythoscapes
- Place
- Space
- Emplacement
- Nationalist Space
- Colonialist Space
- Coercive Accumulation
- Mugabeism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Declaration..... | ii |
| Acknowledgements..... | iii |
| Abstract..... | iv |
| Key Terms..... | vi |
| Chapter One: Introduction | |
| 1.1 Background to the study..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem..... | 9 |
| 1.3 Assumptions of the study..... | 9 |
| 1.4 Research questions..... | 10 |
| 1.5 Aims of the study..... | 10 |
| 1.6 Objectives of the study..... | 11 |
| 1.7 Justification of the study..... | 11 |
| 1.8 Literature Review..... | 12 |
| 1.9 Methodology | 16 |
| 1.10 Theoretical Framework..... | 17 |
| 1.11 Choice of Texts for the Study..... | 24 |
| 1.12 Chapter Outline..... | 26 |
| Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Extended Literature Review | |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 30 |
| 2.2 The underpinnings of the Rhodesian Discourse..... | 32 |
| 2.3 Unpacking the Nationalist Patriotic Master Fiction..... | 39 |
| 2.4 Conclusion..... | 47 |
| 2.5 Extended Literature Review..... | 48 |
| 2.6 Trajectories of Eppel’s Writings: The Focal Texts..... | 59 |
| 2.7 Conclusion..... | 68 |
| Chapter Three: Deconstructing the Constructions of Rhodesian Identities | |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 70 |
| 3.2 Dismantling the Rhodesian Construct in <i>D.G.G.Berry’s The Great North Road</i> | 73 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 3.3 Eppel’s Poetry and the Search for Belonging..... | .88 |
| 3.4 Conclusion..... | 105 |
| Chapter Four: Illusion of Change: Citizenship and Belonging in Zimbabwe | |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 107 |
| 4.2 Textual Analysis of <i>Absent: The English Teacher</i> | 108 |
| 4.3 Land as a Marker of Identity..... | 125 |
| 4.4 Conclusion..... | 136 |
| Chapter Five: The Search for a New Moral and Political Order | |
| 5.1 Introduction..... | 138 |
| 5.2 The Motif of Re-birth in <i>Hatchings</i> | 139 |
| 5.3 The Water symbolism..... | 148 |
| 5.4 The Axis of Evil..... | 153 |
| 5.5 Holiness of Sin in <i>The Holy Innocents</i> | 173 |
| 5.6 Conclusion..... | 188 |
| Chapter Six: Conclusion..... | 190 |
| Works Cited | |
| Primary sources..... | 204 |
| Secondary Sources..... | 205 |

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

This study examines John Eppel's representations of the evolution of Zimbabwe from her predecessor, Rhodesia, and the ways in which such a transition radically departed or rehashed the teleologies and ethics of the colonial space. It is essential to appreciate the fact that to date John Eppel, a white Zimbabwean writer, has written more than twelve books that include novels, short story and poetry collections. He has also contributed in many book projects on short story and poetry writings. He is one of the most prolific white writers in Zimbabwe. Such literary industry cannot be ignored in a nation that has tottered and teetered on the brinks of various crises. The writer's contributions to the Zimbabwean public sphere and his perspectives on the checkered spatio-temporal discourses of the nation need close examination. The study maps out the dominant narratives that formed the bedrock of both spaces in order to show how Eppel subversively and dissidently undermines them.

Given that the title of my study is concerned with colonial and nationalist spaces, it is important to elaborate on issues of place, space and emplacement. Place as a term carries more specific, meaningful, and concrete connotations than space. It involves locatedness in a particular named abstract space. As a concrete term, place induces a sense of belonging and attachment to a geographic entity although it can also carry negative associations like fear, exclusion, violence and corruption as is the case with modern-day Zimbabwe. According to Sandra Schmidt (2011:22), "place occurs when spaces have acquired particular meanings through interactions of people with/in that space." In other words, "place is... seen as space humanized" (Cuthbeth Tagwirei, 2014:72). Most of John Eppel's writings are an attempt at place making in a country he feels he is entitled to call home.

Space on the other hand implies social construction predicated on rules of boundary transgression and the prohibitions thereof. Ranka Primorac (2006:59) refers to the establishment of racial boundaries during the colonial era as the ‘Rhodesian chronotope’ and that space “[...] embodies and enacts social relationships.” Thus, in analyzing the politics of space we enter the domain of the ideological, a central aspect to the study of the Rhodesian and post-independence metanarratives. Henri Lefebvre (1998:92) makes the revealing statement that “... spaces conceal their contents by means of meanings, by means of an absence of meanings or by means of an overload of meanings Spaces lie just as things lie, even though they are not themselves things.” Space, therefore, has to be understood as a discursive formulation that governs racial, political, economic and social boundaries of, in this case, colonial Rhodesia and post-independence Zimbabwe. Herbert Gans (2002:329) sees the transformation of space into place as both discursive and cartographic by saying that:

Natural space becomes a social phenomenon, or social space, once people begin to use it, boundaries are put on it, and meanings (including ownership, price, etc) are attached to it. Then the air-over-dirt becomes a lot or a plot, and if residential users obtain control over the bounded space, it becomes the place.

In the above quotation, Gans has in mind the process of emplacement which helps entangle both space and place to each other. Emplacement basically refers to the ways in which texts are used to problematize, essentialize and orchestrate a sense of home and belonging in narratives. In both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, narratives of and about land and the landscape become sites for the legitimation/de-legitimation of certain subjectivities in the fluid politics of (un)belonging. To better understand emplacement, I invoke Laura Hammond’s (2000:9) view of it as a way in which hostile, alienating and alienated space is consciously and deliberately domesticated to become home through transformation of the landscape and imagining it as home through metanarratives. This complex process of place-making involves creating narrative yarns and justifications in order to occasion identification with space, however unstable, ephemeral and contested this process may be. Such an approach is very

essential for an appreciation of John Eppel's destabilization of the Rhodesian home-making project and the Mugabeist narratives on the land reform identity constructions and occlusions. I argue, therefore, that the narratives on space as place or landscape texts are important for the study as they constrict or broaden the contested parameters of citizenship and (un)belonging in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe.

Central to this study are the concepts of nation as both space and place and the ideas of nationalism, nation-building and consolidation. Homi Bhabha (1990:4) has observed that nations are narrations and, like all narrations, involve elisions, self-legitimation and validations. Benedict Anderson (1991:14) views nations as imagined and constructed, as involving validating rituals and discourses that try to enlist and naturalize nationalistic commitment to that imagined entity. Nations are therefore products of social engineering (Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 1983:1-2). This process involves the creation of what Achille Mbembe (2001:103) calls 'master fictions' or metanarratives. These discursive and self-perpetuating 'logics' often seek to immortalize and naturalize power relations that obtain in society at particular junctures in the evolution of the nation. As sites for the forging of particular identities, nations, according to Timothy Brennan (1990:173), "are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence ... on the fictive quality of the political concept, on an apparatus of cultural fictions" This view is supported by Ernest Gellner (1983:56) who sees the nation as a system of "signs and symbols" strung together by "cultural shreds and patches Any old shred would have served as well." Such an argument finds expression in the names chosen for the two spaces: Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. The names carry historical and cultural baggage that delineate preferred identities that are based on particularized origin myths that, on the surface, appear mutually exclusive in that they imply " a closed pre-determined and pre-destined community" (Etienne Balibar,2002:88). From this standpoint therefore, I argue that both spaces appeal to similar but racially different forms of nationalisms that are instrumental

in the compartmentalization identity constructions. The narrowly conceived and racialized forms of nationalism make a casualty of history. Historical revisionism discursively serves to implant and justify one version of the past, one version of national identity politics and of power relations.

Apropos of the above, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:74) makes an apt observation about the necessary deletions, instabilities, erasures, distortions and misrepresentations in the project of nation-building. He argues that:

Nations just like heroes are not pre-existing entities but are imagined and created. forging a nation includes the instrumental use of the media, educational system, administrative regulations, propaganda, sometimes outright lies and selected fragments of history.

This was the major weakness of nationalistic identity constructions in both spaces. Tom Nairn (1997:71) has it that the problem with nationalism is that it is Janus-faced such that it can be used either for progress (inclusive and just society) or as a tool for retrogression (exclusionary, unequal, corrupt and divided society). In both Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces, nationalism was used as a weapon of excluding other subjectivities from the national family. It dug into the depths of origin narratives and conjured up discourses of sacrifice, blood and suffering to justify ownership, violence and domination in the nation. In its claim to forge national feelings, nationalism becomes the partisan empowerment of people who believe they share the same sense of belonging and thus, necessarily, invents others who are not quite the same and have to be excluded (Tamar Mayer,2002). I argue that although the nation is imagined or is framed as an 'abstraction' "the benefits of belonging to the nation" (Mayer, 2002:18) are always concrete in very racialized and politicized terms in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. These theorizations are important in Eppel's de-compositions and re-compositions of the idea of the nation as a mosaic of identities.

In Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, such narratives “manufacture[d], codif[ied] and help(ed) to reproduce group identities related to race...” and other forms of subordination and marginalization (Mbembe, 2001: 203). Most importantly, Mbembe further argues that these fictions mask themselves as ‘commonsense’ to allow those subordinated to them to define themselves in relation to them. They mystify, confuse, and even mythicize by often plunging into the past in order to dredge up self-propping narratives. Anthony Chennells (1995:103) refers to these as ‘ideological spaces’ in which, according to Mbembe (1991:173), the powerful groups “seek to dominate their subjects through the production of a coherent and codified genre which strings facts and events together in a fantastical way in order to produce the incredible.” Rhodesia and Zimbabwe created such incredible yarns in order to justify particular matrices of power that rendered certain behaviors and ways of thinking ‘acceptable.’ Such incredible narratives in the Rhodesian space were housed in the tropes of Cecil John Rhodes, the civilizing mission, the essential ‘superiority’ of whites of British stock and their culture, Ian Smith and imperial discourses. These, together with the wholesale laying to waste of African history and presence, were meant to historicize, reinforce and legitimate the colonial project. Primorac (2006:68) engages with a “Rhodesian chronotope [which] turned out to be resilient” during colonialism and, to some extent, the post- independence period. It was based on the binary construction of talented and philanthropic Rhodesians of British stock and the peripheral others. The black space was figured as irrational, chaotic and primitive and this justified exclusion, dehumanization and inferiorization. This is the hegemonic construction of the Rhodesian space that we find in Eppel’s colonial novel *D.G.G. Berry’s The Great North Road* (1992) and some his poems in *Spoils of War* (1989). In these two creative works, Eppel counter-hegemonically unsettles the thin ice upon which the Rhodesian national identity construction is based. In this way, Eppel buttresses Maria Lara’s (1998:68) conception of literature as narrative intervention to bring about justice and contest totalizing discourses.

If the writer, John Eppel, destabilizes the Rhodesian metanarrative scurrilously, he does so in order to unmask the “Mugabeist patriotic nationalist narrative” that also thrives on binaries, violent exclusions and unproblematized identity constructions based on race, political affiliation and nativism (Primorac, 2010:203). John Eppel unsettles and problematizes what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:1139) calls ‘Mugabeism’ which he views as “a summation of a constellation of political controversies, political behaviors, political ideas, utterances, rhetoric and actions that have crystallized around Mugabe’s political life.” I conceive the Mugabeist nationalist space as implacably moored in, and poisoned by, the discourses of colonialism and their structures of othering. In the creation and consolidation of the nation, the post-independence ruling class resorts to fragmenting, disjuncturing and partisan cultural symbols of this space. As assiduous and conscientious parrots of colonialism, the ZANU-PF ruling oligarchy discursively installs the figures of Mbuya Nehanda, Sekuru Kaguvi (Shona spirit mediums who were instrumental in the first *Chimurenga* war of liberation from 1896-1897) and Robert Mugabe as incontrovertible symbols of the new nation. These begin to constitute new forms of hegemonic narratives and mythoscapes that exclude other subjectivities in the national imaginary. The post-independence Zimbabwean nation and the broad-based liberation war of the 1970s become exclusively owned by ZANU-PF, thus creating discourses of entitlement. The racist, ethnic and liberation war-based constructions of the nation created identities that were ‘more equal than others’ and reserved violence for those deemed outside the canvass of the national ‘we’. The ZANU-PF brand of nationalism created space for hegemonic groups to have unfettered access to national resources because they viewed themselves as the ‘owners’ and exclusive ‘hatchers’ of the new nation. Since the post-Rhodesian leaders were concerned with replacing the colonial interloper without necessarily changing the systemic structures, they sought to live the lifestyle of white people. This explains the drive towards primitive accumulation and conspicuous consumption (Fanon, 1963:133) in

the post-independence space. This inaugurated corruption, materialism and coercive accumulation, especially with regards to land (Lloyd Sachikonye, 2011:37). This is the subject of my analysis of *Hatchings* (2006), *The Holy Innocents* (2002), *White Man Crawling* (2007) and *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and other Writings* (2004) which are discussed later in this study.

Eppel therefore deploys satire to unmask the colonialist and nationalist spaces and to attack “the cruelty and greed of those who were in power and those who are in power” (Drew Shaw, 2012:100-111). In the context of this study, satire is analyzed for its corrective and reformatory inclination because, in Eppel’s view, no one wants to be laughed at. The humor and satirical attacks of both the colonial and post-independence regimes are Eppel’s ways of removing the ‘fetish’ (Mbembe,2001:103) from both spaces and placing it on the mundane, the obscene and the laughable plane so as to better expose its nudity. Through the use of satire, Eppel removes the veil and unmask the master fictions of both Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces. The strategy invites the reader to participate in the process of debunking the monolithic and monologic narratives of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. Satire, as Henk Driessen (1997:222) points out, “... often mirrors deeper cultural perceptions and offers us a powerful device to understand culturally shaped ways of thinking and feeling” that may need adjustments and even overhaul. One may argue that in regimes based on the falsities of race and dependent on violence and exclusion, the use of satire and humor becomes salutary as a strategy that allows for “... laugh(ing) in order not to cry” (Chenjerai Hove, 2011:35). Hence, the satire that is deployed by Eppel is counter-hegemonic in nature; the laughter is directed at social and political structures that purport to be the natural order of society, national structures that appropriate ‘truth’ for themselves in order to maintain a stranglehold on domination. To the extent that the laughter is aimed at the colonial and postcolonial establishments, it is potentially transformative and helps re-imagine a different social, political and racial order.

I therefore concur with Primorac's (2006:34) observation that "power struggles are reflected, contested, and even for a while settled and decided in narratives" and that "narratives may herald, represent and contribute to, social change." This is the narrative intervention that allows Eppel to position himself on the side of the poor, the dominated, the marginalized and oppressed. In other words, satire creates space for the writer to oust totalizing systems of thought by "an intervention by means of which agents [writers] take initiative to introduce new meanings into the public sphere" (Maria Lara, 1998:68). It aims at rooting and re-routing culturally warped ways of confronting difference and the project of nation-building. The anger in Eppel's satire is meant to disturb authority and guide the reader to feel a sense of revulsion at the status quo. Such revulsion and scandalized outrage is inscribed in the symbols of the vulgar and the obscene that is not unlike another Zimbabwean author, Dambudzo Marechera's evocation of a diseased, morally deficient Rhodesia in his book *House of Hunger* (1978). Tiffin (2003:133) avers that indeed irony (satire) "[...] has become a powerful subversive tool in the re-thinking and re-addressing of history by [...] postcolonial artists." Through hyperbolization, grotesqueness, understatement and scatological imagery among some of its devices, Eppel's satire draws attention to the evils, inadequacies, hypocrisies and failures of both the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces in order to enlist change of behavior. Eppel uses the satiric mode because of satire's ability to jolt the mind into recognition of vices or frailties in an exaggerated way in order to bring about the realization of their repugnance and therefore the urgent need to change. Such a reading of satire in the context of Eppel's oeuvre compels Mbembe (2001:136) to observe that satire allows the ordinary people to "[...] kidnap power and force it, as if by accident, to examine its own vulgarity" because "vulgarity is a normal condition of state power." Writing about a society afflicted by corruption, violence, racism, immorality and abuse of power, Eppel's deployment of satire is therefore salutary.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Zimbabwean society and its literature are, among other divisions, polarized along the lines of race, history, memory and ideology. These divisions are sites for the enactment of inclusions, exclusions and the inscription of dominant narratives that diminish and marginalize other literary voices. The Rhodesian space privileged white/imperial discourses that legitimated white domination and presence whilst the post-independence space scaffolded what Ranger (2005:220) refers to as ‘patriotic history.’ According to Ranger, patriotic histories are officially sanctioned narratives of the past which are woefully narrow, blatantly partisan, and openly racist in their representations of the past. Ranger’s view is shared by Primorac (2010:203) who argues that fictional narratives in both colonial and post- independent spaces have over the years tended to entrench binary forms of thinking. She maintains that the discourses in both spaces insist on violent exclusion and, together, highlight the urgent need for movement away from oppositional and towards pluralistic modes of thinking about the contemporary nation. This is because neither can be considered to be representing a valid form of social critique. The study views literature by different racial and ethnic writers as a form of dialogue between different experiences and angles of telling the story of the nation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:21) argues as much when he observes that “contested pasts and memories (are) connecting tissues across the past and present Zimbabwe.” The study uses Eppel’s oeuvre that spans the colonial and post-independence spaces (when other white Zimbabwean writers have decamped and now write from the diaspora for a white audience) to problematize the tropes of subalternity, home, race, domination and how these can be fruitfully transcended.

1.3 Assumptions of the Study

The main assumptions of the study are that:

- (a) The Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces are founded on hegemonic discourses of self-legitimation.

- (b) Literature can either confirm or destabilize hegemonic discourses.
- (c) John Eppel's writings respond to issues of history, memory and identity construction.
- (d) Satire is potentially corrective.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is based on the following questions:

- (a) What metanarratives does the writer identify as underpinning the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean society?
- (b) What literary strategies does the writer employ to unsettle the dominant Rhodesian/Zimbabwean discourses?
- (c) In what ways does Eppel's artistic vision seek to transcend the stereotypes of blackness and whiteness in his oeuvre?
- (d) To what extent does the writer historicize and complicate issues of identity, belonging and race?
- (e) How does the writer explain the convergences and divergences between the colonial and post-independence space-times?
- (f) Why does the writer privilege the discourses of the marginalized groups in society?

1.5 Aims of the Study

The main aim of the study is to:

- (1) Examine the ways in which Eppel creates space for privileging the discourses of the marginalized thereby destabilizing hegemonic narratives in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe.

It also seeks to:

(2) Analyze the use of satiric humor as a form of resistance to dystopia in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe.

(3) Determine the extent to which Eppel's artistic vision transcends and destabilizes social, political and racial stereotypes.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

By the end of the study I will be able to:

(a) Examine the ways in which Eppel interrogates issues of identity, history and belonging.

(b) Have identified and explained the thrust of hegemonic discourses and how these are subverted in Eppel's writings.

(c) Conclude that the writer seeks to transcend the limitations of black and white stereotypes.

(e) Demonstrate that satire is necessary in unmasking power and showing the need for transformation.

1.7 Justification of the Study

Many white Zimbabwean writers decamped and migrated to other countries either after independence or during the so-called land reform period of the late 1990s and early twenty-first century in Zimbabwe. Some of these writers, such as Peter Godwin, Alexandra Fuller, Catherine Buckle and Christian Lamb began writing about Zimbabwe from the diaspora largely for an international audience apparently to curry sympathy for their seeming victimization and dispossession of land. The study of John Eppel's oeuvre, however, brings a different dimension to white Zimbabwean writing on the evolution of the nation because it proffers the perspective of a white writer writing from within Zimbabwe and about Zimbabwe during politically fraught times. This is significant in that it collapses the already mentioned ruling ZANU-PF-sanctioned patriotic narrative that regards all whites as outsiders without a right to fictively comment and

participate in the political life of the country. The study's importance also lies in how it breaks the boundaries of scholarship that divide Zimbabwean literature into rigid categories of black and white writing. It brings white writing to converse with other writers on Zimbabwe in the Zimbabwean public sphere. The change in the fortunes of whites in Zimbabwe and the resultant violent exclusion inaugurated an era of mutual suffering between the majority blacks and whites, thus, rendering the escape into race politics empty and sterile. John Eppel's writings, therefore, force a re-think on what constitutes Zimbabwean Literature. His writings defy this racial categorization because he is consistently on the side of the abused and marginalized regardless of their skin color. A study of Eppel's literary oeuvre is important in that it reveals the author's clamor for a society where identity construction takes place outside the narrow strictures of race, politics and other forms of exclusion. Besides, his writings span the colonialist and nationalist periods and in this way brings into focus the problematic issues of home, belonging, Zimbabweanness and identity construction in a Zimbabwe haunted by a crisis of how to deal with differences based on race, ethnicity and politics.

1.8 Literature Review

Although a large volume of critical works has been written on the colonialist and nationalist spaces, few of these studies directly engage with the writings of Eppel. This section explores some of the prominent themes and reflections on issues that inform the study. Anthony Chennells has written extensively on the construction of the Rhodesian discourse and settler myths and their limitations in the process of nation-building and identity inscription in both the colonialist and anti-colonialist nationalist spaces. In particular, he looks at the process of ideological constructions that undergirded settler society. Some of the works he has written include "Rhodesian Discourse, Rhodesian Novels and the Zimbabwean Liberation War" (1995), "Self-Representation and National Memory: White Autobiographies in Zimbabwe" (2005), "Great Zimbabwe in Rhodesian Fiction" (2007), "The Treatment of the Rhodesian war

in Recent Rhodesian Novels” (1997), “The White Rhodesian Novels”(1977) and “Settler Myths and the Southern Rhodesian Novel”(1982). Chennells’s exploration of issues pertaining to post-independence Zimbabwe is limited to memoirs and autobiographies by white writers some of whom no longer reside in Zimbabwe. Most of these books, though they deal with the crisis, seem to be focused on shaping and managing the perceptions and reactions of the international community to the Mugabe regime. There is a sense in which these books construct Robert Mugabe and his party as not accountable to anyone inside Zimbabwe and so making an international appeal strategic and necessary. The importance of Chennells’s works to my study resides in the way he engages with the bush war from the white writers’ perspective. Such works will be used to analyze Eppel’s deconstruction of Rhodesian nationalism during the war in *D.G.G.Berry’s The Great North Road* (1992). Chennells’s studies provide valuable insights with which to engage with settler myths about Rhodesians’ bravery and native cowardice, protecting white civilization versus the natives’ fight for freedom, the impact of the war on both whites and blacks and the myth of settler invincibility and the rightness of their cause.

Rino Zhuwarara, a Zimbabwean academic, has written the book *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (2001). The book engages with a wide range of themes on Zimbabwean literature especially before independence. The book, is therefore, important in analyzing black writers’ responses to colonial subjugation and its impact on black society. But the book only interrogates black writers and excludes their white counterparts. It also does not go beyond the year 2000 and therefore excludes the momentous period of the crisis and how it affected society. In dealing with writers like Dambudzo Marechera, Stanley Nyamfukudza, Yvonne Vera and others, the book brings out the black experience of colonialism while John Eppel brings out the white view of the war and independence.

Whereas Zhuwarara trains his literary gaze on Zimbabwean literary luminaries up to the period of the late 1990s, Maurice T.Vambe’s study in *African Oral Story-telling Tradition and the*

Zimbabwean Novel in English (2004) goes backwards in time. The study, like that of Zhuwarara, includes writers like Dambudzo Marechera and Charles Mungoshi but goes further to include earlier writers like Godfrey Ndhlala and Solomon Mutswairo's novels in order to show the influence of African oral traditions on the Zimbabwean novel in English. But, like Zhuwarara's, Vambe's study does not include the study of white writers in Zimbabwe. The absence seems baffling in the context of the late 1990s and early 2000s when these books were published and when the bifurcation of Zimbabwean Literature along racial lines was showing increasing fissures and tensions. The importance of both studies to my study is in the particular ways of reading Zimbabwean Literature in terms of its history and culture, preoccupations that are very much at the center of Eppel's novels, short stories and poems.

A study titled *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* (2006) by Ranka Primorac gives the impression that it deals exclusively with the period of the Zimbabwean crisis. The book, however, deals with the Rhodesian chronotope, especially the chapter on "Writing against Rhodesian Space-Time." In this way, it shares similarities with John Eppel's novels and poems on Rhodesia and its ideological apparatus. The book also engages with the Zimbabwean writers' response to the political, economic and social environment after 2000. The themes take on a political dimension given the fact that vexed issues of governance, exclusion, violence and identity politics are highlighted. To the extent that the book examines ways of reading Zimbabwean Literature in general, it is helpful to my study of John Eppel's analysis of the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean metanarratives and their justification of exclusions. In the article "Rhodesians Never Die: The Zimbabwe Crisis and the Revival of Rhodesian Discourse" (2010), Ranka Primorac shows the extent to which white writers writing in the diaspora refuse to take on a new identity as Zimbabweans and instead re-enact Rhodesianism. These are issues that John Eppel deals with in most of his writings.

A collection of critical essays, *Versions of Zimbabwe: new approaches to literature and culture* (2005), edited by Robert Muponde and Ranka Primorac is an important contribution to Zimbabwean literary studies by both black and white writers. It analyzes problematic issues of race, citizenship, belonging, ethnicity, history and coercion. In so far as the different contributors seek to transcend the binaries of race, the collection is important to my study because it mounts the argument that there are different versions of Zimbabwe that compete for space and, therefore, both black and white writers need to be studied together. Ashleigh Harris' (2005) study titled: "Writing home: Inscriptions of whiteness/descriptions of belonging in white Zimbabwean memoir/autobiography", Kizito Muchemwa's (2005) "Some thoughts on history, memory and writing in Zimbabwe" and Terence Ranger's (2005) "Rule by historiography: the struggle over the past in contemporary Zimbabwe" are particularly important to my study. Although they do not directly analyze the works of John Eppel, they, nevertheless, bring out important issues raised by the focal texts, especially about the need to bring other versions of Zimbabwe as captured by minority groups like the whites. The authors of these essays also bring out issues to do with the abuse of history and memory and the legitimization of particular power relations.

Though dealing largely with the feminist discourse, Lene Bull-Christiansen's *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and identity in Zimbabwe* (2004) is also important in so far as it grapples with and juxtaposes the creation of what she calls "Rhodesian settler discourses" and "Zimbabwean nationalist discourses" (Bull-Christiansen, 2004:44). These discourses create binaries of white/black, insider/outsider, and patriot/sell-out in both the colonial Rhodesian and post-independence Zimbabwean societies. These are arbitrary categories which John Eppel seeks to subvert in his writings. Bull-Christiansen's critique further shows the ways in which nationalism is deployed as a strategy

for inclusion and exclusion and the processes involved in the creation of national myths. The study is relevant because it transgresses both the colonial and nationalist spaces.

The book *Manning the Nation: Father figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society* (2007) edited by Kizito Z.Muchemwa and Robert Muponde is important in the way it deals with the discourse of ‘*amadoda sibili*’ (real men) in the colonial and postcolonial spaces. It deals with a patriarchy that seems to have exhausted itself and, in the process, has plunged the nation into chaos. The Zimbabwean leadership is framed as aggressively patriarchal and nativist, what Anna Chitando (2011:33) calls the “militaristic outlook of Zimbabwe’s political leadership” that often resorts to violence even where it is unnecessary. No wonder one of Robert Mugabe’s post-2000 cabinet was referred to as a ‘war cabinet’ even though Zimbabwe was technically not at war. Although Chitando’s study does not deal with Eppel’s writings, it sheds some light on the patriarchal and aggressive nature of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe.

The above-mentioned works on Zimbabwean literature immensely help in my analysis of John Eppel because they explore general themes and trends in this literature.

1.9 Methodology

The study uses a qualitative approach. This involves a textual analysis and interpretation of the focal texts which in this case are the fictional works of John Eppel that include his novels, short stories and poems. In the analysis of these primary texts, relevant secondary sources will be used. The qualitative approach is selected because it allows the focal texts to be interpreted in the context of their subjective re-creation of the empirical world of the writer. According to Norman Denzini and Yvonna Lincoln (2011:4), qualitative research:

Involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artefacts, and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives.

This approach is particularly important for this study because it allows the researcher to situate the research in its spatial and social context and, in the process, tease out subjective life worlds. It is also amenable to studying the mosaic of experiences, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs. Besides, the approach allows for the intellectual intervention by the researcher through his/her knowledge of the selected society's history, values and his/her own lived experiences. Michael Patton (2002:40) asseverates that the "researcher's personal experiences and insights (are allowed to be) an important part of the enquiry and critical to understanding phenomena."

The study also employs what John Creswell (2013) calls the narrative research methodology. This procedure "... begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals" (Creswell, 2013:70). It is influenced by the perception of a writer's identity and how he/she views the self in a given society at a given time through either theme or narrative style. By analyzing the life experiences of characters and the narrative style in John Eppel's oeuvre, the researcher is able to deploy abstract theoretical and interpretive procedures in order to unpack the problematic issues about the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean societies. Imaginative works of art, especially novels, short stories and poems by their very nature create fictional life-worlds in which characters re-count and interpret their idiosyncratic perceptions of the societies they live in. In the texts selected for analysis in this study, these experiences are invariably narrated through black and white characters so that we are able to glean the place and experiences of both in the context of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. The narrations by the author through characters therefore become metonymic of the successes and failures of the societies under study.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

In this study I invoke the Postcolonial Theory in order to analyze and interpret John Eppel's writings. Although this theory has been interpreted in various ways by different scholars, there are particular areas of agreement over what it should entail. Thus, this study employs certain

strands of the Postcolonial Theory that are most relevant to this discussion. According to Helen Tiffin (2003:95), the Postcolonial Theory is essentially subversive and' dissident in so far as it interrogates colonialism and its effects on postcolonial identities and cultures. She views it as engaged in "subversive maneuvers." In Kwame Appiah's (2001:224) view, it challenges hegemonic and totalizing narratives, especially those that concern the Center and the Margin. I invoke Benita Parry's (1996:67) understanding of the Postcolonial Theory as implicated in "an understanding of colonialism and its legacies different from the narratives handed down by either colonialism or by anti-colonialist movements, and thus throwing the claims of both official and dissident historiographies into disarray." Basing on the above argument, I contend that the Postcolonial Theory resists and, in the process, complicates the concepts of race, nation, identity and history as homogenous entities. To the extent that the project of 'nation as narration' (Bhabha, 1994:4) is a product of, and responds to, grand narratives, the Postcolonial Theory is relevant to my study in contesting Rhodesian/Zimbabwean composition of identity and citizenship. The grand narratives that this theory problematizes and disrupts tend to be used in the service of hegemonic groups to the exclusion of the powerless, the poor and marginalized. Hence, the stories that are allowed to circulate about the nation determine the parameters of belonging and unbelonging.

Given the fact that the nationalist space borrows heavily from the colonial space that it purports to undermine, I employ Appiah's (2001:223) argument that "... human identity is constructed and historical" and that identities are replete with "false presuppositions, of errors and inaccuracies that courtesy calls "myths", "religion" "heresy" and science "magic." Such an approach resonates with Eppel's satirical disruption of these artificial constructions of identities in both spaces where history is re-visioned, race given a natural, immutable quality, political affiliation deemed definitive of citizenship and culture used as a site for domination. When Appiah (2001:224) dismisses race, tribe and history as 'dangerous' constructions, his intention

is to collapse the notion of homogenous identities that are very much at the heart of the fragilities of the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean nation-building project. Fragile because, in Eppel's view, they depend on the disintegrative, socially constructed forces that magnify difference rather than similarities. In this way, Appiah proposes a heterogenous perspective of identity construction that is inclusive and multivalent. Thus, I argue that the concepts of nation as an identity marker, of race, tribe and political affiliation are never stable or monolithic. As identity markers, these categories belie fissures, instabilities, porosities and overlaps. To that extent, therefore, Appiah's theorizations elucidate this study in its interruption of the foundations of colonial and nationalist narrative spaces.

For Paul Gilroy (1993:6), the postcolonial critical approach offers "intermediate concepts lodged between the local and the global," between the colonial and the post-independent. The world inhabited by the writer is a product and, therefore, a reflection of a plethora of cultures and influences all of which need to be appreciated. This accords well with Bhabha's (1994:14) conception of the theory as engaged with loss of fixities, the movement away from viewing literature and life in terms of essentialized binaries of black and white to an analysis of society's problems in terms of what the contact between different cultures brought. This means that the theory resists the same hegemonic discourses that John Eppel subverts in the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces. The Postcolonial Theory destabilizes the notion of 'purity' and opens up spaces for multiculturalism even as it problematizes issues of identity, belonging and the nation. Apropos of this, Tiffin (2003:95) argues that "post-colonial cultures are inevitably hybridized, involving a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impulse to create and recreate independent local identity." The theory necessarily involves 'contamination' and the "continual deferral of authentication" (Tiffin, 2003:18). Bill Ashcroft *et al* (1999:223) argue as much when they observe that the theory "provides a subtler

and more nuanced view of...the relationships than the usual 'us' and 'them' distinctions" that characterize the Marxist and Afro-centric approaches.

According to Gilroy (1999:3), the critical perspective is "rooted and routed through the special stress that grows with the effort involved in trying to face [at least two] ways at once." This shows that the postcolonial critical lens is by its nature interstitial and open. It allows for the interrogation of Rhodesian metanarratives and the post-independence hegemonic and legitimating discourses as characterized by "instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade" (Gilroy, 1999:3). This disrupts the certainties of both spaces while insisting on a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994:228). By satirically focusing on both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, Eppel unsettles the racial, social and political stereotypes of both spaces thereby suggesting the vistas of possibilities conjured up by the dynamic and dialectical relationship of the two. Because John Eppel undermines the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean hegemonic discourses, this theory is apt in so far as it "involve[s] a mapping of the dominant discourse[s], a reading and exposing of...[their] underlying assumptions, and the dismantling of these assumptions ..." (Helen Tiffin, 2003:98) in order to create an identity outside the us/them binary. In this way, both spaces are figured as claustrophobic and in need of transgression.

I also draw upon the Fanonian ideas about the creation of a national culture and the pitfalls of national consciousness in the book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963). Frantz Fanon analyzes the anatomy of colonialism and how the ideas that underpin the colonialist space permeate the post-independence period so that the interpenetration, what Mbembe (2001:14) calls 'entanglement', blurs both chronotopes. For Fanon, colonialism was an injustice based on compartmentalized racial asymmetries that affected the mental, psychic, economic and political stability of the colonized. To concretize these racial inequalities and to show the unsustainability of this colonial logic, Fanon (1963:31) points out that:

In the colonies, the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich.

Such an examination of the colonial space tends to justify the resort to liberatory violence that humanizes and empowers the black person while deflating the high ground that the white man appropriates for himself; a situation that he describes as “...the replacing of a certain ‘species’ of men by another ‘species’ of men” (Fanon, 1963:27). This, of course, does not happen in the way Fanon prognosticated (as is shown later) because the change is cosmetic and illusory and not a total overhaul of the system. This aspect is important in my exploration of the Rhodesian Bush War or the Liberation War of the seventies.

If the colonial society is a Manichean one, divided into racial groups, post-independence society remains binary only this time the Manichaeism is based on class distinctions, political affiliation and residues of white privilege. Fanonian thought is also of archival importance in interrogating the logic of violence and primitive accumulation in the evolution of Zimbabwe. It conjures up the mimicry which the new ruling class adopts from their erstwhile rulers, what he refers to as the obsession with “replicating the foreigner” (Fanon, 1963:127). Eppel analyzes the ways in which the Zimbabwean ruling elite evinces symptoms of what Ngugi wa Thiong’o (2007:180) calls ‘whiteache’ even as this class adopts skin-deep revolutionary rhetoric. From the Fanonian perspective, the post-independence period is fraught with contradictions and paradoxes in that the black leaders myopically make a “heart-breaking return to chauvinism in its bitter and detestable form” (Fanon: 1963:126). One begins to witness a circular motion where apparent movement away from colonial practices becomes a spectacular return to the source of national polarities and exclusions. Through narratives that foreground pacification, projection and threat of imminent violence, the new leadership “lull(s) everybody to sleep... it jostles people and bullies them, thus intimating to the citizen that he is in continual danger” (Fanon, 1963:132).

The threat of force upon the ordinary people in the post-independence period, one-party statism and the preoccupation with patriotism becomes a mask for the practice of primitive accumulation and conspicuous consumption without accountability. For Fanon, this explains the leaders' disconnect with the people they lead; they are preoccupied with corruption and have no vision for the developmental trajectory of the nation. Their concern is quite simply to occupy the tables vacated by the colonizer. Fanon's theorizations are therefore germane in disrupting Mugabeism as empty rhetoric, one grounded in the past rather than the present and future. Fanon's postcolonial theoretical slant also helps in explaining the resort to uncritical Afro-radicalism and nativism that sees whites being scapegoated and black people of foreign origin stigmatized as totemless puppets of the opposition and the West. Buttressing the nativist thrust of the nationalist space, Fanon (1963:136) points out that:

[...] he (the leader) uses every means to put them (the people) to sleep, and three or four times a year asks them to remember the colonial period and to look back on the long way they have come since then.

The past then becomes a hedge, a decoy, a bulwark against a dispassionate analysis of the present, a miasmatic deployment of patriotic history. From this standpoint, the colonial period becomes an anathema, a bogey period of regression to be avoided whilst strategically deferring change in post-independence Zimbabwe. This political smoke-and-mirrors approach disguises a failure to bring change in the material lives of the generality of the people. To that extent therefore, Fanonian thought interrogates and punctures the narratives of colonialism and post-independence that this study seeks to unveil. This is especially evident in *Absent: The English Teacher* which portrays the ruling elite in post-independence Zimbabwe as having adopted the same colonial instruments of coercion and domination that the minority whites used to exploit during the colonial space in Rhodesia.

I also invoke the Bakhtinian conception of literature in my study. This relates to the idea of the chronotope which Bakhtin sees as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial

relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (Mikhail Bakhtin, 1986:84). This is time-space and relates to situating literature in its context. Bakhtin is also important to this study because of his concepts of polyphony and multivocality. He theorizes that “the social diversity of speech types (and) the differing individual voices permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interpretations” (Bakhtin, 1986:263). The study advocates for the inclusion of many dialogic voices in the Zimbabwean body of literature in order to ‘block’ the possibility of a black literary monologue that runs the real danger of becoming epistemic hegemony.

Bakhtin (1986:33) argues that literature imaginatively creates a life-world that the reader may escape into but whose raw material is derived from the real world from which the writer is a part. This is what he refers to as “extraliterary genres ... the genres of everyday life and ideological genres”. This brings to the fore the concept of intertextuality in that the empirical world of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe was shaped by, and in turn, shaped the fictive world. As stated before, the Postcolonial Theory seeks to subvert dominant metanarratives. This dovetails with the Bakhtinian conception of carnivalesque literature which uses laughter/humor, exaggeration, satire and scatology as sites for the subversion of authority, hegemony and also offers possibilities for change and reform. John Eppel uses the elements of the carnivalesque as a strategy to unsettle dominant master fictions of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe.

Although linked to the feminist theory, Maria Lara understands literary narratives as “morally textured” to achieve justice, good life, and institutional transformation and this is relevant to my study. Lara (1998:68) views literary language “as an internal mediation of action, and more precisely, as an intervention by means of which agents take initiative to introduce new meanings into the public sphere.” Literary language, therefore, becomes performative in its illocutionary force of bringing change and justice. For her, literature inaugurates dialogue in the public sphere and becomes “... not only a means of showing what makes one different, but

also of showing that those differences are an important part of what should be regarded as worthy” (Lara, 1998:157). Zimbabwean Literature in its totality brings out the mosaic of literary sensibilities, thematic poetics and interpretations that enrich rather than diminish its impact. Thus, analyses of Eppel in this study “configure new ways to fight back against past and present injustices, thus making transformation possible” (Lara, 1998:5). Lara privileges the use of memory and re-memory to show the ways in which the knowledge of the past should positively redound on the present and the future in bringing about transformation in society. Eppel interrogates the tendency in Zimbabwe of looking at the past in fixed, essentialized and static ways. In this way, the colonial period in Eppel’s oeuvre is rehashed in its unadulterated forms in post-independence Zimbabwe.

1.11 Choice of Texts for the Study

A study that examines Eppel’s oeuvre on Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces presents difficulties in terms of which texts to include and exclude. Eppel’s writings tend to intersect, overlap and reinforce each other in terms of themes, characters and style. It has to be noted that his exploration of the colonial and post-independence realities rotates around the themes of race, stereotypes, power/powerlessness and politics or, in general, the ways in which dominant groups seek to impose their hegemony on the weak, marginalized and vulnerable in society. Setting, plot and to some extent characters may be different but Eppel’s thematic positioning on the side of the subaltern is often more or less the same. In my examination of the Rhodesian space, I deliberately chose the following texts for my study: *D.G.G.Berry’s The Great North Road* (1992), selected poems from the collections *Spoils of War* (1989) and *Songs my Country Taught me* (2005). These texts overtly reflect Eppel’s satiric disruption of Rhodesianism and its exclusionary forms of national identity construction. The texts lay the foundation for the writer’s acerbic mockery of the post-independence dispensation which was optimistically expected to be radically and structurally different the Rhodesian space. In zooming in on the

period after the attainment of independence, I analyze the texts *The Holy Innocents* (2002), *Hatchings* (2006), *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009) and selected short stories from *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings* (2004) and *White Man Crawling* (2007). These were chosen for the nuances they bring to the discourse of Mugabeism as a strategy of performing power and the attendant politics of belonging, resource (re)distribution, identity formation and citizenship.

The choice of these texts necessarily implies the exclusion of others. In this particular case, Eppel's novella, *The Giraffe Man* (1994), could not be reasonably used in the same study with D.G.G.Berry's *The Great North Road* without running the risk of repetition. This is because *The Giraffe Man* is a mockery of "the general triviality of [white] lives" (Dan Wylie, 2001:6). In order to depict this pettiness of white lives and culture, Eppel's satire is directed at the colonial educational system and its bankruptcy. These are the themes that are analyzed in the section on *The Great North Road* and *Hatchings*. The other novel is *The Curse of the Ripe Tomato* (2001) which is set in England and features two Zimbabwean characters who decide to come back to Zimbabwe and get married despite the barriers of race and age. These two main characters feature briefly in the novel *The Holy Innocents* as symbols of the possibility of transcending race or, the need for a creative fusion of racial opposites. Such a theme is evident in *Absent: The English Teacher* when George offers help to Polly the black, abandoned and orphaned girl. Themes of race, religion, age and gender that the novel *The Curse of the Ripe Tomato* examines are also present in the texts chosen for this study.

The book, *Together* (2011), is a collection of short stories and poems that was co-authored with Julius Chingono. Eppel's poems and short stories in this collection also interrogate the themes that my study unravels. Most importantly, the collection also focuses on the Gukurahundi/Matabeleland and Midlands disturbances and the Zimbabwean crisis which are topics sufficiently so broad as to warrant separate studies of their own. These topics are

therefore beyond the scope of this study. *Sonata for Matabeleland* (1995) and *John Eppel: Selected Poems 1965-1995* (2001) are poetry collections that feature most of the poems found in the collections *Spoils of War* and *Songs my Country Taught me* with a few additions. In any case, most of the poems in these collections explore such themes as nature and landscape which are areas that need special focus on their own.

1.12 Chapter Outline

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces the area of study and elucidates the research topic. It deals with the statement of the problem by examining the contentious issues that necessitated the research. In this chapter I explore the assumptions that underpin the study, the research questions and aims of the study, objectives and a justification of why the area was chosen. In other words, it gives the epistemic gap(s) to be filled through the study. The chapter delineates the methodologies to be deployed in carrying out the research, what critical literary theories are to be used to enlighten the study. Finally it gives the organization of chapters and a list of key words used in the whole study.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framwork and Extended Literature Review

This chapter provides the theoretical background to the metanarratives that underpinned the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean space-time. It interrogates the ways in which these ‘nationalist’ narratives naturalize particular ways of viewing history and the relations that obtain in society at the given juncture. It argues that to the extent that both spaces are characterized by particular technologies and architectures of self-legitimation, abuse of power and occlusions, they need to be transcended in order to materialize a more humane, just and egalitarian society. This chapter also provides an extended review of the literature that is relevant to this study so as to locate it within the broader scholarship on Zimbabwean Literature.

Chapter Three: Deconstructing the Constructions of the Rhodesian Identities

The chapter examines the construction of essentialized identities predicated on the grand narratives of race, history, imperial discourses and myths of origin. Rhodesia as an imagined national construction was based on mystifying ideological imperatives that served to naturalize the asymmetrical power/racial relations as immutable. Whites of British stock were represented as superior culturally, rational, moral, industrious, philanthropic and invincible. Such a figuration of the colonial subject served to elevate white domination of blacks as messianic. The chapter explores the ways in which the writer subverts these through characterization and parodying the symbols and rituals that underpinned Rhodesianism. The chapter argues that Eppel uses a microcosm of the settler community, their speeches, behaviors, attitudes and worldviews to undermine the limitations of Rhodesian nationalism and identity inscription. Rhodesian identity is, therefore, shown to be based on the accentuation of racial and cultural differences that inaugurated the construction of the marginal other who is the native. Through the deployment of scatological imagery and satire, the chapter contends, Eppel scurrilously strips Rhodesianism of its threadbare pretensions and presumptions of superiority leaving it as a merely hypocritical and grandstanding charade. This is rendered even more egregious in the chapter's analysis of the Rhodesian Bush War. To do that, I make a textual analysis of the novel *D.G.G. Berry's The Great North Road* (1992), and some poems from collections: *Spoils of War* (1989) and *Songs my Country Taught me* (2005).

Chapter Four: The Illusion of Change: Citizenship and Belonging in Zimbabwe

This chapter problematizes the constructions of belonging, identity and citizenship in post-independence Zimbabwe. It analyzes the manner in which the patriotic narrative narrowed the definitions of Zimbabweanness whilst privileging political identity. The chapter argues that the construction of belonging and citizenship and the binaries of insider/outsider, patriot/sell-out

and settler/indigene is a strategy arbitrarily used by the ruling elite to invent enemies and scapegoats to justify violent exclusion and the politics of coercion. In the revived discourse of nativism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, land, politics and minority status tend to be weaponized in order to serve the partisan interests of the ruling party. I argue that land in both spaces becomes a site for xenophobic dispossession and the forging of national insignificant others to be excluded from the national family. The change from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe is constructed as chimerical in that the structures of inclusion, legitimation/de-legitimation and exclusion are rehashed in very racial and claustrophobic political ways. I argue that Eppel's stance on the mobilization and deployment of power is that it should serve the interests of the people, especially the ordinary, powerless, marginalized, vulnerable members of society and not to work against them. But to the extent that the nationalist space, like its Rhodesian predecessor, has glaring deficits in this regard, a new inclusive political, social and economic dispensation has to be striven for in Zimbabwe. In doing that the chapter focuses on the novel *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009), selected short stories in *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings* (2004) and *White Man Crawling* (2007).

Chapter Five: The Search for a New Moral and Political Order

In Chapter Five, the study analyzes the problematic of race and class in post-independence Zimbabwe. While race continues to manifest itself in the form of neo-Rhodies, there is a way in which Eppel looks at the contradictions in Zimbabwe as largely influenced by class and materialism. The chapter contends that the moral corruption that characterizes certain spaces in post-independence Zimbabwe attests to the need for the 'hatching' a new moral order. The project of nation building is constituted as in need of a new set of ethics. This chapter argues that Eppel uses riotous satire to show how the gangrene of moral corruption has eaten deep into the very foundations and pillars that ordinarily ought to superintend to the health of society. In this regard, the Christian religion, traditional healing practices and the medical fraternity are

mocked for being complicit in the moral rot that inheres in the post-independent nation. These are constructed as phoney and conduits in the worship of the god of wealth and exclusion. There is also a collusion of upper class blacks and whites to marginalize the ordinary citizens which makes it necessary for a new order to be established. I analyze novels: *Hatchings* (2006) and *The Holy Innocents* (2002) to demonstrate my argument in this chapter.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This is the concluding chapter. It synthesizes the various arguments in the preceding chapters about how John Eppel unsettles the colonialist and post-independence metanarratives. In this chapter, I argue that John Eppel satirically attacks the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean societies for their prejudices, stereotypes, and racial polarizations. The colonialist and nationalist spaces are shown to be ideological spaces that use self-propping, exclusionary metanarratives to justify power, racial, cultural and social relations in colonial Rhodesia and post-independence Zimbabwe. In light of the foregoing arguments in this chapter, the study argues that Eppel yearns for a third space outside the limitations of both Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces. The chapter also makes recommendations for future studies.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Extended Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One served to create the context and background to this study by locating the statement of the problem, assumptions, questions that guide the study, the aims, objectives, justification, methodologies and the theories used to clarify it. This chapter unpacks and discusses the grand narratives, myths and (mis)representations that form the foundation of both the colonial and nationalist spaces. First, I examine the ways in which ‘nation as narration’ is a strategy that legitimates and de-legitimizes certain matrices of power relations in constructions of identity. In the second segment of this chapter, I provide an extended review of related literature that directly or indirectly informs this study in order to establish points of convergence and departure in terms of themes.

Most of Eppel’s oeuvre on colonial Rhodesia and post-independence Zimbabwe offers vistas of possibilities by questioning dominant constructions of space. According to Primorac (2006:59), space can be viewed in both physical as well as discursive dimensions. In its discursive form, space should be looked at as a creation of human beings as they interact to produce particular and complex social relations and how these are entrenched to become the guiding philosophies of life at certain historical junctures. This conception of space as a social product is important because, according to Lefebvre (1991:99), it has the tendency to exclude and include certain sections of the society. It can be likened to what Chennells (1995:103) refers to as “ideological space (where) the economic structures ... created (are), at least in part, subservient to the ideological ends.”

So, Eppel’s texts about colonial Rhodesia and post-independence Zimbabwe are about the undermining of the two ideological spaces. They are about unsettling dominant systems of

representing the nation as a discursive narrative strategy. I argue that the constructions of the colonial and nationalist spaces have been fraught with particular self-legitimizing narratives of particular social, political, cultural and economic matrices of power. In Zimbabwe, most literary works have functioned as strategic interventions to produce what Peter Foulkes (1983:56) refers to as ‘demystifying art’ which he views as;

by nature... a subversive and questioning art. It challenges habits and modes of perception, and produces new ways of seeing and interpreting processes and relationships.

Texts like Charles Mungoshi’s *Waiting for the Rain* (1975), Stanley Nyamfukudza’s *The Non-Believer’s Journey* (1980) and Shimmer Chinodya’s *Harvest of Thorns* (1989) challenge colonial certainties and narratives. On the other hand, we have works that unsettle the official grand narratives of the political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe such as Petina Gappah’s *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009), Valerie Tagwira’s *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) and Christopher Mlalazi’s *Dancing with Life: Tales from the Township* (2008).

In certain instances, however, works of art on Rhodesian and post-independence Zimbabwean societies have served to unsettle the often-taken-for-granted discourses of the power-knowledge equation. In other instances, texts have simply functioned as propaganda to advance certain ideological and official narratives. An example of such propagandist narratives can be found in Ian Smith’s (the last Prime Minister of Rhodesia) autobiography where he tries to justify Rhodesianism and the existence of a plethora of betrayers and backstabbers to an otherwise good racial, cultural and social system in *The Great Betrayal* (1997). Indeed, it also finds expression in the fictional and state-sanctioned ZANU- PF propaganda narratives of an unproblematic patriotism that impregnates Nyaradzo Mtizira’s *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008) and Mashingaidze Gomo’s *A Fine Madness* (2010).

This chapter begins by analyzing the nature of (mis)representations of legitimating and self-perpetuating metanarratives of both colonial Rhodesia and post-independence Zimbabwe. It

first examines the metanarratives that undergirded the Rhodesian discourse and their limitations. It then moves on to analyze what has variously been termed ‘Mugabeism’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:1139), Mugabeist patriotic nationalist history (Primorac, 2010:203) or rule by historiography (Ranger, 2005:217). This is an important starting point for this study because John Eppel, through satire, responds to these totalizing systems of thought in order to better subvert them as invalid and pernicious for the nation-building project.

2.2 The underpinnings of the Rhodesian Discourse

Conquest, subjugation and the exercise of power do not depend solely on the use of brute force. A nation created out of conquest has to be bolstered through the creation of legitimating, validating and justificatory narratives that mask themselves as commonsense. These narratives of self-propping are referred to by Mbembe (2001:103) as “master codes or “master fictions.” In this study, I use the two terms and others like grand narratives and metanarratives to refer to:

[...] discursive blueprints which aspire to generate and underlie all socially produced meanings. They seek to govern all those who are exposed to them and to become new form of commonsense (Primorac, 2006:8).

These master fictions create their own self-validating terminologies that seek to install themselves as coherent and logical social order despite the fact that they are ‘fantastical’ and given to “the production of lies and doublespeak” (Mbembe, 2001:118). These metanarratives necessarily have to do with the structuring and ordering of the world of meanings so that “the process of subjectification” (Bhabha, 1994:67) becomes seemingly normal and natural. These official fictions prop up technologies of domination so that the subject people define themselves in relation to them.

For the colonizers to fully justify their presence in the territory that they later named Rhodesia, and to try and shirk themselves of the settler and usurper identities while at the same time ensuring that the subordination of the African was formidably entrenched, they had to come up with technologies of domination where:

[t]he signs, vocabulary, and narratives that the commandment produces are meant not merely to be symbols; they are officially invested with a surplus of meanings that are not negotiable and that one is officially forbidden to depart from or challenge. To ensure that no such challenge takes place, the champions of state power invent entire constellations of ideas; they adopt a distinct set of cultural repertoires and powerfully evocative concepts (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2009:103).

In colonial discourse, this meant the creation of stereotypes as a discursive strategy that fixes the place of the native in relation to that of the colonizer. The creation and maintenance of the Rhodesian discourse was predicated on the conjuring up of “mythologies of power” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:108) and domination. This was a process of myth-making as a strategy of domination and subjectification of Africans. Whites justified their presence in colonial Rhodesia on the grounds that they were bringing civilization to a benighted people. Chennells (1995: 110) observes that “it was the very absence of civilization among blacks which justified his (whiteman’s) presence in the country.” However, civilization is relative and any society’s development and progress is relative and informed by the dialectic interplay between internal and external creative impulses. Albert Memmi (1965:179) wonders if domination and subjugation are necessary to usher in some improvement in any society.

In order to justify the usurpation of African space, ‘natives’ were constructed “as denizens of stasis” (Chennells 1995:104) and the antithesis of civilization. Where the white man represented “a tale of firsts, bests, and absolute beginnings” (Elleke Boehmer, 2005:24), the African is framed as the personification of an absence or lack. In this project of civilization, the colonial metanarrative appropriated the ancient but ruined civilization of Great Zimbabwe.

From the white man's point of view, the existence of such a great civilization supposedly brought about by people of a white hue, but which had become derelict due to neglect, meant that blacks needed whites to nurture them into civilizational ethics. In other words, blacks needed to be groomed to become full and refined human beings who could uphold the values of colonial modernity. Colonial narratives denied that Great Zimbabwe was the work of indigenous Rozvi people who had formed a complex state. The Great Zimbabwe architecture seemed too advanced to be the work of blacks. It had to be the Phoenicians.

Hence, the whites began the process of de-historicizing and de-legitimizing the black person as soon as they established themselves on the Zimbabwean space. Memmi (1965:96) correctly argues that the colonizer strenuously “endeavors to falsify history, he rewrites laws, he would extinguish memory – anything to succeed in transforming his usurpation into legitimacy.” This view is also held by Fanon (1963:169) when he observes that “by a kind of perverted logic, it (colonialism) turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.” For colonialism to validate itself, it had to conjure up a history of non-achievement. The colonial master fiction glibly claims that history begins with the arrival of the white man and that before then the ‘native’ Zimbabweans were outside history. So, history had to be annexed in the service of settler hegemony and to remove agency from the African. It was a settler history which, according to Godwin and Hancock (1993:7), was “replete with heroes, the ever-faithful worshippers of (Cecil John Rhodes and) Ian Smith” and the imperial discourse.

This also applies to the 'enviable' history of people of pioneer stock who are framed as courageous, morally upright, industrious, resilient, heroic, aggressive, brave, adventurous and powerful. They construct their history as having brought order where once there was chaos and also see themselves as having domesticated a wild and threatening African environment. This helps in the production of the politics of the other who is both exotic and knowable through such hegemonic colonial epistemology. The product of such knowledge serves to entrench,

legitimate and justify colonialism. Lene Bull-Christiansen (2004:45) has also observed that as early as the British occupation of Zimbabwe, history was made central to the project of establishing colonialism and the creation of the native other. It was important in the normalization of the abnormal appropriation of the geographic space and the subjectification of the black people. A particular national identity for white Rhodesians and blacks had to be created in order to justify the status quo. In this way, according to David Hughes (2010:22-23), they had to:

[...] propagate the conviction that they belong on the land they have settled In other words, while excluding natives from power, from wealth, and from territory... pioneers must find a way to include themselves in the new lands.

However, Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950) is one of the few white novels that undermine the myth of belonging and domestication of the land. In this novel, the land remains resolutely hostile to the colonial usurpers reminding them of their settler status in Rhodesia.

The colonizers also used differences in the cultures and traditions of the whites and Rhodesian blacks to erect strategic binaries where African traditional customs and values were stigmatized as inferior to those of the white man. According to Bjorn Hettne (1995:49), the African culture was primitive because “of the continued stranglehold of backward-looking traditionalism” that needed to be improved and enlightened by colonial conquest and values. In colonial discourse, African traditions and customs are used in the construction of the racial other. The racial other was stereotypically framed as traditionally indolent, cowardly, barbaric, savage, pagan, unimaginative and dishonest. The construction of blacks in Rhodesia as the antithesis of progress and civilization served the strategic purpose of visibly separating the settler space from the ‘primitive’ and ‘static’ African space (Bull-Christiansen, 2004:45).

This wilful navel-gazing justified colonial exploitation and “the principle of reciprocal exclusivity” (Fanon, 1963:30) as analogous to:

The colonial mother (who) protects her child from itself, from its ego, and from its physiology, its biology and its own unhappiness which is its very essence (Fanon 1963:170).

This master narrative justified colonial Manichaeism of civilized space and uncivilized one; white suburbs and black townships, the reserves and white farms. Yet, these convenient boundaries were often seen to be porous and interpenetrable. Though constructed as dishonest, lazy and beastly, blacks were the sinews of the colonial system since they worked as laborers on farms, as domestic workers and even as white mistresses. These glaring contradictions in the colonial system and its metanarrative show the artificiality of the system. It was crafted in order to protect the white man from black competition and prevent blacks from discovering the ordinary nature of the white people. This disrupts the very foundations of the colonial discourse that insists on the essential savagery of blacks in Rhodesia.

The white narratives that honed on the supposed superiority of the colonial interloper and the inferiority of blacks are perhaps best dramatized in the quintessential colonialist novels like Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1902) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902). In the first novel, the black people personified by Gagool and King Twala are shown to be savage, barbaric, violent and gratuitously bloodthirsty. They revel in superstition, witchcraft and blatant injustice. Gagool is depicted as a witch and king Twala as an incorrigible tyrant more feared than respected. He comes across very much like the portrayal of Lobengula and Tshaka in most white writings that characterize them as scoundrels. It takes the courageous, civilized and Christian white people to bring order to pagan society of Kukwanaland. Umbopa can only become a good leader because he had sucked from the white man's good morals. The metaphor of the gun prevailing over the spear is significant in this regard because it denotes the triumph of white values.

In *The Heart of Darkness*, the same discourse of white hegemony is displayed. The black people are portrayed as living in the abyss of darkness. Their indolence is shown in the constant ritual dances that they are always performing instead of engaging in fruitful labor. Like animals, they populate the trees, the dense forests eating each other up and have to be sjamboked, whipped and bayoneted into fruitful and productive labor in the mines by the white man. The main character, Kurtz, has to die because he has corrupted his morality by deigning to associate himself with the natives and, in particular, a black mistress. The juxtaposition of River Thames with the Congo River is very much akin to the comparison between the primitive, ahistorical Africa with the calm progress and civilizational nature of Europe.

These narratives mask the white man's continued presence in Rhodesia not as a colonizer but as a bringer of order and stability. According to Walt Rostow (1960) quoted in Basil Davidson (1992:298), this had the effect of constructing domination and subjugation as "an acceptable price of progress or, at least as a general benign process of development." This justified the white man's propensity to defer change towards independence or self-rule for fear of recidivism or regression. In white discourse, the black person could not be given self-rule because he/she had not immersed him/herself sufficiently in the white culture to govern a country. From their haughty perspective, governing a modern state was perceived as too complex a business to be entrusted to blacks. In such discourses, the black Rhodesian had to wait endlessly before he/she could be master of his/her destiny. So, the time that the black people could rule themselves was always pushed to some elusive future that never arrived.

Peter Armstrong's book, *Hawks of Peace* (1979), weaves a typical settler discourse narrative of a return to barbarism and savagery in a fictionally created independent black country. In the fictional country, poverty, violence, misgovernance and dictatorship are the order of the day. Everything that the white man had established is turned on its head. Although this has dark echoes of Robert Mugabe's derelict and dystopic Zimbabwe of the late 1990s and early 2000s,

the narrative nonetheless shows that the fear of a return to the dark ages was an alibi for the continuation of the white man's privilege and its racist foundations. In the words of Memmi (2003:53), it prolonged the antinomy of a situation where "[...] the more freely he (the white man) breathe(d), the more the colonized (was) choked" and therefore deferred the resolution of what Mahmood Mamdani (1996:7) calls the "Settler-Native Question." This Rhodesian narrative fed into a propaganda machinery that glibly asserted that "Rhodesia existed in order to defend western civilization from the evils of Communism and to preserve civilized standards from the anarchy and corruption of Black Africa" (Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock, 1993:3) and that the Rhodesian blacks were the happiest people in the world. This explains the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith's, intransigence and his view that black people could not attain independence in his lifetime. It will be noted that Smith's 'never in a thousand years will a black man be president' is echoed by Robert Mugabe's refrain of 'never,ever,ever!' in the post-independence space. Both Smith and Mugabe constructed narratives akin to those of deities seemingly able to penetrate the mists of time to be able to fathom what would and would not happen.

The Rhodesian metanarrative also invoked the false dichotomy of inside and outside Rhodesia. Through this they accentuated the view that the real threat to Rhodesian existence and identity lay outside its borders and that the danger existed in the forms of communist Soviet Union and China (Godwin and Hancock, 1993). These countries were seen as central to instigating rebellion amongst the 'natives'. The reasoning bolstered the narrative that blacks were incapable of analyzing their abject material conditions and taking corrective, liberatory action. Like Zimbabweans after independence, black Rhodesians were denied agency in space and time. They were seen as the tabula rasa whose heads could only be poisoned by external agents. According to this perspective, the armed struggle had nothing to do with black grievances but more a reflection of the outside world meddling in the internal affairs of the nation.

In such a self-legitimizing discourse, Britain was framed as indecisive and traitorous because of her advocacy of black majority rule. This could explain the increasing radicalization and authoritarianism of politics in Rhodesia after the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in which Rhodesia declared an illegal independence from Britain. The metanarrative forms the bedrock of Ian Smith's autobiography titled *The Great Betrayal* (1997). Later in this chapter, I demonstrate that this Rhodesian metafiction was appropriated by the ZANU-PF government after independence and used to invent enemies in the form of Britain, America, Australia and other western countries as responsible for the crisis in post-independence Zimbabwe.

As pointed out earlier, an understanding of the Rhodesian discourse is critical in this study as it informs the textual analysis of John Eppel's writings on the Rhodesian colonial space. Eppel's satire is deployed in such a way that it undermines the very foundations of the Rhodesian metanarrative, displaying its hollowness and artificiality. The next section examines the post-independence ZANU-PF metanarrative of patriotic history.

2.3 Unpacking the Nationalist Patriotic Master Fiction

A lot was expected of the post-independence dispensation concerning making a complete rupture with colonial spatial practices. At the level of rhetoric, there was talk of installing a new, democratic and inclusive system that was people-centered. In reality, however, the post-independence space borrowed parasitically from Rhodesian practices of legitimating and retaining power so that Henri Lefebvre (1991:229) relevantly argues that in space what came earlier continues to underpin what follows. This is because the colonial space continued to be the base upon which the patriotic narrative was constructed to belie what Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya (2002) in the title of their book have termed 'exhausted nationalism' and what I call ambushed nationalism. The ZANU-PF metanarrative is based on what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:1139) calls 'Mugabeism' because Zimbabwe had known only one leader since

1980 (until recently in November 2017 when Mugabe was deposed through the intervention of the military) largely because of Robert Mugabe's Machiavellian strategies of retaining power at all costs. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:1139) Mugabeism is:

[...] a constellation of political controversies, political behavior, political ideas, utterances, rhetoric and actions that have crystallized around Mugabe's political life.

The Mugabeist patriotic nationalist narrative is predicated on populism and seeks to tap upon the popular imagination of the people, especially their fear of regression to colonial white oppression. It is demagogic and uses political eloquence that blends strands of Marxism, Afrocentrism, Socialism, Pan-Africanism and neo-traditionalism to mystify where it should enlighten, to conceal where it should be open and to be abstract where it should be pragmatic. It is often disjunctive in nature, because the choice is invariably between a black-run government and a racist dispensation of the colonial yesteryears. It unavoidably uses the discourse of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and decolonization that was in vogue in the 1960s and 1970s to address contemporary challenges in a globalized, rights-based world. It uses the discourse of intransigence, aggression, force, stiff-neckedness and of "*amadoda sibili*" (real men or dodatism) to conduct state business and power retention. To the extent that this nationalist narrative was crafted in response to various alignments of opposing forces and a nation in crisis, it was defensive in nature.

This virulent form of nationalist metanarrative gained currency after 1997 to justify itself and lend legitimacy to the stranglehold of ZANU-PF and its then leader, Robert Mugabe. It was a response to forces that threatened to dislodge ZANU-PF from power. Like its colonial predecessor, the ZANU-PF metanarrative sought to appropriate history in the service of the party. In the words of historian Terence Ranger (2004:216), it sought to avalanche the citizens with "a single, narrow historical narrative..." by creating an unproblematized but "[...]

coherent [and] complex doctrine” that stressed the infallibility of the party and the treacherous nature of significant political and economic others. It was a discourse of exclusion and violent remembrance of the liberation war as the sole basis for belonging and citizenship. In this narrative, the liberation war and the suffering that it wrought are not allowed to be forgotten. In fact, participation in the war becomes "a passport" to access national resources and leadership positions although this narrative is beginning to fragment and fracture in the face of succession and power battles within the party. The moot succession squabbles recently reached their apogee with the ousting of Robert Mugabe and the selection of Emerson Mnangagwa as the new President of the country.

In the novel *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008) by Mtizira, this metanarrative finds expression in the continuity of the various *chimurengas* (armed struggles). The author enacts the official ZANU-PF narrative by linking the 1890s struggle against the white settlers as the precursor to and continuation of the 1970s liberation war which is unproblematically linked to the Land Reform Program of the 2000 era which, in ZANU-PF circles, is cunningly described as the Third *Chimurenga*, the “conquest of conquests” (The Herald, 1997). The Mugabeist nationalist patriotic narrative as shown in the above novel becomes synonymous with ‘pain’ and ‘suffering’ and the concomitant fetishization of violence (although Mtizira strategically leaves this out) as an instrument of political gamesmanship, especially against the opposition and whites in general.

The ZANU-PF metanarrative also claims to be the guardian of national memory and re-memory. Bull-Christiansen (2004:70) has opined that this ruling party narrative tries to install:

Itself as the only legitimate representative(s) of the Zimbabwean anti-colonial struggle [and] attempts to equate itself with democracy, patriotism and Africanism, thereby narrowing the discursive field of national identity down to those who support ZANU-PF.

In the narrative of the ruling party, fighting against the whites and winning the 1980 elections is democracy. Any other competing claims like respect for human rights, property rights, rule of law, governance issues and so on are deemed peripheral to the discourse of sovereignty and guarding against the fuzzy possibility of what they call re-colonization. This is what Olley Maruma's *Coming Home* (2007) and Mashingaidze Gomo's *A Fine Madness* (2010) also inscribe in their state-sanctioned fictional writings where they create a life-world in which the white person is the enemy out to disturb Zimbabwe's sovereignty. In these accounts, like the ZANU-PF narrative, sovereignty is never problematized except when they conveniently speak against what they perceive to be the West's consistent interference in Zimbabwe's political and economic affairs even as China plunders the national resources unchecked. This phenomenon is partially interrogated by Noviolet Bulawayo in the novel *We Need new Names* (2010).

The construction of national identity and citizenship along selective party lines and conflating Zimbabwe with ZANU-PF is a self-propping and self-preservation strategy reminiscent of the colonial metanarrative. It inscribes in the national polity binaries of outsiders vs. insiders, patriots vs. sell-outs. In Mtizira's already mentioned novel, *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008), the character Chamunorwa falls under the category of 'sell-outs', 'puppets', 'Trojan horses' and the 'inauthentic' citizens because he betrays the ZANU-PF land reform narrative. In the real life of Zimbabwe's bifurcated politics, he becomes the fictional personification of Morgan Tsvangirai, the recently deceased leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)¹, who is one of those written out of the national narrative and therefore, according to ZANU-PF's woefully narrow nationalist and patriotic versions of history, was a fit and proper candidate for political violence.

¹Morgan Tsvangirai was the founding president of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). He was president of the party since its formation in 1999 until his death in February 2018. Throughout his political career as the leader of MDC, Tsvangirai was maligned by Robert Mugabe's ZANU PF as a puppet of the West. During this period, Tsvangirai was arrested on numerous occasions and subjected to various forms of violence sanctioned by the ZANU PF government.

Robert Mugabe (2001:88) dismissed the opposition and its leader and, in the process, buttressed the ZANU-PF metanarrative by saying that the opposition should;

[...] never be judged or characterized by its trade union face; by its youthful student face; by its salaried black suburban junior professionals; never by its rough and violent high-density lumpen elements. It is much deeper than these human superfluous; for it is immovably and implacably moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces wittingly or unwittingly the repulsive ideology of a return to white settler rule. MDC is as old and as strong as the forces that control it; that drive and direct; indeed that support, sponsor and spot it. It is a counter revolutionary Trojan horse contrived and nurtured by the very inimical forces that enslaved and oppressed our people yesterday.

This is a typical ZANU-PF narrative that writes out the opposition from the national collective, a process of externalizing it. For power to be sustained and for rulers to whip up nationalist emotions, they invent enemies so that people's attention is canalized towards the people threatening their nation's existence. In the ZANU-PF narrative, sanctions, the West 'fronted' by the opposition and the drought among other imagined factors, are the enemy. Internal and leadership weaknesses do not feature in this elaborate patriotic narrative of Mugabeism that indefatigably always refused to accept fallibility.

Mugabe's dismissal of the opposition quoted above becomes a rehash of the Rhodesian narrative that binarized the national space into 'native' and white spaces, into the internal and inimical outer national space that sponsored and destabilized the peaceful internal space managed and governed by the 'good' Rhodesians. In Mugabe's nationalist narrative, the outside space is inhabited by the imperialists whose perfidy and slyness were personified by the Bush-Blair alliance. The patriotic narrative also controls "[...] [the] will to unify the national history through the process of remembering and forgetting" (Bhabha 1994:67). The history that the ZANU-PF elite think they embody allows them to elide uncomfortable versions like shutting out ideologies of other nationalists such as Joshua Nkomo, Ndabaningi Sithole

and Lookout Masuku. These were among some of the nationalists who became victims of Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party because they were seen as threats to the hegemony of Mugabe at different times in their lives. In addition, there was the ZANU-PF initiated *Gukurahundi* (Operation flush out chaff) in the early years of Zimbabwe's independence in which ZAPU and its Ndebele supporters were violently crushed. This was a period soon after independence (between 1982-1987), when Mugabe's ZANU-PF deployed the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade militia in Matebeleland and parts of Midlands ostensibly to hunt down ZIPRA dissidents allegedly led by ZAPU's Joshua Nkomo. The result was that an estimated 20 000 civilians lost their lives in an orgy of violence that ended up taking ethnic dimensions. The patriotic version of history does not accept any history that exposes or portrays them (the 'real patriots', ZANU-PF) in a bad light. Thus, although Joshua Nkomo features in ZANU-PF narratives of the nation as 'Father Zimbabwe', it is only after he had surrendered himself and his party, PF-ZAPU, to ZANU-PF after the 1987 Unity Accord. This accord was a 'pact' that stopped the murders and purportedly brought about reconciliation and 'national unity' without truth and justice. Patriotic history tries to elide this part of history and any culpability thereof.

In Zimbabwean Literature, there are some works that seek to subvert the Mugabeist national patriotic history on remembering and forgetting. Apart from John Eppel, there is Mlalazi's novel *Running with Mother* (2012). The novel explores the Matebeleland atrocities focusing on those aspects that the officially state-sanctioned narratives seek to control and suppress. In examining the macabre activities of the ZANU-PF government, the novel undermines the government's claim to being victims of outside forces and confronts it with its own culpability of brutalizing its own people. Through the witness accounts of Rudo and her mother, the novel also ousts the ZANU-PF narrative of being anti-colonialist and Pan-Africanist because it creates a fictional world in which a black government is seen to be massacring a section of its black citizens. The account creates an image of an unrestrained, rogue and uncountable state

that ‘eats its own children’ and therefore has to be called to order. Apropos to the above, Mbembe (2002:240-41) argues against the “[...] manipulation of the rhetoric of autonomy, resistance, and emancipation [that] serves as the sole criterion for determining the legitimacy of an authentic African discourse.” The novel provides a counter discourse to the state-sanctioned official narratives of Zimbabwe’s evolution as an independent state. Mlalazi’s other novel *They are Coming* (2014) challenges state narratives on history and nation-building during the period of the Zimbabwean crisis after 2000. The novel dwells on state violence against the opposition and the creation of a partisan youth militia that terrorizes members of the opposition despite claims by the ruling party that they are, in fact, victims of opposition violence. More importantly, the novel unsettles the process of resorting to myth as a strategy of self-legitimation. In the youth training camps, the youths are force-fed racist, hate-filled and partisan history about the liberation war and the origin narrative of the nation. The discourse used in the youth camps unproblematically frames all whites as evil thieves and usurpers who are related to former American president who came immediately before Barack Obama, George Bush, and former British premier, Tony Blair, both of whom Mugabe perceived as sponsoring the opposition MDC. By contrast, Mbuya Nehanda and Sekuru Kaguvi (Shona spirit mediums during the First *Chimurenga* of 1896-1897) are deified as the originators of modern Zimbabwe.

Thus, the process of myth-making becomes central to the discourses of ZANU-PF. Tamar Mayer (2003:3) has contended that:

Myth remains in fact essential to the life of the nation (because it is through) embracing myths about the nation’s creation that members perpetuate not only national myths but also the nation itself.

The myths of Kaguvi, Chaminuka and Nehanda serve to discursively set apart patriots from those that are not; to create what Kizito Muchemwa (2010:471) refers to as ethnic, racist discourse of “bloodshed, heroism and totemic citizenship” that is exclusionary rather than

inclusive. Such a discourse constructs the ruling party as continuing on the path of resistance pioneered by the above iconic figures. ZANU-PF and its supporters therefore become the inheritors, defenders and possibly the ‘owners’ of the nation. The inclusion of Lobengula (the last Ndebele king) in the national narrative is strategically meant to create a totalizing black Zimbabwean narrative of resistance that has the effect of removing from the national family those that do not subscribe to the ZANU-PF ideology. It also masks particular ethnic fissures and tensions because at the particular juncture in the history of Zimbabwe it was convenient to inscribe a Manichean history of them (the whites, the “foreigners”) versus us (the autochthonic blacks). In other words, myths or the past in the Zimbabwean political discourse in its Mugabeist form seamlessly homogenizes blackness as inherently anti-white. Myth-making unproblematically constructs the Zimbabwean past as characterized by unity in resisting white oppression. But, it is trite to state that the same myths, used outside its patriotic context and shorn of the need to impose a fragile national unity, portrays Lobengula as a greedy sell-out who gave the country away owing to his love for white trinkets, especially sugar. The same myths and discourse of the past construct him as a bloodthirsty raider and capturer of hapless Shona women. This shows the Janus-character and strategic use of the past and myths to advance particular convenient agendas.

The history that is taught by war veterans in the youth militia camps consists of excerpts harvested raw from speeches by Robert Mugabe in which he invariably adumbrates the polarizing origin myths of the nation. In 1999, for an example, Robert Mugabe gave a typically Mugabeist national patriotic narrative of self-validation when he argued that:

We know and still know that land was the prime goal of king Lobengula as he fought British encroachment in 1893; we knew and still know that land was the principal grievance for our heroes of the First Chimurenga led by Nehanda and Kaguvi; we knew and still know it to be the fundamental premise of the Second Chimurenga and thus a principal definer of the succeeding new Nation and State of Zimbabwe. Indeed we know

it to be the core issue of the Third Chimurenga which you and me are fighting, and for which we continue to make such enormous sacrifices (Robert Mugabe, 2001:92-3).

What Mugabe's narrative strategy implies is that the nation has not fully become independent and that it is in the attempt to fully decolonize that the nation finds itself facing problems like food and fuel shortages. It constructs Robert Mugabe as not only the protector of the nation but also as its historian and ideologue. By drawing upon historical luminaries of resistance and placing himself in the thick of the Third *Chimurenga*, which he believes he is a champion of, Robert Mugabe discursively constitutes himself as the instrument of the departed resistance icons. In other words, he legitimates his political actions as sanctified and implicitly sanctioned and succored by them (the ancestral heroes across the ethnic divide). What he insinuates is that despite the resistance from whatever quarter and the seeming illegality with which it was done, Mugabe's demagogic speech impregnates the Third *Chimurenga* with a hue of ineluctability and inexorability.

This kind of narrative, like the Rhodesian metanarrative, is characterized by, in the words of Primorac (2010:207), "a desire to defer change." A future stable Zimbabwe that is fully decolonized is always pushed into the mists of time ad nauseam. The construction of a colonial past that continues to haunt the present and future is the quintessential ZANU-PF narrative that diverts attention away from the regime's corruption and errors of omission and commission.

2.4 Conclusion

As has been highlighted, the ZANU-PF metanarrative is not much different from the Rhodesian discourse. It is rather, "both polemical and parasitic" and that it "has foregrounded precisely the discourse which it purports to be battling against" (Primorac, 2010:203). I have argued that both metanarratives are two sides of the same coin because both purport to be engaged in nation building and yet they are both solipsistic. They use racial stereotypes to foreground difference. To the extent that they are concerned with retention of power, they serve as self-

legitimizing props that exclude the other. It is in this context that John Eppel's writings unsettle both in order to create a third space outside these reductive and exclusionary narratives. The next section provides an extended review of the literature that is pertinent to this study.

2.5 Extended Literature Review

This section reviews literature that is germane to Eppel's understanding of nation construction during and after colonialism. It examines the particular ways through which he mobilizes and deploys satire in order to oust sterile grand narratives that form the foundations of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe and, in the process, create imaginaries of nation construction that supersede race, ethnicity and politics. To do that, I explore available literature on the construction of Rhodesian identities by both black and white scholars. I then move on to critique the contours of Mugabeism after independence and the ways in which this imitates the Rhodesian ideology of exclusion and national bifurcation. Such an approach allows for the imaginative installation of an inclusive society outside the reductive colonial and nationalist totalizing 'master fictions'. This can fruitfully be done by juxtaposing white and black fictions that orchestrate multiple and simultaneous versions of Zimbabwe. The competition for voice and space in terms of themes and perspectives cumulatively constitutes Zimbabwean Literature. This section adopts a thematic overview of overarching tropes on Zimbabwean Literature that are relevant to this study.

Scholarship on white Zimbabwean writers, Eppel in particular, has been thin until relatively recently. Most of the studies tended to concentrate on traditional black writers such as Stanlake Samkange, Solomon Mutswairo, Charles Mungoshi, Dambudzo Marechera, Chenjerai Hove and Stanley Nyamfukudza among others, who were apparently hallowed as representing the Zimbabwean literary canon, the pulse of the nation or simply the preferred cultural producers. This, however, seems to have changed, either because the scholars have realized the lacuna, the unnecessary compartmentalization, or because the political, economic and identitarian

upheavals orchestrated by the ruling elite energized a literary re-think in the light of national fragmentation. In any case, periods of strife and crises are breeding grounds for literary interventionism. There is now a burgeoning body of critical works on white writers, especially their experiences (which have now come to constitute mutual suffering with blacks) during the 1990s to date. This section explores prominent thematic trends by Zimbabwean scholars on issues that inform this study. Such an approach is vital as it locates the study within precedent scholarship in order to establish points of similarities and dissimilarities. It is essential to establish a caveat here that the intention in choosing a thematic scheme in this study is not to prescribe what De Santis (2001:4) calls “false unities” that foreclose multiplicity and differences in style, but to elaborate on the ways in which Zimbabwean writers respond to, and are shaped by history and politics (Kizito Muchemwa, 2005:196). To that end, this literature review begins by engaging with Chennells’s critical works on the Rhodesian and neo-Rhodesian metanarrative.

Indeed, Chennells has written extensively and authoritatively on the ways in which whites within the Rhodesian space sought to construct self-legitimizing narratives through racial nationalism and mythoscapes to fortify their hegemony over the identity sites that they occupied. In his exploration of white Rhodesian writings, he seeks to show the limitations of Rhodesian identity constructions and to tease out the narrow, exclusionary conception of the nation which was their (Rhodesians’) Achilles heel. Rhodesian nationalism and the identities that it forged formed the basis of white master fictions that were, paradoxically, susceptible to counter-hegemonic narratives that eventually ousted them and which they never saw coming. For Chennells, the colonialist space was decisively and definitively an ideological space, a discursive spatial practice that was appropriated by the nationalist space later. As pointed out in the brief literature review in Chapter One, some of the works that he has written include: “Rhodesian Discourse, Rhodesian Novels and the Zimbabwean Liberation War” (1995), “Self-

Representation and National Memory: White Autobiographies in Zimbabwe” (2005), “Great Zimbabwe in Rhodesian Fiction” (2007) and “Settler Myths and the Southern Rhodesian Novel” (1982). In interrogating settler myths and Rhodesian nationalism, Chennells digs deep into the settler grand narratives and how these purported to be the immutable Rhodesian logic that became the hegemonically accepted ways of viewing racial power dynamics. I argue that Chennells’s exploration of settler novels and their informing consciousness is meant to show the writers’ sense of community, belonging and citizenship. In Cuthbeth Tagwirei’s (2014:20) view, Chennells’ analysis of Rhodesian writing is meant to capture “its links to empire, racism and prejudice.” Such works are critical to my study as they help in disrupting the foundations of Rhodesian nationalism and its myth-making project.

In particular, Chennells’ critical works unsettle the Rhodesian whites’ perceptions of the Bush War or the Liberation War of the 1970s. Whilst Chennells’s analyses seek to challenge the uncritical and self-righteous ways in which white writing in Zimbabwe sought to justify and ratify the establishment of Rhodesia and its maintenance, he does not go so far as to analyze the satirical dissidence of Eppel, himself a white writer, who breaks ranks with the ideological direction taken by the writers that he examines. Chennells’s critical body of works provides the necessary raw materials with which to analyze how Eppel goes beyond the petrified view of Rhodesian nationalism and its perceptions of the war through a close study of *Spoils of War* (1989) and *D.G.G.Berry’s The Great North Road* (1992). A reading of Eppel’s texts in the books mentioned offers a window of opportunity to explode and perish the settler myths that are very much at the heart of Chennells’ studies about Rhodesian bravery and native cowardice, protecting white civilization versus the black people’s fight for freedom, the impact of the war on both whites and blacks and the myth of settler invincibility. Far from confining himself to issues that interrogate Rhodesianism, Chennells also engages with themes that appertain to post-independence. But his engagement with post-independence white literary themes is

limited to memoirs and autobiographies by writers who, in the main, no longer reside in Zimbabwe or, as in the case of Ian Smith in *The Great Betrayal*, those who refuse to adopt a post-independence identity. These writers often write from outside and often seek to gain the favor and sympathy of the international community for the errors of omission and commission by Robert Mugabe and his government. This study engages with a white writer writing from and about Zimbabwe, and in the thick of its multifarious, if mutative, politics. The study is different from the writers that Chennells chooses to analyze in that it focuses on the materiality of Zimbabwean life and not some nostalgic remembrance of what once was home or the pathological hatred of Mugabeist Zimbabwe. Besides, Chennells' impressive analyses do not go beyond 2007 and yet Eppel's oeuvre goes as far as 2013.

Rino Zhuwarara's book, *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (2001), is important in its bold attempt to show the general thematic trends in Zimbabwean Literature by prominent black writers. He deals with writers that, at the time, were considered canonical; writers like Dambudzo Marechera (whose style of writing has an uncanny resemblance to Eppel), Charles Mungoshi, Stanley Nyamfukudza and Yvonne Vera. To the extent that the book explores the insidious effects of colonialism on black Zimbabwean society, it has tangential resonances to my study. Themes like land alienation, violence, the politics of race and exclusion form the centerpiece of Zhuwarara's analysis and these are issues that Eppel explores in unsettling the colonialist and nationalist spaces. In that regard, both spaces are implicated in, in the words of Irikidzayi Manase (2011:33), "the creation of restless, dislocated and fugitive identities [...]." But the book only examines black writers' take of colonialism and does not bring the black perspective into conversation with their white counterparts. Tagwirei (2014:24) argues that Zhuwarara's point of entry into what he calls Zimbabwean Literature is problematic. He falls into the trap of assuming that Zimbabweanness is an identity category that is based on being black and which postulates an essentialized and static view of belonging

and citizenship. This could possibly explain Zhuwarara's choice of 'canonical' writers like Dambudzo Marechera, Charles Mungoshi, Stanley Nyamfukudza and Yvonne Vera. Zhuwarara's erasure of white writing seems to be influenced by the patriotic, nationalist and socialist discourses that figured the white writer as unpatriotic and influenced by a settler consciousness that was pernicious to the Zimbabwean nation-building sensibility. He fails to appreciate that writers like Eppel may be "[...] equally burdened with silences, loss, and anxiety instead of just imperious certainty [and this] allows for a productive analysis of whites as being simultaneously powerful and powerless, free and trapped, self-assured but also possibly tormented, or angst-ridden" (Tagwirei, 2014:39). Besides, Zhuwarara's study does not go beyond the year 2000 and therefore does not include the momentous period of what has generally come to be known as the 'Zimbabwean Crisis' (period of economic and political turmoil in the country) and how it affected both blacks and whites. Owing to the fact that it focuses mainly on the colonial space, the book fails to examine the interpenetration between Rhodesianism and Mugabeism and how power is exercised to benefit a select few in both spaces. Eppel's oeuvre transgresses and juxtaposes the colonial and nationalist spaces in order to show their limitations and to orchestrate a literary imaginary outside these binaries.

Maurice Vambe's book, *African Oral Story-telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English* (2004), is another study that excludes white-authored texts. Its major argument is that Zimbabwean fictional works are and should be influenced by the precedent oral-story African/Zimbabwean traditions. Although the study seems to have nothing to do with Eppel's writings, its major influence or contribution to my study is the definitional exclusion of other texts as less Zimbabwean owing to their choice not to use orature. One can only conclude that, like Zhuwarara, Vambe is caught in a time-warp where the black literary voice was constructed as representing the only authentic Zimbabwean identity and experience. The problem with Vambe's approach in this book is that he assumes that 'true' Zimbabwean literature has to be

visibly influenced by orature and that any creative work of art that does not meet this criterion is automatically occluded from the national canon. This means that a writer like Eppel, who taps from classical English literary tradition in terms of form but very Zimbabwean in terms of thematic emplotment, is dismissed as foreign, unpatriotic and not Zimbabwean enough. Eppel's works, therefore, disrupt such compartmentalization, such broad and generalized conceptions of citizenship and belonging. However, the studies by Vambe and Zhuwarara are helpful to my study in so far as they show particular ways of reading Zimbabwean Literature in terms of history, culture, race and contested citizenship; an approach very much at the center of Eppel's oeuvre.

The book *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* (2006) by Ranka Primorac is a literary study of fictional works and Zimbabwean politics spanning from the colonial period of the late 1970s up to 2005. Its importance to this study lies in its incisive theorization of the concept of space-time and the fact that it undermines the official 'master fictions' in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. Borrowing from Lefebvre's *Production of Space* (1991), Primorac argues that space is not only implicated in the physical delineation of the entities called Rhodesia and Zimbabwe but, most importantly, that space is productive of particular shades of social relations. These social relations produce certain constellations of power and its exercise, particular occlusions and inclusions, marked racial matrices that define Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. To the extent that this study examines specific relations that subsist in colonial and nationalist Zimbabwe, Primorac's study is invaluable in analyzing the installation of grand narratives that are used by the rulers to mystify the governed, to provide certain 'logics' as to why existent social and political relations should remain unchanged even though they work to the disadvantage of the powerless. Primorac's engagement with the concept of space allows her to inscribe the idea of what she calls the Rhodesian chronotope (Primorac, 2006:59) which forms the base for a comparative exploration of Rhodesia and

Zimbabwe as ideological spaces that intermingle in such a way that post-independence becomes a progeny of the Rhodesian ‘logic’. This is what Mbembe (2001:14) calls an ‘entanglement’ that is characterized by ‘commandement’ where the colonial space despotically influences and reinforces what is supposed to be a democratic nationalist space.

Although Eppel does not feature in the book’s analysis of Zimbabwean writers, it is relevant to the current study in as far as it enables it to establish continuities and discontinuities in Zimbabwean Literature across racial and language divides. Her examination of the Rhodesian and ‘neo-Rhodesian chronotope’ (Primorac, 2006:75) allows for an analysis of the patriotic rendition of Zimbabwean history and politics. Therefore, because this study is concerned with the ways in which Eppel satirically disrupts and undermines the ideological predications of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, it stands to harvest a lot from this book, especially on the need to transcend the polarized identity constructions of both spaces. The current study’s analysis of texts like *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009) *White Man Crawling* (2007) and *Hatchings* (2006) is largely informed by Primorac’s theorizations and literary reflections. However, the book, impressive in its exegesis and ways of reading Zimbabwean Literature, does not go beyond works written after 2006 and this study intends to fill in that lacuna. The very title of the book promises much in terms of the range of texts to be explored and yet, inevitably, it falls into the same schematic fixity that characterizes most analyses of Zimbabwean creative works. Not surprisingly, she takes it for granted that ‘modern’ Zimbabwean literature is all about Chenjerai Hove, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Yvonne Vera and Shimmer Chinodya who are all black writers. Primorac admits that Zimbabwean Literature needs to be uncoupled from the category of race. She also avers that all literature is implicated in or participates in social change; that Zimbabwean “fictional texts rehearse, refract and interrogate political themes and events” (Primorac, 2006:2). However, she does not extend this to white writers. This study intends to stretch this argument by incorporating Eppel’s writings.

A collection of critical essays, *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture* (2005) edited by Robert Muponde and Ranka Primorac deals with the interface between literature and the politico-historical milieu in which it is steeped and finds its flourish. The volume basically argues that culture influences an understanding of creative works and helps unpack the circumstances that led to the various crises that the nation has faced in its evolution. What is remarkable about the collection is the tentative movement towards multivocality, pluralism and a drive towards fragmentation of literary polarities to inclusiveness. It foregrounds the view that narrating the nation is not a linear act but a complex one that requires an acceptance of variegated versions and perspectives of history and experience. In their own words, the editors state that imaginative texts “imagine multiple versions of Zimbabwe and it is only a multiplicity of approaches and opinions that can do this variety true justice” (Muponde and Primorac, 2005: xv). They further advocate “plurality, inclusiveness and the breaking of boundaries” (ibid: xviii). The contributors in this volume therefore unsettle and undermine tendencies towards totalizing and essentializing narratives about the past, present and future of the nation. To fully materialize this, the volume brings the literature by vernacular writers, black writers in English and white Zimbabwean writers into dialogue with each other in order to orchestrate multiple versions of Zimbabwe. The book deals with issues of identity and belonging, racial and political violence, the abuse of history and myths of origin and of ethnicity and its wilful and convenient suppression. These are the themes that John Eppel grapples with in most of his prose and poetry. In view of the fact that Eppel problematizes the minoritization of identities and the place of the white men in Zimbabwe, this volume offers invaluable insights to the current study. In particular, Ranger’s (2005:217) essay “Rule by Historiography: the struggle over the past in contemporary Zimbabwe” examines patriotic history and its discourse of exclusion and attempts at erasure of other versions and opinions of Zimbabwe; for example, the putative marginalization of the people of

Matebeleland, the Fifth Brigade atrocities, the bashing and peripherization of opposition supporters and the drive towards the personalization and consolidation of power. These are the issues that Eppel's writings also engage with. Although the volume does not analyze any of Eppel's works it, nevertheless, includes white experience of Zimbabwe in Harris' essay "Writing home: Inscriptions of Whiteness/descriptions of belonging in white Zimbabwean memoir/autobiography". Harris' exploration of white life-writing deals with the themes of trauma, nostalgia and (un)belonging that often preoccupies the texts that she chooses like Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996) and Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*. Kizito Muchemwa's essay, "Some Thoughts on history, memory, and writing in Zimbabwe" in the same collection provides the critical material with which to locate and ground Eppel's use of history and memory to disrupt the colonial and nationalist spaces.

Lene Bull-Christiansen's study, *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe* (2004), largely engages with feminist discourses and their counter-discursive nature. However, it is important to my study because it wrestles with and juxtaposes the creation of what she calls "Rhodesian settler discourses" (2004:14) and "Zimbabwe nationalist discourses." The strategy allows her to position history as a site for the discursive legitimation of official metanarratives in both spaces. As a base for the construction and reconstruction of national identities, history is appropriated by successive regimes in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe in order to map out parameters of inclusion and exclusion, insider and outsider, belonging and unbelonging. In the obsession with national identity construction, nationalists in both spaces dig deep into their cultural repertoires in a bid to justify their brands of self-legitimizing nationalisms. Settler discourses were used by Rhodesians to create narratives that normalized and naturalized racism, occupation and domination. The writer concentrates on the racial stereotypes that conveniently 'explained' the assumed inferiority of the black person whilst elevating the assumed supremacy of the white

person and his civilization. These settler narratives tried to capture and distort history in the service of racial bifurcation and black ontological erasure. Bull-Christiansen's study is important in the way it constructs Rhodesian icons and symbols like Cecil John Rhodes, Ian Smith and Rhodesia itself as discursive sites for the legitimation of settler discourse and practice. Eppel's literary and political constitution of colonial Rhodesia is preoccupied with unsettling these pillars of Rhodesian nation narration and its deliberate exclusionary and inclusionary agendas.

Bull-Christiansen's study goes further and explores the problematic of Zimbabwean nationalism after the attainment of independence. As far as the writer is concerned, Zimbabwean nationalism seeks to impose an essentializing national identity predicated on a revisionist version of the liberation war that revolves around Robert Mugabe, ZANU-PF and violence. This allows the writer to interrogate patriotic history, ethnicity, 'mortgaged identities' (Kudzai Matereke, 2012:160) and the politics of violent, partisan land redistribution. The examination of what has come to be known as the Third *Chimurenga* (third war of liberation) installs the discourse of Mugabeism which is characterized by scapegoating and inventing enemies (whites and opposition supporters), racial exclusion and dispossession, use of force and the construction of identity as determined by political affiliation. The book explains and analyzes the polarities and national stasis evident in Zimbabwe as a function of the refusal by the ruling party and its leader to accept blame for the national crisis. Because the book explores Vera's writings as counter-discursive, as offering another version of Zimbabwean history, it links up with Eppel's satirical dissidence against official 'master fictions' in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. But the book confines itself to an examination of only Vera's works and these do not go beyond the vexed period of post-1999 when Mugabeism and its various exclusions becomes manifest. Therefore, this study applies Bull-Christiansen's theorizations of the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces and applies them to the post 2000 creative works by Eppel.

Manning the Nation: Father figures in Zimbabwean Literature and society (2007), a book edited by Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, is important in the ways it deals with the discourse of “*amadoda sibili*” (real men) in the colonial and nationalist spaces. The book examines the family and its politics as emblematic of the national family identity construction. The crux of the arguments by different contributors is that both the family and nation are characterized by attempts to impose both dominant and hegemonic masculinities as normative of Zimbabwean identity. The studies in this book frame both the family and the nation as patriarchies that seem to have exhausted themselves and, in the process, have plunged the nation into chaos. Eppel’s texts chosen for this study reflect the family and childhood as sites for the inscription of male-centered, violent and aggressive Rhodesian and Zimbabwean identities. In certain instances, however, the family and sections of the nation become counter-discursive of these patriarchal constructions.

A relatively recent publication on Zimbabwean Literature is Robert Muponde’s *Some Kinds of Childhood: Images of History and Resistance in Zimbabwean Literature* (2015). Although the book explores Zimbabwean black writers in English only, it is relevant to my study because of its problematization of the concepts of childhood and, by implication, adulthood and how these impact and are impacted upon by history, politics, resistance and complicity. The study thematizes childhood as a site of contestation that brings out fissures, contradictions and fragilities of the Zimbabwean society at particular nodal points in its history. The volume covers the period between 1972 and 2013, making it helpful in the study of Eppel’s creative representations of the colonial and Zimbabwean spaces. Childhood is an important aspect in Eppel’s thematic employment especially in *D.G.G. Berry’s The Great North Road, The Caruso of Colleen Bawn, Hatchings, The Holy Innocents* and *White Man Crawling*; narratives that are at the core of this study. It is through the exploration of childhood that the writer brings out the issues of history, race, colonialism, corruption, resistance and the search for an ideal post-

independence Zimbabwe. Due to the fact that children and childhood “contest, disrupt, and threaten” (Muponde, 2015:3) the discourse of patriotic history, the text becomes helpful to my study of Mugabeism in post-independence Zimbabwean space. In *Some Kinds of Childhood: Images of History and Resistance in Zimbabwean Literature* Muponde views nationalist discourse and Mugabeism as quintessentially constituted by the violence of the Land Reform Program and the re-constitution of Zimbabwean identities in very narrow terms. The marginalization of certain identities such as those of the people of Matabeleland seen in Mlalazi’s already mentioned novel, *Running with Mother* and that of the ordinary people and opposition supporters explored in Bulawayo’s novel *We Need New Names* are issues very much at the heart of Eppel’s writings in the post-independence space. What underlines Muponde’s theorization is the very constitution of the nation as a construct: a construct that ZANU-PF uses to install the discourse of blood, tribulation and exclusion. Mugabeism uses this imaginary of the nation to justify its violent pursuit of power and hegemony in this study. However, the problem with Muponde’s study is that like some of the works already reviewed in this section, it only analyzes black writers.

2.6 Trajectories of Eppel’s Writings: The Focal Texts

It is probably trite to point out that John Eppel is not the only white writer who examines the constructions of the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spatio-temporal realities. There are many others such as Peter Godwin, Alexandra Fuller, Bruce Moore-King and Tim McLoughlin although Eppel is the most prolific to date and possibly the most bohemian in terms of style. What sets Eppel apart from others (white writers) is the sheer iconoclasm, the pointed, if kamikaze, satire and the unmistakable anti-establishmentarianism. Reading Eppel’s works reminds one of Marechera’s existentialist novel, *House of Hunger* (1978), which is characterized by a scatological imagery that gestures to a diseased and immoral Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. Eppel uses the same techniques of pathologizing both spaces in order to show the

need for an ethico-political remedy. I read Eppel as a writer engaged in mapping out territories of experience garnered in the lived spaces of first, Rhodesia and secondly, Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, the elite in the post-independence space do not seem to have learnt anything from the travesties of colonialism yet, paradoxically, they have ‘forgotten nothing’. They become assiduous mimics of the wrongs of the colonial space and this irritates Eppel. Thabisani Ndlovu, quoted in Drew Shaw (2012) has described Eppel as “an angry jester”, which shows his indignation at the ills and foundational stereotypes that undergird Rhodesia and Zimbabwe as discursive spaces. The satiric anger in the focal texts of this study is palpable, anger at the “political and social corruption and injustice” (Shaw, 2012) that he seeks to hold in public ridicule. In broad literary terms, one may argue that most of Eppel’s textual formations are concerned with “anti-racist forms of whiteness (and blackness)” (Ruth Frankenberg, 1993:7) in the two spaces under study. While other white Zimbabwean writers on the colonial space seek to elevate white perspective as normative or the standard, as is the case in the novels of Peter Armstrong and the autobiography of Ian Smith, Eppel scaffolds polyphony or multivalence that assumes, at times, the form of self-implication or self-flagellation in order “to make up for our collective guilt-the generations of colonial oppression” (Shaw, 2012:100-111). This is the significance of his constant re-visitations of the past in order to interrogate the present. In *Great North Road*, George’s journey backwards to Empandeni to Polly’s home and the site of the genesis of colonization reflects the conscious attempt to confront white collective guilt. The persona’s war experience in the Rhodesian Bush War in both *Spoils of War* and *Great North Road*, the discourse of land and its ownership in the short stories and race in *Absent The English Teacher* further reflect this guilt and the need for expiation.

In the light of the above, I argue that a reading of Eppel’s *D.G.G.’s The Great North Road* (1992) and *Spoils of War* (1989) shows his disruption of the Rhodesian space. That the central and satirized characters/personae are white attests to the fact that he seeks to puncture the

pretensions of white racial ideology and to expose the silliness, vacuity and stink that inhabits it. Rangarirai Musvoto (2010:212) sees Eppel's works on Rhodesia as characterized by a wilful "distanc(ing) of himself from the racist Rhodesian establishment" personified by archetypal characters like Duiker Berry whose racist views are called into scrutiny and shown to be empty and merely a function of habit. The ironic gap that he creates between himself and the narrator who is Rhodesian (the first narrator and not the critical second) is meant to bring out the disjuncture between the two perspectives and to magnify his disgust at Rhodesian identity constructions. In spaces signposted by the discourse of race and occlusions, it is to be expected that Eppel's distancing maneuver may actually be ignored or misread as complicity with the very target of disruption. Commenting on Eppel's poetry collection, *Sonata for Matabeleland* (1995) which can reasonably be stretched to other texts analyzed in this study, Musaemura Zimunya, a Zimbabwean poet and academic (cited in Sean Christie, 2013:100-111) observes: "John Eppel's Sonata for Matabeleland promises a lot in its title....Inevitably, though, the *vision* remains ethnically white – one hesitates to say 'settler' for fear of perpetuating the emotive" (italics added).

One realizes that Zimunya's reading of Eppel reflects the fact that race tinges his engagement with the writer. For him, there is a certain level of inevitability that Eppel, as a white writer, will always ride a white hobby horse so that a white 'vision', a 'settler' representation will invariably be manifest. Zimunya homogenizes white narratives and experiences and shows that there are certain expectations that he brings to criticism of white Zimbabwean literature which, in his quest for prescriptivism, he does not find in Eppel's collection of poems. In the egregious attempt to pigeon-hole literary representation in Zimbabwe, Zimunya cannot possibly imagine Eppel doing justice to a space imbued with black history and experience. For Zimunya, that space (Matabeleland) is a no-go area for Eppel, it is alien to him, it is beyond him and, hence, the inevitability of not measuring up to the task. His approach to alternative sites for literary

representation of Zimbabwean experience is hegemonic. He fails to appreciate Eppel's attempts to unmoor the exclusionary, foundational concepts of nation as narration from race and its related entitlements.

Granted the fact that most white writers "frequently mentioned loss, pain, change (and the fact that they) don't always know where (they) belong and (yet) they need to belong somewhere" (Dies Irae, n.p) and that they "reproduce a deep and colonially-rooted ambivalence towards the notion of Africa, home and belonging" (Primorac, 2010:203), the resort to blanket racial literary categorizations and bifurcations is unhelpful. It encourages fixities and defeats a critical practice of engaging with the text's specificities in favor of racial generalizations. Quoting Dan Wylie, Rosemary Gray (2002:n.p) argues that Eppel mocks such practices, the tendencies towards "vacuous sloganeering and pseudo-intellectualism" that create literary boxes. I argue that Zimunya and his ilk's literary approaches to Zimbabwean literature represents a fixed, frozen and impervious binary that conflates white writing with white sensibility, white vision and white thematic emplotment that are reductively figured as anti-black, anti-Zimbabwe and therefore essentially Rhodesian in orientation. The worth of a literary work is lost in the pursuit of essentialized, binary and race-based readings of literature. Such, unfortunately are the limitations of sociological approaches to analyzing Zimbabwean texts that were in vogue during the early years of independence; they tended to reduce literature to the level of anti-colonial nationalism and to become as hegemonic as the system they sought to dismantle. The sociological approaches to literary criticism were founded on the tenuous belief that the new nation needed its own (black) literature and pool of critics who were sufficiently patriotic to undo the damage done by years of colonial hegemony. In the quest for such a project, the formerly subordinated literary systems were hoisted into dominance thus creating the same see-saw asymmetries they sought to right. This is dramatized in the role reversal that confronts George in *Absent: The English Teacher* after the disaster with Beauticious' car (where he

becomes a servant to the black family) and the switching of Robert Mugabe and Ian Smith's portraits. I aver that Eppel's literary intervention is meant to depict the need to embrace diversity without inflecting race. Nhlanhla Dube (2017:82) has opined that the inflection of race to Zimbabwean literature possibly explains why Eppel, despite being one of "Zimbabwe's most accomplished writers", has been 'overlooked' because he is white. Dube also goes further to speculate that Eppel's use of satire may also be his undoing. He tends to go for broke in his satire by constructing buffoonish caricatures of characters who represent power and privilege and this makes him tread on grounds that nationalistic critics/readers find appalling, dangerous or condescending.

Eppel's acerbic destabilization of Rhodesian culture and stereotypes is in part not sufficiently discerned by Zimbabwean readers and critics because of their unfamiliarity with Rhodesian culture (Dube, 2017:84). He further sees this as constituting "a barrier to rapid uptake of Eppel's work(s) by black Zimbabwean readers (and critics). For Sean Christie (2013) the writings of Eppel that interrogate the colonial space fail to capture the imagination of a black readership because "the humor is frequently in-house. That could explain why, together with a print run of just 500 copies published in South Africa, *The Great North Road* failed to make a splash in Zimbabwe." But there is also another reason for this; the old stick-in-the-mud critical approaches influenced by an unproblematized African recuperation project. This nationalistic-cum-critical project of viewing white writing from the standpoint of racism and colonialism fails to appreciate the subtleties, nuances and exonerating imagery inherent in the writings of Eppel. Consistent with sovereignty-induced Afro-optimism inherent in the discourse of Afrocentricity as a critical tool, Ruby Magosvongwe (2013:86) can only see in Eppel's writings, especially after independence, "a direct assault on the competencies of blacks running the affairs of the country." Magosvongwe's argument is totalizing and essentializes Zimbabwe's literary landscape. It is knee-jerk and sterile in that it seeks to silence white writers

from engaging with the post-independence space. Furthermore, it confers on black writers the superior burden of questioning the postcolonial ruling elite and therefore narrowing down the contours of citizenship and belonging. Such a critical trajectory also magnifies the view of literature by white writers as “sub-literature” (Tagwirei, 2014) (the word carries implications of it being lower than, of lesser importance or less national, etc). From Magosvongwe’s standpoint, Eppel’s satirical trajectory represents white malignance, white elevation of the self on a pedestal and, necessarily, white literary and existential haughtiness and unredeemed effrontery. Drawing from Ralph Goodman’s (2004:66) characterization of satire, I argue that Eppel’s deployment of this technique shows that it “[...] does not, in general, operate from a specific moral or political agenda (and instead mocks) any party, group or class” in both spaces. This perspective destabilizes the view that Eppel’s mockery embeds him in a particular racial space, whereas it, in fact, places him beyond racial confines.

The nationalism-inspired literary fulminations against Eppel’s satirical dig at the nationalist space belie the anti-essentialisms, anti-hegemonies and identity instabilities in an equally unstable construction called a nation. In the perspectives of Zimunya and Magosvongwe, writers like Eppel remain rank outsiders, foreigners who have no business unmasking the nakedness and vulgarity of power because, in their views, such a lofty privilege inheres in black writers. In a multicultural and plural society, this is not only unhelpful, fossilized and monologic; it also fails to factor in the instabilities of race as a marker of identity. I argue that Eppel’s writings on Rhodesia and Zimbabwe are geared towards unsettling ‘humbug’ whatever its color and manifestation. I draw on Rory Pilosof’s (2012:14) contention that such writings (as Eppel’s) “provide an insight into the understanding of place, race and belonging within (Rhodesia) Zimbabwe.” In Eppel’s fiction on the nationalist space, one sees the highly racialized and politicized concept of nation-building and consolidation as sites for the creation of narrow national ‘we’ and the construction of the excluded national others. This anomaly in

national affairs is what Eppel seeks to disrupt through counter-hegemonic discourses like the narrative of land and its ownership, citizenship and politics in *White Man Crawling*, *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings*, and the politics of class, gender and power in *The Holy Innocents* and *Hatchings*. Conscious of the fact that textual self-assessments or self-interpretations may not necessarily yield the same meaning as that from other critics, I, however, agree with John Eppel's view that his artistic vision is impelled by the need to transcend racial binaries. In an interview (2007) he says: "My main concern... in my art (is so that) I can find an identity which is not binary, not black/white, African/ European, colonizer/colonized. My concern in my prose is to ridicule greed, cruelty, self-righteousness and related vices like racism, sexism, jingoism."

This makes Eppel's preoccupation with paradoxes or opposites significant in his exploration of both Rhodesian and Zimbabwean spaces. Kizito Muchemwa (2009: xii) points out that the character George's description of Hamlet as 'a lover of paradoxes' in the novel *Absent: The English Teacher* "is a cap that would fit Eppel very well." It also makes Eppel's relentless search for a style that combines European form with African content richly symbolic in his yearning for a transcendent identity outside race and politics. It is no wonder that he imaginatively places post-independence Zimbabwe in a paradoxical relationship with colonialism and so forcing the reader to disavow both spaces as egregiously wanting.

George, a synecdoche, and, one may hazard to say, the writer's alter-ego, describes a paradox as "a third force, which transcends... two opposites" (Eppel, 2009:130), a dialectical fusion of opposites that produces something new. This is representative of Eppel's identity formation in both spaces as characters in his works counterbalance each other to produce perspectives that obviate fixity. The paradoxical construction of identities and nations is productive, creative and innovative as it hedges against fossilization. I contend that Eppel's, like John Coetzee's, works:

[C]onvey the author's continuous interest in overcoming binary logic and constitute innovative sites of transgression and contestation not only to the ideological and social basis of colonial discourse, (but also post independence ones) (Svetlana, Radoulski, 2015:182).

The third space that he yearns for is presented in a forceful way through his emphasis on *Macbeth's* eerie logic and the cynicism of the witches to whom "fair is foul, and foul is fair" (Eppel, 2009:83). Colonial and postcolonial constructions in Eppel's focal texts are not grounded on justice or humanity but, rather, on the end (material possession, power, privilege) justifying the means. Hence, Eppel's lampooning of Rhodesia as a company privately founded and owned by Rhodes and his white acolytes and Zimbabwe as a private limited entity captured by Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF cronies for self-aggrandizement. The funny incident where, instead of Robert Mugabe's portrait being displayed, a student mischievously switches it with that of Ian Smith, can be read as emblematic of Eppel's views about Rhodesia and Zimbabwe "as versions of one another" (Tagwirei,2014:187). So, Fanon's (1963:30) view of the "colonized man (as) an envious man" speaks of the entangled nature of both spaces, which, in their barrenness, can be substituted one for the other seamlessly. The nationalist space is motivated by the desire to ape colonial practices and behaviors. Eppel's constitution of both spaces as mired in racial de-personalization and lack of ethics is meant to stress the point that both "system(s) (were) begun in avarice, supported in pride, and perpetuated in cruelty" (Eldridge Cleaver, 1992:78). They are sites of exclusion, violence, materialism, abuse of power and domination. Hence, the need for a third space very much enamored of by Bhabha (1990:4). Such a space becomes a nodal point for the re-composition of new identities and ethico-political alternative imaginings of other forms of nationhoods.

In examining Eppel's oeuvre, one is always aware of the interstitial spaces that he inhabits in both spaces. As Memmi (1974) points out, being white in a colonial context means that by

default or design, certain benefits and privileges accrue that make one vicariously complicit in the colonial project. As a white writer, therefore, Eppel is implicated in the collective errors of omission and commission of his race. Resultantly, most of his texts are marked by an attempt to come to terms with the racial ghosts of the colonial past. A reading of George in *Absent: The English Teacher*, Auntie Francis in *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road* and many of his poems attest to this process of self-expiation and self-implication. Musvoto (2010:229) captures the identity ambiguity and dilemma that confronts Eppel when he observes that Eppel says he is; “[...] a white Rhodesian poet (writer) who is writing outside the tradition of white Rhodesian writing but from inside the physical space dominated by a white minority (therefore a part of it).”

He has to negotiate an identity, a space outside the tension-filled narratives of Rhodesia and later, Zimbabwe. He is a dissident in Rhodesia and a white outsider in nationalistic Zimbabwe and he has to construct an uneasy in-between identity. How he navigates these spaces of (un)belonging is the subject of this study. In general, however, Eppel’s texts interrogate how the politics of difference fractures and fragments a nation and militates against plurality. In his writings, he would rather have differences used as building blocks in the construction of a multicultural, mosaic society; one that is diverse but concretely inclusive and cohesive. Khombe Mangwanda (1998:23) accordingly sees Eppel’s works, behind the unrelenting satire, to evince “a deep love for his country... and also a deep concern for its postcolonial situation.” The worry about the postcolonial condition of Zimbabwe is in its politics of minoritization that masks economic and political aberrations and abuses of all kinds that we find in the focal texts. To the extent that he privileges a yearning for an ethical society that is all-encompassing, one can indeed say that Eppel’s commitment to Zimbabwe is not in doubt and that he represents a type of committed writing that supersedes class, gender, political affiliation, race and ethnicity. Again, although referring to the works of J.M. Coetzee in South Africa, I conclude by quoting

Radoulska (2015:183) whose views on Coetzee summarize Eppel's vision that: "The choice of the writer to opt out of the political dualism and defend a third position, one that is centered around the responsibility of the other, is a clear expression of his ideological position."

Such a concern for the other is shown by the ways in which Eppel textually identifies with the powerless (victimized farm workers and blacks in Rhodesia), the vulnerable (Polly Petal, marginalized minority groups and opposition supporters) and the harassed. These subaltern groups are not necessarily constructed in any one skin color in Eppel's texts that I discuss in this study.

2.7 Conclusion

Although this review of some of the scholarly works by black and white writers on Zimbabwean Literature is not exhaustive it, nevertheless, establishes overarching trends that help locate this study within existing literary scholarship in Zimbabwe. I argue that recent critical trends in literature about Zimbabwe try to bring literary dialogue between black and white writings so that the narration of the nation becomes complex and polyvocal. In this way, Eppel becomes but one literary voice out of many that complicates and problematizes the project of nation-building. Hence, the Zimbabwean public sphere becomes flooded with contesting, re-affirming and additive voices that enrich Zimbabwean Literature. The conclusion posits the view that to the extent that Eppel uses the resources of history, race, ethnicity, the politics of inclusion and exclusion, land ownership and dispossession, the identity problematic, citizenship and belonging, his writings contribute to the urgencies of building an inclusive, multicultural society. Some scholars that reviewed Eppel's writings constructed him as a rank outsider because of his race while others analyzed his works as contributing positively, if satirically, to the narration of the nation. What is clear is that the review captures the fact that for justice to subsist there is a need to transcend the limitations of grand narratives,

of constructed identity categories and to critically look at the problems that afflict the Zimbabwean society.

Chapter Three: Deconstructing the Constructions of Rhodesian Identities

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I examined the theoretical conceptions of space as both physical, but most importantly, as a discursive means by which human beings interact in order to produce certain ideologies that appear natural and commonsensical. In that chapter, I further argued that space as a social product inaugurates specific legitimating and de-legitimizing narratives that serve to entrench certain asymmetries of power that include even as they exclude significant others in society. I analyzed the grand narratives that formed the bedrock of Rhodesian identity and ideological constructions. The colonial chronotope was used as a springboard upon which to examine Mugabeism in the post-independence Zimbabwe. In juxtaposing the grand narratives of colonial Rhodesian and postcolonial Zimbabwean spaces, I intended to show the limitations of these self-perpetuating ideological constructions in the context of Eppel's counter-discursive unsettling of both. The preceding chapter also reviewed that literature in Zimbabwe that is directly and indirectly linked to the writings of Eppel. In this review of related literature, thematic and stylistic continuities and departures were established and I concluded by pointing out that Eppel's writings elicit mixed critical responses from ideologically divergent critics.

In this chapter, the study examines the ways in which John Eppel undermines the process of Rhodesian identity formation in the novel D.G.G Berry's *The Great North Road* (1992) and the poetry collections *Spoils of War* (1989) and *Songs my Country Taught me: Selected Poems 1965-2005* (2005). The first part analyzes the novel and the second one poetry. The chapter argues that the Rhodesian nation came as a result of conquest of the black people by white settlers. As a result, the social, political and identity organization of the nation necessarily

reflected the binaries of the victor and the vanquished. The name Rhodesia is derived from its British founder, Cecil John Rhodes, a buccaneering business entrepreneur. The very process of naming implies imposition of control; it shows a symbolic process of appropriation and definition of space through language and so it is an initial stage of annexation. According to Chennells (1995:103), the name Rhodesia is an identity marker, an assertion of difference. It is an announcement that the annexed territory is different from other colonies in Africa and, most importantly, that the new nation is based largely on a particular racial identity. In the construction of nation as narration, the Rhodesian metanarrative appropriates Cecil John Rhodes and Ian Smith as symbols or pivots around which group identities coalesce and solidify. The self-legitimizing metanarratives, therefore, inordinately stress the Pioneer Column as the source of history and identity construction because, after all, it was by the Pioneer Column that the British flag was raised in Mashonaland. In this way, the Rhodesian narrative is framed as the genesis of history.

This selective choice of the history of origins and heroes is a conscious attempt at erasure and de-nationalization of the black other “out of the narrative of belonging to the space and constructed group community” (Javangwe, 2011:55). Such a process involved a deliberate agenda of self-validation and self-praise where definitions became progressively narrowed down in order to discursively create the boundaries of racial inclusion and exclusion. Viewed this way, Rhodesia is inscribed as an appendage of the empire whose discourses are central to this new territory. In this chapter, it is further argued that although Rhodesian identity is constructed on slippery terrain, especially after the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), it is Britain and its value systems that give it shape and its distinctiveness. This process of identity formation and solidification takes place through the peripherization and externalization of the native.

Chennells (1996:103) plausibly argues that the colonizer in Rhodesia embodies and appropriates an imperial identity when he says:

Rhodesia, as a space, defines an English race that discovers through the process of conquest and appropriation the nature of its own civilization. The English become a race only through relation to their empire; Rhodesians as spokespeople of the discourses of empire are also naming their own identity. [...]. It is in his struggle to discipline both the perceived unruliness of African nature and the nature of the Africans that the Englishman becomes his true self, and the Rhodesian who in turn has appropriated that discourse his or her true self.

Implicit in the above argument is the view that Rhodesian identity was generally contingent upon the existence of the racial other. Boehmer (2005:24) argues that fundamentally, the construction of white identity in Rhodesia was done within the gaze of the other (the native). The establishment of a white Rhodesian nation was founded on a racist ideology that attempted to justify and sustain white presence in the country. Following a violent struggle over land in the wake of settler occupation, the whites needed to weave a narrative of entitlement that would help domesticate the natives whilst naturalizing the asymmetries of the colonial status quo. Physically and discursively, this involved a process that Chennells (1996:102) refers to as “mapping out the new space” in which the social relations that inhered installed the Rhodesians as the dominant group. The discourses of identity in Rhodesia were based on “who we are (whites) and what ‘they’ (blacks) are, and who has the right to live where we do” (Chris Weedon, 2004:2). Rhodesian construction of the self was based on the separateness of blacks from white space in order to avoid what the whites viewed as “contamination” and too much familiarity. This kind of apartheid was anchored in the belief that the black person represents nothingness or a certain corrosive force to be avoided at all costs. The argument in this chapter is that under conditions of colonialism, the identities of natives are always policed and surveyed so as to cement the contingent identities of the colonizers. Such identity constructions are thus:

Produced in (a) dialectical movement (in that) the colonizer does produce the colonized as negation, but, through a dialectical twist, that negative colonized identity as negated in turn to found the positive colonizer self (Hardt and Negri, 2000:128).

The above statement implies that the native is a mirror through which the colonizer fashions out his self-identity. This means that alterity is not inherent or natural but is created in the service of identity politics. The process of composition, de-composition and re-composition of these contingent identities stabilizes the self-perception of the dominant group. But the attempt to totalize and homogenize such identity formation is fractured and fragmented by the fact that it is predicated on blind, emotive, unquestioning and non-rational attachments. Consequently, “in its bid to bring the group together (Rhodesian) nationalism does not open up or leave spaces for alternative ways of perceiving the nation and its core values” (Javangwe, 2011:52-3). Such a state of affairs leaves Rhodesian self-definition vulnerable to the dangers of creating a yawning chasm between ideology/rhetoric and practising the appropriated modes of behavior. There is always a difference between stating who they are and living the talk. Too often, settler culture is shown to be mere rhetoric, full of sound and fury but empty when it comes to praxis. John Eppel undermines the basic assumptions of settler culture in Rhodesia by interrogating the moral, spiritual, cultural, behavioral and political deficits of a white community against the presumed superiority and altruistic nature of white culture and the colonial project.

The following section analyzes the novel *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road* in order to unpack the workings of the “Manichean logic of exclusion” (Hardt and Negri, 2000:124) at the heart of the Rhodesian settler community in the book.

3.2 Dismantling the Rhodesian Construct in *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road*

The novel *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road* (1992) is an interrogation and deconstruction of Rhodesian colonial and racist culture through the bumbling and misaligned protagonist, Duiker Berry. The story also uses a settler community in the village of ‘Umdidi’ as a

microcosm of white attitudes, stereotypes, racism, white pretensions, values and beliefs. The narrative unfolds through a series of reminiscences and flashbacks that capture Duiker's nodal life experiences in different spatio-temporal circumstances in Durban (University of Natal), Umdidi community, Shropshire and the Factory Workshop. Kohler (1993:70) aptly points out that the book comes "in the form of a satire of Rhodesian life – its waste, its delusion, its myopia, its general inertia – and is cleverly represented by Rose Hadi as an anagram for Rhodesia" and its demise. The Rhodesian way of life and identity construction is sardonically depicted as pedestrian, mundane and ludicrous as it consists of ritually going to the country club, complaining about servants, partying, patronizing the hairdressers, etc (Kohler, 1993:69-70).

The deconstruction of Rhodesian settler culture is introduced through Duiker's accidental discovery of the *Perfumed Wind* which links easily with the project of colonization of Zimbabwe. Introducing the scatological imagery in the narrative, *Perfumed Wind* is a mixture ointment designed by the protagonist in order to lessen the odors coming from the white people's farts and is liberally applied on their bum cleavages. The emphasis on white people's farts and their bums is a strategy used by the writer to install the whites as ordinary people engaged in human bodily rituals like everyone else. For example, they fart, defecate, masturbate, fornicate and smell. Such a strategy unsettles the colonial discourse that inscribes the white people as superior and special. The name of the white village is, curiously, called 'Umdidi', an Ndebele word for anus from where fart and excrement comes. It should be noted that the name 'Umdidi' does not mean a person's posterior or buttocks (contrary to the claims made by Mangwanda, 1998), but has obscene, derogatory and negative connotations of where smelly stuff comes from. This is Eppel's way of scatologically (un)naming and debunking the Rhodesian space to suggest his negative perception of its underpinnings. It also links up with Rhodes' alleged preference for anal sex; *emdidini* in Ndebele. Thus, Eppel's satire assumes

elements of the grotesque and the obscene to describe Duiker (incidentally suffering from ‘lavatoriphobia’) and his *Perfumed Wind* business. The strategy allows the writer to show the excesses of power in the colony. The production of the perfumed wind ointment is a business venture that gives Duiker a fortune though there is a sense in which he views it as a philanthropic gesture and a panacea for the smelly farts of white people given to eating meatballs and cabbages. However, fart, no matter how much it is camouflaged, remains such and always needs to be released from the body. This is akin to whitewashing a grave or perfuming shit, packaging what is unpalatable as palatable.

The parallelism to Duiker’s hero, Cecil John Rhodes is not lost to the reader. The narrator points out that Duiker’s preoccupation and obsession were “[...] to vindicate the man who had given his name to the nation to which Duiker proudly, splendidly, and with oft a moistened eye, belonged” (p.13). This reference to Rhodes is significant because he was the founder of the British South Africa Company (BSAC), a company whose business interests in Zimbabwe was in mining and later farming (Fisher, 2010:1-2). Like Duiker’s perfumed wind business, Rhodes made a fortune out of his mining enterprise in Zimbabwe even though the process of acquiring those mining and farming rights involved a lot of skulduggery and deception. The Ndebele King, Lobengula, was duped into giving away the land to the BSAC. Later they (the Ndebele) and the Shona were machine-gunned into submission so that the whites could have unmolested access to the land (Fisher, 2010:1-2). What Duiker constructs as Rhodes’s altruism and philanthropy is satirically framed by the writer as pure banditry and immorality. Thus Duiker blindly says, “I’m proud of my Rhodesian heritage” (p.12). To which Honey, his girlfriend, retorts:

“Heritage,” She scoffed, ‘you call it a heritage? How can we claim a heritage from our origins? A fucking commercial company owned by the capitalist bum-bandit exploiter, Cecil Pusface Rhodes’” (p.12).

Duiker goes on to argue that Rhodes was a great man who brought civilization to a primitive land. He fails to appreciate the irony that what he calls heritage is predicated on the disinheritance and dispossession of the native population. What Honey is emphasizing are the commercial origins and maintenance of Rhodesia as a colony. Rhodesia was founded and sustained by a process of exploitation of the human and natural resources of the country and that the attempt to cover up this evil amounts to perfuming fart. It is clear that even at this early stage the narrator is already undermining the very genesis of the Rhodesian nation.

Javangwe (2011:54) has argued that in the discursive construction of the Rhodesian metanarrative there is a fetishization of heroes, origin myths of the nation and a projected future group destiny. Rhodes's grasping, egomaniac and racist motives are transformed into humanistic, inclusive and civilizational objectives. Duiker turns the figure of Rhodes and his business into something tenable for the welfare of the people, both black and white, just like he downplays the profit motive of his business that camphorates farts. Furthermore, Duiker's preoccupation with his anus echoes Rhodes' freakery as a "bum-bandit" which is an oblique reference to his purported sexual orientation. Rhodes is alleged to have had a special preference for good-looking young boys, an intimation of his potential gay tendencies. Onomastically, the naming of the village and possibly the settler culture as 'Umdidi', therefore, becomes salutary especially when the narrator points out that wherever there was a white bum, *Perfumed Wind* was used. The satirical narrative, therefore, points to the fact that an identity claim founded on the heroism of Rhodes is immoral because it confounds and conflates exploitation and queerness with civilization. Quite appropriately, therefore, Honey dismisses Duiker's national identity inscription as propelled by a "stinking misguided patriotism" (p.12).

To better appreciate the narrative strategy that is used by Eppel to subvert the Rhodesian constructed identities, it is paramount to examine the Bakhtinian narrative strategy of polyphony/dialogism. Bakhtin (1987:263) argues that polyphony implies a multiplicity of

narrative voices within a text. In a text that involves dialogue between characters, there are many viewpoints that do not necessarily carry the worldview of the author. Each voice in a dialogic encounter carries its own narrative angle and weight, thus, giving rise to a plurality of consciousnesses that may collide, diverge and converge. In this way, the reader is presented with multiple realities personified by different characters (Michael Holquist, 2002:107). Eppel employs this strategy in order to undercut the Rhodesian narrative of white superiority and philanthropism. In this text, apart from authorial intrusions in the form of satiric comments, Honey and her Marxist friends and the eccentric Aunt Frances provide a counter discourse to the hegemonic Rhodesian metanarrative. This narrative technique is often contrasted with monologism where a single perspective or ideology is privileged especially by the main character so that other perspectives are diminished or rendered insignificant. An example of this narrative approach is found in Mtizira's already mentioned novel *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008). In this novel, the overriding ideology is the validation of the various *Zvimurenga/ Chimurengas* (liberation struggles). The majority of the characters in this novel are used to simply endorse the writer's convictions. Eppel chooses dialogism to unsettle the white narrative of superiority.

The dialogic approach is also used to oust hegemonic narratives churned out in the colonial Rhodesian educational institutions. Duiker's education at Milton School (a colonial name, including the hostels, Charter House and Pioneer House) is inscribed as a site for the production of narrow and essentialized identities meant to exclude the racial other in the "imagined community" of Rhodesia (Anderson,1991:7). The school is figured as a citadel for racist ideological brainwashing. Granted that no educational system is value-free, but the conscious ways in which the teachers and the educational syllabus instil mental provincialism is worth commenting on in this book. Each time Duiker engages in an argument with other characters, he always selects "his words from the mental image of a page from his school history exercise

book'' (p.12). Duiker's limitations as a Rhodesian and a product of the machineries of Rhodesian identity construction are laid bare by his subject preferences. Although he ultimately fails his university education (rendering him a questionable authority on issues that need critical cognitive rigor and given his blind patriotism), he, nevertheless, does well in History and Literature.

The narrator points out that:

But then English was one of Duiker's best subjects, his second best in fact. History had been number one, especially Rhodesian history. After all, he, Duiker came from pioneer stock. So it was virtually like learning about his own family (p.25).

The two subjects are amenable to propaganda and distortion, especially in conditions of national crisis where identities are being called into question. These subjects are related to each other in that literature finds its raw material from history. May be this is the reason why literary scholars sometimes talk about the historicization of fiction or fictionalization of history. Literary representations are contingent upon whose literature it is, where the literature comes from, the circumstances of their production and the intended readers. Abdul Janmohamed (1995:23) argues that colonialist literature is ideological because "the fiction forms the ideology by articulating and justifying the position and aims of the colonialists." The literature that is taught at Duiker's school is one that advances imperial interests and views cultural differences as differences of essence. The tragedy in this case is that Duiker does not synthesize the facts that are rammed down his head but simply regurgitates them.

History is a very important subject in re-constructing a people's past in so far as it affects the present and the future self-image of an individual. But history is often constructed to serve specific hegemonic and racist ends. Duiker's history lessons provide an uncomplicated rendition of the past from the white man's point of view. Primorac (2010:203) buttresses this

point by contending that history can be captured so that it serves purposes of the present rather than a re-construction of the past. For Duiker, the only history is one narrated from the white man's point of view. Actually, as far as he is concerned, history begins with the arrival of the white man. Otherwise, before that blacks existed outside of history. The information that is rammed into his head is typically distorted, partisan, self-serving and, therefore, mystifying. For example he is taught thus:

The Ndebele war, 1893.

The seeds of this war can be traced to two converging factors: (1) The longstanding enmity between the Shona tribe and the invading Ndebele (2) The arrival in Mashonaland of the Pioneer ... (p.25).

This construction of history creates the Shona and Ndebele as primitive and unable to settle their conflicts in a civilized manner. In particular, it constructs the whites as benign bringers of peace and stability to a bloodthirsty and violent people who could have exterminated each other were it not for the timely intervention of the white colonizers. Gayatri Spivak (1995:25) decries the tendency "to privilege the narrative of history as imperialism as the best version of history." This distortion of history works to inscribe the whites and colonialism as beneficial to the natives. Nowhere in the quotation do the whites introspect about their role in causing the Ndebele War of 1893. History is manipulated so that the 'messianism' of the whites is raised to prominence whilst the supposed savagery and backwardness of blacks becomes alarmingly egregious as to warrant intervention.

Another example of this historical solipsism is when Duiker says:

"The Matabele deserved what they got. They invaded Rhodesia and plundered everything in sight. The poor, innocent local natives, the Shona-types, were massacred. Their villages were burned down, their cattle and crops taken-" Mr. Thomas' history notes began to assemble in his mind's eye. Titles, subtitles, and dates swam with little squiggly tails into focus (p.52).

This is the Rhodesian discourse of self-legitimation. In this narrative of place-making, the violence meted out on the Ndebele becomes justified because they were themselves figured as violent people wreaking havoc on the weaker native inhabitants. The narrative fits into the colonial stereotype of the Shona as cowardly and victims of the war-like and marauding Ndebele warriors. From this version of history, the Shona deserved and, in fact, welcomed the ‘protection’ by the whites who are cast as saviors. The historical slant also externalizes the Ndebele as invaders whose attachment to the land was tenuous. The inscription of ethnic plunder, pillage, massacres and burning down of villages is a strategy to vitiate the wholesale violence and dispossession done by the colonizers. Theirs is figured as constructive violence that installs order where there was anarchy and chaos. Besides, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:47) disagrees with the view that the Ndebele did not till the land and survived solely on raiding other groups. This is history that aids and abets the technologies of colonial domination and self-validation. Ian Smith uses the same strategy of place-making and justification of white presence in Zimbabwe in his book *Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal and the Dreadful Aftermath* (1997). For him, (with the exception of the ‘Bushmen’) Zimbabwe belongs to no one since the Ndebele, Shona and whites all came from somewhere. The strategy allows the whites to lay claim to Zimbabwe as one of several ethnic groups contesting for space. From Smith’s perspective, the only disadvantage that whites had was that they came slightly later than other ethnic groups, but they belonged to the land nonetheless.

In a counter-discursive installation of dialogism, the writer introduces the character Aunt Frances’s perspective. She represents an alternative imaginary that subverts Duiker and the Rhodesian version of history. She insightfully tells Duiker that:

“What you did at school was Rhodesian Government propaganda. You did history from the white man’s point of view, specifically the white businessman’s point of

view. Matabeleland was a nation, Reggie; Rhodesia was a company with interests primarily in mining and farming. It was a company and it died a company'' (p.53).

Elsewhere Frances makes the observation that:

“The Matabele might have raided Mashonaland but they never occupied it. We simply marched in there, the Pioneer Column, representing the British South Africa Company, we marched in and took over’’ (p.52).

Aunt Frances’ analysis tallies with the argument made earlier in this chapter about the circumstances that surrounded the founding of Rhodesia by Rhodes. The animus of colonialism was economic benefit so that the explanations that inhere in official Rhodesian discourse, according to Frances, are mere red-herring that mask the rapacious imposition and protection of white privileges. The difference between Frances’ rendition of history and that of Duiker is that of history as witnessed, experienced and lived in contradistinction to history as learned and strategically narrated. It is the difference between critical dialogue with history and regurgitation. Duiker simply parrots and mouths what has been dictated to him by his instructors, a process of what Gellner (1983) refers to as ‘exo-socialization.’ This concept posits the view that a person’s outlook and worldview are determined by the quality and slant of the education that he receives and, importantly, the nature of the culture in whose ambit that education takes place. Duiker’s education takes place in a context of racism and the culture in which this learning takes effect is equally racist so that it becomes clear that he is being conditioned by the church, the school and politics to view his society in a particular racialized way and that conditioning is reinforced by the family which, in many ways, is a metonymy of the nation. Nationalist educational systems always try to forge national consciousness and, at times, uncritical loyalty to the nation. This is what makes Duiker’s narration of history a narration of Rhodesian national identity. The reader, therefore, is not surprised when he

intransigently declares that; “I’ll never be able to call it Zimbabwe,” he said, almost absent-mindedly.... “To me it will always be Rhodesia” (p.12). A character that fails to negotiate and re-negotiate a new identity in the face of historical facts and changes in life circumstances does not make for a reliable carrier of national identity. He cannot come to terms with the fact that the roles have changed, that the hitherto dominant group has become the dominated. Besides, identities should be flexible and fluid enough to allow one to negotiate belonging in different life circumstances. In his narrative exclusion of the native other, Duiker comes across as too rigid, fixed and a prisoner of his patriotic history.

On the other hand Frances, though eccentric and advanced in years, provides a plausible perspective on Rhodesian history. She punctures the Rhodesian narrative about black agency by pointing out that the blacks had genuine grievances against the colonizers that made them take up arms. She is, therefore, figured as a foil to the Rhodesian trope of colonialism “as a moral obligation to spread [western civilization]” (Jenny Sharpe, 1995:100). But, her rendition of history as lived and as a white person who lived in a colony where the politics of skin color was entrenched, means that she cannot escape complicity with colonial ideology. For example, she has delusions about having been the mistress to King Lobengula whom she figures as prone to consuming copious quantities of raw or half-cooked meat. This is a characterization that frames him (and other blacks) in zoological imagery. But to the extent that she provides an alternative version of history from that of the self-righteous colonizer, she explodes the myth that whiteness in Rhodesia was monolithic.

The reader is also given a glimpse of Duiker’s time in the army. In particular, the narrator gives a vivid description of Duiker and his fellow Section C soldiers who are given as a microcosm of the Rhodesian soldiers and their worldview generally. The episode where they are camped near the Mozambican border is rich in significance. It shows their attitude towards the bush war whilst giving us a window through which to peep at the whites’ attitudes and stereotypes

towards the native other. The war, according to Ian Smith (2001) and official Rhodesian discourses, was fought to defend white values and civilization and to halt the advance of Communism that was using the black ‘terrs’ as proxies. Godwin and Hancock (1993:3) observe as much when they argue that “Rhodesia existed in order to defend Western Civilization from the evils of Communism and to preserve civilized standards from anarchy and corruption of Black Africa.” The justification for the war in terms of some nebulous humanistic principle was intended to mask material benefits harvested from colonial occupation of Rhodesia.

The episode near the Mozambican border is even more significant in the way it brings out the limitations of the Rhodesian identity construction. In the previous chapter, it was stated that the Rhodesian discourse was underpinned by the construction of blacks in terms of “presence as an absence” (Janmohamed, 1995:2), as the “silent, silenced” other (Spivak, 1995:25). This is evident in Section C’s encounter with women and children carrying firewood. The first statement that the commander makes is an order. He does not seek dialogue with these blacks. The incident is represented as follows: “Hey wena!” Sydney shouted in the lingua franca of Southern Africa. “Haikona baleka mina funa kuluma na wena” (p.67). Framed as the superior other, the white man can only give orders to the native. This is typical colonial infantilization of the natives. That the women remain silent while the commander speaks symbolizes the monologic nature of colonial discourse in that it is unambiguously one-sided, violent, aggressive and threatening. The threats of violence are shown to be unprovoked except for the fact that the native is inscribed as the enemy other who is in collusion with the ‘terrorists’ threatening to invade colonial civilized space (Chennells,1995:104) from which they have been barred by the ‘Manichean allegory’ (JanMohamed,1995:2) or what Fanon (1967:29) calls compartmentalization of colonial spaces. The episode dramatizes the principle of the spectacular in which the powerful flaunt their strength over the weak. Mbembe (2001:32) observes that “power [in the colony] was reduced to the right to demand, to force, to ban, to

compel, to authorize, to punish ... to be obeyed-in short, to enjoin and direct.” The soldiers squander the opportunity to engage in a fruitful dialogue with the racial other. Instead, the women are viewed as a menace to be confronted and possibly browbeaten. In fact, in the eyes of these Rhodesian soldiers, they represent the terrorists who need to be externalized to the other side of the Mozambican border where they should belong. The silence of the women and, by implication, the guerrillas to authorize their own narrative of the nation confronts the reader with “the essential Spivakian puzzle (of): How can we account for the subaltern? How can they speak [for themselves]?” (Joe Maggio, 2011:426). The Rhodesian soldiers, representatives of the Rhodesian identity, miss the opportunity to re-negotiate a new identity in light of the other’s discourse. Rather, they elect to talk over or talk down to or talk across the natives rather than with them which is a quintessential figuration of monologism or ‘commandement.’

The war provides Eppel with the arsenal to satirically perish the myth of Rhodesians as courageous people. The myth was founded on the prayerful narrative whose injunction in the Rhodesian national anthem was: “Rise O voices of Rhodesia, God may we Thy bounty share. Give us strength to face all danger, and where challenge is, to dare” (p.72). The construction of Rhodesians as intrepid is collapsed when the soldiers come face-to-face with danger and “terrorists”. Richard Bourne (2011:8-9) argues that for purposes of sustaining the war, Rhodesians depended on certain strategic fallacies that propagated the view that they were “the best counter-insurgency force in the world... perfectly capable of defeating a contemptible army of ‘garden boys.’” But faced with the prospect of engaging the ‘terrorists’ in real combat, they are shown to be cowardly, thus unmasking the façade of courage that they appropriate for themselves. In this episode, where Duiker’s Section C is deployed near the Mozambican border, Rhodesian soldiers are portrayed as shaken to the core because of the movement of mere cows. The strategy allows the writer to bring the white soldiers to terra firma as ordinary human beings traumatized by the war. The negative characterization that they create for blacks

is satirically turned against them by the narrator whose intention is to show the falsity of Rhodesian identity construction. When they do eventually come into contact with the terrorists, Duiker undergoes a Damascene conversion. He begins to question the justification for waging a war that brings so much suffering to human beings who should ordinarily live together in peace. The brutality, agony, screams and mutilation of bodies makes him realize the senselessness of the war. This questioning of the war is, however, not peculiar to Eppel. Other white Rhodesian writers like Angus Shaw in the novel *Kandaya: Another Time Another Place* (1993) and Bruce Moore- King in the novel *White Men Black War* (1989) also question the purpose of the bush war in terms of the suffering it brought to both sides.

Duiker is portrayed as harassed by the war. He is so tired that he feels like he is on the verge of collapsing. This makes him negotiate a new sense of identity forged away from the fixed and essentialized Rhodie conception of the self. He willingly adopts a flexible, inclusive identity that takes on board the native other. The narrator points out that Duiker:

[...] wished that he were at home with his mother and father, and the dog and the cat and the servants. He wished he were lying on the carpet in their lounge with Lady snoring by his side. He didn't give a damn, at that moment, for Honey, or his mail-order business ...: he did not give a Cory bastard for... Rhodesia or the universe (p.75).

The suffering that he witnesses in the war front makes him recant his Rhodesianism to envision a national space that is accommodative of blacks as human beings.

Bourne (2011:26) points that settler attitude towards Africans was characterized by “fear, contempt and sexual anxiety.” The fear is based on the black person discursively and metaphorically transgressing into the white man’s territory; contempt is for his/her alleged inhumanity and sexual anxiety arises over the possibility of the black person invading the sexual terrain of the colonizer and the probability of impurity through miscegenation thereof. This is shown by Duiker’s encounter with the African policeman. The policeman is reading

James Hadley Chase whose cover page “had... a sexy, almost naked blonde on the cover of the book and this disturbed him” (p.64)). He is disturbed by the real possibility of the black man transgressing into forbidden white sexuality and possibly having sex with white women. This threatens the artificial boundaries that underpin colonialism. Sweetie Hadi voices such stereotypical thinking when she cautions her daughter that “I don’t like you running around in a costume with all these piccanins about” (p.127). Duiker, on the other hand, would rather have the black policeman read Shakespeare whose English cultural ideology is never in doubt although he has not read the book himself. English canonical literature helps keep the discursive boundaries safe, it is the kind of literature that cements white values, beliefs and worldview and Duiker has no problems with that.

The encounter with the black girl is pregnant with satirical sexual innuendo inaugurated by graphical psychological descriptions of the soldiers. The deft authorial intrusions help unmask the pretensions of white culture towards black sexuality. The men are clearly attracted to the black girl in “colorless rags” (p.67). Sheer force of habit, race and cultural stereotype forbid them from expressing what they feel deep down: attraction to the girl. Eppel shows the artificiality of race and racism in this particular episode. The narrator pointedly observes that:

The young girl, had she not been ... you know ... a ‘nanny’ ... would have been pretty and quite sexy. Naturally Sydney and his patrol men, all true Rhodesians, were not in the least bit sexually attracted to ‘nannies’ ... and if all five of them were now making intensely detailed visual examinations of this young thing, you, dear reader, can be assured that these examinations were accompanied by no feelings of lust (p.67).

This is satire at its most excoriating. The reader is aware that these soldiers are victims of their own culture and racism. The socially constructed moral compartmentalization forecloses them from seeing the basic humanity and femininity of the girl. This tallies with Jean-Paul Sartre’s (2003:25) reasoning that “no one can treat a man like a dog without first regarding him as a

man.’’ The colonizer is aware of the humanity of the colonized and the nagging consciousness makes him/her create narratives that help suppress or salve the conscience. To regard the native as a full human being is to admit to equality, to black competition for jobs and to lose the cheap labor which is at the heart of the colonial enterprise. In other words, whites deliberately construct a racial bulwark that serves their economic purposes and that wall is always vulnerable when faced with basic human emotions that know no boundaries. This shows the pretensions and “psychological blockages of the white people” (Kohler, 1993:73).

To demonstrate the imprisoning effect of the constructed and lionized Rhodesian personality, the writer shows the soldiers fantasizing about sexually possessing and ravaging the black girl. Their mode of making love to the girl takes the form of control and domination, a sadistic infliction of pain. Mbembe (2001:13) corroborates the point by arguing that “male domination derives in large measure from the power and the spectacle of the phallus – not so much from the threat to life during war as from the individual male’s ability to demonstrate his virility at the expense of a woman and to obtain its validation from the subjugated woman herself.’’ The major teleology of the colonial enterprise was to impose total submission of the native to its imperatives. Thus, the soldiers symbolically impose their power upon the helpless girl:

Lofty, for instance, had the girl on her back with her legs wide open; Corrie had her stripped naked, bound hand and foot, and suspended from a chain that was bolted onto his garage roof; Billy was doing something very thorough with his fingers; Sydney had her up against the back seat of his Toyota station wagon and seemed to be frisking her for a concealed weapon. Duiker had her on all fours-but only for an instant (p.68).

The humanity and beauty of the black girl imposes itself on these young soldiers despite the racial divide. The subversion of the colonial narrative of contamination if whites have sexual intercourse with blacks is shown by the secret affair that Maria, Sweetie Hadi’s maid, has with Blesbok. Despite Blesbok’s scandalized and self-righteous rage against sex across the color

line in public, he secretly sleeps with a nanny, who, according to Reg Bench, stinks. The narrator says “Maria had a pretty good idea of the identity of the father of the baby in her womb. Baas Blesbok was a very big man” (p.188). The authorial intrusion serves to unmask Blesbok’s phony morality as a representative of Rhodesian culture. The worst part (and a source of great hilarity) is that Blesbok’s double standards are discovered by his own daughter. This, and many other incidents, points to the constructedness and artificiality of Rhodie culture that frames the blacks as morally abject, inferior and savage. However, Godwin and Hancock (1993:9) observe that despite their pretensions to a higher social, sexual, cultural and moral order “in reality, they (whites) practised a Sunday Christianity (and they) yielded to moral temptation (and) broke most of their own codes for ‘civilized’ behavior.” John Eppel, thus, succeeds in deconstructing Rhodie identities as pure, superior, morally upright and unshakeable. The whites, just like any other race, have their strengths and weaknesses. Through the novel, the Rhodesian national identity constructions are shown to be in need of re-negotiation to include the racial other. The text, therefore, satirizes philosophies that are based on race and racism. The next section analyzes selected poems from the collections *Spoils of War* and *Songs my Country Taught me*.

3.3 Eppel’s Poetry and the Search for Belonging

This section analyzes poems from Eppel’s two collections, *Spoils of War* (1989) and poems from *Songs my Country Taught me* (2005). Although these collections of poems mainly thematize issues of loss, nostalgia and nature, they also grapple with the problematic of identity alignment, especially the status of the colonial interloper in a Rhodesia that is rapidly coming to an end. In the section where I analyzed the novel *D.G.G.Berry’s The Great North Road*, I argued that there is evidence that the action takes place towards the end of the 1970s, a period when Rhodesia is gravitating towards a new dispensation. The poems chosen for analysis include “Rhodesian Lullaby,” “On Browsing through Some British Poems” and “Spoils of

War” from the collection *Spoils of War*. From *Songs my Country Taught me* I discuss the poems “In memory of General Josiah Tongogara” and “Pioneer Woman with Four Jacks.” These have been chosen because they best show the ways in which Eppel unsettles the Rhodesian metanarrative and his search for identity construction outside the restrictive confines of race. Some of the concerns raised by the selected poems such as belonging, Rhodesian nationalism and its problematic identity compositions are a repeat of the themes found in the novel discussed in the previous section.

The first poem to be analyzed in this section is “Rhodesian Lullaby”, which, despite its title which suggests a soothing and soporific song that is sung in order to comfort a child into sleep, registers the pain that the Rhodesians experienced at the loss of their privileged position in Rhodesia. These concerns are articulated in the stanzas below as follows:

Like shrapnel from an old bomb we scatter
to other lands, delivering reasons.
... On the backs of our hands, faces,
and necks – the first traces of skin cancer.
Yes, we’re Rhodesians. Does it matter?

Even our children have learned not to cry
for their puppies’ graves. The women weep
no more for their gardens. And the men sleep
less fitfully on their way to Smithland
or Salisbury-by-sea. A boozy band
of rebels, we fought the world and lost. Why

should it matter? Rhodesians never die.
From our mouths flat patriotisms slide
tight as trouser-legs, unbending as pride.
...

.... In a trickling of pus
and blood down cheeks, we shout our lullaby.

Our wallets were fat, our bellies fatter.
Memories of war slip like envelopes
under the doors of our minds. Each one copes
in his own way – a defiant slogan
on a T-shirt, the old flag printed on
a dishcloth... hush now – it doesn't matter (p.15).

The poem is preoccupied with the period of denial that the Rhodesians went through during the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. The persona frames them as caught in a time-warp and hankering after an evanescent dream as captured by the simile: “Like shrapnel from an old bomb...” and “from our mouths flat patriotisms slide.” Wamuwi Mba0 (2010:64) has opined that nostalgia and loss arise out of cognitive dissonance, a disjuncture between a golden past and a harassing present and uncertain future. In his own words, nostalgia “arises out of perceived lack, or from perceptions of dislocation and uncertainty.” The poem is also preoccupied with processes of white identity reconstruction and retention in the face of independence as suggested by the line: “We scatter/to other lands, delivering reasons” and the stubborn repetition of “Rhodesians never die.” Despite having lost the war and, therefore, their privilege and wealth through the Lancaster House Conference of 1979, the persona dramatizes the aggressive intransigence of the Rhodesians who continue to cling on an outdated identity as depicted in the line: “Yes, we are Rhodesians/Does it matter?” Their refusal to accept change echoes Duiker’s stance in *The Great North Road* who insists on calling Zimbabwe, Rhodesia in spite of the irreversible change to independence. Rather than forge a new postcolonial Zimbabwean identity which is not circumscribed by racial categories, the whites find solace in emigrating to other countries than accept change as disclosed in the opening line of the poem

which reads: “Like shrapnel from an old bomb we scatter to other lands, delivering reasons” (15). Gerald Gaylard (2009:62) argues that the whites after independence became “marooned, adrift, (and) a seeming anachronism in a world that has no use for (them).” The image of an old bomb stresses the irrelevance and ineffectiveness of Rhodesians’ construction of themselves. The reasons that they deliver to other lands, concretized by the line: “...to other lands, delivering reasons”, probably have to do with their self-validating narrative that they never lost the war but were betrayed by many significant others, including Britain at the Lancaster House Conference (Smith, 1997). These are reasons of self-justification and self-consolation that their perceived enduring identity will remain etched in their lives even though the persona undermines such a puny posture by pointing out that “we scatter/ to other lands....” This shows that there is no coordination, no systematicity in their stubborn Rhodesianism and this renders their tenacious identity clutch futile and their defeat permanent. There is a ring of irony in their insistence upon a Rhodesian identity which they inwardly know has evaporated as captured in the lines: “Even our children have learned not to cry/for their puppies’ graves. / The women weep/ no more for their garden.” Yet, the Rhodesians still frame their identity as permanent as propagandized by their national anthem, ‘Rhodesians never die’ which, unfortunately, has been mocked by national events in the form of independence.

These lines dramatize a sense of collective loss which also accepts the demise of Rhodesia as a *fait accompli*. Such a loss is further signalled by the incipient traces of disease “the first traces of skin cancer” which frames these Rhodesians in pathological terms of misalignment with their situation. From Eppel’s mild satire, this misalignment constitutes a disease just like the Umdidi community is afflicted by an ailment that demands the application of the perfumed wind ointment. However, Mangwanda (1998:52) sees the cancer of the skin in the poem as reflective of “the pain and disillusion that confronts them.” The rhetorical question “does it

matter?” paradoxically registers both a rejection and a grudging acceptance of the status quo; if they have lost in real terms, then they will continue to cultivate their identity in theory.

There is a hint of self-flagellation by the white persona who seems to lament the whites’ blind patriotism that clouded their judgment to the extent that they could not foresee the powerful forces ranged against them when they declared the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. Fisher (2010:4) points out that the UDI re-made their home as a place of stigma; Rhodesia clearly became a pariah state in the community of nations. The negative characterization used to describe the guerrillas by the Smith regime is mockingly turned upside down so that it now describes the Rhodesians and their lost cause. The persona seems to be referring to this when he describes the Rhodesians as: “[a] boozy band of rebels, we fought the world and lost”. By voting overwhelmingly for independence from Britain, with the hope of perpetuating settler rule even in the face of anti-colonial movements, the Rhodesians behaved like drunks (boozy) whose judgments were impaired. The result was that they lost the plot and eventually the country. Their rebellion against Britain and the rest of the world that advocated majority rule boomeranged.

It is also important to note that the persona frames Rhodesian nationalism as weak and based on shaky grounds because it sought to defend an injustice as he points out: “From our mouths flat patriotisms slide/ tight as trouser-legs, unbending as pride”. The situational incongruity of the Rhodesian predicament is brought into sharp focus by the fact that they have to resort to megaphone declarations (“we shout our lullaby”) of the impeccability of their ideology. The act of shouting what is supposed to be a lullaby reflects the paradoxical situation that confronts these Rhodesians: cultivating an identity that they had become habituated to whilst at the same time accepting the loss of Rhodesia as irreversible. Their situation is akin to trying to remember and forget at the same time so that the tension involved in trying to resolve these opposites is the ordeal that makes them shout a lullaby.

According to Fisher (2010:30), the tragedy with whites in post-independence Zimbabwe was that they sought to live in the past rather than the present. That explains why they maintained exclusive clubs and societies that were enclaves of the Rhodesian racist culture. The flimsiness and frivolity of such desperation is shown when the persona mockingly observes that: “Each one copes/ in his own way – a defiant slogan/ on a T-shirt, the old flag printed on/ a dishcloth...hush now – it doesn’t matter”. The fixed and separate construction of white Rhodesian identity in independent Zimbabwe for those whites that did not emigrate was exploited by the post-independence Robert Mugabe regime which framed them as people who had spurned the hand of reconciliation and so they became vulnerable to racial persecution and this had the effect of de-nationalizing and de-territorializing them from the Zimbabwean space. The poem “On Browsing through some British poems” interrogates and complicates the issue of belonging for whites born and bred in Rhodesia. Such whites’ connection with England (the former imperial power) is imagined as tenuous. The persona confronts the white self with the question of who he/she is and where he/she belongs. This is particularly evident in the second and third stanzas of the poem. The second stanza highlights these concerns as follows:

I know that we do not belong,
wife, child, puppy, sweet-peas,
to this brown land; nor in Somerset
where Sisson lives. But something like the heart-
break that a road...two strips of tar
that smelt, when afternoons grew hot
in Colleen Bawn, of liquorice,
to which I now add all sorts
of sweet remembrances.

I know that we are merely visitors in Africa-
the blue eyes of our child, the marmalade,

the pets, the BBC. And when I went to London
to find some British poets
shuffling verses for a game of rhyme,
I was a visitor (p.36).

The above quoted lines are an example of what Gaylard (2009:62) refers to as the literature of “obsolescence and anachronism” characterized by a sense of problematic belonging. The persona is trying to negotiate a new identity not grounded on race and imperialism in a society that privileges such identity categories. It is difficult for the persona to pitch a ‘third space’ of identity in light of his/her skin color. Stuart Hall (1990:222) opines that there should be “a way out of the colonial racial binaries by theorizing identity as a production, always in process, and as much a part of the future as the past.” Though the peculiar circumstances of the persona have rendered him/her stateless and nationless, he/she nonetheless registers a yearning to belong to some space. One may argue that the poem symbolizes the ambiguous status of whites like Eppel in Zimbabwe. By virtue of being white, they were implicated in the colonial privileges and settler culture to which their skin color condemned them, yet being born in Zimbabwe they could not stake a claim to a British identity to which they were alien. The poem becomes an exercise in both self-implication and self-exemption: An attempt to accept the history of colonialism in Africa and the identity damage that it wrought and the quest for individual exoneration and place-making as well. Maybe this explains why the poem inscribes what Primorac (2010:212) refers to as “vacillations and waverings about home.” The persona registers this nowhere-ness in Zimbabwe in the stanza below as follows:

I know that we do not belong,
wife, child, puppy, sweet-peas,
to this brown land; nor in Somerset... (p.36).

Ambivalence about home is one of the themes that characterize the works of white post-independence writers like Alexandra Fuller (2002), Ian Smith (1997) and Peter Godwin (1996) among others. However, belonging cannot be a function of the color of one's skin, nor the shape of the nose nor the texture of the hair or the number of years a people have inhabited a particular space. Rather, it has to do with one's attachment, loyalty and shared vision for the geographic entity that is occupied. What the persona seems to be satirizing is the guilt complex of whites in Zimbabwe. Having not foreseen the end of Rhodesia and its racist constructions, the whites were caught off-guard when independence came. Independence confronted them with the problematic of re-defining home and belonging under changed political, racial, social and economic circumstances.

In the poem, "In Memory of General Josiah Tongogara", Eppel borrows from the classical English poetic tradition (hence, the mention of Yeats and Alfred) to wrestle with Zimbabwean themes. This is an ambiguous space that he successfully navigates and which renders his poetry unique in the context of Zimbabwe. The technique is emblematic of the already mentioned ambivalent identity position that he inhabits in Zimbabwe as a white citizen in a race-conscious society. These concerns are highlighted in the poem as follows:

First, the cash-box bandit Cecil John,
tossed like coins a thousand thousand crimes
that fell on heads and tails, or rolled along
those hunters' tracks pressing northward from the Cape,
acquiring land for a promise and a song.

Next, guilty of riot-eeen, loot-eeen, rape-
eeen in nearly every speech. The Wrong
(but) Honourable Ian Douglas Smith,
extant. Fearless as a tiger, he did

a lot of bona fide damage with

the likes of me, in this set up, the third
and final pair of lips; so tight they'd break
the circle of a rhyme; so thin they'd cut
a kiss in two; so sorry they'd embarrass
General Josiah Tongogara, extinct (p.42).

The poem is preoccupied with unmooring the foundations and maintenance of Rhodesia as an ideological space. It attacks the foundations of Rhodesia by undermining its icons represented by Cecil John Rhodes and Ian Smith. The two personalities are constituted as people of questionable integrity and judgement respectively, thus rendering the space they established and oversaw vulnerable to the vagaries of their character flaws. Although the poem seems to emphasize on the heroes of Rhodesia, its major thrust is to provide a counterpoint to the underpinnings of Rhodesia through the image of Tongogara.

Josiah Tongogara was a nationalist luminary, a commander of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) forces. To the extent that he was involved in the struggle against white oppression, fighting for majority rule, he is an iconic figure in the history of Zimbabwe. He represents freedom, anti-colonial domination and, therefore, justice. He becomes the antithesis of everything that Rhodesia (Rhodes and Smith) stood for. Therefore, the mention of Tongogara in the title of the poem and at the end is meant to counter-balance the constructions of national identities represented by Cecil John Rhodes first and Ian Douglas Smith second. From a Rhodesian supremacist standpoint, these two symbolize heroism though, from the persona's point of view, heroism of a perverted kind. For the persona, the fetishization of Rhodes is misplaced because he was simply "the cash-box bandit". This reinforces the point raised in the analysis of *D.G.G. Berry's The Great North Road* that Rhodes' establishment of

Rhodesia was impelled by selfish economic motives and not any putative philanthropy. While the novel mentions his banditry in connection with his alleged homosexual proclivities, in this poem it is in connection with the unscrupulous and unethical ways with which he annexed the country in search of riches. The deliberate use of the word ‘bandit’ to refer to an ‘icon’ considered as the founder of the Rhodesian nation reflects Eppel’s contempt or disdain for the foundational myths of Rhodesia. He constructs Rhodesia as a space founded on criminality and uncouth aggrandizement. Hence, the persona’s reference to “a thousand thousand crimes”, “acquiring land for a promise and a song” and “hunters’ tracks pressing northward from the Cape”. A nation forged from the heath of injustice, dispossession, exploitation and buccaneering necessarily brings forth skewed and crippled identities hell-bent on using race as a scaffold to material rapacity. The point is reinforced by references to “loot-eeen, rape-eeen” which stress the violence, the violation and thuggery involved in the economic and political forging of the racist nation.

In the linear history of racist Rhodesia, the poem makes mention of Ian Smith who symbolizes an extreme form of nationalist intransigence based on the perceived superiority of whites of the pioneer stock. The persona mockingly constructs Smith’s judgement as clouded by his white-centered nationalism to such an extent that he became a prisoner of this ideology. Accordingly, the persona mildly ridicules him for his slavish belief in the rightness of the Rhodesian cause by referring to him as: “fearless as a tiger (and that) he did a lot of bona fide damage” (p.42). In this line, the persona implies that Smith was so cocooned and cloistered in his world of racism and exclusion that he failed to see the injustice of the system that marginalized the majority black populace. The characterization of Smith as fearless and being like a tiger is consistent with settler compositions of their identities of bravery and invincibility, a construction that Eppel deliberately undercuts and mocks. Historically the reference to ‘fearless as a tiger’ alludes to the two meetings that Smith held with British representatives to

try and resolve the Rhodesian question. The first was held aboard *HMS Tiger* in 1966 in the Mediterranean and the second aboard *HMS Fearless* in 1968. Both failed because of Smith's intransigence and his belief in the sovereignty of Rhodesia. However, what the persona stresses is the fact that Rhodesian nationalism and its attendant identity construction were magnetic and alluring to most whites so much that the "damage (was done) with/the likes of me, in this set up...." In other words, Smith's supporters should also shoulder the blame for their predicament because they were complicit in the perpetuation of a racist nation whose foil is General Tongogara.

The other poem that the study analyzes is "Pioneer Woman with Four Jacks" from *Songs my Country Taught me* (2005). In this poem, Eppel subtly mocks the construction of the Rhodesian self-image that is located in racist, violent history epitomized by the Pioneer Column's incursion into the colony. For the pioneer woman, who is the subject of this poem, the history of Rhodesia can only be traced via Cecil John Rhodes and the odyssey of the Pioneer Column. This explains why she constantly quotes "her hero Cecil Rhodes..." (p.87) and gives people close to her the symbolic name 'John' (in memory of Rhodes) as if it is a talismanic wand that transforms her space. Musvoto (2010:216) refers to the poem as reflecting "a self-centered remembering of the past in placing identities of Rhodesians at the center of the colony." In the process, the poem spells erasure and closure of other histories and identities that are outside the metanarrative of colonization. For the Pioneer Woman, the pivot of identity in Rhodesia oscillates around "...the wagon trek/from Beaufort West to Kuruman, and then/to Bulawayo via Khama's land, /as Kipling puts it somewhere. (Kipling is her favorite poet :...)" (p.87). The persona indirectly mocks the Pioneer Woman for celebrating a history of conquest, dispossession, racism and dehumanization. This is made all the more egregious by the woman's love for Kipling, a writer notorious for condoning and justifying colonialism as both necessary and beneficent. Ngugi (1981:16) has referred to Kipling (and other colonialist writers like Rider

Haggard, John Buchan and Robert Ruark) as “down-right racist... and often made no effort to hide it” and that Kipling subscribes to the discourse of the “white man’s burden (which) is unashamedly stated as the motive force behind the colonial adventures....” In reading Kipling’s works, one becomes immersed in the invention of the inferior other who needs the redeeming exploits of the whites.

The Pioneer Woman’s love for Kipling and his worldview makes her an unredeemed supremacist whose self-propping identity construction is contingent upon the creation of the sub-human other. This is shown by her view of Africans as stereotypically base and savage; “but as far as the houseboys are concerned, my boy, you are Africa’s smelliest ass” (p.87). The irony does not seem to register on the self-centered woman that the colonial venture’s success depended on the suffering of those people that she stigmatizes as stinky. Nor does she appreciate the fact that these laborers, reduced to ‘boys’, have been stripped of their independence and have had their agency diminished due to colonialism that she brags about. Resultantly, the persona uses subtle satire to undermine and mock the Pioneer Woman and her stereotypical views. This subtle satire at the expense of whites of her kind is achieved through the construction of the houseboy as the sinews of the woman’s household; “...and ring the bell for the houseboy,/John, and order tea, and lemonade/for piccanin baas John and scones with home-made/marula jelly” (p.87). There seems to be a great chasm between the perception that the pioneer woman has of Africans (smelly) and the seeming dependence that she has on them for her daily household chores (cooking food). The poem reflects colonial hypocrisy and punctures the myth of colonialism as beneficial to the blacks. It should also be noted that the houseboy’s name is ‘John’, which symbolizes the fact that whites in the colony sought to create blacks after their own image, to make them clones, to re-create black identities that aped rather than contested and resisted white hegemony. It is also important to highlight that the houseboy is such only to the extent that there is the existence of “piccanin baas John”, a fact that

concretizes the argument that colonial white identities are forged in the full glare of the other, a constructed opposite other who is vital for identity composition and re-composition. The poem is therefore Eppel's way of ousting colonial myths of the pioneer stock's perceived inherent superiority, the civilizational goals of colonialism, the supposed congenital inferiority of blacks and the re-visioning of history to create narratives of legitimation.

In the poem "Spoils of War" the persona reminisces about the pain of the liberation war and the benefits harvested therein. The title of the poem, "Spoils of War", is important in its inscription and criticism of Rhodesian nationalism and identity construction. Spoils of war connote pillage, plunder, looting and the resultant appropriation of such ill-gotten gains of war. As such, the poem has a moral and judgmental tone about the objectives of the war on the part of Rhodesians. It unsettles the Rhodesian narrative about the necessity of the bush war because, in the narrator's view, it leads to "undeserved misfortune" on not only the self but also to "someone like ourselves." In other words, the war involved the dehumanization of man by man over ideals that could have been negotiated without killings. The poem seems to be a repetition of the episode analyzed in *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road*. The excerpt below reveals the persona's horror and scandalized perception of the bush war and its effects on both the whites and the blacks.

[...] discussing Aristotle's

Poetics. Tragedy should excite Fear and pity: "Our pity is awakened

by undeserved misfortune, and our fear

by that of someone just like ourselves." Tinned

thoughts these, at this time. Shall we squeeze a tear

or two. Army life makes rat-packs/ of our

minds.

The LMG drags me through the bush,

its muzzle close to the ground. A sour,
smoky stink of terror checks it. I push
forward, then flatten in a/commotion
that splits a bag of raisins in my brain.

When the screaming starts, I have a notion,
lying on my back-horizontal rain
of tracer bullets just above my nose-
a notion that some cattle have been shot.
I start feeling pity and fear for those
poor bellowing beasts. Surely that is not
a human sound. The screams go on all night.

Next morning our section finds their shelter,
fifteen metres from where we lay. The sight
of corpses, and their smell, like an abattoir,
forces warm pilchards into my throat. "Look
at that," says Sarge, "a Tokarev pistol
still in its grease." He pockets it. They take
a portable radio, a fistful
of rounds, an empty AK magazine,
five teeth, a penis, a number of ears,
and a picture of someone in a green
uniform. Sarge tells me to save my tears
for the civilians that the gooks have slaughtered.
But I am not thinking of them, and I
cannot explain that I am being purged
of my Rhodesianism. That ugly
word with its jagged edge is opening
me. Through haze of baked beans in chili
sauce. I move to the past tense.

The going
was tough but at last I had my frilly-petalled
(highly protected) succulent
shrub buried up to its neck in granite
sub-soil. *Adenium* does not transplant
well, but this one flourished. You can see it
there today. It flowers in September.
And if ever you live in our old home-
the one in the village- please remember
not to over-water my cuddlesome
stump. And if you are bothered by the law,
tell them that the plant is a spoil of war (p.44-45).

The pain, suffering and sacrifice that the war demanded are evident in the deployment of images of the macabre. The persona refers to “the sight of corpse, and their smell, like an abattoir... (p.44). He also refers to: “The poor bellowing beasts. Surely that is not/a human sound. The screams go all night” (p.44). The sight of people in agony, the corpses and the bullets whizzing past make the persona question the reasons for fighting in the war. He begins to realize that “our pity is awakened/by underserved misfortune/and our fear by that of someone just like ourselves” (p.44).

This discovery has far-reaching implications for identity construction. He begins to see his own vulnerability that comes through ‘fear’, the fear and pity for the suffering and agony of the other, and for what war can do to fellow human beings. The emotions of fear and pity take on an atavistic nature that transcends racial politics. These emotions go to the very heart of what makes a human being human and it inaugurates a process that results in him “being purged of [his] Rhodesianism/That ugly word with its jagged edge “(p.44). He becomes shorn of the constructed and artificial humanity that colonialism cultivates in whites.

The Rhodesianism he refers to probably implies the racial ideology of white superiority and objectification of blacks. The experience of the war is captured as brutalizing, horrifying and dehumanizing because he experiences “fear for those bellowing beasts” (p.44). The bellowing beasts are the guerrillas, the black Zimbabweans, who despite being adversaries to these white soldiers, nevertheless arouse feelings of fear and pity. Thusly, the persona undermines the Rhodesian narrative of the intrepidity of the Rhodesian soldiers just as he does in the novel examined in the first section of this chapter. In the poem, the soldiers are imagined as ordinary people, subject to ordinary emotions like all human beings. The suffering and unnecessary killings make the persona realize the senselessness of the war as he begins to see through the Rhodesian propaganda veil. That releases him from blind and emotional support of Rhodesia and what it purported to stand for and that is the process of catharsis that re-composes his identity more as a human being and less a white ‘superior’. The hollowness of the war in terms of the benefits achieved is strategically diminished by the fact that the spoils of war consist of “a Tokarev pistol, a portable radio, a fistful of rounds, an empty AK magazine, five teeth, a penis, a number of ears...” as highlighted in the penultimate stanza. This is shown to be extreme barbarism which the white Rhodesians reserve for blacks but which the persona shows to be the white definition of courage and principle. What the stanza registers is white hypocrisy and a misdirected sense of nationalism in defence of white privilege. In this way, the persona juxtaposes extreme suffering and barbarity in the war front to what he sees as a hollow victory on the part of the whites. The mutilation of a dead body as a trophy cannot, by any measure, be considered heroism or bravery. This allows the persona to orchestrate a sense of the nebulous nature of the Rhodesian ideal for which the whites brought death and barbarism to “someone just like ourselves.” The purging of the persona’s Rhodesianism results in him undergoing both ideological and ontological conversion where he begins to see the basic humanity of the black person.

The grisly depiction of the war makes the persona “move in the past tense” (p.45). This implies that he begins to question his world of privilege that he has enjoyed to the exclusion of the native other who decides to take up arms to assert his humanity. The persona constructs a new identity based on empathy and only then does he appreciate the horror and senselessness of the war whose benefit has only been the *Adenium Obesum* that he uproots as his ‘spoils of war.’ The metaphor of the *Adenium*, compared to the other spoils of war mentioned above, is significant. Musvoto (2010:228) argues that uprooting this plant symbolizes “a desire to escape by communicating with the Rhodesian bush to which both he and the enemy that the Rhodesian propaganda has constructed can relate.” I argue that the act of uprooting the plant hints at the process of transitioning from an ‘unbending’ Rhodesian identity to that of a tolerant, inclusive and multicultural society born out of the horrors of the war near the Mozambican border in the Section C army. It is linked to the persona’s being purged of his Rhodesianism in that he symbolically expresses the will to relate to the unknown enemy, to craft a discourse that interrupts the Rhodesian metanarrative about the war. One might even argue that the act of transplanting is also symbolic of a future society that is different from the one represented by the Sargie’s sadistic mutilation of the bodies of the freedom fighters (Khombe Mangwanda, 1998). At least for the persona, the war had some benefits because it allowed him to negotiate and re-negotiate a new identity outside the category of race. This is why at the end of the poem the persona concludes that: “And if you are bothered by the law/ tell them that the plant is a spoil of war” (p.45). In this respect, it is not far-fetched to suggest that the law that the persona refers to represents a post-war society/Zimbabwe hatched from the debris of an irrational racial war; a society that should unite more than polarize. It is clear in this poem that the narrator is questioning the value of the war in a way that is reminiscent of the narrator in Bruce Moore-King’s (1989) novel *White man Black War* (1989) who blames the Rhodesian ‘Elders’, one of

them being Ian Smith, for misleading young white Rhodesian soldiers about the objectives of the war that sought to exclude the black majority.

3.4 Conclusion

The chapter has argued that Rhodesian nationalism defined white identity construction during the colonial era. It is the narrow, nationalist, racist and stereotypical self-perceptions that frame Duiker's worldview in the novel *D.G.G. Berry's The Great North Road*. The novel mocks and undermines the Rhodie culture that is dependent on the inferiorization of the native other. Eppel undermines the assumed superiority of the English culture in Rhodesia by showing us a settler community that is parochial, dishonest, immoral, unhygienic and prejudiced. The community uses the black person as a mirror through which they (white people) define themselves. The prejudices and stereotypes about blacks are used to magnify the superiority of the whites and their history. The Rhodesians, like colonizers everywhere, realized their subject status when the black person was objectified. Eppel uses the strategy of the educational syllabus, history, culture and ordinary day-to-day conversations of the whites to mock their racism and the exclusionary ideology. At the end of the book, the reader is left with the impression that white Rhodesian culture is too rigid and solipsist to such an extent that it contains the seeds of its own destruction. Instead of celebrating difference, Rhodesian culture and ideology uses such differences to dominate and trample on other subjectivities. In the novel, white identity is shown to be limited and in need of re-negotiation so that it includes the other. The poetry collection also examines racial identity politics that is based on sterile nationalism in which Rhodesia (and her heroes) is framed as fixed and not negotiable. The chapter has argued that the refusal to negotiate a postcolonial Zimbabwean identity led to whites becoming an irrelevance because they could not transcend the limitations of race. By clinging to the discourse of Rhodes and Smith uncritically, they find themselves unable to relate to the black other. In unsettling the tools with which whites define themselves, Eppel installs a more

inclusive and humanistic way of identity formation. The next chapter analyzes Eppel's novel *Absent: The English teacher* and the short stories from the collection *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings* and it argues that in these texts he subverts the Mugabeist black narrative in order to inaugurate a third space that is not race-based.

Chapter Four: Illusion of Change: Citizenship and Belonging in Zimbabwe

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter argued that the construction of the Rhodesian nation as narration was predicated on the racist appropriation of Cecil John Rhodes and Ian Smith as symbols upon which white group identity coalesced and solidified. The Rhodesian metanarrative also included the lionization of the Union Jack and the Rhodesian national anthem which helped manufacture a distinct Rhodesian identity that set them apart from the native other and later, after 1965, from ‘perfidious’ Britain and her perceived decadence and lack of principle. By resorting to Rhodesian nationalism as a yardstick for installing the ‘superiority’ of white culture and identity, the colonial state inscribed a particular metanarrative that sought to justify white presence in Zimbabwe as philanthropic and beneficial to the blacks in Rhodesia. The chapter further contended that Eppel undermines the Rhodesian metanarrative by satirically depicting a white settler community that is ordinary, racist, vapid, vacuous, perverse and motivated by a selfish pursuit of wealth. The chapter concluded by pointing out that the Rhodesian nation was founded on the practice exclusion that had no bearing on the essential reality of the blacks and the whites that it served to scaffold.

This chapter examines Mugabeism and the ways in which it dovetails and deviates from the Rhodesian metanarrative in terms of its expansion and diminishing of citizenship and belonging. The use of the term Mugabeism is significant because Zimbabwe has known no other president since the advent of independence in 1980, until recently in November 2018 when Mugabe was removed from power through military intervention. The term is used in this chapter to reflect particular ways of capturing, consolidating, maintaining power, deflecting criticism, scapegoating others and dealing with invented and real opponents. In analyzing the contours of Mugabeism, the first section of this chapter will discuss the novel *Absent: The*

English Teacher (2009) and then move on to selected short stories in the collection, *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and other writings* (2004) and *White Man Crawling* (2007) to explore issues of land and Land Reform as markers of identity and belonging. The section also deals with political affiliation as emblematic of citizenship, autochthony and Zimbabweanness.

4.2 Textual Analysis of *Absent: The English Teacher*

The novel centers on a white character George J. George the quintessential English teacher's reminiscences about Zimbabwe's evolution as a nation since 1980. George's experiences and analyses as a white Zimbabwean make him view himself as a synecdoche in that he is less an individual but more a representative of the white race in Zimbabwe. As a metonym, George's life experiences in Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe may be seen as that of the white race during the period of ultra-nationalism that began in the late 1990s. It may well be argued that George is the alter-ego of the writer himself who has lived in Zimbabwe for the greater part of his life teaching English in Bulawayo, in which case the book can be read as semi-autobiographical. The character George has also lived in Rhodesia under Ian Smith and has seen it metamorphose into Zimbabwe. He, therefore, feels qualified to comment on both spaces. Through the strategy of constructing a character that has lived in both spaces, Eppel seems to suggest that post-independence Zimbabwe, like Rhodesia, defines citizenship and belonging in terms of race and political affiliation. The parameters of belonging and unbelonging, outsider and insider in Zimbabwe are "terribly and deeply interpellated by categories of colonialism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011:12). What this implies is that the structures of colonialism that were supposed to be dismantled were largely left intact. Colonialism, it has to be noted, was not a system that was amenable to democracy, inclusiveness or tolerance. The reverse, in fact, was true. So, I argue that the post-independence Zimbabwe that Eppel satirizes draws heavily from the same Rhodesian discourse that Mugabeism purports to undermine or replace. To the extent that Mugabeism feeds off the very ideology it seeks to subvert, Fanon's (1967:20) observation

that “decolonization is the veritable creation of new men” rings hollow because in the case of Zimbabwe, it simply ushered in ‘white’ black rulers. Once again, I draw upon Fanon’s (1967:122) elaboration of the post-independence ruling elite who just “step into the shoes of the former European settlement...” and that for them independence “simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period” (Ibid). In other words, there are no radical departures from the colonial exercise of power.

The dominant post-independent Zimbabwean discourse which is controlled by the ruling ZANU PF party uses the language of convenient political urgencies to impose citizenship on others while excluding others from the national ‘we’. David Kaulemu (2012:10) contends that the issue of citizenship in Zimbabwe “alert(s) us to the political manipulation of [it] by a political leadership in danger of losing power.” It is a site for hegemonic practices and political gamesmanship by the ruling elite in the guise of stabilizing the country and fighting internal and external enemies. The ways in which we define ourselves or who we think we are as Zimbabweans should be sufficiently elastic to imagine other selves who have an equal claim to being Zimbabwean. Thus, the first statement introduced by Eppel is one reflective of George’s obsolescence and irrelevance as a white person in Mugabe’s Zimbabwe. In the chapter titled “Pale Moon Rising” the narrator observes that: “When George J George mistook his white Ford Escort for the moon, he knew that his time was up” (p. 1). Here, the narrator examines the terms and conditions of citizenship and belonging in the period after 2000 when “land and the race question ... formed the centerpiece of ZANU-PF’s definition of belonging, citizenship, exclusion and the whole history of the nation” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011:12). George feels that his “time is up” because he has outlived his usefulness in a society in which identity and belonging are measured in race terms. He has become an anachronism, an emasculated citizen. Eppel’s narrative begins at the end by showing the main character, George, feeling out of tune with his contemporary Zimbabwe. This strategy allows the narrator

to reflect on the evolution of Zimbabwe when Mugabe assumed the reins of power in 1980 and convinced the nation and the international community of his statesmanship by promising equal citizenship to all Zimbabweans. It also enables the narrator to puncture Mugabeism as inconsistent, contradictory and paradoxical. The civic form of nationalism that Mugabe preached in 1980 was in tune with Anderson's (1991:7) categorization of a nation as an imagined community characterized by "a deep horizontal comradeship... to a territorially delimited, sovereign state" which, unfortunately, in the late 1990s was not as automatic and seamless as it seemed in the 1980s. The horizontal comradeship that Anderson refers to is the sense of belonging and citizenship where the state treats all its citizens with justice while affording them the opportunity to exercise their civic responsibilities. It also assumes the right to transform those national values that hold society back while cherishing those that make for a healthy nation.

George remembers with a sense of wry amusement and bitterness that the announced policy of reconciliation was meant to heal a bifurcated society diseased by racism, tribalism and animosity. Robert Mugabe made his debut statement at the United Nations General Assembly in which he stated that:

When ZANU ascended to power we felt the moment demanded of us a spirit of pragmatism, a spirit of realism, rather than that of emotionalism, a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness rather than that of vindictiveness and retribution.... We had to embrace one another in the spirit of our one nationality, our common freedom and independence, our collective responsibility (p. 120).

Prior to that he had stated on 17 April 1980 that: "If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today you have become a friend. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds me to you and you to me" (p. 114). This is an example of what Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos (2003:4) call "civic nationalism" that was necessarily inclusive and embraced all those that subscribed to the geographical entity called Zimbabwe. It was broad-

based and attempted to “bestow fundamental civic and human rights to all its citizens” (Ibid). For the greater part of the 1980s, the government was preoccupied with trying to build a unified nation out of the discrete groups within the country, it was “nation-building, across racial and ethnic boundaries ...” (Raftopoulos, 2003:224). This point is supported by Michael Ignatieff (1994:3-4) who argues that:

Civic nationalism maintains that the nation should be composed of all those... regardless of race, color, creed, gender, language, or ethnicity- who subscribe to the nation’s political creed. This nationalism is called civic because it envisages the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values.

The new leaders, therefore, sought to de-racialize and de-essentialize citizenship, identity and belonging.

But, as Michael Billig (1995: 10) has argued, the process of founding and consolidating a nation is never straightforward and without fissures, tensions and paradoxes. It is inherently conflictual and adversarial because, “a particular type of identity has to be imposed. One way of thinking of the self, of community and, indeed of the world has to replace other conceptions” So, despite the seeming and ostensible magnanimity of Mugabe and ZANU-PF through the proclamation of this reconciliation policy, the terms and conditions of national unity and identity had to come from the majority group in power, it remained narrow and warehoused in the political interests of the ruling party. The parameters of belonging were dependent on the whims of the dominant group who decided on the criteria for ‘true’ citizenship and reconciliation. I argue that the proclamation was too sweeping, loose and homogenizing for people whose interests and perceptions about the trajectory of the new nation were vastly different. With the benefit of hindsight, it was always going to be prone to abuse and manipulation. This policy of reconciliation was immediately put to test and found to be wanting

when the ZANU-PF government unleashed its North-Korean trained soldiers on Matabeleland. In one fell swoop, a section of the people in parts of Midlands and Matabeleland were deprived of belonging and citizenship as the government rode roughshod over a people it ought to have protected. This appears to be what Eppel has in mind when he registers the limitations of reconciliation in Zimbabwe. He creates this conversation between George and two prisoners arrested because of diminished citizenship and belonging due to politics of ethnicity and race:

First prisoner: “They hate you because you are white; they hate us because we are Ndebele. They call us dissidents.” (p. 22).

Second prisoner: “We both lost the war of Independence. You whites are only suffering now because of MDC, but we Ndebele, we have been suffering since 1980” (p. 22).

It is apparent from the excerpt above that Eppel collapses ZANU PF’s definition of unity and belonging as narcissistic and self-serving. He reveals that minoritization is a strategy used to determine or accord political, economic, and cultural freedoms. The minority status of these groups (the Ndebele and whites) means that they are marginalized and have to subordinate themselves to the ideology of the powerful group. This is an example of tyranny of the majority, what Anna Tsing (2000:117-118) calls scale-making, which she sees as a question of who belongs politically and culturally and more than whom. Jeater (2012:126) appears to have this in mind when she observes that the word citizen is tantalizing because “it suggests that there are certain rights that must be recognized by the state, including the right to challenge a political party (or culture) even when it claims to represent the ‘nation’ as a whole.” In the Zimbabwe run along the lines of Mugabeism, to express dissent against party orthodoxy (if you are white) is to spurn the hand of reconciliation. Kizito Muchemwa (2005: xiii) opines that the policy was made with the head and not the heart. It was made for strategic reasons that ranged from attempting to create an aura of statesmanship on the part of a former guerrilla fighter who was stigmatized as radical, and for purposes of the international community whose donor funds

were especially needed for the new nation. Smith (1998:22) cogently argues that a nation “is consciously constructed by elites who seek to influence the emotions of the masses (and stakeholders) to achieve their goals.” Nations are constructed as having particular identities and characters that emphasize particular specificities and particularities at particular historical junctures depending on alignments of political, social and economic forces. Ndebele people could be dispensed with in 1980 in order to achieve a one-party state whilst it was not pragmatic and reasonable to take a radical Marxist stance on whites then. Whites’ skills and experience in running a government were critically needed. So, to the extent that the new government wanted to garner experience on how to manage state affairs, they (whites) had to be tolerated. This was a strategy of marking time before the messy divorce takes place. In other words, from Robert Mugabe’s Machiavellian political calculations, the whites’ full citizenship was contingent upon their usefulness to the ruling party. They had to toe the line by supporting the governing party or, at least, not overtly opposing it. Their skin color and history rendered them vulnerable to being exteriorized in politically fraught times as happened in the late 1990s.

The façade of an inclusive national project of citizenship and belonging began to fall apart from 1999 onwards. This was a result of a concatenation of factors that eventually resulted in the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. In particular, the year 2000 marked a watershed in the racial politics of the country and for citizenship generally. Following the ZANU-PF’s first electoral defeat in the Constitutional Referendum of 1999 and the prospect of this translating into an electoral loss the following year, the ruling party narrowed the contours of citizenship, belonging and identity politics in the country. Raftopoulos (2003: 230) observes that “the President and other party leaders blamed the referendum defeat on the white minority and the West, and promised political retaliation in a volatile, racially cast political discourse.” The ‘Daily News’ newspaper of 15 December 2000 carried an article titled “Mugabe attacks whites-again” in which it quotes the President as

having instigated his supporters to “continue to strike fear in the heart of the white man, they must tremble. The white man is not indigenous to Africa, Africa is for Africans.” This appeal to the discourse of nationalism, nativism Afro-radicalism and autochthony was strategic; it was meant to dredge up the language of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism that was much in currency in most African states. It was a discourse of exclusion and the authorization of violence against an identified internal enemy in defense of a nation under threat, the discourse of blood and sacrifice. Appiah (1992:56) perceives such an approach as a resort to nativism which has always been the bane of most postcolonial states in Africa. Africa cannot be reductively defined as the abode of black people only in much the same way Europe cannot be said to be exclusively for white people. Nativism reflected pathology of victimhood that African states should have striven to transcend at the attainment of self-determination.

Asked by the ridiculously named Minister of Child Welfare, Sweets, and Biscuits on who he was going to vote for in the impending elections George says; “I’m not allowed to vote, master. My name disappeared from the voter’s roll some years ago” (p. 114). George as an embodiment of white people has been stripped of his voting rights which Judith Todd (2015:51) refers to as “the quintessence of citizenship.” There are certain rights and privileges that a citizen enjoys as a member of a national community, including joining a party of one’s choice or simply participating in the national activities of the country in exchange for certain obligations that the state accords to the individual, including granting protection against arbitrary victimization and withdrawal of rights. By not being allowed to vote, George cannot influence the trajectory of the country’s politics, he has become a mere object of politics. Manfred Max-Neef (2012: 85) points out that a birth certificate; a national identity card and a passport form “the fundamental human need for identity (and) sense of belonging to a country.” From Eppel’s perspective, these count for nothing in a racialized, radicalized, and politicized Zimbabwe of the post-2000 era. The Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act of 2001 rendered most whites and farm

workers ineligible to participate in national politics unless they were members of the ruling party. Most, like Todd who raises the same issue in her autobiography *Through the Darkness: A life in Zimbabwe* (2007), were rendered stateless and nationless despite being born and bred in Zimbabwe. Characteristically, George realizes his anachronism in Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe. So;

He dug around in his box table and withdrew a large manila envelope. It contained papers that gave him his identity; his birth certificate, his academic and professional qualifications, his redundant will, his expired passport, his vehicle license, and his National Registration card.... He returned to the fire, placed the envelope on the rosy glow of mopani wood, and waited for it to burst into flames (p. 121).

This act of burning the documents is an acknowledgement that he has become a misfit in a Zimbabwe characterized by racial and political bellicosity. He is stripping himself of both the colonial and post-independence identities which he finds inadequate for a Zimbabwe that limits or even shuts out the horizons of belonging and identity construction. Through the inferno, George completes the road to statelessness and de-nationalization which Mugabeism had already imposed on him and his ilk through stripping him of his voting rights. But, to be fair on the post-independence Zimbabwean government, the whites had themselves to blame for playing into the hands of the Robert Mugabe regime that stripped them of their sense of belonging and citizenship. Not only did most of them stand aloof in their comfort zones, unwilling to participate in national affairs, but also they even refused to assume a necessary post-independence identity as Zimbabweans. They clung to their warped Rhodesian identity arguing that for as long as they kept their wealth, the blacks could do all they wanted without them. Jeater (2012:130) observes that "...at the end of 2002 the Westminster Foundation funded the opposition to the tune of £191,591." Using that as a basis, "ZANU-PF was able to externalize the roots of the nation's problems and present itself as a victimized black government, able to maintain political legitimacy on that basis" (Jeater 2012: 130). So the

ruling party used that as a weapon to clamp down on whites and their puppets who were constructed as MDC. This became a justification for what Matereke (2012: 160) calls “mortgaged citizenship” in that “citizens (had) been forced to understand themselves as citizens not in terms of their individual status and relationship with the state.... but through the ruling party and the revolution it waged.” Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:1147) has pointed out that Mugabeism works on the basis of manipulating the discourse of victimhood, what he calls the ‘cult of victimization.’ ZANU-PF was able to opportunistically project itself as the victim of powerful external forces that sought to effect regime change through unconstitutional means. This appealed to a section of war veterans, party loyalists and many Africanists. It became a justification for the stripping of citizenship of many whites and people of foreign descent (totemless people) who had, nonetheless, become Zimbabweans by birth. It also created grounds for the use of force on these assumed opposition supporters because they were white or worked for whites.

George makes a most profound analysis of ways in which Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe is a palimpsest of Ian Smith’s Rhodesia in which both spaces become, in Mbembe’s (2001:16) words “an interlocking of presents, pasts, and futures, each age bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous ones.” George reminisces on similarities between the two spaces as follows:

When he worked George recalled his forty years as a teacher, first in ‘fascist’ Rhodesia, then in ‘marxist’ Zimbabwe. He calculated that if he subtracted his years away at university in South Africa, he would have spent twenty-eight years as a Rhodesian and twenty-eight years as a Zimbabwean. Politically the times had not been so different. The nicest people in both eras, George reflected, had been the poor and the little children, especially those from the rural areas (p. 116).

George is reflecting on what Antonio Gramsci (1971:276) calls “a great variety of morbid symptoms....” immanent in both spaces that must be destroyed before a new humane and

inclusive society can be born. Here, is an example of an illusion of change, a mirage, an example of what Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1981:24) views as cosmetic changes that do not go to the very heart of the structures and systems of colonialism. The switching of Robert Mugabe's portrait with that of Ian Smith is significant in this regard. What the writer seems to be suggesting is that whether it is Ian Smith or Robert Mugabe does not make much of a difference because both leaders thrive on exclusion, polarization, racism, ethnicity and historical revisionism. Where Ian Smith purported to represent the ideals of white civilization to the exclusion of blacks, Robert Mugabe purports to represent black Zimbabwean identity, Pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and conquest of conquest that consigns whites to marginality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:35) which meant total domination of the whites and their so-called puppets. This also meant hatred of whites, scapegoating them and even 'xenophobic dispossession' that simplistically homogenized all whites as colonizers despite inherent contradictions in the category of whiteness. The narrator collapses the totalizing tendency in Zimbabwe that sees all whites as originating from England and America when he says:

George's kith and kin, what little he knew of them originated somewhere in Eastern Europe, possibly Lithuania, possibly Estonia, possibly the land of the blood-sucking vampire.... (p. 31).

George's attempt to make sense of his origins, which takes the form of speculative reasoning, is an attempt at place-making, complicating the nature of identities in the context of migrations and the peripatetic nature of collectivities and individuals in the past. Such kinds of movements, in certain instances, tended to bury an individual's exact points of origin over time. My argument here is that identities are not cast in stone; rather they are composed, de-composed and re-composed and are always in flux. Historical identities cannot be used as a measure of belonging and citizenship because they go back into the mists of time. Black Zimbabweans

themselves cannot claim indigeneity based on their blackness alone; many, due to migration came from somewhere. Through the above quotation, Eppel is satirizing identity constructions that are essentialist and seek to divide rather than unite the nation.

The facetiously named Beauticious Nyamayakanuna, Minister Gonzo, and the police represent the discourse of Mugabeism. The patriotic political history that they represent is characterized by oversimplification, crudity, racism and violent hatred of the opposition and the alternative national imaginaries that they symbolize (Ranger, 2005:221). Such history is propagandistic and depends on the psychological effects of repetition and appeal to the emotive rather than the rational. All the national problems are heaped on the internal and external others and this is often woven as an incontrovertible national ‘truth’ that is chorused endlessly. So, Beauticious and the police are constituted as having been fed on a diet of Mugabeist patriotic history such that they are unwilling to see through its indoctrinating effects in the conduct of national affairs.

For example, Beauticious says to George:

“No ZESA, no fuel, no food. Who is responsible, Joji?” All five faces at the Formica table looked at him expectantly. “We are, madam; the British, the Europeans, the Americans.” “You have raped our country barren, Joji. First our women and girls, next our motherland. Shame on you.” The minister clicked his tongue in sympathy (p. 58).

It is possible that Eppel as a writer may be trying to salve his conscience for the collective guilt of colonialism for which he benefited vicariously, but a major feature of Mugabeism is projecting blame on significant others. The invention of enemies is its major political capital which makes Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:1149) to categorically state that:

Mugabeism is also marked by denial of ZANU-PF’s and Mugabe’s responsibility for some of the problems bedeviling the country. Mugabeism has even become a politics of denial....

The sanctions that Beauticious seems to be alluding to may indeed have contributed to the meltdown in the country that has resulted in critical shortages, but she refuses to interrogate a patronage system that has made her ‘husband’ get so suddenly rich that he can afford the many latest car models, many houses and many mistresses all over the country. She is impervious to the reality of the politics of ‘invasion’ that has led her to give George forty-eight hours to vacate his premises so that they become hers. In short, that the corruption and the politics of entitlement have so poisoned the social and political fabric that no one is accountable to the ordinary person. There is always the race for “embourgeoisement through increasing demands... for capital and resource accumulation” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:62). The end result is that those who think they belong, the super-citizens, become, in the words of Fanon (1963:133, “preoccupied with filling (their) pockets as rapidly as possible but also as prosaically as possible (and) the country sinks all the more deeply into stagnation.” The ordinary person is not allowed to think, analyze and deduce the blameworthiness of the ‘enemies’ of the nation nor that of the government that is supposed to be in charge of managing and fixing state affairs. The people have simply to be reminded and commanded where blame should lie in the past, where it lies in the present and where it should lie in the future that never arrives.

One only has to witness the ways in which the ruling party denies the existence of factions within its ranks, the way in which they argue that the economy is on the ascendancy despite obvious evidence to the contrary, the way they deny groundswell of popular discontent by the ordinary people and the sanctions mantra that has become discordant. Denialism allows the party to invent and banish putative enemies so as to create politics of entitlement for supporters of the regime. This way of constructing a nation is strategic in that it allows the ruling party to control and present itself as the barometer of remembering and, necessarily forgetting (Sylvester, 2003, Bhabha, 1994). The ZANU- PF metanarrative “functioned as tranquilizer(s)

that covered up the treachery of a kleptocratic government...” (Christiansen, 2004:61) that had run out of ideas.

From Eppel’s perspective, citizenship and belonging are predicated on the visibility of President Mugabe both as a person and as an embodiment of Zimbabwean identity. From the standpoint of Mugabeism the person of the President is put on a pedestal so that it is conflated with that of the nation. The nation cannot be conceived outside of the President. He defines the parameters of belonging. Party members blame the nation’s woes on everyone and everything except the incumbent himself. Two incidents stand out in this regard. The first is the imprisonment of George because “they say I have insulted the President and that I have been causing alarm and despondency in the minds of the people” (p.14). Secondly, is the ‘treasonous’ switching of portraits. In the logic of Zimbabwean politics, criticizing the ruling party is tantamount to insulting the leader. He represents the values, the history, the past, the present, and future of the nation. He, in other words, is a deity, a fetish and so above reproach. Achebe’s (1983:15) conception of citizenship as a situation where “the state undertakes to organize society in such a way that the citizens can enjoy peace and justice, and the citizen in return agrees to perform his patriotic duties” counts for nothing in a Zimbabwe characterized by the cult of personalism, what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011:63) calls consolidation of an ‘Imperial Presidency.’” Support for Mugabe becomes support for Zimbabwe; to oppose him results in the shutting out or writing out of such ‘unpatriotic’ people from the national space and the attendant persecution and violence.

In the novel *They are Coming* (2014) by Mlalazi we also see the way in which the President’s name and picture constitute a national symbol to be feared, revered and fetishized like an oracle. In the instance, the reader witnesses a fight over the non-payment for sex services between Mavundla and Mbambo, a ZANU-PF activist. In the scuffle the T-shirt which bears the President’s portrait is torn and Mbambo says “I’ll have you arrested for defaming the

President,'’.... “You cannot tear his face in half and escape. You will go to jail” (Mlalazi, 2014:92). In another incident, Mbambo has a fight with the milkman over money and, because he loses the fight, he frames the milkman to the police alleging that he insulted the President and the police arrest him without so much as a shred of incriminating evidence. Richard Sklar (1985:14) notes the existence of ways in which the President, his picture or name are so sacrilegious that speaking ill of them is deemed subversive, treasonous and even dangerous.

In the second instance in *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009), Smith has incontestably been defeated and emasculated and his portrait lies helplessly on the ground. But the entourage of the Deputy Minister is palpably frightened because this constitutes an insult to the President. The police officer, supposedly apolitical, is quick to pounce on the tenets of Mugabeism. He admonishes George as follows:

“[...] you insult our sovereign state by what is tantamount to an act of treason; replacing our Excellency’s portrait with one of that monster who murdered and raped millions of black people, men and women, and children” (p. 16).

The irony is not lost here that opposition members suffer the same fate as shown by overcrowded prisons and the harassment of the Movement for Democratic Change and Simba Makoni’s supporters. Horace Campbell (2003:75-77) defines this approach to citizenship and belonging as ‘dodaism’ which seeks to evince “sacrifice, courage, ability to take risks, ability to fight, valorization of war, manifesting anger, preparedness to shed blood and defiance of the ‘West’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:1152). The policeman is very angry on behalf of the nation and President because a white citizen has had the assumed temerity to symbolically portray post-independence as fundamentally similar to the colonial space.

What Fanon (1963) says about the colonial space and its divisions/compartments may well be said of the post-independence period depicted in *Absent: The English Teacher*. Here belonging is premised not only on race but, most importantly, on class and political affiliation. The

characters in the novel whose affiliation politically is inclined towards the ruling party arrogate to themselves the powers of being ‘super-citizens’ with all the advantages that this entails. It should be remembered that the liberation party, having either refused or failed to transform itself into a governing party, thrived on the discourses of conquest, domination and commandism (Sachikonye, 2011:13&17). The representatives of this class come vulgarly in the form of the mistress of the ZANU-PF-aligned Minister of Child Welfare, Sweets and Biscuits (a portfolio that clearly shows he does nothing fruitful besides siring children) and Beauticious (a name that suggests that she is empty and simply uses her body to attract men). Beauticious represents primitive accumulation, or what Ayi Kwei Armah (1968) calls the discourse of the ‘gleam.’ Her association with ZANU-PF opens doors to resources which ordinary people cannot access despite having contributed to the liberation of the country. Through Beauticious, Eppel shows that post-independence eerily resembles the colonial period in that it replaces one repressive system with another. Beauticious’ voyeurism that is shown by her attitude to George’s diminished circumstances dredges up the masochism of the whites during colonialism. She thrives, not on creating an enabling environment where all become equal citizens, but “on the pursuit of past wrongdoing to the point of shamelessness” (Mbembe, 2001:115). We are told, for example that Beauticious, the super-citizen:

[...] would pay him (George) the minimum wage and supply him 5 kilograms of mealie-meal per month, and five leaves of spinach or rape per day, depending on availability (p. 27-28).

The reader is also alerted to the fact that Beauticious;

[...] talked to George for the most part in what the Rhodesians called ‘kitchen kaffir’ or, ‘Fanakalo’ or ‘Chilapalapa,’ because that is how she remembered being talked to by white people when she was a little girl (p. 30).

Here, the narrator satirically questions if really independence was intended to dismantle the structures of colonialism or merely replace a white, grasping class with that of black buccaneers. This captures the fact that the black upper or the politically-connected classes saw independence as an opportunity to impose their dominance over the lesser citizens rather than share the resources equally with the generality of the people. They had learnt their lessons well from the white men.

George's condition as a servant represents the emasculation and de-personalization of white people. It is instructive to note that Beuticious removes all indigenous trees that George had intentionally planted as a way of identifying with the landscape. The indigenous trees for George represent a way of identifying with not only the downtrodden but inscribing himself firmly in the land as a white Zimbabwean. Beuticious' removal of these is at variance with the nativist, anti-white rhetoric her party propagates at every turn. This shows the hollowness of the rhetoric of Mugabeism because it is contingent and does not constitute a coherent, systematic body of ideas and behaviors that are consistent. Whilst denouncing the whites and what they seem to represent, the post-independence opportunistic blacks mimic the worst attributes of the white people and their conception of power. This makes George wonder about the significance of independence for both blacks and whites when he says:

What is it that turns people ugly when their aspirations to acquire property, climb on the gravy train are fulfilled? Is money so addictive that the more you get, the more you want? Why do people like Beuticious strive to out-Rhodie the Rhodie? (p.116).

This is typically a case of a class of new oppressors that indicate left and turn right, that talk of re-distributing wealth while sadistically trampling on the poor like George and the majority of the black people. It is this reality that prompted Ibbo Mandaza (1989:69) to observe that post-independence Zimbabwe is a "schizophrenic state" that purports to advance a socialist agenda

of egalitarianism while clinging to colonial capitalist structures. Without any serious structural transformation of a colonial system that catered for the minority by the minority, any postcolonial state remains implacably moored in the rule by the few over the many. Beuticious' case shows that independence offers possibilities for opportunists and masochists to apply colonial techniques of appropriating the spaces formerly occupied by the white people. Power is used not in the service of the citizens but against them, especially if they are white or members of the internal enemy: the opposition.

Eppel uses the technique of juxtaposition in order to show that race is a construct used by the ruling elite to capture and maintain power. The ruling class or upper class uses race and politics in order to acquire wealth while the ordinary person does not see any essential difference between being black and being white. This may be because under Mugabeism ordinary people of both races endure mutual suffering that brings them closer to each other. For example, George pays fines for Dlamini, Ndiweni and Joseph who are arbitrarily incarcerated in unhygienic prison conditions that strip them of their dignity as citizens of the country.

The most poignant example of race as a construct is shown by George's helping of the desperate, destitute girl. It is instructive that Joseph, a black person, would have nothing to do with the girl and George takes it upon himself to give succor. He travels all the way to Empandeni to the girl's home before he dies. This is richly symbolic; it captures George's insistence on the necessity of opposites. He dramatizes this when he says to the girl: "What happens, my dear when opposites merge? You get a paradox (oh no!), a third force, which transcends the two opposites..." (p. 130). This is the major preoccupation of George's lectures in literature in English. He shows the need to transcend the limitations of citizenship and belonging defined on very narrow terms in both the colonial and post-independent spaces. The old has to die for a new, inclusive, multi-ethnic and multicultural society to emerge. George's death becomes symbolic of both closure and erasure of ossified constructions of belonging; an

end to the old order. The time-warped mentalities represented by the ruling elite have to pave way for a new order represented by George's association with the girl, with Ndiweni, Dlamini and Joseph because a nation is an aggregate of all the cultures, races and ethnicities that inhabit that particular space. But that can only happen if there is a truthful confrontation with the ghosts of the past. George himself has to confront the burden of his colonial past in Fort Mangwe where the process of colonization began. After that he has to die for the new dispensation to emerge. It is instructive that his last days in his journey to Empandeni are characterized by vomiting which may be symbolic of the renunciation of both the colonial and postcolonial identities in favour of an identity construction outside both claustrophobic spaces. George's death, therefore, offers possibilities for the merging of opposites in order to inaugurate a new conception of citizenship and belonging in Zimbabwe.

4.3 Land as a Marker of Identity and Belonging

This part examines Eppel's deconstruction of the narrow, essentialist and arbitrary nature of land as a marker of identity and belonging during the period of nationalist, patriotic and Mugabeist era of 2000 onwards. I discuss the discourse of land as a symbol of geographic location, ancestral heritage and autochthony. I analyze the short story "The Very High Ranking Soldier's Wife" in the short story collection titled *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings* (2004) and the short story "White Man Crawling" in the collection of short stories going by the title *White Man Crawling* (2007). These two short stories have been chosen because they specifically deal with the problematic of the Land Reform Program and its essentialist re-definition and reconstruction of citizenship, belonging and identity. The discourse on land heightened the ruling party's anti-imperialist and jingoistic narrative that was teeming with exclusions and binarisms that went with fighting in the war of liberation. As a result, this tended to exclude other modes of belonging to the nation. These issues are critical in that instead of taking the nation into a tolerant, inclusive future, Mugabe's nativist Zimbabwe

takes it into the past characterized by exclusion, minoritization and liberation war bellicosity. The discourse on land installs a type of nationalism that is “narrow, xenophobic and racist (in its) articulation of the African national project” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:62). In light of the land discourse, the ruling party began to view all the whites as foreigners and their Zimbabwean black sympathizers as traitors. This provided ample justification for the unleashing of violence and narrowing the contours of citizenship on those who were seen as against the national interests. This is why Anna Alonso (1994:379-405) has argued that the “self-identity of nations has been secured partly through the construction of internal Others, whose markedness assures the existence of a national identity that, remaining invisible or unmarked, is successfully inscribed as the norm.” The ruling party’s narrative on land was both strategic and convenient because it tapped into a blind and atavistic force that had been simmering since the late 1980s; the landless, poverty-stricken, unemployed and manipulable sections of the Zimbabwean society. This force had been waiting for a chance to brighten their abject lives and the ZANU-PF narrative of the authentic insiders versus the sabotaging outsiders provided them with such an opportunity.

Land and its ownership in Zimbabwe has been a site of contest and angry controversy for a long time since it is viewed as a symbol of colonial dislocation, displacement and dispossession. As an historical heritage and a source of identity construction, it represents colonial conquest and the urgent need to fix this settler-native question (Mamdani, 1996:7) through its reclamation. This is what G. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2011:2) refers to as the “ontological basis of citizenship” which entails locating the self in a specific “homeland or collection of ancestral lands in Africa (Zimbabwe).” He further argues that citizenship based on indigeneity privileges entitlement to land believed to be ancestral heritage. He concludes by observing that:

This is why across the continent, groups identified as strangers or settlers may live in an area for over 100 years and still be considered as having no legitimate rights in the land they occupy (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2011:7).

From the above quotation, it can be noted that the discourse on land often assumes racial and ethnic overtones and further create the binary between outsider and insider, “the genuinely and the falsely national” (Balibar, 2002:100). Land was used by the ruling party in the post-2000 era not only to create orderly disorder (in that the ‘spontaneous’ land invasions appeared to have the tacit support of the government and its agencies for strategic political reasons) but also to give the leaders the gravitas to reclaim lost support by means both fair and foul. Like Hitler’s Germany with its pure Aryan race rhetoric, the land discourse in Zimbabwe invented the ‘people’ (Balibar, 1991:37) on whose behalf the party spoke just as they thought they did during the liberation war.

The appropriation of land as a marker of identity, belonging and total decolonization in its patriotic Mugabeist rendition has its genesis in the late 1990s when the ZANU-PF government faced a series of problems and challenges to its rule. First, there was the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) that brought with it unmitigated suffering that was at variance with the ruling oligarchy’s socialist rhetoric (Bond and Manyanya, 2003:68; Raftopoulos, 2003:229). The program inaugurated massive job losses, rapid price increases and general economic decline. Many people who had lost their jobs trekked to the rural areas where calls for land became strident. Secondly, the war veterans emerged as a militant force to challenge their neglect by the ruling party and demanded compensation for participating in the liberation war (Bull- Christiansen, 2004:58). An assortment of critical voices took ZANU-PF head-on by questioning its relevance and legitimacy in the face of rapid economic decline. These voices demanded accountability from the government (Raftopoulos, 2000:30). What should be remembered in this narrative is that to maintain its tenacious stranglehold on power, the ruling party had always appropriated the liberation war as its exclusive domain. Now, the emergence of a militant war veteran’s movement unhinged this monopolized narrative of the struggle. The

ruling party then saw it fit to bring these former fighters to its discursive fold (Bull-Christiansen, 2004:58). ZANU-PF capitulated and not only gave them gratuities but also promised them land in whose name they fought the war. In this way the government was able to resuscitate the nationalist liberation discourse on land whilst at the same time inventing internal and external enemies of the country (Christine Sylvester, 2003:39-40). Land, therefore, became a propitious tool with which to rally lost support by creating convenient binaries of patriots/sell-outs, foreigners/indigenes, puppets/authentic. Giorgio Agamben (1998:12) talks of what he refers to as biopolitics which refers to the politicization of bare life or the factoring in of political calculations and machinations into the very existence of the people. In such circumstances, “life... becomes a principal object of the projections and calculations of state power” (Ibid). ZANU-PF used land so as to create individuals who are instruments of the state in its bid to re-capture and maintain power. Biopolitics in Zimbabwe turned citizens (at least the majority) into objects rather than subjects of state power. It manipulated citizens not to view themselves as Zimbabweans but as compartments that should always be fighting against each other.

Bull-Christiansen (2004:59) has argued that the revived discourse of Afro-radicalism, nativism, sovereignty and anti-imperialism set in motion “the colonial stereotypes (which) were again deployed in an articulation of ‘true Zimbabwe,’ which was ‘rural Zimbabwe,’ while the urban population was perceived with increasing suspicion” as totemless opposition members who were outside the Zimbabwe liberation war history (Blair Rutherford, 2003:203, Sachikonye, 2004:72-73). This opened the floodgates for the invasion of land owned by white farmers by state-sanctioned agents since, according to Hammar *et al* (2003:28), “the notion of ‘foreignness’, and of constructing literal enemies out of so-called strangers and intruders, has been critical in the regime’s strategic narrowing of national identity and belonging.” Whites, especially after the constitutional referendum, began to be externalized as rank outsiders who

had spurned the hand of reconciliation and were hell-bent on effecting regime change in the country (Martin Meredith, 2002:196-197).

This is the background against which this section of the study seeks to analyze the story “The Very High Ranking Soldier’s Wife” and “White Man Crawling” as indictments of the exclusionary nature of the land redistribution exercise and the way it re-defined identity politics in Zimbabwe. First, in the story “White Man Crawling”, the narrator acknowledges the manifest racial land imbalances that, in Fanon’s (1963:31) theorization, installed the logic of race as a marker of class even in post-independence Zimbabwe. The narrator says that “before the so-called Land Reform Program Nols had owned seventeen farms, all but three of which he had...given to the government...” (p.11). Before that, the narrator says these commercial farmers had:

[...] continue(d) living in the lifestyle to which they had been accustomed since independence: a lifestyle which did not exclude annual holidays in Alpine ski resorts, house boats on Lake Kariba, shopping sprees in private jets, to Sandton City, and best of all, jamborees in their iconic 4 by 4s (p.11).

Earlier on in the story, the narrator refers to the distribution of land as “so-called” because he does not see the land being redistributed fairly and equitably. For him it is a monumental fraud. This is corroborated by the above quotation which implies that whites still controlled a larger chunk of the resources in independent Zimbabwe in much the same way they did during the Rhodesian period. They pitched their citizenship above that of blacks by virtue of the wealth that they possessed. The terms and parameters of citizenship and belonging needed to be revisited to reflect, not the sediments of a Rhodie system, but a re-connection of the dispossessed with their ancestral links with the land. That link had been ruptured by colonialism that was characteristically constructed as a plague by the blacks. In this way, land reclamation is accepted as the continuation of ‘Zimbabwe’s unfinished business’ (Hammar *et al*, 2003:1).

According to Hammar *et al* (2003:19), land in its nationalist imaginary became a metaphor of belonging and autochthony, it came to be seen “as the sole, authentic signifier of national identity.” All other constructions of identity were either trivialized or serious attempts were made to erase them in favor of this totalizing narrative of inclusion and occlusion.

But, the sense of the necessity of land re-distribution is immediately annulled by the story due to the partisan and exclusionary nature in which it is done by the ruling party. The narrator says: “They had duly been resettled, not by the peasants, but by the local honourable minister and his relatives. And that is the reason why Nols had been allowed to keep a few” (p.11). What this implies is that access to the land depended on supporting the ruling party and its ideology of Mugabeism. The Mugabeist narrative constructed supporters of ZANU-PF as super-citizens who could acquire and keep any piece of land anywhere and anytime in the country. The Nols are able to get assurances from higher positions that they could keep their farms for as long as they continue to fund the ruling party’s campaign program against the opposition which is seen as the puppet of the West. This shows the fact that a person’s identity as a Zimbabwean who can own land is dependent upon the ‘good grace’ and whims of ZANU-PF. Such an approach confounds the boundaries that should inhere between the party and the state. But then Zimbabwe is a party-state and national identity is construed as party identity. Even then the Nols’s possession of the farms is contingent upon the whims of those that claim to own the origin story of the nation. This is why the minister qualifies his promise by stating that the Nols can keep their farms ‘for now.’ Land is a marker of wealth, ownership, belonging and, therefore, should be monopolized by the national liberators who are party cadres to the exclusion of insignificant others. It explains why during election times ZANU-PF, through the then Minister Saviour Kasukuwere (He fled to exile after the new government deposed Robert Mugabe though he is back now), has been parcelling out tracts of land to ZANU-PF youths even in situations where the city council ought to have that preserve.

The discourse of entitlement and the construction of the ruling party supporters as super-citizens are reflected in the story in story “The Very High Ranking Soldier’s Wife” in *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings*. The story dramatizes the appropriation of the liberation war by ZANU-PF loyalists in order to install what Sachikonye (2011:37) refers to as “coercive accumulation” where there is “brazen expropriation and extortion of property in clear violation of existing law and practice.” The irony is not lost to the reader because the fact that the wife of the high ranking soldier is not an ex-combatant but basks in the glory of her husband who is a senior army official is focalized by the title of the story. The high ranking soldier’s wife simply marches into the Wordsworth’s property without regard to property rights because she is convinced that whites are not Zimbabweans, that they are foreigners and, therefore, outside the pale of the law. This externalization of the white people is strategically used not only for purposes of ‘embourgeoisement’ of party loyalists, but also to inaugurate “adversarial nationalism” (Sachikonye, 2011:41) that legitimates violation of the other as redressing colonial imbalances. The basis for invading the Wordsworth’s farm by the high ranking soldier’s wife is the questionable reasoning that: “I mean! Fucksake! Chave! Chave Chimurenga!”(It’s now war!) (p.8). For as long as greed and xenophobia are masked as a war for economic empowerment, where the rule of law and respect for property rights are suspended and the end justifies the means, Zimbabwe will remain in thrall of violent exclusions and dispossession. The narrator further states that “when will *these* people realize that the land is *ours*, and that *they* stole it from *us*?” (p.8) (Italics added).

The use of terms such as ‘these people’, ‘is ours’ and ‘from us’ captures the unproblematic and totalizing identity construction that partitions the nation into blacks and whites, ‘them’ and ‘us’. Such partitioning based on the view of land as “the key signifier of true Zimbabwean identity” (Bull-Christiansen, 2004:44) is convenient for the ruling party because it concretizes the creation of ‘fictive ethnicity’ (Etienne Balibar, 2002:100) where nations resort to inventing

a 'national idiom' that is said to capture the essence of national identity. Such a national idiom was blatantly and constantly brought out by the then president, Robert Mugabe's angry tirades against Zimbabwean whites and blacks and their handlers in Euro-America. These were ceaselessly constituted as anti-land reform, anti-black empowerment and therefore serious national security threats. This marked the normalization of violence as 'redemptive.' Thus Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya (2011:2) observe that:

Once an enemy has been defined and branded as an alien or belonging to a different race, its violation and elimination is viewed as not only justifiable (in defence of national interests) but also as redemptive (cleansing the nation of impurities)...In Zimbabwe the enemy was the 'white farmers' conspiring with the British, Americans and local black puppets within the MDC....

As if to corroborate the above, the narrator points out that "the two land grabbers (the Wordsworths) were given such a hiding that they had to be hospitalized for a fortnight" (p.9). The irony is not lost on the reader that the land grabbing that was used by the whites during colonialism is now being used by the black government in an era characterized by an elastic conception of citizenship, respect for human rights, property rights and rule of law. The narrator captures the selfish and self-aggrandizing motivation of the discourse of land-grabbing and invasion when he points out that the high ranking soldier's wife also took "a silver tea set, which had belonged to Mrs Wordsworth's great grandmother, a set of World War II service medals and three photograph albums, one of them leather bound!"(p.9). The items that the invaders seize have nothing to do with land as a symbol of dispossession and/ or its reclamation as an emblem of total independence. What the narrator registers is the unredeemed and unmitigated craving for a white lifestyle by the same people who purport to be dismantling it. I argue that that the arbitrary and whimsical invasion of white-owned land dramatizes the Africanization of colonial practices of exclusion, domination and denial of rights. Campbell (2003:79-80) questions the futility of orchestrating fresh land imbalances in the process of

trying to correct colonial ones. The high ranking soldier's wife is a metaphor of ruling party officials and loyalists who are above the law, who can rent quite a few ZANU-PF roughnecks, chant a few party slogans, sing a few songs in praise of the party leader and then invade and eject anyone from any farm if he/she is deemed to be outside the national 'we.' They, therefore, can have as many farms as they desire because, as super-citizens, they have been given the carte blanche by a ruling party that views itself as the embodiment of the nation. We are told that the rented roughnecks were "shouting ZANU-PF slogans, singing liberation songs from the 70s..." (p.9). The reader is also told that these purveyors of a violent Zimbabwean identity construction consisted of "... teenage war veterans, a fifty-year old ZANU-PF youth, and half a dozen pre-adolescent Border Gezi graduates wearing academic gowns" (p.9). Through this pungent satire, the narrator constructs the land reform exercise as stage-managed and choreographed in order to create a rich and immune class of party loyalists. The subject citizens, who are ZANU-PF, have the backing of the state to visit violence on the object citizens, who are the whites and those who oppose the Third *Chimurenga*, the so-called conquest of conquests. This conquest of conquests is constructed as representing the apogee of colonial dismemberment and the consequent handing over of the nation to its 'rightful' owners, the 'patriotic' black Zimbabweans. The story, therefore, mocks the statement uttered by Robert Mugabe when he said that he and his party were then talking about the conquest of conquest and that the prevailing sovereignty of the people of Zimbabwe over settler minority rule and all it stood for including possession of land. He had then gone on to declare that power to the people was to be followed by land to the people. As the above story shows, what is referred to as 'the people of Zimbabwe' and 'the people' are ruling party supporters who exclude other racial groups and opposition supporters who also have a right to lay a claim to land and to being Zimbabwean. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2011:2) condemns this approach to national identity construction and instead advocates a situation where "residency rather than indigeneity ought

to be the new basis of citizenship in Africa.” Such an approach avoids the pitfalls of inclining towards retributive social justice instead of a restorative one.

The story “The Very High Ranking Soldier’s Wife” also critiques the ambiguous position of the farm workers in a radicalized, racialized and politicized Zimbabwe. The majority of farm workers in Zimbabwe were people of Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican descent. These people came to the country as migrant laborers during the Federation. Successive generations lost contact with their countries of origin and began to identify themselves as Zimbabwean by virtue of having been born and bred in the country. In the politically volatile period of post-2000, their status as citizens became a site of contestation largely because they worked for white commercial farmers and were assumed to be supporters of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change or as essentially anti-government (Blair Rutherford, 2003:196-197). Due to their assumed allegiance to the white commercial farmer by virtue of employment, they were viewed with suspicion and hostility by the ruling party and its purveyors of the “politics of disorder” (Sachikonye, 2011:41). The ambivalent position of the farm workers in Zimbabwe empties Mugabeism of its essential rhetoric of being anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist and therefore of being manifestly Pan-Africanist as the predicament of the farm workers in the quotation below shows:

The three hundred or so farm workers and their families, most of whom had been born on the farm, took to their heels after their huts were burnt down, and squatted on the verges of public roads, and in the caves of leopard-infested koppies, until they were set-upon by ZANU-PF Youths and driven further afield. As far as I know, those who haven’t died of exposure are still on the run (p.9).

I read Mugabeism as being a bundle of contradictions when considered in the context of blacks of supposed foreign origins working on white-owned farms in Zimbabwe. Not only are these people denied land (though they are deserving of it and qualify for it); their very livelihood in

terms of employment, shelter and education is destroyed by the ruling party's super-citizens whose brief seems to be that of aggravating these workers' outsideness or non-belonging. Like the Rhodesian identity construction whose manifestation had to be in the full gaze of the native other, the Zimbabwean nationalist patriotic narrative of identity had to be achieved through the brutal erasure of all other forms of identity that did not conform to the ZANU-PF teleology. The quotation unsettles the argument that the Third *Chimurenga* was an attempt at final decolonization because it escalates the view that it was a strategy or a pivot around which to instil fear and submission into those that had become dissident to the ruling party's type of governance.

The ZANU-PF youths, the war veterans and the militia who view themselves as the authentic protectors of the nation construct the farm workers as essentially aligned to the whites. They are viewed as totemless and brainwashed people who cannot interrogate their material circumstances of exploitation. As stated earlier, Rutherford (2003:203) views their identity as constructed in terms of belonging to the farm and the white commercial farmer. They are considered as having no independent identity outside the farm and white ideology. In such a narrative, they are written out of the national collective and are thus fit and proper candidates for violent removal from the Zimbabwean post-independence space. So, the farm workers, though they are black like other Zimbabweans, have an identity that is compromised by their association with white farmers. They are vicariously clumped together with whites and the sins of omission and commission they are assumed to have done. This is why "the three hundred or so farm workers and their families..." have "their huts burnt down..." and beaten by ZANU-PF youths (p.9).

The story captures the fact that the history of the white farmer in colonial Rhodesia has been appropriated by postcolonial discourse to frame the farm laborer as "not legitimately within the national imaginations of the various social groups of Zimbabwe" (Rutherford, 2003:203). The

use of ZANU-PF youths, the war vets, the local governor and Green Bombers (p.9) in not only taking the land away from whites but also disciplining farm workers becomes emblematic of the binary of super-citizens versus rank outsiders, patriots versus ‘inauthentic’ Zimbabweans. One may argue therefore that the exclusion of the farm workers from the benefits of belonging through access to land is based on the untenable belief in what Michael Ignatieff (1995:1-2) refers to as the discourse of ‘blood and sacrifice’ that frames Zimbabwe as undergirded by the liberation war to which the farm workers are supposed to have contributed nothing. This is why in this story there is a lot of ZANU-PF slogan chanting, toyi-toying and “singing of liberation songs from the 70s...” (p.9) to reflect that the country was won through blood and, therefore, the farms will be violently repossessed to indicate the continuity of war violence.

4.4 Conclusion

In light of the foregoing analysis, this chapter argued that Mugabeism is a product of its Rhodesian predecessor in terms of the ways in which it narrows citizenship and belonging. Just as in the period of Rhodesia, citizenship and belonging are based on race, political affiliation and the perception that those who support the ruling party are a group of super-citizens who own the nation by virtue of being linked to the liberation war history. Through the chosen texts, the chapter has argued that Eppel undermines the notion that independence brought with it egalitarianism, but instead, stresses the view that it created a new breed of super-citizens in the form of ZANU-PF loyalists. This breed of citizens is driven by primitive accumulation and the will to dominate and exercise power over the weak in Zimbabwe. The positions of George under Beauticious and the Minister, of Ndiweni and Dlamini under the violent and marginalizing *Gukurahundi* period, of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change supporters under the homogenizing and totalizing patriotic Zimbabwe, bear witness to a bifurcated society. The argument that Eppel seems to be advancing in the text *Absent: The English Teacher* is the Africanization of exclusion, domination, minoritization, coercion and

unequal distribution of resources. To the extent that the selected stories in *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings* and *White Man Crawling* deal with land as a marker of Zimbabwean identity construction and its skewed nature, they complement the text *Absent: The English Teacher*. The land re-distribution, whose motive was ostensibly to correct colonial injustices, ended up creating party loyalists concerned less with social justice but more with personal aggrandizement and living the lifestyle of erstwhile oppressors. The chapter further argued that Eppel's satire centers around undermining the ideology of Mugabeism as redemptive, restorative and just but as energized by the same Rhodesian identity partitioning that it claimed to be addressing. In the chosen texts for this chapter, Eppel concludes by raising the rhetorical question of why those people in power tend to use that same power not in the service of the people but against them. There is not much difference in terms of identity and belonging between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. Eppel pokes fun at Rhodesian nationalism as shown in the previous chapter. At the same time, he satirizes the Mugabeist patriotic Zimbabwe as this chapter has attempted to unravel. The next chapter examines the Eppel's conception of an ideal Zimbabwean multicultural society, the third space, which he has been hinting at. The title of the next chapter is, accordingly, given the rubric; "The search for a new moral and political order" in an ideal Zimbabwe shorn of binary, artificial and politically convenient identity constructions.

Chapter Five: The Search for a New Moral and Political Order

5.1 Introduction

The basic argument in the last chapter was that the construction of post-independence Mugabeist ideology was predicated on the very ideology that it assumed to be undermining: the Rhodesian discourse. In its parasitic appropriation of the Rhodesian narrative, Mugabeism located itself in the politics of race, exclusion, violence and political entitlement that had the net effect of stripping a significant portion of the population of its citizenship and sense of belonging. I argued that the post-independence ruling elite narrowly defined citizenship in terms of skin pigmentation, political affiliation and the liberation war discourse to divide society into super-citizens (ZANU PF supporters) and the insignificant others who, together with former colonialists, were perceived to be working to undermine the sovereignty of the country and its land re-distribution program that was used as a marker of an authentic Zimbabwean identity. I concluded by arguing that to the extent that post-independence Zimbabwe used the very structures and parameters of colonial hegemony, the change from the colonial to the postcolonial space is framed by Eppel as cosmetic.

In this chapter, I examine two novels, *Hatchings* (2006) and *The Holy Innocents* (2002) in order to unravel Eppel's vision for an ideal Zimbabwean society outside the limitations of race and violent politics. I analyze issues of a nation plagued by matters of morality, corruption, class distinctions, religious fundamentalism and, to some extent, the continued resonance of race long after the demise of colonialism. The two novels are important in that they show a nation that is corrupt, immoral and unable to face up to the urgencies of its future. In both novels, race is no longer much of an issue because both races (black and white) collaborate to engage in activities that are not beneficial to the health of the nation. In the two novels, Eppel's satire is

trained at both blacks and whites and, in the process, it attacks ‘humbug’ and the abuse of power. Ultimately, the two novels conjoin to inaugurate a search for a new and enduring moral order that should characterize an ideal multicultural Zimbabwean society/identity that transcends Rhodesianism, Mugabeism and the use of religion to advance personal interests.

5.2 The Motif of Re-birth in *Hatchings*

The novel begins by introducing us to the heroine, Elizabeth Fawkes turning sixteen years. This is important in that it shows her development into womanhood, into a character with the capability to ‘hatch’, to birth a new moral society from the one that currently prevails. Furthermore, the beginning of the story introduces us to Elizabeth’s potential lover, Jet Bunion whom she loves to distraction. The unconditional love that is hinted at the beginning finds its fullest expression at the end of the novel when the two discuss the possibility of getting married and establishing a family built on principles of ethical existence. This potential marriage may be read as metonymic of a new postcolonial Zimbabwean nation that is about to be forged. As the story begins, Elizabeth and her family are out camping in the Matopos National Park, in particular near the Mtshелеle Dam. That the story begins in the Matopos area is significant for the writer’s thematic employment. The reader is made aware of the scenic and beautiful nature of the area when the narrator points out that:

[...] the dam was reasonably full of water and lilies were in full flower. The white variety prevailed here. Elizabeth called them the lotus plants, but her mother liked to be more specific. She called them *ottelia exserta*. Mrs Fawkes was surprised that none of the more common blue variety, *Nymphaea caerulea* grew on this dam. The lilies reminded Elizabeth of a poem they had studied with their English teacher, Mr. Lipp. How did it go?

In the afternoon they came into a land in which it seems always afternoon.

That’s what it’s like here, she thought. Time seems to standstill. ‘There is no joy but calm.’ A calm disturbed by the occasional gust of wind ... (p.2-3).

The peaceful, numinous and edenic nature of the place is counterpoised with “the hustle and bustle of school life” (p.3), the madding crowd of Bulawayo city. The symbolism used to heighten the sense of serenity is also significant. It is a place alive with water which is emblematic of life in this context, of luxuriance and health. The place is described as teeming with white lilies which depict purity, innocence and natural beauty. The place is further figured as timeless in the sense that its peacefulness is epiphanic and implies sacredness where time is not measured from the perspective of the mundane or ordinary conception of temporality. According to Gehan M. Anwar Deeb (2016:113), ordinary human conception of time falls under “cosmological time expressed as linear succession; that is, we undergo the passing hours and days and the progression of our lives from birth to death” and yet, there is also phenomenological psychological time which is “time expressed in terms of the past, present and future.” Although steeped in its historicity and materiality, the place’s temporality is inscribed as transcendental and this makes it manifestly special. The fact that time seems to stand still is very important because it constructs the place as a symbol of permanence, resilience and resistance to that kind of change that does not ameliorate the lives of the people. Perhaps, this derives from the place’s proximity to the putative holy shrine of Njelele believed to be the home to *Umlimu*, the rock God whose voice was authority to much of Southern Africa (Ranger, 1999:19). It is a place where one is at peace with nature, its beauty and the world because it represents “...entry to a state of nature” (Ranger, 1999:23).

The heroine, Elizabeth, is with her family and is “at peace with the world” (p.3). This is a very important attribute later in this study of a society that has lost all moral scruples and pursues individual and wealth interests to the exclusion of human relations. The chapter also introduces an important thematic aspect of the narrative which is:

the fertile egg of an Asil Khan, the rarest and strongest... Originally there had been six eggs, apparently smuggled out of India in somebody’s diplomatic bag, but five

of them had become cracked in transit and had ended up scrambled, on lightly buttered toast (p.3).

Although there is something irregular and unorthodox in the way the egg finds its way into the Zimbabwean shores, something that borders on the criminal (since the egg is smuggled into the country), its symbolism cannot be denied. It reflects the creative domestication of the alien to become the positive local; something we don't find in the spaces occupied by the immigrant community that is discussed later in this chapter. The talk about this egg and the possibility of it being hatched by Elizabeth in her bra, after having turned sixteen, in the Matopos, and in a morally bankrupt and degenerate society which is outside this (Matopos' and Elizabeth's) space is very significant for the whole book. This statement is also important in that it introduces early on the interplay between good and evil that forms the crux of the story. The very possibility of Elizabeth hatching the Asil Khan egg herself brings to the fore the significance of the title of the book "hatchings". It shows the centrality of the heroine as a potential bringer of a new postcolonial moral and political order. It is for this reason that the negotiations between father and daughter for the hatching of the egg take on wider thematic connotations for the book. The negotiations proceed thus:

"Do you think you could hatch it, Lizzie?"

"Sorry, Dad?"

"My egg. Do you think you could hatch it?"

"Not in my bra, Dad." Elizabeth was serious.

"It's too much of an effort, especially with school coming up soon. I will put it under Mrs Noodle when we get home. She started sitting yesterday.

"Not this egg, Lizzie; it's too precious....it's got to hatch. Your bra is the safest bet Elizabeth closed the book she had been dipping into and placed it carefully on the ground. It was one of her recommended novels- Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. "Twenty one days is a long time, Dad. And what about the nights when I'm asleep? I could easily crush it." ... Elizabeth was at the point where Pip returns to the forge in order to marry Biddy and discovers that she has married Joe.

“Please what, Dad?” She said, slightly annoyed at the interruption. “Please incubate my precious egg. I’ll never ask you to do it again. I promise.” “All right, I’ll do it,” said Elizabeth crossly (p.3-5).

This passage is quoted in full because of the important information it contains about the role that Elizabeth plays thematic structure of the novel. It is also important to note that Elizabeth’s turning sixteen is associated with language that is rich in sexual innuendo and double entendre to suggest her potential fertility and maternity. When the father expresses the hope that the chicken will be a cock, Elizabeth responds by saying:

“I’m not that keen on cocks,” said Elizabeth. Mrs Fawkes heard this and wondered, with alarm, what father and daughter had been talking about. She quickened her steps. She was uneasy on the subject of human sex and, hitherto, had avoided it in the company of her daughter (p.4).

Later on Elizabeth also uses language that is rich in sexual insinuation and potential for worlding a new moral paradigm when her father offers her a drink and she says:

“I’d love a long one, Dad.”.... “What do you mean by a ‘long one’, Elizabeth?” said Mrs Fawkes remembering with guilt her own adolescent fantasies...” (p.8).

The talk about Elizabeth’s love for Jet Bunion, incubating the egg, her turning sixteen, the innuendo about cocks crescendoes to create an atmosphere of a sexualized character now ready for the role of motherhood. It is also important to note that the negotiation for the hatching of the egg takes place exactly at the time that Elizabeth is reading Charles Dickens’ novel *The Great Expectations* which seems to suggest that in Elizabeth Eppel reposes the nation’s great expectations of symbolically hatching the egg and, therefore, a new moral dispensation different from the colonial and immediate post-independence spaces.

The inclusion of Charles Dickens’s novel, *The Great Expectations* is not accidental to the thematic poetics of the novel. The general corruption and degeneracy in the novel, of which

Elizabeth is an antithesis, finds concretization in *Great Expectations*. According to Ross H. Dabney (1967:128) quoted in Mangwanda (1998:205), corruption and moral degeneracy is very much at the center of the novel in that:

Moral corruption spreads in two ways in *The Great Expectations*; by overt all-dramatically direct influence-and by seepage from a generally corrupt society. The direct line of infection runs from Compeyson, through Miss Havisham and Magwitch, through Estella, to Pip, who is rotted by his expectations. The expectations are at the centre of the novel, and they are centred on Estella.

The fact that Elizabeth is reading this novel at this stage is apt in holding her up as a conjuror of a new post-independence nation that stands in opposition to the depravity embodied in *Great Expectations*. As is shown later, this bi-polarization of the nation is important for the search for a new moral order represented by spaces occupied by Elizabeth. The first chapter introduces a foundational aspect of the novel which the writer persuades the reader to side or, at the very least, sympathize with. This concerns the good qualities associated with the Matopos and the characters that are found in this space. Khombe Mangwanda (1998:197) refers to this as the positive space that is associated with regeneration, serenity, fertility, conviviality and the birth of a new positive national culture as opposed to the negative qualities that are found in other spaces that inhere in the nation.

The Fawkes' camping also takes place on the eve of the New Year's Day. This is also richly symbolic. It shows the end of the previous year with its successes, failures, profanities and the optimism that the coming year may well bring with it new hopes, new ways of viewing nation-building and a new national culture. In short, represents a new humanity. The New Year symbolizes the cross-over of the old self into a new one. It is about the re-invention of the self, the nation and its politics. That Elizabeth and her family have their camping excursion on the eve of the New Year is symbolic of the present and real possibility of a new societal/national

boundary crossing into a new ethic whose embodiments are Elizabeth and the Matopos. So, the New Year camping is Eppel's way of holding out hope for the postcolonial Zimbabwe grounded on the values represented by the Matopos and, by extension, the Fawkes family who personify love, humanism, tolerance and probity. In the words of Boland Lipp (Elizabeth's iconoclastic English Literature teacher):

The beginning of the New Year was also the beginning of a New World, a new space as well as a new time... (It) symbolized the death of the corrupt Old Year, the corrupt Old World. How did Eliade put it? 'By symbolically participating in the annihilation and the re-creation of the world, man too was created anew; he was reborn, for he began a new life' (p.91).

The New World symbolizes a new Zimbabwe shorn of colonial debauchery and corruption, while the new time figures new ways of doing things. In the New Year, therefore, Elizabeth participates in the inexorable and relentless "annihilation and re-creation of the world" and, in the process, re-birthing a new ethical national culture threatened by "the corrupt Old Year".

The writer consistently reinforces the Fawkes, in particular Elizabeth, as a beacon of hope for postcolonial Zimbabwe. Not surprisingly, the Fawkes' garden is figured as a microcosm of the Matopos despite the fact that in Bulawayo there is an acute shortage of water. The garden is presented as natural and teeming with "only indigenous things- not just trees, but bushes, shrubs, flowers-even grasses..... The Fawkes garden in Hillside is one of the few gardens without working boreholes that did not look like a desert" (p.25). This is a depiction of space that stands for beauty in the midst of aridity, degeneration and absence of life-sustaining attributes.

In the general desiccation and waterlessness that reduces other gardens to deserts, the Fawkes's garden stands out as an oasis, a real beacon of hope for the nation's great expectations about which Elizabeth reads whilst they are at Matopos. This explains why Eppel is at pains to locate the Fawkes in spaces of the natural, the beautiful and the peaceful. The narrator does not go on

to give details about the other gardens but minutely details the nature of the Fawkes' garden. This luxuriance represents renewal and moral re-armament in a morally barren and bankrupt society/nation. It is often typical of Eppel's writings to obsess with the tensions, fissures and contradictions between binaries, what he often calls contraries or paradoxes. Despite the presentation of the Fawkes' garden as iconic and Matopos-like, this very quality attracts gratuitous condemnation from the vicinity. In this case, the positive description of the Fawkes's family and garden is countervailed by space that is adversarial and generally stands in tension-filled juxtaposition to the positivity that the Fawkes's garden exudes. The narrator points out the fragility of the relations between the neighbors and this microcosm of the Matopos when he observes that:

Neighbors complained about the condition of the Fawkes' garden. Their four immediate neighbors were the Macimbis, who were Ndebele, the Mashitas, who were Shona, the Verwoerds, who were Afrikaans, and the Piggies, who were English. Their neighbors thought that the Fawkes 'bushveld' lowered the tone of the neighborhood. Presumably the Piggies' seven foot interact wall, and the Verwoerds' six foot breeze-block wall with inset wagon wheels, raised the tone. The black neighbors who couldn't bear to see a single blade of grass, let alone wild flowers- or even trees, for that matter- anywhere near their houses, accused the Fawkes of infesting the neighborhood with ticks and snakes and scorpions and centipedes. What they didn't plough for mealies and vegetables, they cleared of every growing thing, and swept with grass brooms, morning, noon and night producing great clouds of choking dust and making a significant contribution to the thinning of the earth's crust. Any trees that ever existed in their gardens had long since been ring-barked, chopped down, and sold as firewood (p. 25).

The selfish, navel-gazing and unself-critical nature of the neighbors' complaints about the Fawkes garden is minutely and yet satirically detailed by the narrator. The neighbors have their own egregious shortcomings and idiosyncrasies that they dare not admit. Yet, they show themselves as caught up in a discourse of scapegoating that holds back national reconciliation and cohesion. The reader is told that in all this the Fawkes never complained about any of their neighbors. This stresses their (the Fawkes) catholicity, the kind of cultural relativism that sets

them apart from their neighbors whose ethnocentrism and solipsism is at variance with creating a tolerant and multicultural postcolonial society. Though the ethnic groups alluded to are not really representative of the mosaic of ethnicities in Zimbabwe, the above quotation shows the embedded attitudes of different ethnic groups towards one another. These are relics of the old colonial world of fragmentation and creation of ethnic/racial enclaves. Pierre Englebert and Kevin Dunn (2014:73) refer to this as a 'regime of differentiation' that still subsists even after independence. Van Evera (2001:20) explains these embedded ethnic/racial attitudes in terms of the primordial view of identity construction when she cautions that these "... constructed identities cannot easily be reconstructed, and that, for all practical purposes, a quasi-primordial treatment of ethnic identity as fixed in any given situation is ... legitimate." The Fawkes family represents a negation of this primordialist approach to identity construction. In this microcosmic community of the above quotation, Eppel seems to be suggesting that there is need not only to totally de-racialize but also to de-tribalize the nation for purposes of harmony and national cohesion.

Thus, with deft satire, Eppel condemns the judgmental, pharisaic nature of these adult groups who have poisonously adopted the colonial discourse of seeing difference as an oddity. Eppel uses the technique of focalization to set the Fawkes family apart from their cantankerous and quarrelsome neighbors (relics of either an old order or an order that needs to be transcended for the good of the nation). Hence, the narrator brings out relational attitudes grounded on tensions within these neighbors the better to bring out the exceptionalism of the Fawkes. He says:

And when it came to factional fights between the Afrikaners and the English, or between the Ndebele and the Shona, or between the blacks and the whites-the Fawkes remained neutral. Indeed, they negotiated peace. The Verwoerd children weren't allowed to entertain the Macimbi or the Mashita children in their own territory, and it was unthinkable that the Verwoerd children should ever visit the homes of Macimbi or the Mashita children (p.26).

The Fawkes family is constructed in its role as peace-maker and consensus-builder, as hatcher of a tolerant and inclusive national ethos that undermines hegemonic ethnicities. Through the Fawkes, Eppel unsettles imaginaries of the nation that are based on hatred, stereotype and otherization as antithetical to an enduring nation-building ethos. The above quotation constructs the adults in a determined process of handing down to the children a polarized society which, unfortunately, the children, with the encouragement of Elizabeth, refuse to be habituated to. The juxtaposition of the ethnic/racial fixities of the adult neighbors, the catholicity of the Fawkes and the protean, fluid nature of the children's comradeship makes it manifest to the reader that the future of this fictional nation lies in the children who seem to have 'drawn a curtain of forgetfulness' over past divisions and vendettas.

The children decide to socialize together without prejudice on neutral ground which they symbolically and strategically name *ubungane* which word, we are told, "is a Zulu word meaning comradeship" (p 27). It is instructive to note that the children create this place of camaraderie (*ubungane*) in a natural, peaceful and regenerative space reminiscent of the Matopos. The narrator observes:

So the children gathered in neutral ground where they were trees to climb, snakes to catch, where there was wild fruit to gather, thick bush to hide in, where they could watch the crested barbets nesting in the *Euphorbia ingens*, the sparrow weavers nesting in the *Acacia nilotica*, and the African hoopoes nesting in the eaves of the house. Elizabeth and her father helped them build a tree-house made out of wooden packing cases which, with the help of ropes, they secured high up in the commiphora mellis- the elbow tree. When they built a den, deep inside the *Bauhenia galpinii*, Elizabeth provided them with a piece of old carpet and a few scatter cushions that she herself made. There she brought them tomato sandwiches and cups of mazoe orange. There she read to them, taught them songs about Jesus, and played 'I spy with my little eye' (p.26).

The children represent innocence, purity and the future. They move away from the adversarial and conflictual space of the adults into the positive space where Elizabeth, as the symbolic and

fictional hatcher of a new national culture, succors them. This is pregnant with futuristic implications in that they are being socialized into a possible new national culture where diversity and multiculturalism are cultivated in order to usher in a new dispensation that should energize the nation. They are being molded and molding one another into being equal citizens of the new nation that has been born out of divisions, grudges and vendettas of the Rhodesian era. The reader gets the impression that Eppel guides him/her to view this as the ideal nation, the utopia that should necessarily emerge out of the previous dystopic order. This is why Eppel strategically uses children to condemn the divisive politics of the yester years. Hence, when the Fawkes' family is confronted by the police over the dead body of a dumped child, all the children of *ubungane* commiserate with Elizabeth by crying in sympathy with her. This shows that the polarizations that characterized and still characterize the colonial and post-independence spaces are artificial and, therefore, not immutable. If these bifurcations are historical and constructed, it means they can be de-constructed through unlearning them. Through such actions, the reader is presented with a universe grounded in *ubuntu* in which one's being is centered on mutuality of relations with other persons that surround it. Such an approach transcends artificial boundaries of race, tribe and religion. It is necessarily empathetic, humane and geared towards the greatest good to the greatest number.

5.3 The Water Symbolism

Before an analysis of the space occupied by venal national scoundrels, a space in diametrical opposition to the space that represents good or 'the positive space', it is essential to interrogate the water symbolism in this novel. This is important because water has a dual significance in the study of this morally divided society. In its symbolic duality, water occupies both moral spaces and represents different things in this binary society. At the campsite on New Year's Eve, Elizabeth is unable to sleep and so she eventually decides to go out of the camp into "such a beautiful night" in order to be at peace with nature and to ponder Jet Bunion's love proposal.

This episode is strategic in that it allows mother and daughter to engage conversationally about the significance of the sacred and the profane, and to interrogate Mircea Eliade's thoughts on biblical religions and the water symbolism thereof. Philipa describes what Elizabeth experiences while resting on the rock on the night of the New Year's Eve as a "religious experience" (p 78). She goes further to explain that:

But to go back to your experience last night: it's the New Year, and the New Year is a very significant time, not only for Christians but for all mankind "The New Year is an earthly imitation of the first day of Creation with a big 'C'... ". Elizabeth sighed and lay back with a tight mouth. Here we go again. "... on earth joins sacred time which is eternal ... vestige of those saturnalia which symbolized the moral chaos of the old Year ... with each New Year man is reborn ... reintegrated with the Dream Time ... sacred and profane" "What I'm trying to tell you Elizabeth is that last night you were present at the creation of the world" (p.78-79).

The above quotation raises critical issues which the writer deliberately wants the reader to pay attention to. First, that the beginning of the New Year symbolizes the advent of a new order, a different breed of men and women prepared to take a trajectory different from the failures and moral ambivalences of the previous year. The moral chaos that Mrs Fawkes is referring to may well mean the colonial culture with its exclusions and racist foundations. The 'Dream Time' may be figured to mean the great expectations associated with a new moral and social order that independence is supposed to install, a morality that transcends the narrow, claustrophobic and corrupt philosophy of Rhodesianism. Dream Time is what is symbolized by the Matopos, the Fawkes (Elizabeth in particular) and the children. In other words, it stands for the ideal post-independence society shorn of the profanities and evils of the past. The binary between the good (symbolized by Dream Time) and the evil (represented by the moral chaos of the Old Year), positive and negative spaces is viewed here in terms of the profane versus the sacred spaces. But the profane and the sacred need not be viewed in disjunctive terms because they have a tendency to interpenetrate each other seamlessly.

While the mutually exclusive conception of the profane versus the sacred may be true of the Fawkes family, of Jet Bunion and Elizabeth's natural love and new ethos that is being installed, of the children and their postcolonial path-clearing *ubungane*, the same cannot be said of other sordid and sleazy characters that celebrate the New Year. These take the form of the Wicks, Cocks, Twots and the participants in Ingerborg's party. The analysis of these characters comes later in this chapter. Eliade's book *The Sacred and the Profane* also brings out the significance of the water symbolism in its duality. Eliade makes useful observations about water as a symbol. I quote the arguments made by Eliade with regards to water in full:

“[...] Water is given tremendous value by the Old Testament because it states in Genesis that water existed before the earth. Here,” she ran her finger along the print, “Eliade quotes: ‘Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters’. Water is a useful religious symbol because it is paradoxical

“Sorry mom why is water paradoxical?”

It symbolizes degeneration as well as regeneration; death as well as life “Right. On page 130, Eliade talks about immersion and emersion. Being immersed in the water symbolizes a kind of death; being emersed ...” (p.106-107).

Indeed, water symbolizes life and regeneration as evidenced by both the Matopos and the Fawkes' garden. The Matopos in particular is figured as a place that abounds with water whereas Bulawayo lacks it and is undergoing a regime of strict water rationing. Ranger (1999:22) corroborates this view by observing that “the perennial pools in the shrine caves (Matopos) are identified with the uterus and amniotic fluid of a pregnant woman, and as the source of all life.” Ranger (1999:19) further notes that: “to the south and the north lie areas of uncertain rainfall, subject to periodic drought.” Mrs Fawkes actually tells her daughter to take a good bath in Matopos because in Bulawayo there is no water. So, Matopos is figured as regenerative and full of life and vitality whereas Bulawayo is constructed as dry and lifeless.

Doef McMackmack captures this divide between spaces with water and those without, a view of water in its degenerative and corrupt sense when she says to Mrs Twots:

“Did I hear a toilet flushing?” she said. She went on before her hostess could reply, and as this was a moral issue, her nostrils began to flare slightly. “I must say I’m surprised Elaine, that you permit the flushing of the toilets at a time when Bulawayo is about to run out of water. Do you know I empty our WC- I do it once a day, usually just before we go to bed, don’t I, Dolphine?-with an old soup ladle? Not a pleasant job but it does save water.” It’s Daylene. We don’t have to worry about water,” she replied with a mixture of irritation and superiority in her voice. “If we exceed our ration, and we do every month, we simply pay the fine. We can afford it. Besides which we have two excellent boreholes in the garden. We got loads of water” (p.19).

Bulawayo, the surrounding areas and, by implication the whole Zimbabwe are divided into spaces with water and those without it. The symbol of life and regeneration is, in the main, in short supply in Bulawayo, thus, threatening the very existence of the inhabitants of this space. This absence of water symbolizes the spiritual and moral aridity of a whole nation that is in need of salvation. Biblically, water is also paradoxical. During baptism, it is used to ‘destroy’ the old sinful self and conjure up a new, reconstructed and redeemed one. Submerging a person in water in biblical religions symbolically takes the form of a cross-over from the profane to the sacred. In today’s Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe, water and related items like stone pebbles are used for ‘healing’ purposes. So water is a source of life. This is why the Old Testament says in the beginning the earth was water and from it came life. Water is used by God in the Old Testament to destroy the old sinful world whilst at the same time saving Noah’s family and other creatures in the Ark to inaugurate a regenerated new world. Genesis (6:11-20) makes mention of the paradoxical nature of water as a symbol of death and regeneration because “...God saw the earth and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted their way upon earth.... (God says) “I will destroy them with the Earth.” Thus, the destruction through water is creative destruction because it is meant to usher in a new and clean life.

But the water in Strontium Twots' homestead reflects water in its negative, degenerative sense. It represents corruption and the death of morals even on a New Year which arguably to supposed to re-create humanity. The Twots' businesses and wealth were founded and run by money that was accrued illegally, corruptly and immorally. Not surprisingly, the household is associated with stink, shit, defecating very much in the style of Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger* (1978) and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968). Both writers use scatological imagery of overflowing public toilets, venereal diseases, immoral sex, excrement, semen in order to dramatize a diseased moral universe that needs treatment. In order to show the corrupt nature of the Twots family and its corrupting and corrupted space, the narrator satirically says of the Twots and the water associated with them:

Rudolph and Doef arrived fifteen minutes before twelve, a most inappropriate time for the Twots household, since Strontium, only half dressed, was halfway through one of his mighty public holiday shits, a four pounder which left him drained, slightly clammy to the touch, and mildly euphoric. The smell, much to the embarrassment of his family- for they always seemed to have guests on public holidays – would pervade the entire house for up to an hour after delivery. By one o'clock it would have cleared (p.17).

With deft, riotous satirical laughter at the Twots, the narrator condemns their (the Twots') buccaneering business approach that installs death, degeneration and corruption to the newly-independent nation. Therefore, water in this space symbolizes corruption that very much brings stasis and regression to the nation. The character Koomson in Armah's novel, very much like Strontium Twots, is extremely corrupt and has to hide and escape from justice through the latrine hole and is always pursued by excremental stink. This construction of Koomson redounds negatively with the characterization of Strontium whose 'four pounder' defecation has to take over an hour to clear the air of its stink even after flashing the toilet with his excess of water.

5.4 The Axis of Evil

Opposed to the space that represents the positive qualities of nation-building symbolized by the Fawkes is the space that stands and values evil like that of the Twots in the water symbolism. This space stands in antithetical, if destructive, opposition to the morality, beauty and tolerance dramatized by the Matopos, the Fawkes family and the children of *ubungane*. This space is constructed as cancerous, pernicious and militating against the normal developmental trajectory of the nation. It is rotten to the core and yet its invasive nature seems to be not only unstoppable but also accepted by the majority of the people across the racial divide, by the young and old, rich and poor. It is a topsy-turvy underworld in which the abnormal has become the normal, where the exception has become the rule. In this novel, the main architects of the corrupt, immoral, destructive and dangerous culture of the subterranean world of corruption, smuggling, killing, abortion and dumping of babies are epitomized by the South African refugee, Sobantu 'The Butcher' Ikherothi, the immigrant community, the schools, the church and other Zimbabweans, both black and white, who have gotten rich through unorthodox and corrupt means. The name 'Sobantu', by which one of the immoral characters is called, is symbolic; the prefix (so-) in Zulu and Ndebele means 'owner of' and combined with (-bantú), it comes to mean owner of people; which is consistent with the fact that "he now controlled a network of operations that was vast and that earned very good money for a number of people in different walks of life" (p.34). In other words, like Moral MacBraggart the preacher (whose character is analyzed later), Sobantu has people eating out of his hand in that they are dependent on his underworld which is portrayed so intrusive that it even threatens the sacred space of the Fawkes as evidenced by the discovered dumped body in their yard. His middle name 'The Butcher' is also significant in that it shows the extent to which, as an immigrant, he mercilessly destroys and corrupts the moral fibre of the community. The reader is made aware of the corrosive influence of Sobantu 'The Butcher' Ikherothi who:

Made a good living smuggling emeralds out of Zimbabwe. But his most lucrative venture avidly supported... was disposing of unwanted babies for thousands upon thousands of mothers in Southern Africa. He'd started off modestly enough, operating in one or two of the smaller Zimbabwean towns like Gwanda and Chegutu, but the demand for his services grew like wild fire and he expanded rapidly He'd even considered forming a company, as a front, and then floating it on the Zimbabwe stock exchange, but one of his 'sleeping' partners, a man called Sudbury Bauls, had dissuaded him. Too risky, he'd said (p.34).

The quotation above shows the amount of damage wrought on not only the Zimbabwean nation but also other neighboring countries. By externalizing the minerals that ought to help the nation and its citizens' development while bringing in drugs that destroy people's health, Sobantu 'The Butcher' Ikherothi operates within the invidious teleology of colonialism by plundering, pillaging national resources and halting the internal creative processes for national progress. In this way, Sobantu contributes to what Walter Rodney (1973:380) refers to as the colonial 'development of underdevelopment' morally, physiologically and materially. Though the writer seems to blame Sobantu for this underground world of smuggling minerals, there is a sense in which the locals themselves are complicit in the wilful destruction of their own society's moral health. This is why the business of abortion and disposing unwanted babies is growing in leaps and bounds. The novel reflects a society that has resigned itself to depravity, debauchery and plunder. What is worrying is that the invasive and intrusive nature of this subterranean world has found its way to almost every facet of life in Zimbabwe. Sobantu 'The Butcher' Ikherothi is, thus, able to hire and post scouts in all public places such as

Schools, colleges, universities, markets, nunneries.... wherever girls and young women were to be found in large numbers.... These scouts found out which of the girls had unwanted pregnancies, when they were due to give birth, where they would be giving birth, how much they could afford to pay, and arranged to dispose their babies, discreetly and efficiently (p.35).

The public places, which are in the glare of society, have been invaded by rottenness to such an extent that there seems to be a point of no return. The church and the school ordinarily impart and inculcate morally upright life-skills. When these institutions become centers of corruption, death and immorality, then the future of this postcolonial nation is compromised.

The most devastating consequences of the negative or profane spaces, the novel suggests, are their toll on schools in particular. Schools are supposed to be institutions that inculcate and impart cultural values and mores that constitute the foundation of a nation. As cultural citadels, schools need to be protected and hemmed in from the corrupting influences of a debased world of hedonism, decadent lifestyle and death. Yet, in the world of the novel, they have become bastions of teachers' sexual predations, corruption and degeneration. Eppel is consistent in constructing schools as sites for physical, emotional, mental and spiritual violence as seen in the novels *D.G.G. Berry's The Great North Road*, *The Giraffe Man* and *Absent: the English Teacher*. Far from molding the characters of their pupils, these schools deform and cripple them.

The first example of the writer's negative figuration of schools is Kipling Primary School. This particular school employs a teacher suggestively named Comrade Ipayipi. Onomastically, the name is an Ndebele vulgarization of the word pipe which in this case may be taken to stand for a long male sexual organ that is routinely used to ejaculate (water) on gardens (female sexual organs). Ipayipi's name has phallic implications that connote the generous use of the penis on the vulnerable members of society. This reasoning is lent credence by Ipayipi's view of pupil abuse as a normal part of teaching. The narrator says "[...] Comrade Ipayipi... regarded fornication with his pupils as a perk and not as rape" (p.29). Under conditions of normalcy, teachers are supposed to act in *locos parentis* and so superintending to the morality of pupils but, in Eppel's fictional world, they ravage and prey on the innocence of these children. That this sexual depravity takes place at primary level is the writer's attempt to show

that the very foundations of this postcolonial nation have become ramshackle and may be difficult to bolster up and strengthen for the future. The kids have become socialized into pornographic life that blights their future as potentially excelling students. Such a rotten system creates rotten surrogate parents who believe in sexploitation. The narrator buttresses this point by minutely describing Ipayipi's sexual exploits on his pupils:

Certainly it was "convulsive sighs" that Washington and his classmates in grade four began hearing more and more frequently behind the stockroom door. In, out, in, out. The way Comrade Ipayipi moves his pelvis, he could be dancing to the latest Oliver Mtukudzi number. Sapphire is making little cries of pain, her teacher is making little grants of ecstasy. Some of these sounds, these 'convulsive whispers' are picked up by alert ears of these grade four children who always sit at the back of the classroom where there is a door... (p.29).

It is the irony of this society that those at an advantage enjoy at the expense of the suffering of others. Metonymically, Comrade Ipayipi represents those who derive orgasmic pleasure from the sexual pain that others, in this case Sapphire, go through during this existential ordeal. This is a society that has lost all sense of sympathy, empathy and moral scruples. It is a Darwinian social and moral wilderness (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1972: xvi-xvii). This wilderness is aided and abetted by the headmaster, Comrade Clever Ruforwokuda-Jones BA, who strangely reasons that "in any case the conditions of service for teachers were so abysmal, why shouldn't they (the teachers) be allowed the odd perk" (p.30). He is presented as a corrupt authority figure whose pursuit of political and ideological clichés like Marxism and Education with Production that were in vogue soon after Zimbabwe attained her independence, clouds his judgment about the role of the school and supervision in a postcolonial society. The headmaster personifies corruption, political correctness (Marxism and Education with Production), empty -isms and nepotism. He turns the school into a site for primitive accumulation and the employment of relatives rather than a citadel of mental, moral and physical grooming of children. But, there is also a muted sense in which the narrator indicts the government for not only failing to supervise

schools, but also neglecting to pay teachers a decent salary. Such abdication of responsibility by the teachers, the headmasters and the central authorities reinforces the Darwinian jungle that Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1972: xvi-xvii) refers to where anything, however abnormal, becomes normal. If dereliction of duty and morality is rife among authority figures, then such a society is doomed.

The other school is the Black Rhino High School. The school is framed as a relic of Rhodesian brainwashing. It is conservative and backward-looking rather than focused towards a multicultural, post-independence orientation. This is because it is "a school which would ensure that high standards of 'Rhodesian' education – the highest in Africa, if not in the entire world – would be maintained" (p.1). This school is caught up in a time-warp, dredging up the worst of the Rhodesian rotten past. The rottenness of the school is shown through its association with its corruptly materialistic patron, Sudbury Bauls, whose dealings in unwanted babies with Sobantu has already been alluded to. His exploitative, scandalous and Rhodes-like way of accumulating wealth rubs off the school so that it also comes to be viewed with suspicion. The racist and regressive nature of the school is further highlighted by not only its class-privileging motto: 'To Them That Have Shall Be Given' but also its colors; red, orange and black. The narrator says of the choice colors:

Matilda gave out publicly that the colors had no symbolic value but privately-only to her closest friends, mind you-would she confess that the red was the blood of Christ, and the orange, her favorite color and her favorite fruit, was her homage to the place of her birth: Bethlehem in the Orange Free State of South Africa (p.2).

The school symbols are more fragmenting than unifying in a nation coming from the polarities of the liberation war and Rhodesian racism. The Orange Free State was the heart of Boer separatist, racist and exclusionary apartheid ideology. That the school is associated with apartheid history in postcolonial Zimbabwe does not do much in terms of reconciliation and

forging an inclusive Zimbabwean identity. To make matters worse, these schools have become sites for the dumping of babies and, thus, showing the unstoppable reach of Sobantu ‘The Butcher’ Ikherothi.

Prince Charming High School is also important in the novelistic narrative in so far as it highlights the role of expatriate teachers and intellectuals in the (under)development of the postcolonial nation. To do this, the writer uses the characters of Simon and Nicholas. Expatriate teachers are ordinarily expected to add value to the educational system of the country they work in. That they are outsourced presupposes that those specific subjects or areas of specialization are in short supply and have to be imported. Besides, these expatriate teachers are expected to kowtow to the culture and tradition of the host country whilst dialectically bringing some aspects of their culture that invigorates the value systems of the host country. This is what Martha Pratt (1992:4) refers to as the contact zone where “disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other....” She further avers that these borderlands are often ‘transformative’ of both cultures although, in this case, the reader witnesses the undermining of this approach to cultural encounters. Simon and Nicholas represent the worst of their community. For example, we are made aware that they were:

[....] united by a common hatred: white Zimbabweans, or Rhodies, as they were sardonically called, and by a common love: ‘black pussy’. They taught at the same secondary school in one of the high density areas; it was called Prince Charming High School and it was co-educational. Simon was supposed to teach English, and Nicholas was supposed to teach History, but they both saw this compartmentalization of subjects as a load of bourgeois crap, as part of an overall strategy to keep a corrupt establishment of Anglican Sodomites in power. So they taught politics. They were both paid up members of an ultra left-wing breakaway Group called the Gallopsykites. They had broken away from the Trotskyites who, they claimed, were not moving quickly enough in the direction of world revolution (p.13).

They bring into Zimbabwe an anarchic element, a radical anti-establishment thrust that is at variance with a newly-independent nation trying to locate its developmental bearings. Far from

helping the nation towards ideological clarity, they muddy it. The above quotation also brings to the fore the fact that these expatriate teachers tended to test their political ideologies on the helpless students. One wonders what it is that should come first, revolutionizing the world and then the nation or the nation first, given the contradictions, divisions, vendettas, and inequalities of a formerly colonial nation. Their preoccupation with anarchist world revolution, with Trotsky and Gallopsy is of little relevance to a Third World country trying to come to grips with its past and to construct a salutary future. The writer insinuates that these expatriate teachers are irrelevant to the educational needs of the country. Their construction of history is predicated on the history, not of Zimbabwe, but of some developed countries like Russia who can have the liberty to experiment with different ideologies because they have the space to do so. In any case, as ideologies migrate from their places of origin, they undergo adaptations, cross-fertilizations and syntheses in order to include the local elements. Simon and Nicholas are blind to the need for this dialectic. As a result, they become dangerous to the cultures of the newly independent nations. One may argue that their idealism or assumed radicalism is a façade or decoy for the wilful and wholesale infection and affliction of the moral and political cultures of the countries they work in.

Their simplistic categorization of blacks as good and whites as evil does not help a nation that is trying to reconcile the various races and ethnicities that populate it. The reader is also made aware of the propensity for ‘black pussy,’ which accentuates the high levels of sexual predations on the young girls at the school. There is a sense in which these expatriates bring into the country certain reverse stereotypes about blacks and whites which the nation is at pains to transgress. The essentialized notion of viewing blacks as good and whites as evil is influenced by some idealized conception of blackness (which is not homogenous) and whiteness (which is also totalizing). The result is an uncomplicated and unproblematic categorization that Eppel clearly unsettles in the book. As a result of their love for ‘black

pussey’, “some of the pupils had seen the poor, dumped baby and news had spread very quickly through the school that its skin was very light-almost pink. The expats, with their proclivity towards ‘black pussy’, by no means a secret at Prince Charming High, became prime suspects” (p.14). The implication here is that they bring more harm than good, especially as they are also seen rendering help to Sobantu ‘The Butcher’ Ikherothi’s crime syndicate. Indeed, Prince Charming is a den of sexual iniquity even without these two but their view of baby-dumping and having sex with blacks as a moral obligation constructs them as dangerous elements the country can do without.

Eppel also interrogates the role of foreign intellectuals and the quality and relevance of the researches that they conduct in the country. The construction of these researches, through their titles, and the agencies that fund them suggests that they are irrelevant, useless and that they are motivated by the greed for money. Some of the topics that these researchers have come up with include: Litotes who is a Scottish social scientist doing a PhD on the role of nostrils in the transition from puberty to adulthood in left-handed Zimbabweans; Afghan, a psychologist from Australia is conducting a research on the correlation between intelligence and penis-size in bilharzia infected men who lived within a ten kilometre radius of the Mzingwane Dam. The narrator continues with the satirical depiction of these researchers and their funders by mockingly stating that:

Fark was a Canadian sociologist doing his PhD on *The Ramifications of Steatopygia in Unmarried Women Aged between Thirteen and Seventeen along the Confluence of the Naunetsi and Save Rivers*. Doss was a Dutch psychologist doing her PhD on *The Psychological Ramifications of Steatopygia in Unmarried Women Aged between Thirteen and Seventeen along the Confluence of the Naunetsi and Save Rivers*. Their research dovetailed quite nicely. They were attached to the University of Zimbabwe but many other institutions were interested in their research, which was regarded as vital to the moral, spiritual, physical, and indeed material advancement, not only of Africa – though primarily Africa – but the entire world. They were being sponsored by no less than seventeen aid organizations throughout the world... (p.39).

One is left in no doubt that these First World countries have so much money to spend so much so that they fund even the most banal, pedestrian and useless researches on Africa and the African. It is most significant that these researches concentrate on the body, in particular, the sexuality of the African. They concentrate on the buttocks, the genitalia, the nose, etc so that they are figured as perpetuating stereotypes about the African. Sune Qvotrup Jensen (2011:63) refers to this as the “exoticist fascination of the other” and its inherent “pathologization.” This creation of the other is always a function of the knowledge-power matrix that Said talks about in *Orientalism* (1979).

The mockery of these researches on the host on Zimbabwe is not lost on the reader. One gets the impression that the so-called studies are motivated by the money that goes with migrating to the African countries. The researches do not add any knowledge value to the newly-independent country. The narrator satirically points out that these researches were important for “the moral, spiritual, physical and indeed material advancement” of Africa (p.39). Except for the anthropological value that helps in the creation of the African other (just as colonial anthropology was used to empower whites epistemologically), the researches help the researchers materially given the free-flowing aid money. But the quotation also shows the intellectual bankruptcy of the local higher learning institutions that fetishize outsiders as real researchers who are able to identify and solve all the problems that the newly-independent nation faces. Their gullibility is, therefore, mocked and indicted.

It is instructive to note that most of these researches have been going on for more than ten years and that the funds have been flowing whilst these African countries in which these studies are conducted endure abject poverty. Eppel is questioning the benefits that accrue for the postcolonial nation out of these high-sounding research titles. Do they benefit the African countries or the countries that fund them? Apart from the native being the raw material that is

used to generate some kind of information that is sent back to the West, the Africans are used as dumping grounds for misfits who would have failed to make it in their own countries. The narrator corroborates this when he says of Doss that she “[...] had come out to Zimbabwe for all the right reasons. Besides, she hadn’t been able to get work in Holland where even domestic workers had PhDs” (p.74). So the post independence nation receives the worst kind of expatriates, the mediocre types who participate in the general degeneration of the country.

But there is a sense in which this exploitation, this dumping of the worst kind of immigrants is not limited to Zimbabwe. It is part of a wider plot to stagnate the Third World countries. For example, Gymnogene Pigge, an identifier and disposer of teenage pregnancies in the employ of Sobantu ‘The Butcher’ Ikherothi, has led a scoundrelly life wherever he has gone. He;

[...] had come out of England, via India, shortly after Zimbabwe’s independence in order to help actualize, as he put it, the fledgling country’s road to socialism. That was the reason given by Gymnogene Pigge. He said nothing of the debts he’d left behind in England, the pregnant girls he’d left behind in India, and the presence in Bulawayo of a wealthy, childless aunty and uncle whom he’d intended to milk and whom he’d been milking from the day he’d arrived in Zimbabwe, ten years ago (p. 38).

This dimension of the immigrant community is aggravated by the presentation of the Irish drama teacher Kathleen O’ Toole-bag (the sound of the name is grating and pregnant with negative connotations) who is a PhD student and is “making a study of ‘township’ drama in Bulawayo’s high density suburbs” (p. 40). Her propensity for plagiarism bespeaks of a shallow mind that uses local material in order to enrich English Literature and, therefore, she is presented as parasitic, exploitative and harmful. She presents a play, *Riders to the Veld*, in Bulawayo about which the narrator mockingly observes:

It had been billed as an Ndebele folk drama, and the English teacher from Black Rhino High was amazed at how ‘Irish’ an Ndebele folk drama could be. There was one line – something about spitting and being astride the moon that was strongly reminiscent of J.M Synge. And where, if not in one of GB Shaw’s plays,

had Boland come across the words: “Not bloody likely”? Then there was the place where the protagonist in the Ndebele drama meets his love; the Salley Gardens. She (the love) lopes past these gardens with “little tar-black feet”! Boland knew his WB Yeats. Coming away from the play, Boland Lipp could only conclude that Irish writers had been great plagiarists and that they had stolen some gems from Ndebele culture (p. 40).

There is a sense in which this Irish teacher is obsessed with creating a culture of parroting, of being consuming rather than producing knowledge. Far from developing Ndebele drama, she tries to kill it by superimposing her traditions’ classical theater conventions on it. She implies that Ndebele plays should be modeled along the literary tradition of the West, which is an indirect statement that indigenous drama is inferior and, therefore, ought to be elevated to the standard of Europe. Skies Izindebe, the chairperson of the Bulawayo writers’ Union, and who is tasked with raising the standards of indigenous arts, is a thoroughly corrupt individual whose relationship with the dubious O’Toole-bag smacks of complicity to run down the industry. His undisguised materialism and solipsism makes him unsuited to hold such a high post in an industry that should be a barometer of society and its morality. We are told that he has surrounded himself with his relatives and that:

His wife was secretary, and his brother was treasurer. The Union received a lot of money from sympathetic donors, mostly from Canada and the Scandinavian countries. The money was given in order to help promote the arts, writing in particular, in Matabeleland (p.40).

However, instead of taking the arts to higher heights, he squanders the goodwill and aid-money for personal gain. It, therefore, appears at first sight that all avenues for national regeneration are blocked.

In the novel *Hatchings*, as in the already analyzed *D.G.G.Berry’s The Great North Road*, we are presented with a thoroughly corrupt, mendacious and rabble-rousing preacher, Brother Moral MacBraggert. It is the irony of these novels that his name is called Moral when he is

presented as a preacher of dubious morality. The church, like the school in Eppel's fictional world, is presented in a negative light. Not only is MacBraggert's church racist and materialistic, we also have "those visiting Anglican priests who had a propensity for Bum Banditry" (p.99). So, the church reinforces 'ungodly' acts of male-to-male sex very much like the queerness of Cecil Rhodes in *D.G.G. Berry's The Great North Road*. In Moral MacBraggert's case, the church, far from healing the fissures, cleavages and tensions in society, actually exacerbates and magnifies them. His church deviates from other churches that are concerned with salvation, eradicating injustices and creating conditions for unfettered worship of God even by the poor. The Blood of Jesus Church holds the poor in high contempt. In a show of disapproval of this brand of religion, the narrator says the church was;

[...] of white 'Rhodesians' who, after losing the war of liberation, after witnessing their beloved Rhodesia become dreaded Zimbabwe, had turned for solace to the church-not those commie bastards like the Catholics or the Methodists who had supported the fuckin' terrors, and the and the poor, and the humble, and all that shit-but the right-wing, violently anti-communists, violently pro-capitalist, American churches like The Brotherhood of Christ, and Holy Roller Rhapsody and the Blood of Jesus, which preached the doctrine of material prosperity and reminded their frothing congregations that it was Jesus himself who said "The poor will always be with us." The preachers at these churches weren't over-educated nerds... (p.5).

So, this particular church is a gathering of Rhodie elements that are anxiety-laden about the new political dispensation and the fate that awaits them. It is a conservative church that panders to Rhodesian ideals of racism, exclusion and the worship of the 'God of gold'. In its disdain of the poor and the blacks, the Blood of Jesus becomes an enclave for continued white economic prosperity that contradicts Jesus' exemplary love for the poor and the condemned. The church, thus, becomes a site of divisions and pharisaic self-righteousness. Moral MacBraggert's 'sermons' are appealing to white congregants because these remind them of the days when their influence was unchallenged. If they have lost political control, at least they still control

the wealth, and the church becomes a symbol of their apartness, their irredeemable laager mentality in a nation that cries out for cohesion and reconciliation.

MacBraggert's preaching is not only repetitious and demagogic but also self-righteous, blackmailing and self-centered. He uses personal testimonies which are manifestly fake to impose that which he thinks should constitute sin and righteousness. To the extent that he rails against Communism, terrorism and the poor, Moral MacBraggert is constructed as more political and ideological than he is religious in his sermons. He uses the podium to politically brainwash his white congregants simply because, like Sobantu 'The Butcher' Ikherothi, "he held in the palm of his hand-the third finger of which bears a large gold signet ring, and smells of cinnamon and musk-all of the Bulawayo's rich, very rich, and fabulously rich born again Christians" (p.98). His manner of preaching is strategic and well-calculated to raise emotions from his audience, some kind of a tear-jerking strategy meant to construct himself as the chosen one, as occupying a high moral ground and therefore a worthy candidate for cynosure. The narrator says:

He'd just finished telling them of the time, in the early years of his ministry, when he'd performed a double healing ceremony before a capacity crowd. He'd used the special power God had put in his right foot to repair a badly damaged lawn mower, and to restore to consciousness and equally damaged school teacher.... Then went on to tell them what he told them every Sunday in church: how he had been a drug dealer, a vandal, and a fornicator. All those drug addicts, many of them now dead, he had been responsible for; all those street signs he had bent; all those girls that he'd got 'in the family way', and the abortions he'd organized for them.... At this point, whether at church or, as now, at a party, he would sob a little and the crowd about him would respond with murmurs of "Praise the Lord"... (p.97-98).

Brother Moral MacBraggert's choreographed sermons depend on histrionics; the bigger the sin he purports to have committed before his conversion, the more striking, he believes, is its effects in portraying him as a real born-again who has irreversibly seen the light of Jesus Christ. I argue that Moral's phoney sermons rely on the 'Big Lie' syndrome where he assumes that the

bigger the lie and the more often repeated it is, then the more believable it becomes. His attire, a powder blue safari suit with matching powder blue eyes and espadrilles, makes him the quintessence of Rhodesian personality/ethos which his white congregants tenaciously cherish and cultivate. The white gold signet symbolizes the wealth which they still relatively monopolize in the independent nation and which wealth they do not wish to surrender. This explains the church's disdain for the poor; the poor remind them of their guilt. Their acquisition of wealth during and after colonialism depended on the abuse and exploitation of other sections of the population. The orgasms and glossolalia that the women experience are symptomatic of the seductive and mystificatory nature of his gospel of wealth and its discourse of exclusion.

The genesis of an economic meltdown in the country allows the writer to destabilize the evil space that has, from the start of the novel, seemed formidable and impregnable. We are told by the narrator for example that "Sobantu has returned to his homeland to take his rightful place in the negotiations for a new political order in South Africa" (p.112). Having brought destruction to Zimbabwe as a refugee, he returns to his homeland as a political luminary who participates in the negotiations for an independent South Africa. The rest of the immigrant community, feeling the pinch of the economic situation in Zimbabwe, is also leaving the country. The narrator points out that the migration of this self-seeking contingent of foreigners is good for the country by pointing out that:

Gymnogene Pigge, the teachers-Simon and Nicholas, Fark Ruckles, Kathleen O'Toole-bag-and all those other ex-pats who came out to Zimbabwe for the right reasons, have now decided to leave Zimbabwe for the right reasons: you can't get sugar, you can't get matches, you can't get rice, you can't get cooking oil-you can't even get mealie-meal. And what you can get is too expensive..... The last I heard, he (Gymnogene Pigge) and his Harris Tweed Jacket were heading to Zambia. Simon and Nicholas are on their way to Namibia, someone told me, there to vilify the Boers, screw the Hereros, and bolster the fledgling Gallopskyite party which has opened an office in downtown Swakopmund. Apparently Fark and Doss and Afghan and Litotes have found research posts at the University of Bophuthatswana, were they could spend the next decade writing up their PhD theses. Aid money from Canada and Sweden is still available to them. As long as your research is relevant-

and theirs is-and in the interest of human welfare-and theirs is, by God-the precious foreign currency will keep pouring in. Yes, I too have heard the rumors, but Fark's allocation goes to his personal bank account for one reason, and one reason only: easy access. He doesn't want his vital research to drag.... (p.113).

The crossing of the border into Zimbabwe is represented as the importation of the alien, the negative, the unwanted and the corrupt. Marcel Mangwanda (2007:230-231) has observed that Eppel constructs the immigrant community as a disease that has invaded the nation and needs to be excised like cancer. These immigrants dabble in illegalities like smuggling and baby dumping. But the border crossing out of Zimbabwe is installed as redemptive and as the beginning of a process of national regeneration. What Eppel suggests is that whilst this may be good for the post-independent Zimbabwean nation, there is a sense in which these sleazy characters, because they personify 'gangrene', unfortunately carry their immorality and corruption to other African countries. Simon and Nicholas take their love for 'black pussy' and radical, if experimental, political ideas to Namibia were they will certainly destabilize the politics and development in that country. Their love for African vaginas becomes symptomatic of the exploitation of Africa for their (outsider's) own needs. Eppel's critical stand on the role of these egocentric 'imports' in the (under)development of post-independent nations reminds one of Malcolm X's (1970:48) observations that:

An outsider can't clean up your house as well as you can. An outsider can't take care of your children as well as you can. An outsider can't look after your needs as well as you can. An outsider can't understand your problems as well as you can.

The reader is also left with a gnawing feeling that Sobantu 'The Butcher' Ikherothi and other immigrants have set out to poison the moral fibre of the countries that they now inhabit. In particular, the expatriates use the African ground in order to line their own pockets by engaging in researches that have no time frame and are meant to benefit their own communities through the study of the other. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1982:32), this amounts to a process of

“borrow(ing) grounds for an argument with ourselves or with others.” From the perspective of the narrative, immigrants do more harm than good.

But, as Mangwanda (2007:125-133) validly argues, the negative construction of the immigrant community in Zimbabwe appears, at times, to be stereotypical and may accentuate intolerance in a country that has yet to become tolerant and inclusive. It has to be remembered that in the early years of independence up until the post-2000 period, Malawians were derogatorily termed *Mabhurantyre* (people from Blantyre) or *Izimbamgodi* (people so low that they were employed to work underground digging for gold) while Mozambicans were dismissed as *Makarusha* (presumably the name of a Mozambican tree). In the post-2000 Mugabeist patriotic discourse, these people of foreign descent were stigmatized as people who have no anchorage in Zimbabwe, as ‘totemless’. I argue that whilst Eppel may be lampooning certain traits of this community that negatively affects the morality of the nation, he may inadvertently be perpetuating stereotypical, xenophobic hatred of these people in a nation fraught with manifest fissures, prejudices and arbitrary exclusions that need to be transgressed.

In the end, the space occupied by the dubious characters like Moral MacBraggert, Sobantu ‘The Butcher’ Ikherothi and others begins to crumble. We are told for example that Brother Moral MacBraggert would be giving his “valedictory sermon. He would soon be off on a crusade to save sinners up and down the south coast. The man is a saint” (p.114). The egocentric decision to decamp in Zimbabwe is satirically registered by not only his assumed sainthood but also by the fact that Bulawayo is about to run out of water. The narrator pointedly says that:

Because of stringent rationing, not enough water was running through the sewers and they were regularly becoming blocked, not only by paper and excrement but by condoms, foetuses, and a growing number of fully formed bodies. At times the stench was unbearable. People were talking of cholera and typhoid epidemics. Those who were in a position... were making evacuation plans. Brother Moral MacBraggert, for instance, was in the process of evicting the tenants from his cottage on the south coast, near Margate, where he would live until the Zambezi pipeline to Bulawayo had been completed....(p.111).

Through this statement the narrator subtly undermines MacBraggert's pious moralism of claiming to be responding to the spiritual call of saving souls in another part of the world. Rather, he is running away from adversity in Zimbabwe, leaving his so-called sheep to their own devices. The pungent mockery against MacBraggert's grandstanding and hollow prophetism is not lost on the reader ("the man is a saint!"). The quotation also raises critical issues about the preacher and his church. That there are dumped babies, unbridled and immoral sex and the imminence of contagious diseases is reflective of immorality and corruption that stink to high heavens. Instead of confronting these ills, his church does nothing. His sainthood has not helped to diminish the odor of immorality and corruption which he is running away from and which he has played a big part in bringing. This explains why the "stench was unbearable" (p.111). Moral MacBraggert's emigration to the diaspora is, therefore, constructed as good for the moral and spiritual regeneration of the nation. The nation does not need such self-serving, phoney and McCarthyst characters. For as long as there is good life and deification for him in Zimbabwe, MacBraggert will stay in the country masquerading as a saver of white souls. He leaves the country at a time it clearly needs moral re-armament which he cannot offer. The narrator reminds us of the racist, exclusionary and materialistic nature of the church when he points out that:

The Blood of Jesus Temple was packed with worshippers – virtually all white – all ready to weep in tongues at the imminent departure of their beloved preacher, Brother Moral MacBraggert.... they prayed for the families of businessmen, commercial farmers, successful criminals and senior civil servants..... In short they prayed for themselves. Well why not? Wouldn't you if you felt that your world was falling apart, for the second time in a little over ten years? I mean, be reasonable (p.115).

This is a gathering of die-hard Rhodies who wish to maintain the asymmetrical economic status quo. They fear change and just as they feared the advent of independence which threatened

their status, now the political crisis in Zimbabwe threatens their certainties, groupthink and their buccaneering approach to wealth acquisition. Quite relevantly, this provokes Elizabeth to ask the question why “the reasonably tolerant churches like the Anglicans are dying. (Yet) the intolerant fundamentalists like.... Yes... like me, are thriving” (p.116). One would assume that biblical churches represent self-abnegation, selflessness and piety, but the Blood of Jesus sect (the name is satirical) represents egocentric me-and-my-status-and-my-wealth syndrome. The narrator’s statement, “I mean, be reasonable”, draws the reader’s attention to the spiritual bankruptcy of this gathering. It symbolizes religious Machiavellianism in its unadulterated manifestation. To the extent that MacBraggert’s church is partisan, sterile and amoral, its disintegration is inscribed as salutary for the moral rebirth of the nation.

Such a view is supported further by the fact that Moral MacBraggert sets himself up a pedestal to such an extent that he confounds Jesus’ words with his own; that, in other words, he conflates himself with the biblical Jesus Christ. Such hypocrisy and grandstanding is condemned by none other than the ‘hatcher’ of a new national culture, Elizabeth Fawkes. We are told that “she felt suddenly stifled. She couldn’t face, yet again, the testimony that would follow these eclectic pronouncements of Christ spoken as if they were the eclectic pronouncements of Moral MacBraggert” (p.116). She condemns this self-deification. Moral MacBraggert’s approach to religion finds its manure in the cult of personalism dramatized by the whites’ hero-worshipping of Cecil John Rhodes and Ian Smith in *D.G.G. Berry’s The Great North Road* (1989) and Mugabeism in *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009), *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Short Writings* (2004) and *White Man Crawling* (2007). Such narrow constructions of religion, politics and peoplehood need to be transcended in order to herald a new situation where “we need new names” (Noviolet Bulawayo, 2009), new ways of doing things. That Elizabeth indicts “the hypocrisy of a community of which Black Rhino was a microcosm” (114) becomes an important leap in the crystallization of a new society in Zimbabwe. That these miscreants leave

the postcolonial nation becomes salutary because it enables this society to search for new self-fulfilling national ethos.

Therefore, the space occupied by the forces of regression and corruption, of degeneration and death are emblematic of a “system that thrives on the survival instincts of dwellers in a Darwinian jungle” (Ngugi wa Thiong’o 1982: xvi-xvii). In Ngugi’s literary works, this is epitomized by characters like Mwireri wa Mukirai and Gitutu wa Gataanguru in his novel *Devil on the Cross* (1982) that have sold their souls to the devil and would do anything to get wealth and prominence in society. These characters redound negatively with the characters found in the evil space in the novel *Hatchings*.

It is important to note the technique that is used by Eppel to begin and end the book. Earlier on it was noted that the book begins with Elizabeth, the central figure around whom the novel revolves, in camp with her family at the Matopos area. The ending is equally important in that it features Elizabeth in the same Matopos place, in particular the Mtshелеle Dam area. This is very significant for the triumph of the sacred space over the profane or negative one. It is instructive to note that the earlier arrangement was that “they had chosen World’s View for the vigil-near the grave of Cecil John Rhodes. Weather permitting, they would spend the night next to his remains. Elizabeth had suggested Mtshелеle Dam but the others had out-voted her” (p.113). The choice of a site near Rhode’s grave would have been most inappropriate for Eppel’s novelistic project that seeks to hatch a nation outside the confines of the polarities of politics, race, ethnicity and religion. According to Terence Ranger (1999:25), Rhodes’ remains in the Matopos symbolize an attempt to impose white history and conquest over black culture. The choice by Rhodes that his burial site be located at Matopos was ideologically meant to oust Mzilikazi (who was Ndebele king until he died in 1868 and is buried in the Matopos Hills) as a symbol of land ownership and to inscribe whites as the new rulers. Ngugi (2009:4) sees Cecil’s choice of burial at the Matopos Hills as a reflection of “triumph and humiliation.”

Therefore, given the competing claims and symbolism attached to the Matopos by different races and ethnic groups, the choice of this site would have presented many problems for Eppel's thematic poetics. Eppel's strategy is to steer clear of the political, ideological and identitarian dimensions of the Matopos and to appropriate its holiness and positivity. Hence, it is significant that it is Elizabeth who suggests Mtshelale Dam and not Rhodes' grave as if to scaffold her sacredness and association with a new moral order. This is so because Elizabeth, and by extension her family, is used as the yardstick of normality against which all the other characters in the novel are measured (Barbara Mbangami-Ruwende (2011:1). Thus, in order that a new national dispensation is inaugurated, divisive symbols of the past have to be transcended.

As a gesture of this social and religious trajectory, the reader finds "Elizabeth guid (ing) Jet to the spot where she and her parents had camped over New Year" (p.118). It is here that they declare their love, a most propitious place because, according to Ranger (1999:22), the water there is "identified with the uterus and amniotic fluid of a pregnant woman, as the source of all life." It is this dimension of fecundity that Eppel wants to appropriate in the Matopos area. This is also the site for the actual hatching of the Asil Khan egg which is symbolic of the birth of a new morality after the symbolic dismantling of the profane space. The interstitial symbolic space between the dying old world and the imminent installation of a new order is characteristically marked by quietness and numinosity. The narrator points an atmosphere of expectation and pregnant cross-over to a new world:

"What's that sound?" He lifted his head. He would have cocked his ears if he could.

"What sound?"

"Shh! Listen."

They listened intently, both realizing simultaneously how utterly quiet the world had become as if the diurnal creatures had gone to sleep and the nocturnal creatures were yet to stir. A minute's silence for the Earth's abandoned babies They heard

it: cheep, cheep, cheep... click, click, click..., cheep, cheep, cheep. “I don’t believe it,” said Elizabeth, “it’s the chick.”

“The what?”

“The Asil Khan, Jet, its hatching” (p.121).

With the hatching of the egg, Elizabeth’s “symbolic figure... as ‘creator’ of the nation” (Mangwanda 1998:203) reaches its apogee. The dialectical juxtaposition of the “diurnal creatures” and the ‘nocturnal’ ones results in something new and better. The ‘diurnal creatures’ and the ‘nocturnal’ ones represent the fusion of both that results in a synthesis that paradoxically gives way to a new order epitomized by the hatching, by the image of birthing. The quietness that precedes the hatching symbolizes that process of transition. It epitomizes the actualization of the great expectations that the cross-over to real independence should have entailed from the very beginning. The hatching, together with Elizabeth and Jet’s natural love and the fact that this happens when “the moon is rising. (And they) see that light on the horizon?” (p.122) gives an optimistic ending to the novel. The rising moon symbolizes the dawn of a new era based on love and understanding. Their mutual declaration of love reinforces the new national ethos that has triumphed over the corrupt space and now the nation is ready for a positive, dynamic and creative humane trajectory. It suggests that, overrun as the nation seemed to be by the negative space, all hope is not lost, that through the spaces occupied by Elizabeth’s family and Jet Bunion, the postcolonial nation may well be on course for a new nation-building trajectory. This optimism derives from the aura of holiness associated with the Matopos and its proximity to Njelele, the sacred shrine that is believed to solve problems for individuals and the country.

5.5 Holiness of Sin in *The Holy Innocents*

The novel *The Holy Innocents*, like other works by Eppel examined in this study is a satire of what he calls ‘humbug’ in Zimbabwe. It constitutes a pungent attack on a post-independence

society that has lost its moral compass and is, therefore, adrift. In this novel, Eppel pokes fun at the bankruptcy of the Rhodies whose racism has become anachronistic, at the materialism of the medical fraternity represented by Dr Pudding, the irreligious and bastardized traditional healing practices of Dr Umsilawobi and High Priest Uhlakaphile. The novel uses John ‘Bouncer’ Leghorn, a neo-Rhodie, as its narrator to interrogate the ‘unholy’ and rapacious spaces occupied by the Blood of Jesus Temple, traditional African healing practices and the reactionary nature of the ARSE Club. As in the previous section, these spaces are figured as inimical to the growth and flourishing of the post-independence nation.

It is important to note that the story begins and ends at the exclusionary Association of Rhodesian Sports Enthusiasts club, whose acronym is, symbolically framed as the ARSE. It is through this acronym that Eppel introduces the scatological imagery that is a feature of most of his works. Whilst the colonial Rhodesian village in *D.G.G. Berry’s The Great North Road* is cynically named *Umdidi*, the post-independence space is defined by the ARSE club from where the plot of the narrative oscillates. The acronym ARSE is the English version of *Umdidi* as if to suggest that the two spaces are an inversion of each other. This connects quite well with *D.G.G. Berry’s The Great North Road* and its emphasis on the *Perfumed Wind’s* application on white bums and arses, with Cecil John Rhodes’s bum-banditry and with *Hatchings’* stress on the sexual predations of the immoral characters that occupy the negative space. In particular, the reference to ARSE strategically introduces the writer’s oft-used technique of grotesque realism. The ARSE club affords the writer the opportunity to analyze and undermine the lifestyles, attitudes and philosophies of “.... Bulawayo’s diminishing team of Rhodesian manhood” (p.5). The club is, at the beginning, exclusively white except for the barman, Amos Impisi. The strategy allows the writer to examine the status of the erstwhile Rhodies in the post-independence dispensation. Although this is a community of displaced and uprooted Rhodies (displaced from their certainties and swagger), they nevertheless still possess and

flaunt a disproportionate amount of wealth and status in a free and supposedly egalitarian Zimbabwe. This sense of asymmetry is pointed out by the narrator when he observes that:

Then they climb into their bakkies, or their four-by-fours, their six-by-sixes, or their two-fifty SLS, and they make their way slowly – what’s the rush in company time? To the club of their choice (p.5).

The quotation above shows the continued flamboyance of the Rhodesians who amassed and continue to amass wealth through racism and opportunism.

There is here a suggestion that the colonial structures of race and class inequality have not been dismantled after independence so that the majority of the formerly and still marginalized groups can benefit. That the club is a meeting place of only the Rhodesians bespeaks of the continuing fortification of white supremacist ideology. The club therefore becomes a metaphor of the resilience of Rhodesian identity construction (epitomized by the slogan Rhodesians never die!). That they have refused to assume a Zimbabwean identity is attested by the fact that they still refer to the club as the Association of *Rhodesian* Sports Enthusiasts even after independence. The club is a community caught up in a time-freeze and that refuses to unfix the fixities of the colonial era. Not surprisingly, most of the patrons of this club use *Chilapalapa*, (a language which is an admixture of English and vernacular languages) or English when speaking to the barman (“... and fuga plenty ice...”) (p.7). These are languages of domination, inferiorization and oppression in post-independence Zimbabwe. The assumption of occupying a high moral, mental, political and leadership high ground is expressed through the clichéd conversation between Amaryllis Bantam and Desiray Weaner, whose elitism is shown by the narrator when he says they;

[...] gave each other a conspiratorial look. These people! Running the country aground. The country that we built up; roads, railways, airports; schools, colleges, university; shops, warehouses, factories. We gave them the wheel; we gave them

the written word; we gave them Christianity. And what do we get? They hate us (p.27).

The discourse of binarizing and essentializing identities within the national space dramatized by the phrase, '[t]hese people!' into them and us does not augur well for a nation seeking to foster cohesion and an inclusive Zimbabwean identity. These whites conveniently refuse to factor in the fact that the said infrastructure, as already mentioned in this study, was built through the labor of black people. This reinforces the fact that they are caught in a time-warp and are unwilling to see blacks as equal and competent partners in the process of nation-building. For them, the blacks will always remain the other to be dominated and disdained.

The conversation between the above characters, narcissistic as it is, brings out the irony of circumstance. Bantam and Weaner may be justified to complain about the levels of national dereliction, neglect and corruption, but that is countervailed by the narrator's pointing out of the asymmetries of ownership of national resources between the ordinary black people and the whites. Using Angus 'Large White' Horn as a synecdoche (he of the bovine smell), the narrator draws the readers' attention to the fact that the man:

Owned at least sixteen farms and ranches, most of them acquired for a song on the eve of independence. He was one of the community's vociferous opponents of the government's Land Acquisition Policy (p.8).

The Rhodies desire ostentation and undiminished possession of wealth. The quotation above shows their reluctance to embrace equality and fair distribution of wealth. Sixteen farms and ranches for one person in a country whose liberation war was largely centered on land cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered normal especially given the fact that the majority of whites simply marched into the land and settled themselves without paying a cent for it. Such white intransigence (symbolized by Angus) on the land issue may give a veneer of justification for Robert Mugabe's violent land re-appropriation although that, also, was as

opportunistic as the way Angus acquired the land for himself. The fact that is not lost on the reader is that Angus represents racism, exclusion and white supremacy. Hence, the narrator observation that: “Hadn’t Angus ‘Large’ Horn played rugby for Rhodesia? And hadn’t he played water polo for Rhodesia? And hadn’t he been a selous scout...” (p.9). There is a yawning chasm, a mismatch between the new dispensation and the history of exclusion (white racist sport) and violence (being a selous scout) that these neo-Rhodies still fetishize and lionize in independent Zimbabwe. The sporting activities mentioned above were predicated on race and the peripherization of blacks. Ironically, these are the people who have benefitted the most out of independence at the expense of the black majority. For an example, Bully Dorper has risen from being a Rep to being Managing Director, Shova Hereford was a Rep but is now General Manager and Greg Aylesbury has graduated from being a primary school teacher to Company Director (p.5). Besides, these whites are constructed by the narrator as being mentally bankrupt as they did not do well at school but rose solely on account of their skin pigmentation after independence. So, the politics of white preferential treatment is still the norm even after majority rule.

The community of ARSE club consists of anachronisms who still believe in the purity of the white race. This is why they are outraged and scandalized by the fact that Duiker Berry has married Nothando “a black woman old enough to be his mother and they referred to Nothando as ‘that nanny’...” (p.33). She is black and therefore seen as beneath sharing a life and a bed with a white husband. She is seen as inferior and worse a mere nanny who worked for the Berry family before independence. In the novel *The Curse of the Ripe Tomato* (2001), Berry and Nothando meet in England and eventually decide to get married despite Rhodesians’ insistence that there should never be such liaisons. That they get married reflects the fact that both are human beings whose feelings for each other transgress artificial racial boundaries. This is Eppel’s way of unsettling the construct of race as an ontological category. Yet, in Zimbabwe’s

ARSE club, the community feels collectively and severally affronted by what they see as the trivialization and frivolization of the purity of pioneer stock. But, through Cheryl ‘Boobs’ Australop, the narrator undermines the propensity of whites to set themselves up a pedestal. Despite her limitations as a white human being, including not learning indigenous languages, “her desiccated face” (p.7) and her love for booze, she comes across as a beacon of hope for a multicultural Zimbabwe. She is the only white character in the book that has the courage to tell Bill Berry (Duiker’s father), who is consumed by a corrosive sense of scandalized victimhood, that “mixed marriages are inevitable in a multi-racial Zimbabwe” (p.34). She has learned to unlearn the ossified Rhodesian thinking on miscegenation and to partially embrace a post-independence multicultural identity.

Duiker and Nothando’s relationship is symbolic of the transgression of racial boundaries. The union represents a fusion of opposites, a dialectical movement from antithesis to synthesis which is what post-independent Zimbabwe yearns for. But such a synthesis is not without its nemesis, represented by members of the ARSE club. It is as if the writer is arguing that achieving a multicultural post-independent society is fraught with attitudinal and psychological hurdles. The task of achieving a multicultural society involves the willingness to transcend the fixities of race and racism. This perspectival reading of the novel is not unlike the Fawkes family’s symbolic figuration as icons of good society threatened by adversarial and cantankerous neighbours and evil forces that inhabit the fictive world of *Hatchings* in the first part of this chapter.

From the ARSE club, the plot moves on to an exploration of religion symbolized by the High Priest Uhlakaniphile and his murky role as a medical doctor, and Dr Kenneth Umsilawobi, in his role as a traditional medical healer. As stated before, Dr Pudding has a dual role; that of medical doctor as well as leader of the eccentric and esoteric sect named Holy Innocents. Often, however, the two roles reinforce each in a symbiotic and negative way. The name of the sect

that he leads as High Priest Uhlakaniphile is itself ironically symbolic in that the sect shows neither holiness nor innocence in its religious practices; the sect is experienced in its sinfulness or immorality. Such a negative construction of the sect is achieved through its location and environs. We are told that it is located:

In the thickest, thorniest, most inaccessible part of the bush, (where) there is a circle of stones. Inside this circle the ground is bare, beaten flat and hard. The only large tree in the vicinity is a dead *Lonchocarpus Capassa*, the rain tree-dead not of natural causes but because it had been ring-barked. It is inhabited by a large blue-headed lizard that runs up and down the trunk making a scraping noise against the peeling skin.... This bird, a fiscal shrike, can be seen at almost any time of day.... (p.13).

There is something terrifying, brooding, uncanny and eerie about the atmosphere and description of the sect's shrine. The thickness, thorniness and inaccessibility of the place conjoin to create a mood of fear, suspicion, danger and devilry. This is reinforced by the 'hard', 'bare' and 'flat' nature of the ground. The figuration heightens a sense of spiritual barrenness. That the only tree that is there has been deliberately ring-barked symbolizes the death-embracing practices of the sect, the moral and spiritual sterility that harks back to the waterlessness and aridity of the negative space in *Hatchings*. The large lizard and the shrike intensify the sense of the eerie, of scavenging and predation. The shrike preys on the weak, the helpless, the unsuspecting and the hapless. The relationship between the predatory bird and its prey then becomes emblematic of the relationship between the sect's leaders and the congregants.

The place is figured as macabre, grisly and fundamentally irreligious. The strategy allows the writer to associatively paint the congregants, their leaders and the sect in general as occultist and steeped in evil. This negative construction of the sect prepares the reader for the entrance of its leader as High Priest Uhlakaniphile, an Ndebele word that means the wise one/the clever one. The leader of the sect is an Englishman, Lucius Pudding, who, we are told, came as part

of the aid package after independence to minister to the sick. Immediately after introducing this character alongside the location of his shrine, the narrator brings out the unethical nature of this expatriate doctor. We are told that his coming to Zimbabwe:

As it turned out, aided Lucius Pudding (for that is the *good* doctor's name) a lot more than it aided the citizens of Zimbabwe. His bonding to government lasted three years during which time he was posted to various hospitals in the rural areas where he managed to kill slightly more patients than he managed to save (p.14).

This is an acidic mockery of the immorality of imported medical practitioners whose brief seems to be to experiment and make money more than healing people. As a medical doctor, Pudding is constructed as a scoundrel whose allegiance to the Hippocratic Oath is overtly undermined. He is self-centered, salacious, materialistic and unethical and this makes the reader to question his suitability for not only private medical practice but also to lead the sect of the Holy Innocents.

In his medical practice Dr Pudding specializes in killing unborn babies through abortion and which dead foetuses he prescribes as a cure for the Rhodesian women's pathological obsession with fighting wrinkles, ageing and sun-tanning. Although Dr Pudding provides them with these so-called cures from foetuses, these women profess to be against abortion as they disingenuously argue that it is murder. Whilst these white women publicly and loudly condemn abortion as murder, privately, and in pursuit of selfish ends, they promote it. Dr Pudding has poisoned the moral fibre of this Zimbabwean society through his peccadilloes as a medical practitioner. The foetus that Bobby Hereford steals from his clinic makes the reader feel a sense of disgust and moral revulsion at not only Dr Pudding as a medical practitioner but also the constituency that willingly aids and abets him in this moral corruption. To register this moral outrage and revulsion, the narrator describes the use to which the foetus from Dr Pudding is put. He says of Mini:

After a long search she found the colander and placed in the kitchen sink (which she found quite easily). Then she poured the contents of the jar into the colander. The formalin escaped down the sink while the foetus, in the foetal position except for an errant leg, which hooked itself in one of the ring-shaped handles of the colander, the foetus remained. It was a boy..... She... lifted it with those (the trapped leg tore slightly), and plopped it into the processor (p.57).

The reader cannot help but feel a sense of nausea at these whites who ironically pontificate that they brought christianity, civilization and morality upon a ‘savage’ and morally bankrupt people. The reader is left with a niggling after-taste that this is cannibalism and savagery writ large despite hypocritical denials to the contrary. What the narrator does is to turn the colonial stereotypes on their heads by constructing the Rhodesian whites using the images that they have for long reserved for blacks so as to register the fact that they are hypocritical. The satirical thrust is further brought out by the narrator when he strategically and tear-jerkingly gives voice to the processed foetus which says:

“And what I want to know is what it says, the processor, what it keeps on saying. Does it tell me that I now live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me?” (p.57).

Through this technique, the writer gives voice to the voiceless, the marginalized, helpless and vulnerable; those that are sacrificed on the altar of solipsism, avarice and unbridled love for money. People like Mini and Dr Pudding represent the types of people who are prepared to enjoy life even if it means loss of life to others (even of unborn babies). The foetus’ fictional reminiscences about Jesus Christ and his love for the innocence of children becomes a way of criticizing the hollowness and hypocrisy of those who profess to be Christians. They are shown to be given to mouthing and parroting the bible when their actions are at variance with what they claim to believe in. At a metaphorical level, post-independence Zimbabwe has so sunk into moral abyss that good life has to be achieved at the expense of the powerless. The powerful spend money on leisure and pleasure when people in the rural areas (like the girl from

Tsholotsho) have no shelter, food, parents and blunder about in life with no bearings whatsoever. This is a testament of the rot that has afflicted society and which rot Dr Pudding heightens in order to get the fast buck. But it is also an indictment of the gullibility of a white community which has too much money but cannot spend it on projects that benefit the society. Hence, they spend it fighting against the natural process of ageing and its consequences.

As stated before, Dr Pudding's role as a medical doctor taps and feeds into his role as the leader of the Holy Innocent sect. In fact, the boundary between the two is blurred because both involve undiminished immorality. For example, his role as a medical doctor comes in handy in drugging victims (like Bobby Hereford) to be used for sacrifice and ritual murder. In his role as High Priest Uhlakaniphile, he shows that biblical religion can be used, in the words of the narrator, as "[...] a right-wing capitalist God..." (p.88) that advances the prosperity gospel. The narrator deliberately uses a satirical subversive mode (Rosemary Gray, 2002:n.p) to deconstruct Uhlakaniphile's brand of religiosity. His belief in sacrifice is not only perverted but also subverted. The reader is made aware that the Holy Innocents' motto which is "carved on the tree trunk of the dead rain tree" (p.14) is, "I give that you may give" (p.14). Such a maxim is deliberate and calculated to manipulate the gullible ordinary people to do Uhlakaniphile's avaricious bidding in the wry belief that God rewards the selfless. Ezra Chitando (2013:101) aptly argues that this type of worship exhorts that "believers must 'sow' in order to 'reap' financial rewards and good health in this life. Through giving generously, God will reward them richly." This is a strategy that makes people to give to the sect with a certain lack of sagacity in the hope of Godly rewards in some nebulous future. In the process, such believers fall prey to scheming church leaders. Uhlakaniphile strategically chooses those verses in the bible that advance his selfish and materialistic interests. His belief in sacrifice is outdated but strategic in the sense that, from a biblical point of view, Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice rendering all other forms of sacrifices obsolete and superfluous.

James Watts (2011:13) has argued that such a conception of sacrifice (that of Uhlakaniphile) is simply “violence spiralling out of control” and assumes negative qualities that privilege selfishness. That possibly explains why Moral is crucified upside-down as if to emphasize the sect’s perversion and subversion of the bible. Such a reading, then, tallies with the writer’s symbolic composition of the shrine as a place of barrenness, death and a spiritual graveyard alluded to earlier in this study.

The description of the location of the sect and the symbols associated with it lend negative weight to its philosophy of the “holiness of sin” (p.14), an oxymoron that is meant to heighten the sense of the macabre and the perverse. The narrator points out this manifest perversion of Godly worship by stating the basic fundamentals of the sect’s sense of sacrifice:

What you do is you copulate with adolescent girls, daughters of sect members, or waifs who stray in from the rural areas where there is nothing to eat and nothing to do, and when they become pregnant you use their male babies for sacrifice; and you do it on calm windless nights so that the smoke from the burnt offerings can rise directly into the nostrils of our Lord on high (p.15).

Sleeping with helpless girls symbolizes the satisfaction of the bodily sexual needs that have nothing to do with God. If anything, it depicts sexual predation that is appropriately symbolized by the shrike in the sect’s shrine. The writer at this point shows the use of poverty as a way of exploiting the gullible and desperate people. In times of want and economic turmoil, cultist churches or sects sprout in order to fish in the troubled economic waters where people are in desperate need of an elixir for their economic and spiritual needs (Chitando, 2013:99). These people are often hemmed in by poverty and will do anything to ameliorate their dire circumstances. That there is hunger and unemployment in Zimbabwe is shown by the narrator’s focalization of “rural areas where there is nothing to do, and nothing to eat” (p.15). The sect uses poverty and desperation occasioned by the Zimbabwean economic and political crisis to hoodwink people into a false sense of hope. Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Haar (2004:107) see the

gullibility of the people in these sects as “an omnipresent sense of powerlessness” and lack of agency, while Englebert and Dunn (2014:108) view it as a result of “the precariousness of many dimensions of life in Africa....”

The narrator’s subversive narrative orchestrates a strategy in which Western medical practices connive and conspire with African traditional healing to fleece off desperate people in society. Both are constituted as cousins of self-aggrandizement and immorality. This is why we find in the novel Dr Pudding and Dr Umsilawobi engaged in plotting to kidnap Bobby for ritual purposes. In their sinister plotting conversation, their knees make contact as if to suggest the impossibility of uncoupling the two religious renegades (and what they represent) who are, nonetheless, trusted and lionized as problem-solvers in society. For example, the reader is made crucially and painfully aware that Dr Pudding:

[...] had an arrangement with a traditional healer who used body parts to prepare lucky charms for some very wealthy, very influential clients; and to mix potions that would enhance the sexual prowess of some very wealthy, influential clients (p.15).

This is a very selfish, atavistic and unscrupulous post-independent society whose marauding instinct for prosperity knows no limits. The body parts may be read as symbolizing the predations on the weak, helpless and vulnerable members of society who can easily be killed and sacrificed to the god of wealth and prosperity. It may also symbolize general malfeasance. The selfishness, hedonism and will to dominate are dramatized by the men’s need for enhanced sexual prowess over women, which reflect phallic domination (Mbembe, 2001:13). Such phallic domination is shown when both High Priest Uhlakaniphile and Kenneth Umsilawobi compete over who should deflower the rural girl from Tsholotsho. African traditional healing values are guided by *ubuntu* whose main proviso is people-centeredness, doing the greatest good to the majority. It is predicated in the belief that one’s personhood cannot be seen in

isolation from that of others whose goodwill one always actively seeks. Gerhardus Oosthuizen (1992:165) argues (in a different context) that a healer restores harmony and equilibrium in society. Such a reading is strengthened by Gilbert Harman (1977:vii) who contends that that the normative ethics of a healer “pertains to the nature of right and wrong, deciding what makes actions good or bad, good or evil, and deciding what actions ought or ought not to be done.” Umsilawobi therefore is figured as the antithesis of this African worldview.

Dr Umsilawobi is constructed as immoral, buccaneering and narcissistic. His dabbling in traditional medicine is shown to be contingent upon the impressionability of desperate people and not on the efficacy of the healing itself. Like Sobantu ‘The Butcher’ Ikherothi, Moral MacBraggart, Cecil John Rhodes and Duiker Berry of the *Perfumed Wind* fame, Umsilawobi is a hollow man, a man shorn of moral scruples. Maake Masango (2006:933) cogently points out that “...at the heart of African spirituality is the dignity of human beings” which Umsilawobi trashes in his search for unbridled wealth. We are told that “Kenneth was one the richest men in Zimbabwe...” (p.46) trading in human body parts. The crescendo of satirical devastation against this ‘inyanga’ (healer) is when the narrator points out that his sources of business and wealth involved taking advantage of human tragedies. These tragedies involved “bus accidents, mass drowning, collapsing mine shafts, fires, and outbreaks of killer diseases” (p.49). This level of moral crudity and lack of human conscience by people who should be custodians of tradition becomes the butt of the writer’s satire. Disasters like the ones enumerated above make a normal human being feel a sense of his/her mortality and, therefore, to commiserate with the victims and their relatives. One gets the impression that a diseased post-independence society produces diseased beings that have diseased ideas about wealth creation and accumulation. The pathologization of both Umsilawobi and Dr Pudding installs a crippled and stunted society in urgent need of a cure. Such a reading of the text is supported by the fact that Umsilawobi suffers from a venereal disease which he cannot cure using his own

herbs and has to be treated by his partner, Dr Pudding. The reader is left with a gnawing suspicion that, given the fact that Pudding says the disease is at an advanced stage, he has been spreading it amongst the poor and vulnerable female members of society. The narrator therefore presents the sect and African traditional healing as engaged in hoodwinking maneuvers.

Dr Umsilawobi's fake pretensions to healing, the gullibility and ridiculousness of the people who seek his services are hilariously shown by the narrator when he says that Umsilawobi's:

[...] third most lucrative enterprise was his AIDS treatment which drew hundreds of desperate patients from all over Southern Africa. Using his own urine as a base for the active ingredients: the genitals of male and female virgins and the powdered bark of several indigenous trees ... he bottled the concoction using any bottles he could find, sealing them with rag stoppers, and selling it for \$500 per bottle (p.49).

Once again, like Uhlakaniphile, Umsilawobi takes advantage of people's desperation and malleability to make a lot of money. People do not seem to believe the oft-repeated caveat that AIDS currently has no cure and flock to any pretender who promises a cure however manifestly fake. In times of desperation people are prepared to sell their soul to the devil albeit at a great cost to themselves. The uselessness of Umsilawobi's prescriptions is further mockingly undermined when the narrator points out that:

His instructions to his patients were to take a tablespoonful of the medicine immediately before and immediately after sexual intercourse. Most of his patients made remarkable recoveries for a month or two, and then the novelty would wear off and they go back to fading slowly away (p.49).

The biting satire in the quotation above is trained at both Umsilawobi's fake but ingenious psychologization of people's illnesses and treatment and at the patients' mental disposition of accepting the weird as panacea for their bodily problems. How do you cure a disease spread through sexual intercourse by engaging in sexual intercourse basing on the flimsy belief that a teaspoonful of herbs can eradicate the disease? There is a hint here that AIDS wipes out a lot

of people because victims allow themselves to be used as instruments/pawns in the hands of money-seekers and profiteers like Umsilawobi and Dr Pudding. The mere attempt at fraudulently raising people's hopes of a speedy recovery (using urine as medicine and indulging in more sex and therefore risking more infections) is depicted as immoral, inhuman and grasping.

Dr Kenneth Umsilawobi's hypocrisy and inhumanity redounds unfavorably with Dr Pudding's prescription of foetuses as a cure for wrinkles and ageing to white women, in particular the character Mini. Like Umsilawobi, Pudding preys on people's knee-jerk and naive belief in the assumed probity of doctors. The narrator scurrilously satirizes Mini as a synecdoche of white women, just like blacks, when he points out that; "Mini had been brought up, like all good Rhodesians, to trust doctors, lawyers, accountants, headmasters, priests, Ian Smith, the Argus Press... in short, the establishment, implicitly" (p.57). The people mentioned above represent the powerful in society, those whose word is judged as right because of their position and influence, the opinion-makers. Dr Pudding and Umsilawobi represent such people that society trusts to its detriment. The church is shown to be an extension of the negative aspects of African necromancy and as a profit-oriented business enterprise as revealed by the ultimate program of the holy innocent which "[...] was, first, to work the congregation into a frenzy by passing around a boomslang (a symbol of devilry) that had been captured in that very spot, by beating a drum and blowing whistles made chiefly from human body parts, by chanting, singing, and ululating, ..." (p.104). This reflects an unholy alliance and complicity of the church and traditional healers who specialize in the trade in human body parts. There is something voodooist about these church rituals and items; the chants, snakes and the drumbeating that heighten the macabre, the occult and immorality that inhere in these institutions. Eppel is unsettling such fetishization and deification as unhealthy for society as it gives pretenders like Dr Pudding and Umsilawobi the *carte blanche* to propagate evil. It is as if the writer is arguing

that power, might or positions do not necessarily translate to right or moral uprightness. If anything, in a classed society of Eppel's oeuvre, power often corrupts and inebriates individuals so that there is need for a certain dosage of healthy skepticism when dealing with the powerful or seemingly powerful and 'trusted'.

5.6 Conclusion

In reviewing *The Holy Innocents*, Rosemary Gray (2002:n.p) has concluded that the novel shows that "there is no way out, only a way on". Indeed, there certainly is unmitigated materialism and immorality in the novel but there are glimpses of the possibility of a reformed society although this is muted. In *Hatchings*, the forces of evil and immorality seem to be on a rollercoaster but, in the end, these forces crumble in the face of the positive and regenerative forces represented by the Matopos, Elizabeth Fawkes, Jet Bunion and the hatching of the Asil Khan egg. These symbolize the birth of a new social and moral ethos. Although *Hatchings* begins and ends in the Matopos, the ending holds out hope for postcolonial Zimbabwe. In *The Holy Innocents*, the narrative begins and ends in the ARSE club, an unregenerate and irredeemable citadel of racism, gossip, mental bankruptcy and immorality. In that way, the novel comes full circle. Where one could have read constable Phiri, the policeman who goes to the shrine together with constable Dube (who seems bewitched and hypnotized by Uhlakaniphile's biblical orations and incantations) and attempts to make an arrest of the Holy Innocent' congregation as symbolizing hope, law and restraint, such a reading meets with critical obstacles. He may represent intrepidity which is symbolized by the attempt to intervene and rescue Moral MacBraggart from mutilation, but the point is that he makes no arrests. His failure in this regard provides the sect and Umsilawobi with the possibility of re-grouping and spreading their evil deeds elsewhere in the country. It also provides Moral MacBraggart with the oratorical arsenal to construct the self as larger than life and to advance his project of religious entrepreneurship. That Dube and Phiri are also present in the ARSE club, beholden

upon the white patrons for beer, means that they have also been corrupted as law enforcers. They therefore look aside when the neo-Rhodies cast aspersions on the postcolonial nation and what it should stand for. Like Dr Pudding's connivance with Umsilawobi, the police officers have become compromised mercenaries that make the moral regeneration of the nation really difficult. There is no possibility of ending the stasis and corruption represented by the ARSE club under the circumstances of the book's ending.

In a limited sense, however, there are possibilities of racial harmony symbolized by the marriage between Duiker Berry and Nothando. Though this is not accepted by most ossified whites, the fact that they have gotten married represents a window of opportunity for multiculturalism. Then there is Cheryl 'Boobs' Australop who has the courage to voice her convictions to all and sundry in the club that liaisons between blacks and whites in post-independence Zimbabwe should not be viewed as an aberration but an urgency demanded by postcolonial circumstances. She can then be read as a character that has re-negotiated a postcolonial identity which may cascade other whites. But in terms of the mercenary edge that characterizes this novel there certainly seems to be no way out but a way on. In the reckless, unrestrained and narcissistic pursuit of wealth, this novel does not hold out much hope for post-independence Zimbabwe.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The study examined John Eppel's disruption of the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean space-times as valid and sustainable anchors for inclusive, multicultural, morally upright and just society. As narrative evocations of the nation, both spaces were seen to be limited, limiting and in urgent need of being transgressed or broadened. Eppel's selected works, written from the perspective of white experience of both spaces, 'throw into disarray' the fixed constructions of whiteness, blackness, indigeneity, citizenship, belonging and class. The study argued that the focal texts puncture the myths, values and worldviews of whites in Rhodesia (although Eppel himself is white and supposedly a beneficiary of the occlusions and institutional racism in the colony) while staking a claim to belonging in Robert Mugabe's over-politicized and racialized Zimbabwe. In creatively staking a claim to being Zimbabwean, Eppel appropriates the right to authorize voice and contribute to the public sphere those issues that prevent the nation from achieving an ideal social structure. By criticizing both spaces as corrupt and corrupted, the writer registers his dissatisfaction with them while privileging a third space that benefits all who believe they belong to the nation. Through the creation of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe as narrations, imagined communities (Anderson, 1991:14) or "discursive formations" (Brenan, 1990:173), or as "fictive ethnicity" (Balibar, 2002:96), Eppel forces the reader to re-assess his/her conception of nation-creation and nation-building. The organizing principles of the nation as 'abstraction' and which the focal texts use to disrupt both spaces are race, culture, language, location and the deployment of mythoscapes. It is these that form the bedrock of totalizing narratives about the national metanarratives whose veracity and continued hold on people's imaginaries of the nation are satirically laid to waste in Eppel's chosen texts. Through the writer's deliberate creation of emotional attachment to certain characters/spaces and a repulsion for others, Eppel installs binaries or opposites that help locate forces of regression

and progression that propel or militate against his vision of ideal nation-building. Through his use juxtaposition, Eppel allows the reader to envision and, through guided reader attention, to yearn for a space outside the fixed polarities presented in the works. The riotous satire and the scaffolding of the vulgar serve to jolt the reader into a re-conceptualization of the oft-taken-for-granted constructions of belonging, identity, nation, power and democracy.

In the study, I used the term “unsettling” the colonialist and nationalist spaces advisedly to bring out the counter-discursive or counter-hegemonic nature of Eppel’s writings on Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. I argued that the focal texts map out dominant narratives of both spaces in order to “defy, erode and... supplant” them (Ashcroft *et al*, 1996:1). Space, as an informing metaphor of this thesis, was also articulated in its dual dimensions; in its physical locatedness as geographic and also, most importantly, in its social and discursive nuances. In its discursive articulation, space was seen as a social creation of human beings as they interact to produce social, political, economic, racial, class and gender systems in space-time. I invoked Lefebvre’s (1991:294) theorization that “there are beneficiaries of space, just as there are those excluded from it, those ‘deprived of space’: this fact is ascribed to the ‘properties’ of a space.” Since space creates boundaries of inclusion and exclusion which are vulnerable to contestation, social space fashions out narratives that legitimize/de-legitimize the status quo. I contended that social space therefore creates ideological technologies and mythoscapes that justify dominant master fictions of space as place. Further, Chapter One argued, any discourse about space often reflects the ideological and political background that produced it. The selection of Eppel’s writings on Rhodesia and Zimbabwe shows that both spaces yarned self-legitimizing grand narratives which, as Eppel argues, were mutually reinforcing in their exclusionary and domination canvass. Lefebvre (1991:229) may well have been describing a similar situation about social space when he remarked that “[...] what came earlier continues to underpin what follows” and, therefore, to orchestrate a fictional yearning for a space outside these borders.

The study further argued that identities forged under conditions of racial nationalism are consciously created, manured and reproduced to suit particular racial, political, economic and class ends and that they tend to be essentialistic and absolutizing. The study contended that the racial inequalities, the invisibility of blacks, the stereotypes that inhered in Rhodesia were a product of a narrative mystification that constructed the black person as an inveterate inferior other. Equally, in postcolonial Zimbabwe, power and its exercise was figured as a function of inventing enemies, using race as a marker of autochthony and narrowing citizenship and belonging to political affiliation and nativism. The study pointed out that in some instances race became conflated with class so that black material rapacity was a collaborative venture with the remnant class of Rhodies. In other words, colonial space was a palimpsest upon which was overwritten the nationalist narrative even though it was at the level of rhetoric. This is why Eppel challenges the monolithic gestures of that kind of nation-building and helps the reader imagine other forms of nationhoods.

In order to contest the rigidity and acidity of both spaces, the study sought to advance the negotiated, fluid and mutative nature of identities by deploying certain strands of the Postcolonial Theory that give prominence to issues of race, politics, domination (and counter-domination), identity, history and belonging. Chapter One worked from the premise that the colonial encounter brought with it insidious changes to the colonized societies that, of necessity, required complex, yet painful negotiations and re-negotiations that could not be achieved in simple disjunctive terms of black and white as was the case in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. I averred that the land annexation was the most visible manifestation of this damage but its covert and subtle forms took the form of appropriation of a worldview, of history and representation. The chapter therefore selected those postcolonial theorists (Bhabha, Gilroy, Appiah, Fanon, Lara and Mbembe) that grapple with the idea of the nation as an ideological and representational construct mired in identity compositions, de-compositions and re-

compositions. It was argued that the theory contests domination of all forms and broadens spaces for cultural relativism and pollination of values and knowledges and that this makes it a valid analytic tool of ‘unsettling’ the two spaces, the two ‘entanglements’ (Mbembe,2001:14). I also employed Bakhtin’s theory of literature that incorporates heteroglossia, polyphony and dialogism/monologism and how this relates to pluralizing/democratizing the public sphere. Especially productive, was his emphasis on the symbiotic relationship between literature and the social milieu, with its ‘extraliterary texts’ which helped unravel Eppel’s fictional life-world and the politics of race, class, gender, violence, citizenship and belonging in the empirical Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. These strands helped in unpacking Eppel’s rejection of static, fixed and essentialist constructions of identity in the two spaces. I invoked Nancy Fraser’s (1995:291) theorization of ‘alternative public spheres’ which he/she termed subaltern counter-publics and is:

[...] the parallel discursive arena where members of subordinated social groups invent and articulate counter-discourses. Subaltern counter-publics permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs.

The approach was helpful in unsettling the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean dominant narratives of creating, building and consolidating the nation. The above theorists helped position Eppel on the side of the dominated and silenced others.

Chapter Three examined the novel *D.G.G.Berry’s The Great North Road* and selected poems from *Spoils of War* and *Songs my Country Taught me*. In the three texts, Eppel uses the trope of oppositionality, or, to put it differently, of juxtaposition in order to use the black person “...as a mirror that reflects the colonialist’s self-image” (Janmohamed, 1996:19). In *Great North Road*, the writer shows the extent to which Rhodesian nationalism was used as the canvass upon which Rhodesian identity was forged in the full glare of the black other. Through Menippean satire and its tendency to unsettle myths and inherited traditions, the writer presents

a settler community that is a microscopic representation of the Rhodesian nation that is replete with its cultural and racial supremacism, stereotypes and origin myths. I argued that the settler community of Umdidi (an Ndebele word that dramatizes their racial vulgarity, obscenity and stench) is a quintessence of colonial Manichaeism in which blacks are not only inferior and silent, but also generally held to be the invisible other. This is why the community presented shows the dominance of settler/white culture through the whites' conversations, their take on colonialism, history, religion, food and race. The salience of white day-to-day speeches, worldviews, behaviors and idiosyncrasies affords the writer a window of opportunity to oust, undermine or even mock the assumed superiority of white culture and its limitations in the construction of a Rhodesian identity. The reader is afforded a glimpse, through the 'intelligence of emotions and the attendant guided attention' (Martha Nussbaum, 2001:301), of the static, hypocritical and essentialized conceptions of nation-creation. Through guided attention or focalization, the reader becomes a witness to the inanities, the disgusting, mentally bankrupt views and the monologic nature of their narratives about history and humanity in general. The logic of imperialism which fires settler conceptions of the self in an African social setting to which they have nothing but scorn and disdain, but to which they seek to stake an Adamic claim, renders them pretty ambivalent and dithering in terms of their conceptions of self-identity.

I contended that the discursive genealogical constructions of Rhodesians of pioneer stock as superior allows for the spatial and narrative peripherization/marginalization of the black person as subhuman and therefore fit to be excluded from agential activities of the nation. In Duiker, the chapter argued, lies the site for the writer's scurrilous unsettling of the very foundations of Rhodesian nationhood. Duiker Berry embodies the contested, if empty or sterile, Rhodesianism. Basing his views of the self on myths from the past and its symbols, he constructs himself as the best representative of British culture. Institutions like the school and

the church become complicit in the production of the crippled mind the Duiker exhibits. These institutions are constituted as sites that “privilege the narrative of history as imperialism as the best version of history” (Gayatri Spivak, 1995:25). Such colonial monologisms as given by white writers and teachers are self-perpetuating props that however fail to stand their ground in the face of solid and experiential logic. Aunt Frances represents an alternative repository of history and nation-creation that fractures the self-assured monologue personified by Duiker. He is found deficient when confronted with a different version of history. Beyond self-righteous anger (itself a defense mechanism), beyond parroting and echoing partisan history as given in textbooks, Duiker is unable to mount a reasoned intellectual contestation. Gareth Stevens *et al* (2013:29) point out that history is always implicated in “[...] relations of power in deeply personal, psychosocial and socio-political ways....” They further observe that:

[...] there is sometimes a slippage between what we understand to be the archive and official histories, that is, a conflation of the two that requires some unpacking, disentanglement and liberation which may offer different ways of not only creating histories, but also of understanding the impact of these histories on our present and future.

Though white, Aunt Frances represents such an attempt to collapse the totalizing history of colonialism and the myth of the civilizing mission as master fictions that validate colonial hegemony. But most importantly, I argued, Aunt Frances’ narratological function as the writer’s alter-ego and a dissident voice serves to show the dangers of viewing whites as a homogenous group with similar worldviews. She represents the fissures and faultlines inherent in the category of whiteness so that the reader begins to understand that not all whites can arbitrarily be deemed as inveterate oppressors. In the selected poems in *Spoils of War*, the persona deals with the above issues except that here the experiences of Duiker in the war front literally purge him of his ‘Rhodesianism’ in that he realizes the futility of the war. The image of suffering on both sides humanizes Duiker’s conception of the nation. The war explodes the

myths that undergirded Rhodesian nationalism so that the hitherto silent and exterior other becomes human and with whom space has and can be shared in a multicultural society. But other poems construct the refusal of the Rhodesians to metamorphose their identities into postcolonial ones. They remain caught up in a time warp and refuse to accept that Rhodesia has collapsed like a deck of cards. In the words of Godwin and Hancock (1993:8), these Rhodesians remain stuck to their “commitment to the Rhodesian way of life” which renders them obsolete and anachronistic. In short, therefore, chapter Three has argued that Eppel uses deflating narrative techniques that serve to stress the unsustainability of the Rhodesian chronotope. That way, he imagines the possibility or potentialities of a world shorn of racism and its implications.

Chapter Four grappled with post-independence nationalism that takes the form of Mugabeism and its inscription of patriotic history in contestations of what constitutes Zimbabweanness. *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009) and selected short stories from *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings* (2004) and *White Man Crawling* (2007) were the focal texts used to position the nationalist space in relation to the previous Rhodesian one. I therefore argued that “new nations justify their being and claim to existence by making radical departures, even if it means only at the level of rhetoric, from their predecessor states” (Javangwe, 2011:59). It is this rhetoric and façade of a colonial rupture and a re-composition of ZANU-PF grand narratives that formed the bedrock of this chapter. The assumed rupture paradoxically manifested in the myriad of occlusions, minoritizations, partisan empowerment, violence and coercive accumulation; practices very much at the heart of Rhodesian national imaginaries. In examining the focal texts, I argued that the chapter is a dramatic staging of Mugabeism with its obsession with the rhetoric of anti-white, anti-opposition, anti-colonialism, appropriation of the liberation war and the refusal to accept blame for the crisis in Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:1149). As a means of ‘statecraft’, Mugabeism was characterized by peripherization of

certain identities, the use of land as the only definer of authentic Zimbabwean belonging, inventing enemies and narrowing down the contours of citizenship. Hammar (200:32) refers to these as “extremely brutal forms of exclusion(s) and dispossession.” Race, in its patriotic Mugabeist rendition, becomes a major factor in creating parameters of belonging and unbelonging.

I argued that in this chapter Eppel deliberately and strategically creates the character George J. George as a representation of life in Rhodesia and the experiential narratives of whites in that space. His synecdochal construction in both spaces (twenty-eight years in both) harvests the view that both spaces are motivated by the will to dominate, to exclude, to marginalize and to inscribe fixed, bi-polar identities that are more fracturing than unifying. Through George, the chapter argued, is shown postcolonial Zimbabwe’s pursuit of past and present wrongs to the point of shamelessness (Mbembe, 2001:115). The fate that befalls George becomes emblematic of a reversal of roles that does nothing to bring about a just, inclusive and tolerant society. The transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe is thus constructed as illusory. The satire directed at the rapacious ruling elite only serves to show that power transforms those who wield it into monsters who ride roughshod over the powerless. The invisibility, the nothingness, the de-centering or obsolescence of whites as citizens only serves as a reminder of the invisibility and silence of the blacks during the colonial space. This creates a fictional life-world that is impelled by vengeance and the politics of adversarialism that is contrary to the spirit of reconciliation announced at independence. I argued that the strategic witnessing by the reader of George’s fall, Beauticious’ vampirish pounce on him, the stripping of his voting rights, the help that he gives to the black child, Polly, and the succor that he gets from fellow sufferers in jail cumulatively suggest a constructed system from above which in no way affects the racial relations of people below. The narratological tactic thus leaves the reader in a state of cognitive dissonance about Mugabeism and its claim to be messianic and all-encompassing. The

narrative guides the reader to sympathize, to view George as ‘more sinned against than sinning’, and to view him as a colleague equally affected by meanders and vagaries of Mugabe’s politics. The efficacy of the satirical narrative lies in effecting Martha Nussbaum’s (1995:7) concept of the novel’s power of affect, the capacity to emotionally identify with the character’s trials and tribulations as if they were the reader’s own. In this way, the reader identifies with people like George, those at the receiving end of state power. *Absent: The English Teacher* is reminiscent of J.M Coetzee’s (2000) *Disgrace* in its preoccupation with white self-exemption and self-implication. Memmi (2003) points out that by virtue of being white in colony one is entitled to benefits that accrue in a racial society whether one wants to or not. The preoccupation with collective guilt is a function of this although Eppel complicates this by arguing that identities are much more fluid than this as shown by the very act of helping the black abandoned child and journeying to Empanjeni which is reflective of a confrontation with one’s past/guilt. His death ultimately holds out hope for a future Zimbabwe where race is not an issue.

I argued in the second part of this chapter that land in Zimbabwe has always been constructed as site for the inscription of imposed or homogenized national identities, however unstable and contested these may be. The contention was that for the settler, the land represented belonging, ownership, imposing order upon chaos and therefore symbolic of home-making. Land was emblematic of striking roots on the African wilderness, of place-making however ambivalent this remained. After colonialism, land for the blacks stood for dispossession, defeat, alienation and a will to fight for re-possession of the this indigenous heritage, it was a marker of black identity during the liberation war. In the politically fraught period of post-1999 when the ruling party’s stranglehold on power became tenuous and shaky, the land issue was weaponized to orchestrate the land redistribution or Third *Chimurenga* which was replete with narrow racial and political definitions of citizenship and belonging. Charles Berryman (1999:176) has argued

that in times of crisis, the ideas of nation, identity and belonging, because of their unstable and shifty nature, need constant propping. In light of a constellation of forces ranged against the ruling party and the real threat of losing power, Mugabeism was deployed as a survival strategy to neutralize the alignment of threatening political forces. The site for the scattering of these threats was the land and its potential use for the re-interpretation of the past versus the present, its capacity to inscribe primordial identities on space. In its patriotic Mugabeist form, the land was ideologized and in this ideological reductionism, it was used to redefine ‘Africanness, African being, national ethos and patriotism’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011:15) in essentialized, politicized and racialized terms. As a marker of true Zimbabwean identity, it arbitrarily occluded other subjectivities from national belonging. In the revived discourse of indigeneity, Afro-radicalism and nativism, the political language became focused on “the notion of ‘foreignness’, and constructing literal enemies out of so-called strangers and intruders... (which) has been critical in the regime’s strategic narrowing of national identity and belonging” (Hammar *et al*, 2003:28). The resort to the appropriation of the liberation war discourse that centered on land effectively installed virulent definitions of citizenship that authorized violence to an identified, white, pro-western internal or external foe that had to be excised from the national polity.

The section also contended that Eppel narratively registers his disillusionment with white land greed during and after colonialism and the ways in which they construct themselves as super-human beings as shown in the focal stories in *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings* and *White Man Crawling*. His narrative thrust is that disproportionate white land ownership was an injustice that needed urgent redress. But, typical of his fictional search for a third space outside the untenable polarities, he shows his disapproval of the way land becomes a symbol for the shutting out of space and place for belonging to other citizens in the Third *Chimurenga* grand narrative. Far from social redistributive justice, land becomes a decoy for the

‘embourgeoisement’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:62) of only ZANU-PF super citizens ‘who are more equal than others’ as shown in the story “The Very High Ranking Soldier’s Wife.” It also becomes a site for the coercive and xenophobic exercise of power to retain the inequalities in land ownership and maintain ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe in power. The discourse on land is used as a strategy to problematize Zimbabweanness, belonging, violence, citizenship and to throw open alternative ways of re-visioning social redistributive programs that are just, inclusive, non-racial and pro-poor. Otherwise, in Eppel’s texts selected for this study in this chapter, land is constructed as a nodal point for the legitimation of inequalities and an installation of the politics of entitlement that harks back to the Rhodesian colonial structures of hegemony. Alois Mlambo *et al* (2010:89-91) cogently conclude that “the concept of Zimbabwe as home for its citizens is one fractured along historical, spatial, political, racial, ethnic and personal lines, and indeed it is a multidimensional intersection of all these factors.”

Whereas the analysis of Eppel’s works in Chapter Three and Chapter Four reflected that he creates a binary society fractured along the lines of race and politics, Chapter Five argued that the fictional postcolonial nation’s bifurcations are predicated on the morality/immorality and class divides. I argued that, characteristic of a society that has emerged from colonial experience, race indeed still subsists as shown by remnants of neo-Rhodies but this aspect is not foregrounded. What the writer creates is a post-independent nation trying to locate its moral compass. Such transitioning is presented as not without its fair share of problems that are a throwback from colonialism. Thus the overarching tropes in the section on *Hatchings* are those of re-birth, birthing, probity and fertility that are counterpoised with the rottenness, corruption, evil and the regressive forces of immorality. In this narrative representation of Zimbabwe, both blacks and whites are complicit in undermining the envisaged developmental trajectory of the nation. Through the inscription of the Matopos with its supposed holiness, the New Year, water symbolism, the egg, the Fawkes family and the innocence of childhood, Eppel advocates a

moral re-armament that rejuvenates the post-independent nation so that justice, humanity, tolerance and multiculturalism form the centerpiece of nation-building. But such a narrative vision is always ambushed by a resilient, pervasive, intrusive and omnipresent corrosive underworld whose negative influences have sullied and muddied the very foundations of a moral society.

Schools, universities, churches and politics itself have become so morally compromised that there seems to be no way out for the nation. I contended that what aggravates the moral acidity are the activities of the immigrant and refugee communities who, far from bringing value to the nation, actually import values and practices that destroy it. Ordinarily, I argued, these people ought to bring in cultural variety that strengthens rather than weakens the host nation. Despite the seeming implacability and relentless juggernaut of the evil space, Eppel holds out hope for a moral and inclusive society through the image of the Asil Khan egg, its eventual hatching and through the symbolic staging of this act in the Matopos. Though politics is downplayed here, the section tallies with other chapters in its search for a just, corruption-free society whose canvass is sufficiently broad to include the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. But, I also argued that Eppel's fictional representation of foreigners may tend to stoke the very fires of xenophobia and intolerance that he seeks to destabilize in a nation that has not sufficiently healed from the ills of racism and tribalism. The immigrant and refugee community is presented in a stereotypical way very much in the mould of what Phaswane Mpe's (2001) *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* seeks to supersede. Morality, immorality and corruption have nothing to do with a person's nationality though fraudulent researches that perpetuate the exoticization of the black person in anthropology is the epistemic trump card of the West in claiming to know the other.

The second part of this chapter analyzed the book *The Holy Innocents*. In the novel, like others, Eppel continues with his satirical attack on various forms of power abuses, corruption,

materialism, exclusions and beliefs that affect the positive construction of the postcolonial nation. The satire is manifestly trained at religious institutions whose mystifying antics tend to fleece the ordinary, poor and vulnerable of their money and, in the process, perpetuate discourses of domination, predation and the worship of money. The medical fraternity, represented by Dr Pudding (an expatriate) is figured as complicit in the general degeneration of a society whose penchant for out-sourced staff is more dangerous than helpful. Linked to this, is the African healing belief system and cultic churches which are seen as collusive in the theater of money-making at the expense of people's lives. The section argued that Eppel constructs a diseased nation corroded to the core and where, in Macbeth's words "returning were as tedious as go over" (William Shakespeare, 1987:121). The agents of cure become the vectors inflicting damage on and afflicting society. The depravity of the doctors is shown by their obsession with money and sex. What Eppel registers is the fact that in times of national crisis unscrupulous individuals exploit people's vulnerability and the need for help to their own advantage. Hence, the construction of the church as a den of iniquity where the gospel of prosperity and seeding (sacrifice) is used to hoodwink the people into investing their faith, bodies and money (which they do not have) into cultic, voodoo-like religious organizations that advantage their originators. The travesties of the Christian religion and African healing practices that are, in their true forms, people-centered, pro-poor and humane, serve to reinforce the image of Zimbabwe as a post-independence space that has lost its moral direction. The section becomes Eppel's way of indicting the postcolonial space and its rulers who have abandoned their people and left them susceptible to exploitation by those who masquerade as saviors. The moral cul de sac presented at the end of *The Holy Innocents* is Eppel's way of suggesting an alternative way of imagining a post-independent nation's moral fiber. There is need for a new moral and political order that extricates the nation from the clutches of greed,

moral chaos and poverty. I argued that the project of nation-building is disrupted by people's acceptance of the abnormal as normal.

Recommendations

In the context of the arguments and findings made above, the study makes the following recommendations:

- Eppel's satire often uses naming as a technique to reinforce theme. The study of names and naming systems has become an important area of study worldwide. Names are symbolic and the way Eppel names characters, institutions, ministers/ministries is richly symbolic. Future studies of Eppel's works can deepen an understanding of literary onomastics, especially in the fields of toponyms, retronyms, unconventional names and nicknames.
- Over and above Eppel's deployment of satire, his writings evince a preoccupation with nature, the landscape, the flora and fauna. Future studies can explore the extent to which the landscape can be regarded as a metaphor of representation of the status quo in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe.
- In Zimbabwean Literature the subject of Gukurahundi has been dominated by black writers. In future, scholars can examine this issue in literary representation by white writers. Few white novelists have fictionalized this event and the few include Eppel in his poems and prose writings.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Eppel, J. (1989) *Spoils of War*. Cape Town: Carrefour Press.

Eppel, J. (1992) *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road*. Johannesburg: Carrefour Press.

Eppel, J. (2002) *The Holy Innocents*. Bulawayo: 'amaBooks.

Eppel, J. (2004) *The Caruso of Colleen Bawn and Other Writings*. Bulawayo: 'amaBooks.

Eppel, J. (2005) *Songs my Country Taught me. Selected Poems, 1965-2005*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Eppel, J. (2006) *Hatchings*. Bulawayo: 'amaBooks.

Eppel, J. (2007) *White Man Crawling*. Bulawayo: 'amaBooks.

Eppel, J. (2009) *Absent: The English Teacher*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Secondary Sources

Achebe, C. (1983) *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. California: Stanford University Press.

Allen, G. (2000) *Intertextuality*. London: Routledge.

Alonso, A. M. (1994) "The Politics of Space, Time, Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1): 379-405.

Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Appiah, A. (2006) *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York & London: W.W. Norton.

Appiah, K.A. (2003) "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern." In: B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (eds) *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 337-357.

Armah, A.K. (1968) *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G & Tiffin, H. (eds) (1996) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Ashcroft, A., Griffiths, G & Tiffin, H. (eds) (2002) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G & Tiffin, H. (eds) (2003) *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1987) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1986) "The Problem of Speech Genres." *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist (eds) Trans. Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Balibar, E. (2002) "The Nation Form: History and Ideology." In: E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein, (eds) *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso, pp.86-106.

Balibar, E. & Wallerstein, I. (eds) (2002) *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso.

Berryman, C. (1999) "The Critical Mirrors: Theories of Autobiography." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 32(1):71-84.

Bhaba, H.K. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, H.K. (1990) *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge.

Bhebe, N. & Ranger, T. (eds) (1995) *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage publications.

Boehmer, E. (2005) *Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bond, P. & Manyanya, P. (2003) *Zimbabwe's Plunge: An Exhausted Nationalism, Neo-liberalism and the search for social Justice*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Bourne, R. (2011) *Catastrophe: What Went Wrong in Zimbabwe?* London: Zed Books.

Brenan, T. (1996) "The National Longing for form." In: B. Ascroft, G. Griffins and H. Tiffin (eds) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, pp.128-131.

Brouillette, S. (2007) *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*. Palgrave: Macmillan.

- Bulawayo, N. (2013) *We Need New Names*. London: Vintage Books.
- Bull-Christiansen, L. (2004) *Tales of the Nation. Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe*. UPPSALA: NORDISKA AFRICA INSTITUTE.
- Cabral, A. (1979) *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings*. New York: Monthly Review.
- Calhoun, C (ed.) (1992) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Campbell, H. (2003) *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of Patriarchal Model of Liberation*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
- Chennells, A. (1982) *Settler Myths and Southern Rhodesian Novel*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Zimbabwe.
- Chennells, A. (1995) "Rhodesian Discourse, Rhodesian Novels and the Zimbabwe Liberation war." In N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds) *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, pp.103-109.
- Chennells, A. (2005) "Self-representation and national memory: white autobiographies in Zimbabwe." In: R. Muponde and R. Primorac (eds) *Versions of Zimbabwe: new approaches to literature and culture*. Harare: Weaver Press, pp.131-144.
- Chitando, A. (2011) "Narrating Gender and Danger in Selected Zimbabwe's Women's writings on HIV and AIDS." Doctoral Thesis: University of South Africa.
- Chitando, E. (2013) "Prophets, Profits and Protests. Prosperity Theology and Zimbabwean Gospel Music." In E. Chitando, R. Musiiwa, and J. Joachim, (eds) *Prophets, Profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe, 12 Bible in Africa Studies*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, pp.133-151.

Chitando, E., Musiiwa, R. & Joachim, J. (eds) (2013) *Prophets, Profits and the Bible in Zimbabwe, 12 Bible in Africa Studies*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press.

Christie, S. (2013) "Eppel's Acid Satire finds New Purchase in Zimbabwe." Mail and Guardian, April 5. <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-04-05-00-eppel-acid-finds-new-purchase-in-zim-1> (accessed January 10, 2018).

Cleaver, E. (1992) *Soul on Ice*. New York: Dell Publishing.

Conrad, J. (1902) *Heart of Darkness*. London: Penguin Classics.

Creswell, W.J. (2013) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing among Five Approached*. Third Edition: SAGE, London.

Dabney, R.H. (1967) *Love and Property in the Novels of Dickens*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Daily News newspaper, 15 December 2000, "Mugabe Attacks Whites- Again."

Davidson, B. (1992) *The Blackman's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*. London: James Currey.

Day, G. & Thompson, A. (2004) *Theorizing Nationalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

De Santis, A.D. (2001) "Caught Between Two Worlds: Bakhtin's Dialogism in the Exile Experience." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 14 (1): 1-19.

Deeb, G.M.A. (2016) "Moments of infinite joy within limited time": The concept of time in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. *International Journal of English and Literature* 7 (8): 112-126.

Driessen, H. (1997) "Humor, Laughter and the Field: Reflections from Anthropology." In: J. Bremmer and H. Roodenburg (eds) *A Cultural History of Humor from Antiquity to the Present Day*. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 222-241.

Dube, N. (2017) "Towards a Stylistic Re-reading of John Eppel's *Absent: The English Teacher*." *Scrutiny 2, Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 22(2): 82-95.

du Gay, P. et al, (eds) (2000) *Identity: A reader*. London: Sage Publications.

Eberhart, C. A. (ed.) (2011) *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in The Bible*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

Ellis, S. & Haar, G.T. (2004) *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Englebert, P. & Dunn, K. (2014) *Inside African Politics*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Fanon, F. (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin Books.

Fisher, J.L. (2010) *Pioneers, Settlers, Aliens, and Exiles: The Decolonization of White Identity in Zimbabwe*. The Australian National University: E-Press.

Foulkes, P. (1983) *Literature and Propaganda*. New York: Methuen.

Fraser, N. (1992) 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.' In: C. Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press, pp.109-142.

Gans, H. (2002) "The Sociology of Space: A Use-Centered View." *City and Community* 1(4): 329-339. Accessed 15 October 2016.

Geady (ed.) *Political Transition, Politics and Cultures*. London: Plato Press.

Gilroy, P. (1993) *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.

Gilroy, P. (1994) *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures*. London: Serpent's Trail.

- Godwin, P. & Hancock, I. (1993) *Rhodesians Never Die. The Impact of war and Political Change on White Rhodesia, 1970-1980*. Harare: Baobab Books.
- Goffman, E. (1971) *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin.
- Gomo, M. (2010) *A Fine Madness*. Banbury: Ayebia Clarke.
- Goodman, R. (2004) "De-scribing the Center: Satiric and Postcolonial Strategies in the Madonna of Excelsior." *Journal of Literary Studies* 20 (3-4):62-70.
- Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2008) World-system Analysis and Postcolonial Studies: A Call for a dialogue from the "Coloniality of power" Approach. In: R. Krishnaswamy and C. Hawley (eds) *The Postcolonial and the Global*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, pp.94-104.
- Gwekwerere, T. (2013) "Space, Voice and Authority: White Critical Thought on the Black Zimbabwean Novel." Doctoral Thesis. University of South Africa.
- Habermas, J. (1989) *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Haggard, H.R. (1958) *King Solomon's Mines*. London: Puffin Books.
- Hall, S. (1996). New Ethnicities. In: D. Morley and C. kuan-Hsing (eds) *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 442-451.
- Hall, S. (2000) "Who needs Identity?" In: du Gay, P.*et al*, (eds) *Identity: A reader*. London: Sage Publications, pp.15-30.
- Hammar, A., Raftopoulos, B. & Jensen, S. (2003) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business. Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of crisis*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Hammond, L. (2000) "This Place Will Become Home. Emplacement and Community formation in a Tigrayan returnee settlement, Northwest Ethiopia." Masters Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Hardt, M. & Negri, A. (2000) *Empire*. London: University Press.

Harman, G. (1997) *The Nature of Morality: An Introduction to Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Harris, A & Donovan, S. (2010) "Rhodesian and Zimbabwean Literature." *English Studies in Africa* 50 (1): 3-11.

Harris, A. (2005) "Writing home: Inscriptions of whiteness/descriptions of belonging in white Zimbabwean memoir/autobiography." In: R. Muponde & R. Primorac (eds) *Versions of Zimbabwe: new approaches to literature and culture*. Harare: Weaver Press, pp. 103-117.

Hettne, B. (1995) *Development and the Three Worlds. Towards an International Political Economy of Development*. London: Longman.

Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T. (1983) *Invention of Tradition*. London: University of Cambridge Press.

Holquist, M. (1990) *Dialogism. Bakhtin and his World*. London: Routledge.

Holy Bible (Revised Standard Version): Genesis 6-11-20. The Bible Societies.

Hove, C. (2011) *Homeless Sweet Home: A Memoir of Miami*. Lebanon: B & B Press.

Hughes, D.M. (2010) *Whiteness in Zimbabwe. Race, Landscape, and the Problem of Belonging*. Palgrave: MacMillan.

Hutcheon, L. (1989) *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.

Ignatieff, M. (1994) *Blood and Belonging. Journeys into Nationalism*. London: Vintage.

Ikonne, C., Oko E. & Onwudinjo, P. (eds) (1991) *African Literature and African Historical Experience*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational.

Janmohamed, A.R. (1996) "The Economy of the Manichean Allegory." In: B. Ashcroft, G. Griffins and H. Tiffin (eds) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, pp.59-87.

Javangwe, T.D. (2011) "Contesting Narratives: Constructions of the self and Nation in Zimbabwean Political Auto/biography." PhD Thesis. University of South Africa.

Jeater, D. (2012) "Citizens, Witch or No-person? Contested Concepts of Personhood in Political Violence and Reconciliation in Zimbabwe, 1978-2008." In: D. Kaulemu, (ed.) *Imagining Citizenship in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, pp.124-137.

Jensen, S.Q. (2011) "Othering, Identity Formation and Agency." *Qualitative Studies* 2 (2): 63-78.

Kaulemu, D. (2012) "Imagining Citizenship in Zimbabwe." In: D. Kaulemu, (ed.) *Imagining Citizenship in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, pp.v-x.

Kaulemu, D. (ed.) (2012) *Imagining Citizenship in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Kohler, P. (1993) "Satire and Testimony in the Late Rhodesian Novel: John Eppel's *D.G.G.Berry's The Great North Road*." *English in Africa* 20 (2): 67-87.

Krishnaswamy, R. & Hawley, C. (eds) (2008) *The Postcolonial and the Global*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Lara, M.P. (1998) *Moral Textures. Feminist Narratives in the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lazarus, N. (1999) *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

Lazarus, N. (2004). *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Lessing, D. (1950) *The Grass is Singing*. London: Michael Joseph.

Lynch, G. (1988) *Stephen Leacock: Humor and Humanity*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University.

Maggio, J. (2007) "Can the subaltern Be Heard? Political Theory, Transition, Representation, Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak." *Alternatives* 32 (4): 419-443.

Magosvongwe, R. (2013) "Land and Identity in Zimbabwean Fiction Writings in English: From 2000 to 2010: A Critical Analysis" Doctoral Dissertation, University of Cape Town.

Malcolm X. (1970) *By Any Means Necessary*. New York: Pathfinder.

Mamdani, M. (1996) *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

Mamdani, M. (2001) "When does a Settler Become a Native? Citizenship and Identity in a Settler Society." *Pretext: Literacy and Cultural Studies* 10 (1): 63-73.

Mamdani, M. (1998) "When Does a Settler Become a Native? Reflections of the Colonial Roots of Citizenship in Equatorial and South Africa." *Center for African Studies*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

- Manase, I. (2011) "Imagining Post-2000 Zimbabwe Perceptions of Land and Notions on Identities in Catherine Buckle's *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions*." *Journal of Literary Studies* 27 (2): 26-37.
- Mandaza, I. (1986) "The State in Post-White Settler Colonial Transition." In: I. Mandaza, (ed.) *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition 1980-1986*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Mangwanda, K. M. (1998) "The Zimbabwean Nation as a Cultural Construct in the Works of John Eppel, Dambudzo Marechera and Yvonne Vera." Doctoral Thesis, University of Pretoria.
- Mangwanda, M. K. (2007) "Corruption, Migration and The Zimbabwean Nation: John Eppel's Hatchings." *African Identities* 5 (1): 125-133.
- Marechera, D. (1978) *House of Hunger*. London: Heinemann.
- Maruma, O. (2007) *Coming Home*. Harare: Gonamombe.
- Masango, M. J.S. (2006) "African Spirituality that Shapes the Concept of Ubuntu." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 27 (3): 930-943.
- Materike, K. (2012) "Citizenship as critique." In: Kaulemu, D. (ed.) *Imagining Citizenship in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung, pp.148-168.
- Max-Neef, M. (1989) *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections*. New York: Apex Press.
- Mayer, T. (2002) "Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Setting the Stage." In: T. Mayer (ed.) *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*. London: Routledge, pp.1-24.
- Mayer, T (ed.) (2002) *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*. London: Routledge.
- Mbao, W. (2010) "Inscribing Whiteness and Staging Belonging in Contemporary Autobiographies and Life-Writing Forms." *English in Africa* 37 (1):63-75.

- Mbembe, A. (2001) *On the Postcolony*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- McGregor, G. & Primorac, R. (eds) (2010) *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Mcleod, J. (2007) (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Memmi, A. (2003) *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. London: Earthscan.
- Meredith, M. (2002) *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Mlalazi, C. (2012) *Running with Mother*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- Mlalazi, C. (2014) *They are Coming*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- Mlambo, A., Vambe, M.T. & Zegeye, A. (2010) "The Culture of crisis and crisis of culture in Zimbabwe." *African Identities* 8 (2):89-91.
- Mpe, P. (2001) *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
- Moore-King, B. (1989) *White Man Black War*. Harare: Baobab Books.
- Morley, D. & kuan-Hsing, C. (eds) (1996) *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Mtizira, N. (2008) *The Chimurenga Protocol*. Gaborone: Botshelo Publishing.
- Muchemwa, K. & Muponde, R. (eds) (2007) *Manning the Nation: Father figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- Muchemwa, K.Z. (2005) "Some Thoughts on History, Memory and Writing in Zimbabwe." In: R. Muponde & Primorac, R. (eds) *Versions of Zimbabwe: new approaches to literature and culture*. Harare: Weaver Press, pp.195-203.

Muchemwa, K.Z. (2009) "Introduction". In: J. Eppel (2009) *Absent: The English Teacher*. Bulawayo: 'amaBooks, pp.ix-xvi.

Mugabe, R.G. (2001) *Inside the Third Chimurenga*. Harare: Government of Zimbabwe.

Muponde, R. (2015) *Some kinds of Childhood: Images of History and Resistance in Zimbabwean Literature*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Muponde, R. & Primorac, R. (2005) (eds) *Versions of Zimbabwe: new approaches to literature and culture*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Musvoto, R.A. (2010) "Recasting History: Imagining and Mapping out Identities in Some Zimbabwean Poetry." PhD Dissertation. University of Pretoria.

Muzondidya, J. (2009). "From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997". In: Raftopoulos, B & Mlambo, A. (eds.) *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*. Harare: Weaver Press, pp.167-200.

Nairn, T. (1997) *Faces of Nationalism: Janus-Revisited*. London: Verso.

Ndlovu- Gatsheni, S. J. (2009) *Do Zimbabweans Exist? Trajectories of Nationalism, National Identity Formation and Crisis in a Postcolonial State*. Oxford: Peter Lang International Academic.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2009) *The Ndebele Nation. Reflections on Hegemony, Memory and Historiography*. Pretoria: UNISA Press.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2009) "Making Sense of Mugabeism in Local and Global Politics: So Blair, Keep your England and let me Keep my Zimbabwe." *Third World Quarterly* 306 (6): 1139-1158.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2009) "Africa for Africans or Africa for 'Natives' Only? 'New Nationalism' and Nativism in Zimbabwe and South Africa." *Africa Spectrum* 44(1):61-78.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2011) *The Zimbabwe Nation-State Project. A Historical Diagnosis of Identity and Power-based Conflicts in a Postcolonial State*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. & Muzondidya, J. (eds) (2011) *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism? Rethinking Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1981) *Writers in Politics: A Reengagement With Issues Literature and Society*. Oxford: James Currey.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1982) *Devil on the Cross*. Nairobi: Heinemann.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, (1993) *Moving the Centre. The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2007) *Wizard of the Crow*. Lagos: farafina.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. (2009) *Something Torn And New: An African Renaissance*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.

Nussbaum, M. (1995) *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon.

Nussbaum, M. (2001) *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nyambi, O. (2011) "Notes on Reading Zimbabwean Literature". *Postamble* 7 (1): 13-30.

Nzongola-Ntalaja, G. (2011) *Citizenship and Exclusion in Africa: The indigeneity Question. National Workshop on Citizenship and Indigeneity Conflicts in Nigeria*. Abuja: The Centre for Democracy and Development.

Okam, J. (1991) "The Novelist as a Historian: Yambo Ouologuem's *Le Devoir de Violence* Revisited." In: C. Ikonne, E. Oko and P. Onwudinjo (eds) *African Literature and African Historical Experience*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

Oosthuizen, G.C. (1992) "Diviner Prophet Parallels in the African Independent and Traditional Churches and Traditional Religion." In: G.C. Oosthuizen, G.C. and I. Hexham (eds) *Empirical Studies of African Independent Churches/Indigenous Churches*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Pr., 163-194.

Oosthuizen, G.C. & Hexham, I. (eds) (1992) *Empirical Studies of African Independent Churches/Indigenous Churches*. New York: The Edwin Mellen.

Parry, B. (2004) "The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies". In: Lazarus, N. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion of Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 66-80.

Patricia, A. (2017) "Dies Irae: Days of Wrath, Days of Crisis: A Report on the Current Situation in Zimbabwean Creative Writing." *The Nordic Africa Institution* 17. (2007). Web 10 November 2017.

Pilosof, R. (2012) *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmer's Voices from Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Pratt, M.L. (1992) *Imperial Writing and Transculturalism*. New York: Routledge.

Primorac, R. (2006) *The Place of Tears. The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe*. London: Tauris Academic Studies.

Primorac, R. (2010) "Rhodesians Never Die? The Zimbabwe Crisis and the Revival of Rhodesian Discourse." In: J. McGregor and R. Primorac (eds.) *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 202-228.

Radoulski, S.S. (2015) "Positioning is, above all, a matter of representation: J.M. Coetzee and the Transformative Power of Transgression." *Culture, Language and Representation* xiv: 181-200.

Raftopolous, B. (2012) "Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape and the Problem of Belonging." *African Affairs* 111(444): 497-498.

Raftopoulos, B. & Yoshikuni, T. (1999) (eds) *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Raftopoulos, B. & Mlambo, A. (2009) (eds) *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial period to 2008*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Raftopoulos, B. (2003) "The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe." In: A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos, and S. Jensen (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business. Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*. Harare: Weaver Press, 217-242.

Ranger, T. (1999) *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe*. Harare: Baobab Press.

Rodney, W. (1972) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Harare: ZPH.

Rutherford, B. (2003) "Belonging to the Farm(er): Farm Workers, Farmers, and the Shifting Politics of Citizenship." In: A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos, and S. Jensen, (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business. Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*. Harare: Weaver Press, pp. 191-216.

Sachikonye, L. (2011) *When a State Turns on its Citizens. Institutionalized Violence and Political Culture*. Jacana: South Africa.

Said, E. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage Books.

- Said, E.W. (1979) *Orientalism*. New York: Vantage Books.
- Sartre, J.P. (1957) Introduction. In: A. Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. London: EARTHSCAN, pp. vii – xxi.
- Schmidt, S. (2011) “Theorizing Place: Students’ Navigation of Place Outside the Classroom.” *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 27(1):20-35. Accessed 15 October 2016.
- Shaw, D. (2012) “Narrating the Zimbabwean Nation: A Conversation with John Eppel.” *Scrutiny 2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 17(1):100-111.
- Shakespeare, W. (1987) *Macbeth*. Harare: College Press.
- Sklar, R. (1985) “Reds and Rights: Zimbabwe’s Experiment.” *A Journal of Africanist Opinion* 14 (Fall): 29-31.
- Smith, A.D. (1998) *Nationalism and Modernism. A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nation and Nationalism*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, I. (1997) *The Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal and the Dreadful Aftermath*. London: Blake Publishers.
- Spivak, G.C. (1995) “Can the subaltern Speak?” In: B. Ashcroft, G. Griffins and H. Tiffin (eds) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp.28-37.
- Stevens, G., Duncan, N. & Sonn, C.C. (2013) “Memory, Narrative and Voice as Liberatory Praxis in the Apartheid Archive.” In: G.Stevens, N. Duncan, and D. Hook (eds) *Race, Memory and the Apartheid Archive: Towards a Psychosocial Praxis*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, pp.1-10.
- Stevens, G., Duncan, N. & Hook, D. (eds) (2013) *Race, Memory and the Apartheid Archive: Towards a Psychosocial Praxis*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

- Sylvester, C. (2003) "Remembering and Forgetting 'Zimbabwe': Towards a Third Transition." In: Geady (ed.) *Political Transition, Politics and Cultures*. London: Pluto Press.
- Tagwirei, C. (2014) "Should I Stay or should I Go?" Zimbabwe's White Writing, 1980 to 2011." Doctoral Thesis. Stellenbosch University.
- Tembi, C. (2016) "The Zimbabwean Crisis: Locations of Writing and the Literary Representation of Zimbabwe's 'Lost Decade.'" M.A.Dissertation. University of Stellenbosch.
- Tiffin, H. (2003) "Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourses." In: B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin, (eds) *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 99-101.
- Todd, J.G. (2012) "Citizenship by Birth in Zimbabwe: A Case Study." In: D. Kaulemu. (ed.) *Imagining Citizenship in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung, pp. 39-49.
- Todd, J. (2007) *Through the Darkness: A Life in Zimbabwe*. London: Struik Publishers.
- Tsing, A. (2000) "Inside the Economy of Appearances." *Public Culture* 12 (1): 115-44.
- Van Evera, S. (2001) "Primordialism Lives!" *American Political Science Association-Comparative Politics* 12 (1): 20-22.
- Wallerstein, I. (1991) "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism and Ethnicity," In: Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. (eds) *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso, pp.71-85.
- Watts, J. (2011) "The Rhetoric of Sacrifice: Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in the Bible," In: C.A Eberhart (ed.) *Ritual and Metaphor: Sacrifice in The Bible*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, pp. 3-16.
- Weedon, C. (2004) *Identity and Culture. Narratives of Difference and Belonging*. McGraw-Hill: Open University Press.

Wylie, D. (2001) "Introduction". In: J. Eppel, *John Eppel: Selected Poems 1965-1995*. Bulawayo: Childline, pp.5-8.

Yliopisto, J. (1999) *The Characteristics of Menippean Satire in Seneca, Lucianus and Erasmus*. Toukokuu.

Zhuwarara, M. (2001) *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English*. Harare: College Press.

Internet Sources

<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/zimbabwe/eppel/gray2.html>. accessed on 9/30/2017