Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/31875 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Mangena, Tendai
Title: Counter-discourse in Zimbabwean literature
Issue Date: 2015-02-11

Counter-Discourse in Zimbabwean Literature

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van

de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden

op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,

volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties

ter verdediging op woensdag 11 februari 2015

klokke 10:00 uur

door

Tendai Mangena

geboren te Mwenezi, Zimbabwe

in 1979

PROMOTIECOMMISSIE

Promotor:

Prof. dr. E.J. van Alphen

Co-promotor:

Dr. D. Merolla

Leden:

Prof. dr. M.E. de Bruijn

Prof. dr. M.P.G.M. Mous

Dr. S. Pozanesi (Universiteit Utrecht)

Dr. K. Robbe

Prof. dr. W.J.J. Schipper

Dr. A.L.B. van Weyenberg

Table of Contents

Introduction

I am against silence. The books I write try to undo the silent posture African women have endured over so many decades. (Vera, as cited in Soros 2002)

I don't see that this has anything to do with history that you are researching. We have nothing to hide, but I would not expect to read our dissident problem in a history book. (Kilgore, 2009: p. 260)

If the government said inflation would go down, it was sure to rise. If they said there was a bumper harvest starvation would follow, if the government says the sky is blue, we should all look up to check. (Gappah, 2009: p. 43)

Counter-Discursive Narratives

As demonstrated by Zhuwarara, Zimbabwean fiction in general, like most literatures of the world, is responsive to and reflective of history (2001: p. 10). Major Zimbabwean writers write against both colonial oppression and the challenges of the Zimbabwean postcolony. Literary texts contribute to the public sphere and to the 'search for justice' in the aforementioned historical periods, as they often stand as subversions of dominant versions of history. As examples of 'dissident' voices, such works constitute what Lara calls 'emancipatory narratives' in that they are shaped by the various oppressions faced by the general Zimbabwean public in different chronotopes (1998).

My central aim is to understand how such dominant and emancipator versions of history are narratovely created and what their relationship is. Therefore, the question that forms the basis of my thesis is 'what are the key features of Zimbabwean counter-discursive narratives in English? In view of that my thesis is based on the concept of counter-discourse. Terdiman coined the term counter-discourse 'to characterize the theory and practice of symbolic resistance' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: p. 50). He used the term to refer to specific aspects of French literature in his seminal work *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France* (1989). The term has been incorporated into postcolonial theory 'to describe the complex ways in which challenges to a dominant or established discourse (specifically those of the imperial centre) might be mounted from the periphery' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: p.

50). In Zimbabwean literature, challenges to a dominant or established discourse are not just limited to those of the imperial culture, but go beyond to include challenges to the established/dominant discourse in the post-independence state, specifically nationalist, patriarchal and 'patriotic' discourses. In Zimbabwean literature, counter-discursive narratives are varied. Writing on behalf of the subaltern groups, writers invent anti-colonial, anti-nationalist, anti-'patriotic'and anti-patriarchal narratives, popularly known as feminist narratives. Put in simple terms, writers who challenge dominant discourses do it from positions of marginality/subalternity. The subaltern in this context include the colonised, women, children and subordinated masculinities (in the Zimbabwean context these include those that belong to political opposition parties). What is contested in 'dissident' narratives is 'the capacity of established discourses to ignore […] *marginalize* and *distort'* the existence and history of the subaltern (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: p. 50).[1] Subversion of dominant discourses is a critical aspect in resistance and/or protest literature, given that counter-discursive narratives are 'mode(s) of combat' (Terdiman, 1989: p. 11). Stated in other words, counter-discursive narratives belong to the category of protest literature. Elsewhere, the African American writer Wright posits: 'all literature is protest. You can't name a single literary work that isn't protest' (1961, as cited in Baldwin, 1998: p. 257). Wright said this in a conversation with James Baldwin, and was dismissing the art for art's sake concept as 'crap'. His proposition, though a contested one, is quite valid especially with reference to literature by members of an oppressed group in any given society. 'All those who cherish and fight for the liberation of the human spirit from all negative restraints'[2] fight a cultural battle through their writings (Ngugi, 1981: p. 33).

An absolute definition of protest literature may not be possible because of its fluidity. Protest literature can be defined from various theoretical standpoints. Deconstruction and Feminism are some of the useful ways of understanding different forms of protest literature. Deconstruction is based largely but not exclusively on Jacques Derrida's rereading of philosophical writings. As a revisionist theory, contestation is central to Derrida's Deconstruction theory. The revision aspect of this theory is also a key feature of counter-discourse; for counter-discursive texts are revisions of dominant discourses. Terdiman

---

[1] The meaning of subaltern adopted in this discussion is one adopted by Gramsci to refer to those 'groups in society who are in subject to the hegemony of the ruling class […] and are denied access to hegemonic power' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: p. 198).

[2] 'Negative restraints', in the modern sense, constitute human rights abuses.

describes re-vision as a counter-discursive act 'of looking back, seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction' (1971, as cited in Widdowson, 2006: p. 491). Most counter-discursive narratives are fresh ways of reading 'old texts', but with new different insights. The idea of 'revision' demonstrates that there is an interrelationship between dominant and counter-discursive narratives. Terdiman explains the relationship as follows: 'we might thus posit something like a Newton's Law in the discursive realm: for every dominant discourse a contrary and a transgressive counter-discourse. [...] no discourse is ever a monologue' (1989: p. 65, p. 36). This relationship between counter and dominant discourses is demonstrated in this study through a discussion of how colonial, nationalist, patriarchal and 'patriotic' discourses are contested. These discourses are intertwined and their counter-discourses present interesting connections. At the beginning of a counter-discourse tradition in Zimbabwe, we have nationalists challenging the colonial writing of Zimbabwean history and culture. Democrat writers in turn challenge nationalists' glorified narrations of especially the liberation struggle, citing inadequacies and biases. Feminist writers revise the 'revised-nationalist' discourse on the liberation struggle.[3] Rewriting nationalist history and culture reshapes an understanding of the nation and normally addresses insufficiency and deliberate exclusions in terms of historical and cultural representation. This chain of relationships is descriptive of counter-discourses and is because these 'are not sovereign and do not exhaust reality' (Terdiman, 1989: p. 18). In other words, the chain of counter-discursive narratives is open-ended, meaning that 'the site of counter-discourse is itself contested'- instances where 'counter-discourse struggles against both dominant and competing oppositional discourses' (White, 1990, as cited in Terdiman, 1989: p. 80).

In Feminism, protest is against patriarchy and is aimed at the promotion of gender equality. Feminism is one of the most influential political and cultural movements of the late twentieth century and mainly 'promote(s) women's autonomy'. A reading of Lara's *Moral Textures: Feminist Narratives in the Public Sphere* shall be useful in the discussion of feminist narratives. She conceives feminist 'narratives of emancipation as forms of recognition' (1998). An important aspect of her approach is to show how 'women build up first their claims about becoming persons and being persons through the aesthetic sphere,

---

[3] 'Female writers' would have been an appropriate phrase but this would mean excluding some Zimbabwean male writers (like Hove) who also take part in revisions of nationalist narrations of the liberation struggle.

by writing novels […]'. As Lara demonstrates, narratives of emancipation create new forms of power, offering the oppressed women new ways of fighting injustices, thus transforming institutions. Feminist texts selected for this study include Vera's *Without a Name*, *The Stone Virgins*, 'It is Hard to Live Alone' and 'Crossing Boundaries', Nyamubaya's 'That Special Place', Hove's *Ancestors* and Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*. Nyamubaya, Vera and Tagwira contribute to the feminist debate from an insider's point of view. Hove's text represents women's exclusion yet also presents challenges associated with 'speaking for others'. The guiding question in the discussion of Hove's *Ancestors* is 'how much authority does a male writer have to talk on behalf of the subjugated woman in his narrative?' Spivak's ideas on the subaltern will be useful in my analysis of Hove's text as a feminist text.

In my discussion of feminist narratives, I shall also make use of the sociological theory of intersectionality. This theory demonstrates how 'various socially and culturally constructed categories of discrimination interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels contributing to systematic forms of inequality'. Intersectional systems of society that bind together cultural patterns of oppression include race, gender, class and ethnicity (Collins, 2000: p. 42).

> The term 'intersectionality' was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), when she discussed issues of black women's employment in the US. She was eventually invited to introduce the notion of intersectionality before a special session on the subject in Geneva during the preparatory session to the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in September 2001 in Durban, South Africa. (Yuval-Davis, 2006: p. 193)

I will use the notion of intersectionality in my discussion of Mazvita in Vera's *Without a Name*, Onai in *The Uncertainty of Hope* and other black women characters in selected texts. Vera's Mazvita is a black poor woman labourer. In a colonial set-up, she is not just black, but also a woman as well as at the bottom of the social ladder. Her poverty cannot be separated from her being black, a labourer and a woman. Onai's victim status emanates from her poverty, being a street vendor and a woman. Like all other vendors, Onai is a victim of Murambatsvina state violence, like all other characters in Tagwira's novel. As a wife she is also a victim of her husband's abuse. Such a position is akin to the black woman's position in America especially during slavery. Nanny in

Hurston's *Their Eyes were Watching God* refers to how, 'de nigger woman is de mule of the world' (1937). The statement means that the black woman is 'not with power, not a liberated woman (if liberation means the freedom to make choices about one's life), but a mule picking up the burdens that everyone else has thrown down and refused to carry' (Washington, 1975: p. xi).

Counter-discourse has close links to the notion of writing-back. The term writing-back was coined by Salman Rushdie in the 1980s and is a key concept in post-colonial theory (Freundt, 2012: p. 1). Postcolonial literature consists of writings by previously suppressed voices to the imperial centre, and goes beyond to re-write all other forms of dominant ideologies including patriarchal and nationalist dominations in independent states. Political, economic and cultural domination are some of the many oppressive tendencies of colonialism. The First and Second Chimurenga[4] were the major responses to colonialism and are representative of the fight for democracy against the excesses of colonial contact. Writers took part in the liberation struggle at the level of cultural production by writing-back to the imperial centre. In chapter 1, I will discuss the problems associated with writing-back to the imperial centre with a specific reference to Negritudism.

Mbembe and Mwangi's understanding of the African postcolony informs my focus in chapters 2, 3 and 4. In *On the Postcolony (2001)*, Mbembe calls for a reading of African postcolonial realities that goes beyond associations to imperialism to include self-reflection. Using the same approach in *Africa Writes Back to Self: Metafiction, Gender and Sexuality*, Mwangi demonstrates that in the African postcolony writers depart from writing-back to the colonial centre and focus on 'local forms of oppression that are seen parallel to classical colonialism' (2009: p. 1). Texts selected for chapters 2, 3 and 4 should be understood as self-reflexive on specific historical aspects of the Zimbabwean postcolony, and particularly challenge falsification of history through biases, exclusion and 'posing truth for counter-discursive purposes' (Freundt, 2012: p. 3). In chapter 2 I will discuss how Vera, Nyamubaya and Hove 'displace and annihilate' the nationalist imagination of the liberation struggle, particularly challenging women exclusion (Terdiman, 1989: p. 12). According to Fanon,

---

[4] The First Chimurenga refers to the 1896/7 Shona and Ndebele uprisings against colonialists. The Shona and the Ndebele lost the war. This war continued in the 1970s as the Second Chimurenga, which ended in 1980, marking the end of colonial rule. The Second Chimurenga is followed by a Third Chimurenga (for a detailed discussion of the Third Chimurenga, see chapter 4 of this study).

'history teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism' (1963: p. 119). Gukurahundi[5] is a good example of the 'cracks' of the independent state that are a sign of retrogression as ZANU tends towards monopolization of power. The works selected and discussed in chapter 3 re-write state silence and lies about Gukurahundi violence. In chapter 4 I will focus on how writers re-imagine the Third Chimurenga in ways that clearly subvert the state's 'patriotic' discourse on the Third Chimurenga.

My study is also given shape and impetus by Thieme's notion of postcolonial con-texts (2001). His idea is limited to how postcolonial writers invent con-texts that interrogate and subvert colonial pre-texts. His discussion of text interaction is limited to the debate between English canonical and postcolonial texts, but in Zimbabwean literature text interaction goes beyond what Thieme suggests to include interaction of texts outside the colonial rhetoric. In chapter 2 I will discuss how Vera, Nyamubaya and Hove resituate the black woman subject into the national liberation discourse in three different but related ways. Vera in *Without a Name* rewrites land politics in the context of the liberation and demonstrates that women cannot understand land just as a cultural artefact that blacks should fight to repossess. Vera demonstrates this through Mazvita who is critical of Nyenyedzi's unquestioned attachment to land. Mazvita's position is influenced by a personal sexual violation where the land is an accomplice. Vera and Nyamubaya in 'It is Hard to Live Alone' and 'That Special Place' also destabilize the battle rear-front distinctions with specific reference to women's participation in the liberation struggle. Nyamubaya challenges the idea that the battlefront is a male preserve, and indicates that women also participated in the liberation struggle as fighters. Vera challenges the proposition that the battlefront is the most significant war location, and demonstrates that women also contributed in their domesticity. Hove and Vera also situate women-specific struggles in the context of the larger liberation struggle. My discussion in this chapter is influenced by my reading of Lyons' theorising on the place of the woman in the liberation struggle in *Guns and Guerrillas Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle* (2004). Lyons argues that black women are relegated to the margin of the liberation

---

[5] 'Gukurahundi' was the code name for the Zimbabwean government's military operation against 'dissidents' in Matabeleland and Midlands in the early 1980s, which used the North-Korean trained Fifth Brigade. What the government termed 'dissidents' were actually members of ZAPU who had the potential of becoming an opposition party.

10

narratives because 'most popular fiction about the war has been written by men' (2004: p. 6). Texts selected for this chapter therefore rewrite masculine narratives of the war.

In chapter 3, the state-sponsored Gukurahundi is discussed as one of the crimes that, as Soyinka avers, 'constantly provoke memories of the historic wrongs inflicted on the African continent by others' (1999: p. xxiv). Since ethnicity is a key aspect of Gukurahundi, over and above discussing Gukurahundi narratives in the context of the counter-discourse theory, I also refer to Luraghi's theory on ethnic identities in *The Ancient Messenians: Constructions of Ethnicity and Memory* (2008). In Gukurahundi, emphasis on ethnic differences includes language use, political affiliation and positions of power. Besides Mbembe and Mwangi as key theorists influencing my discussion in chapter 4, I also rely on Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya's ideas of the Third Chimurenga contained in *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism: Rethinking Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe* (2011). Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya interpret the Third Chimurenga nationalism as grotesque: put in place by government as an emancipatory project and dismissed by voices of dissent as 'an exhausted patriarchal model of nationalism' (2011: p. 2). The selected texts on the Third Chimurenga discussed in chapter 4 are dissident and largely question the Third Chimurenga's emancipatory function. Wendell's ideas on women's victimhood in her article 'Oppression and Victimization: Choice and Responsibility' (1990) and Yuval-Davis' 'Intersectionality and Feminist Politics' will shape my discussion of victimhood in Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*.

Trends in Reading Zimbabwean Literature and History

A lot has been written about Zimbabwean literature and history. My current research departs from but also complements existing literature. All critics on Zimbabwean literature agree that Zimunya's *Those Years of Drought and Hunger: The Birth of African Literature in English in Zimbabwe*, published in 1982, remains a seminal critical work on Zimbabwean literature as it is 'designed to function as an introductory overview' (Primorac and Muponde 2005: p. xvi). Veit-Wild's *Teachers, Preachers, Non-Believers: A Social History of Zimbabwean Literature* (1992) 'responded to the critical anomy of Zimunya's work' cited above (Vambe, 2005: p. 91). Veit-Wild does not limit herself to Zimbabwean literature in English but also discusses texts written in indigenous languages (specifically Shona and Ndebele). Wild's sociological

approach to a study of Zimbabwean literature contains some illuminating ideas on cultural nationalist writing that I refer to in chapter 1 of this study. I also find Zhuwarara's *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (2001) and Vambe's *African Oral Story-Telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English* (2004) useful in my historical (and thematic) discussion of Zimbabwean counter-discursive narratives in chapter 1 of this study. Muponde and Primorac's *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture* (2005) is one of the key texts on how Zimbabwean literature is related to the nation's 'history and politics' and the book reflects on the 'multiple-evaluations of Zimbabwean history' (p. xiv/xiii). I particularly find Kaarsholm's 'Coming to Terms with Violence: Literature and the Development of the Public Sphere' useful to my current study (especially chapters 2, 3 and 4). Kaarsholm focuses on how writers reflect on violence as a key aspect in 'the liberation war and the experiences of postcolonial development that have dominated the post-1980 period' (2005: p. 3). I expand on her ideas on the Third Chimurenga to include Operation Murambatsvina and introduce new texts on the debate on Gukurahundi (Mlalazi's *Running with Mother* (2012) and Kilgore's *We are Now Zimbabweans* (2009)). Christiansen-Bull published many articles on Zimbabwean literature and what is related to my study is her reading of Vera's texts in 'Yvonne Vera: Rewriting Discourses of History and Identity in Zimbabwe' (2005) and *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe* (2004). Her ideas are influential to my reading of especially Vera's *Without a Name* and *The Stone Virgins* as subversions of nationalist narratives on the Second Chimurenga and the silencing of Gukurahundi.

Nyambi's unpublished doctorate thesis entitled 'Nation in Crisis: Alternative Literary Representation of Zimbabwe Post-2000' is also a significant text on Zimbabwean fiction in English. His study is limited to texts written and published between 2000 and 2010, the period he describes as 'the most productive' in Zimbabwean literary history (2013: p. 33). My own study complements that but departs from it in that I include texts published before 2000 and also after 2010. Whereas we both discuss Hove and Vera in our studies, we differ in perspective and text selection. In my study I discuss Hove's *Shadows* and *Ancestors* in the context of Gukurahundi and Second Chimurenga respectively, yet Nyambi selects *Blind Moon* and discusses it alongside Chikwava's *Harare North* as 'texts which dispute Gomo's metaphoric tagging of Zimbabwean democracy as a fine madness (in his novel *A Fine Madness*)'

(2013: p. 38). Though we both deal with Vera's *The Stone Virgins,* Nyambi uses the novel 'as a launch-pad into (his) analysis of what (he) calls the 'struggle within a struggle' - the use of literature in challenging gendered narratives of the nation through inscribing female experiences of the post-2000 period into the national narrative' (2013: pp. 34-5). On the other hand I situate Vera's novel in the general context of Gukurahundi articulations, and as reflecting more on the sense of betrayal early into independence that has come to be associated with Gukurahundi violence. I also include Vera's 'It is Hard to Live Alone', 'An Unyielding Circle' and *Without a Name* and discuss these as subversions of the nationalist liberation narrative. On land discourse Nyambi identifies texts that support the 'anti-white sentiment and philosophy of the Third Chimurenga: Chinodya's *Chairman of Fools* and Mtizira's *The Chimurenga Protocol.* Nyambi's discussion of Hoba's short stories (*The Trek and Other Stories*) 'centres on their complex evocation of the flip side of the land revolution 'that is occluded - not only in official narratives of the Third Chimurenga epitomized by Mugabe's book *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, but perhaps more importantly' in Maruma's *Coming Home* and Mtizira's *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2013: p. 38). In my discussion on land politics in the Third Chimurenga I differ from Nyambi in terms of relevant texts; I focus on Hoba's 'Specialisation' and Chingono's 'Minister without Portfolio'. Nyambi limits himself to the Third Chimurenga crisis (and includes texts that rewrite Gukurahundi in his analysis) and my own study broadens that and separates Gukurahundi from the Third Chimurenga crisis and also focuses on the Second Chimurenga.

Most of the literary texts selected for my thesis fictionalise and revise history (they are historical/novels and short stories), with history influencing the authors' imagination. Thus in my reading of the texts I make constantly reference to historians' ideas. Of particular use in my study are Ranger, Lyons and Ndlovu-Gatsheni's works. These historians and (others[6]) revise what Ranger termed 'patriotic history'. Thus, literary texts discussed here and the historical sources consulted in reading the literary texts are both revisionary. Lyons' *Guns and Guerrillas Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle* (2004) (seminal history text) shaped my discussion in

---

[6] Kriger's *Peasant Voices* challenges influential studies such as Ranger's *Peasant Consciousness and the Guerrilla War* (1985), Lan's *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (1985) and Martin and Johnson's *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (1981). It also challenges scholars whose support of African nationalism resulted in the production of 'praise texts' (Robins, 1992: pp. 78-9).

chapter 2 on Vera, Nyamubaya and Hove's rethinking of the second Chimurenga with respect to black women's participation. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, has written extensively on Zimbabwean history (with a clear bias on Zimbabwean nationalism) and some of his ideas used in my discussion were drawn from a significant number of articles and books. 'Rethinking Chimurenga and Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Critique of Partisan National History' (2012), delineates the historical use of *gukurahundi* as a strategy of eliminating opposition in colonial and post-independent Zimbabwean politics. 'The Nativist Revolution and Development Conundrums in Zimbabwe' (2006), and *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism: Rethinking Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe* (2011) are useful interpretations of the Third Chimurenga and these give shape to my reading of texts that rewrite the Third Chimurenga.

Though some of the essays that make up Vambe's *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe* (2008) are dismissed as 'speculative'[7]*,* in my study I findChari's article 'Worlds Apart: Representations of Operation Murambatsvina in Two Zimbabwean Weeklies' and Mhiripiri's 'The Zimbabwean Government's Responses to Criticism of Operation Murambatsvina' quite useful. I particularly use Chari and Mhiripiri's ideas in my reading of Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* as a text that rewrites state discourse on Murambatsvina. The Government's official discourse sanitized Murambatsvina to mean, 'clean up' and 'to restore order' (Mhiripiri, 2008: p. 156), yet the UN report on the operation condemns it as a violation of basic human rights.[8] What emerges clearly from Chari's discussion is how dimensions of Murambatsvina are polarized and contradictory. The two potentially contradictory narrations of the operation are visible in Zimbabwe media's coverage - 'pro-government *Sunday Mail* promoted it as a blessing in disguise or as having paid dividends by removing all illegal activities' (Chari, 2008: p. 109). Yet, on the other hand, the privately owned *The Standard* largely represented it 'as a bankruptcy on the part of the government […] *and* unreservedly undermined the clean up' (ibid). The state used controlled media

---

[7] Wermter SJ's Review of *Vambe's Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina of Zimbabwe,* Mukai-Vukani Jesuit Journal for Zimbabwe, No 48, May 2009, 24-6.

[8] Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka (2005).

to articulate its 'literal, interpretive and implicatory denial' of the negative impact of the operation on the affected citizens (Mhiripiri, 2008: p. 152). Tagwira's text is read in this study as one of the texts that offer an alternative to the state's misrepresentation of Murambatsvina reality as stated above. As I have demonstrated in this section, my study is not carried out in isolation; it is steeped in existing literature but also departs from it in several ways.

The Corpus of this Study

The corpus is restricted to texts written in English by black as well as white writers. The decision to limit the study to Zimbabwean literature in English is influenced by the fact that the English language tradition represents the mainstay of Zimbabwe's literary heritage (Primorac and Muponde, 2005: p. xv). Zimbabwean literature takes many forms but in this research I limit myself to the novel and the short story.

Zimbabwe has given birth to and nurtured a number of locally, and internationally recognized writers, who are writing in English. For issues central in this study, I selected those writers who are of central importance for a discussion of those issues. In chapter 2 I will specifically study Vera's 'Crossing Boundaries' (1992), 'It is Hard to Live Alone' (1992) and *Without a Name* (1994). I also read Hove's *Ancestors* (1996) and Nyamubaya's 'That Special Place' (2003) in the same chapter, under the theme 'feminist narratives rewriting nationalist discourses'. In my discussion of Gukurahundi narratives, I read to Vera's *TheStone Virgins*(2002), Hove's *Shadows* (1991), Ndlovu's 'Torn Posters' (2003), Godwin's *Mukiwa* (1996), Kilgore's *We Are Now Zimbabweans* (2009) and Mlalazi's *Running with Mother* (2012). On texts that contest state lies on the Third Chimurenga I selected Chinyani's 'A Land of Starving Millionaires', Hoba's 'Specialization', Chinodya's 'Queues', and Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*. All works selected for this study were published after Zimbabwe attained its independence from British colonial rule. The emphasis is on how the selected authors (as demonstrated in selected works) employ counter-discursive strategies to challenge the hegemonic tendencies of dominant discourses. In the context of this thesis, I specifically refer to patriarchal, nationalist and 'patriotic' dominant discourses subverted in selected counter-discursive texts. Ranger differentiates between nationalist and patriotic historiographies in his article 'Rule by Historiography: The Struggle over the Past in Contemporary Zimbabwe' (2005). He explains that patriotic history is 'different from and more narrow than the old nationalist

historiography, which celebrated aspiration and modernisation as well as resistance. It resents the questions raised by historians of nationalism' (2005: p. 220). As Ranger demonstrates, patriotic history is 'a complex phenomenon [...] variously propagated - in courses taught by war veterans in the camps[9], in collections of Robert Mugabe's speeches[10], in Chigwedere's syllabi and textbooks in the schools[11], on state television and radio, and in the writing of Mahoso[12] and others in the state-controlled press' (2005: p. 235).

Reading the Corpus of Zimbabwean Literature in English

In terms of methodology, my study is an exercise in interpretive textual analysis. The key aspect of my textual analysis is 'close reading'; where 'reading' is taken to mean 'interpretation'. Close reading encompasses aspects of 'symptomatic reading', where interpretation, as Jameson argues, 'could never operate on the assumption that the text means exactly what it says' (Best and Marcus, 2009: p. 3). Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* (1981) and Crane's 'Surface, Depth, and the Spatial Imaginary: A Cognitive Reading of *The Political Unconscious*' (2009) are some of the key texts on symptomatic reading. The hidden things that need to be unravelled in selected texts come out clear in almost all the texts studied for this thesis. For example Chinodya re-interprets Zimbabwean political history in 'Queues' through the sexual relationship trope. I read selected texts as self-contained, yet also went beyond to include new historicism approach and read texts in their historical contexts. In my reading of the selected texts, I often interpret the text in the context of Zimbabwean history, since these contest official narrations/non-narrations of history. Such interpretive exploits are used especially in chapters 3 and 4. Texts selected for these two chapters are discussed in the time-and-place-specific contexts of Gukurahundi and the Third Chimurenga aspects of Zimbabwean history, and are read as representations of such history. The emphasis here is on the Bakhtinian concept of the chronotope which rests 'on the inseperability of space and time in novels' (Primorac, 2006, p. 35). In such cases I constantly

---

[9] The government-instituted compulsory National Youth service put in place in 2001 was meant to teach 'patriotic history'. Central in the content material was ZANU PF propaganda, 'entirely consisting of speeches made by Robert Mugabe since 2000' (Ranger, 2005: p. 222)

[10] Robert Mugabe's speeches can be found in *Inside the Third Chimurenga,* published in 2001.

[11] Chigwedere authored a number of history books used in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

[12] Mahoso is theChairman of the Zimbabwean Media and Information Commission and a weekly columnist at the Sunday Mail (Ranger, 2005: p. 226).

refer to historical sources in my reading of texts. I also go beyond the 'information' in such historical texts, to include in my interpretation, the poetic and rethorical devices. For example, in as much as I interpret selected texts on 'land politics' of the Third Chimurenga in the context of history, I also highlight how the use of satire is a significant counter-discursive strategy (a key aspect of symptomatic reading where there are sometimes hidden things in a text for ideological reasons). I demonstrate this point by referring to how I interpret Chingono's use of satire in 'Minister without Portfolio' as a counter-discursive strategy. Chingono attacks the minister, particularly unmasking his hypocrisy. His choice of an anti-hero of a minister is a counter-discursive strategy to subvert the 'Zimbabwean state fiction […] which is precisely the kind of hero centred narrative' (Bakhtin, 1986, as cited in Primorac, 2007: p. 437). Most of the texts studied in my thesis are best read as 'witness/*testimonio* literature'. 'Testimonio is implicitly or explicitly a component of what Barbara Harlow has called a "resistance literature' (Beverly, 1989 p. 11). The resistance aspect is located in the sense that testimonio literature is 'an alternative reading to the canon' (Beverly, 1991, p. 3). As I demonstrate elsewhere, my understanding of the canon is expanded beyond the imperial text to include patriarchal, nationalist and 'patriotic' narratives. Since intertextuality is a key aspect of counter-discourse, in my reading of the selected texts, I go beyond these texts to refer to the 'outside texts' that they engage with. In most Zimbabwean counter-discursive narratives one finds echoes of earlier texts and in some cases instances of 'forward referencing'. For instance, in my reading of feminist texts in chapter 2, I also refer to male-written texts on the subject under study. This is the case since 'revision' is a key concept in counter-discourse. The intertexual is described by Terdiman as an act 'of looking back, seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction' (1971, as cited in Widdowson, 2006: p. 491). In the process of text interpretation, I also refer to existing relevant literature (what is elsewhere referred to as 'secondary sources') to respect other related forms of text interpretation.

Study Layout

This study consists of four chapters, introduction and conclusion. In Chapter 1, entitled '*A Historical Discussion of Zimbabwean Counter-Discursive Narratives',* I discuss the counter-discursive trends in Zimbabwean literature. From the historical and thematic approach adopted, it becomes clear that challenges to established/dominant discourses go beyond the imperial culture to

include subversion of established discourses in the post-independent state with specific references to nationalist, patriarchal and 'patriotic' discourses. Since 'counter-discourses are not sovereign and do not exhaust reality' (Terdiman, 1989: p. 17), one finds that counter-discursive narratives in Zimbabwean literature are open-ended. Nationalist writers challenge colonial discourse on African history and culture. Their narratives of especially the liberation struggle are incomplete and largely biased. Reacting to the nationalist view of the war and history, revisionist writers downplay women's role in the liberation struggle and hence the picture they project is incomplete. What revisionist writers exclude is contested in feminist writings, which in general speak for as well as about women. Zimbabwean feminist writings recover 'repressed narratives of women' (Maodzwa-Taruvinga and Muponde, 2005). Post-independent resistance narratives decry a glossing over of the cracks and 'aching spots' in what Ranger has termed 'patriotic history'. Challenges to 'patriotic history' defining the Zimbabwean postcolony are performed in two significant ways: rewriting Gukurahundi violence and the Third Chimurenga.

In Chapter 2, entitled '*Feminist Rewriting of Nationalist Narratives',* I discuss Vera's short stories 'It is Hard to Live Alone' and 'Crossing Boundaries' (both from *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals*) and *Without A Name*, Hove's *Ancestors* and Nyamubaya's 'That Special Place'. All texts selected for this chapter are set during the liberation struggle against colonialism, and are women-centred stories. In this chapter, I demonstrate how Vera, Nyamubaya and Hove challenge the nationalist version of liberation history through a foregrounding of women roles in the liberation struggle (as part of the battlefront and its rears), women-specific struggles ignored by the nationalist struggle. The chapter has four significant parts: 'Rethinking Land Politics in *Without a Name*', 'Re-Interpretation of Black Women's Experience of the Liberation Struggle', 'Black Women's Other Struggles' and 'The Struggle for Memory in *Ancestors*'. In this chapter I explore ways in which selected authors rise above nationalist sentiments and decry the patriarchal domination of women by foregrounding women-specific struggles.

In Chapter 3, entitled '*Narrating Gukurahundi Violence*', I discuss the various literary texts that articulate Gukurahundi, paying particular attention to the various stages and forms of articulation. The first years of post independence were quiet on the 'Zimbabwean literary front […] and the early post independent writings were celebrationist […] (but also contained) elements of criticism and articulated frustration' (Kaarsholm, 2005: pp. 4-5). Gukurahundi

remained suppressed history until a report by the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission was released in 1997. Gukurahundi also became a literary event beginning with Hove's *Shadows* (1991) reaching its culmination with Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002). In this chapter, I trace the literary developments in narrations of Gukurahundi paying particular attention to how writers challenge the suppressed history and silenced memory of Gukurahundi violence. In my discussion, I refer to Hove's *Shadows*, Vera's *The Stone Virgins*, Godwin's *Mukiwa: The White Boy in Africa*, Kilgore's *We are Now Zimbabweans*, Ndlovu's 'Torn Posters' and Mlalazi's *Running with Mother*.

The focus in Chapter 4, entitled '*A Re-interpretation of the Third Chimurenga in Post-2000 Writings*', is on texts that revise the government's Third Chimurenga discourse. The chapter is made up of four major parts: *'Troping a Different Zimbabwean History in Chinodya's Queues', 'Of Extreme Wealth and Abject Poverty: Chinyani's A Land of Starving Millionaires', 'Rethinking the Land Issue in Chingono's Minister Without Portfolio and Hoba's Specialization',* and*'The Uncertainty of Hope (Reflections on a Failing State, The Victim Trope and Rewriting Murambatsvina').* The selected texts discussed in this chapter present a challenge to the inadequacies of the biased and often-incomplete dominant 'patriotic' narrative of the Third Chimurenga. Literary counter-imaginations of Zimbabwean history contribute to multi-re-evaluations of the history of the Third Chimurenga. According to Muponde and Primorac, 'through a series of omissions the patriotic historiography builds and departs from the previous nationalist discourses' (2005: p. xii). The patriotic version of history, which was sold to the public through the state-controlled media, threatened to exclude the last decade crisis.. Alongside state-controlled media, a 'patriotic literary narrative' emerged. This tradition entered the public sphere 'as a sympathetic force to the state advancing its rule' (Nyambi, 2011: p. 3). The state's understanding and subsequent denial of the crisis is contested by not only opposition politics, Non-Governmental Organizations and the Private Media but subversion also came from creative writers.

Chapter 1: A Historical Discussion of Zimbabwean Counter-Discursive Narratives

Introduction

Writing a history of counter discursive literary narratives in Zimbabwean context (or for any nation for that matter) is an almost impossible task. What I put together in this chapter is an attempt at an assessment of Zimbabwean literature in English, paying particular attention to its counter-discursive aspects. As Chennels highlights, in Rhodesia 'the dominant version of history was authorized by whites' and 'the current dominant version of history within Zimbabwe is the self-serving historical memory of ZANU PF' (2005: p. 133), what Ranger elsewhere termed 'patriotic history' (2005). In both Rhodesian and Zimbabwean chronotopes[13], any voice of discontent subverts the dominant version of history and translates into protest. Such literary voices of discontent are what Terdiman has termed 'dissident discourses' (1989: p. 80). Counter-discursive strategies in Zimbabwean literature can be discerned in texts that represent the excesses of colonial contact, feminist narratives seeking the recognition of women, autobiographies and post-independence rewritings of Gukurahundi and Third Chimurenga crises. The chapter is arranged along themes and sub-themes. The highlighted dimensions of literary protest confirm Ranger's proposition that there are 'admittedly signs of a more systematic historiographical dissent' (2005: p. 240). The division into sections in this chapter is thematically informed. This applies especially to narratives of the liberation war and feminist narratives of resistance. In terms of year of publication, most of the works that belong to the two categories are post-independence writings, but they deserve to be discussed separately because they represent an identifiable thematic pattern.

Resisting Colonialism

Rhodesian colonialism was multifaceted; it had political, economic and cultural dimensions. Political domination included the creation of an administration that excluded the natives, yet the policies put in place through the administration

---

[13] 'Chronotope' is a Bakhtinian term referring to how literature represents both time and space.

shaped the natives' existence.[14] One of the most damaging and visible colonial policies for blacks in Rhodesia was the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. Through this Act, many blacks lost their fertile lands to the 'new occupants' and were dumped in reserves that could not sustain their living since they depended on land for survival. The introduction of various taxes precipitated the rate at which black people opted for farm labourer positions. As Sachikonye highlights, the creation of native reserves dates back to 1894 in Matabeleland with the setting up of the Gwaai and Shangani reserves. The Shona and Ndebele uprisings in 1896 and 1897 were precipitated by such appropriation of land (2004: p. 3). The creation of colonial boundaries was to 'facilitate the functioning of the capitalist economic system' (Primorac, 2006: p. 63). From the point of view of the colonizer, there existed two mutually exclusive groups in the colonial world: the dominant and the dominated, the Occident and the Orient respectively. These distinctions were based on the ideology of race, which influenced 'the construction and naturalization of an unequal form of intercultural relations' between whites and blacks (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: p. 41).

On the other hand, cultural domination included defining the black person's way of interpreting the world as not only uncivilized but also savage and primitive. In essence, 'colonialism was not simply content with imposing its rule upon the dominated […] rather by a kind of a perverted logic it turned to the past of the colonized people, distorted, disfigured and destroyed it' (Fanon, 1963, as cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995: p. 154). Objectification of the black 'other' was central in the creation of the imperial object in imperial discourse. From time to time blacks were convinced to join the Christian church and the modern school. They entered the church as the 'cursed sons of the biblical Ham' and the curriculum they encountered in the classroom was largely Eurocentric. Black students were taught European history and literature of the canon. The black image they encountered in the English canon had an effect on their understanding of themselves.

Literary texts that resist and (re)present resistances to colonialism and its discourse can be divided into two identifiable categories. The first category is cultural nationalism and the other consists of texts representing the war(s) of liberation. The second category is also known as 'war literature'. It is important

---

[14] In some cases black elites were part of the administration yet, mostly, the European-educated who were incorporated into the administration had no capacity to challenge unfair policies and practices.

to note that these categories are not absolute; there are visible instances of overlap. For instance, novels that represent the 1896/97 First Chimurenga are also directed at helping the colonised black people to regain lost pride and dignity. Such texts include Mutswairo's *Feso* (1956) and Vambe's *An Ill-Fated People* (1972). In *An Ill-Fated People*, Vambe constructs the proud history of the VaShawasha Shona-speaking people who were free and independent prior to the establishment of colonial rule. Their social and economic progress was slow but steady. They mined and made guns among other notable achievements. Europeans grabbed tracts of land and demanded labour from the VaShawasha, who felt insulted and subsequently rebelled. It is clear from Vambe's *An Ill-fated People* that Western civilization destroyed an established system of survival and 'a life pattern of centuries' (Afejuku, 1988: p. 508). Besides focusing on the 1896/7 First Chimurenga, Vambe's autobiographical narrative also seeks to establish the dignity and the pride of the VaShawasha people by highlighting their history.

Cultural Nationalist Fiction

The cultural revolution seeking to undermine racist ideology is the postcolonial niche of writing-back to the imperial centre and is a central aspect of negritudism[15]. In Tiffin's words, negritude writers are 'not simply writing back to an English canonical text but to the whole discursive field within which these texts operated and continue to operate in postcolonial worlds' (1987, as cited in Kossew, 1996: p. 14). Most texts written by black people are characterized by 'self assertion, the rediscovery of the past and the decolonization of the mind' (Veit-Wild, 1992: p. 1). The main purpose of writing back to the imperial centre is aptly described by Achebe as an act of helping battered societies to regain

---

[15] Negritude is a literary and ideological movement that began in the 1930s and can be traced back to French-speaking black intellectuals with Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas as founding figures. As a concept, negritudism refers to the distinctive aspect of the black man's response to the colonial situation, in defence of black humanity against colonial and any other form of dehumanization. According to Ashcroft et al. negritude is a theory of 'the distinctiveness of African personality and culture' (2007: p. 145). There is however need to note that Negritude attracted criticism. Though in my discussion I will refer to these criticisms, here I would refer to some of the criticisms. Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) warned that cultural claims would lead Africans 'up a blind alley' (p.172). Ezekiel Mphahlele accused Senghor of being dishonesty. He accused him of advocating for Negritudism, yet sung praises to French culture. Other African writers who were critical of the movement included Wole Soyinka and Lewis Nkosi among others.

self-belief and putting away years of denigration (1988: p. 44). In other words, the works that belong to cultural nationalism strove to re-appropriate black humanity, which western ideology had questioned and dismissed. Black Zimbabwean writers in this category belong to the First Generation, and are the first elite group of educated Africans in Rhodesia (Veit-Wild, 1992: p. 17). Their texts are understandably the first in the history of Zimbabwean counter-discursive narratives (and Zimbabwean literature in general) that date back to the Rhodesian colony[16]. Such works are varied and are written in the three major Zimbabwean languages: Shona, Ndebele and English[17]. However, in my study I will limit my focus to texts written in English (except for my few comments on Mutswairo's shona novel *Feso*) as indicated earlier on. The texts have no strict historical boundaries. One finds that there are some works that were published well after independence that still focus on cultural nationalism as their theme.

Novels that represent the cultural nationalist struggle include *Feso* (1956), *On Trial for My Country* (1966), *Year of Uprising* (1977), *The Polygamist* (1972) and *Jikinya* (1972) among others. Mutswairo's *Feso* 'recreates the image of a unified pre-colonial Shona past so as to undo colonial mythologies and distortion of an African past' (Vambe, 2004: p. 26). Samkange's *On Trial for My Country* (1966) represents an African version of the history of colonialism in Rhodesia. The history of colonization is retold and reconstructed from King Lobengula's point of view. Both *Year of Uprising* and *On Trial for My Country* 'resume the broken dialogue with the gods of their people and thus provide a relatively authentic cultural base from which future and present generations can face the future' (Zhuwarara, 2001: p. 13). What characterizes Samkange's and Mutswairo's writings referred to above is what Schipper has termed 'the idealization of the ancestral Africa, the old Africa that did not have the misfortune of knowing the whites' (1989: p. 34).

Schipper identified suffering as one of the major themes of negritude literature. Black suffering is a theme that is well-developed by Jean-Paul Sartre in his essay *Orphée Noir*. Sartre constructs the black person as a 'man who has

---

[16] There is however need to note that counter-discourse existed in Zimbabwean pre-literate communities in song and other forms of oral literature. Praise-denuciatory poetry and songs often performed the protest role.

[17] Examples of Ndebele and Shona cultural nationalist texts include D. E. Ndoda's *Indabikhona* (1988, Mambo Press), N. Sithole's *Umvukela wamaNdebele* (1982, Longman, C. Matsikiti's *Rakava Buno Risifemberi* (1995, Mambo Press) and N.M. Mutasa's *Dikita Misodzi neropa* (1991, Mambo Press).

accepted all the burdens of mankind and who suffers for all, even for whites' (1949, as cited in Schipper, 1989: p. 31). Samkange's two works highlighted above concentrate on the theme of black suffering by exposing the injustices meted out to blacks by colonial whites. In the form of a moral outrage, the books resent the brutal way in which blacks lost their land and represent what Schipper termed the 'revolt' element of negritude literature (1989: p. 34). For the same ideological reasons, Sithole wrote and published *The Polygamist* in 1972. His book is a cultural defence of the African family institution of polygamy. He explains 'to the world that there was a philosophy, a value system of depth and some moral beauty' in polygamy (Kahari, 2009: p. 104). Ndhlala's *Jikinya* (1972) also fits into the same discourse of cultural defence against the 'othering' and 'objectification' of the African in Western ideology. The cited texts act 'both as literary and political strategy to challenge colonial racism, the idiom of the African people's difference and otherness' and protest against the colonizer's misrepresentation of African history, culture and life (Vambe, 2004: p. 26). Overall, by fighting for national culture, these authors are in a way fighting for what Fanon termed the 'material keystone which makes the building of a culture possible' (1963, as cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995: p. 154).

There are complications in the African writer's duty of rewriting history mainly through going back to a mooted past. Vambe identifies 'the paradox of the project of cultural retrieval that insists on recovering a pure and authentic and unchanging identity for Africans' as one of the challenges (2004: p. 27). A recovery of a pure and authentic Africa rests upon the postcolonial concept of nativism. Nativism is 'the desire to return to indigenous practices and cultural forms as they existed in pre-colonial society' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: p. 143). As argued by Spivak and Bhabha, 'nativist reconstructions are inevitably subject to the process of cultural inter-mixing that colonialism promoted and from which no simple retreat is possible' (as cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2007: p. 143). The other disturbing element associated with retrieving a distorted past includes how the very discourse of otherness and difference in negritude literature maintains notions of fixed binaries of Africans and whites and also 'normalizes and appropriates Africa by freezing it into some timeless zone of the unchanging past' (Hall, 1996, as cited in Vambe, 2004: p. 27). This challenge is directly related to assumptions of retaining pure African culture. Cultural nationalist re-writing of African experience sometimes override reality.

Moments of defending a people's humanity and dignity often emphasize reverence and any rewriting highlighting 'blasphemies and sins' of African existence may seem disloyal. When Mutswairo creates in *Feso* the African people's leader Pfumojena, whose corrupt tendencies lead him to expel voices of discontent from his kingdom, one would want to know how such writing would help a battered people regain belief in themselves. Yet to ignore these aspects of African experiences is to falsify African history and reality. The paradox, however, is that highlighting these truths sometimes complicates the purpose of re-writing and confirms the white stereotypes of black people's behaviour. In Ndhlala's *Jikinya* the effort at recreating a romantic and fantastical past of the Ngara people of pre-colonial Zimbabwe is quite problematic. What needs to be challenged is the practical value of the novel. How does the novel help a battered society regain belief in itself when the writer recreates a romantic and fantastical history bypassing Africa's realities?

Inasmuch as the colonized people insisted on avoiding the colonial taint by refusing to embrace elements of Western culture, Western 'snares' were always tempting. The protest themes 'are in conflict with the deeper desire towards assimilation of many western values' (Kahari, 2009: p. 14). Particularly tempting were the 'bounties of the Christian god […] education, paid jobs and many other advantages that no one in his right senses could underrate' (Achebe, 1988: p. 31). Such realities are captured in Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1975). One of the characters who belong to the old generation, the Old Man, asks: 'What kind of fighting is it when you are clutching and praying to your enemy's god?' (1975: p. 115). The Old Man's statement demonstrates the ambivalence of fighting colonialism yet also finding it appealing. The need to resist modernity stems from the fact that in the African context 'Western modernity is inextricably tied to Western colonialism' (Jameson, 1990, as cited in Friedman, 2006: p. 426). Traditionalism subsequently becomes a reaction to the complicated relationship between modernity and imperialism. According to Hobsbawm, the concept of tradition can be traced back, in Europe, to the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He intimates that 'traditions (are) actually invented, constructed and formally instituted'. Invented tradition means:

> A set of practices normally governed by […] accepted rules and a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. (1992: p. 1)

Traditionalists insist on wanting to restore an imagined and often lost past, whilst 'modernity's dislocating break with the past also engenders a radical reaction in the opposite direction' (Friedman, 2006: p. 434). The need to embrace as well as resist what modernity offers complicates the project of cultural nationalism.

The modernity/tradition dichotomy is problematic, complex and contradictory, especially for the previously oppressed communities. Modernity is associated with colonialism and 'progress', yet holding on to tradition is not only nativist but is representative of 'forces of resistance to modernity's homogenizing' tendencies (Valdez-Moses, 1995, as cited in Friedman, 2006: p. 442). The struggle between tradition and modernity is a 'defining characteristic of modernity' (Friedman, 2006: p. 434). Largely, however, cultural nationalism is useful as a response to the peripheralization of African cultures and history. It facilitates the centring of a marginalized culture by making 'every periphery into a centre […]' and abolishing 'the very notion of the centre and the periphery' (Pollard, 2004, as cited in Friedman, 2006: p. 429). What should be condemned is a nativist return to an imagined and often lost Old Africa. A favourable position is 'not passive assimilation, but one based in a blending of adaptation and resistance' and in postcolonial terms this results in hybridity (Friedman, 2006: p. 430). I would like to end this section by noting that the terms 'modernity' and 'tradition/traditionalism' are very problematic, and I will simplify their usage in most African discourses. For most Africans 'modernity' is definitive of change brought to African history and cultures through colonialism and other means of foreign intrusion. The perceived change in 'modernity' is either positive or negative. Embracing what modernity/ or what comes with the 'foreigner' then translates into some kind of assimilation. Tradition on the other hand is what Africa used to be before 'modernity'/imperialism; an untainted Africa. Hence being traditional implies rejection of modernity and what colonialism offers. What I have tried to do in this section is to problematise the options, especially in relation to cultural nationalist roles played by African writers.

War Literature

Colonial history in Southern Africa is a 'history of land seizure and settlement' (Primorac, 2006: p. 125). In this history, colonists trampled upon African people's human rights. One of the human rights violated has been discussed in

the previous section as the process of 'othering' that denied Africans their history and dignity. Zimbabwean literature and history demonstrate that violent response, as a form of defence against any form of oppression, is a right every man and woman possesses. Blacks fought two important wars against white colonialists in Rhodesia: the First and Second Chimurenga. These two wars are 'justified' in that the oppressed blacks fought to defend their humanity.[18] The Second Chimurenga became an important literary event for both white and black Zimbabwean writers - from the point of view of the oppressor and the oppressed respectively. As argued by Hochbruck the Second Chimurenga is one of the wars in the world, which grew in telling (1996: p. 161). Texts by whites are mainly 'based on the Rhodesian chronotope'[19] (Primorac, 2006: p. 128) - these texts include the following: Stiff's *The Rain Goddess* (1976)*, Early's *A Time of Madness* (1977), Burton's *The Yellow Mountain* (1978) and Carney's *The Whispering Death*. Listed texts construct 'the space time of war as a zone of contact between the forces of order and civilization introduced by Europeans and the threat posed to them by native savagery and communism'-represented by whites and blacks respectively (Primorac, 2006: p. 128). The texts continue in the ideology that 'others' the African in support of colonial domination. For instance, the story in Stiff's *The Rain Goddess* takes place in the mid 1960s to early 1970s and begins as the British South Africa Police fight against communist-backed guerrillas. The image of the guerrillas in this narrative is one that is tainted; they are torturers who use violence to intimidate their tribesmen into joining the war. In the same manner, Carney in *The Whispering Death* constructs the liberation war as an act of terrorism that follows the Declaration of Independence, with guerrillas as terrorists. *The Yellow Mountain* is mainly about the relentless efforts to raise money for the building of a barrier along the Eastern Border meant to disturb nationalist efforts to undo colonialism. *A Time of Madness* recreates 'the history of black division and irreconcilable difference' in an effort to justify the colonial conquest and the continuation of white rule (Kaarsholm, 1991: p. 42).

---

[18] A justified war shows the redeeming qualities of violence. Fanon observed that 'for the colonized people violence [...] invests their characters with positive and creative qualities' (1963: p. 73). However, the same violence has 'remained a cancer that corrodes the [...] political culture and blocks democratic advance' in post-independent Zimbabwean politics (Sachikonye, 2011: p. xviii).

[19] Rhodesian chronotope refers to the time and space of colonial Rhodesia.

Bruce Moore King's *White Man, Black Man* (1989)

> engages the myth of a people's war that was used by Ian Douglass Smith's to persuade and call up white people to fight the black liberation forces in Rhodesia. (The novel) questions the myth of whiteness as equal to civilization that was propagated by white Rhodesian leaders especially between 1965 and 1980. The novel contests the myth of white invincibility. (Vambe, 2009: p. 107)

Though the novel does not counter and reinscribe a specific hegemonic text, it challenges the 'discursive colonialist field' (Ashcroft, et al 2007: p. 50) that subscribed to the concept of white invincibility in the face of its destruction in the liberation war. This kind of writing also contributes to anti-colonial writings mainly practiced by black writers in the African and specifically Zimbabwean context. Robert Early's *A Time of Madness* (1977) also presents the conflicts over land domination in the pre-colonial Zimbabwean States. He recalls that

> the pitiful warriors of the Shona people had taken land from the little yellow bushmen, killing them or forcing them to flee into arid and inhospitable desert of the Kalahari, the Matabele had done the same thing to the Shona and only the arrival of the whites in 1890 had prevented their annihilation.(p. 236 – 238)

In the above words, Robert Early has captured some of the historical situations that Dambudzo Marechera, Patrick Chakaipa and Solomon Mutswairo protested against in their works, but he does that for ideological reasons that have an inclination towards justifying the colonization process. The counter discursive element in Robert Early's works referred to above is identifiable in the manner in which the writer highlights an element of domination in traditional pre-colonial societies. He argues that this kind of domination has nothing to do with colonial influences. His writing becomes counter discursive in the sense that he challenges an existing notion of the understanding of domination in African societies in general. He shows that domination in the African society did not begin with the advent of colonialism but rather stretches back to pre-colonial times. However, 'this history of division (among blacks) and difference (is used to) justify the colonial and the continuation of white rule' (Kaarsholm, 1991: p. 42). In this light, Robert Early's novel feeds into the general white

representation of black culture and history. Such representation is contested by works by black writers. Texts discussed here belong to colonial popular fiction in support of the colonial regime and represent the colonizers' efforts to stifle the liberation struggle. Such a version of the liberation struggle counters the belief that the liberation struggle was a justified war. As Hochbruck controversially[20] argues, 'because of his politically incorrect position, the intruding settler cannot be interested in a positive depiction of what he does not perceive as just an 'Other' but also the enemy' (1996: p. 164). White writers' constructions of the war are representative of their attitude towards the 'black' enemy. White writers' version of the liberation struggle is contested in texts on the Second Chimurenga written by black writers.

On the other side war construction by black writers is two-dimensional: war glorification and challenges to such glorifications. Such dimensions are also visible in the documentation of Zimbabwean liberation history by historians. Historians differ in their perspectives and understanding of the liberation war; some glorify it while others construct the war space as complex. Such differences may be noted between Manungo and Kriger. Manungo presents 'a harmonious picture of collaboration between peasants and guerrillas'. Kriger on

---

[20] The controverse in Hochbruck's argument lies in the fact that there are some white writers 'though politically incorrect (as he argues) who are against the colony and are on the side of the victim of colonial culture, what Chennels described elsewhere as non-homogeneity of white writing. One would find that besides the texts that I isolated above and demonstrated how they are in support of the colonial order, there are some white writers who are clearly against the colonial culture. To illustrate my point, I would refer to the position occupied by John Eppel in the Zimbabwean literary sphere and white-Zimbabwean writing in general. John Eppel is consistent in his attack of both the colony and the postcolony. In an interview Eppel declares, "I am anti people in power who abuse it" and as such he focuses writes "about man's inhumanity to man [...] in Rhodesia, and continues in Zimbabwe" (http://www.weaverpresszimbabwe.com/index.php/authors/interviews/506-interview-eppel-john-by-drew-shaw). *The Great Road North* (1992) is a text on the Rhodesian nation where Eppel is against himself and his own people. In *Spoils of the War* (1989) Eppel counters the colonial vision of an unending Rhodesia. This is particularly clear in "Spoils of War" which 'questions the whole concept of Rhodesianism by deriding the excessive violence of its nationalism and patriotism against the racial other' (Musvoto, 2009: p.160). Another good example is the South African white writer J.M Coetzee. Though Coetzee does not comment directly on the anti-apartheid struggle, in most of his works he is critical of colonialism. His stance comes out clear in *Waiting for Barbarians* (1980) and *Foe* (1986). The focus in these two novels is on what Coetzee himself described elsewhere as an 'occlusion' of blackness in narratives by whites. What this simply demonstrates is that there are white writers who invest into antiracism (possibly in the same way we also have blacks who invest into colonialism).

the other hand expresses a 'gloomier picture of collaboration between peasants and guerrillas' (Kaarsholm, 1991: p. 5). The early Ranger, Bhebhe, Martin, Aneus Chigwedere and Johnson are nationalist historians while the recent Ranger, Beach and Kriger can be seen as revisionist historians.[21] In literature, the differing perspectives on specific aspects of the guerrilla war highlighted above also suffice.

Major works that belong to 'war literature' include Mutswairo's *Feso* (1956) and *Year of Uprising* (1978), Katiyo's *A Son of the Soil* (1976), Mutasa's *The Contact* (1985), Samupindi's *Pawns* (1992), Chinodya's *A Harvest of Thorns* (1989), Kanengoni's *Echoing Silences* (1997), Hove's *Bones* (1988) and Nyamfukudza's *Non-Believer's Journey* (1980). *Feso* and *Year of Uprising* also belong to cultural nationalist literature. This is representative of the instances of overlap of categories referred to in the introduction to this chapter. *Feso* is a recreation of the image of a unified pre-colonial Shona past and as a foundational nationalist text speaks against white land appropriation (Vambe, 2004: p. 26). Samkange's *Year of the Uprising* (1978), for instance represents the moral outrage of a people who bitterly resented the brutal manner in which Africans were dispossessed of their land. The resentment of land dispossession forced black people into fighting the forces that made them squatters on their own land. In negritude terms, *Year of Uprising* 'resumes the broken dialogue with the gods of *black* people and thus provides a relatively authentic cultural base from which future and present generations can face the future' (Zhuwarara, 2001: p. 13). In Mutasa's *The Contact*, the spiritual attachment to the land and the need to bring about a non-racial society precipitated the liberation struggle. In *A Son of the Soil*, Katiyo highlights the impact of racism on the existence of blacks. *The Contact* and *A Son of the Soil* 'shared the broad assumption that the guerrilla war was a justified one' (Kaarsholm, 1991: p. 5). *A Fighter for Freedom* (1983) and *The Contact* (1985) glorify and romanticize the war. Glorifications of the war are jubilant counters to 'the discredited Rhodesian discourse which in the decade before independence produced novels indiscriminately glorifying those fighting against the guerrillas' (Primorac, 2006: p. 141). Kaarsholm has described texts that glorify the war as part of 'official celebrations' for the attainment of independence (1991, as cited in Hochbruck, 1996: p. 168). *A Fighter for Freedom* (1983) is about a black fighter who 'aligns himself with the struggle

---

[21] In this case, revisionist refers to the counter-discursive nature of the 'new' history narrations.

for independence' and is projected as a genius in organizing and fighting (pp. 50-1). As such, one can argue that Chipamaunga's story is a predictable response to some of the assumptions that most Rhodesians had about black people. The hero's visit to Great Zimbabwe enables him to challenge some of the misconceptions about the building of the monuments. Tinashe's role is that of rehabilitating the African in relation to his culture and history. As such, the guerrillas know that they are fighting at the level of culture and identity.[22] *A Fighter for Freedom* and *The Contact* revere the war and gloss over its complexities.

On the other hand, *Crossroads, Non-Believer's Journey* (1980) and *Echoing Silences* (1997) (and others) question the romantic narrative and paint a complex picture of the war. Tizora's *Crossroads* particularly de-romanticizes the impact of the liberation struggle on individuals. In *Crossroads,* Priscilla survives the war but she is not simply a hero, but also a victim whose life is broken. The broken pieces of her life are difficult to reassemble into meaningful existence after the war. In *Non-Believer's Journey* Nyamfukudza exposes 'the shortcomings of the liberation politics and the war; the subjective as well as the destructive' (Zhuwarara, 2001: p. 139). There 'is no celebration of the war as a purification process […] even if victorious, *the war* will contribute tragedies and complications of its own' to an independent nation (Kaarsholm, 1991: p. 57). Kanengoni in *Echoing Silences* breaks the silence on the forgotten heroes, denouncing the official heroes in the process. In the same novel, Kanengoni also contests the distinction between war veteran and those who did not fight in the war by reminding politicians that all Zimbabweans contributed to the liberation struggle in their own way (cf. Hove, 2002). Chinodya's *A Harvest of Thorns* is one of the early texts that point towards post-independence disillusionment and de-romanticizes the liberation war by criticizing its 'brutalities' (Hochbruck, 1996: p. 170).

This discussion of war literature has shown that 'counter-discourses are not sovereign and do not exhaust reality' and are thus complex (Terdiman, 1989: p. 18). Literary 'nationalists' work against the grain of Rhodesian discourse and its misrepresentation of the war, yet in the process of countering white writers, they create a limited and narrow discourse that needs revision.

---

[22] Zhuwarara, Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom* (the essay first appeared in *Zambezia: The Journal of the University of Zimbabwe* 14 (1987), 140-43),
 http://www.postcolonialweb.org/zimbabwe/ (accessed 21 July 2010).

The 'revisionist' writers are far from giving a complete picture of the struggle: for example, the discursive tendencies in these novels downplay women's contribution to the liberation war. For instance, *Nehanda* (1993), *On the Road Again* (1985) and *Bones* (1988) fill in the gaps in nationalist versions of the war. Black women writers and some male writers like Hove, give a new dimension to the liberation struggle history by highlighting the forgotten black woman's contribution in the war. In foregrounding and highlighting the shortcomings of masculine war narratives, feminist texts 'broaden and deepen the understanding of the contradictory nature of liberation history in the hope that the insights will count in the construction of a new and liberated society' (Zhuwarara, 2001: p. 139). The Second Chimurenga remains a highly contested literary theme, with so many versions, coming from authors belonging to different ideologies. The versions are the teller's interpretation of 'reality'. This scenario in the narration of the liberation struggle highlights the complicated concept of truth. If 'truth' is taken to be 'correspondence to reality', then that becomes complicated if perceived in the context of relativism. In essence 'reality' here is perceived to be history (like in this case the history of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle), yet history is narrated, and like other narratives has versions (and depends on who tells the story); so basically we can't use historical sources to verify the 'truth' element of such literary narratives. What this demonstrates is that what there are perceptions and interpretations of reality (otherwise of truth) which are sometimes biased and incomplete. Put together different interpretations and or perceptions are an attempt at diversity; diversity which is also characterised by subversion/ contestation. Most importantly the versions of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle discussed above interact through contestation which is the essence of counter discourse.

Subversion in Black Female-Authored Texts

There are three central functions of feminist writing: a liberating contestation of various forms of oppression, a response to exclusion and a struggle for identity. Zimbabwean black feminists perform such roles by rewriting official historiography and contesting exclusion and misrepresentation of the black woman's experience in mostly male-authored works. Such narratives, then, become 'new discourses that recover the repressed narratives of women' (Maodzwa-Taruvinga and Muponde, 2005: p. xiii). Black women writers resist social silencing and marginality by placing women at the centre of their texts, which is a restoral of women centrality in cultural texts. In such fiction, black

women are also raised to the level of agents and actors in history. In writing, women carve out an identity for the various women that they represent. In terms of time and space, black Zimbabwean women narratives challenge the oppression that black women contend with in both the colonial and the 'independent nation'.

Since the 1960s, publications by black women writers have rapidly increased within and beyond the African continent. The first black Zimbabwean woman to write in English and publish in the colonial period is Chifamba 'who started writing by collecting and transcribing traditional stories' (Veit-Wild, 1992: p. 17). The transcribed stories are contained in *Ngano Dzapasi Chigare* (Stories of Olden Days, 1964), a folktale anthology. In her first publication, Chifamba contributes towards the preservation of traditional knowledge systems as well as redefining justice by outlining some elements of women oppression. One of the traditional stories,'The Widow and theBaboons', draws attention to the plight of widows who 'are deprived of inheritances and victimized on the deaths of their husbands'[23] (Musengezi, 2004, as cited in Daymond, Driver, Meintjes, Musengezi, Orford and Rasebotsa, 2004: p. 285). Makhalisa is another early Zimbabwean black woman who wrote and published mainly in Ndebele but, in 1984, she published a short story anthology entitled *The Underdog and Other Short Stories* where she mainly depicts the 'harsh realities of female victimization in a patriarchy' (Veit-Wild, 1992: p. 248). In 'Baby Snatcher', Makhalisa highlights the need for African societies to rethink infertility in marriages by demonstrating that childless marriages are not always the woman's fault. Neither Chifamba nor Makhalisa were well-known compared to their male counterparts. This is likely so because during that time fighting for women rights seemed out of place; for there were other 'bigger issues' that black people needed to address in the colonial stifling space and celebrating the newly acquired independence respectively.[24]

---

[23] The same theme is explored in the film *Neria*, which is based on a script written by Dangarembga. Neria (the woman protagonist) struggles after the death of her husband. The husband's relatives disinherit and victimize the widow.

[24] Comparatively, the African American female writer Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) could not make an immediate impact on African American readers upon its publication because it was considered thematically 'wrong'. Written in the context of the Harlem Renaissance, Hurston's work was discredited for the use of the dialect spoken by African Americans during a period when blacks were defending their humanity and challenging their marginality. Richard Wright then called the book, 'a minstrel–show turn that makes the white folks laugh'. Mary Ann Evans (1819-1880) wrote and published under a

In spite of the many 'gender specific deterrents' that women in Zimbabwe have to triumph over, the independent nation brought an increased publishing literary activity (Primorac, 2006: p. 141). During the larger part of the first decade of independence only males writing in English were known internationally. In an interview prior to the publication of *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga indicated that writers were basically men at the time. All this changed with the publication of *Nervous Conditions* in 1988. Ever since then Zimbabwean female writers began serious writing. Dangarembga has since made an immense contribution to Zimbabwean literature and film industry, as a novelist and a filmmaker. Her major publications are *She No Longer Weeps* (1987), *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and *The Book of Not* (2006). She has also produced a number of films. She wrote a script for *Neria,* a 1993 Zimbabwean film that highlights the disadvantaged positions in which black women find themselves in traditional inheritance systems. *Neria* depicts the battle against the abuse of traditional inheritance customs by black men. The abuse affects the widow and her children who are eventually dispossessed materially. Dangarembga also directed a film; *Everyone's Child* (1996).*Everyone's Child* is slightly different in that it represents the disadvantaged positions of vulnerable orphaned children in an adult-controlled postcolonial world.

In all her creative works, Dangarembga protests against various forms of oppression as they affect black women. This is also a lived reality for Dangarembga. When she joined politics and became a member of the Mutambara MDC faction in 2010,[25] she confirmed this by saying: 'I have always been a vocal critic of injustice, backwardness, intolerance, brutality […] and all the things that are named in the bible as deadly sins'.[26] In *Nervous Conditions,* the battle waged by black women in a colonial state is two-dimensional. Like black men, they suffer the colonial burden but, over and above that, they have to contend with domination in a patriarchy. Some of the beliefs contested in *Nervous Conditions* include the patriarchy-oriented decision to bar girls from acquiring modern education and a lack of economic freedom, even for women with careers. The animosity in the Tambudzai-Nhamo relationship is a result of the decision to segregate the girl child. Tambudzai is

---

the male pen-name George Eliot to obscure her female identity and 'ensure her works were taken seriously in an era when female authors were usually associated with romantic novels' (BBC, History, George Eliot (1819- 1880)).

[25] Movement for Democratic Change, opposition political party.

[26] newZimbabweSituation.com, 3 June 2010.

not sorry when her brother Nhamo dies because as long as he lives she cannot get the first priority to go to school. The novel is generally 'a stark critique of both the patriarchal beliefs of the black community and against the racist structures under which this community must live'.[27]*The Book of Not* is a sequel to *Nervous Conditions* and is about Tambu's 'high-school years during the war of liberation and of her struggle to make an independent life for herself in the decade after national independence' (Kennedy, 2008: p. 88).

In *She No Longer Weeps,* Dangarembga interrogates what it means to be a woman in the Zimbabwean postcolonial context. On attainment of independence, women were promised emancipation, especially in the passage of the Legal Age of Majority Act. This Act was meant to give women the right to contract their own marriages, represent themselves in court, and be guardians of their children. Most of the promises were not seriously honoured on attaining independence, and in *She No Longer Weeps* we witness a daughter's struggle to define her own identity as a woman, independent of her father and the confines of constricted cultural codes. The struggle reflects the broader effort by women in independent Zimbabwe to assert their own understanding of adulthood.

After the publication of *Nervous Conditions*, other women writers complemented Dangarembga's efforts, and the most prominent among these is Vera who was quite prolific. She published *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals (1992), Under the Tongue (1996), Without A Name (1994), Butterfly Burning (1998), Nehanda (1993)* and *The Stone Virgins (2002).* Most of the stories that make up *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals* are set during the liberation struggle and are female centred. *Under the Tongue* focuses on 'the rape of a very young girl by her father while the liberation war engulfs the whole country' (Gunner and Ten Kortenaar, 2007: p. 6). *Butterfly Burning* is about Phephelaphi, and 'places at the centre of the protagonist's crisis over her social and personal identity the consequences of becoming a mother. Phephelaphi's pregnancy stands in the way of her moulding her identity according to her own desires and of her achieving a position of some stature and economic independence in her social world' (Hunter, 2000: p. 236). *Nehanda* (1993) is about the spirit medium Nehanda's role in the liberation struggle. By writing the story of Nehanda, Vera 'defies the notion that women were simply peripheral to nationalist struggle or that they played back-seat roles', thereby challenging 'both the colonial and the male-centred African nationalist erasure of African women's subjectivities and agency' (Desiree, 2004: p. 193).

---

[27] Christiansen-Bull, www.od.dk.

Another interesting black female writer is Nyamubaya, a poet and a short story writer. Her works include *On the Road Again* (1985), *A Dusk of Dawn* (1995) and 'That Special Place' (2003). *On the Road Again* is a collection of poetry and *A Dusk of Dawn* is a combination of short stories and poems. In most of her texts, Nyamubaya 'revisits the war, to reveal its pains and horrors and to appraise the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters who participated in it. [...] *also* poetically *re-inscribing* into Zimbabwean society's memory of history the sordid details of the experiences of the past' (Musvoto, 2007: p. 62).

Though not well-known, Masitera has written interesting texts. She published *Militant Shadow* in 1996. This is a collection of poems that militate against emotional and physical exploitation of black women as mothers, wives and children in a male-dominated society. In *Now I Can Play*, Masitera contests various forms of female oppression. In one of the stories, a man's wife and his mistress compete for him, and both emerge out of the competition as the man's 'captives'. In another story, a girl escapes an attempted rape and is told by her mother to keep silent about it or she will 'be ruined for life'. The girl stands accused of inviting the attempted rape. The second story clearly highlights moments of unacknowledged women experiences resulting from patriarchy-imposed silence and women complicity. Masitera's *Start with Me* (2011) highlights the daunting experiences of women in old age. Masitera's *The Trail* (2000) was published on the verge of the Third Chimurenga. *The Trail* has some affinities to Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* with particular reference to characterization. Lindiwe, Lindiwe's rebellious aunt and Nyasha are central in Masitera's text and are related to Dangarembga's Tambudzai, Lucia and Nyasha respectively. Thematically *The Trail*

> In contrast to Dangarembga's, Masitera's story takes place after independence, and her heroine's rebellion is not directed at a proto-nationalist patriarchy. Instead, it turns itself against the foreign white nuns who run Lindiwe's school without understanding the Zimbabwean students' desire for 'freedom and justice'. (Primorac, 2007: p. 446)

Besides challenging other female writers, Masitera is also popularly known for criticizing 'Vera's representation of three generations of women living together without men in the 1996 novel *Under the Tongue*' (Primorac, 2007: p. 439). Lilian Masitera's works introduce a new and unique feminist voice into

Zimbabwean literature. Besides challenging the ideology of patriarchy, Masitera also challenges what she perceives as misrepresentation and bias in texts by other Zimbabwean feminists.

Gappah and Tagwira are representatives of the upcoming young and modern black Zimbabwean women writers. Gappah contributed stories to the short story anthology *Women Writing Zimbabwe* (2008), edited by Staunton, and published a short story anthology entitled *An Elegy for Easterly and Other Short Stories* (2009).*An Elegy for Easterly* is a collection of short stories that 'use the motifs of connection and reconnection to examine a range of postcolonial subjectivities from the perspective of women' (Muchemwa, 2010: p. 136). She also has an upcoming novel, *The Book of Memory*. Tagwira has published a novel, *The Uncertainty of Hope,* in 2006 and contributed short stories to Staunton's *Women Writing Zimbabwe*.

Only prominent black female writers using English are highlighted here. So many others have written maybe a few short stories here and there but have not yet made huge impact in the Zimbabwean literary field. There is a specific pattern to Zimbabwean narratives by black women; there are peculiar forms of oppression that affect black women that women writers are forced to challenge. Primarily, Zimbabwean women writers write against patriarchal dominance and masculinised nationalist history that gloss over women existence and identities. Patriarchy-enforced silence is broken when women writers write about issues that affect them: issues that are particularly considered taboo. In addition, they also protest against the oppressions that affect Zimbabwean people as a whole. Such elements of protest are visible in literature of the post-2000 crisis, also written by black women.[28] Examples are Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly*, Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* and *Women Writing Zimbabwe*. This kind of writing is peculiar in its presentation of the crisis as it affected women's lives.

Like most male writers of the late 1990s who revise unqualified glorification of the liberation war, Vera and Nyamubaya respond to an official recalling of the contribution of black women in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. They challenge the Joyce Mujuru image of a 'heroine holding a baby in one arm and an AK47 in the other' as the super image of black women in war situations (Christiansen-Bull, 2006: p. 92). Vera and Nyamubaya contest such a glorified role women played, showing that their contribution to the liberation struggle was rather complex. The contribution that women made sometimes left them with painful dents, as in cases of Mazvita in *Without a Name* (1988) and

---

[28] Also named the 'lost decade'.

Nyamubaya in 'That Special Place' (2003). Nyamubaya's 'autobiographical return to a 'special place' is a retrospective contestation over narrative so as to redeem the true stories of the revolution' (Muchemwa, 2006: p. 14). Vera's *Nehanda* (1993) rewrites the First Chimurenga from a female perspective (Muchemwa, 2005: p. 200). The writing of alternative history from a feminist perspective is not limited to literary texts. It also characterizes the making of both fictional and documentary films. *Women of Resilience* (2000), *Mothers of Revolution* (1990) and *Flame* (1996) are films 'driven by a common political concern arising out of post independence marginalization of certain voices. Taken together they therefore constituted a counter-discursive movement toward the writing of an alternative history which otherwise would have remained invisible and unarticulated' (Bryce, 2005: p. 28). *Mothers of Revolution* gives women an opportunity to speak about the war through 'oral testimony from Zimbabwean women involved in the war' (Kennedy, 2008: p. 87). *Flame* is about two girls' experiences as liberation fighters and the different paths they take during the war and in an independent Zimbabwe. *Flame's* director claims that the film is a true reflection of the liberation war. Sinclair states that 'in order not to fall in the traps of clichés of stories or legends that are told [...] about the presence of women in the war, I based the film solely on true stories that had really been experienced' (in an interview with *Speciale*, 1996, as cited in Gugler, 2003: p. 57).

Nyamubaya's '*On the Road Again'*(1986) thematically connects with other texts such as Marechera's *House of Hunger,* Nyamfukudza's *Non-Believer's Journey* and Chinodya's *A Harvest of Thorns* that predict the failing independent state. Nyamubaya refers to a 'defeated victory' and a 'mysterious marriage' between 'independence and victory', where 'independence' was celebrated without 'victory'. Her understanding of the liberation struggle entails that attainment of independence did not mark the end of fighting, rather the struggle continues. Vera also participates in post-independence critique of the Gukurahundi violence. Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002) was the first comprehensive novel to break the imposed silence on the massacres of thousands of Matabeleland and Midlands residents by government soldiers. Tagwira and Gappah also participate in rewriting the official state position on the 1999-2009 crises in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) and *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) respectively. However, these two works are not just feminist[29].

---

[29] In my discussion of gender in this thesis I limit myself to feminism (and to limited extent masculinities) but in Zimbabwean literature there are possible new/other counter-discourses

Rather they fit well into the category of Zimbabwean writers that represent post-independence politics, particularly the 'millennial crises'.

Post-Independence Writing

Zimbabwe's post-independence history and politics are not so different from other African states. After a protracted liberation war between black nationalists and the colonialists, Zimbabwe obtained its independence in 1980. From 1980 up to the time of writing this thesis, the nation has been under the leadership of the Nationalist party ZANU, later ZANU PF, with Robert Mugabe as its Prime Minister and later President. On attaining independence, Zimbabwe became 'a Jewel of Southern Africa'. The new government emphasised reconciliation and sowed a commitment to democracy and economic development (Holmes and Orner, 2010: p. 16). In spite of the social and economic reforms, 'cracks began to show' when Robert Mugabe and the ruling ZANU

> moved to consolidate power and crush opposition. In the early 1980s, an army was sent into Matabeleland and Midlands provinces […] to root out supposed traitors among the former soldiers of ZIPRA. (Holmes and Orner, ibid.)

Gukurahundi ended in 1987 with the signing of the Unity Accord, which saw the birth of ZANU PF. A severe drought and the IMF-recommended economic restructuring program ostensibly disturbed economic and social growth. Following the controversial land re-apropriation and redistribution of 2000, Zimbabwe entered a period popularized as the 'Third Chimurenga'. The

---

on sexual 'minorities' or marginalized sexual groups. These voices can be located in texts on homosexuality. Homosexuality is condemned in Zimbabwe (Robert Mugabe – the Zimbabwean President – is on record for dismissing homosexuals as 'lower than pigs and dogs'). By voicing the tabooed homosexual theme, writers destabilize what Shaw elsewhere termed 'officially codified claims to natural authority' in the area of sexuality (2006: p. 273). 'Gay, lesbian and transgendered writing' challenge old assumptions regarding gender and sexuality (Shaw, 2006: p. 274). Such texts include Madanhire's *If the Wind Blew* (1999) and Huchu's *The Hairdresser of Harare* (2011). These texts tread on 'uncharted terrain' (Shaw, 2006: p. 281), invade the walls of condemned sexualities and articulate not just the prevalence but also the essence of homosexuality. Such writers, just like The Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe Group (GALZ) write to defend human rights for minority sexualities, and what they write present challenges to dominant sexuality beliefs in Zimbabwe (as demonstrated in the constant attacks on homosexuality by the Robert Mugabe).

economic, social and political crises that faced the nation from the late 1990s was lessened by the inception of a Government of National Unity in 2009[30] that ended in 2013, with the re-ushering in of the 'old' ZANU PF-dominated government. The GNU was a coalition government that consisted of the two major Zimbabwean political parties: ZANU PF and the two MDC factions and was a solution to the inconclusive 2008 presidential elections.[31] In spite of the political impasse that characterized the GNU era, there were notable improvements in economic and social aspects; improvements that still remain visible in the post-GNU era. In recent times, Zimbabwe has seen a remarkable growth in its economy. Most importantly there is undoubted availability of food in all Zimbabwean shops. At the end of the power-sharing deal, ZANU PF won the harmonised elections in 2013.

As indicated before, in Rhodesia the dominant version of history 'was authorized by whites' and in an act of dissent, black writers subverted that and offered their own historical perspective (Chennels, 2005: p. 133). In this process, they managed to re-appropriate the misrepresented black 'other' (this is termed cultural nationalism in one of the previous sections of this chapter). In post-independence Zimbabwe, the official and dominant version of history is the one choreographed by the dominant ZANU PF political party and the ruling government. In acts of defiance, all voices of dissent (eventually tagged 'enemies of the state') subvert this official narrative. The dominant version of history is mainly characterized by 'inclusions and exclusions'. 'Inclusions and exclusions' in any society's history depend on 'the political exigencies of the moment' (Chennels, 2005: p. 133) largely because 'official history is selective and supportive of the status quo' (Muchemwa, 2005: p. 195). The narratives, referred to above, by 'voices of dissent' represent what Nyambi has termed 'narrative interventionism' (2011: p. 2), which is conceived here as an act of retelling, in other perspective, the dominant versions of history.

Some of the celebrationist war novels discussed in one of the earlier sections fit into the mood of the period immediately following the attainment of independence. The mythologization of war is understood in the context of celebration. The celebration mood characteristic of this fiction carried a genuine euphoria about the revolution being accomplished (Kaarsholm, 1991).

---

[30] The Zimbabwean postcolonial political development has also been divided into three phases; 1980-1990, 1990-1997 and 1997 and onwards (Sylvester, 2003, as cited in Primorac and Muponde, 2005: p. 16).

[31] MDC T, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, and MDC M, led by Arthur Mutambara.

Rewriting mythologies of the war is also symptomatic of the disillusioning aspects of post-independent Zimbabwe. Writers like Nyamfukudza, Mungoshi, Marechera and Chinodya 'challenged the discourses of Zimbabwean nationalism well before its historiography did so' (Primorac and Muponde, 2005: p. xvii). Texts that fit into this category include Chinodya's *A Harvest of Thorns,* Marechera's both *Black Sunlight* and *House of Hunger.* In both *Harvest of Thorns* and *Black Sunlight,* though the death of Rhodesian colonialism is certain, in the emerging Zimbabwe promises of independence are betrayed. At the end of the war Benjamin, in *Harvest of Thorns,* comes back home and realizes that, though some things have changed, much still remains unchanged. It is important to note that Chinodya received fierce literary attack after the publication of *Harvest of Thorns* for what seemed to be a premature and unfair judgment of the gains or non-gains of independence. In *Black Sunlight,* Marechera demonstrates that as long as opposition politics cannot be tolerated in a free nation, there is no freedom to talk about. For him 'true liberation […] could be achieved only through the overcoming of oppositional identity discourses and freeing the imagination to create space for individual reinvention' (Pucherova in an Interview with Magadza, 2012).[32]

True to the prophetic voices of Marechera and Chinodya (among others), as early as 1982, the historical tensions, conflicts and rivalry between ZANU, ZAPU, ZIPRA, ZANLA, 'the Shona and the Ndebele' led to Gukurahundi. The 'civil war' was representative of a violation of the nationalist ideology, but also an act of ethnic cleansing and a sign of retrogression.[33] The cleansing was largely a result of ZANU's tendency towards monopolization of power and an effort to create a one-party state, which is modern dictatorship (Fanon, 1963: p. 132). The then government of Zimbabwe suppressed Gukurahundi reality. Robert Mugabe's argument that this 'ugly' history was not supposed to be brought into the future was a statement directed at suppression of history (Ranger, 2005: p. 240). Subsequently, this remained a silenced memory throughout the 1980s. Significantly, Zimbabwean literature contains fiction that interrogates facts found or not found in the official historical narrative with respect to Gukurahundi violence. Though not comprehensively, Marechera was

---

[32]http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/08/qa-the-undying-legacy-of-dambudzo-marechera/ (accessed 20 March 2012).

[33] 'Civil war' may not be an appropriate phrase to describe Gukurahundi, because there was no fighting; the government simply went into what they identified as enemy territory and killed thousands of unarmed civilians.

42

the first male black Zimbabwean writer to deal with the silent and unacknowledged historical narrative of Gukurahundi in *Black Sunlight* (1980) by particularly referring to 'intelligent opposition', the term the government used for dissidents (Kahari, 2009: p. 100). Hove in *Shadows* also deals with the unnamed trauma of Gukurahundi. Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002) counters Hove and Marechera's male understanding of the event as a 'male affair' (Vambe, 2004: p. 100). In this novel, Vera describes Gukurahundi violence as experienced by the people of Kezi. Two women's lives are shattered by the battle between government forces and 'dissidents'. Godwin's autobiography *Mukiwa*: *A White Boy in Africa* also captures the Matabeleland massacres but his text had no immediate effect in Africa though it made an impact in Britain for obvious ideological reasons. The book 'fell into a genre of white memoir' in Zimbabwe (Muchemwa, 2005: p. 196). Other texts that contest the suppressed Gukurahundi history and 'silenced memories' include Ndlovu's short story 'Torn Posters', Kilgore's *We Are Now Zimbabweans* and Mlalazi's *Running with Mother* (Toivanen, 2009: p. 1). Such texts resist 'the slipping into oblivion of unacknowledged, unspoken traumas of *Gukurahundi violence'* (Muchemwa, 2005: p. 196) (my emphasis).

In the 1990s and onwards, as the government abandoned the socialist ideology, the disappointments of independence became more obvious (Kaarsholm, 1991). Against the background of the 1999-2009 political, social and economic Zimbabwean crises, there existed 'multiple re-evaluations of the country's history' (Primorac and Muponde, 2005: p. xii). There is 'patriotic historiography' on one hand and voices of dissent on the other. Patriotic historiography builds and departs from the previous nationalist narratives through 'a series of omissions, additions and simplifications' (ibid.). Such an incomplete and biased historical version was made available to the public through the state-controlled media, *The Herald* and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings. Chikwava laments this situation in 'Seventh Street Alchemy'[34] and intimates that people were 'tortured with recycled maxims of state propaganda which ranged from the importance of being a sovereign nation to defending the gains of independence' (2003: p. 21). In 'At the Sound of the Last Post*'*, Gappah satirizes such monopolization of history. The narrator in Gappah's story says:

---

[34] One of the short stories that make up *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2003), a short story anthology.

> Only the official truth matters, only that truth will be handed down through the history books for the children to learn […] they will learn […] the land is one of plenty with happy citizens. The injustices of the past have been redressed to consolidate the gains of independence. (2009: p. 24)

Here, the narrator grapples with the official denial of the crisis and the representation of the Zimbabwean Fast Track Land Reform of 2000. Fiction about the Zimbabwean crisis witnesses the 'sad' lives of a majority of Zimbabweans, and short stories on land re-appropriation demonstrate that the process was marred by corruption and land imbalances were recreated, with ZANU PF leaders getting more land ahead of land-hungry ordinary citizens.

Robert Mugabe, in a classic act of denial of 'the crisis', once said that anyone who believed that the nation was in short supply of fuel should test that by lying on any of the Zimbabwean roads. Such a denial resonates well with the argument that 'African economies never collapse until there is no food in the state house' (Hove, 2009: p. 23). Alongside state-controlled media, during the same period a literary tradition emerged that also fits well into Ranger's 'patriotic narrative'. Nyambi locates Gomo's *A Fine Madness* in this tradition. In line with the official discourse on the crisis, Gomo's book

> represents negative images of an Africa suffering under western neo-colonial siege years into self rule in an essentialist way that projects the continent as entirely beleaguered by terrorist groups, rebels and opposition parties sponsored by western powers to destabilize African 'democracies that threaten to overwhelm white minority influence'. (Nyambi, 2011: p. 3)

The story of Africa as victim can also be found in Robert Mugabe's understanding/misunderstanding of opposition politics, particularly the Movement for Democratic Change. Mugabe's favoured rhetoric -'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again' - correlates with the belief that 'the MDC is implacably moored in the colonial yesteryear and embraces […] the repulsive ideologies of return to the white settler rule' (White, 2003: p. 101). According to Moyo, ZANU PF could never share power with MDC because 'they are British backed racists whose existence is provocative' (as cited in White, ibid.). The affinity between state discourse and Gomo's *A Fine Madness* shows that this

specific literary tradition has 'entered the public sphere as a sympathetic force to the state, advancing its rule and subsequently subverting anti government voices' (Nyambi, 2011: p. 4).[35]

The counter-discursive, anti-government voices that challenged the official discourse on the crisis included opposition parties, privately owned media, civil society, revisionist historians, creative and critical texts. Non-official re-writing of the Third Chimurenga history by particularly creative writers is interesting. From 2000 onwards, many Zimbabwean short story anthologies were published by different local and international publishing houses. The most visible publishing houses in 'the scramble for short story' include Amabooks of Bulawayo and Weaver Press of Harare. From Weaver Press, Staunton edited four short story anthologies: *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2003), *Writing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2005), *Laughing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2007) and *Women Writing Zimbabwe* (2008). Morris edited the three series of *Long Time Coming: Short Writings from Bulawayo (1, 11* and *111)*. Most of the short stories rewrite the official denial of the Third Chimurenga crisis. Other such works include Chingono's *Not Another Day* (2006), Chinodya's *Harare North* (2009), Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) and Chinodya's *Chairman of Fools* (2005).

Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* challenges the official narrative of Operation Murambatsvina.[36] As shown by Nyambi, 'the state narrative characteristically shows a clear defensive assertiveness that finds expression

---

[35] Other texts that belong to the same tradition include Maruma's *Coming Home* (2007) and Mtizira's *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008). According to Primorac and Muponde, 'some xenophobic novels in indigenous languages, monologic popular texts and nationalist narratives of patriotic childhoods' helped to pave way for the Third Chimurenga as well as rehearsing it (2005: p. xv).

[36] Operation Murambatsvina was implemented by the government in 2005 and was mainly characterized by violence. It was a programme purportedly meant to clean 'dirt, crime and subversion', targeted at urban dwellers. The 'cleansing exercise was however politically motivated' - it was an opportunity to disturb the emerging strong opposition political MDC party. As explained by Sachikonye, Operation Murambatsvina was an example of the 2002 'post-election retaliation by the Mugabe Regime mainly against an opposition movement that had strongly become rooted in urban areas' (2011: p. 26). The operation was characterized by destruction of 'illegal' business and residential structures and between 700,000 and 2.5 million people were left homeless and without a source of income. Elsewhere, Operation Murambatsvina has been described as a 'man made socio-political catastrophe' (Nyambi, 2011: p. 5). For more details see chapter 5 of this study.

[…] in the government's intransigent official response to the […] United Nations' report that concluded that the operation violated its victims' basic rights' (2011: p. 6). Tagwira questions the state's denial of the brutal violation of basic human rights curtailed in the operation. Thus, her work translates into a discourse of protest that is 'counter narrative […] of the official narrative of time-space' and in reading the work, the reader experiences 'the tragedy of Operation Murambatsvina in ways that steer him/her to certain perceptions […] which have not found expression in the state narrative' (ibid.).

The centrality of the land issue in Zimbabwean politics and crisis of the last decade cannot be overemphasized.[37] Its centrality is not limited to history but also extends to literature. From as early as the 1950s, Zimbabwean writers focused on the land theme. Key texts include *A Son of the Soil, Feso, Nehanda* and *Waiting for the Rain*. These texts describe how colonized black people are affected by colonial land ownership imbalances. When the liberation war was waged, major issues to be resolved included land ownership imbalances. Upon attaining independence, it took the ZANU and later ZANU PF government a long time to correct those imbalances. Faced with a powerful and influential political opposition party (MDC in the late 1990s), ZANU PF fell back on the emotional land issue and put in place a largely chaotic Land Reform Programme, and dubbed it *Jambanja.* The manner in which the justified cause of redressing the land ownership imbalances was implemented had dire consequences to a nation whose economy was slowly crumbling under a corrupt leadership. This kind of leadership is satirized in Musengezi's *The Honourable*

---

[37] Land reform has always been controversial in Zimbabwean politics. In 1888, Cecil John Rhodes led colonists to expropriate the black people's land, getting the best productive land and creating ownership imbalances in the process. The struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe sought, among other things, to redress colonial land ownership imbalances. However, the colonial land ownership patterns established during the colonial conquest were largely maintained in the post independent period. There were a number of land reform processes in the history of the independent Zimbabwe and the 2000 Land Reform Programme is the most controversial. ZANU PF was accused of reacting to the referendum defeat and MDC's popularity by 'bashing […] a few white farmers' (Bond and Mandinyanya, 2002: p. 67). Revisiting the land question was taken to be ZANU PF's predictable political strategy 'to reclaim […] lost political ground' (Hammar, 2004: p. 10). The ruling party is believed to have planned to achieve two things through the land reform: to get 'revenge against white farmers, who are largely believed to have a greater influence in the opposition party and to garner support from the electorate (Bond and Mandinyanya, 2002: p. 67).

MP (1983). As writers struggle to undo the damage of the official representation of the land reform and its attendant negative impact on human existence, they contribute to the discourse of protest. Major texts in this category include selected short stories in *Writing Now (2005), Writing Still (2003, Laughing Now (2007)* and Hoba's *The Trek and Other Stories.*

It should be pointed out from the onset that 'despite all evidence to the contrary, the fast track land reform was officially represented as a pinnacle of national history: the long overdue reclaiming of a key national and spiritual resource, and thus a glorious act of final decolonization' (Primorac, 2006: p. 2). Writers demonstrate overwhelming evidence to the effect that, though the land invasions could be considered reclamation of a national and spiritual resource, these were largely chaotic and could be viewed as one of the factors behind the millennial crisis. Most importantly, however, the land invasions became an important literary event, providing artists with a new reality to be recreated. Writers show how the invasions were mostly anarchic. For instance, Hove bluntly refers to the fast track program as a 'chaotic resettlement program' (2002: 6). From Chinodya's 'Queue*s*' (2003) in *Writing Still*, 'grabbing of farms' is one of the crimes that Zimbabwe committed against the world, the world that later punished us. The farm invaders are first and foremost 'reformed rustics […] who rejoiced at the pieces of their ancestral land that were restored to them, at the little seed packs, thrift bags of fertilizers and itinerant tractors availed at them' (p. 51). Though in nationalist narrative the Third Chimurenga was 'represented as a glorious final act of decolonization', in intervention narratives the same act 'led to the collapse of the nation's economy' (Primorac and Muponde, 2005: p. xiii).

One interesting contribution by Chingono is his story 'Minister without Portfolio' (2007).[38] From Chingono's point of view, the farm dwellers have built matchbox size houses and are busy dancing and drinking beer, while the land lays fallow. Some of the grabbed farms are deserted. This prompted the minister in the story to conclude that these invaders are 'sabotaging the revolution' by derailing the land reform program. He becomes a laughing stock at the end of the story when it is confirmed that these are some of the farms he invaded and now belong to him. Chingono's story undermines ZANU PF's claim that the opposition MDC party and its allies that were derailing the supposed land reform program. As Kanengoni argues: 'Though the intentions of

---

[38] Hoba's '*Specialization*' (2007) also paints a picture of a chaotic land reform programme and will be discussed in chapter 5.

the monumental land allocation were noble the implementation was fraught with corruption and rampant abuse' (2004: p. 50). The corrupt manner in which the Land Reform Program was implemented has resulted in yet another land imbalance where mostly ZANU PF stalwarts now own the land. A fourth Chimurenga would be needed to undo the imbalances created by the 2000 Land Reform Program.[39]

Writers go beyond the land crisis and demonstrate the various aspects of the crisis that the government of Zimbabwe largely dismissed or deliberately ignored in their national discourse. They do so by highlighting the material realities of ordinary Zimbabweans denied basic commodities like food, decent accommodation, dignified remuneration and freedom of expression. Mostly the accusation by the government that the so-called 'enemies of the state' choreographed the problems Zimbabwe faced was a crucial part of the official denial of the crisis. The 'enemies of the state' discourse relates well to the blame loaded on the MDC and its supposed allies Britain and America that the ruling ZANU PF wanted the world to believe were the chief choreographers of the crisis. With differing levels of success, writers of the Zimbabwean crisis grappled with issues related to the causes and the nature of the post-2000 crisis. Their texts ultimately offer a challenge to the grand narratives of the 'crises'. In what Pilossof described as 'the latest evolution of Zimbabwe's white writing' white writes add their voices and narrate especially the 'land invasions' aspect of the Zimbabwean crisis (2009: p. 621). Texts that give the aforementioned white version of the land invasions include; Buckle's *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* (2001) and *Beyond Tears: Zimbabwe's Tragedy*. (2006), Vanbuskirk's *The Last Safari: A Season of Discovery in Zimbabwe* (2006), Godwin's *When A Crocodile Eats The Sun: A Memoir of Africa*. (2008), Harrison's *Jambanja* (2006) and Wiles' *Foredoomed Is My Forest: The Diary of a Zimbabwe Farmer* (2005). Key to note is the fact that these white writers, like the black writers who subvert the state land discourse, paint a negative picture of the invasions. The notable difference is that white writers are narrating the 'land invasions' as victims of the Third Chimurenga and for the greater part their narratives fit into the 'white writing' category that is often dismissed as part of the colonial discourse. However this is not meant to suggest that their stories do not contribute meaningful alternatives to the state discourse on land invasions.

---

[39] For a detailed discussion of the possibility of a fourth Chimurenga, see Primorac, 2006: p. 74.

Autobiographical Writing and Alternative Historiography

Autobiographical writings are an important aspect of Zimbabwean literature. These are personal and private in nature but operate 'within a broader socio–political context' (Harris, 2005: p. 104). Autobiographical writings are both Rhodesian and Zimbabwean. According to Chennels, 'early autobiographical writings contributed to the larger imperial narrative' and were mainly written by white Rhodesians (2005: p. 132). Examples include Ian Douglass Smith's *Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal and the Dreadful Aftermath* (2001) and Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996). In his autobiography, Smith locates the palce of the self in the history of Rhodesia. Key points emphasized in his narrative include 'displacement' of the 'non-existing' black race through colonial infiltration. Still steeped in colonial discourse, Smith minimises the significance of black resistance (especially the First Chimurenga) to colonial encroachment (Javangwe, 2011: p. 77). What Smith does in his autobiography is re writing the history of colonialism, offering an alternative to what black writers and individuals have said on the subject. Godwin's *Mukiwa* will be discussed in chapter 3 as one of the texts that rewrite the Gukurahundi aspect of Zimbabwean history. *Mukiwa* 'traces and delineates the life of Peter Godwin in colonial Rhodesia from childhood up to the time he returns to independent Zimbabwe in the early 1980s' (Javangwe, 2011: p. 90)

On the other hand, early black Zimbabwean autobiographies were an important consciousness formation for nationalists. Shamuyarira (1965), Vambe (1972), Nyagumbo (1980) and Sithole (1976) 'recall how racial insult, poverty and the frustration of educational ambition constrained their lives within Rhodesia' (Chennels, 2005: p. 133). Autobiographical writings by black politicians in Rhodesia resist the excesses of the colonial contact and ideology. In post-independence Zimbabwe, popular political figures continue to write their life-stories and the most interesting of these are Nkomo's *The Story of My Life* (1983) and Tekere's *Life Time of Struggle* (2007). These two autobiographies exist in a terrain that is dominated by 'the self-serving memory of […] ZANU PF' (Chennels, 2005: p. 133). *The Story of My Life* (1983) contests ZANU's misrepresentation of Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU's political contribution to the building of a new Zimbabwe. It is particularly Nkomo's misrepresentation as 'father of dissidents' that he questions in his autobiography. Largely, his autobiographical projects 'forms part of a political reconstruction in the midst of hostile deconstruction' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006: p. 78). Self-writing allows Nkomo (and others) an opportunity at creation and

recreation of their identities (Chennels, 2005: p. 132). Gukurahundi was a 'full scale repression of ZAPU and anything to do with that organization's history of contributing to the nationalist struggle and the liberation war' (Kaarsholm, 2005: p. 4). In *The Story of My Life,* Nkomo reacts to repression of ZAPU and re-establishes its contribution to the nationalist struggle and the liberation struggle. Tekere was a founding member of ZANU who also served the new Zimbabwe in 1980 as one of its cabinet ministers and was sacked from the government in 1981, and subsequently from the ZANU PF party in 1988 and formed an opposition party (ZUM).[40] In his autobiography, Tekere is 'at pains to portray Robert Mugabe, who often had poor judgment, was manipulative and cunning' as a response to 'the propagandists who present Mugabe as a courageous man' (Mambipiri, 2011)[41]. This shows that 'the ruling party's history is not an uncontested call of the past' (Chennels, 2005: p. 133). Generally, the lives of the autobiographers reflect on the history of the nation and make an interesting contribution to national history by questioning and deflating certain elements projected on nationalist history. Personal testimonies in self-writings fill in the 'cracks and interstices'[42] of Zimbabwean history and 'articulate previously censored and suppressed' realities (Harris, 2005: p. 103). In this section I have demonstrated how race is also a key aspect in self-writing and narration of the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean history.

Conclusion

Counter-discourse is a crucial feature of Zimbabwean literature. A study of the trends of counter-discursive narratives in this chapter has confirmed Terdiman's description of counter-discourse as not sovereign and not exhaustive of reality (1989: 18). Initially, black Zimbabwean writers had to reconstruct the African past disfigured in colonial discourse by dismantling its colonialist assumptions. Such re-appropriation of history influenced cultural nationalist writings and all literature that resisted the oppressive tendencies of colonial contact. Later, black Zimbabwean writers had a task to write and rewrite post-independence successes and failures. In tracing the theme of violence in novels from independence onwards, patterns of inter-textual relationships emerge prominently with texts 'quoting, echoing and debating each other and in the

---

[40] Zimbabwe Unity Movement

[41] www.newzimbabwe.com, Mambipiri, *Edgar Tekere: A Review* (accessed 9 June 2011).

[42] Harris uses this phrase to refer to personal testimonies that are part of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission generated stories.

process reformulating and challenging earlier tales' (Kaarsholm, 2005: p. 18). In challenging colonialist construction of the liberation struggle and celebrating independence, selected black (largely male) writers romanticised the liberation struggle. There are texts that revise the romanticised versions of the liberation struggle and yet the revisions are insufficient. The revisions have been subsequently challenged in texts that highlight the complexities of war violence and write women into the liberation history. A number of writers also challenge the state discourse on Gukurahundi and the Third Chimurenga. Prominent politicians offer alternative voices to state discourse through autobiographical writing. Compared to literatures from other parts of the African continent, the dynamism of the post-1980 literary history of Zimbabwe is exceptional in this respect. Many of the literary texts that can qualify as counter-discourse have been written about Zimbabwe, and this study cannot pretend to be exhaustive. As a result, I will only refer to selected themes in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2: Feminist Subversion of Nationalist Narratives

Until lions have their histories, tales of hunting will always glorify their hunter - African Proverb (Hudson-Weems, 2007: p. 1)

Introduction

In tracing the history of counter-discourse in Zimbabwean literature in the previous chapter, I demonstrated how black women writers make their contribution through a subversion of patriarchal and nationalist narrations of Zimbabwean history. In this chapter, I expand on that position and demonstrate how Vera, Nyamubaya and Hove[43] resist the social silencing of women by placing women at the centre of their texts. That process is not just a refusal of marginality but is also a restoral of centrality of women in cultural texts. Selected writers write black women into Zimbabwean liberation history in two ways: through a revitalisation of women's roles in the liberation struggle and emphasising women-specific struggles that are often ignored in nationalist writing of the liberation struggle. I begin this discussion by revisiting the subject of colonialism: highlighting its nature and the colonized subjects' responses. I also highlight some characteristics of nationalism as a response to colonialism paying particular attention to how nationalist discourse on the liberation struggle ignored and excluded women's issues from its agenda. Such a background is useful in understanding the selected texts set in Rhodesia and focusing on the liberation struggle against colonialism. Texts selected for this chapter are Vera's *Without a Name* and selected stories from *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals and Other Stories*, Nyamubaya's 'That Special Place' and Hove's *Ancestors*.

European colonization of African space and people was motivated by the general pursuit to dominate and conquer, informed by a political and economic desire for expansion and enrichment of European nations. Colonialism in Africa was multifaceted and systematic. It was not only about political and economic domination but had also a cultural aspect. In imperialist logic, imperial culture thrives to obliterate the culture of the oppressed and to impose its own cultural idea. Colonialism in its various forms dehumanized the colonized Africans, and was 'a heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as the other'

---

[43] Hove's *Bones* fits here even though he is a male writer, largely because the text is female-centered and addresses women's issues. I will however discuss the complexities associated with male writers speaking on behalf of women in their texts.

(Spivak, 1988: p. 76). The colonized African subjects responded in various ways. Supporters of colonialism in Europe and the rest of the world believed that the majority of Africans welcomed and embraced colonialism because it supposedly brought peace to the continent, most parts of which were said to be conflict ridden. Such a version of colonial history is not convincing in all respects and was as manipulative as it was ill-informed. African scholars argue that even if the African pre-colonial society was 'itself not a golden age of democracy […]' colonialism was 'undemocratic to the core' and hence could not have brought peace but created new conflicts (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: p. 1144).[44] There is also considerable evidence of a mixed reaction to colonialism by the colonized, what is termed 'hybridity' in postcolonial discourse - with many colonized people living at the crossroads of cultures. Though the colonized people made efforts to resist colonial encroachment, some aspects of imperial culture were rather tempting. Achebe refers to 'the bounties of the Christian God […] education, paid jobs and many other advantages that nobody in his right senses could underrate' (1988: p. 31). The postcolonial concept of hybridity was 'invented' to go beyond the simplistic dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized. Living at crossroads of cultures for colonized people is quite problematic because it confirms the supremacy of Western values, yet:

> The violence with which the supremacy of white values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and of thought of the native man mean that, in revenge, the native laughs in mockery when Western values are mentioned in front of him. (Fanon, 1963: p. 33)

Hence, proper decolonization entailed that the colonized register a 'total rejection' of the colonizer's values. The need to resist 'modernity' is justified because in the African context modernity 'is inextricably tied to western colonialism' (Jameson, 1990, as cited in Friedman, 2006: p. 426).[45] Such a

---

[44] This is comparable to Curtin, Feierman, Thompson and Vansina's position that Europeans 'propagated that they had come to Africa to keep the peace *with the intention of stopping* intra-African warfare and to suppress those African customs they regarded as repulsive' (italics my own) (1995: p. 423).

[45] The use of the term 'modern' in relation to African space has always been problematic. As Taiwo argues 'colonialism and modernity are used interchangeably in much of the discourse about Africa' (2010: p. 3). Claiming that colonialism 'installed modernity in Africa' (ibid.)

54

rejection normally manifests itself in traditionalism and is a reaction to the complicated relationship between modernity and imperialism. However, 'total rejection' becomes an empty declaration: particularly contradictory and paradoxical vis-à-vis the process of hybridisation. As colonial rule became more institutionalized and intense, African resistance became more organized and focused, and was couched in the concept of Nationalism - it is also quite important to note that the idea of a nation was borrowed from western thinking (this is also an expression of hybridity). Subsequently, then, 'colonialism created African nationalism and African nationalists' and nationalism was one of 'the strongest foci for resistance to imperial control in colonial societies' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: p. 1144). Nationalism is a concept of a shared community, what Anderson has termed 'an imagined community' (2006). Nationalism enabled postcolonial societies to reinvent a self-image through which they could act to liberate themselves from imperialist oppression. Some of the African Nationalist Movements that fought for liberation from colonialism include MPLA[46] and UNITA[47] of Angola, FRELIMO[48] of Mozambique, SWAPO[49] of Namibia, ANC[50] and PAC[51] of South Africa and ZANU[52] and ZAPU[53] of Zimbabwe. All these movements represent the difference and diversity of colonial resistance.

Fanon describes the struggle for national culture as a revolutionary schema that comprises three separate but related stages. He indicates that in the assimilationist stage, the native intellectual demonstrates assimilation prowess but in stage two he 'remembers his authentic culture and kicks against attempts to assimilate him' (1963, as cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995: p. 159). What characterizes stage two is cultural reaffirmation and unbridled traditionalism. Stage three represents the nationalist phase that is characterized by fighting back. This last stage is always 'a violent phenomenon' and is a

---

remains problematic. In what ways are African states considered non-modern, and who measures 'modernity'? In the context of this study, modernity is understood to be any changes (good or bad) that were brought to the African continent through colonialism.

[46] Popular Movement for the Independence of Angola.

[47] Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

[48] Front for the Liberation of Mozambique.

[49] South West Africa People's Organization.

[50] African National Congress.

[51] Pan-African Congress.

[52] Zimbabwe African National Union.

[53] Zimbabwe African People's Union.

significant aspect of decolonization (Fanon, 1963: p. 27). From Cabral's point of view, 'national liberation struggle as a historical act becomes an act of cultural resistance to such an extent that it is recognized that the object of national liberation is the freedom of a society and its values from foreign domination' (1973, as cited in Ashcroft et al, 1995: p. 160). One has to note, however, that besides such a militant intellectual position adopted by both Fanon and Cabral, nationalism is not unitary. Schiff demonstrates that 'cultural domination is […] a major aspect of imperialist domination […] *and* is always a major site of resistance […] *but* the totality of indigenous culture can hardly be posited as a unified, transparent site of anti-imperialist resistance'.[54] This becomes clear when it comes to the voices of women challenging nationalist discourse on the liberation struggle. Though African Nationalism was a response to the undemocratic colonial enterprise, it was itself not a 'school for democracy' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: p. 1144). This is another example of hybridity that cannot escape our attention, in particular as we read Zimbabwean writers who subvert and reread the mainstream narration of the liberation struggle - especially the ones I have selected for this chapter. Nationalism rested on patriarchal ideology, and particularly failed to escape gender discrimination, which is one of 'the problematic aspects of nationalist ideologies' (Engelke, 1998: p. 36). In the Zimbabwean context, 'the woman as subject has been rendered invisible by the historiographies of Rhodesia' as well as by the nationalist ideology (Lyons, 2004: p. 67). Where/when femininity is excluded, masculinity 'becomes the only trusted guardian of national history, land and heritage as well as the only fire that warms the national patriotism' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: p. 1154). Once the exclusion of women is accepted as the norm, the collective of nationalism is defeated and nullified. The woman's question is not made an integral part of the fight for national culture for obvious reasons of such exclusion 'has been to render invisible women's hands in the making of nations and states' (Nagel, 1998: p. 243). This is largely so because 'nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope' (Enloe, 1990, as cited in Nagel, 1998: p. 244). It suffices then that nationalism is 'a discriminatory identity' (Bhabha, 1995: p. 34). The masculinized dominant nationalist version of history excludes women and hence is gender-blind.

---

[54] M. Schiff, 'Histories and Theories of Nationalism: A Semiotic Approach', http://www.janushead.org/4-2/schiff.cfm (accessed 2 May 2011).

According to Lyons, 'most popular fiction about the war has been written by men' (2004: 26). All the literary works studied for this chapter contest 'the image of the historic woman warrior fighting for political independence, wielding a gun in one hand and holding a baby with the other' (Lyons, 2004: p. xix). The selected writers show the complex roles and positions occupied by women in the fight for national culture and other struggles that are women-specific. The response to the biased narration from 'feminist' perspective has been to illuminate the role played by women in the fight for national struggle, the impact of the struggle on women's lives as well as the other struggles that are specific to women. Such narratives are then directed at 'bringing women back in the study of nationalism and national politics' and have since filled in an important gap in Zimbabwean war historiography elsewhere and in literature (Nagel, 1998: p. 243). As part of the postcolonial discourse, they weaken the orientalist nature of the grand narratives by exposing 'the inadequacies of conventional accounts of the past by attempting to include what these accounts tended to leave out' (Lyons, 2004: p. 4). In view of this, this chapter then seeks to study some texts by Vera, Hove and Nyamubaya - short stories from *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals* (1992), *Without a Name* (1994), *Ancestors* (1996) and 'That Special Place' (2003).

Rethinking Land Politics in Vera's *Without a Name*

At the centre of the liberation struggle was a demand for lost land. For colonized black people, the 'demands for [...] lost lands were part of a developed consciousness of the mechanisms of their oppression; of an understanding of the ways in which the state had expropriated them to the direct advantage of settler farming' (Ranger, 1985, as cited in Gunner, 1991: p. 77). Anti-imperialism, 'has from the outset embodied ideals of freedom, democracy and equality as well as the restoration of land to the people' (Primorac, 2006: p. 4). Nationalist narratives insist on the centrality of the land issue since colonial occupation was understood as 'geographical violence'. Through decolonization, the oppressed people reclaim their 'geographical identity' (Said, 1993, as cited in Mangwanda, 2003: pp. 141-42).

In redressing the loss of locality to the colonizers, the indigenes struggle to restore lost lands. Many Zimbabwean authors articulate such a nationalist approach to an understanding of land as a central aspect of the decolonization process. In this discussion I focus on Vera's contribution to the land debate in *Without a Name*. Vera adopts a nationalist approach to land and identities in her

other works *Nehanda* and *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals.* However, in *Without a Name* she revisits the way black women relate to land in the context of the liberation struggle. She demonstrates that there are notable contradictions on the way colonized people relate to land. Vera achieves this through a representation of Mazvita's sexual abuse, her decision to escape to the city and the critical stance that she takes against Nyenyedzi's loyalty to the land. Mazvita rejects the land, yet in grand narratives of colonial domination women are normally used as symbols of 'the virgin land to be tamed by the European' (Busia, 1989-1990: p. 91). In Mazvita, Vera problematizes how violated women relate to land. Mazvita is the protagonist of the story. Men initially call her Mazvita and later on Howa, and she refuses such naming. Symbolically her refusal to be named extends to include a refusal of male historiography, especially on the imagination of the land space. In the African traditional sense, land is inseparable from a people's identity. Land supposedly gives Mazvita her identity but to her it is not just a cultural artefact but rather reminds her of the personal violation that she experienced during the rape incident, an experience that she struggles to forget. Here Vera searches for a re-evaluation of how violated women relate to the land and its features in complex ways. During rape, Mazvita could not see the rapist's face, yet she needed to see the face to hate the man for the abuse. She then transferred the hate to various elements that seemed complicit in the act of her violation. She hated the land, the dew-covered grass, the call of the strange bird and the mist. The things she hated 'contained the loss *and* continued to remind her of her pain' (p. 30) and contributed in various ways to the pain and horror of the moment of violation. She hated the dewy grass 'she had felt graze tenderly against her naked elbow in that horrible moment' (ibid.). Mazvita wanted to cry out her pain but an unknown bird 'had silenced her when she needed to tell of her suffering […] to hear her own suffering uttered, acknowledged' (ibid.). Crying for her would have meant a release of pain. The unknown bird's silencing force relates to the traditional silencing of women. Women are not given an opportunity to articulate their existence - which for the greater part is characterized by pain. However, African women have found ways to articulate their voices in serene ways, although often their voices remain subordinate.

Mazvita also 'hated the land that pressed beneath her back as the man moved impatiently above her, into her, past her' (ibid.). She connected the man to the land because it had 'allowed the man to grow from itself into her body' (ibid.). The violence that she experiences in the rape incident is inseparable from

the land, where the land and other geographical features become accomplices with the rapist, making it very difficult for the violated Mazvita to have any sense of connection with the land, that which, in the Zimbabwean worldview, gives one an identity. Psychologically, anger and hatred have significant functions. For Mazvita anger and hatred function 'as some kind of psychic glue […] *and as alternatives to sexual violation'* (italics my own).[55] The rage of anger and hatred then 'function as a defence against shame that feels unbearable'.[56] Such an unbearable shame is connected to Mazvita's emotional feeling as she emerges out of the act of rape 'damaged *and* that sense of damage can mean that the self is felt to be in pieces, in danger of collapse' (italics my own).[57] The three related emotions 'hatred, anger and rage serve a defensive and cohesive function'.[58]

Mazvita could not connect the emptiness that she felt after the violation to the rapist but rather connected it 'to the land'. Mazvita strongly feels that the land played a significant part in the violation of her body and being and, as a result, she feels so alienated from it and wants to escape to the city where she would feel safe because the city space is 'landless for her' (Vera in a Primorac Interview, 2012: p. 379). Mazvita is thus critical of her lover Nyenyedzi's attachment to the land and his claim that 'the land is inescapable […] *and* is everything' (italics my own) (p. 33). For Nyenyedzi the land is an inheritance from the ancestors that should be guarded jealously, hence he is against Mazvita's suggestion that they move to the city. Nyenyedzi thinks that moving to the city is an admission that the indigenes have lost the land to the new colonial occupants and translates into some kind of betrayal to ancestors who are the real owners of the African land. Yet for Mazvita nothing justifies such an attachment to the land. The land did not only collude in her violation, but as farm labourers, the colonized black people are also alienated from it in various ways. In her view, the colonized are

> servants paid poorly for *their* labours. *They* cannot decide which crops to grow on it. *They* do not pray for the success of *their* crop because it is no longer *their* crop. *They* cannot pray for another's

---

[55] J. Burgo, 'Narcissistic Rage and the Sense of Entitlement',
http://www.afterpsychotherapy.com/narcissistic-rage/ (accessed 27 April 2013).
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

crop. There are no rituals of harvest, of planting the crop into the ground. *They* labour because it is *their* task to labour. *They* do not own the land. The land is enclosed in the barbed fences, and *they* sleep amid the thorny bushes, in the barren part of the land. (p. 33)

They have been dispossessed, alienated and they cannot afford to be uncritical of the land and the new meaning it has acquired in the colonial set-up. As labourers, the colonized natives have lost ownership of the land and what they occupy is quite unproductive and very repulsive. The land has also been 'desecrated by commercial cash crop farming' and has become privatized through commercialization and the creation of farms (Samuelson, 2003: p. 94). Mazvita agrees that land is a cultural artefact that black people should guard jealously, but she believes that such an understanding of the significance of land is not the only truth. She asks Nyenyedzi the following question: 'what you say about land is true, but does this truth belong equally to all of us?' (p. 33). Her personal experiences have forced her to revisit issues of land and identity, land and loyalty, and land and attachment. The intricate relationship between land and black people changed for the violated Mazvita. In essence, the position that Mazvita takes in *Without a Name* represents a rebellion against the cultural loyalty to land (Pucherova, 2012: p. 186). 'She had loved the land, saw it through passionate and intense moments of freedom, but to her the land had no fixed loyalties' (p. 34). For instance, she refers to how the land has allowed the colonizers to succeed in violating its cultural significance. She says:

> The strangers have taken the land. They have grown tobacco where we once buried the dead. The dead remain silent. They have grown tobacco where we once worshipped and prayed. The land has not rejected them. (p. 33)

What Mazvita articulates here is the land invasion by colonialists - and how that has disturbed the land and transformed it from a sacred place (where ancestors are buried) into an economic commodity. In Mazvita's view, the land did not reject such a transformation.

Mazvita's personal story dramatizes women's alienation from the land and at the same time satirizes Nyenyedzi's and, by extension, any uncritical attachment to it as a cultural artefact and as a site of identity. Through a foregrounding of how Mazvita and Nyenyedzi differ in their perception of the

land and the freedom fighters, Vera refers to differences in perception as 'heterogeneity of expectations and aspirations' (Musila, 2012: p. 9). The differences are noted where 'Nyenyedzi has a firm belief in the freedom fighters' struggle to free the land, while for Mazvita the soldiers are terrorists, and after the rape, her immediate need is liberation from the trauma of the experience, and the need to run away from a defiled identity, which is tied to the land' (ibid.). It is also significant to note that historically, in many African states 'land belonged to men and women were mainly part of the labour on these farms' (Musila, 2012: p. 6).[59] Hence, even before colonial intrusion women were already disillusioned with the land, especially with respect to its ownership. In the liberation struggle, women are further disillusioned. In Mazvita Vera is conscious of class. Initially Mazvita is a peasant girl who traverses geographical spaces. She moves from the village to the farm, later on to the city and back to the village. The physical journey also signifies movement from peasantry to proletariat, and finally reclamation of peasantryhood.

In *Without a Name* Vera also highlights how women's bodies are sites of the liberation struggle. This she achieves through a representation of Mazvita's rape. Rape is one of the 'issues whose existence may not have been made visible in nationalist discourse' (Lipenga, 2012: p. 271). According to Muchemwa, 'patriarchal history and memory gloss over taboo experiences of rape' (2005: p. 197). In that context Vera's interpretation of the taboo of rape is politicized and her writing becomes a radical challenge that has 'interrupted traditional relations of speech and authority by uttering the unsaid taboos' (Devault, 1999: p. 183). In *Without a Name*, Vera also emphasizes the fact that Mazvita is not just a victim of rape but emerges out of the experience as a survivor. She saves herself from the traumatic memory of the rape through infanticide: 'she rested her fingers shakingly on the child and remembered. The past came to her in rapid waves that made her heave the child forward, away from her, in a deep and uncontrollable motion of rejection' (p. 17). It is important to note that even though women are excluded from 'national community, […] through the violence inflicted on their bodies, they become some sort of unofficial displaced sites of struggle' (Toivanen, 2009: p. 66). It is also quite paradoxical that the female body is more often than not violated, yet the nation is conceived in terms of the same female body. This is implicit in 'the familiar discourse of the rape between the colonizer and the colonized country' (Kanneh, 1995: p. 347).

---

[59] See also Schmidt, 1992, as cited in Musila, 2012: p. 6.

A Re-Interpretation of Black Women's Experience of the Liberation Struggle

If we agree that in fighting for national culture 'the collective disillusionment and anger *was* over the denial of manhood, identity and peoplehood', we also have to agree that such a discourse deliberately ignores the impact of imperial culture on black women and the subsequent women participation in the liberation struggle (italics my own) (Hunter and Davies, 1992, as cited in Zenenga, 2007: p. 132). This emanates from the fact that, from the onset 'the colonial subject is always *perceived* as male' (italics my own) (Busia, 1989–1990: p. 97). Such exclusion represents some kind of misinterpretation of colonial history and the nature of the liberation struggle. Both Nyamubaya and Vera fill in the ideological void within the public political sphere, and re-appropriate such a masculine nationalist perspective of the liberation struggle and particularly problematize the war front and rear dichotomy in 'That Special Place' and 'It is Hard to Live Alone' respectively.

The front-rear dichotomy has roots in the Manichean tendency to 'see the world in terms of dualistic and conflicting binary opposites' (Murray, 2009: p. 3). In the context of war, the battlefront is understood as a territory of strong men and the rear is reserved for weak men, children and women. In terms of hierarchy, the battlefront is the most important and the rears are subsidiaries. Such dualization corresponds to 'a subtle mechanism of hierarchization which assumes the unique valorisation of the positive masculine pole while perpetuating the inferiority of the negative feminine term' (Murray, 2010: p. 490). Men as major players in the battlefront are believed to be more important than women, who in most cases are relegated to the war's rears.

The two short stories selected for this part of the chapter are set during the liberation struggle, are women-centred, and deal with the deliberate exclusion of women from different standpoints. The two stories force readers to collapse the boundaries between the battlefront and its rears and understand that women made meaningful contributions to the making of the nation either in the battlefront or in the rears. Vera and Nyamubaya re-imagine the war from two distinct standpoints. Nyamubaya particularly forces readers to rethink war heroism by highlighting that those at the battlefront were not always heroes of the liberation struggle. Vera celebrates a meaningful contribution of women to the liberation struggle in domesticity. She demonstrates that women may not be at the battlefront but they make meaningful contribution from their homes. Nyamubaya on the other hand writes from the battlefront and reflects on the war

experience, especially her personal experience as a trainee soldier at Tembwe Training Camp. Both writers demonstrate how black women experience the war in ways that are different from men. This is largely so because women's social role 'is always defined at least in part by their reproductive capabilities, and they experience revolution and its outcomes differently' (Tetreault, 1994, as cited in Lyons, 2004: p. 31). In this discussion I specifically refer to Nyamubaya's 'That Special Place' and Vera's 'It is Hard to Live Alone'.

In the previous chapter, I indicated that Nyamubaya is one of the writers of the late 1990s who revise unqualified glorification of the liberation war. She responds to an official recalling of the contribution of black women to the liberation struggle and show that their contribution was rather complex. She makes such a contribution in '*On the Road Again*' (1986) and 'That Special Place' (2003). For the purposes of this chapter, I analyse 'That Special Place', which has been described as an 'autobiographical return to a 'special place' […] to redeem the true stories of the revolution' (Muchemwa, 2006: p. 14). In 'That Special Place', Nyamubaya is very consistent in reflecting on the injustice of the liberation struggle with special reference to soldiers' ill-treatment by fellow soldiers in positions of authority. Nyamubaya recounts her experiences and four other soldiers at Tembwe Training Camp as captives. Upon joining the training camp, they are branded suspects for various reasons. Writing a synopsis of their lives is a requirement for all new recruits. Nyamubaya and other prisoners are held in captivity because their biographies had not satisfied the Camp Security Commander. The story is a gloomy picture of such captivity, where they are given nothing to eat and drink, and are physically tortured. The reality of such a traumatic experience is expressed bodily. Nyamubaya relates how the captives 'looked ghostly and frightening with their disfigured cheeks, lips, eyes and noses covered in grey dust. One of them had a thick swollen sagging lower lip and a large swollen forehead that seemed to hang over his eyes' (p. 219). Such reference to body disfigurement becomes 'the loci of both psychic and physical pain' (Murray, 2010: p. 489). This narration of gruesome aspects of the war undermines the nationalist narrative that largely glorifies it.

What is particularly significant for this discussion is the black woman's experience of war terror. It is common knowledge that for many women physical appearance is very important. For Nyamubaya there is a sense of great discomfort when in captivity her afro hair turned white, and she had dust on her face and on her 'java print dress she had once been proud of' (p. 217). She feels utter discomfort when Nyathi instructed his men to 'make a cross through her

hair from ear to ear and from her forehead to the back of her neck' (ibid.). Nyathi did this to destroy any feeling of beauty that Nyamubaya had. Though the precision and force that normally characterize traumatic recall is lost in the narrative, Nyamubaya informs the reader that Nyathi also raped her (Murray, 2009: p. 4). It is important to note that the perpetrator here is a Camp Security Commander, one who has a key post in the struggle. His liberating role thus remains questionable. What is particularly derided in Nyamubaya's narrative is the figure of authority in the person of the Camp Security Commander Nyathi whose ego has been described by Muchemwa as 'big as his penis […] whose erection got harder with resistance' (2006: p. 12).

Nyamubaya also forces the reader to rethink the concept of freedom. The recruits are meant to participate in the liberation struggle whose aim is to free people from the clutches of colonialism. Ironically, they further lose their own freedom in the process, to fellow soldiers, when they are held in captivity. In captivity, they are removed from the real business of the liberation struggle. Nyamubaya describes their prison in the following words: 'the hut fell a long, long way from the liberation struggle of my dreams' (p. 223).

The overall picture we get from Nyamubaya's construction of the liberation struggle in 'That Special Place' is that not everyone who joined the war got a chance to make a meaningful contribution; others like her and the fellow soldiers were victimized and alienated from the real battle. Such a dimension of the reality of the liberation struggle was never the limelight of the official narration of the liberation war. Nyamubaya refers to all this as the experiences of a 'special place: the place that many people in this world will never know' (p. 228). Her text then functions as a subversion of the official nationalist narrative of the liberation struggle by projecting what Terdiman terms 'an alternative' (p. 13).

On the other hand, in 'It is Hard to Live Alone', Vera writes the story of a community of black women who are affected by and contribute to the liberation struggle in various significant ways. Women vendors meet at the vegetable market and share their experiences of the war. The war is fought somewhere else and yet they are here, affected by it and contributing to it meaningfully. As they discuss ordinary things, one of the women refers to the need for women to be strong since most of them live without husbands who have joined the war. These women may appear confined to the domestic space, but in that domesticity, they make a meaningful contribution to the war. They particularly celebrate the fact that they are mothers - they 'give birth to sons and daughters

who fight in the war' (Vambe, 2012: p. 320). What excites them even more is that their daughters have the potential to play a 'more active' role as soldiers. In this case then 'women's reproductive capacity is important for the nation' - for giving birth creates a base for potential freedom fighters (Toivanen, 2006: p. 68). Women 'are asked to bear children […] *whose blood must water the land*' (p. 42) before land ownership is regained. The different roles women play in the absence of their husbands may appear limited to domesticity but they are not mean roles. They look out for their families and doubly operate as mothers and 'fathers'. They work and pay for their children's education. Their identities are also redefined. Without their men, women raise children and, hence, 'they have to make sure that the community structures do not have to collapse; they have to feed the aged and their young ones' (Vambe, 2012: p. 320). However, these women talk about imminent change in abstract terms. Mampofu particularly refers to how some other people say: 'Things will change one day. That we shall all have more to eat and that education will soon be free' (p. 42). This is the only time that the market women talk about their expectations of achievements in anticipation of independence. Such talk may be just dismissed as small talk, yet it is an indication of how their interpretation of reality is not just limited to the present but also includes the future. Inasmuch as the women could be worried that they have to live without their men, who have joined the battlefront, they anticipate an end to the war and a beginning of a new reality.

From a masculine understanding of the participation of women in the war, women are just 'needed to support the war and are assigned roles designed to serve male participants such as wives, prostitutes, entertainers and sympathetic nurses' (Lyons, 2004: p. 22). Women are thus restricted to supportive roles, which are principally secondary and on the other hand 'the real actors are men' (Lyons, 2004: p. 244). This however does not mean that women do not play significant roles in the 'making […] of nations' (Nagel, 1998, as cited in Lyons, 2004: p. 243). Vera highlights the other roles that women played in the liberation struggle. Such participation highlights not a passive presence, but an agency that influences the course of the liberation struggle. In Vera's 'It is Hard to Live Alone', black women are represented not just as passive objects in the war zones but play active roles even in their domesticity. The war is reconstructed not just as a male-dominated space but women are part of it as significant subjects - war narratives that give the black woman no meaningful role as if she were absent are limited and narrow in comprehending the revolution. The position that Nyamubaya recreates in 'That Special Place'

foregrounds the complexities of the liberation struggle. The setting is a training camp but what happens contributes little to the real aim of the revolution. Those who intend to join and contribute to the liberation struggle are tortured by freedom fighters in positions of authority. Women participate in the war as soldiers but are sexually abused and humiliated.

Black Women's Other Struggles

Generally, the colonial world revolves around boundaries and borders based on the centre-periphery model. This model is 'crucial in the imperial occupation and domination of indigenous space […] and of economic marginalization' (Ashcroft et al, 2007: p. vii). The

> binary logic of imperialism is a development of that tendency of western thought in general to see the world in terms of binary opposition that establishes a relation of dominance […] centre / margin, civilized / primitive and colonizer / colonized *distinctions. The distinctions* represent very efficiently, violent hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively perpetuates. (Ashcroft et al, 2007: p. 19)

However, a close reading of black women's lives shows that the existing boundaries in a colonial world are cut into several segments and that women exclusively occupy the bottom segment. Even in that 'bottom segment', one finds that there are sub-segments with women from different social classes occupying different segments. This specifically refers to intersectionality, where the significance of 'examining intersection of multiple forms of discrimination' is emphasized (Yuval-Davis, 2006: p. 66). The intersections of race, gender and class show that black women experience oppression from various sources in especially colonial spaces. Both Vera and Hove go beyond the race problem and demonstrate that black women also have problems that are specific to them because of their gender and social class. Such women-specific problems are often ignored in nationalist narratives.

According to Lyons 'during various struggles in Africa, many women realized that the root cause of their oppression was not capitalism and colonization alone but also patriarchal', and hence, they suffered from a multiple-layered marginality (2004: p. 33). Against a background of national liberation, the women represented in the texts selected for this section of the

chapter also seek emancipation from the clutches of patriarchy. Black women could register their fight against colonialism in the nationalist struggle (as part of the oppressed black race) but they needed to wage a separate fight against patriarchy. This kind of emancipation for women was never intended in the national liberation struggle. This is largely because 'the culture of nationalism is constructed to emphasize and resonate with masculine cultural themes' (Nagel, 1998: p. 251). Yet, paradoxically, 'women's emancipation is a prerequisite for national liberation' (Lyons, 2004: p. 39). A foregrounding of black women's other struggles demonstrates that while 'the armed struggle may be necessary' to deal with colonial domination, a *total national* liberation can only be achieved if women are also liberated from the clutches of patriarchy (Baker, 2012: p. 124). This is largely so because ideally 'no cultural liberation without women's liberation' is total for any nation (Ngugi[60] as cited in Petersen, 1995: p. 254).

The texts studied in this section highlight the 'other' specific women's struggles that are not made part of the national liberation struggle. Some of the texts are not solely about such women-specific struggles, so in my discussion I isolate just the parts that define the struggles. I will begin by analysing Vera's 'An Unyielding Circle'. Men in this short story order women around and give them a manual on expected female behaviour. The manual includes the following: 'a woman must bend on her knees to give food to a man, […] must use two hands to give food to a man, […] must sit down when she is among men, […] and must use two hands to receive anything from a man' (pp. 76-8). This manual is hinged on the patriarchal belief that women should respect men. Men 'uphold the age-old tyrannical values associated with the subordination and humiliation of women' (Vambe, 2012: p. 320). What is particularly interesting is women's responses to such domination and humiliation. The vendor women come close to shedding 'salty tears'. Witnessing men's boasts about 'women they had thrown out of their homes', the two women in this story felt 'sympathy for each other and […] a flame rose between them while the men continued their speech' (p. 77). They are obviously angered but their anger does not develop into any meaningful form of organized protest; they feel 'the pressure of the moment' but do nothing and resume their talk. The positive thing is that the women are self-reliant and economically independent. Both women are vendors; one sells maize cobs and the other knits and sells bedcovers. They find consolation in economic independence; thus one of them says, 'You have your

---

[60] A date is not provided in the source text for Ngugi's citation.

cobs […] and I have my knitted bedcovers' (p. 77), yet this is insufficient and disillusioning. They are aware that such economic independence will not protect them from the bullying attitude of the men, and hence they ask what the bedcovers 'hide' or 'cover'. In the disillusioning present, they 'wove a silence that protects and consoles […] postponing the moment when they have to endure the anguish' (p. 78).In this short story, black women characters have achieved some kind of economic independence and yet, with that independence, men always find ways of dominating and humiliating them. The manual of female behaviour highlighted above is given to a woman who is just trying to make ends meet by selling maize cobs to a group of men drinking beer and is forced to comply with their demands.

Patriarchy is also questioned in relation to 'Western formal education' that the girl-child is usually denied. In African history, colonized people embraced Western education, yet it also occupied an ambivalent position in their lives for it was also a major colonizing tool. Ngugi indicates that in colonialist narrative of African history that informed what was taught in most African schools, there is 'almost total omission of colonialism, racism and ideologies of repression and their opposites, anti-colonialism, anti racist struggles and ideologies of liberation' (1981: p. 3). This selection of taught issues in schools was a political decision and an 'integral part of imperialism and domination' (ibid.). The exclusion of critical material was directed at cultural domination through the spread of 'racist formulations' central in the great tradition of European literature reflecting the 'white image of the world'. On the other hand, formal education was a useful tool in the development of critical consciousness needed for the decolonization process. The later idea is espoused by Shaull as one of the functions of education that helps 'men and women to deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the oppressed's world' (in the Foreword to Freire's 1996*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 16). Freire succinctly summarizes the ambivalent role of Western education for the colonized people. Education as an instrument of oppression 'attempts to control thinking and action and leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power while […] indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression' (Freire, 1996: pp. 58-9). On the other hand, education as 'a humanist and liberating praxis, posits […] that the people subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation' (Freire, 1996: p. 67). Yet when we read texts where black women fight for access to such education, such dimensions are often ignored. Black women are

not so much worried about the content of education but are impressed by the prospects that come with the attainment of education in a modern African set-up. I will demonstrate this point by focussing on what happens in Vera's 'Crossing Boundaries' and Hove's *Shadows*.

In Vera's 'Crossing Boundaries', Masibanda reflects on how her father did not allow girls to attend school. She says, 'my father did not allow us girls to go to school, why waste money on a girl? […] when it came to making a choice, he sent the boys to school' (p. 5). Sending a girl-child to school is considered money-wasting; hence if there are choices to be made boys always get first priority. Yet there are implications for the lack of education in girls' lives. Masibanda retorts: 'It is difficult to be a woman in these times. If my daughter can get an education, she will not have to live this hard life that I have endured. She can walk away from pain' (p. 6). Masibanda believes that women generally live difficult and painful lives and that one of the available outlets is embracing the white world and what it offers, in this case modern education. However, Masibanda is very cautious: 'she felt that their condition on the farm was a daily trial and to embrace more of the culture of those who kept them subservient was hard to accept' (p. 6). She understands the ambivalence and complexities associated with embracing what colonialism offered, good or bad - explained earlier on as the need to embrace as well as reject colonial modernity. Here Vera emphasises that, from the point of view of the black woman, the colonial world is not just about the colonial/racial boundaries, but it is also imbedded in these are gender boundaries.

As Hove demonstrates in *Shadows*, children who do not go to school end up like Johana, 'milking the cows, dehorning the small bulls and smelling of cow dung' (p. 10). Failure to go to school means one will remain in the village and will not go to and enjoy the city. Division of space is crucial in Zimbabwe, as in other parts of the world, and the rural-urban dichotomy is particularly significant. Rural space has come to be associated with backwardness, traditionalism and poverty whilst, on the other hand, the city remains a symbolic expression of modernity and good life. Failure to get an education means that girls will remain in the rural space living a life of poverty. According to Johana's father:

> Girls do not have to go to school for more than was enough to open
> their eyes to the letters of their young lovers who courted them in
> the forests. The little money there was would be spent on the boys,

not the girls. Did not the white man rule it, when he said only boys would pay taxes? What was the use of sending girls to school when […] only boys would pay taxes? (p. 21)

Girls' future is limited to marriage, so the kind of education permissible for them should only help them with courting. The impression that we get here is that the colonial administration also realised that black women depended on men and thus exempted them from paying taxes. This kind of discriminative violence against the girl child is instituted as a necessary measure 'to maintain the institutions of patriarchy; that is the structures, beliefs and practices that maintain male dominance over women' (Williams, 2001: p. xiv). For without that education women will continue to depend economically on their men, and dependence makes them vulnerable to all sorts of abuse.

In this section of the chapter, the selected texts highlight the fact that black women are also subjected to patriarchal domination. Spivak has described the above phenomenon as 'instances of doubly-oppressed women who are caught between the dominations of a native patriarchy and a foreign masculinist imperialist ideology' (1988, as cited in Parry, 1995: p. 36). The empire and native patriarchy act as analogous to each other and both exert control over female subjects who are thus doubly colonized. What compounds the women's position is that nationalism does not necessarily seek to dismantle especially the power of patriarchy. Attaining freedom from the clutches of patriarchy is not a priority in the liberation struggle that is largely masculine in nature and purpose. So, the black woman's 'other struggle' often continues after national independence; and 'women's sites of struggle seem to be emphasized in other areas than purely those of decolonization and nationhood' (Toivanen, 2006: p. 70).

Both authors successfully highlight the 'other' struggles that women have to wage outside the popular and masculinised liberation. They do so through a 'rebellion that questions patriarchy' (Vambe, 2012: p. 307). For women, then, 'the past does not automatically mean a glorious golden age that decolonization is anticipated as bringing back; rather it is marked by a continuous burden of indigenous masculine oppression' (Toivanen, 2006: p. 72). However, unlike the liberation struggle reflected in the background of women's other struggle, theirs is not an organized response. Rather it remains at the level of the affected individual and there are no intentions, from the other women around, to come up with an organized response. As rightly noted by Vambe, 'one senses that *the*

struggles are open-ended so that what is privileged […] is not necessarily organized political rebellion stacked with a knowable beginning and anticipated by predictable ending' (2012: p. 307). All the above-discussed women in the selected works represent a 'shift from portraying women as *only* victims to depicting women as feisty, assertive and self reliant', and this represents 'a counterpoint to the victim paradigm' (italics my own) (Vambe, 2012: p. 314). Inasmuch as I agree that there is no such unitary notion as 'women's struggle', here I have assembled some aspects that I have discussed as constituting black women's struggle. Giving prominence to the 'other' struggle of women challenges the unity of national identity and that of the collective understanding of the fighting colonial oppression. As demonstrated by Lipenga 'there are also other battles that are being fought and which constitute part of the nation in the same way as the liberation war' (2012: p. 270). In this part of the chapter, I have demonstrated this by highlighting Vera and Hove's representation of specific black women's struggles in 'An Unyielding Circle' and *Shadows* respectively.

The Struggle for Memory in *Ancestors*

In *Ancestors*, Hove relates the story of suppressed female memories. He explores women's voicelessness through a representation of Miriro and Tariro's lives. Miriro is born dumb and 'faced the earth without words', without a voice (p. 3). This entails that 'she was born without a history of her own […] her story will be told by others while she sat there and did not even nod or listen' (p. 3). According to Miriro's family traditions, her birth condition and abnormality ironically signal death.

> She did not yell loud as the other children did […] all was *silence* in the sooty hut. No words, not even mumblings of words […]. She faced the earth, with its ants and anthills in *subdued silence*, facing the roaring thunder and flushes of lightning with a *defiantsilence,* the winds too, with her *silence,* like one who does not want to describe, or name anything'. (p. 4)

The silence that defines Miriro's birth is symptomatic of the silence and traumatic voicelessness enforced on women in patriarchy, and lack of speech signifies objectivity. According to Busia, 'voicelessness is often a deliberate unvoicing, rather than an intrinsic absence of speech on the part of the women' (1989-1990: p. 87). In the context of narrating national history, such deliberate

unvoicing translates into some kind of domination directed at removing women's voices from the narratives. The text that recognizes women and represents them as agents then becomes a liberating text and a symbol of the suppressed women's voices. Hove achieves this in *Ancestors* through a chronicle of Miriro's life. Irrespective of the fact that she leads a painful life leading to a forced marriage, after death she becomes an important being and haunts her family, especially Mucha, as a way of enforcing recognition and memory. The story she eventually tells through Mucha's voice is located in 'the realm of oppositional struggle' (hooks, 1990: p. 145).

Miriro's initial silence at birth and life makes her a 'latecomer to […] words' (p. 20). During her silence, some other people are busy constructing her story and the story that she tells herself subverts these constructions. The dominant discourse that Miriro subverts marginalizes and trivializes the experiences of women and hence is narrow, biased and not all-inclusive, and is told from the perspective of the dominant male voice. In the opening chapter to *Ancestors,* the narrator says:

> The stories that we hear, the victors are the only storytellers. If only the monkey could tell his own story. If only the bird could tell the story of its flight in the air, the tree too if it could tell its own story. The story of our life is the story of our male blood flowing in the veins but there is other blood flowing in our veins, not mentioned by those who know the names of things. To name is to live. A father never lies to his children but it does not mean that he may tell all there is to be told and to omit is to lie. (p. 21)

Mucha's father tells a narrow version of history. In his account of the history of the family, he mainly focuses on his experiences of colonialism. He recounts how The Land Development Officer introduces him to the new capitalist discourse of farming for commercial purposes; euphemistically referred to as the 'belly of the purse' which he embraces (p.22). He also relates his adventures to the lands of Gotami where the original owners were displaced brutally by the colonizers. Such stories of invasion also go back into pre-colonial history of tribal invasions. As he narrates this history, he deliberately leaves out 'the story of the bones of one born without words in her mouth'. This is Miriro's story and other 'stories about female blood […] blood that has been neglected by so many tales which father has hidden away' (p. 45). Listening to the one-sided male

voice is tantamount to listening to lies, for this voice is always narrow in its interpretation of history. In the afterlife, Miriro 'is now a voice that comes and goes as it wills […]. She is a dark voice full of joy and sadness, telling its story, my story, our story […] telling our story, as she lived' (p. 12). Her story is part of the 'haunting stories which come in a voice the ears and the heart cannot resist' (p. 12), a haunting voice that advocates for gender justice and creates space for multiple narratives. Death transforms Miriro into a speaking subject and a timeless super-being. Articulating the transformation Miriro's voice says 'many years later, after I have died, I can speak. I can tell my story to all my hearers.[…] My joys and sorrows cross all rivers of time and distance, hearing voices from across generations of families and homes' (p. 17). What Miriro's ghost articulates defies boundaries in terms of physical and temporal spaces. Tribulations narrated in her story are essentially female experiences across generations.

To complement and expand on Miriro's traumatic existence and eventual liberation in death is Tariro's life. Tariro is not given a chance to make choices in her life and is given away in marriage to an old drunkard. This is promoted and instituted through old aunts who take her to a new home without telling her where they are heading to. Most importantly, this is an instance of forced marriage, which violates the girl's right to make choices in life, including the choice of a life partner. The old man who marries Tariro only accepts her as an

> offer […] and thinks the girl may be too young for him […] for the young woman would soon know widowhood than marriage but […] a man who marries a young wife also marries for his blood who are not yet born. (p. 103)

The idea of a forced arranged marriage turns Tariro into a commodity that is passed from one hand to the other. Since the husband is old and approaching his death, this means that she will also be passed on to the young men in the family upon her husband's death. Both Tariro and her mother respond to the forced marriage in different but significant ways. Tariro's mother fights against the forced marriage, defies the ancestors and 'orders them to bring back her child, […] to her own hut, not to some old man who does not know women of his own age group from among whom he must marry' (p. 121). She curses the ancestors, yet in traditional wisdom that is an abomination. She insists: 'If the ancestors take away my daughter, I curse them' (p. 121). This rebellious stance challenges

traditional authority in cases where it subjugates women's position. Tariro in protest refuses 'to look at the faces of those around her' (p. 144) and eventually kills herself to make an impact. As Busia suggests, suicide cannot be valorised as 'the only legitimate option within confining social conventions for the native woman to make herself heard' (1989-90: p. 103).

Girl-child exclusion is implicit in the children's games played by Mucha and other children. In the naming game, other children refuse to name Tariro and agree that she should not be mentioned. For Mucha this means that 'Tariro is dead' and '[…] must be removed from the memories of the living' (p. 96). Through this Tariro is declared non-existent.

The male writer as hearer listens and re-tells female stories that are however also part of his history and identity. Such storytelling, which is a key aspect of oral culture, plays a significant role in memories and the telling of the often-untold stories of female experience. The story that Mucha retells remains an instance of shared memory. He says:

> I, Mucha, the hearer of endless tales, stories to which I belong but could not assist in making, I was part of that memory until I was born to be a mere hearer, […] for as my ears listen, it is not known how many words of the owner of words spread their mat in the ears and the heart of the hearer. (p. 12)

Hove is grappling with the ethics of representation, or narration, and challenges associated with speaking on behalf of others and speaking from outside the circle. This has been defined by Spivak as one of the two senses of representation - speaking for - which in itself is quite problematic (1988: p. 70). Not only is Mucha, and by extension the author, recreating female experiences, yet he is shut out from the knowledge of the uniquely female experience. Thus speaking from 'without' is one of the complexities of speaking for. This refers well to what hooks has termed the 'politics of location'. Mucha speaks about both Miriro and Tariro from a location that poses a number of problems (1990: p. 145). He 'merely report*s* on the non-represented subjects' (Spivak, 1988: p. 74). If Mucha speaks on behalf of the female ancestry (retelling Tariro and Miriro's stories), the two remain mute and do not become speaking subjects and this signals continued enforcement of women's voicelessness. This also gives an impression that Miriro and Tariro 'cannot represent themselves, must be represented' (Spivak, 1988: p. 71). In *Ancestors* Hove deliberates on the female

ancestors' point of view of history, a dimension to an understanding of reality 'which officially does not exist'. In this specific text, Hove has managed to speak for and about the silenced women's voices. He particularly deals with women's deliberate devoicing through scripting a text that eventually represents their story. However, female representation within male-authored texts remains a challenge, since male writers usually work subtly within the confines of patriarchal discourse. For instance, Hove silences his female characters in *Ancestors* by allowing a male figure to retell the story of their ancestry.

Conclusion

The liberation struggle against colonial domination has been contested from various angles as shown in the previous chapter. In the texts selected for this chapter, Hove, Vera and Nyamubaya contest the liberation narrative and offer a different imagination that is women-oriented, and engage the reader in various key aspects of the liberation struggle. In the first section of the chapter, I argued that Vera in *Without a Name* expands on the limited understanding of the liberation struggle with specific reference to the land politics. Through Mazvita, Vera challenges the representation of the land as a cultural artefact that black people should guard jealously and demonstrates that the black woman associates the land with personal violation and is alienated from it. Both Vera and Nyamubaya reinterpret and destabilize the war battlefront and -rear dichotomy. In Vera's 'It is Hard to Live Alone', black women contribute to the liberation struggle through domesticity in significant ways. Nyamubaya in 'That Special Place' re-imagines liberation war heroism and demonstrates that those at the battlefront were not always heroes - not all freedom fighters are heroes, some are rapists, murderers and sell-outs. The Camp Security Commander Nyathi raped women, terrorized other freedom fighters and sold out to the Rhodesian soldiers.

The authors I selected deal with various aspects of black women's inarticulateness and silences in the context of the liberation struggle. Foregrounding women's 'other' struggles shows that there is no common link between the nationalist struggle and women's struggles. It becomes very problematic to say that the nationalist struggle is for national independence when the majority of black women do not seem to have their issues addressed by the liberation struggle. A reflection on the concept of women's double colonization then forces readers to adopt a comprehensive approach to questions

of oppression and justice. Such a reflection challenges nationalist histories that narrate the liberation war as a one-sided kind of resistance.

Chapter 3: Narrating Gukurahundi Violence

The crimes that the African continent commits against her kind are a kind of a dimension and, unfortunately, of a nature that appears to constantly provoke memories of the historic wrongs inflicted on that continent by others. (Soyinka, 1999: p. xxiv)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed how Vera, Nyamubaya and Hove challenge the masculinised nationalist discourse on the liberation struggle by writing women into that history. In this chapter, I focus on how black writers (both male and female) rewrote the history of Gukurahundi. I begin this discussion by referring to a re-reading of African post-independence history beyond colonial politics. The above epigraph, taken from Soyinka's *The Burden of Memory: The Muse of Forgiveness,* is a good example in that direction. Soyinka demonstrates that the whole African continent has memories of historic wrongs inflicted on her by others; there are wrongs that have been inflicted on Africans by fellow brothers and sisters that are not different from external ones. Zimbabwean memories of historic wrongs need to be contextualized to crimes that vary from region to region. In current popular imagination, the Great Lakes Region (Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo are part of that region) is the most politically unstable of post-independence Africa. There is 'genocide in Rwanda […] grisly civil war in Liberia and Sierra Leone, state collapse in Somalia and embedded corruption in Nigeria' (Bauer and Taylor, 2003: p. 2). Though there is a tendency to generalize African politics, one realizes that of all the African regions, Southern Africa is relatively stable politically. Bauer and Taylor locate political stability in a number of Southern African countries:

> Botswana is typically cited as one of the most democratic countries in Africa with a history of peace and stability […] Namibia and South Africa have received widespread acclaim for their democratic constitutions and respect for the rule of law. […] Zambia and Malawi […] made transitions in the early 1990s from decades of single party rule by presidents-for-life to multiparty systems […] none of the countries in the region has been the victim

of a military coup […] the region is characterized today by relative peace. (2005: p. 6)

Though national political stability/instability remains a controversial subject, it is significant to note that Zimbabwe is part of the Southern African region considered as relatively peaceful. On attaining independence in 1980, Zimbabwe showed all the signs of potentially becoming a democratic state. Nevertheless, there have been major political drawbacks. As early as 1982, after two years of independence, government soldiers of the Fifth Brigade killed thousands of civilians in Matabeleland and Midlands regions (mostly Ndebele people), in an operation named Gukurahundi that lasted up to 1987. The violence was purportedly a move by the government to deal with violent 'dissidents'.

Zimbabwe is a multi-ethnic nation, with major and minor indigenous ethnic groups. Minor ethnic groups include Tonga, Chewa, Venda and Shangaan among others. These 'are located in the marginal borderlands and […] have felt marginalized from both the economy and society and have complained of political and cultural domination by both the Shona and the Ndebele' (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007: p. 289). Yet relations between the two major ethnic groups (Shona and Ndebele) have largely been hostile. In Shona discourse, the Ndebele ethnic group is understood as both 'ruthless and unsympathetic towards their Shona neighbours' (Musiyiwa and Matshakayile-Ndlovu, 2005: p. 76). Oral history tells that Shona people were the original occupants of the space that is known as Zimbabwe today. The Ndebele brutally invaded Shona territory long before the arrival of the whites. This kind of narrative is also recorded in Shona literature.[61] The hostility between the two ethnic groups is particularly encoded in the names they gave each other upon contact. The Ndebele people were named 'Madzviti' by the Shona and, in return, the Ndebele named the Shona 'Amasvina'. Madzviti is a derogatory term that, in normal discourse, refers to 'the lazy, lousy, wandering stinking locusts' (Mutswairo, 1983, as cited in Musiyiwa and Matshakayile-Ndlovu, 2005: p. 77). 'Amasvina' is a term that means 'the dirty ones'. Such hostilities also persisted during the nationalist struggle against colonialism. The antagonism between Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups could also be discerned in the two nationalist

---

[61] Examples of Shona texts that reflect on ethnic hostilities between Shona and Ndebele include Magwa's *Njuzu* (1991) Masundure's *Mhandu Dzorusununguko* (1991), Chiwome's *Masango Mavi* (1998) and Chakaipa's *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* (1958).

liberation movements that came to be associated with the two ethnic groups, ZANU and ZAPU respectively. The 1963 rifts saw ZANU breaking into ZAPU and ZANU. The distrust between the two movements was also noted in the relations between the respective armed forces ZANLA and ZIPRA. 'The antagonisms between the two guerrilla armies hardened into hostilities between their political parties, as ZANU-PF became convinced that ZAPU was supporting a new dissident war in order to improve its standing in the country' (CCJPZ, 1997: p. 39) upon attaining independence.

> The rivalry between the two parties continued in the aftermath of the post-1980 settlement, punctuated by the Gukurahundi violence of the new state in Matabeleland and the Midlands in the mid-1980. This massive deployment of state violence effectively led to the formal subsumption of PF Zapu to the ruling ZANU PF in the form of the 1987 Unity Accord, and thus the demise of a formidable opposition party. (Raftopoulos, 2007: pp. 126-7)

Against that background, one notes that the political instabilities of the 1980s are redefined as violence between Shona and Ndebele people, largely because of the political connections between the Ndebele and ZAPU and its ZIPRA forces, and between Shona and ZANU and its ZANLA forces and later the Fifth Brigade soldiers.

So, over and above cultural differences between Shona and Ndebele, political affiliation was and remains a distinguishing feature. As Ndlovu and Dube argue, politics and ethnicity were conflated in Gukurahundi, hence it became 'an ethnic cleansing of ZAPU and its Ndebele supporters' (2014: p. 8). From the time ZANU split into two in 1963, national politics 'took an ethnic dimension' (Ndlovu and Dube, 2014: p. 9). Since ZAPU supporters and ZIPRA soldiers were mainly Ndebele speaking, and the Fifth Brigade soldiers were predominantly Shona, Gukurahundi violence was later constructed as a war between ethnic groups. Gukurahundi was largely silenced and unacknowledged by the government. Significant in this discussion is how various writers have re-imagined Gukurahundi in their works. Here I discuss the literary representation of the silenced political instabilities of the 1980s paying particular attention to the general trend in Gukurahundi rewriting. In my discussion I refer to Hove's *Shadows*, Vera's *The Stone Virgins*, Ndlovu's 'Torn Posters', Mlalazi's *Running with Mother*, Godwin's *Mukiwa* and Kilgore's *We are Now Zimbabweans*. I

discuss these texts with a particular attention to the various stages and forms of articulation of Gukurahundi violence. It is significant to note that any writing on Gukurahundi is or at least pretends to be about the past -'a past that no longer exists but keeps on haunting the present' (Van Alphen, 1997: p. 15). Van Alphen says this in the context of literature on the Holocaust, and what he says is also applicable to Gukurahundi violence. Thus all the works discussed here are re-interpretations of the Gukurahundi past from diverse angles.

Texts and Trends in Gukurahundi Articulation

Gukurahundi was not comprehensively articulated in government official narratives of history (particularly through the media, which were controlled by the government), and this was a deliberate exclusion. Exclusion was part of the general pattern of a lack of acknowledgement of the reality of Gukurahundi by the government. As indicated in the Catholic Commission on Peace and Justice in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) report on Gukurahundi, there is only one (government) minister on record who acknowledged the reality, otherwise the government's position is denial. The single exception to this is Minister Mahachi (the then minister of defence), who said in *The Sunday Mail* of 6 September 1992 that: 'events during that period are regretted and should not be repeated by anybody, any group of people or any institution in this country' (1997: p. 16). Mugabe and his government were only held accountable for the Gukurahundi atrocities by the civil society organizations and private media as late as 1997 (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 57). The CCJPZ report *Breaking the Silence* was the first comprehensive report of the atrocities committed by government soldiers in Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces in the early 1980s. Muchemwa described such writings displayed by the CCJPZ as resisting 'the slipping into oblivion of unacknowledged unspoken and unwritten traumas of history' (2005: p. 196).

As demonstrated by Christiansen-Bull, literature 'has qualities that make it instrumental in support of hegemonic versions of national identity as well as in opposition to them' (2004: p. 8). I do not intend to highlight the qualities referred to here, but I want to point out that there is literature that is critical of the government-initiated (and silenced) Gukurahundi. In terms of trends in Zimbabwean literature, 'the first years of post independence were quiet […] and the early post independent writings were 'celebrationist […] (but also contained) elements of criticism and articulated frustration' (Kaarsholm, 2005: pp. 4-5). Much of the criticism was limited to the disillusioning aspects of the

liberation war. Nyamfukudza's *The Non-Believer's Journey* (1980) and Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom* (1983) are some of the early texts critical of the nationalist narratives of war and the new independence. The Gukurahundi atrocities are only 'addressed for the first time in Hove's *Shadows* (1991)', and from a woman's point of view in Vera's *Stone Virgins* (2002).

Hove's *Shadows* is 'not focused specifically on the post independence period […] but tells the story of a family that is forcefully removed from their land' during colonial dominance (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 29). Beyond struggles against colonial oppression, Hove's narrative also takes us to another struggle, this time an internal conflict in post-independence Zimbabwe involving the ex-combatants, popularized as 'dissidents', and the government. In Hove's text, the dissidents describe themselves as men 'who were treated badly after the war to free the land from the hands of the colonizers' and'[…] who had fought the white men from the west' (p. 96). Implicit in this description is that dissidents made a meaningful contribution to the war, yet upon attainment of independence they are side-lined from political dominance. 'Dissidents' understood themselves as liberators of the land, yet the new government described them as dissidents:

> The radio said those young men were bandits who wanted to drink the blood of the defenceless people of the land. Every night the voices from the radio insulted the young men in the bush, they were infidels, murderers who killed everyone they came across. […] even the voices of the big people, who had taken over the rule of the land, they insulted the young men every day. (pp. 96-7)

Such insults by the government are directed at othering the ex-ZIPRA forces and coding them as 'enemies of the state' who should be rooted out. Images of dissidents based on their behaviour evoke past war violence that people may want to forget. Experiences of the war are relived when Hove refers to how 'young men went around even during the day asking for the people to cook for them as it was before the white man was defeated. They began to sleep in houses expelling the owners of the houses' and '[…] sometimes they took the women to dark places, making them pregnant' (p. 97). The dimension of Gukurahundi violence encoded here is that dissidents caused terror, and that their violent activities were a significant aspect of Gukurahundi. The history of the Gukurahundi conflict is explained as follows: 'it is said that they [the

government] had quarrelled with them [the dissidents] about many things. So the young men went into the bush to find the guns they had hidden when they were freedom fighters in the bush' (p. 97). From Hove's narrative, dissident violence influenced Gukurahundi, yet this theme is not given much space in Hove's book. In other words, the book is not about Gukurahundi. Reference to Gukurahundi is an appendage to the account of Baba Joanna's history of displacement. In the space of only four of the last pages and in the form of speculative gossip by the village elders and through the voice of the omniscient narrator, Hove limits his account of Gukurahundi to dissidents' activities. Hove's *Shadows* is best described as 'a warning' about Gukurahundi and Vera's *The Stone Virgins* then becomes a 'groundbreaking project' of retelling the Gukurahundi atrocities (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 88).

Vera has been discussed in previous chapters of this study. I closely read Vera's *Without a Name* and 'It is Hard to Live Alone' in chapter 3. I highlighted that *Without a Name* demonstrates how violated black women relate differently to the land during the liberation struggle. In my reading of 'It is Hard to Live Alone', I indicated that Vera questions nationalist discourse on the liberation war by highlighting the fact that women took a great part in the war, even in their domesticity, and in that approach she managed to force readers to rethink the difference between the battle front and its rears. In chapter 2 of this study, Vera is highlighted as one of the prominent female writers who give women voices. In the same chapter, I also referred to Vera as one of the few post-independence black Zimbabwean writers who are brave enough to articulate the officially suppressed Gukurahundi stories. In this section I expand on that position and demonstrate how, in *The Stone Virgins,* Vera articulates post-independence betrayal by invoking the memories of historic wrongs committed on the Ndebele people by the new, predominantly Shona, government. Elsewhere, Vera describes her role as an artist in the following words:

> As you know, twenty years later we found ourselves a changed people. We have a feeling that we have betrayed our own dream as a country - those of us who thought would become better in our sense of duty, responsibility […]. Because even morally we felt superior to the enemy then. So now, we don't have that. We feel that we have failed ourselves. And that we have a new obligation, which is to create a social change within this new environment

which has resulted from our independence. So, as a writer you cannot be detached from that. (In an interview with Ranka Primorac, 2012: p. 388)

In the above quote, Vera was talking in particular about the Third Chimurenga crises, but the betrayal that she refers to includes Gukurahundi. In *The Stone Virgins*, she demonstrates a commitment to reflect on the leaders' betrayal by reliving Gukurahundi through a re-telling of the experiences of two sisters: Nonceba and Thenjiwe. The novel is 'set partly during the liberation war and partly after independence' (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 21). Bound in one book and under one title, the two separate historical segments are made one. Such a sense of continuity reflects more on the sense of betrayal early into independence that has come to be associated with Gukurahundi. The sense of continuity affords Vera to link together the struggle for independence from colonial domination and the challenges of a new nation. Gukurahundi placed the first question mark on the reality of independence. Through such a structure, Vera manages to 'iterate the divisions of the past, which the nation's people are obliged to forget', in patriotic narrations of history (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 90). By referring to both the colonial period and the post-independence 1980s, Vera refers to both historic memories of wrongs committed on blacks by both outsiders and by insiders.

Vera's re-writing of the silences surrounding Gukurahundi is richer than Hove's and certainly more complex and detailed. Though both Hove and Vera focus on the violence of the dissidents, , in Vera's *The Stone Virgins,* unlike Hove's *Shadows,* we hear the voices of dissidents as well as civilian victims. Unlike the dissidents in Hove's work who are just described by the villagers and the new rulers, in *The Stone Virgins*, through Sibaso, Vera manages to describe the dissident mentality. Sibaso is a dissident 'who is hunted by the government forces and feared by the civilians' (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 94). Sibaso is the 'ex-ZIPRA dissident who senselessly decapitates Thenjiwe, cuts off the lips of her sister Nonceba, and pollutes the caves of the hills with his violence' (Kaarsholm, 2005: p. 15). Vera also finds space in her novel to detail the activities of the Fifth Brigade soldiers through their destruction 'of the Thandabantu store in Kezi […] torturing and murdering of its owner Mahlatini' (ibid.). Another character, Cephas Dube, comes from the Eastern Highlands. He nurses Nonceba and achieves 'unity at ethnic or provincial level' (ibid.). Unlike the Fifth Brigade soldiers who cross from Mashonaland to inflict pain on

Matabeleland civilians and, unlike the dissident Sibaso who destroys life, Cephas' actions are directed at rebuilding. Christiansen-Bull describes Cephas' efforts as aimed at 'restoring the nation's past' (2005: p. 208).

Besides Hove's *Shadows* and Vera's *The Stone Virgins*, Ndlovu's 'Torn Posters' is one other significant narrative on Gukurahundi. 'Torn Posters' is one of the short stories in Staunton's *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2003). In chapters 2 and 5 of this study, I highlight that *Writing Still* is one of the texts that seek to question the discourse of the Third Chimurenga by characterizing it in negative terms, dismissing its liberatory potential. I selected Chinodya's short story 'Queues' from the anthology and discussed it in chapter 5, showing that, like most texts that operate as opposition discourse to the patriotic understanding of the Third Chimurenga, in this story Chinodya tropes a different Zimbabwean history. He particularly rewrites Zimbabwean history, highlighting aspects that are often suppressed in official narratives, largely acknowledging government's faults in post-independence. Ndlovu's short story discussed here is from the same anthology and, just like Hove's *Shadows* and Vera's *The Stone Virgins*, it articulates Gukurahundi violence. Ndlovu is Ndebele and it is significant to note that 'anger' runs throughout her short story. Nyambi has termed such anger 'ethnic-induced-anger' (2013: p. 121). Ndlovu writes about Gukurahundi from the point of view of the victims. This maybe confirms Banks' argument that 'only ethnic minorities will be conscious of ethnicity' (1996: p. 122).

A child narrates the story of a family ordeal, where the father, a prominent opposition party supporter, clearly ZAPU, is arrested. The father and others he supposedly represents are victims of the Shona's 'bad' behaviour directed at brutalizing the Ndebele. There are clear ethnic divisions expressed through the 'them' and 'us' distinction in Ndlovu's construction of Gukurahundi violence. Those that belong to the 'them' category come from Mashonaland, they are bad people led by 'Him'. As Nyambi argues, 'Him' 'is a clear allusion to the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe who is of Shona ethnic origin' (2013: p. 123). 'Us' refers to the Ndebele victims of Gukurahundi who experience the following:

> In the villages of Matabeleland entire homesteads, pots still on the fires, huts set ablaze with sleeping families inside them, mass graves in abandoned mines, mothers stripped naked and forced to

watch their children's throats slit, elderly women beaten, raped and killed for their blankets. (p. 180)

The 'them' and 'us' distinction in a new independent nation is a sign of disunity exacerbated by ethnic differences made complex by political affiliations to ZANU and ZAPU, that are also clearly ethnic. According to Luraghi:

The ultimate foundation of the ethnic group and the ultimate criterion for belonging is usually blood ties, members of an ethnic group normally recognise each other and members of other ethnic groups on the basis of ritual practices, speech patterns, styles of clothing and other cultural traits and in some cases physical appearance. (2008: p. 7)

But during Gukurahundi ethnic ties went beyond these blood and cultural ties to include political affiliations. Belonging to ZANU and ZAPU political parties has ethnic dimensions - it meant being Shona and Ndebele respectively.

In Ndlovu's story, the new government, made up of predominantly 'bad' Shona people, failed to ensure proper, complete and meaningful decolonization. The government has made things worse by inflicting pain on everyone that it has identified as the 'other'. As the narrator's mother tells: 'six years later the sheets and blankets still have NRR (National Rhodesian Railways) imprinted on them. It is as if this government of vultures, holding court in their Victorian robes (with white wigs) are nostalgic for the colonial era, only this time they are in the driver's seat, inflicting pain' (pp. 183-4). Ndlovu refers to how the new government has failed in liberating the nation, and has not made meaningful changes, as signified by the blankets that still have Rhodesian tags. All they have done is become the new oppressors.

The victimized Ndebele ethnic group is angry, and anger is manifested in various acts of revenge in Gugu's short story. The child-gang moves around, tearing down ZANU PF posters that are written in Shona, and mocks Shona people. The mockery is particularly directed at how they speak English with a supposedly funny heavy accent. The narrator gives an example of a Shona person speaking English with a heavy accent; '*wot grrede rr u en? Wot es yowa nem*' (p. 182). Such an accent is described as an insult to the Ndebele people (presumably better speakers of the English language). At various levels, the

short story dramatizes ethnic distinctions between the Shona and Ndebele. The Ndebele's perception of what distinguishes them from the Shonapeople includes language use, political affiliation, positions of power, and moral issues of being good and bad.

A recent publication on Gukurahundi is Mlalazi's *Running with Mother*. This text is ideologically not different from earlier critical works on Gukurahundi highlighted in this chapter, in that it voices the 'versions of the nation's history which the government has invited the Zimbabwean people to forget' (Christiansen-Bull, 2005: p. 209). He does that by narrating the silenced Gukurahundi violence, against the background that 'the full truth of those years has not been told' (Eppel, 2004: p. 47). In that context, the text is a reminder of the 'ugly history'. Remembering then becomes a strategy of confrontation with the nation's 'ugly' moments. The confrontation involves 'baring of the truth of one's history in order to exorcise the past' (Soyinka, 1999: p. 1). As Soyinka argues elsewhere, 'knowledge or information is a social virtue that carries the potential for prevention or social alertness' (1999: p. xv). The book is a 2012 publication, and this demonstrates how the memory of Gukurahundi continues to plague the nation as long as no reparations to the victims are made, and as long as the perpetrators are not identified and punished. Narrating Gukurahundi violence is done against the background that, to date, 'the state has failed to deal with the truth of the massacres of the 1980s and other forms of state repression' (Eppel, 2004: p. 43).

Just like Ndlovu, discussed above, Mlalazi is Ndebele yet, unlike Ndlovu, Mlalazi's novel transcends ethnic biases. In *Running with Mother,* Mlalazi

> tactfully constructs Rudo (the narrator) as an ethnic and cultural hybrid (being born to a Ndebele father and a Shona mother and being conversant in both ChiShona and IsiNdebele languages (as reflected in her name Rudo Jamela) to foreground a complex account of the atrocities.[62] (Nyambi, 2013: p. 124)

In addition, Mlalazi 'reflects what was previously less topical; the adverse impact of Gukurahundi on Shona People' (ibid.). Rudo is a 'product of processes of ethnic fusion and fission' what Wenskus termed 'ethnogenesis' (1961, as cited in Luraghi, 2008: p. 8). To use Bhabha's phrase, Rudo's identity is 'in-between-space' (1994: p. 1). The Shona 'element' of her identity dictates

---

[62] Rudo is a Shona name and Jamela is a Ndebele surname.

that she is accepted by the dominant ethnic group. This is not a personal choice but one that is dictated by the events of the moment. Since Zimbabwe is patrilineal, Rudo's identity is supposed to be Ndebele, but strangely enough Shona soldiers accept her as one of them. Here Mlalazi emphasises that Rudo's ethnic identity has to do with more than blood, and encompasses her relation to the father and mother, to their languages, to the world of foods, songs, sentiments and common knowledge acquired from both parents.

There is a way in which Rudo's ethnic identity is akin to black people born of white and black parents in the U.S. (and elsewhere). Phoenix and Owen say the following in the context of the U.S.: 'mixed parentage challenges binary black-white thinking and demonstrates some of the contestations that are constantly being waged around the terminology of race' (2005: p. 72). This statement on racialized unions illuminates an understanding of mixed parentage at ethnic levels. Pluralities of ethnicised identities like Rudo's challenge especially the conception of Shona-Ndebele binaries, with specific reference to ethnic purity. The 'Rudo Jamela' identity challenges any claims to ethnic 'metissage' (Rodríguez-García, 2006: p. 405). If the Shona ZANU dominated government has 'othered' the Ndebele ZAPU populations, what should happen then to those that 'have both feet in both camps'? (Root, 1996, as cited in Phoenix and Owen, 2005: p. 90). Of all the texts that narrate Gukurahundi, only Mlalazi's *Running with Mother* raises this question. Rudo narrates her experiences of Gukurahundi as one of the privileged victims - privileged in the sense that, though she is Ndebele, she bears a Shona name and her mother is Shona. With that dent of a Shona identity, Rudo is saved the wrath of the soldiers. As she and others run away from the soldiers, they have with them the security of the Shona mother who saves them at the end of the story. Rudo has ties with Shona people through her mother. For instance, she has ties with Uncle Ndoro who calls her '*Muzukuru*' (nephew) and calls her father '*tsano*' (brother-in-law) (p. 5).

The black-white mixed marriages referred to earlier also demonstrate the complicated issue of belonging for children born of mixed parentage. Phoenix and Owen argue that:

> In Britain and the USA the conceptual polarisation of black people and white people has historically, generally led to those of mixed parentage being included in the category now commonly called black. It is indicative of the political nature of this categorisation

that having one white parent has never been sufficient to permit inclusion as white, but having one black parent necessarily entailed classification as black. (2005: p. 73)

The Fifth Brigade soldiers reconstruct Rudo's identity, including her into the Shona ethnic group. They ensure that she is saved from the wrath directed at the Ndebele people, even though she is born of a Ndebele father. The conversation between the soldier and the narrator in the opening scenes is quite crucial. The soldier is Shona and hence speaks to Rudo and the other girls in Shona. When the narrator replies in Shona, he asks more questions: 'You speak Shona? […] What is your name? […] Your surname? […] Why do you have a Shona name and a Ndebele surname?' (p. 6). And later on Rudo is given an opportunity to escape. The officer instructed her to 'disappear, and don't look back. This is a matter for the Ndebele people only' (p. 9). In the same manner, Rudo's mother is given an opportunity to escape. She confesses: 'When they heard me speak Shona, they told me to run away' (p. 17). Mamvura, Rudo and Gift (who is renamed Anovona) are saved on account of their Shona names, language and identities. They are later taken to the city and advised not to come back to the village or the soldiers won't be lenient on them since they are 'on a national duty and *they* don't want anything disturbing *them*, not even *their* fellow tribes people or their children' (italics my own) (p. 139). The decision to serve Mother, Rudo and the renamed-Gift is an 'ethically-based' decision.

Mother is Shona, and the other two are her children. In that context the title of the novel 'Running with Mother' can be read as descriptive of the relationship between the narrator and her mother. The mother is Rudo's source of security: 'the one person she could trust in the world besides father' (p. 18). The mother plays a significant role and assists the narrator in escaping violence. Such assistance can be read in two ways: the literal escape where the mother leads the journey from the destroyed village to the safety of the mountains and, metaphorically, the mother's Shona identity that redefines the narrator's identity and allows her to escape the wrath of the soldiers. Hilker's article on influences of mixed identities on categories and belonging for the Ibimanyi in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict is one of the few texts that discuss 'people of other 'mixed' heritage - for example, those with the same skin colour, but with parents of different nationalities or ethnic heritage' (2012: p. 231).[63]Mlalazi in *Running*

---

[63] Ibimanyi are Rwandans of mixed Hutu-Tutsi heritage.

with Mother uniquely contributes to this debate by problematizing Shona-Ndebele ethnic binary as well as Gukurahundi victim-perpetrator boundaries.

There are problems or complications associated with the idea of ethnic 'metissage' as demonstrated by Mlalazi in his novel:

1) Rudo's father, Innocent, is Ndebele and marries Mamvura, who is born and bred in Mashonaland. This couple remains a good example of integration and cooperation between the Shona and the Ndebele.

2) Mamvura marries into a Ndebele family and now stays in Saphela village which is part of Matabeleland. Ndoro comes from Mashonaland and works in Matabeleland. Such movements represent what Muchemwa elsewhere refers to as perforation suggested by mobility, and such mobility makes insisting on boundaries difficult (2013: p. 42).[64] Both Mamvura and Mr Ndoro now occupy a space that has been identified by the government as 'dissident territory', and hence they complicate what Captain Finish describes as a national duty to 'keep the country clean of weeds and trash' (p. 138). The soldiers spare Mamvura and her children but Mr Ndoro's ethnic identity does not save him: he gets mad and is one of the men that are killed by soldiers in the Phezulu Mountains. People like Mamvura however find themselves in a dilemma. They are treated with suspicion by the Ndebele people. For instance, in the Phezulu Mountains, one of the Ndebele teachers wants to attack Mamvura, arguing that 'her people are killing us', yet on the other hand Auntie defends her, indicating that Mamvura is part of her family and has killed no one. This position then demonstrates that the perpetrator of Gukurahundi violence cannot be identified on ethnic basis alone. But funnily enough Mamvura's husband is treated just like an ordinary Ndebele person, yet he married into the Shona tribe.

3) The third dimension relates to the children of mixed parentage. As demonstrated by Mlalazi, they are saved by their mother's identity.

4) Since the story is set in Matabeleland, Mlalazi could not narrate what could have happened to Ndebele women who were married to Shona men

---

[64] Muchemwa is referring to the city-rural boundaries in colonial Zimbabwe in particular, and he concludes that 'this perforation is suggested by the mobility and circulation of people and goods. Mobility and circulation indicate the emergent that links the country and the city. Apart from their key connection with labour, capital, and consumption, goods, as they circulate, transmute into images that reframe the borders that the nationalist imagination seeks to make impervious.' (2013: p. 42).

whilst staying in Mashonaland. In the same way, no light is shed on what could have happened to the Ndebele who perforated the ethnic-space boundaries and were working in Mashonaland.

5) In *Running with Mother*, ethnicity is clearly a dominant aspect of the Gukurahundi massacres yet emphasizing the ethnic and leaving out the political aspect of Gukurahundi is very problematic. Gukurahundi was more political than ethnic and ethnic politics was just used in an otherwise political problem. It then remains disturbing when Mlalazi embraces that position without questions.

At the beginning of Mlalazi's novel, the drama takes place in the Kezi area. Kezi is one of the districts in Matabeleland, mostly populated by the Kalanga people. 'Kalanga [...] have constantly been treated as a sub-ethnicity of the major groups in south-western Zimbabwe such as the Ndebele, Tswana and Shona' (Mazarire, 2003: p. 1). In Gukurahundi discourse, the Kalanga are normally conceived as part of the Ndebele ethnic group, in that they occupied the same space with Ndebele people. One quickly picks up signs of uneven development. The four villages of Saphela have just one secondary school: 'the school is just too far away. But like it or not, it's the only secondary school among the four villages in the Saphela area of Kezi' (p. 1). This can be read in line of the general 'complaints about the sidelining of western regions in development projects and perceived marginalization of Ndebele people in both the economy and politics by the dominant Shona groups' (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007: p. 288). The story setting shifts to the Phezulu Mountains and finally to the narrator, the mother, and Gift's way to Bulawayo. The name 'Saphela' is vital to the imagination of Gukurahundi. Saphela is a Ndebele name that means 'we are finished/we were finished'. It signifies the general outcry by Ndebele victims that Gukurahundi violence resulted in many casualties. An estimated 20,000 civilians, largely Ndebele-speaking, were killed during Gukurahundi.

Mlalazi's story takes place during Gukurahundi - the political genocide as well as the normal time of the year. Normally *gukurahundi* is a Shona word for the first rains that fall around September. The rains are named as such because they are the first rains that sweep away the chaff from the previous harvest. The word has two forms that can be analysed as follows: *gukura* (sweep away) and *hundi* (chaff). As described by the narrator:

The first rains of the planting season are always met with excitement. When we are at home, and in better times, it is not surprising to see even the elders briefly dancing in rain, just to feel the drops fall on their skin. Children take off their clothes and run around in these first rains, letting the cool water wash their bodies. (p. 60)

The narrator demonstrates how *gukurahundi* is normally a positive development that excites people, both elders and children. Used in the context of the Matabeleland and Midlands massacres, *gukurahundi* acquires both 'positive' and negative connotations. The new government uses it to name the Fifth Brigade soldiers in a way they think is positive, for the violence is taken as some kind of a security measure to sweep away the threat of the dissidents. In the 1980s, a certain sector of the nation had been identified as 'other': the government thought that purging this 'other' was necessary for the purification of the rest of the nation. Identification of the Ndebele people as 'chaff' emanates from the fact that they are ZAPU supporters, and belong to a political party other than the dominant ZANU; and such objectification is prompted by intolerance for opponents in the political arena.

As Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues, ZANU PF used the strategy of *gukurahund*i from as early as 1979 to

discipline those considered to be wavering. It was used as a strategy of dealing with opponents in 1979, a year that was described as *Gore regukurahundi*' […] in political terms *gukurahundi* has a revolutionary goal of destroying the white settler regime, the internal settlement puppets, the capitalist system and all other obstacles to ZANU PF's ascendancy' (2012: p. 4).

Echoed in the *gukurahundi* strategy is how some lives are conceived as disposable. Disposability of lives as 'chaff' in *gukurahundi* establishes links between Gukurahundi and Murambatsvina of 2005. Human disposability in both cases is not based on incorporating people, but on disposing of lives and driving people away, further marginalizing them. People are disposed of as 'chaff' in Gukurahundi and as 'dirty' in Murambatsvina and, in both cases, those disposed of supposedly belong to and support opposition parties: ZAPU and MDC respectively.

For the victims, the term *gukurahundi* has very negative connotations. As Rudo recalls, the first rains of the spring were something one could not easily forget:

> I will never forget the first rains of that spring. We still had not found shelter when a huge raindrop splattered on my forehead. I looked up. Dark clouds filled the whole sky. And the earth was rich with the smell of rain and wet earth.' (p. 60)

The first rains become the accomplices of the soldiers, against innocent civilians. Rudo and the remaining family members, and others from the area, are running away from the wrath of the soldiers, yet the rains disrupt their efforts to escape and add to their pain and suffering. The soldiers' wrath displaced and scattered families, and the river waters scatter people further.

In the opening scene, the narrator and a group of friends are coming from school in the afternoon, on a supposedly normal summer day. What introduces us to the atrocities of Gukurahundi is a bus approaching the girls on their route from school. It approached them like a whirlwind. The bus raised a lot of dust 'as if a giant broom was sweeping the road' (p. 3). The supposed 'sweeping' function of Gukurahundi and the concept of 'dissidents' and the Ndebele as 'chaff' are echoed here. Implicit in the 'sweeping' act is the ruthlessness of the 'soldiers with red berets' (p. 6). 'Red berets' and violence were some of the distinctive features of the Fifth Brigade soldiers (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, http://www.issafrica.org/pubs/Books/OurselvesToKnow/Ndlovu.pdf: p. 25). The girls are terrified when, in the opening scenes of the book, the red beret soldiers dangle a human hand chopped off at the wrist - not just a hand but a hand that belonged to someone they knew. The hand belonged to headman Mabhena, the father of one of the girls. Rudo's father had his upper body tied with a rope and a black sack covering his head (p. 7).

The narrator describes human beings' remains as follows: 'what we had sensed was one thing was many, a mass of human bodies, burnt together: charred limbs, bones shining white in the moonlight and defaced skulls. The smell of burnt flesh was intense', forcing the narrator to vomit (p. 27). Such images of destruction evoke emotions of sympathy, and force the reader to view the soldiers as evil, and the operation as unjust and a violation of human rights. The soldiers committed other atrocities that included the burning of the clinic and 'ordered the nurses to undress and they took them all away, naked' (p. 26).

People's homes were unsafe and, for the first time, 'the open bush represented more security than the solid confines of the hut' (p. 36). Using a helicopter, soldiers dumped corpses into the Saphela Mine. The red beret soldiers also forced villagers to inflict pain on themselves, instructing them to burn their own homes and to dig mass graves for all the people shot. Neighbours are made to kill their neighbours, and men are forced to rape their neighbours' wives with their children watching. Miss Grant, a white teacher, was raped and later died, and other teachers could not burry her. Vultures fed on her body. Indications are that the girls that disappeared at the beginning of the novel were raped, for they were later found 'naked without underwear' (p. 10). Killing in *Running with Mother* is not limited to human beings but also includes the killing of dogs. Dogs are used in most homes to scare off intruders, and their destruction here symbolically implies how all security features for the victims were disturbed, thus increasing their vulnerability to all forms of abuse. Such state power over the subjects' bodies and freedom to destroy their lives represents what Agamben has described as one of the ways in which 'power-threat penetrates subjects' bodies' (1998: p. 10), emphasisingthe disposability of life.

There are two categories of masculinity in Gukurahundi narrative: hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. The two categories are distinguished from each other by their emphasis on power and domination. The Fifth Brigade soldiers as representative of hegemonic masculinity have the power to brutalize everyone who has been identified as the enemy. The enemy camp includes men, women and children. Men in the enemy camp are emasculated in various ways. They are made to destroy their own homes, and are in certain situations forced to act like women. For instance, the teachers had to put on Auntie and Mother's dresses to cover their nakedness upon joining the narrator's family in the cave. They had to sit like 'women with their feet folded underneath them, just as *women* do so as not to show *their* pants' (italics my own) (p. 127). The Fifth Brigade soldiers occupy a position of power and the emasculated men are dominated and hence represent subordinate masculinity. The subordinated males are not limited to Ndebele, some are Shona. Mr Ndoro, for example, is also brutalized by the soldiers although he is Shona.

Pain is at the centre of the lived experiences of Gukurahundi. Pain and grief are signified by wailing that pervades the novel. Wailing is a symptom of pain. The sound that comes from the wailing body expresses the emotional state of hurt. Remarkable instances of wailing include the girls' screaming at the opening of the text, Uncle Ndoro's wailing and seeming madness at the

beginning of the text, Auntie's 'maddening wails' (p. 23) upon discovering her brothers' dead bodies. The narrator also recalls: 'The wails from the village rang through the darkness as if they had always been there, like the moon and the stars, as if the whole world was wailing' (p. 26). 'Pain is often described as indescribable, as subjective experience that eludes language and communication and is explicable only by way of metaphor and analogy' (Philipose, 2007: p. 63). Close to the scenes where wailing takes place, there are laughing vultures. The presence of vultures can be read in two ways here; naturally, vultures are a feature in environments where there is meat to feed on. On a metaphoric level, vultures in the context of the story can come to be associated with the Fifth Brigade soldiers. The bestialized soldiers are 'vultures' who 'laugh', brutalise others and generate joy from their suffering.

The Saphela people are represented as innocent victims of the government soldiers' ruthlessness. The bad things that happen to them have nothing to do with what they have done wrong. Headman Mabhena gets his hand chopped off but he was 'a very important person in the village, a man who was respected, who tried crimes and meted out punishment to all those found guilty' (p. 9). Auntie also describes his brothers as good people: 'Genesis and Francis never did anything to anybody. […] they were not dissidents, just simple people looking after their families and livestock' (p. 24). As described by the narrator, Innocent 'had been a father who liked to laugh with his family, a man who was kind to other people, who had gone all the way to Chisara in Mashonaland East to pay *lobola* for his Shona bride and bring her back to his village in Matabeleland in triumph' (p. 43). Rudo's father is called Innocent and such a name is symbolic. The name intimates a condition of innocence, which is not limited to the name bearer but extends to all other victims of Gukurahundi. As individuals, the Saphela people are innocent, but, in Gukurahundi state discourse, they belong to an ethnic group and support a political party that has been isolated and described as 'the other' by the state. As Sironi and Branche state, in cases of political torture 'the collective dimension of the individual is attacked, the attachment to a group that the aggressor has designated as the target' (2000, as cited in Philipose, 2007: p. 70). In the Gukurahundi violence, the perpetrators are clearly evil and Captain Finish is symptomatic of that evil. He is

the soldier with binoculars […] the one who ordered the killing of
Uncle Genesis and Francis […] he is the one who took away

Rudo's father, […] he is the one we met on the way from the school […] the one who ordered the nurses to strip naked before he took them away in the army truck. […] So he has come to finish us all off. (p. 77)

He played a significant role in murdering, traumatizing and raping civilians, and is thus clearly identifiable. His name symbolically alludes to an attempt at wiping out an ethnic group. The captain's name is related to Saphela which is a Ndebele name meaning 'we perished/we are perishing'. Mlalazi could be right in identifying 'Captain Finish' and what he represents as the epitome of the victimizer, yet it is a fact that:

Many parties were at least partly culpable in the unfolding of events [...]. These include ZANU-PF, those ex-ZIPRAs and others who became dissidents, those remnants of Rhodesian state agencies, which sought to disrupt unity and South African agents who both actively disseminated misinformation and who also trained and equipped dissidents. (CCJPZ, 1997: p. 16)

Victimizers were many players as shown in the CCJPZ report cited above.

The concept of 'running' referred to in the title can be read in various ways. On one level, reading through the text is some kind of journey undertaken by the reader and, going through the text, the reader reads the violence of Gukurahundi. On another level, 'running' refers to the narrator's journey as she, and others around her, experience Gukurahundi. Rudo travels with her mother, aunt and the boy Gift. Journeying in this context foregrounds displacement, with people forced to leave the only places they have known as home.

In Mlalazi's text, the helicopter is as menacing as the river waters, and the soldiers. It 'came *with* the incongruous rhumba music' and hovered like 'an ugly looking beast in army colours' (p. 74). The music that accompanies the operations ironically presupposes celebration and joy. The militaristic nature of the violence is captured in the use of the helicopter to hunt down the Saphela people and in the army colours of the helicopter. This is rather an ironic 'war' situation, where the civilians are the enemy and are hunted down with heavy machinery, yet at the same time the supposed enemy is not armed in any way. The soldiers constantly urge people to go back into captivity at Mbongolo Primary school: 'go back to Mbongolo Primary school and we will forgive you'

(p. 65). Mbongolo Primary school is some kind of a prison, where people are held in captivity with promises of being forgiven for having committed unstated crimes. Forgiving and forgiveness have 'distorted meanings' in Zimbabwean politics (Muchemwa, 2011: p. 396). Muchemwa particularly demonstrates this distortion by referring to Chikwava's *Harare North* where the narrator recalls how Comrade Mhiripiri would state that 'for traitors, punishment is the best form of forgiveness' (2009: p. 9). Mbongolo School is reminiscent of the 'Balagwe Camp in the Matobo District (and other camps elsewhere). Here thousands were killed and their bodies thrown down mine shafts' (Eppel, 2004: p. 45). Balagwe Camp reminds people of the colonial Protected Villages that were run by Rhodesian defence forces and were aimed at stopping civilians from offering assistance to freedom fighters (CCJPZ, 1997: p. 12). In both cases, the enforced captivity represents some form of organized state violence. In the context of the novel, the promise of forgiveness is empty after all: the Saphela people are called back to captivity for punishment.

Rudo and company run away from the wrath of the soldiers and find safety in the Phezulu Mountains. These mountains were used during the liberation war by freedom fighters. Rudo and company felt that: 'Just as *the mountains* had given freedom fighters protection during the long years of the struggle, this time *they* hoped that they would give *them* protection from the soldiers ravaging the villagers' (italics my own) (p. 67). Mlalazi here compels the reader to compare the liberation struggle to Gukurahundi not only in relation to the use of the Phezulu Mountains as a hiding place. As Eppel argues, 'compared to the violence of the liberation war the 1980s was far worse' (p. 46). 'The liberation war was painful, but it had a purpose […] the war that followed was much worse. It was fearful, unforgettable and unacknowledged (CCJP and CRF, 1994, as cited in Eppel, 2004: p. 46).

When the teachers insisted on joining the narrator and her company in the cave, Mother was not comfortable for fear of victimisation. Mother's fears were confirmed when the teachers forced them out of the cave. Mkandla, who is later killed together with Uncle Ndoro, points a finger at mother and says: 'her people are killing our people with the permission of the Prime Minister […] she must leave this cave at once' (p. 132). He picks up a stick and threatens to kill Mother with it: 'What I said is that I do not want a Shona person anywhere near me ever again' (p. 133). Such anger manifests itself in various other forms in Ndlovu's 'Torn Posters'. Auntie exonerates Mother: 'she has no part in any of it, this is my brother's wife and she is my family' (p. 132). One of the teachers,

Ndlovu, also helps in making a distinction between the enemy and the rest of the Shona ethnic group. He argues: 'It's not the Shona people doing this […]. It's the soldiers who are doing it' (p. 132). In other words, the soldiers should be accountable for their evil deeds. The narrator adds her voice and concludes that it is not just about the Shona and Ndebele; mother is Shona but not a killer, and gives life to Gift. This is an urge for ethnic reconciliation, yet a point of reference missing in most works on Gukurahundi. Instances of reconciliation of ethnic groups and different social classes are expressed when the narrator refers to how the school 'even had a white person in the school though during the war we were fighting against whites. And Mr Mkandla wrote letters to Auntie, an uneducated village woman' (p. 83). Uncle Genesis married Madube, a Xhosa woman. Marriage then affords individuals to cross ethnic divisions.

Mlalazi goes beyond the ethnic hostilities and demonstrates in *Running with Mother* that ethnic relations are complex and can be redefined. At the beginning of the story, the Shona-speaking people are dismissed as rat-eaters. Auntie dismisses mother and the narrator as 'rat-eating people' and the father too (p. 25). Rudo's father adjusts and accommodates his wife. Out of the interactive process of living together in diversity as husband and wife, he gets to a point when he understands that there is nothing wrong with eating a rat. His rat eating is symbolic of the argument that 'ethnic imperatives' are not absolute (Luraghi, 2008: p. 8). In other words food prejudices do not have logical basis. Innocent (Rudo's father), deals with the stated ethnic prejudice through his marriage to a Shona wife, which, like all other marriages across ethnic groups, is an 'indicator of integration and/or assimilation' (Rodríguez-García, 2006: p. 405). Hilker highlights this as a history of cooperation between ethnic groups that normally extends 'into the realm of friendship and intermarriage' (2012: p. 229).

Rudo's mother is Shona but she is not a killer like the Fifth Brigade soldiers. On the other hand, Auntie's initial refusal to eat rats is just a symbolic act of loyalty to ethnic identity, otherwise she (and this extends to other Ndebele people) knows that a rat is food but she would not eat it for fear of metaphorically 'becoming' Shona. The issue of eating rat or not eating rat indicates artificial human differences that are manipulated for purposes of othering. Auntie's feelings however transform as the story progresses. Later on Auntie eats a mouse, and understands that 'there is nothing wrong with mouse meat' (p. 108). This could be the future of ethnic relations. Mamvura envisions the future of peaceful ethnic interaction as follows:

I am scared […] about what's happening. This country is for everyone: the Shona and the Ndebele, Kalanga, Venda, Tonga, Suthu and all the other tribes that live within our borders, even the whites, the Indians, the Chinese, coloureds, everybody. Isn't this why we went to war. (p. 108)

Mother advocates unity of different people from different ethnic grounds. Mlalazi, through Mamvura redefines Zimbabwean citizenship. Most importantly, in Mlalazi's narrative, there is a possibility of human contact that bypasses ethnic differences: 'Maybe seeing Auntie sitting beside Uncle Ndoro as if she was a servant serving him, and the images of her eating the mouse, something she had been against for so long, might have prompted it' (p. 117).

Yet, in reality, after 'the Matabeleland genocide […] tensions between members of the two largest language groups Shona and Ndebele, have persisted in Zimbabwe' (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 18). There is an urgent call in Mlalazi's text for the need to collapse the space-tribe rigidities, which Luraghi terms ethnic 'territorial boundaries' exemplified by such names as Mashonaland and Matabeleland (2008: p. 8). In modern Zimbabwe overemphasising such space ethnic boundaries remains problematic: people are free to move and settle wherever they want and people who are not Shona/Ndebele or any other ethnic group for that matter occupy space politically designated for specific tribes.

Rudo, Mother and Auntie cannot understand the violence round them. Aunt initially thinks the headman would have more information on what is happening to their village but is later informed that the headman was probably dead. Before they start their journey, Auntie, Mother and the narrator switch on the supersonic transistor radio hoping that 'there will be something […] on the news' (p. 30). As the narrator recalls:

The newsreader, [...] first began with the news that the Prime Minister was on a state visit to the United Kingdom, where he was going to be given an honorary degree by the University of Edinburgh. She then went on to report that O' Level results had been better this year than last, and that we were well on our well to having the highest literacy rate in Africa. More news followed about an invasion of locusts in Matabeleland North, and new

government houses built in Gwelo. […] and then the news in Shona ended. (pp. 34-5)

Repeated again in Ndebele the news was the same. Emphasis on petty issues remains an evasion of serious issues. Government control of information during Gukurahundi included 'silencing all points of view that deviate from official versions of events' (Eppel, 2004: p. 49). Victims cannot find an archive with their narratives, and this demonstrates a lack of recognition of such narratives in state narratives. State-controlled media was significantly silent about Gukurahundi as demonstrated by Eppel in the following proposition: 'Reading archives of the state media of the 1980s is a surreal experience; in Bulawayo, while thousands were being massacred a few kilometres away, the *Chronicle* was almost silent, blaming dissidents for what little violence was acknowledged' (ibid.). This is what writers subvert.

The trend so far is that black writers re-writing Gukurahundi violence do it from different standpoints. They write differently on the same facts around the historical truth of Gukurahundi, as is shown by the movement from Hove, to Vera, to Gugu and Mlalazi's narratives.

White Writers' Narrations of Gukurahundi

White Zimbabwean and non-Zimbabwean writers also articulate the Gukurahundi violence. It is significant to point out from the onset that scholarship on Africa by non-Africans has always been treated with suspicion. This is largely so because 'speaking rationally about Africa is not something that has ever come naturally -*with* absolute otherness as a central notion' (italics my own) (Mbembe, 2001: 1). One of the most significant contributions is Godwin's *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa,* an autobiography published in 1996. Godwin is a white Zimbabwean described by Wylie as 'the peripatetic Godwin now living in New York' (2007: p. 160). Godwin has also published two memoirs, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*: *A Memoir of Africa* (2008) and *The Fear: Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe*. These two memoirs are set in Zimbabwe and represent eyewitnesses' accounts of the 2008 harmonised election violence. Godwin's articulation of Gukurahundi in his autobiography provoked a range of critical responses. Godwin's work has largely been regarded as part of a colonialist discourse on Africa and hence has been dismissed as misrepresenting African realities. Godwin only refers to the Gukurahundi violence in the last part of his autobiography. As he witnesses the

massacres, Godwin 'wondered briefly whether Chief Maduna's ancestral spirits were going to strike down another white man before he could bear witness' (p. 418). As Chennels asks: 'Does another white man bearing witness suggests that the function of the texts like Mukiwa is to testify to the Matabeleland massacres? Or is the Gukurahundi a metonymy for Africa's savagery that once again has escaped the control of rational Europe and it is that savagery to which Godwin's story bear witness?' (2005: pp. 141-2). Chennels implies that white writers cannot be appreciated outside the colonial ideology. Such interpretations of texts written by whites are efforts directed at silencing some sections of postcolonial Zimbabwe based on race. Other critics however read such texts positively. Muchemwa reads the same text alongside Vera's *The Stone Virgins* and notes that the last part of Godwin's autobiography 'shares the same setting and uses the same stories of horror of the civil war in Southern Matabeleland' (2005: p. 200). Muchemwa also argues that Godwin's 'return to the locations of specific historical crimes - the killing of the civilians in Matabeleland - is also an imaginative return to a past *which* though under siege can be retrieved' (2005: p. 199). The Antelope Mineshaft that Godwin refers to in his autobiography is a site of crime. Here people 'die without proper burial, without dignity, unremembered' (Muchemwa, 2005: p. 200). Wylie argues that Godwin's 'Mukiwa reaches a gritty persuasiveness in its last section where Godwin [...] braves Gukurahundi reportage that could be fruitfully levelled against the only novel so far to deal richly with that shameful episode' (2007: p. 160). It is significant to note that even if Godwin's book could have been the second literary work (after Hove) to portray Gukurahundi, it was simply dismissed as 'white writing', addressing 'European rather than African audiences' (Pilossof, 2009: p. 622), and hence conceived as a continuation of a colonial discourse.

One other white writer who also adds his voice to narrating the Gukurahundi violence is Kilgore, and he does that in his first publication *Weare All Zimbabweans Now* (2009). Kilgore is an American who writes the Zimbabwean story as an outsider. The title of the novel is extracted from Robert Mugabe's speech on reconciliation on attaining independence in 1980. Echoed in the words 'we are now all Zimbabweans' is racial reconciliation. As Barnes argues 'reconciliation refers to race relations [...] relations between indigenous groups are referred to with a somewhat different vocabulary' (2004: p. 141). The term used to describe relations between indigenous groups is unity. Kilgore uses such a title, yet his story is not so much about race relations as it is about

relations between indigenous Zimbabweans, particularly Shona-Ndebele ethnic relations during the Gukurahundi violence.

His novel is about an American student, Ben Dabney, who travels to Zimbabwe to carry out research on Zimbabwean history as part of his PhD studies. Kilgore depends on an outsider to tell the Zimbabwean history. This narrative strategy is similar to the recent trend in Hollywood construction of twenty-first century Africa, which, as Evans and Glenn argue, 'depends on white protagonists' (2010: p. 15).[65] Initially Ben admires the fictionalised real-life figure Robert Mugabe for his reconciliatory speech and political stance on Zimbabwe's attainment of independence. In the course of his research, Ben's opinion of Robert Mugabe changes. The shift is prompted by what he accidentally finds during his research. As he struggles to get facts surrounding the death of a prominent political figure, Tichasara, the narrator gets a glimpse of the Gukurahundi violence.[66] To emphasize the significance of such a discovery, some kind of epigraph titled 'Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 1983' opens the novel/story. An important point of the discovery is when the narrator fails to sell the story to outsiders, even through the BBC. Ben learns that government-controlled newspapers only carry the stories of dissident actions, and do not refer to the violence inflicted on innocent civilians by Fifth Brigade soldiers. Such evasion of truth is dramatized when top government officials demonstrate their hatred of one of the ex-combatants for telling the truth. Comrade Chokie, short for *Chokwadi*, meaning 'truth', is hated for telling the truth. Truth concealment is enforced on the basis that, as expressed by one of the ZANU members, 'Zanu's dirty laundry must not be washed in public' (p. 88). Gukurahundi then is conceived as part of the dirty laundry that ZANU would want to keep concealed. In response to the BBC story on Gukurahundi violence, the Ministry of Information spokesperson condemns 'western journalists who are fabricating atrocities on the part of the Zimbabwean Army […] the only atrocities perpetrated in this region are carried out by the apartheid government and their agents which include the Renamo and dissidents known as Zapu in

[65] A good example is the movie *The Last King of Scotland*, which is a re-interpretation of Ugandan Idi Amin's despotic rule with Dr Nicholas Garrigan (James McAvoy), as 'the central white focalizer in the film' (Evans and Glen 2010: p. 15).

[66] Tichasara's death alludes to the historical death of Tongogara (a prominent political figure) on the eve of independence in a suspicious road accident. The two names Tichasara and Tongogara are Shona and have closely related meanings: Tongogara means 'we will stay' and Tichasara means 'we will stay behind'. So the use of Tichasara in the narrative is a clever evasion of the use of the historical name Tongogara.

Zimbabwe' (p. 155). From the state's point of view, the only acknowledged violence comes from the South African apartheid government, the Renamo and dissidents, and not from government soldiers.

The fictionalised Robert Mugabe also denies Gukurahundi history in an interview with the narrator. Responding to questions on Matabeleland violence, the President says: 'I don't see that this has anything to do with the history that you are researching. We have nothing to hide, but I wouldn't expect to read about our dissident problem in a history book' (p. 260). Hatred of truth presupposes a telling of lies and one of the lies told by the fictionalised Robert Mugabe is that Matabeleland violence has no place in narratives of national history. The President comfortably talks about Zimbabwean history, emphasizing in particular colonial dominance and the liberation role. When Robert Mugabe finally talks about Gukurahundi he blames everyone else except the government. The West and its press (particularly the BBC), South Africa and the Boers, and super ZAPU are the culprits; anything the state does is in defence of its sovereignty.

The ZANU slogan '*pasi nemadissidents*!' - down with dissidents' - echoes the primary action of Gukurahundi, that of removing the 'chaff' through the killing of ZAPU supporters. From Kilgore's narrative, the 'fifth brigade […] North Korean trained […] All Shonas' (p. 147) are the culprits in the Gukurahundi violence. Kilgore does not problematize such an opinion. Not all Shona people were recruited into the Fifth Brigade and there is no way they could all be responsible for the violence. The supposed killing of Tichasara and the violence of Gukurahundi are evoked in this novel as examples of the faults of the new Zimbabwean government in the early years of independence. It is significant to note that Kilgore's narrative reads more as history than as fiction. The differences between history and fiction in this text are hard to define. For instance Kilgore uses names of historical persons. Robert Mugabe is a major character in the text, and his speeches are rehearsed and taken from historical sources.

Gukurahundi Debates in Non-Fiction
In this section, I highlight responses and challenges to opinions on Gukurahundi in non-fiction. I specifically discuss responses to *Running with Mother* by *The Patriot*, Ndlovu and Dube's responses to Vambe's article on Gukurahundi and comments on Viomax's Gukurahundi song posted on YouTube. *The Patriot* is one of the 'pro-Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU PF)' newspapers

(Ndlovu and Dube, 2014: p. 4). Part of a *Running with Mother* review had the following to say:

> The book that Weaver Press describes as a 'short, but powerful novel' is a narration of horrors committed by Government soldiers. Last year, *The Patriot* published a consolidated 64-page police report of the atrocities that the dissidents perpetrated on the population in Matabeleland, Midlands and Mashonaland West between 1981 and 1987. Information about events of the time show that soldiers went in to assist the police to contain the atrocities. But in *Running with Mother* villagers were more afraid of Government security forces and atrocities were committed by soldiers on a 'mission' to 'wipe out the Ndebeles'. Evidently, the book is another offering with a heavy Rhodesian influence. Rhodesians having realized that they cannot overtly fight and 'regain' what they feel they 'lost' have resorted to mechanisms that create animosity between the people of Zimbabwe.[67]

Reference to the role played by dissidents in this review is made as a challenge to the position taken by Mlalazi in *Running with Mother* on dissidents and what they did during Gukurahundi. Mlalazi emphasises soldiers' brutality while *The Patriot* struggles to justify the killings as aimed at dealing with the dissidents. What is clear is that in both narratives, the novel and the review, there are deliberate exclusions in recalling what happened in the past. The reviewer takes a defensive stance on the role played by the soldiers during Gukurahundi, and the review can be read in the context of the government's denial of the atrocities. In the review, *Running with Mother* is dismissed as a colonialist text influenced by 'Rhodesians' who lost land in the Third Chimurenga. Read in the context of the Third Chimurenga, *Running with Mother* functions as what Soyinka, elsewhere, termed 'the role of memory, of ancient precedents of

---

[67] The review appeared on a weblink that is now broken: http://thepatriot.co.zw/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=1211:weaver-press-oh-weaverandcatid=6:analysisandItemid=39. Mlalazi had copied it and pasted it on http://www.umthwakazireview.com/index.php/culture/item/581-running-with-mother-gukurahundi-novel-by-mr-mlalazi (accessed 26 May 2014).

current criminality obviously governs […] responses to the immediate and often more savage insults on our humanity' (1999: p. xxv). The link established between Mlalazi and Rhodesians is a strange way of re-invoking colonialist injustice in the context of Gukurahundi. The link is established to force people to always comprehend the white man as 'the' enemy and ignore the local 'enemy'. The reviewer describes Mlalazi as a sell-out:

> Mlalazi is currently hopping from one Western capital, of our former colonisers, to the next. They are feting him because he is spewing out the kind of story that they used to colonise us: to 'stop the Africans from exterminating each other'. The writer may proffer all sorts of argument for his work, but as he is hosted in Europe he must never forget that there is more that unites us as Zimbabweans, as Shonas and Ndebeles than divides us. Seeds sown to cause disharmony among Africans by whites using surrogate blacks might germinate, but will not grow.[68]

The Patriot reporter is influenced by the ZANU PF party ideology that defines 'any critique against the ruling party and/or government as neo-imperialist' (McGreal, 2002, as cited in Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 5). In this case, Mlalazi's book about a historical event is viewed as an anti-white discourse of the Third Chimurenga. A version of history that forces the nation to remember the wrongs against its own are dismissed in this newspaper and in ZANU PF's rhetoric on the nation as 'anti-national […] and the ethnic antagonisms are represented as neo-colonial manipulations […] and as the work of the outside forces' (Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 57). The review reflects ZANU PF's position on remembering and forgetting some aspects of history, especially in the post-unity period that insists that any reliving of such 'ugly' historical moments is premised on subverting the government. What we read in the review is not different from Robert Mugabe's response to the CCJP report on Gukurahundi. Like *The Patriot* reporter who views Mlalazi's novel as influenced by 'Rhodesians', Robert Mugabe dismissed the bishops who compiled the CCJP report as 'sanctimonious prelates who were influenced by international gallery' (Meredith, 2002, as cited in Christiansen-Bull, 2004: p. 86). So, for Robert Mugabe, ZANU PF and anyone operating within the same ideological parameters, 'anyone who aired ugly history were dismissed as

---

[68] See the previous footnote.

agents of the external enemy, because true Zimbabweans were said to be able to distinguish real differences from historical divisions that were overcome by the unity accord' (Christiansen-Bull, 2005: p. 209). The review that I quoted above is political and not literary, where the reviewer is playing puppet to ZANU PF, and trying to relive and rehearse its responses to Gukurahundi. The reviewer's argument that 'Rhodesians' influence Mlalazi remains very much archaic. Such a position represents an evasion of truth where most failed African states would blame others for their failure except themselves. This is thetwenty-first century and Rhodesians are long dead, symbolically as well as literally.

The reviewer states:'As we celebrate silver jubilee of the signing of the Unity Accord one is best reminded that the book is a typical example of the employment of the divide-and-rule strategy. Here is a book produced to fan the tensions between the Shonas and Ndebeles'. The reviewer's understanding of unity in Zimbabwean history is narrow. He forgets that national unity 'collapsed in 1982' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008: p. 44). As Christiansen-Bull argues, 'unity was installed as the sign by which memories of the violent past could be turned into an obligation to forget' (2005: p. 209). The kind of unity encoded in the Zimbabwe Unity Accord of 1987 should have been preceded by exposition of truth, since 'Truth as prelude to Reconciliation seems logical enough' (Soyinka, 1999, p. xix). *The Patriot'*s effort should be understood as a government effort to 'silence any talk about ethnicity under the political rhetoric of a united Zimbabwe' (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007: p. 282).

Another significant dialogue to note is one between Vambe and Ndlovu and Dube. All three are academics and their engagement is expressed in the form of academic articles. Vambe published an article on Gukurahundi entitled 'Zimbabwe's Genocide: Voices and Perceptions from Ordinary People in Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces, 30 Years On' (2012). His article sought to 'ascertain whether or not there have been marked changes in the perceptions of the people of Matabeleland and the Midlands regarding the legacy of Gukurahundi' (2012: p. 283). Ndlovu and Dube respond to Vambe's article in 'Response to Maurice T. Vambe's "Zimbabwe's Genocide: Voices and Perceptions from Ordinary People in Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces, 30 Years On"' (2014). They argue that Macaphulana's description of Vambe's article as a 'scholarship of grudge' (2014: p. 1) influences their response. Vambe is Shona and Macaphulana is Ndebele, and he understands Vambe's 'grudge' to be an ethnic one. Ndlovu and Dube demonstrate that they have problems with Vambe's article. The first problem has to do with Vambe's

methodological and theoretical approaches - where he claims to have used qualitative and quantitative methodologies, yet his findings do not demonstrate that he used these. They also have ideological, ethical and moral concerns and agree that the article resembles a 'romanticised and elitist view of what (Vambe) calls ordinary people's views' (2014: p. 5). Ndlovu and Dube conclude that Vambe's article 'seems to accept without question the state narrative of events of what happened in the early 1980s in Zimbabwe' (2014: p. 6). They illustrate their point by quoting the following statement made by Vambe in his article:

> The ZIPRA deserters who were described as dissidents took their arms with them and often used these to terrorise ordinary people, and to abduct foreign tourists. The dissidents also caused general mayhem to government projects. In response, the government trained and sent the Fifth Brigade in parts of Matabeleland and the Midlands to flash out dissidents. (2012: p. 282)

If Vambe had written an article on a different subject, the article was going to escape the scrutiny it attracted. Gukurahundi remains a sensitive issue in Zimbabwe and the ethnic anger is discernible each time people engage in dialogue about what really happened. Vambe wrote his article as an 'outsider'. In this context Oster's argument makes sense: 'if (one) has never had the experience of being in a group that has been discriminated against or persecuted, one cannot possibly understand how sensitive those groups can be' (2003: p. 15). I would also demonstrate this point by quoting responses to Viomax's Gukurahundi 2009 Shona song.[69] The video of the song was posted on YouTube

---

[69] *Zvakatanga nemadviti vakatora tsvarakadenga* (it started with the Ndebele who raided Shona beautiful women)

ZIPRA yakauraya mashona akapera (ZIPRA killed all Shona people)

Zvakauya navaMugabe vakatora zvombo zvehondo (Mugabe started it by taking war tools)

ZANLA yakauraya mandevere akapera (ZANLA killed all Ndebele people)

Zvakatanga naLobengula wakatora tsvarakadenga (it started with Lobengula who took Shona beautiful women)

Mandevere akauraya mashona akapera (Ndebele killed all Shona people)

Zvakauya navaMugabe vakauraya Matabeleland (Mugabe started it by killing Matabeleland)

Mashona akauraya mandevere akapera (Shona people killed all Ndebeles)

Madviti Masvina Garisanai (Ndebele and Shona live peacefully)

Mashona Idyai Macimbi (Shonas should eat what is popularly known as Ndebele food (macimbi))

Mandevere idyai mbeva (Ndebeles should eat what is popularised as Shona food (rats))

and people shared their thoughts through comments. For those who posted their comments, anonymity was ensured using pseudonyms. Below are some of the comments:

>**Nhlonipho Gatyeni**: why wasn't this banned, this is uncalled for when we are calling for peace, someone just goes Ludacris
>
>**Thulani Nkomo**: golo likanyoko olbhotshela imini lebusuku lizaphela nge AIDS maswina othuvi zinjandini migodoyi alilaplan ngaphandle kobusela.[70]
>
>**Buqhawe Msimanga**: This idiot needs to be admitted in a lunatic center and kept there for life. Then she calls herself a freedom fighter, bitch please keep your deluded ideas to yourself.
>
>**Vusumuzi Masuku**: wena msatha nyoko!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
>
>**Ronald Zolas Mazorodze**:*haagone kuimba*, 2ndly, she is planting tribal hatred muZim medu. to hell with you viomak and whoever posted this demonic work
>
>**Nobhutshuzwayo**: you ma'am, are a complete moron
>
>**Masende**: VioMak, you are a misguided and obviously uncooked sorry excuse of a musician. Even my Shona friends think this is highly unpalatable and inaccurate misrepresentation of facts about history. You can lick Mugabe's geriatric arse shiny clean but you are going to be here for a very long time. You are just an attention seeking idiot - Well, you hv got it now and we've got you in our cross-hairs.[71]

The affective anger that runs through the comments is because Viomax's memory of Gukurahundi is viewed as unacceptable. The people who comment are hostile to what they see as an inaccurate construction of Gukurahundi history. It is significant to note that Viomax has been attacked for using the ethnophaulisms *Madviti* and *Masvina* to refer to Ndebele and Shona people respectively in her song. She is also attacked for constructing Lobengula Joshua Nkomo as similar to Robert Mugabe. Such a construction means placing

---

Madviti, Mashona Unite (Ndebele and Shona Unite)
Zvakatanga naUmdala akacherera gidi mujecha (Joshua Nkomo started it when he hid guns) (Viomax *Gukurahundi* (2009) (Album: Zimbabwe is Mine).

[70] These are insults directed to all Shona people and can be translated as follows: 'Your mother's vagina that is a toilet day and night, you will die of AIDS masvina, dogs who know nothing but stealing'.

[71] http//www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFqHDGdPI0U (accessed 26 May 2014).

Gukurahundi on the same footing with Lobengula's Shona raids and dissident acts. In that context, Viomax's song sounded like a justification of Gukurahundi.

A closer look at a review of *Running with Mother* by a reporter of *The Patriot*, a response to Vambe's article by Ndlovu and Dube, and responses to Viomax's Gukurahundi song, show that writers and critics alike are influenced by ideologies, dominant or non-dominant. Vambe, who has been dismissed as a ZANU PF apologist, argues that

> The debates on Matabeleland and the Midlands disturbances that are being carried out in learned articles in the weekly, *The Patriot*, are important because they reveal a side of the story that only those former dissidents who share their experiences in *The Patriot* can offer. (2012: p. 297).

Here Vambe's support of *The Patriot* ideology is a clear testimony that he is a state apologist for Gukurahundi violence, because the newspaper is pro-ZANU PF. The debates here demonstrate that there are versions on Gukurahundi history with different authors emphasising different aspects. Major emphases are put on the atrocities from the government, dissidents' actions and victims' experiences.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated that there are different versions of the Gukurahundi violence, from different writers. In all the narratives, one thing stands out: the writers are aware of the fluidity between history and fiction and each of the works discussed here is a unique interpretation and reflection of that aspect of Zimbabwean history. Each text represents a contesting of reality as narrated by the government. Significant to note is that Mlalazi's *Running with Mother* broadens our understanding of victims of Gukurahundi and shows how Gukurahundi was not simply an affair between the Shona and the Ndebele. In cases where people marry across tribes, it remains difficult to insist on pure ethnic identities. Ethnicity then remains what politicians use as a divide and rule strategy. As pointed out by Barth and Wenskus, 'ethnicity is often an instrument used by leaders or elites to mobilise larger groups of people towards specific goals' (1994, as cited in Luraghi, 2008: p. 9).

In Gukurahundi narratives, the Shona in general are implicated as perpetrators, yet accusing the Shona people in general is very problematic, for the ordinary Shona person did not do anything bad to anyone during the Gukurahundi violence. There was no ordinary confrontation between ethnic groups: the government just decided to go out to kill an ethnic group for political reasons. Collective responsibility leaves no room for individual judgment, yet individuals committed the crimes, and these should be held accountable.

Scholarship on the Gukurahundi violence is characterized by serious obliterations: Matabeleland goes beyond Ndebele people in terms of ethnic groups that occupy this space. This is an example of a counter-discourse, where 'the assumption that there exists one essential victim suppresses internal power divisions, since the site of counter discourse is itself contested terrain (White, 1990: p. 82). Imagining the Ndebele as the only victims silences other ethnicities in Matabeleland, like the Kalanga and the Venda. The obliterations referred to can be traced back to colonial administration. As highlighted by Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'the colonial Rhodesian state divided the country into ethnicized administrative units: Mashonaland for Zezuru-speaking Shonas, and Ndebele-speaking groups […] many groups, especially those speaking minority languages were lumped into these ethnicized administrative units and their alternative identities ignored' (2007: p. 278). It is surprising that thirty-four years into independence scholars continue to construct Zimbabwean ethnic groups and space in ways that ignore and obliterate other ethnicities. It is not correct to say that Mashonaland equals Shona and Matabeleland is Ndebele. Other ethnic groups occupy these spaces and are submerged in such provincial names as Mashonaland and Matabeleland. Ethnic boundaries are not easy to draw.

As indicated in the above discussion, the black-white distinction of writers' identity in the postcolony is one of the various ways of silencing certain groups from commenting on national faults. Such a binary categorization has roots in the theory of deliberate isolation of those that are deemed politically wrong. This can be discerned in the way whites have been dismissed from participating in the public sphere and have been defined as aliens. Yet, in the discussion above, I have noted that 'white' writers who have been dismissed as writing to the European reader, have narrated the Gukurahundi violence in ways that are different from black writers considered here.

Discernible in the last section of the chapter is how the debate on Gukurahundi continues, yet remains ethnicized. Writers and critics alike either sympathize and speak on behalf of the Gukurahundi victims and show 'enlightened compassion' (Spivak, 1988: p. 140) or are the perpetrators' apologists. Lastly, the Ndebele have a term *insewula* for the first rains termed *gukurahundi* by the Shona. However, the Gukurahundi violence was never referred to as *Insewula*. The historic moment cannot come to be associated with the Ndebele term - this term cannot capture the ideological and political implications of the violence. In the following chapter, I will focus on subversion of 'patriotic history' in a selection of texts.

Chapter 4: A Reinterpretation of the Third Chimurenga in Post-2000 Writings [72]

This is not the Twentieth century any more. You can't go on flogging the colonial horse. The colonial horse is dead. You've got to find yourselves new horses, new mules. (Chinodya, 2003: p. 50)

Introduction

Underscored in the epigraph is the need for a new way of understanding the African postcolony, in which a continuous blame on the colonizer turns out to be a misreading of the 'new' sources of oppression for the majority of citizens.[73] Chinodya refers to the exhaustion of what Mbembe has termed 'the thematics of anti-imperialism' (2001: p. 263). In an interview, Mbembe says:

---

[72] Here I propose an understanding of the Third Chimurenga that goes beyond the 2000 land reform programme to encompass all aspects of Zimbabwean history that have come to be associated with what is popularized as 'the Zimbabwean crisis' (see Muponde, 2004: p. 176, who has also described the Third Chimurenga as 'the crisis'). ZANU PF re-configures Chimurenga as an endless struggle or as a struggle that has distinct phases in order to justify its hold on power. It has reconstructed itself as the only authentic and legitimate revolutionary party able to implement the various phases of the struggle. The naming of these phases has become an important aspect of ZANU PF's election manifestos throughout the history of the nation. I broadened the meaning on the basis that the 2000 land reform programme, at the centre of the Third Chimurenga, is a defining aspect of the crisis. My interpretation of the struggle discourse here includes the often-ignored struggle of the majority of Zimbabweans to survive the crisis - the unacknowledged subaltern struggles at various levels. The re-appropriation of the term is directed at disrupting the usual association of the word Chimurenga with fighting against the colonial enemy and trivializing all the other 'wars' that are attendant to the Third Chimurenga. A re-appropriation of the term also widens the scope of historical interpretation, breaking what Mbembe in another context termed the thinking of time 'in terms of a mechanical succession of ages' (First, Second and Third Chimurengas). (http://www.springerin.at accessed 23 March 2012)

[73] Chinodya's idea is a variation of Soyinka's statement 'The crimes that the African continent commits against her kind are a kind of a dimension and, unfortunately, of a nature that appears to constantly provoke memories of the historic wrongs inflicted on that continent by others' (1999: p. xxiv), discussed in the previous chapter.

As far as Africa is concerned, colonialism is over. Apartheid is over too. Africans are now the free masters of their own destiny. […] Unfortunately, African criticism has been slow to awake to this new reality and its empowering possibilities. The discourse of victimization and resentment is still pervasive. In most African nativist, nationalist or Afro-Marxist discourses, history is still interpreted as an endless process of sorcery. […] Many feel the need to wear masks and to blame everything on the past. In the process, they forget to account for the self-destruction and self-inflicted injuries that our boundless passions have always incited - and continue to incite.[74]

Above, Mbembe calls for an interpretation of African contemporaneity that goes beyond the invocation of the colonial ghost to include self-reflexion. Yet, for him, any comment about Africa by an African is deployed against a Western interpretation of Africa that assigns to Africa

a special unreality, such that the continent becomes the very figure of what is null, abolished, and, in its essence, in opposition to what is the very expression of that nothing whose special feature is to be nothing at all. (2001: p. 4)

In such circumstances, the African who writes about Africa becomes conscious of the need to write back to the centre, and is then expected to 'eradicate, validate or ignore' the Western interpretation of Africa (Mbembe, 2001: p. 4). However, most African writers on the postcolony cannot continue to worry themselves about writing back to the centre and re-inscribing the African image, they have to deal with the 'spectre of anarchy and disintegration *that is* real and threatening' and is visible in many African States (italics my own) (Williams, 1996: p. 350).

Texts selected for this chapter are Chingono's 'Minister without Portfolio', Hoba's 'Specialisation', Chinyani's 'A Land of Starving Millionaires', Chinodya's 'Queues' and Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*. They are discussed in the general context of what Mwangi has termed the 'self-reflexive' project of 'writing back to self' that is visible in the history of African literature on the postcolony (2009). Such a process in the re-imagination of

---

[74] http://www.utexas.edu/conferences/africa/ads/1528.html (accessed 17 October 2013).

Africa is characterized by a conscious departure from 'the tradition of 'writing back' to European colonial centre, focusing on […] local forms of oppression that are seen parallel to classical colonialism' (Mwangi, 2009: p. 1). The departure represents a challenge to the postcolonial notion of 'writing back' and is 'not blind to internal causes of the malaise within African societies' (ibid.). Writing back is a complex process in contemporary African literature as it involves responding to both colonial and postcolonial African texts. Examined here are Zimbabwean self-reflexive texts on what is popularized as the Third Chimurenga. The phrase 'Third Chimurenga' was coined between 2000 and 2005 by the then Zimbabwean Minister of Information and Publicity Jonathan Moyo to describe the state that sanctioned the violent takeover of land belonging to white Zimbabwean farmers (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya, 2011: p. 2).

Scholars from various disciplines have defined and described the Third Chimurenga. Opinions on the Third Chimurenga fall into two major opposing positions. In the first view located in what Ranger has termed 'patriotic history', the Third Chimurenga is celebrated as 'an emancipatory project with redemptive objectives […] *and* is 'a third war of liberation against neo-colonialism by Western imperialists and their allied white Zimbabwean commercial farmers' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya, 2011: p. 2). In the same context, the Third Chimurenga is understood as a sequel to the First and Second Chimurengas. The second view comes from those that question the discourse of the Third Chimurenga. These describe it in negative terms and particularly dismiss its liberatory potential. Critics suggest that it is 'an exhausted patriarchal model of nationalism' (Ndovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya, 2011: p. 2). The Third Chimurenga is also described as a 'radical anti-Western nationalist discourse' (Nyambi, 2011: p. 4), and 'has also been unusually successful in calling attention to itself as more than a moment of madness' (Muponde, 2004: p. 176). Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya argue that the Third Chimurenga nationalism is 'grotesque' in that it 'provokes both empathy and disgust' (2011: p. 3).

In a situation where officially 'all the actors within the nation's political sphere may be described as either "patriots" or "sell-outs"' (Primorac, 2006: p. 10), it follows that in official government discourse those that endorse the liberatory Third Chimurenga rhetoric are 'patriots' and those that are critical of it are deemed 'sell-outs'. Defined simply, patriotism means 'love for one's country'. The Zimbabwean version of patriotism is narrow and is defined in terms of affiliation to the ruling party ZANU PF. As a result, not belonging to

the ruling party makes one a sell-out. This is a Zimbabwean kind of patriotism and selling out; a special kind of patriotism 'which defined everyone else as a traitor' (Ranger, 2005: p. 10), where difference easily transforms into foe (Muponde, 2004: p. 176). Sites that fall into the patriotic range include the state-controlled media, what Ranger has called 'patriotic journalistic narratives', especially of ZTV and *The Sunday Mail* (2005, as cited in Nyambi, 2011: p. 3). In addition to 'patriotic journalistic narratives', there are voices of 'regime scholars […] who regurgitate the ZANU PF discourse' (Tendi, 2010, as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya, 2011: p. 71). These include Vimbai Chivaura, Claude Mararike, Tafataona Mahoso and Isheunesu Mupepereki. Inasmuch as Tendi wants to define them as 'regime scholars', 'party ideologues' is a more appropriate descriptive term. Their discourse is not scholarship proper and cannot survive scrutiny outside ZANU PF party discourse. The official criticism (so-called 'unpatriotic' discourse) of the Third Chimurenga is located in private media (*The Standard* and *The Daily News*). What is significant for this study is that such 'patriotic' and 'non-patriotic' distinctions are also visible in literary narratives. Texts that fall into the 'patriotic writing' category include Gomo's *A Fine Madness*, Maruma's *Coming Home*, and Mtizira's *The Chimurenga Protocol*. What is termed 'patriotic writing' here is coded elsewhere as 'the popular public realm that is in contact with the domain of political discourse' (Primorac, 2007: p. 434). This chapter mainly explores how the so-called 'unpatriotic' literary texts represent and reflect on the economic, political and social realities of the Third Chimurenga. The defining aspect of the reflection is a subversion of the official government's belief that there are no problems and, where the national crisis is acknowledged, this is conceived as a creation of the West, especially the British and their ally opposition party - MDC.

A defining aspect of the Third Chimurenga is state repression. Any criticism of the government was met with brutality, instituted through the controversial Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (Hammar, 2004). As Muchemwa argues, these two acts were nothing but 'legislative and administrative instruments designed to muzzle freedom of expression' (2007: p. 15). We tend to associate Gappah's fictional country in the 'The Sound of the Last Post','where the truth can only be spoken in the private chambers of the mind' (2009: p. 15),,with the repressive environment of the Third Chimurenga. 'The act of narration

thenbecomes an act of defiance and subversion *of the grand narratives* *(*Muchemwa, 2007: p. 9) (emphases added).

In *Writers in Politics,* Ngugi argues that 'a writer has no choice; whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural, ideological struggles in a society [...] every writer is a writer in politics' (1981: p. xvi).[75] In line with this argument, most Zimbabwean literary works published after 2000 reflect some aspects of the Zimbabwean economy, social realities as well as political aspects. Ngugi's crucial question on 'what and whose politics' are contained in literary texts, points to the contested phenomenon of literary 'patriots' and 'sell-outs'. Most of the artists whose works comment on one or several aspects of the Third Chimurenga, 'have also been directly associated with the opposing poles of the political divide' (Primorac, 2006: p. 10). This is mainly so because, according to ZANU PF government then, anyone who criticizes its operations becomes an 'enemy of the state', belongs to the opposition and is automatically unpatriotic. This chapter analyses selected literature of 'the crisis', with the aim of demonstrating how such narratives challenge the 'patriotic' interpretation of several aspects of the 1991-2008 crisis. The selected texts present a challenge to the inadequacies of the biased and often incomplete dominant 'patriotic' narrative of the Third Chimurenga. The texts I have selected for this chapter belong to two different genres - short story and novel, but are bound together by a common thematic focus. Selected texts focus on various defining aspects of the Third Chimurenga crisis in ways that subvert the state's official narration.

Troping a Different Zimbabwean History in 'Queues'[76]

'Queues' is one of the short stories that make up Staunton's *Laughing Now* and is a complex narration of two stories. The main story consists of a sketch of Zimbabwean history from colonial times to the present Third Chimurenga crisis. A narrative of personal interaction between Rudo and the nameless narrator parallels this story. The two stories are interwoven but they can be read separately. I intend to discuss the main narrative and then highlight the significance of the love story. A sketch of Zimbabwean history is told through

---

[75] Ngugi uses the pronoun 'he' here to embrace both genders and such use is 'rooted in the beginnings of the English language. *He* has lost all suggestion of maleness *in this circumstance* […] it has no pejorative connotations' (italics my own) (Strunk and White, 1979, as cited in Gastil, 1990: p. 629).

[76] A short story in Staunton's anthology *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2003).

the voice of the nameless narrator. It contains minimal actions. Most of the details of the story are historical and represented chronologically. Historical aspects that come out clearly include life in Rhodesia for ordinary black people, the changes brought about by the achievement of independence in 1980, ethnic cleansing of Gukurahundi of the early 1980s, economic aspects of the 1990s, international relations in the twenty-first century, land 'invasions' and the crisis. The story begins in the mid-seventies in Rhodesia. The narrator tells the story of *Sisi*, Elizabeth's not so blissful yet meaningful life as a housemaid for white people during the colonial period. Elizabeth's occupation is one of the worst paid occupations in the world, yet she manages a decent life out of her career. The narrator's father, who is a milkman, managed to 'send three children to boarding school on his pay' (p. 43). Reference to such a past where those who were 'six times upon the universe' (p. 44) poor and yet survived is compared with the present where queues and shortages of basic commodities are a defining aspect of people's material realities. The successes that defined the early years of independence gave the nation the status of 'the bread basket' of Southern Africa. This however was short-lived. The narrator particularly refers to how 'we massacred each other [...] manufactured enemies *and* squandered resources' (p. 47). The massacres referred to are the realities of the Gukurahundi violence, an aspect of Zimbabwean history that is officially excluded in the national patriotic narrative and is subverted in the literary texts discussed in the previous chapter. The narrator's understanding of history includes such previously silenced aspects of misrule of the early 1980s. The Willowvale scandal is a good example of squandering economic resources through corruption.[77] By means of the image of a sexually inviting whore, the narrator retells the sad story of interference by the international community, especially the World Bank, and its economic solution of ESAP[78], which remained illusory. The narrator tells the reader that Zimbabwe experienced problems because she had committed crimes against the 'world'. The voice of the world is not limited to global influence, but also refers to the power structures of neo-colonialism, with the West as the dominant power, even though Zimbabwe has gained political independence. The suggested problems cannot be separated from global influence or from the nation's perceived 'stubbornness'. The voice of the

---

[77]This was the 'first case of infamous corruption occurred when government ministers engaged themselves in the buying and reselling of the then-famous Toyota Cressida cars in what came to be known as the 'Willowvale Scandal' (Tofa, 2013: p. 80).

[78]Economic Structural Adjustment Programme.

world in the story chronicles Zimbabwe's misconduct: 'Stop giving ex-combatants grants […] controlling prices […] grabbing the farms […] tampering with the land […] ok (sic) reimburse the white farmers that you kicked out' (p. 150).

On the other hand, Zimbabwe insisted that she could not compensate white farmers because these 'were not *her* offspring' but 'grandchildren of colonialists' and 'went on flogging the colonial horse in the 20th century' (italics my own) (ibid.). Emphasized here is the political injustice of non-compensation of white farmers. The history of colonial land grabbing is re-lived in a way that justifies non-compensation of white farmers in the Third Chimurenga. The do's and don'ts articulated here are the Washington dictates that included 'abolish monopolistic price controls'. Under conditions of monopolistic supply, in 2000-2001 there were, during inordinate rises in prices of basic essentials (Bond and Mandinyanya, 2002). However, the condemned price controls between 1998 and 2001 were generally not well-received. The world's response to Zimbabwe's perceived stubbornness was a declaration to the effect that the country be 'punished, humiliated, isolated, starved and squeezed until it accepts defeat' (p. 151). Therefore, after the thorny land business, 'we lost our friends', resulting in 'dry banks […] and we queued for cash that was not there [...] We ran out of foreign currency … there was no electricity' (p. 154). The narrator suggests that, even if the land invasions were controversially 'pro-people', they were perceived by the West as 'anti-systemic and anti-status quo' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006: p. 3) and hence Zimbabwe was punished for that. The punishment took the form of economic sanctions by the West levelled at Zimbabwe. A drought compounded the problem, and eventually there was no 'food to eat [….] No safe water to drink […] we got sick […] no nurses [….] No fuel' (p. 155). In line with Bond and Mandinyanya's position, Chinodya has also highlighted that the compensation of the ex-combatants in 1997 had a bearing on the subsequent fall into crisis (2002). It is understood that the plunge began in 1997, when Robert Mugabe and his ruling party decided to give each of the registered combatants a pension pay-out, mainly to silence the veterans' protest over the 'regime's failure to meet even their basic employment and survival needs' (Bond and Mandinyanya, 2002: p. xi). So, according to economists, the problems that Zimbabwe faced had its origins in the financial meltdown of 14 November 1997.

The suggestion that there could be other reasons for the economic crisis that Zimbabwe faced, besides the sanctions imposed by the West, is quite

useful. It illustrates that it may be an exaggeration to blame the sanctions as the exclusive source of the country's troubles. As Magaisa argues, Zimbabwe's breakdown did not happen overnight because of the sanctions. However this is not meant to detract from the fact that sanctions did have a negative impact, especially on Zimbabwe's economy.[79] To Chinodya and maybe to most writers and critics alike, the land issue had a strong bearing on the emergency and perpetuation of the Zimbabwean crisis. Central in Chinodya's concept of Zimbabwean history is how events are entwined - with sequences and connections. The rural-urban connections are redefined. The takeover of mainly rural farmland results in a serious urban crisis. The story ends in the present, in a fuel queue. The queue trope is 'emblematic of the disruption to urban normality' where people queued 'for food, cash, fuel, drinking water, transport, passports, and even for things that weren't even there' (Hammar, McGregor and Landau, 2010: p. 269). The relationship between Rudo and the narrator is fictive but illuminates the realities of the historical narrative. There is however an 'ambivalence' that has been described by Primorac as 'unsettling', in the likening 'of Zimbabwe's relationship with the wider outer world to a frustrating affair with a woman' (2005: p. 464). The relationship between Rudo and the narrator disturbs the flow of the main narrative. In a state where freedom of expression is not a right, this could be Chinodya's attempt at subtlety. In this short story, he has demonstrated that the Zimbabwean crisis is complex and goes back to the early 1980s. What is observed in the late 1990s are just consequences. He also emphasizes that the crisis is a 'reflection of the risks involved in any African attempt to defy the "disciplining" forces of globalization and neo–liberalism' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2006: p. 3). At the same time, the state cannot be exonerated since it contributed to the nature of the crisis in various ways.

Of Extreme Wealth and Abject Poverty: 'A Land of Starving Millionaires'[80]

Chinyani's 'A Land of Starving Millionaires' describes the various social and economic crises attendant to the Third Chimurenga. The story can thus be read as a response to the government's denial of such impact on the citizens' material realities. The magnitude of the crisis recurs in post-2000 Zimbabwean writing and is an indication that the Third Chimurenga had a serious impact on the

---

[79] www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/magaisa6
[80] A short story in Staunton's *Laughing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2007).

majority of people's lives. Notable is the contrast between the scarcity of basic commodities for the majority of people and a life of abundance for the privileged class. The emphasis lies on the differences between the wealthy and the poor. The Zimbabwean world record inflation, running at 13.2 billion Zimbabwean dollars a month in late 2008, saw the cropping up of 'millionaires' and 'billionaires'. This economic crisis with ever-rising rates of inflation has its origins in what Bond and Mandinyanya (2002) view as 'the financial meltdown of 14 November 1997' when the Z$ fell from $10 to below Z$30 to the US$ over four hours of trading time' (p. xi).

It is against this background that the valueless Zimbabwe dollar is satirized in Chinyani's 'A Land of Starving Millionaires'. The story concerns Mr Usury, a millionaire who fails to provide basic life requirements for his very big family. He moves around with a bag of money, but he is disappointed when he realizes that his bag of money cannot even buy him a loaf of bread. He then resorts to collecting his debts but the debtors cannot afford to pay him back. The story ends when a red Mercedes Benz that belongs to a local Member of Parliament runs him down. Herein lies the paradox for Mr Usury, a millionaire yet starving, and eventually killed by 'the state'. The state is represented by the local Member of Parliament who runs him down. Mr Usury's millionaire status was a common status for many Zimbabweans who had valueless cash during the economic crisis. The 'big' sack carried by Mr Usury is full of 'Zimbabwe dollar' baggage. It is quite paradoxical that the millionaire 'staggered towards the long line of tuck shops, because he hadn't eaten anything but the national staple food […] air pie […] a euphemism for one long slice of nothing' (p. 38). Non-availability of basic food resulted in hunger. Such deprivation easily translates into a violation of basic human rights.

The 'millionaire' survives on usury activities. He is so desperate to collect his debts and to use that money to buy food for his large family that he 'shouts obscenities at the coffin' (ibid.) containing his debtor, showing his preparedness 'to kill a dead man for not paying' (ibid.). Mr Usury is affected by an economic crisis that is well beyond the debtor, who unfortunately is nothing but also a victim. In this world of poor and struggling millionaires, a well-fed local MP, who drives a 'blood red luxury Mercedes', eventually runs over the man, instantly killing him. Red and blood are traditionally associated with death and with fire brigades and ambulances. Here the red colour refers to the threats of disaster that befalls the underprivileged in times of a national crisis. The Member of Parliament's car 'turned the corner in the typical fashion of a well

fed politician with inexhaustible amounts of fuel to burn' (p. 42). The same class of people is evoked in many other short stories about the Zimbabwean crisis of the last decade. Here I refer to 'Minister without Portfolio', 'A Dirty Game' and 'In the Heart of the Golden Triangle'. In Chingono's 'Minister without Portfolio', the 'chef', who happens to be 'a minister without portfolio', is undoubtedly rich. Besides driving a red Mercedes Benz, he has money to look after his family and other 'small houses'.[81] The minister gives his girlfriends 'piles' of US dollars in a country where there is a serious shortage of foreign currency. In the same vein, the government official in Mandishona's 'A Dirty Game' (2007) is worried that his family cannot get visas to go to London to attend a daughter's wedding. In a country gripped by serious food shortages, those that belong to the privileged group can afford to go to London and attend weddings. While there is nothing in the shops, in Gappah's 'In the Heart of the Golden Triangle' (2009), the wives of cabinet ministers, including the first lady, do all their shopping in Johannesburg while 'their husbands promise to end food shortages' (2009: p. 17). The writers deal with 'profligacy during times of scarcity' by the government officials who, on the pretext of working for the people, are busy enriching themselves. What is exposed and attacked in these stories is the political leaders' hypocrisy - what Achebe termed 'the tendency of the leaders to materialistic wooliness and self centred pedestrianism', which translates to a practice and display of affluence (1983: p. 11). The satirized government officials in the above short stories also fit quite well in Turok's (1987) imaging of the post-independence African ruling class. This class shows alarming tendencies in manipulating state power for its own interests, using political opportunities to enrich themselves at the expense of the majority of poor citizens. This has also been described by Mbembe as one of the ways of 'appropriation of public resources and privatization of the state' where those in positions of authority grant themselves advantages and privileges (2001: p. 46).

Rethinking the Land Issue: 'Minister without Portfolio' and 'Specialization'

Chinyani's story discussed in the above subsection and the two short stories discussed here are part of short story anthology *Laughing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe*. The stories that make up the anthology are humorous, hence

---

[81] 'Small house' is a phrase used in the Zimbabwean public sphere to refer to what Christiansen-Bull has termed 'un-respectable, non-married women […] compared to the main house of the married woman' (2013: p. 511).

the reference to 'laughing' in the title. In theorising laughter, O'Neill describes it as a 'product of derision and self-satisfied mockery' (1980, as cited in Colletta, 2003: p. 18). In both 'Minister without Portfolio' and 'Specialization', the reader laughs at the main characters' foolishness. Through laughter both Hoba and Chingono deride the 2000 'land invasions'. It is important to note that the land question is a key aspect of the Third Chimurenga. Central to the official aims of the Third Chimurenga is 'reclaiming land from the white commercial farmers giving it back to black Zimbabweans' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: p. 62). During the 2002 presidential elections, ZANU PF's campaign slogan was 'The land is the economy and the economy is the land'. Most importantly, however, the 2000 land invasions became an important literary theme. In line with the revisionary history of the 2000 land reform programme, creative writers show how the 'invasions' were anarchic. For instance, Hove bluntly refers to the land fast-track programme as a 'chaotic resettlement program' (p. 6). In Chinodya's 'Queues', 'grabbing of the farms' is one of the factors that initiated problems for Zimbabweans in the twenty-first century. In both stories, the 2000 land invasions are subjected to comedy.

Since satire 'tends to be concerned with public issues and with public examples of those issues', Chingono in 'Minister without Portfolio' attacks a government minister's foolishness. The minister has a girlfriend and together they are chauffer-driven to Beitbridge through a potholed road. He vows that he will make sure 'the road is resurfaced without delay' (p. 7). This promise is meant to impress the girlfriend, not in the national interest. The minister engages in what Mbembe has termed 'baroque practices' in which the 'economy of pleasure has become inseparable from vice' (2001: p. 128).

The minister also declares that he loves his girlfriend the same way he loves the country that he 'fought for, *and* died for' (italics my own) (p. 8). This trope of 'dying fighting for liberation' is closely associated with heroism in Zimbabwean politics. However, the minister, in ignorance, evokes the 'dying for the nation' concept. His declaration is a mockery of the heroism of the liberation war and a grotesque exaggeration of 'the ideology of sacrifice' (Raftopoulous, 1994, as cited in Kriger, 2006: p. 1165). The 'we fought for and died for the nation' discourse is part of the humorous incongruities and absurdities in the discourse of the war. If he had died for real, he would not be talking about his own death. What is combined in the image of the minister is what Mbembe in another context termed 'farce cohabit*ing* with buffoonery' (italics my own) (2001: p. 238).

On their way to Beitbridge, the minister and his girlfriend pass through a number of newly acquired farms along the road. The minister notices that most of the dwellers of these farms have done one of the following things: they have built matchbox-size houses and they are busy dancing and drinking beer while the land lays fallow. In some cases, the farms are deserted. The minister then concludes that these invaders are 'sabotaging the revolution' by derailing the land reform programme. He becomes a laughing stock at the end of the story when it is confirmed that these farms are all his. This is some kind of democratic act where hypocrisy is unmasked and 'the high-and-mighty are lampooned and spoofed' (Treiger, 1989: p. 1215). The author here creates an anti-hero and thus succeeds in subverting the 'Zimbabwean state fiction […] which is precisely the kind of hero centred narrative' (Bakhtin, 1986, as cited in Primorac, 2007: p. 437). Chingono also manages to undermine the government's claim that the opposition MDC party and its allies were derailing the land reform programme. Government officials filled their own pockets and served their own interests at the expense of the majority of the population. These are some of the 'advantages and privileges that holders of positions of authority grant themselves'. Mbembe describes such grants as one of the ways of 'appropriation of public resources and privatization of the state' in the postcolony (2001: p. 46). The irony is that the 2000 land redistribution process is articulated in state discourse as people-driven and for the people.

The land reallocation process was marred by corruption and greed. Some influential people took advantage of their position to acquire as many farms as they could, yet ironically the land invasions were meant to address multiple farm ownership among other irregularities in Zimbabwean farm ownership. As Kanengoni argues: 'Though the intentions of the monumental land allocation were noble the implementation was fraught with corruption and rampant abuse' (2003: p. 50). So, inasmuch as 'the fast track land reform was officially represented as a pinnacle of national history: the long overdue reclaiming of a key national and spiritual resource, and thus a glorious act of final decolonization' (Primorac, 2006: p. 2) was largely chaotic. The minister in Chingono's story is a prominent political figure who lives a luxurious life. Even in times of crisis, he can afford to import expensive whisky from Europe and gets many farms that remain unproductive, yet landless poor people do not get such opportunities. Hence, the Third Chimurenga cannot be the final phase of the struggle for land reclamation. There is a possibility of a Fourth Chimurenga that should be directed at correcting 'the overcorrected imbalances of land

redistribution […] where the opposition parties will have to try to reclaim land mainly settled by Zanu PF card holders […] in order to redistribute land with a sense of justice and fairness' (Primorac, 2006: p. 87). As the story about the minister without portfolio illustrates, the Third Chimurenga has created a newer version of multiple farm ownership.

Hoba's story 'Specialization' is about three newly resettled farmers, Chimoto, Baba Nina and the narrator. They violently take over Baas Kisi's farm but fail to make it productive because they lack the necessary expertise. The violence implied in the Shona name Chimoto reflects on the violent nature of the 2000 land invasions.[82] The land invasions have also been named Jambanja. Jambanja is Shona slang 'for violence or chaos used to describe the violent and chaotic farm occupations' (Muzondidya, 2007: p. 325). Underscored here is also how violence is always connected with Zimbabwean political processes.

Chimoto and other war veterans play a crucial role in invading and occupying white-owned land. According to Kriger, war veterans had a symbolic value for the ZANU PF government, through their links to the liberation war. As such, they were found useful in the Third Chimurenga. Chimoto instructs the narrator to call and inform the farm owner not to return to his farm:

> You white kaffir, don't bother showing your nigger farse here because we will do your ace meat meat with a sharp *panga.* The farm and everything on it is now ours. We, the soverin sons of the soil. (p. 71)

Chimoto's words capture the discourse of Zimbabwean nationalism. The violence of land invasions is evoked when Chimoto refers to the use of *panga* (knife) not only to inflict pain, but also to shed blood. Chimoto here uses the term 'panga' to refer to a knife, in a way that is directed at mocking him. He thinks that the English translation of the Shona word '*banga*' (knife) is '*panga*'. He thinks that translating from Shona to English is done by devoicing the initial sound of the word. Only children learning a language manipulate sounds in such a childish way. Implicit in the declaration that 'the farm and everything on it is ours' is a crystallization of the trajectories of indigenization sustained 'through an authoritarian manner that denied individuals any rights as citizens' (Mbembe,

---

[82] 'Chimoto' is a Shona word that means a serious conflict that borders on violent confrontation.

2001: p. 42). Through the very process of indigenization of the land, Baas Kisi loses his rights as a citizen.

Hoba's image of the war veteran is an interesting one. Chimoto, the war veteran, is illiterate, hence he confuses words. He uses 'farse' instead of 'face', and 'soverin' instead of 'sovereignty'. He does not know what these terms mean but simply borrows them from the rhetoric of politicians. In the Zimbabwean public sphere, and as confirmed in this story, lack of education and use of violence are some of the defining features of war veterans. Chimoto is a fake war veteran who 'carried a limp in the left leg where he said a bullet had entered but not come out. The limp only became visible to those who didn't know him, when he was angry, which was often, and when they were at a meeting for the war veterans' (p. 71). Chimoto uses the limp to masquerade as an ex-combatant. Here Hoba participates in the debate on the 'political constructions about Zimbabwe's war veterans that revolves around a discourse of "true" and "fake" veterans' (Kriger, 2003: p. 323).

Hoba re-imagines the fluid war-veteran identity. War veterans 'prided themselves as the country's liberators, though during the guerrilla war they'd been called terrorists by Ian Smith's government or *vanamukoma* by the fearful majority in the barren sandy reserves' (p. 71). Hoba also manages to delegitimize war veterans' claims to superiority. War veterans are associated with liberation in nationalist discourse, but from the point of view of the colonizer, they are associated with terrorism. During the liberation war, liberation fighters' operations might also have terrorized the masses. In Third Chimurenga discourse, war veterans are also associated with the violence of the land invasions. The importance of war veterans in the land invasions represents what Primorac has termed 'a sudden return into the past' (2007: p. 439). The use of 'kaffir' and 'nigger' to refer to whites highlights reverse racism and how the race 'thematic […] has undergone major shifts' in the African postcolony (Mbembe, 2002: p. 264). By means of an interesting discourse of freedom and sovereignty, Chimoto believes that in a 'free' sovereign country the owners of the land have rights to reverse the colonial process, in ways that do not respect the rights of everyone. 'Kaffir' is a racially offensive term used to refer to blacks in colonial Africa. 'Nigger' is derogatory and was used to refer to black Americans. 'Nigger' and 'kaffir' were used to undermine the humanity of the oppressed blacks in Africa and the African Diaspora and here the terms are reversed and applied to the white Zimbabwean minority. In an instance of replacing racism of the past and re-labelling, the white farmer is now a 'kaffir'

as well as a 'nigger'. 'The political repression of a single dominant and relatively homogenous ethnic group - native African - with preeminent rights over the country's land' is referred to in Chimoto's 'the soverin sons of the soil' discourse (Muzondidya, 2007: p. 325).

Unlike the productive specialization in the epigraph to the story, the threesome's specialization remains a mockery. Baba Nina is the driver of the only car they looted from the previous farm owner. Baba Nina focuses on trivial issues in real farming and spends most of the time cleaning the car and the tractors. The narrator specializes in growing maize, and has a secret that he will not divulge to his companions. He is a university graduate and, like all other university students at that time, supported the opposition political party. He conceals his past because, during the Third Chimurenga, political affiliation is a key trope. His support of the opposition entails that he is the 'enemy of the state' and, like all other enemies of the state, he should not benefit from the land reallocation process.

In their specialization model, the group ignored irrigation altogether although 'the dam was full and the irrigation equipment was lying idle' (p. 75). The new occupants lack the farming expertise needed to make full use of the previously productive farms. An interesting aspect of Hoba's short story is an emphasis on impostors. Chimoto, the nameless narrator, the traditional healer and his assistant are hypocrites. Chimoto is a fake war veteran. The narrator supported the opposition political party as a university student, yet hides his identity. The traditional healer's assistant is a former university student who cheats those that want help from the healer and we can discern complicity in the healer as well.

'Minister without Portfolio' and 'Specialization' can be read as challenges to the state's portrayal of 2000 land invasions. The use of comic satire by Chinyani and Hoba should be understood in the context of the repressive political environment where citizens have no freedom of speech. For any state, 'freedom of speech is a defining attribute' of democracy (Halliwell, 1991: p. 48). In using satire, the authors achieve two things: they offer entertainment but they are also rebellious and destabilize the confines of the undemocratic space. What they achieve confirms what Freud termed the potential of humour 'to be pleasurable as well as rebellious and aggressive' (1960, as cited in Colletta, 2003: p. 30). Unlike the 'state fiction', that is 'hero-centred narrative'[83] and whose 'protagonists are ZANU PF and Mugabe'

---

[83] Bakhtin, 1987, as cited in Primorac, 2007: p. 433.

(Primorac, 2007: p. 437), the above two stories focus on government officials and ZANU PF party cadres who are anti-heroes.

The Uncertainty of Hope: **Reflections on a State in a Crisis**

Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* is set in 2005 and most of the drama takes place in Mbare, one of the old high-density suburbs of Harare. The place and time of the events are significant to our reading of the text. The year 2005 is remembered for the government initiated Operation Clean Up, popularized as Operation Murambatsvina. The operation took place against the background of an economic crisis that had begun in the late 1990s. Setting her story in Mbare is also significant, for Mbare is popularly known for being mostly inhabited by black self-employed. Tagwira describes Mbare as the 'bedrock of the informal employment sector, the largest in the whole country' (p. 119) and as

> a high-density township that had absolutely no redeeming features to speak of. The degree of overcrowding was spectacular […] a multitude of tiny houses were stacked against one another making an intricate maze of carelessly planned streets. This housing itself was a colonial inheritance: then it had been considered suitable accommodation for blacks. (p. 52)

In Rhodesia, Mbare was a 'demarcated native suburb for blacks working in menial jobs […] and as an apartheid segregative mechanism to have blacks compartmentalized in survailable areas' (Nyambi, 2011: p. 6). By 2005, not much change was registered.

The heroine of the story, Onai, is one of the residents of Mbare who lives a difficult life against the background of Murambatsvina and the general national social and economic crises. As the reader goes through Onai's turbulent life story and that of the people around her, the various aspects of the referred crises are underscored. The story opens with Onai and her three children feeling very vulnerable and threatened as their Mbare home is invaded by thieves. The poverty of their existence is revealed early in the text as Tagwira describes their possessions. The most significant item they own is a black and white television. The husband's irresponsible behaviour is also described early in the text. It is three o'clock in the morning and Onai's husband is not yet home, making his family unnecessarily vulnerable to thieves. The domestic violence that Onai

endures throughout the text is foregrounded in the opening scene when, upon returning from his drinking spree, Gari beats her up, resulting in hospitalization.

Onai's frequent journeys to the hospital reflect on a number of aspects of the crisis in the background. During their first trip, John describes the journey as a 'misuse of hard earned petrol […] he had to wait for five days in a queue to get fifteen litres of petrol' (p. 13). This is a reference to the fuel shortages that hit the nation during the post-2000 period, which have been a literary subject for many writers but were never acknowledged in the official narrative of the period. The *Sunday Times* reported that

> Mugabe's government insists fuel supplies are adequate and claims the 'artificial shortages' are due to hoarding by traditional distributors. Deputy Energy Minister Reuben Marumahoko said the government was surprised by the shortages because 'enough fuel for daily consumption was being pumped out of Noczim's main depot in Harare'. 'There is no need to panic because the country has enough fuel.' Right now, we have called in all the distributors to find out where the fuel is going and we are still investigating,' Marumahoko told Parliament. He said the country's daily consumption of 1.9 million litres of diesel and 1.2 million litres of petrol was being released from the depot and there was no need to panic. (Sunday Times (South Africa), 6October 2002)

The position adopted by the then Deputy Energy Minister is not a personal position, but one that reflects the state's position. Robert Mugabe is on record saying that in Zimbabwe there were never fuel shortages. He invited those that believed there were fuel shortages to sleep on any Zimbabwean road and see if they were not going to be run down by moving cars. He was right because he belonged to the privileged social group that never experienced the shortages but, as a President, he was not telling the truth.

In Tagwira's text, Tom and Tapiwa belong to a privileged social (and possibly political) class and are never in short supply of anything. Their political and social identities are ambiguous. They have all the basics and can afford a number of luxuries and their businesses prosper during the crisis. Tapiwa Jongwe is a well-connected business man. His second name suggests a ZANU PF political identity. '*Jongwe*' is a Shona word for a cockerel and for a long time, a cock has been a ZANU PF party symbol. Tom is a new farmer

whose flower business always takes him to the UK. His acquisition of the new farm is shady, but the plot explains away any suspicion by showing that he used inherited money to buy the farm. Nothing stops Tom from going to Victoria Falls with his girlfriend, whilst the majority of characters in the text cannot afford such luxuries.

They hunger for all basics and queue for fuel (if ever they have the luxury of owning a car), otherwise 'most of Mbare dwellers resort to walking as a result of […] ever-increasing fares' (p. 17). Most of the infrastructure is dilapidated. Onai highlights how 'most of the tower lights were faulty' and the badly serviced road to the hospital has 'out-sized pot-holes' (p. 13). An ailing health system is represented in the story by the hospital where Onai was repeatedly admitted. The stories point towards a collapsed health system where patients are expected to wash old bandages that are subsequently recycled. 'Hospital meals are deficient and tasted as bland as they looked' (p. 35). Hospitals, like other places in the country, operate without water as a result of burst pipes. The irony is that hospitals 'detain patients until they pay the bills' (p. 50) that are far beyond what they can afford. The HIV-infected Sheila has to be on a long waiting list to get anti-retroviral drugs and dies whilst on the waiting list. A classic example of a health crisis can be found in the personal account by of one of the medical doctors:

> We had a power failure. The generator was on for about two minutes, then it crashed. […] I finished the C. section in candlelight. Nobody could find a torch. […] I missed an artery, I think and she almost bled to death, out in Recovery. Getting blood to transfuse her was another nightmare. […] we had to take her back to theatre. […] She had to have a hysterectomy. Now she has one child and no womb. (pp. 183-4)

This is an allegory of a failed state whose health structures are dysfunctional. The reliving of the crisis in the novel performs the political function to unsettle the government's grand narrative of the crisis 'by giving voice and bearing witness' (ibid.). The medical doctor in the text is fictional, but his experiences are a significant version of the failing health system during the crisis period.

Through Gari's experiences as a worker, we get a glimpse of the state of the Zimbabwean industry during the crisis period. The company he works for moves to South Africa 'because of persistent losses' (p. 35) and the workers are

not just retrenched but get unreasonable send-off packages. Gari interprets this as an insult and an 'outright threat to his manhood. For what would happen if he stopped earning a regular salary' (p. 37). There is no doubt that Onai and many others are millionaires, but just poor millionaires of twenty-first century Zimbabwe. The millions they have are a mockery of what it means to have so much money. Onai explains her condition: 'I never thought that in my lifetime I would be a millionaire. *Inini chaiye miriyoneya*! But look at me! […] I must be amongst the poorest millionaires in the world!' (pp. 55-6). The millions are not real money but bearer cheques 'introduced as a temporary measure to alleviate crippling cash shortages' (ibid.).

In post-2000 Zimbabwean fiction one finds a castigation of the official denial of the crisis. In most texts, there are references to the nature of 'news' in the state-controlled media. For Tagwira's characters, 'the official word represents just lies'. Reference is made to how official word 'has it that banks should give new farmers preferential access to foreign currency' but, as Tom alerts the reader, 'that's just something announced on the news - something that you will read in the papers. In reality, it just doesn't happen' (p. 21). News in the electronic media was meant to instil 'the master fiction *of the Third Chimurenga* into the consciousness of its people' (Primorac, 2007: p. 436) Onai does not like watching news because 'there was never anything on it that was faintly relevant to the realities of her life' (p. 54). Onai here has the capacity to show the lies in such a discourse. VaGudo particularly relates the irony in terms of price hikes - 'fuel when you get it costs up to one hundred and twenty thousand dollars per litre, though the official price is still only fifty thousand dollars' (p. 74). One of the public toilets at Mbare bus terminus was a 'small, filthy room, reeking of excrement' yet 'a discoloured notice declared that the toilets were cleaned regularly' (p. 287). Such a situational irony is reflective of the distortions prevalent in the state discourse. Distortions are characteristic of what Halbwachs termed reflections of *not just* the past *but of the present* (emphases added):

> When reflection begins to operate, when instead of letting the past recur, we reconstruct it through an effort of reasoning, what happens is that we distort the past. […] It is then reason or intelligence that chooses among the store of recollection, eliminates some of them and arranges the others according to an order

conforming with our ideas of the moment. From this come many alterations. (1950, as cited in Coser, 1992: p. 183)

As much as the government rearranges the present Third Chimurenga and alters some of its realities, the filthy toilet reeking of excrement becomes the telling evidence of rottenness. The toilet becomes what Mbembe has described elsewhere as a pictographic sign that

> does not belong solely in the field of seeing, it also falls in that of speaking. It is in itself a figure of speech and this speech expresses not only for itself or as a mode of describing narrating and representing reality but also as a particular strategy of persuasion. (2001: p. 142)

What people see in the state of the toilet, vis-à-vis the message of the notice, is telling about reality. The inscribed notice that the toilet is cleaned regularly remains a lie. Through such verbal/dramatic irony, the author highlights the dishonesty in state discourse on the crisis of the Third Chimurenga. Thus, patriotic history represents 'obvious official lies' (Mbembe, 2001: p. 129) and is 'demonstrably untrue' (Primorac, 2007: p. 436).

The characters in Tagwira's novel exhibit certain behavioural tendencies that are a testimony of living a crisis and of efforts to survive. Particularly visible are lawlessness and corruption as survival strategies. John smuggles some groceries from South Africa and now believes that there is a thin line between 'what's legal and what is not' (p. 27). Later on, he initiates a business in smuggling illegal immigrant girls and women into South Africa. John's smuggling business is a window through which we get to see the challenges faced by many economic fugitives escaping from poverty-ridden Zimbabwe into South Africa. John and his wife are illegal moneychangers. Their business flourishes because they are connected to the Assistant Commissioner of police Mr Nzou. For Nzou, pulling deals was always a way of securing a future for his children because 'salaries were pathetic and the cost of living too high' (p. 66). Onai comments: 'we are slowly turning into a nation of thieves' (p. 51). Tapiwa buys fuel from transport operators and acknowledges that the majority now 'exist as semi-criminals […] in the sense that […] there is so much fraudulence' (p. 350). Prostitution as a survival tool is very rampant in the text. Sheila and Melody are prostitutes. For Sheila, 'as a prostitute […] she could at least die with a full

stomach' (p. 62). Melody is a university student in a relationship with a married man for financial security/gain. She believes the 'economy' forced her into 'a corner' (p. 81) and she has to trade 'her innocence for university fees and groceries' (p. 82). For some people begging is a condition of existence and remains a survival strategy, yet for others it is a personal choice. Tapiwa makes a personal choice to suffer, and the only suffering that he knows is self-inflicted. He decides to 'beg and accept public humiliation as an act of contrition', but otherwise he has everything he needs to live a comfortable life. There are real beggars but Mawaya, whose begging sprees were futile because 'nobody could afford to throw away anything that was remotely edible' (p. 57), is not one of them. Focusing on an unreal beggar remains Tagwira's way of trivializing the destitute in the urban city.

The Victim Trope in *The Uncertainty of Hope*

My analysis of *The Uncertainty of Hope* also highlights the conscious effort by Tagwira to refute the state position that the Third Chimurenga is against the neo-colonial enemy. I will demonstrate this point by discussing Onai's victim status. Onai tells us that her life has 'always been a struggle, but no single year had been as hard as 2005' (p. 85). For Tagwira, the challenges faced by Onai and those around her do not have links to their racial identities. Thus, Tagwira redefines the enemy-victim trope of the Third Chimurenga by subverting the state's interpretation of the struggle discourse of the Third Chimurenga. Identities of both the victim and the victimizer are clear in postcolonial Zimbabwe. In state discourse, the victim trope is racial, the state enemy is the former colonial master (in support of the opposition political party MDC) and the victim is the previously colonized black. As a state apologist, Gomo shows in *A Fine Madness* racial relations in the African postcolonial situation, as Ngugi avers, 'in terms of a monolithic whiteness against an equally monolithic blackness' (in an introduction to *A Fine Madness*, 2010: p. 2). Yet, in Tagwira's narrative, the enemy for ordinary Zimbabweans cannot be understood in physiological properties of race. For Onai, the enemy has two faces; she and others are victims in the political instabilities of the postcolony and her marriage is a constant source of stress. Against the backdrop of a national political and economic crisis, Onai is married to a violent, irresponsible and 'philandering husband' (p. 69). In her narration of victimhood in the context of the Third Chimurenga, Tagwira is clear that 'physical differences play a less crucial role […] it is more important to know who are the masters and who are the slaves

than whose skin is light and whose is dark' (Todorov, 1986: p. 172). Race relations are re-defined in post independence Zimbabwe. Skin colour differences are a crucial part in the black-white relations and the re-imagination of citizenship and especially land ownership. However, this is not Tagwira's focus in *The Uncertainty of Hope*. She demonstrates that gender and class, and not racial relations, are crucial in the victim trope of the Third Chimurenga. In foregrounding Onai's personal struggle, Tagwira subverts the understanding of victimhood in the power structures of the Third Chimurenga.

In theorizing victimhood, Wendell suggests that clinging to the victim status allows claims to 'innocence and moral superiority in the face of hostile forces' (1990: p. 2). Onai is a victim of institutionalized state oppression of Murambatsvina, like all other affected characters, and of Gari's hostility. She suffers doubly as a citizen of a failing state and as a woman, and in both cases she is innocent. Such representation serves to demonstrate that the oppressed citizens of the postcolonial situation and 'women's suffering […] are not within their control and […] no one could reasonably expect them to have avoided' that (Wendell, 1990: p. 15). Reading victimhood in Onai's life is a way of acknowledging her oppressed status and injustice. However, perceiving Onai just as a victim is rather problematic. It is one of the ways of consolidating her 'powerlessness and frustrating her recovery' (ibid.). A closer look at Onai's life reveals that victimhood is not a fixed identity for her. She is also a survivor. The 'survivor' interpretation 'bespeaks an orientation towards active resistance' (Wendell, 1990: p. 9). Onai lives with an abusive husband and the usual trips to hospital after every beating are symptomatic of that abuse. She finds it difficult to sleep, and subsequently develops severe a headache -'a headache was stealthily advancing behind her eyes. She saw stars and dark spots. Nausea held her on the brink of vomiting' (p. 121). The effect of violence on Onai's body has two significant dimensions - she takes in the pain that is inflicted on her body through beating, and her body gives in to emotional stress, resulting in headaches. Tagwira wants us to understand that Onai is not just a punch back. She may seem incapable of vocal resistance, but she has an amazing capacity to take in pain. Such a capacity then forces us to raise issues of responsibility and choice. She has an opportunity to report Gari to the police in order to obtain justice through the law. The doctor who always attends to her during hospitalization offers her the opportunity to do so. Yet taking a legal route is difficult for her. A passage from Frye helps us in analysing Onai's difficult situation. Frye says:

Oppression of women is something that women do not choose […] a woman may continue to live with the man who batters her but the choice to remain is not a free one. It is a choice among evils in a severely constrained situation, and she has not chosen that situation. The oppression is something consisting of and accomplished by a network of institution and material and ideological forces […] women are not simply free to walk away from servitude at will. (1985, as cited in Wendell, 1990: p. 16)

Onai did not choose to experience violence in her marriage and yet she cannot simply walk out of the abusive relationship for two reasons. She has been conditioned to believe that she can make her marriage work and she and her children look up to Gari for economic support. She testifies that, 'Gari was not an easy man to live with. Over the years, she had worn herself out just trying to conceal proof of his violence. As a model of perseverance, nobody could have done better than she had' (p. 5). She has learnt a lesson on perseverance from her mother's marriage. The marriage was imperfect but the mother 'stayed for the sake of her children and because marriage was not something that one could just walk away from. Once you get in you stay […] no matter how hard it gets' (p. 7). Onai's resolution to stay in an abusive marriage is encouraged by Steve Makoni's song *Handiende* (I will not leave) in which 'an abused woman *vows* that she would not leave her marriage' (p. 97). Onai believes that this song relates to a common woman's position. Such a sense of community gives her the courage to hold on to her resolution to stay with Gari in spite of the abuse.

Gari is a 'philandering husband' and Onai lives in constant fear of contracting the HIV virus. She gets disturbed when she gets to know that Gari is in a relationship with Gloria:

Any other woman but Gloria, please! By Jo'burg Lines standards, Gloria was the most infamous of prostitutes [….]. Recently one of her boyfriends had died of AIDS. The story doing rounds was that Gloria was HIV positive. [...] the threat of HIV hung over her like a hangman's noose. There was no guarantee that Gari would not force himself upon her without a condom one of these days. […] The risk of infection was now very immediate and the thought of it terrified her. (pp. 125-6)

HIV and AIDS are associated with imminent death. For Onai getting the virus means that she would leave her children without a mother. Such a threat pushes Onai into thinking about protection. She then insists on the use of condoms and especially relies on the female condom, which allows her to be in control of her sexuality and her body.

Gari as head of family is expected to fulfil his duty of taking care of the family. When he fails, Onai relies on her vending job to support the family. Ironically, she does not realize that she has some kind of economic independence in vending, even if it may seem insufficient. Katy and John blame Onai for staying in an unfulfilling relationship and they demand acts of resistance. They do so by stressing the importance of the choice of leaving Gari and walking out of the relationship. Katy and John fall into the danger of 'infantilizing' Onai, thinking of her as 'a helpless victim' of Gari's oppressive treatment. They do not seem to understand that Onai's suffering should be read in the context of the power of patriarchy. Onai does not give in to their pressure, rather she tells herself that Katy came from a different social background and class, and hence she cannot understand her situation. Onai understands that her marriage is not the best but she reads into her identity nothing but passivity. Hence, she holds on to a belief that, 'there was nothing else she […] could do. She was after all only a woman' (p. 5). There are instances when Onai believes that widowhood would give her liberation. When Gari did not come home for the second time, she

> wondered if she should check the hospitals and mortuaries. He might have come to a violent, inebriated end. For a moment, she felt horrified, covertly ashamed by the readiness with which she embraced the possibility of widowhood. In the transient moment, the darker side of her nature felt a glow of liberation. His death could not harm them. (pp. 121-2)

Gari's death would be a welcome development for Onai and her children.[84] Onai believes that his death would give them the much needed freedom and space. Yet when Gari actually dies, Onai's struggle is re-defined. The Shona domestic

---

[84] In the same way, though in a different context, the boy-child Nhamo's death is a welcome development that gives the girl-child Tambu an opportunity to get educated in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*.

structure dictates that Onai should be inherited. Upon Gari's death, Toro (the younger brother) is appointed her guardian. When Onai defies the inheritor's orders to take his family into the family house, her struggle takes a new twist: she loses the family home to Toro, Gari's brother mandated to 'take care of the family'. In patriarchy women's oppression and choice are 'circumscribed' and to deny that 'they are harmed and weakened by social condition is to deny that they are oppressed' (Wendell, 1990: p. 17).

In spite of the fact that Tagwira wants us to appreciate the support that Onai gets from Katy in the form of genuine sisterhood, Katy remains a constant source of stress for Onai. For the most part, Katy enjoys her marriage and this always reminds Onai of what she lacks in her own marriage. In her initial response, Onai takes Gari's perspective and protects him from blame and responsibility. At this stage, she protects her husband from scornful neighbours and friends. Onai tells Katy that Gari is not to blame. She impresses upon Katy that Gari behaves the way he does because he is 'going through a difficult time at work' (p. 6). In a protective manner, she wants Katy to believe that Gari cannot be held responsible for his actions. Onai also knows that:

> Her episodic facial bruising and blackened eyes had ceased to be material for speculation because they all knew precisely what was happening. However, the cocoon of pretence that she had worn around herself had become her armour. It was one thing, which held the frail vestiges of her dignity securely in place. (p. 5)

Onai treats her abuses as a secret that needs safeguarding. Divulging her experiences would mean losing her dignity. This enforced silence relates to the general view that 'oppression reaches into women's psyches and undermines their ability and very desire to oppose it' (Wendell, 1990: p. 24). Faced by an inquisitive doctor, Onai refuses to divulge the secret of an abusive husband and lies that 'she had walked into a door while fumbling in the dark during a power cut' (p. 45) - thus being protective of her victimiser. Echoing the traditional understanding of 'the respectability of marriage versus the shame of divorce' (Christiansen-Bull, 2013: p. 518), Onai believes that:

> She did not want to be coerced into revealing things, which had the potential to destroy her marriage. She would not be able to bear the shame of being a divorced woman. How could she possibly face a

world that despised divorcees; looked down on single mothers? Marital status was everything. […] In her whole extended family nobody had ever had a divorce. She would not let herself be the first. (p. 46)

However, later on, she gives up the perspective of the victim and becomes 'a responsible actor', and re-possesses the power to redirect her life (Wendell, 1990: p. 20). She does this with the help of other women around her. A spirit of resistance is registered in her response to attempted rape. Using her knowledge of self-defence that she learnt from a television programme, Onai protects herself from attempted rape. When she gets help from the Kushinga Women's project, her application for a house in the government Hlalani Kuhle programme is approved. Her agency is however questionable when it comes to her status at the end of the text. Even if she vows that she is 'through with men' (p. 341), the author wants us to believe in the possibility of a future relationship between Onai and Tapiwa. At the end of the text, Onai is a completely changed person: 'her afro hair had been straightened and styled to accentuate her features, making her look years younger' (p. 352). Such body semiotics signify a meaningful transformation. Tapiwa plays 'a significant role in ameliorating Onai's misery' (Muchemwa, 2010: p. 137). He offers her a job, with an attractive package. This is one of the aspects in the plot that prompted Muchemwa's reading of the text of what he termed 'the *deus ex machina* to rescue (*Onai*) from her plight since she lacks the psychological, intellectual and material wherewithal to escape from the cycle of abuse' (2010: p. 137).

Rewriting Murambatsvina
There are polarized dimensions of Murambatsvina in the Zimbabwean public sphere. The Government sanitized Murambatsvina to mean 'clean up' and 'to restore order' (Mhiripiri, 2008: p. 156). However, the UN report on the operation condemns it as a violation of basic human rights.[85] The two potentially contradictory narrations of the operation are also visible in Zimbabwe's media coverage. In *Hidden Dimensions*, Chari highlights how the 'pro-government *Sunday Mail* promoted it as a blessing in disguise or as having paid dividends by removing all illegal activities' (2008: p. 109). Yet, on the

---

[85] Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka (2005).

other hand, the privately owned *The Standard* largely represented it 'as a bankruptcy on the part of the government […] *and* unreservedly undermined the clean up' (italics my own) (ibid.). One finds that the state used controlled media to articulate its 'literal, interpretive and implicatory denial' of the negative impact of the operation on the affected citizens (Mhiripiri, 2008: p. 152). By creating a story against the background of Operation Murambatsvina, Tagwira makes her contribution to the many interpretations of the operation. Her narrative demonstrates that the operation was a human catastrophe that left many urban dwellers, especially in Mbare, displaced, without homes or sources of income.

In *The Uncertainty of Hope*, Katy cautions Faith against being outspoken about Murambatsvina. She says '*mwanangu*, mind how you speak and take care who you utter such things to. It's not your place to be so forthcoming with open criticism' (p. 146). The mother educates the daughter on what should and should not be said in public in a repressive environment. In the Zimbabwean postcolony, subjects are forbidden from criticizing state policies, and the danger of doing so lies in the 'threats of physical pain' (Primorac, 2007: p. 436). The irony is that Tagwira's text speaks against the brutalities of Murambatsvina, even though it is not safe in the political environment to do so. The fear of victimization can be located when,on arriving in Harare for the launch party, Tagwira was concerned for her safety and proclaimed that, 'I don't get the feeling that we [Zimbabweans] are free to write anything. Writers in Zimbabwe […] have avoided depicting the current climate'.[86]In an interview, Tagwira describes her interest in writing not just fictional novels but also those that 'also deal with the truth in a manner that allows for its complexity and its multifaceted nature'.[87] In *The Uncertainty of Hope* Tagwira deals with the truth of the Zimbabwean crisis, and in this section I intend to discuss how she rewrites the story of Murambatsvina. Using contrasts, she re-imagines the two significant dimensions of Murambatsvina - the official discourse of Murambatsvina as a beneficial operation aimed at ending illegal economic activities and destroying illegal structures in all cities, and the critical reaction that condemned it. Faith and Tom (and Nzou) are juxtaposed and have antithetic views on Murambatsvina that correspond to the aforementioned dimensions.

---

[86] http://valerietagwira.wordpress.com/2007/09/09/bbc-africa-beyond/accessed 23/09/2013

[87] http://valerietagwira.wordpress.com/2007/09/09/the-standard/accessed 23/09/2013

Faith represents the voice of conscience and has several questions on Murambatsvina with special reference to how this affect the inhabitants of Mbare - Mbare is the only home that she knows and she is very much aware of the deprivation that characterizes life in this part of Harare. She understands that 'half of Mbare's population lives in shacks. Where would they all go? And if the markets are closed all these people would starve' (p. 22) for most Mbare inhabitants survive on vending. John and Nzou do not just have crucial information on Murambatsvina well before its implementation but they also defend it as noble. Nzou believes that 'demolitions clean up the towns and drive out criminals' (p. 72). He argues: 'The country had to be rid of the crawling mass of maggots, bent on destroying the economy. At the end of this exercise, the former 'sunshine city' status of Harare would surely be restored' (p. 135). In state discourse urbanites had becomes 'dirty', referred to as 'a mass of maggots'. Ironically, Nzou is one of the foreign currency dealers and identification of criminals in a state thriving on lawlessness then becomes problematic. However, even if the bad and the good of Murambatsvina are shown through character foils, delineations of the two-dimensional coding of Murambatsvina foreclose several interpretations.

Even if Nzou and Tom sanitize Murambatsvina in the same style that the government did in their response to the Tibaijuka UN report, the overall picture of Murambatsvina we get from the novel is bad. To discredit Murambatsvina, Tagwira highlights the irony and brutality of its implementation. Tom, Nzou and others that belong to their class have prior knowledge of the planned 'state demolitions' well before implementation but those who are eventually directly affected are the last to know. The means of informing them are ineffective and very brutal. The message is delivered by cars in motion and only a few get the full details. In some kind of ambush, the riot police then confiscate people's business goods and bulldozers destroy their 'shacks'. Tagwira describes the night of the day that the operation was launched as follows:

> That night, the Mbare population was more restless than ever. Twilight quickly turned to night, and darkness fell like a thick blanket. It brought with it a tangible sense of apprehension, an uncertainty that was as dark as oppressive as the night itself. (p. 119)

The overwhelming presence of a sense of death associated with the night of the launch alludes to the negative effects of the operation on the people's lives. The operation is violent and militarized. The tear gas canisters, the thick baton sticks, the handcuffs and the heavy presence of riot police in semi-military attire underscore the violent nature of the operation. By focusing on the victims' experiences, Tagwira highlights the negative impact of the operation and succeeds in subverting the official representation of Murambatsvina, which 'avoided focusing on its victims' (Chari, 2008: p. 111). I refer to Hondo and Onai's conditions as victims of Murambatsvina. Hondo is a war veteran and the name is a Shona name meaning war. He cannot believe that the police want to destroy his extra two rooms and lectures to them on how he fought the war. The immediate war evoked by his name is not the past Second Chimurenga, in which he participated, but the present 'war' between state agents and Mbare inhabitants. He dismisses the police as 'British puppets, and sell outs' (p. 150). In the Third Chimurenga discourse, the opposition party MDC members are British puppets who have sold out the nation to the West. Here Hondo adopts the nativism of the Third Chimurenga narrative that 'links sell outs to western identities' (Primorac, 2007: p. 442). Conversely, the state police are re-imagined as sell-outs. The state police, named British puppets, have no links with the British because they are state agents carrying out national duties. In this context, however, they have sold out in the sense that they have become enemies to not just the property owners but to everyone else whose life is negatively impacted upon by the violence of Murambatsvina. Later on, Hondo commits suicide and throws himself in front of a moving train. On the other hand, Onai is ordered to destroy her shack and the way she does it is not just representative of obedience but translates into some kind of subtle resistance. Onai's destruction of the shack becomes an act of defiance and an opportunity to deal with all her sources of stress.

> She struck with a forceful blow against all the Garis of the world and against everything that threatened her existence. She groaned and swung the axe into a higher, wide arc. […] she pressed on with the sole mission of destruction. She cried about her miserable life with Gari. She cried about the food shortages. She cried about the market that had been closed, leaving her without a livelihood. Out of the corner of an eye, she glimpsed Sheila's forlorn, hunched figure and wept for all the people who had suddenly become

homeless. She cried about the poverty that had left her crushed and hopeless about everything that rendered her powerlessness, everything that held her in chains […]. (p. 143)

Onai is aware that her sources of stress have nothing to do with race. thus her anger is directed at Gari (patriarchy), and at the state (for failing its citizens on social responsibility). The state discourse on Murambatsvina masked such 'trauma, anxiety and resistance' that characterized Operation Murambatsvina. In highlighting Hondo, Onai and other victims' experiences of the violence, Tagwira unmasks the true effects of the operation on the affected people. Threatened by the police orders to vacate their market stalls, Mbare Musika vendors resisted eviction. 'Rocks, fruits, vegetables and other objects flew in the air as angry people hit back at the police who were assaulting them' (133). Implicit here is that the victims of the operation made efforts at resisting eviction. Maya encourages others to display solidarity in dissent. At the end of the day, 'the market place resembled a battleground as the traders were caught up in a spate of violent protests and looting' (134).

Displaced inhabitants of Mbare relocate to Tsiga grounds (a literary version of the historical Caledonia Farm), where there is no clean water, no sanitation facilities and no schools. The argument that Murambatsvina was intended for restoration of order remains a farce, for people's living conditions turned from bad to worse. Tsiga is worse than the destroyed shacks they lived in. Faith invokes such degeneration and argues; 'the shacks might not have been fit for habitation but are the holding camps and streets where they live now any better?' (160). In the novel, Murambatsvina is re-imagined as a fake kind of cleaning that leaves 'rubble and dirty […] broken furniture, and bricks and motor remained a constant symbol of the destruction of people's homes' (282).

The 'hidden dimension' of Operation Murambatsvina has been defined as the state's attempts at punishing the urbanites for voting for the opposition party in the 2002 presidential elections. In Tagwira's text, Nzou's statement that the displaced people can 'go wherever they came from […]' is in line with the hidden state aim to disperse the urban electorate. Nzou's statement above was an instruction by the police during the real Murambatsvina to those who could have indicated that they had no rural homes to go back to their countries of origin (Muzondidya, 2007: p. 335). The urbanites are identified as state enemies and hence 'retributive suffering' is inflicted on them (Primorac, 2007: p. 434). The use of the enemy-patriot dichotomy emphasizes links between sell-outs and

cities, and authentic patriots and rural areas. Sell-outs are 'associated with cities […] and are excluded from the organic unity of the authentic national space' (Primorac, 2007: p. 443). Dispersing the urbanites through Operation Murambatsvina becomes some kind of political control aimed at disturbing predictable political opposition party votes. Such a hidden agenda is captured in the literal of sense of the word Murambatsvina - rejection of filth (Muchemwa, 2010: p. 137).

To show that the government had acted with impunity and that the Murambatsvina policy was based on anger, Operation Hlalani Kuhle/ Garikai as a sequel to it then becomes an image manager and a signifier of the government's sensitivity to criticism.[88] According to Mhiripiri, focusing on Hlalani Kuhle was a government 'diversionary tactic' to 'something favourable' directed to 'offer hundreds of families new homes and to offer proper business and vending facilities' (2008: p. 156). In *The Uncertainty of Hope*, the provision of houses under the Hlalani Kuhle program is bastardized. Onai's experiences as a prospective beneficiary are quite telling. First, she has difficulties having her name entered on the waiting list, and later on she is informed that she should pay a deposit. She does not get the house at the end and the promise of redemption remains elusive.

The Uncertainty of Hope seeks to include everything read and heard about Murambatsvina's project of displacement and the attendant crises, what Muchemwa has referred to as the author's 'anxiety narrative' that extends to hover-like; the process of picking up every indicator of the post-2000 crisis. Yet from the point of view of discourse analysis, the hovering central in the making of the text is a strong point for the text because 'one characteristic of great literature is that it typically communicates a wide range of ideas simultaneously' (Gibbs, 2001: p. 77).

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be reached from this analysis. The Zimbabwean crisis of the last decade left a mark on national literature. Both the old and new writers discussed here engage with issues of the Third Chimurenga. They do so in ways that challenge the official position on the Third Chimurenga as a liberation project. 'Patriotic history' sanitizes the Third Chimurenga and associates it with triumphalism. The texts discussed here are consistent in their view of the failed nature of the state during the Third Chimurenga, and hence subvert the state

---

[88] This is a Shona word meaning good life.

narrative. Such subversion has two dimensions: a focus on the rural farm invasions and its connections to urban crisis. The social and political realities recreated in the discussed stories can be verified in revisionist historical narratives. In other words, the kind of history that we read from these narratives is one shaped by reality. From various angles, creative writers challenge the accuracy of the representation of the social political realities in the grand narratives. The memory articulated in the studied works invokes the Third Chimurenga reality as a crisis. Writers re-imagine the Third Chimurenga as some kind of war, not against attempts at re-colonisation by the West through the opposition party (as stated in state discourse), but as a site of struggle for basic life requirements. The enemy of the people is clearly the state, which is failing in its social mandate. With state lies in circulation, artists offer an interesting dimension and their narratives contribute to an understanding of what could have happened to Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans in the last decade.

Conclusion

'Writing back', 'counter-discourse', 'oppositional literature', 'con-texts': these are some of the terms that have been used to identify a body of postcolonial works that take a classic English text as a departure point, [...] such texts are not 'simply 'writing back' to an English canonical text, but to the whole of the discursive field within which such a text operated and continues to operate in post-colonial worlds. (Thieme, 2001: p.1)

My intention in this study was to highlight the nature of Zimbabwean counter-discursive narratives specifically focusing on selected texts written in English. What I have demonstrated is that in Zimbabwean literature counter-discourse is not limited to subversion of 'the authority of the canon of English literature' but goes beyond to include engagement with local dominant discourses. Writing-back is expanded to include writers who, as suggested by Mwangi, depart from writing-back to the colonial centre and focus on 'local forms of oppression that are seen parallel to classical colonialism' (2009: p. 1). Initially I showed the various acts of writing-back which include cultural nationalism, feminist discourses and self-writings. Then I went on to narrow my focus to feminist rewriting of nationalist narratives, texts rewriting both Gukurahundi and the Third Chimurenga. Counter-discursive texts discussed in this study offer 'new' dimensions to specific narratives of the nation, and in the process create versions of those specific narratives.

As Adichie argues, for every story told, there are different versions and 'insisting on one version of the story' is to ignore the diverse versions of the story (2009). The various personal stories that Adichie tells demonstrate 'the danger of a single story', as she argued in a speech with that same title (2009). Adichie's conclusion is that 'single stories create stereotypes, and stereotypes are bad; not because they are not true, but because they are incomplete, they make one story the only story' (ibid.). In my study, I looked at various stories and how writers challenge the single-story versions by offering counter-discourses. Counter-discourse challenges exclusion and the one-dimensional nature of dominant cultural productions. Ranger traces the single-story theme in Zimbabwean context with specific reference to

Rhodesia in the 1950s and 60s and in Matabeleland in the 1980s and 90s [...] when people had been denied a history. [...] too much

143

history as well as too little [...] too much history if a single, narrow historical narrative gained a monopoly and was endlessly repeated. In Rhodesia in the 1950s and in Matabeleland in the 1990s, it had been necessary to remedy a deficiency. Now it had become necessary to complicate over-simplifications; to offer a plural history. (2005: 219)

Ranger's understanding of Zimbabwean history is crucial but also limited. He refers to the narrowness of colonial interpretation of history and postcolonial (government) narrations of Matabeleland violence and the 'patriotic' narrative of the 'Third Chimurenga'. Diversity of different stories works only to a certain degree. There are stories that are not just limited, but are manipulative interpretations of facts. This point is clarified in my discussion of state lies on the Third Chimurenga. But as demonstrated by Blackburn (2005), the truth/false dicothomy is complicated. However Blackburn asserts that, "We must not believe that all opinion is ideology that reason is only power, that there is no truth to prevail (2005: p. xiii). Counter-dsicursive texts particularly show that there is what we can point at as the truth. We can actually use these texts to confirm history. As shown by Blackburn "We believe propositions, and when an issue arises, it is some proposition and its truth and falsity upon which our attention turns. If the issue is an historical one, then our attention will be turned to the historical period and the sources that help to establish what occurred (2005: p. 9). Endorsing claims to authority and knowledge may seem difficult; saying this is similar to saying that it is difficult to arrive at truth. 'Language, culture, power, gender, class, economic status, ideology and desire' are according to Blackurn, the 'dark forces' that influence narratives (2005: p. xvi). In this study the dark forces go beyond the above listed to include ethnicity, race and political affiliation. Ethnic identity proved influential in Gukurahundi narratives, race was a significant aspect in colonial and anti-colonial narratives, and literary dialogue on land invasions of the Third Chimurenga had political affiliation implications. The versions that we have are biased (the dominant and the subversions), since bias is a key aspect of every narrative. But it is possible all the same to elevate some versions above others; compared to dominant discourses, subversions/alternatives possess some kind of superiority. This kind of conclusion questions the relativist mantra that 'there are only different views, each true 'for' those who hold them' (Blackburn, 2005: p. xvi).

In tracing the history of counter-discursive narratives in Zimbabwean literature in English in chapter 1 of this study, I referred to some of the issues raised by Ranger. At the beginning of that tradition in Zimbabwean literature in English, we have representations of black resistance to colonialism. This kind of literary resistance is two-fold. It consists of cultural nationalist writings and war literature. Texts discussed under 'cultural nationalism' undermined colonial racist ideology and fulfilled the traditional postcolonial function of writing-back to the imperial centre. In the context of Thieme's idea of pre-texts and con-texts, texts by black writers are representative of con-texts, and as such interact with the pre-texts of English canonical literature. Zimbabwean writers involved in the Cultural Revolution belong to the first generation and are the first black elites. These include Mutswairo, Sithole and Ndhlala. Cultural nationalism was a useful response to the peripheralisation of African cultures and history, but the de-centring project had its own problems, largely due to the complicated relationship between modernity and colonialism on one hand, and between tradition and nativism on the other hand. For colonised blacks, modernity is intricately tied to colonialism; hence embracing modernity translates into passive assimilation. On the other hand 'being traditional' might refer to a nativist return to an imagined past. This might imply that nativism is not a positive human quality. Using Stanford's ideas (2006), I demonstrated that a hybridised position of adaptation and resistance is favourable as a response to colonialism.

I have demonstrated that Thieme's con-texts/pre-texts distinction can be broadened and is complicated in the context of Zimbabwean war literature. In the decade before independence Rhodesian discourse 'glorified those fighting against guerrillas' in the liberation struggle (Primorac, 2006: 141). Such 'pre-texts' are destabilized by nationalist novelists who understandably glorified the war and glossed over its complexities. Writers such as Chinodya (in *Harvest of Thorns*) and Kanengoni (in *Echoing Silences)* challenge such narrow war-historiography. Revisions of war literature are found inadequate by feminist critics. Subsequently female (and some male) writers challenged the exclusion of women by writing women into war history.

As shown in the epigraph, Thieme's 'contexts' is limited to postcolonial texts. But in Zimbabwean counter-discursive narratives this is extended to include texts in dialogue with local dominant discourses. In war literature, Thieme's con-text/pre-text boundary is particularly contested. What would normally pass as a con-text is translated into a pre-text when its discourse is challenged. I will demonstrate this point here.

- ✓ Rhodesian discourse on war (pre-texts) is challenged by Black Nationalist writers who glorify the war (con-texts)
- ✓ Nationalist texts that glorify the war (these are con-texts at the level above) are translated into pre-texts when they are challenged by writers who represent war space as complex (at this level such war revisions are con-texts)
- ✓ War revisions are translated into pre-texts when female writers identify inadequacies about women exclusion, and revise the 'revised' war historiography.

This demonstrates that there are no fixed boundaries between con-texts and pre-texts as confirmed in Zimbabwean counter-discursive narratives. Such boundaries overlap and are always contested (Thieme, 2001). Over and above broadening Thieme's pre-text/con-text distinction, a study of the trends of counter-discursive war narratives confirmed Terdiman's position that counter-discourse is not sovereign and not exhaustive of reality (1989: 18). Defined here is what is popularly termed intertextuality. Allen has described intertextuality as follows:

> Texts [...] are viewed [...] as lacking in any kind of independent meaning. They are what theorists call intertextual. The act of reading [...] plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all other texts to which it refers. (2011: p. 1)

Most texts discussed in this study are in constant dialogue with other texts, especially through contestation.

Like most male writers of the late 1990s who revise unqualified glorification of the liberation war, Vera and Nyamubaya respond to an official recalling of the contribution of black women in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. Vera and Nyamubaya particularly challenge the glorified role black women are said to have played during the liberation struggle and demonstrate that women's contribution to the liberation struggle was rather complex. I expanded on this position in chapter 2 where I demonstrated how Hove, Vera and Nyamubaya challenge the exclusion of women in war literature. They write black women into Zimbabwean liberation history in two significant ways: through a revitalisation of the roles of women in the liberation struggle, and

emphasising women-specific struggles that are often ignored in nationalist writing of the liberation struggle. Nyamubaya and Vera fulfil their mandate by problematizing the war front/rear distinction respectively in 'That Special Place' and 'It is Hard to Live Alone'. They force readers to collapse the boundaries between the battlefront and its rears and understand that women made a meaningful contribution to the making of the nation either on the battlefront or at the rears. For Nyamubaya male freedom fighters at the battlefront were not always heroes of the liberation struggle. Some were rapists and sell-outs. With women as soldiers, the traditional composite nature of the battlefront is challenged. Vera celebrates women's meaningful contribution to the liberation struggle in domesticity. Women may not be at the battlefront but they make a meaningful contribution even when they participate from their homes. A foregrounding of the 'other' struggles of women remained a way of forcing readers to adopt a comprehensive approach to questions of oppression and justice and understand that the liberation war cannot be just about resistance to colonial dominance. I demonstrated this point by taking a look at scenes from different stories that highlight the other struggles that women are involved in, against the background of the larger 'liberation struggle'.

Feminist discourses are complicated when male writers participate. I complicated my discussion on feminist war literature by including Hove's voice and demonstrated how in *Ancestors* he narrates the history of female ancestors, a dimension to an understanding of reality which officially does not exist. As argued by Spivak, 'speaking for' is one of the two senses of representation and is in itself quite problematic (1988: p. 70). Hove speaks from without and is shut out from knowledge of the uniquely female experience. Speaking from without is one of the complexities associated with speaking for. This is what hooks termed 'politics of location' (1990: p. 145). If Hove speaks on behalf of female ancestry, it entails that those spoken for will remain mute and cannot become speaking subjects; and that signals continued enforcement of women's voicelessness.

Over and above revising war narratives, women writers have a unique counter-discursive tradition. Primarily, Zimbabwean women writers write against patriarchal dominance and masculinised nationalist history that gloss over the existence and identities of women. Many Zimbabwean women writers are involved in the battle over misrepresentation of women in history and in literature. However, as I demonstrated in chapter 2, some women writers are more visible and consistent than others. I also noted that women writers participate in the post-independence critique of the ugly moments of the

Zimbabwean postcolony, by offering alternative voices to the official and dominant version of history choreographed by the dominant ZANU PF political party and the ruling government. This kind of history is the official narrative and is mainly characterized by 'inclusions and exclusions'. Examples of female voices, which challenge the dominant ZANU PF history, include Vera, Tagwira and Gappah. Vera's *The Stone Virgins* (2002) broke the imposed silence on Gukurahundi. Tagwira and Gappah also participate in the rewriting of the official 'lies' on the 1999-2009 crises in *An Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) and *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) respectively.

In *The Burden of Memory: The Muse of Forgiveness* Soyinka urges a re-reading of African post-independent history beyond colonial politics. He appeals to the entire African continent to understand that, inasmuch as the continent has memories of historic wrongs inflicted on her by others, there are also wrongs that have been inflicted on Africans by fellow brothers and sisters that are not different from the external ones. Soyinka's position is clearly disputed by some African leaders. For instance, Robert Mugabe said the following when his nation was deep in a multidimensional-crisis: 'memories do pile up, but the most remote ones, especially those which saw us suffer and the times when we were under bondage, under colonial rule, those can never fade away, they remain forever' (2005: p. 6). Echoed in Mugabe's words is an understanding of Zimbabwean history that emphasises colonial injustice whilst ignoring historic memories of local human rights violations. Some Zimbabwean writers subvert this kind of limited historiography, offering alternative accounts. In chapter 3 I demonstrated the interventions in Gukurahundi narratives. Writers selected in chapter 3 concentrate on Gukurahundi as a local historic wrong, committed by the government soldiers that people should always remember. The texts discussed in chapter 4 are evidence as to how Zimbabwean and non-Zimbabwean writers alike continue to voice Gukurahundi silenced by the government. They re-write Gukurahundi from different standpoints. The debate on Gukurahundi continues but remains ethnicised. Writers and critics alike either sympathise or speak on behalf of the Gukurahundi victims and show 'enlightened compassion' (Spivak, 1988: p. 140) or are apologists of the perpetrators.

In my analysis of the texts that re-write 'state lies' on the Third Chimurenga in chapter 4, I began by expanding on the meaning of the Third Chimurenga to encompass all aspects of Zimbabwean history that have come to be associated with what is popularized as 'the Zimbabwean crisis'. A re-appropriation of this term widened the scope of historical interpretation. The

broadened meaning enables a focus on the often-ignored struggle of the majority of Zimbabweans to survive the crisis; there I disrupted the usual association of the word Chimurenga with fighting against the colonial enemy. Where Robert Mugabe says 'Well, our people are happy, they are very happy' in 2005 (2005: 7), Zimbabwean writers demonstrate that the majority of Zimbabweans were living in poverty, and it is impossible that they could have been happy. For a discussion of such subversions of the official government rhetoric on the Third Chimurenga crisis, I selected short stories by Chinodya, Chinyani, Hoba, and Tagwira's novel. These texts are consistent in light of the failed ambition of the state during the Third Chimurenga. The focus is on the rural farm invasions and their connections with urban crisis. The social and political realities re-created in the discussed stories can be verified in revisionist historical narratives. I repeat here the toilet image in Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*. A public toilet at Mbare bus terminus is a 'small, filthy room, reeking of excrement' yet 'a discoloured notice declared that the toilets were cleaned regularly' (p. 287). I used Tagwira's toilet image to highlight the distortions prevalent in the state discourse on the Third Chimurenga. As much as the government re-arranges the story of the Third Chimurenga and alters some of its realities, 'the filthy toilet reeking of excrement' is the image that conveys reality best. The inscribed notice that the toilet is cleaned regularly remains an obvious lie. I used Tagwira's toilet analogy to interpret how 'patriotic history' represents 'obvious official lies', (Mbembe, 2001: p. 129) which are 'demonstrably untrue' (Primorac, 2007: p. 436).

Though 'the relationship between history and fiction was problematic from the beginning because it gave rise to the dilemma concerning the relative roles of imagination and historical fact' (Hamnett, 2006: p. 32). In all the narratives discussed in this thesis, one thing stands out: the writers are aware of the fluidity between history and fiction and each of the works discussed is a unique interpretation and reflection of significant aspects of Zimbabwean history (the history of the liberation struggle, of Gukurahundi and of the Third Chimurenga). Some of the key strategies employed by writers included a weaving of 'popular memory', a reference to real historical figures (Kilgore uses Robert Mugabe in his novel *We Are Now All Zimbabweans*) and 'concrete reference to places, events and times' (Hamnett, 2006: p. 32). The texts I studied in specific contexts of contemporary politics 'represented the mirror in which the age saw itself' (Hamnett, 2006: p. 34), since the kind of literature discussed here is in dialogue with history through contestation. It remains 'a kind of testimony, an example of a kind of "witness literature" or testimonio' (White,

2005: p. 148). To demonstrate that there is an overlap of history and literature studied for my thesis, a significant number of historical sources were consulted. Visible historians who shaped my discussion include Ranger, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Muzondidya and Lyons. Ranger's ideas on historiography, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's theory on Zimbabwean nationalism, and Lyons' discussion of women participation in the liberation struggle were particularly useful to my interpretation of texts representing similar issues.

Anyone who criticizes the ZANU PF government is tagged an 'enemy of the state', and is understood as an opposition political party member and is thought of as unpatriotic. In repressive governments and all undemocratic spaces, voices of dissent (writers included) are at risk of personal 'losses'. In both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, writers were exiled, and some works banned.[89] In the Third Chimurenga period, the ZANU PF government put in place policies to make sure that any public criticism of the government was met with increased brutality. This was instituted through the controversial Public Order and Security Act and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Censorship and victimization of dissident voices signifies lack of toleration of divergence. Dominant discourses are absolutist in that they fail to respect/ do not tolerate divergence. Silencing voices of discontent is a strategy that dominant groups use to ensure political autonomy. Yet oppositional 'politicians' (writers and critics included) are important in 'building democratic potentials […] destabilizing powerfully established structures […] be they racist, colonial, patriarchy' or the imposition of the postcolonial state (Kaarsholm, 2005: p. 4). Without voices of dissent, it may not be possible to 'transform legislation […] and confront the politics of injustice' (Lara, 1998: p. 148). A proliferation of dissenting voices (creative writers included) in the Zimbabwean public sphere is testimony that discontent will always be expressed, even in undemocratic spaces.

---

[89] The Rhodesian government banned *On Trial for My Country (1966)*. The Zimbabwean government banned Marechera's *Black Sunlight* (1980) because most characters in the novel were read as 'prototypes of dissidents' (Veit-Wild, 1992: p. 220), the very 'dissidents' that the government wanted to clean up in Gukurahundi. Mhlanga's *Workshop Negative* was banned when it was about to be performed in Harare at the First International Book Fair in 1983 (Veit-Wild, 1992: p. 307).

Bibliography

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

Adichie, C., *The Danger of a Single Story* Video (TED, 2009).

Afejuku, T.E., 'Autobiography or History: Lawrence Vambe's *An Ill-Fated People'*, *Research in African Literatures*, 19(4) (1988), 508-19.

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

Allen, G., *Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

Anderson, B.R., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

Alphen, E.J. van, *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory*(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

Amuta, C., 'Fanon, Cabral and Ngugi on National Liberation', in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* ed. By B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and T. Helen (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 158-63.

Baker, R., 'Trauma and the Desiring Subject: The Spatial and Temporal Poetics of Yvonne Vera's *The Stone Virgins'*, in *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera,* ed. By H. Cousins and P. Dogson-Katiyo (London: Africa World Press, 2012), pp. 121-44.

Baldwin, J., 'Alas, Poor Richard' (1961), in *Collected Essays* (New York: Library of America, 1998).

Banks, M., *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Barnes, T., 'Reconciliation, Ethnicity and School History in Zimbabwe 1980-2002', in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. by B. Raftopolous and S. Tyrone (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 140-59.

Barry, H.D. (ed.), *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future. Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004).

Bauer, G.and Taylor, S.P., *Politics in Southern Africa: State and Society in Transition* (Denver: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).

BBC, History, George Eliot (1819-1880), http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/eliot_george.shtml (accessed 23 November 2010).

Bond, P., and Mandinyanya, M., *Zimbabwe's Plunge, Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2002).

Beverly, J 'Through All Things Modern': Second Thoughts on Testimonio', *Boundary 2*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1991), pp. 1-21

_____ 'The Margin at the Centre: On Testimonio (Testimonial Narrative), *Modern Fiction Studies*, Volume 35, Number 1, (1989), pp.11-28

Best, S and Marcus, S., 'Surface Reading: An Introduction', *Representations*, Vol. 108, No. 1 (2009), pp. 1-21

Blackburn, S., *Truth: A Guide for the Perplexed*. (New York: Allen Lane Penguin Group, 2005).

Bryce, J., 'Incendiary Interpretations and Patriotic Imperative: The Case of *Flame*', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. By R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 25-39.

Burgo, J., 'Narcissistic Rage and the Sense of Entitlement', posted 27 April 2011, http://www.afterpsychotherapy.com/narcissistic-rage/ (accessed 27 April 2013).

Burton, L., *The Yellow Mountain* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: Regal Publishers, 1978).

Busia, A.P.A., 'Silencing Sycorax: On African Colonial Discourse and the Unvoiced Female', *Cultural Critique*, 14 (1989-90), 81-104.

Carney, D., *The Whispering Death* (London: Corgi, 1980).

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, March 1997: Report on the 1980s Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands http://Archive.Org/Stream/Breakingthesilencebuildingtruepeace/Matabelelandreport_Djvu.Txt (accessed 18 February 2014).

Chari, T., 'Worlds Apart: Representations of Operation Murambatsvina in Two Zimbabwean Weeklies', in *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*, ed. by M. Vambe (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), pp. 105-18.

Chennels, A., 'Self Representation and National Memory: White Autobiographies in Zimbabwe', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. By R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 131-44.

Chifamba, J., *Ngano dzepasi chigare* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Chinodya, S., *Harvest of Thorns* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1989).

—— 'Queues', in *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe,* ed. by I. Staunton (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp. 43-62.

—— *Chairman of Fools* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005).

Chinyani, E., 'A Land of Starving Millionaires', in *Laughing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe,* ed. by I. Staunton (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp. 38-42.

Chikwava, B., *Harare North* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2009).

Chingono, J., *Not Another Day* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2006).

—— 'Minister without Portfolio', in *Laughing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe,* ed. by I. Staunton (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp. 7-15.

Chipamaunga, E., *A Fighter for Freedom*(Gweru: Mambo Press, 1983).

Chiwome, E.,*A Social History of the Shona Novel*(Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996).

Cousins, H.,and Dodgson-Katiyo, P. (eds), *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2012).

Christiansen-Bull, L., *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe* (Uppsala: Nordiska Africainstitutet, 2004).

——'Yvonne Vera: Rewriting Discourses of History and Identity in Zimbabwe', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. By R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 131-44.

——'Mai Mujuru: Father of the Nation', in *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society,* Ed. By R. Muponde and K.Z. Muchemwa (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp. 88-101.

——'"What Would Vera Write?": Reflections on Zimbabwean Feminist Discourses on Gender-Power', in *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera,* ed. By H. Cousins and P. Dogson-Katiyo (London: Africa World Press, 2012), pp. 203-22.

——'"Respectable" Women versus "Small Houses": Feminist Negotiations of Sexual Morality, Marriage and the Challenge of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 39(3) (2013), 511-26.

——'Words are like Weapons- They Change The Way We Think about the World', Mazwi: A Zimbabwean Journal, www.od.dk (accessed 22 July 2010).

Colletta, L., *Dark Humour and Social Satire in the British Novel* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2003).

Collins, P.H., 'Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2000), 41-53.

Coser, L.A. (ed.), *Maurice Halbwachs: On Collective Memory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

Curtin, P, Feierman, S., Thompson, L., and Vansina, J., *African History from the Earliest Time to Independence*(London: Longman, 1995).

Davies, R., 'Memories of Underdevelopment: A Personal Interpretation of Zimbabwe's Economic Decline', in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. By B. Raftopolous and T. Savage (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 19-42.

Dangarembga's New Venture: newZimbabweSituation.com, 3June 2010 (accessed 23 July 2011).

Dangarembga, T., *She No Longer Weeps* (Harare: College Press, 1987).

––– *Nervous Conditions* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988).

––– *Everyone's Child* (Film), script by Dangarembga (Zimbabwe, 1996).

––– *The Book of Not* (Banbury: Ayebia Clarke, 2006).

Daymond, M., Driver, D., Meintjes, S., Musengezi, C., Orford, M., and Rasebotsa, N. (eds),*Women Writing Africa: The Southern African Region*(New York: The Feminist Press, 2004).

Desiree, L., 'Revisioning Patriarchal Nationalism: Yvonne Vera's *Nehanda*' (JCAS: State, Nation and Ethnic Relations, 2004), pp. 193-208.

Devault, M.L., *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research (*Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

Early, R., *A Time of Madness* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: Graham Pub., 1977).

Engelke, M., 'Thinking about the Nativism in Chenjerai Hove's Work', *Research in African Literatures*, 29 (1998), 20-3.

Eppel, S., 'Gukurahundi: The Need for Truth and Reparation', in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. By B. Raftopolous and T. Savage (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 43-62.

Evans, M., and Glenn, I.,'"TIA – This is Africa": Afropessimism in Twenty-First Century Narrative Film', *Black Camera*, 2(1) (2010), 14-35.

Ewick, P., and Silbey, S.S., 'Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward A Sociology of Narrative', *Law and Society Review,* 29 (2) (1995), 197-223.

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

Freire, P., *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Books, 1996).

Freundt, M., 'Other Truths: Negation as a Device for Reader Engagement in Post-colonial Settler Literatures' (2012), University of Wollongong, http://r.uow.ed.ac/theses/3679.accessed 23/08/2012

Friedman, S.S., 'Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies', *Modernist/Modernism Journal*, 13(3) (2006), 425-43.

Gappah, P., *An Elegy for Easterly* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).

Gastil, J., 'Generic Pronouns and Sexist Language: The Oxymoronic Character of Masculine Generics', *Sex Roles*, 23(11/12) (1990, 629-43.

Gibbs, R.W., 'Authorial Intentions in Text Understanding', *Discourse Processes*, 32(1) (2001), 73-80.

Gomo, M., *A Fine Madness* (Banbury: Ayebia Clarke, 2010).

Godwin, P., *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (New York: Grove Press, 1996).

Green, M., 'Social History, Literary History and Historical Fiction in South Africa', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 12 (2) (1999), 121-36.

Gugler, J., *African Film: Re-Imagining a Continent* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003).

Gunner, E., and Kortenaar, N. ten, 'Introduction: Yvonne Vera's Fictions and the Voice of the Possible', *Research in African Literatures*, 38(2) (2007), 1-8.

Gunner, L., 'Power, Popular Consciousness, and the Fictions of War: Hove's *Bones* and Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns*', *African Languages and Cultures*, 4(1) (1991), 77-85.

Halliwell, S., 'Comic Satire and Freedom of Speech in Classical Athens', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 111 (1991), 48-70.

Hammar, A., McGregor, J., and Landau, L., 'Introduction: Displacing Zimbabwe: Crisis and Construction in Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36(2) (2010), 263-83.

Hamnett, B., 'Fictitious History: The Dilemma of Fact and Imagination in the Nineteenth-Century Historical Novel', *European History Quarterly* 36 (2006), 31-60.

Harris, A., 'Writing Home: Inscriptions of Whiteness/ Descriptions of Belonging in White Zimbabwean Memoir/Autobiography', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. By R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 103-17.

Hilker, M.L., 'Rwanda's "Hutsi": Intersections of Ethnicity and Violence in the Lives of the Youth of "Mixed" Heritage', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 19(2) (2012), 229-47.

Hoba, L., 'Specialization', in *Laughing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe,* ed. by I. Staunton.(Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp. 69-75.

—— *The Trek and Other Stories* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009).

Hochbruck, W., 'Armed Conflict and Cultural Encounters: Zimbabwean War Fiction', in *Fusion of Cultures?,* ed. by P. O. Stummer and C. Balme (Amsterdam: Cross Cultures, 1996), pp. 160-74.

Hoeller, C., 'Interview with Achille Mbembe', (in Springerin Magazine, a quarterly art/theory/cultural studies journal based in Vienna, Austria),http://www.springerin.at(accessed 27 April 2013).

Homi, B.K., *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

——'Signs Taken for Wonders', in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. By B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and T. Helen(London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 29-35.

Hooks, B., *Yearning Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990).

Hove, C., *Bones* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1988).

—— *Shadows* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1991).

—— *Ancestors* (Harare: College Press, 1996).

—— *Palaver Finish* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2002).

Hudson-Weems, C. (ed.), *Contemporary Africana Theory, Thought and Action: A Guide to Africana Studies* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2007).

Hunter, E., 'Zimbabwean Nationalism and Motherhood in Yvonne Vera's *Butterfly Burning'*, *African Studies*, 59:2 (2000), 229-43.

James K., *We Are All Zimbabweans Now* (South Africa: Umuzi, 2009).

JanMohamed, A.R., 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory', in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* ed. By B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and T. Helen (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 18-23.

Javangwe, T.D., 'Contesting Narratives: Constructions of the Self and the Nation in Zimbabwean Political Auto/Biography', Unpublished PhD thesis (2011)

Kaarsholm, P., *Cultural Struggle and Development in Southern Africa* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1991).

—— 'Coming to Terms with Violence: Literature and the Development of a Public Sphere in Zimbabwe', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to*

Literature and Culture, ed. By R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 3-24.

Kahari, G., *The Search for Identity and Ufuru: An Introduction to Black Zimbabwean Fiction in English* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 2009).

Kanengoni, A., *Echoing Silences* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1997).

—— 'The Lone Way Home: One Man's Story', in *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future, Rethinking Land, State and the Nation in the Context of Crisis,* ed. by D.H. Barry (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), pp. 47-51.

Kanneh, K., 'Feminism and the Colonial Body', in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* ed. By B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and T. Helen (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 346-48.

Katiyo, W., *A Son of the Soil* (Harlow: Longman, 1976).

Kennedy, R., 'Mortgaged Futures: Trauma, Subjectivity, and the Legacies of Colonialism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's The Book of Not', *Studies in the Novel,* 40(1&2) (2008), 86-107.

Kortenaar, N. ten, 'Of Fathers and Ancestors in Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain*', in *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society,* ed. By R. Muponde and K.Z. Muchemwa (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp. 31-45.

Kosofsky Sedgwick, E., *Epistemology of the Closet*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

Kostelac, S.L., *Poetic Language and Subalternity in Yvonne Vera's* Butterfly Burning *and* The Stone Virgins*,* M.A. Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2006).

Kossew, S., *Pen and Power: A Post-colonial Reading of J.M. Coetzee and André Brink* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996).

Kriger, N., 'Zimbabwe: Political Constructions of War Veterans', *Review of African Political Economy*, 30(96) (2003), 323-28.

——'From Patriotic Memories to 'Patriotic History' in Zimbabwe from 1990-2005', *Third World Quarterly* 27(6) (2006), 1154-64.

Lara, M.P., *Moral Textures: Feminist Narratives in the Public Sphere* (California: University of California Press, 1998).

Lavelle, R., 'Yvonne Vera's *Without a Name*: Reclaiming that which has been taken', in *Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera,* ed. By R. Muponde and M. Taruvinga (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp. 109-16.

Levi, P., *The Drowned and the Saved*(New York: Penguin Books, 1988).

Lipenga, T., 'Rewriting the City: Women's Occupation of Urban Space in *Butterfly Burning* and *Under the Tongue*', in *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera,* ed. By H. Cousins and P. Dogson-Katiyo (London: Africa World Press, 2012), pp. 261-78.

Lyons, T., *Guns and Guerrillas Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*(Asmara: Africa World Press, 2004).

Ludicke, P., 'Writing from the Inside-Out, Reading from the Outside-In: A Review of Yvonne Vera's *Nehanda* and *Without a Name*', in *Contemporary African Literature,* ed. byW. Derek (Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies, 1997), pp. 67-74.

Luraghi, N., *The Ancient Messenians: Constructions of Ethnicity and Memory*(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Magadza, M., 'The Undying Legacy of Dambudzo Marechera: Dobrota Pucherova Interview',
http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/08/qa-the-undying-legacy-of-dambudzo-marechera/ (accessed 20 March 2012).

Makhalisa, B., *The Underdog and Other Short Stories* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984).

Mambipiri, G., *Edgar Tekere: A Review,* www.newzimbabwe.com (accessed 9 June 2011).

Mangwanda, K., 'Re-mapping the Colonial Space: Yvonne Vera's Nehanda', in *Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera,* ed. By R. Muponde and M. Taruvinga (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp. 141-54.

Makoni, S., 'Handiende' (1994) YouTube (Accessed 16 July 2010).

Maruma, O., *Coming Home* (Harare: Gonamombe, 2007).

Marechera, D., *The House of Hunger* (London: Heinemann, 1978).

—— *Black Sunlight* (London: Heinemann, 1980).

Masitera, L., *Militant Shadow* (Harare: Now I Can Play Publications, 1996).

—— *The Trail* (Harare: Now I Can Play Publications, 2000).

—— *Start with Me* (Harare: Now I Can Play Publications, 2011).

Masunungure, E.V., 'Travails of Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe since Independence', in *Zimbabwe: The Past is the Future, Rethinking Land, State and the Nation in the Context of Crisis,* ed. by B. D. Harold (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), pp. 77-86.

—— 'Voting for Change: The 29 March Harmonised Elections', in *Defying the Winds of Change: Zimbabwe's 2008 Elections,* ed. by E.V. Masunungure (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), pp. 61-78.

Mawuru, G., *Neria* (Film),script by Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe, 1992).

Mazarire, G.C., 'Who are the Ndebele and the Kalanga in Zimbabwe?', paper prepared for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Project on 'Ethnicity in Zimbabwe' (2003),
http://ir.uz.ac.zw/jspui/bitstream/10646/314/1/Mazarire-Ndebele-and-Kalanga.pdf (accessed 22 July 2014).

Mbembe, A., *On the Postcolony* (London: University of California Press, 2001).

——'African Modes of Self-Writing', *Public Culture*, 14(1) (2002), 239-73.

Mhiripiri, N., 'The Zimbabwean Government's Responses to Criticism of Operation Murambatsvina', in *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe,* ed. by M. Vambe (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), pp. 149-58.

Mlalazi, C., *Dancing with Life: Tales from the Township* (Bulawayo:
AmaBooks, 2008).

—— *Running with Mother* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2012).

Moorcraft, P., *Mugabe's War Machine*(Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2012).

Moyana, R., 'Shimmer Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns*' ,in *New Writings from Southern Africa: Authors who have Become Prominent Since 1980,* ed. by E. Ngara (London: James Currey, 1996), pp. 45-58.

Moyse, A., 'The Media Environment Leading up to Zimbabwe's 2008 Elections', in *Defying the Winds of Change: Zimbabwe's 2008 Elections,* ed. By E.V. Masunungure (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), pp. 43-60.

Mtizira-Nondo, N., *The Chimurenga Protocol* (Harare: Botshelo Publishing, 2008).

Muchemwa, K., 'Some Thoughts on Historical Memory and Writing in Zimbabwe', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. By R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 195-202.

——'"Why Don't you Tell Children a Story?": Father Figures in the Zimbabwean Short Stories', in *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society,* ed. by R. Muponde and K.Z. Muchemwa (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp. 1-16.

—— 'Old and New Fictions: Rearranging the Geographies of Urban Space and Identities in Post 2000 Zimbabwean Fiction', *English Academy Review: Southern African Journal of English Studies*, 27 (2) (2010), 134-45.

——— 'Polarising Cultures, Politics and Communities, and Fracturing Economies in Zimbabwean Literature', *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*, 37(3) (2011), 395-408.

——— 'Imagining the City in Zimbabwean Literature 1949 to 2009', Unpublished Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University,December 2013, http://scholar.sun.ac.zaaccessed 21 February 2014

Mugabe, R., 'We Won't Go Back to the Common-Wealth', *New Africa* 441(June 2005), 6-12.

Mungoshi, C., *Waiting for the Rain* (London: Heinemann, 1975).

Muponde, R., 'The Worm and the Hoe: Cultural Politics and Reconciliation after the Third Chimurenga', in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. byB. Raftopolous and S. Tyrone (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 176-92.

Muponde, R., and Primorac, R. (eds) *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005).

Muponde, R., and Primorac, R., 'Introduction: Writing against Blindness', in *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. by R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. xiii-xxii.

Muponde, R., and Maodzwa-Taruvinga, M. (eds),*Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera*(Harare: Weaver Press, 2003).

Murray, J., 'A Post-colonial Feminist Reading of Selected Testimonies to Trauma in Post-liberation South Africa and Zimbabwe', *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 21(1) (2009), 1-21.

Musila, A.G.,'Beyond the Frame of History: Colonial Modernity, Love, and Freedom in Yvonne Vera's *Without a Name*, *Butterfly Burning*, and *The Stone Virgins*', in *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera,* ed. By H. Cousins and P. Dogson-Katiyo (London: Africa World Press, 2012), pp. 3-22.

Musiyiwa, M., and Matshakayile-Ndlovu, T., 'Ethnicity in Literature of Shona and Ndebele Expression', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. By R. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 75-88.

Musvoto, R., 'Tensions and Conflicts in Zimbabwean Society: Nyamubaya Reminisces', *English Academy Review: Southern African Journal of English Studies*, 24:1 (2007), 61-70.

—— 'Filling the void in our national life: The search for a song that captures the spirit of Rhodesian nationalism and national identity', *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa*, 6:2 (2009), 154-162

Mutasa, G., *The Contact* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1985).

Mutswairo, S., *Feso* (Gweru: Mambo Press in association with the Literature Bureau, 1956).

Muzondidya, J., and Gatsheni-Ndlovu, S.,'Echoing Silences: Ethnicity in Postcolonial Zimbabwe 1980-2007', *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 7(2) (2007), 275-97.

Muzondidya, J., 'Jambanja: Ideological Ambiguities in the Politics of Land and Resource Ownership in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33(2) (2007), 325-41.

Mwangi, E., *Africa Writes Back to Self: Metafiction, Gender and Sexuality* (Albany: Suny Press, 2009).

Nagel, J., 'Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21(2) (1998), 242-69.

Ndhlala, G., *Jikinya* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: College Press in association with Literature Bureau, 1979).

Ndlovu, I., and Dube, B., 'Response to Maurice T. Vambe's "Zimbabwe Genocide: Voices and Perceptions from Ordinary People in Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces 30 Years On"', *African Identities*, 11 (4) (2013), published online in 2014.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J., and Muzondidya, J., *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism: Rethinking Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe* (New York: Heinemann Publishing, 2011).

Ndlovu-Gathseni, S.J., 'The Nativist Revolution and Development Conundrums in Zimbabwe', *Occasional Paper Series*, ACCORD, 4 (1) (2006), 1-40.

—— 'Fatherhood and Nationhood: Joshua Nkomo and the Re-imagination of the Zimbabwean Nation', in *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society,* by ed. R. Muponde and K.Z. Muchemwa (Eds.). (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp 73-87.

——'Nation Building in Zimbabwe and the Challenges of Ndebele Particularism', *AfricanJournal on Conflict Resolution*, 8 (3) (2008), 27-55.

—— 'Making Sense of Mugabeism in Local and Global Politics: "So Blair, Keep Your England and Let Me Keep My Zimbabwe"',*Third World Quarterly*, 30(6) (2009), 1139-58.

——'Africa for Africans or Africa for "Natives" only? New Nationalism and Nativism in Zimbabwe and South Africa',*Africa Spectrum*, 44 (1) (2009), 61-78.

—— 'Rethinking Chimurenga and Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A Critique of Partisan National History', *African Studies Review*, 55(3) (2012), 1-26.

—— 'The Post-colonial State and Matabeleland: Regional Perceptions of Civil-Military Relations, 1980-2002',http://www.issafrica.org/pubs/Books/OurselvesToKnow/Ndlovu.pdf (accessed 6 March 2014).

Ngugi, W., *Writers in Politics: A Re-Engagement with Issues of Literature and Society*(Oxford: James Currey, 1981).

Nkomo, J., *The Story of My Life* (London: Methuen, 1984).

Nyambi, O., 'Some Notes on Ways to Read Zimbabwean Literature of the Crisis'',*Postamble: A Multidisciplinary Journal of African Studies*, 7(3) (2011), 1-12.

——'Nation in Crisis: Alternative Literary Representation of Zimbabwe Post-2000'(unpublished PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, December 2013),http://scholar.sun.ac.za.Accessed 12 January 2014

Nyamfukudza, S., *The Non-Believer's Journey* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1980).

Nyamubaya, F., *On the Road Again: Poems during and after the National Liberation of Zimbabwe* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986).
'That Special Place', in *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe,* ed. by I. Staunton (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp. 217-28.

Nyathi, P.T., 'Re-Integration of Ex-Combatants into Zimbabwean Society: A Lost Opportunity', in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. byB. Raftopolous and S. Tyrone (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 63-78.

Orner, P., and Holmes, A. (eds), *Hope Deferred: Narratives of Zimbabwean Lives* (San Francisco: McSweeney's Books (2010).

Oster, J., *Crossing Cultures: Creating Identity in Chinese and Jewish American Literature* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2003).

Parry, B., 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse', in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* ed. byB. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and T. Helen (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 36-44.

Petersen, K.H., 'First Things First: Problems of a Feminist Approach to African Literature', in *Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* ed. By B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and T. Helen (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 251-54.

Philip, C., Feierman, S., Thompson, L., and Vansina, J., *African History from the Earliest Time to Independence* (London: Longman, 1995).

Philipose, L., 'The Politics of Pain and the End of Empire', *International Feminist Journal of Politics,* 9(1) (2007), 60-81.

Phoenix, A., and Owen, C., 'From Miscegenation to Hybridity: Mixed Relationship and Mixed Parentage in Profile',in *Hybridity and its Discontents: Politics, Science and Culture,* ed. by A. Brah and A. E. Coombes (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 72-95.

Pilossof, R., 'The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans', *South African Historical Journal*, 61(3) (2009), 621-38.

Primorac, R., Review of 'New Writing from Southern Africa Nobody Ever Said AIDS: Poems and Stories from Southern Africa by Nobantu Rasobotsa, Meg Samuelson and Kylie Thomas', in *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe,* ed. by Irene Staunton, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31 (2) (2005), 463-66.

—— *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* (London: Tauris Academia Studies, 2006)

——'The Poetics of State Terror in Twenty-First Century Zimbabwe', *Interventions,* 9 (3) (2007), 434-50.

——'The Place of the Woman is the Place of Imagination': Yvonne Vera Interviewed by Ranka Primorac, in *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera,* ed. By H. Cousins and P. Dogson-Katiyo (London: Africa World Press, 2012), pp. 375-90.

Pucherova, D., 'Desire, Pleasure, and Freedom in *Butterfly Burning*', in *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera,* ed. by H. Cousins and P. Dogson-Katiyo (London: Africa World Press, 2012), pp. 185-202.

Raftopolous, B., 'Unreconciled Differences: The Limits of Reconciliation Politics in Zimbabwe',in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. byB. Raftopolous and S. Tyrone (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. viii-xxii.

——'Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics', in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. By B. Raftopolous and S. Tyrone (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 160-75.

——'Reflections on Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe: The Politics of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)', in *Zimbabwe in Crisis: The International Response and the Space of Silence,* ed. by S. Khan and R. Primorac (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 125-38.

Ranger, T., 'Rule by Historiography: The Struggle Over the Past in Zimbabwe', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. byR. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 217-43.

—— 'The Rise of Patriotic Journalism in Zimbabwe and its Possible Implications', *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* (University of Westminster, London), Special Issue (2005), 8-17.

Robins, S., 'Heroes, Heretics and Historians of the Zimbabwe Revolution: A Review Article of Norma Kriger's "Peasant Voices" 1992', *Zambezia*, XXIII (i) (1996), 73-92.

Rodríguez-García, D., 'Mixed Marriages and Transnational Families in the Intercultural Context: A Case Study of African-Spanish Couples in Catalonia', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32(3) (2006), 403-33.

Sachikonye, L., 'The Promised Land: From Expropriation to Reconciliation and Jambanja',in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation,* ed. By B. Raftopolous and S. Tyrone (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), pp. 1-18.

—— *When a State Turns on Its Citizens: 60 Years of Institutionalised Violence in Zimbabwe* (Cape Town: Jacana, 2011).

Samkange, S., *On Trial for my Country* (London: Heinemann, 1966).

—— *Year of Uprising* (London: Heinemann, 1978).

Samuelson, M., 'Re-membering the Body: Rape and Recovery in *Without a Name* and *Under the Tongue*', in *Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera,* ed. By R. Muponde and M. Taruvinga (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003), pp. 93-100.

Samupindi, C., *Pawns* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1992).

Schiff, M., 'Histories and Theories of Nationalism: A Semiotic Approach', http://www.janushead.org/4-2/schiff.cfm (accessed 2 May 2011).

Schipper, W.J.J., *Beyond the Boundaries: African Literature and Literary Theory* (London: W.H. Allen, 1989).

Sinclair, I., *Flame* (Film) (Zimbabwe, 1996).

Shaw, D., "Narrating the Zimbabwean Nation: a conversation with John Eppel", http://www.weaverpresszimbabwe.com/index.php/authors/interviews/506-interview-eppel-john-by-drew-shaw (accessed 26 November 2014)

⸺ 'Deviant' Innovations in Zimbabwean Writing: From the Racial Divide to Same Sex Desire, *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 95:384, (2006), 273-281

Spivak, C.G.,'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxismand the Interpretation of Culture,* ed. by C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 271-316.

Soros, E., 'Yvonne Vera: Breaking the Silence', World Press Review Online, http://worldpress.org/Africa/736.cfm. (accessed 23 January 2013).

Soyinka, W., *The Burden of Memory: The Muse of Forgiveness*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Staunton, I. (ed.), *Mothers of Revolution* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1990).

⸺ (ed.), *Laughing Now: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007).

⸺ (ed.), *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003).

Sithole, N., *The Polygamist: A Novel* (New York: Third Press, 1972).

Stiff, P., *The Rain Goddess* (Salisbury, Rhodesia: Jacaranda Press, 1973).

Tagwira, V., *The Uncertainty of Hope* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2006).

Taiwo, O., *How Colonialism Pre-empted Modernity in Africa* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010).

Tekere, E., *A Lifetime of Struggle* (Harare: SAPES, 2007).

Terdiman, R., *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

The Patriot Editor: Review of Mlalazi's *Running with Mother* (2012),http://thepatriot.co.zw/index.php?option=com_contentandview=arti cleandid=1211:weaver-press-oh-weaverandcatid=6:analysisandItemid=39.

Thieme, J., *Post-Colonial Con-Texts: Writing Back to the Canon: Literature, Culture andIdentity*(New York: Continuum, 2001).

Tibaijuka, A., *United Nations Habitat.Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe*(Geneva: United Nations Habitat, 2005).

Tizora, S., *Crossroads* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1985).

Tofa, M., 'The Trajectory of Iniquitous Dictatorship in Zimbabwe: Implications for Democratization in Southern Africa and Beyond',in *Regime Change and Succession Politics in Southern Africa: Five Decades of Misrule,* ed.

by M.N. Amutabi and S.W. Nasong'o. (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 80-97.

Todorov, T., 'Race, Writing and Culture', *Critical Inquiry*, 13 (1) (1986), 171-81.

Toivanen, A., 'Remembering the Nation's Aching Spots: Yvonne Vera's Authorial Position of Witness and Healer', *Postcolonial Text*, 5(4) (2009), 1-15.

——'Women on the Fringes of the National Community in Yvonne Vera's *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals*'; http://uef.academia.edu/AnnaLeenaToivanen/papers/330460/ (accessed 19 May 2012).

Treiger, L.K., 'Protecting Satire against Libel Claims: A New Reading of the First Amendment's Opinion Privilege', *The Yale Law Journal*, 98(1215) (1989), 1215-34.

Turok, B., *Africa What can be Done?* (London: Zed Press and the Institute of African Alternatives, 1987).

Umtwakazi Review: *Running with Mother* by Mr Mlalazi, http://www.umthwakazireview.com/indexculture.php//item/581-running-with-mother-gukurahundi-novel-by-mr-mlalazi (accessed 12 November 2013).

Vambe, M.T., *African Oral Story-Telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2004).

——'The Poverty of Theory in the Study of Zimbabwean Literature', in *Versions of Zimbabwe, New Approaches to Literature and Culture,* ed. byR. Muponde and R. Primorac (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), pp. 89-100.

——'Contesting the Myth of "A People's War" in Bruce Moore-King's *White Man Black War* (1989)', *Journal of Developing Societies* 25(1) (2009), 107-20.

——'Yvonne Vera and the Politics of 'Opening Spaces' and 'Carving' Other Images for African Women',in *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera,* ed. By H. Cousins and P. Dogson-Katiyo (London: Africa World Press, 2012), pp. 305-24.

——'Zimbabwe's Genocide: Voices and Perceptions from Ordinary People in Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces, 30 Years On', *African Identities*, 10(3) (2012), 281-300.

Vambe, L., *An Ill-Fated People: Zimbabwe Before and After Rhodes* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972).

Vera, Y., *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals* (Toronto: TSAR Publications, 1992).

—— *Nehanda* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1993).

—— *Without a Name* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1994).

—— *Under the Tongue* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1996).

—— *The Stone Virgins* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2002).

Viomax (pseudonym) *Gukurahundi* song (Album: Zimbabwe is Mine) (2009), http//www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFqHDGdPI0U (accessed 26 May 2014)

Washington, H.M. (ed.), *Black-Eyed Susans: Classic Stories by and about Black Women* (New York: Anchor Press, 1975).

Wendell, S., 'Oppression and Victimization: Choice and Responsibility', *Hypatia* (1990), 15-46.

Wermter, O., Review of *Vambe's Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambats-vina of Zimbabwe,*Mukai-Vukani Jesuit Journal for Zimbabwe, No 48, May 2009, 24-6, http://weaverpresszimbabwe.com/latest-reviews/7-hidden-dimensions-of-operation-murambatsvina-the-/180-review-of-the-hidden-dimensions-of-operation-murambatsvina-in-zimbabwe-oskar-wermter-sj.html(accessed 23 June 2014).

White, E.F., 'Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counter Discourse and African-American Nationalism', *Journal of Women's History*, 2(1) (1990), 73-97.

White, H., 'Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality', *Rethinking History,* 9(2-3) (2005), 147-57.

White, L., *The Assassination of Hebert Chitepo* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2003).

Widdowson, P., 'Writing Back: Contemporary Re-Visionary Fiction', *Textual Practice in Feminism*, 20(3) (2006), 491-507.

Wild-Veit, F., *Teachers, Preachers, Non-Believers: A Social History of Zimbabwean Literature* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1992).

——'Dances with Bones: Hove's Romanticised Africa', *Research in African Literatures*, 38(2) (2007), 37-47.

Williams, A., 'Literature in the Time of Tyranny: African Writers and the Crisis of Governance', *Third World Quarterly*, 17 (2) (1996), 349-66.

Wylie, D., 'The Schizophrenias of Truth-Telling', *Contemporary English Studies in Africa*, 50(2) (2007), 151-69.

Yang, J., 'Representation and Resistance: A Cultural, Social and Political Perplexity in Post-Colonial Literature' (1999), www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/yang/1.html (accessed 20 September 2010).

Yuval-Davis, N., 'Intersectionality and Feminist Politics', *European Journal of WomenStudies*, 13(3) (2006), 193-209.

Zenenga, P., 'Boys: Performing Manhood in Zimbabwean Drama', in *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society,* ed. By R. Muponde and K.Z. Muchemwa (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), pp. 127-41.

Zimunya, M., *Those Years of Drought and Hunger: The Birth of African Fiction in English in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1982).

Zhuwarara, R., 'Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom*' (1987) (the essay first appeared in *Zambezia: The Journal of the University of Zimbabwe*, 14: 140-43, http://www.postcolonialweb.org/zimbabwe/ (accessed 21 July 2010).

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

Acknowledgements

Samenvatting

Counter-Discourse in Zimbabwean Literature is een studie naar de specifieke aspecten van contradiscursieve Zimbabwaanse verhalen. Zimbabwaanse literatuur is divers wat betreft de gebruikte talen, maar het corpus van deze studie beperkt zich tot de belangrijkste pijler onder het Zimbabwaanse literaire erfgoed: Engelse teksten. De bespreking van de geselecteerde teksten is gebaseerd op Terdimans postkoloniale concept van contradiscours, dat hij uiteenzette in *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France* (1989). Terdiman beschouwt contradiscours als een strategie voor 'symbolisch verzet', waar 'uitdagingen van een dominant of gevestigd discours (in het bijzonder dat van het imperialistische, koloniale centrum) boven de omgeving uitgetild kunnen worden' (Ashcroft, Tiffin & Griffiths, 2007: 50).

Uitdagingen van een dominant of gevestigd discours beperken zich in de Zimbabwaanse literatuur niet tot dat van de koloniale cultuur, maar ze overstijgen deze door de uitdagingen van het dominante discours van na de onafhankelijkheid erbij te betrekken. Anti-nationalitische, anti-'vaderlandse' en antipatriarchale verhalen maken ook deel uit van de contradiscursieve verhalen. Dus mijn analyse van 'terug schrijf'-praktijken begeeft zich buiten Thieme's 'con-text'-theorie zoals die is beschreven in zijn *Post-Colonial Con-Texts: Writing Back to the Canon: Literature, Culture and Identity* (2001). Zijn begrip van 'terug schrijven' beperkt zich tot de interactie tussen postkoloniale teksten en imperialistische teksten, zo blijkt uit zijn stelling dat : " 'Terug schrijven', 'contradiscours', 'tegendraadse literatuur', 'con-text': dit zijn begrippen die zijn gebruikt om een corpus van postkoloniaal werk te doen onderscheiden, en dat een klassieke Engelse tekst tot een uitgangspunt maakt. […] Dit soort teksten zijn niet 'simpelweg 'terug te schrijven'' tot een Engelse canonieke tekst, maar tot het gehele discursieve veld waarbinnen zo'n tekst functioneerde en nog steeds functioneert in de postkoloniale wereld" (2001: 1).

Mijn studie gaat verder dan Thieme, en omvat ook ideeën van andere critici, zoals Mwangi, Soyinka en Mbembe. Ik refereer vooral aan hun artikelen, respectievelijk "Africa Writes Back to Self: Metafiction, Gender and Sexuality" (2009), "The Burden of Memory: The Muse of Forgiveness" (1999) en "On the Postcolony" (2001). Mijn studie bestaat uit een Inleiding, vier hoofdstukken en een conclusie. In hoofdstuk 1 beschrijf ik de geschiedenis van contradiscursieve verhalen in de Engelstalige Zimbabwaanse literatuur. Aan het begin van de traditie is er het zwarte verzet tegen het kolonialisme. Dit soort literair verzet is

170

tweezijdig: het bestaat uit cultuurnationalistische teksten en oorlogsliteratuur. De cultuurnationalistische teksten die ik bespreek ondermijnen de racistische koloniale ideologie en vervullen de traditionele postkoloniale functie van 'terug schrijven' naar het imperialistische centrum. In de lijn van Thieme's idee van 'pre-texts' en 'con-texts' vertegenwoordigen de teksten van zwarte schrijvers 'con-texts', die een wisselwerking hebben met de 'pre-texts' van de Engelse canonieke literatuur. Zimbabwaanse schrijvers betrokken bij de Culturele Revolutie, zoals Mutswairo, Sithole and Ndhlala, behoren tot de Eerste generatie en zijn de eerste zwarte elite. Cultureel nationalisme was een effectief antwoord op de marginalisering van Afrikaanse culturen en geschiedenis, maar het 'de-centre'-project bracht zijn eigen problemen met zich mee, die in hoofdstuk 1 worden belicht. Die uitdagingen komen voort uit de ingewikkelde relatie tussen moderniteit en kolonialisme aan de ene kant, en tussen traditie en nativisme aan de andere.

Voor gekolonialiseerde zwarten is moderniteit verbonden met kolonialisme, dus het omarmen van moderniteit staat gelijk aan passieve assimilatie. Aan de andere kant vertegenwoordigt 'traditioneel zijn' niet alleen verzet tegen moderniteit, maar kan het ook refereren aan een nativistische terugkeer naar een denkbeeldig verleden. In hetzelfde hoofdstuk laat ik zien dat Thieme's onderscheid tussen 'pre-texts' en 'con-texts' verbreed moet worden en niet makkelijk toepasbaar is in de context van Zimbabwaanse oorlogsliteratuur. Het Rhodesische discours - in het decennium voor de onafhankelijkheid – 'verheerlijkte de strijders tegen de guerillas' in de bevrijdingsstrijd (Primorac, 2006: 141). Zulke 'pre-texts' werden gedestabiliseerd door nationalistische romanschrijvers, die – begrijpelijk – de oorlog verheerlijkten en de complexiteit daarvan tot hun recht lieten komen.

Schrijvers als Chinodya (in *Harvest of Thorns*) and Kanengoni (in *Echoing Silences)* betwisten de enge nationalistische oorlogshistoriografie. Hun teksten onderscheiden zich als herzieningen van de oorlogsliteratuur, doch zij krijgen kritiek uit feministische hoek. Vervolgens bestrijden vrouwelijke (en enkele mannelijke) schrijvers de uitsluiting van vrouwen, door vrouwen in de oorlogsgeschiedenis te schrijven (dit idee wordt uitgewerkt in hoofdstuk 2). In het bijzonder wordt Thieme's grens tussen 'pre-text' en 'pre-context' betwist. Wat normaal gesproken als 'con-text' wordt beschouwd, wordt in 'pre-text' vertaald als het discours wordt betwist. Ook al was een verbreding van Thieme's onderscheid tussen 'pre-text' en 'con-text' nodig, de studie van trends in counter-discursieve oorlogsverhalen, bevestigen Terdiman's stelling dat

contradiscours niet soeverein is en geen uitbreiding is van de realiteit (1989: 18).

Er bestaat duidelijke tekstuele interactie tussen Zimbabwaanse literatuur en Engelse literatuur. Behalve cultuurnationalistische teksten, bespreek ik ook postonafhankelijkheid autobiografische en feministische teksten met een speciale interesse in de manier waarop deze teksten het lokaal dominante discours ondermijnen.

De geselecteerde contradiscursieve thema's besproken in hoofstukken 2, 3 en 4 zijn: "feministisch herschrijven van nationalistische verhalen", " het vertellen over het geweld van Gukurahundi" en "een herinterprettie van de Derde Chimurenga in Post-2000 teksten". Deze thema"s zijn stuk voor stuk zelfreflexief ten aanzien van de Zimbabwaanse cultuur. De teksten worden gestuurd door de behoefte aan een reconstructie van de Zimbabwaanse post-koloniale geschiedenis. Feministisch bewustzijn voedde de behoefte van vrouwen voor een geschiedenis, en een poging een verleden te reconstrueren, waarin vrouwen hun eigen rol konden herkennen. Derhalve herschreven 'herstorians' de traditionele geschiedenis van de mensheid vanuit het perspectief van vrouwen, waar voorheen alleen mannen waren (Godiwala 2003: 33).

In hoofstuk 2 van deze dissertatie beschouw ik tegen deze achtergrond geselecteerde teksten van Vera, Nyamubaya and Hove als feministische kritiek op mannelijke verhalen over de bevrijdingsstrijd. Deze schrijvers geven zwarte vrouwen een plaats in het nationale bevrijdingsdiscours op drie verschillende doch verwante manieren. Vera herschrijft in *Without a Name* de landpolitiek in de context van de bevrijding en laat zien dat vrouwen het land niet alleen als cultureel object beschouwen, dat zwarten moeten bevechten om het terug te krijgen; vrouwen beschouwen land vooral vanuit de eigen persoonlijke ervaringen met geweld die op dat land plaatsvonden. Vera laat dit zien door Mazvita, die kritiek heeft op Nyenyedzi's onbetwiste verbondenheid met het land; haar eigen positie wordt beïnvloed door persoonlijk ervaren seksueel geweld, waarbij ze het land als medeplichtig beschouwd. Vera and Nyamubaya ondermijnen in *It is Hard to Live Alone* and *That Special Place* de stabiliteit van het 'voorhoede/achterhoede'-onderscheid in de strijd, speciaal verwijzend naar de vrouwelijke bijdrage aan de bevrijdingsstrijd. Nyamubaya betwist het idee dat het voorhoedegevecht de meest belangrijke locatie van de oorlog is, en toont aan dat vrouwen ook bijdroegen in hun huiselijke omgeving.

Hove en Vera plaatsen de strijd van vrouwen in de bredere context van de bevrijdingsstrijd. Mijn bespreking in dit hoofdstuk is beïnvloed door het

lezen van Lyons' theorie van de plaats van vrouwen in de bevrijdingsstrijd in *Guns and Guerrillas Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle* (2004). Lyons stelt dat zwarte vrouwen zijn verbannen naar de marges van de bevrijdingsverhalen omdat "de populairste fictie over de oorlog door mannen is geschreven" (2004:6).

In hoofstuk 3 wordt de door de overheid betaalde Gukurahundi besproken als een van de misdaden, die – zoals Soyinka stelt – "continu herinneringen oproepen aan historische misstanden, die het Afrikaanse continent zijn aangedaan door anderen". (1999: xxiv). Soyinka's positie wordt duidelijk betwist door sommige Afrikaanse leiders. Robert Mugabe bijvoorbeeld zei het volgende toen zijn natie in een diepe multi-dimensionele crisis verkeerde: "herinneringen stapelen zich op, maar vooral de meest ver verwijderde, vooral die ons zagen lijden in de tijden dat we onder slavernij leefden, onder koloniaal gezag, die kunnen nooit vervagen, ze blijven altijd". (2005: 6). In Mugabe's woorden klinkt een begrip van de Zimbabwaanse geschiedenis met de nadruk op koloniaal onrecht door; hij negeert historische herinneringen aan meer recente, lokale mensenrechtenschendingen.

Deze eenzijdige historiografie wordt betwist door literaire interventies in het beeld van Gukurahundi. Schrijvers die in hoofdstuk drie passeren richten zich op Gukurahundi als een lokale, historische misstand, gepleegd door de regeringssoldaten die mensen zich altijd zouden herinneren. De teksten die ik in dit hoofdstuk bespreek zijn: Hove's *Shadows*, Vera's *The Stone Virgins*, Ndlovu's *Torn Posters*, Mlalazi's *Running with Mother*, Godwin's *Mukiwa* en Kilgore's *We are now all Zimbabweans*. Zij laten zien hoe zowel Zimbabwaanse als niet-Zimbabwaanse schrijvers de door de overheid verzwegen Gukurahundi weer bespreekbaar maken. Ze herschrijven de officiële visie erop vanuit verschillende standpunten. Het debat over Gukurahundi duurt voort, en wordt gevoerd door verschillende bevolkingsgroepen. Schrijvers en critici aan beide zijden sympathiseren, of spreken namens Gukurahundi's slachtoffers; ze tonen 'verlichte compassie' (Spivak, 1988: 140) of zijn verdedigers van de daders.

In hoofstuk 4 richt ik me op de manier waarop bepaalde schrijvers de Derde Chimurenga opnieuw verbeelden, op manieren die duidelijk het discours van de staat over dat onderwerp ondermijnen. De teksten die worden besproken zijn Hinodya's "Queues", Chinyani's "A Land of Starving Millionnaires", Hoba's "Specialization", Chingono's "Minister without Portfolio" en Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*. Met de analyse hiervan beoog ik een verbreding van

het begrip Third Chimurenga, door alle aspecten van de Zimbabwaanse geschiedenis die geassocieerd worden met de gepopulariseerde Zimbabwaanse crisis erbij te betrekken. Een herwaardering van deze term verbreedt de strekking van historische interpretatie. Met een verbrede betekenis kan men inzoomen op het veelal genegeerde gevecht van de meerderheid van de Zimbabwanen om de crisis te overleven; daarom koppel ik het woord Chimurenga los van de gebruikelijke associatie, het vechten tegen de koloniale vijand. Wanneer Robert Mugabe zegt "Wel, onze mensen zijn gelukkig, ze zijn erg gelukkig" in 2005 (2005: 7), laten Zimbabwaanse schrijven zien dat de meerderheid van het volk in armoede leeft, en onmogelijk gelukkig kunnen zijn.

Voor de bespreking van zulke ondermijningen van de officiële regeringsretoriek over de Derde Chimurenga crisis heb ik een paar korte verhalen van Chinodya, Chinyani, Hoba, en Tagwira's roman uitgezocht. Deze teksten schetsen allemaal de falende ambitie van de regering tijdens de Derde Chimurenga. De nadruk ligt op de invasies van landelijke boerderijen en hun verband met de stedelijke crisis. De sociale en politieke situaties in deze teksten vinden bevestiging in revisionistische historische vertellingen. Ik gebruik het beeld van het toilet in Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* om dit punt te benadrukken. In Tagwira's roman is het openbare toilet in het Mbare busstation een "kleine, vuile ruimte, stinkend naar uitwerpselen" doch "een verschoten bordje meldde dat de toiletten regelmatig werden schoongemaakt" (278). Dit beeld belicht de heersende vervormingen in het staatsdiscours over de Derde Chimurenga. Zolang als de regering het verhaal van de Derde Chimurenga herschikt en de realiteit deels verandert, zal 'het vuile toilet, stinkend naar uitwerpselen' het beeld zijn dat de realiteit het best benadert.

Doch de relatie tussen geschiedenis en fictie is problematisch. In alle in deze thesis besproken verhalen zijn schrijvers zich bewust van de vloeibare grens tussen geschiedenis en fictie, en elk besproken werk is een unieke interpretatie van en reflexie op belangrijke aspecten van de Zimbabwaanse geschiedenis: de geschiedenis van de vrijheidsstrijd, van Gukurahundi en van de Derde Chimurenga. Sinds het type literatuur dat ik bespreek in deze studie in dialoog staat met de geschiedenis door deze te betwisten, heb ik een aanzienlijk aantal historische bronnen geraadpleegd. Teksten van historici als Ranger, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Muzondidya en Lyons zijn hiervoor gebruikt.