



Lena Englund

Memoir in Transit

Whiteness, Displacement and Journalism in Peter Godwin's
Autobiographical Writing





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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim and Scope

Few minorities have been as contested and controversial as white Zimbabweans in Africa. Descending from European settlers, who appropriated large parts of the land in what was to be called Rhodesia and set their own rules for government, their place and political status have changed greatly since the beginning of colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Going from complete control and power to a greatly reduced existence in contemporary Zimbabwe, whites have often found themselves with no other option than emigration. The lives and misfortunes of white Zimbabweans have more recently been negotiated in autobiographies in particular, and a number of memoirs have been published in the last two decades. This literary expression of whiteness, displacement, and an often quite nostalgic approach to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe has been criticized by scholars (cf. Pilosof, 2012; McDermott Hughes, 2010; Primorac, 2010; Hove, 2014a, b) and the writers in question have often been accused of reinforcing a particularly 'Rhodesian' perspective which disregards the lives and realities of black Zimbabweans as well as the colonial past. Some of these writers have focused on reminiscing about their childhoods, which were to a large part dominated by privilege in heavily segregated Rhodesia (cf. Wendy Kann, Lauren St John, Alexandra Fuller). Others have made it their task to document more current events such as political instability, violence, and corruption in Zimbabwe (cf. Philip Barclay, Andrew Meldrum, Douglas Rogers). One writer in particular, namely Peter Godwin, has covered both his own childhood as well as recent political developments, and has written both from a very personal perspective as well as engaging in a more professionally distanced approach. To date (in 2017), Godwin has published three memoirs detailing his early childhood in Rhodesia and life beyond.

These memoirs have helped build Godwin a career as an authority on matters related to Zimbabwe, and as a writer and journalist with a particular focus on Southern Africa. The aim of this dissertation is to analyse Godwin's autobiographical writing, particularly with regard to this professional

dimension. The approach taken here to his publications will be, to a significant extent, contextual. Godwin's position of authority raises questions about the historical place of whites in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and the country's transformation after the end of colonialism, most urgently in the context of representation and the lives of present-day Zimbabweans. The way he portrays himself and his own life in his writing remains at the core throughout. Autobiography is a popular genre at the moment, and it is something from which Godwin's memoirs have benefited, having largely been published for Anglophone audiences with easy access to printed media. Their appeal to readers and their place in the literary market is another aspect of this analysis, opening up new paths for the study of contemporary life writing, a hybrid genre which, in particular, originates from complex historical, political and geographical locations.

Godwin's early life is documented in *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa*, which was published in 1996. It is an exploration of his childhood and upbringing in Rhodesia, his participation in the civil war and the situation in Zimbabwe at the eve of independence, as well as his expulsion from the country in the mid-1980s. *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* (2006, henceforth *Crocodile*) is the second memoir and it recounts events in the early 2000s, focusing particularly on his aging parents and his constant travels back and forth between Zimbabwe and the USA. The political dimension is present to a greater extent than in *Mukiwa*, and the third memoir, *The Fear: The Last Days of Robert Mugabe* (2010), takes this development further. *The Fear* reports from the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008 in Zimbabwe and the aftermath, and is built around interviews with people targeted by the violence that erupted. The memoirs illustrate Godwin's life from two perspectives: his personal ambitions, struggles and shortcomings, as well as his professional capacity as journalist and expert in the making on matters related to Zimbabwe. These two aspects remain central to this study, as they demonstrate the complexity of his existence as a white, diasporic Zimbabwean writer and journalist. This study engages in a detailed analysis of Godwin's three Zimbabwe-related memoirs from perspectives of whiteness, displacement, and literary journalism. His place in the literary market, where books are advertised, sold and read, is also a central part of my discussion.

The personal and the professional dimensions generate questions in relation to his whiteness, his displacement and his work as a journalist. What is Godwin's status like, as an insider and outsider in Zimbabwe at the same

time, and as someone who has both been forced out of the country and has left it voluntarily so many times? Where can Godwin's writing be located in terms of postcolonial literature and African literature? What roles do the historical reality and colonial legacy play for Godwin, and how does he express this in his memoirs? What conclusions can be drawn with regard to other white Zimbabwean writers, and what are the reasons behind the great number of memoirs emerging in recent years? Last but not least, the question of who has the right to write Zimbabwe, to represent the nation and its people, remains topical in current criticism of both this particular genre of writing as well as African literature as a whole. These questions are addressed in this dissertation in four main chapters that centre on the literary market and publishing industry, on whiteness, displacement and last but not least on literary journalism and ethics.

Previous studies of Godwin's memoirs and the memoirs of other white Zimbabweans have often focused on the farming situation (Pilossof, 2012), the question of land and belonging (McDermott Hughes, 2010), or identity-making and the workings of memory (Harris, 2005; Chennells, 2005). In this dissertation the discussion builds on previous criticism but goes further and beyond earlier studies (Harris, 2005; Primorac, 2010; Linfield, 2007; Chennells, 2005; Hove, 2014a,b; Tagwirei, 2015), simultaneously offering the first extensive examination of Peter Godwin's Zimbabwe-related memoirs.

The historical and political realities of Zimbabwe remain crucial throughout this study. An understanding of both the colonial era as well as the current situation in the country is essential for a thorough and coherent analysis of Godwin's memoirs. Being sensitive to that reality is of utmost importance, also due to the controversy surrounding this writing. Hence, parts of this dissertation focus on definitions of various kinds. For example, in relation to chapter four, I ask if Godwin is diasporic, and if he is, what does that mean for himself and for his writing? Calling him displaced suggests involuntariness, a forced existence outside his preferred home. These notions all have political connotations as well and a discussion of such concepts is needed.

The term 'white' is controversial too in many regards, and my decision to refer to Godwin and his fellow writers as white Zimbabweans can be criticized for a number of reasons. In an ideal world, epithets such as 'white' or 'black' need not be used any more. People would be referred to as simply people, and no memoir or novel would be marketed as representing a certain subgroup, chronicling the specific experiences of that particular group.

Colour would not matter. Godwin himself makes several references in his memoirs to an existence where colour and race are no longer issues, for example in *Crocodile* when attending his sister Georgina's wedding: "[r]ace, it seems, is finally losing its headlock on our identities in this little corner of Africa" (*Crocodile*, 40). Later, at his father's funeral, he notes: "I realize that my mother is not alone, that my parents are loved and accepted, and I realize just how colour-blind their society has become" (*Crocodile*, 320). In *The Fear* (p. 157) he cites Morgan Tsvangirai, the opposition leader, who stated that "we Zimbabweans are non-racial now" and talks about Roy Bennett, a white politician belonging to the same party whose "story is no longer about race, it has moved beyond that" (*The Fear*, 241). There is a clear desire in Godwin's writing to move beyond whiteness and issues relating to colour, something which stems from his own discomfort with his whiteness, a discomfort made visible particularly through his roles as a child of settlers, a journalist travelling to Southern Africa and an immigrant in the USA. Whiteness becomes performative in the sense that the way it is talked about and referred to play a part in defining it as a concept. Hence, by adopting these different roles in his writing he performs whiteness in a variety of ways which will be explored in due course. The somewhat naïve claim that colour has lost its meaning is perhaps a form of wishful thinking, but the historical reality of Zimbabwe and the colonial legacy make ignoring colour impossible. Colour remains at the centre of Godwin's writing, even if he wishes it were otherwise. This is a central observation with respect to the present dissertation.

A relevant example can be found in South Africa, where a new generation has emerged and which is called the *born-free generation*, a term that refers to people who were born after the end of apartheid and never experienced the South Africa of systematic racial segregation. This generation now has a significant task ahead of them, one which will determine South Africa's future: what will become of the rainbow nation (cf. Boryga, 2015; Leithead, 2015; Distiller, 2008; Rotich, Ilieva and Walunywa, 2015; recently also popularized by Russell, 2009 and Foster, 2012). Such a discussion proves that colour and the legacy of colonialism are still being negotiated in South Africa as well, despite being a nation which has made serious efforts to reconcile and heal after apartheid. Whites in Rhodesia had an elevated, powerful place during the colonial era, and much of both Godwin's writing as well as that of other writers is concerned with issues emanating from a shared colonial past. Just as young South Africans still negotiate their colonial past, white Zimbabweans cannot escape their own legacy and the burden of history

either. Emily Witt (2011) has neatly summarized the problem with this genre of white Zimbabwean writing and the controversy surrounding it. She argues that “[t]he white-person-in-Africa memoir is generally fraught territory, mostly because even well-earned self-pity can be trying for readers, given the history of white people in Africa”.

Other scholars, for example Maly et al. (2012, 759), argue that nostalgia narratives present a positive image of a particular person and his or her past, while ignoring the negative parts of history. This is true to some extent for white Zimbabwean autobiography as well. The realities of these writers in Zimbabwe have been formed largely due to their privileges, which in turn have everything to do with their colour. Using the term ‘white’ to describe these writers is hence a necessity that stems from a colonial past. Failing to address these issues would suggest ignorance with regard to Zimbabwe’s colonial legacy and the particular existence of this group of Zimbabweans. An insightful discussion of white writing as opposed to black can be found in David Attwell’s work *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History* (2006), where he engages in dialogue with J.M. Coetzee’s essay collection *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988). One of Attwell’s conclusions is that the legacy of the past still defines both white and black writing (Attwell 2006, 15). Moving away from explicitly historical realities in relation to discourses of race is not yet possible, and here I strongly agree. Coetzee (1988, 11) defines white writing as something not inherently different from black writing, but that it is white because it “is generated by the concerns of people no longer European, not yet African”. That is a complex notion with regard to whiteness and white writing, suggesting that Africanness is something that can eventually be accessed or earned. This discussion proves how sensitive the subject of whiteness is, and it remains central to the present study.

In order to locate this study in a wider context, it is relevant to note that this dissertation has several dimensions that can add something to the current discussions of autobiography and memoir, the future of African literature, but first and foremost the complex literary legacy of descendants of white settlers in Africa. African literature is more relevant than ever at the moment, with young celebrated writers such as for example Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie from Nigeria, Brian Chikwava from Zimbabwe and Lauren Beukes from South Africa being read around the world and representing varied backgrounds and different literary genres. Questions concerning what African literature is, what it should be, and who should write it are also

relevant (cf. Krishnan, 2014), and they once again highlight the complexity of writing such as that by Godwin. Interestingly enough, very few memoirs by non-white Zimbabwean writers have been published, at least not to the same extent as memoirs by white writers. There is for example Geoffrey Nyarota's autobiography *Against the Grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean Newsmen* (2006), which is particularly about the years before and after independence. Then there is also Fay Chung's memoir *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*, also published in 2006, which documents her life as a daughter of Chinese parents. She grew up in Southern Rhodesia, lived through the civil war and later worked towards a political career. More autobiographies are hopefully forthcoming, and there is certainly one particular narrative many historians at least would eagerly read, were it ever to be published, namely the memoir of current leader of state Robert Mugabe. Morgan Tsvangirai published his memoirs in 2011, titled *At the Deep End*, and former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith's controversial memoir *Bitter Harvest* (originally published in 1997 and later updated and reprinted) emerged two decades ago. These personal narratives of political leaders attest to the complex political reality of Zimbabwe and suggest a need for documentation of different versions of the past. Everyone wants their views of events to be made public, and the contest seems to at least partly concern which of these views will become the official version of history.

Primarily, black writers in Zimbabwe seem to have chosen fiction as their medium. NoViolet Bulawayo, Brian Chikwava, Petina Gappah, Shimmer Chinodya, Irene Sabatini and Tsitsi Dangarembga among many other contemporary writers have published a number of novels and short stories in recent years. The reasons behind this choice can only be speculated upon, but the emergence of so many white memoirs cannot be dismissed as pure coincidence. A significant number of white-authored novels have also been published alongside the memoirs in recent decades. Writers such as Andrea Eames, Ian Holding and Lauren Liebenberg have all written novels relating to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe that were published since the land reform in 2000. White writers remain preoccupied with the past also in fiction, which is evident in for example Eames's *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011). The novel follows the life of Elise on a white farm from the 1990s onward until things begin to collapse for white citizens due to the land reform. Holding's novel *Unfeeling* (2005) tells the story of Davey, a white teenager whose parents are killed in an attack on their farm. Last but not least, Liebenberg's novel *The Voluptuous Delights of Peanut Butter and Jam* (2008) is set in

colonial Rhodesia and follows two white girls growing up on a farm during the civil war. Liebenberg offers a quite troubling view of the civil war in a “Historical Note” at the beginning of her novel. She writes that “landlocked Rhodesia was besieged by hostile neighbours”, and that “[e]ventually, isolated, buckling under economic pressure and faced with a growing body count, the embattled Rhodesians surrendered” (*Voluptuous Delights*). These passages prove that the white Zimbabwean version of history can still be controversial, and the fear that it would become official is not unfounded. Liebenberg’s sympathy with white Rhodesia is explicit and the “embattled Rhodesians” suggests that in her opinion, their cause was, if not noble, at least justified.

The literary expression of white Zimbabweans has thus been prolific, both in terms of autobiographical writing and fiction, and the themes and topics remain similar. Even though this may even enable critics to talk of Zimbabwean nostalgia narratives as a subgenre, it is also necessary to note, however, that there are writers who have chosen a completely different path. One striking example in this context is John Eppel. In an interview with Drew Shaw (2012, 102), he was asked how his writing is similar to and different from that of Godwin, Fuller and others. He replied that the differences have to do with him still being present in Zimbabwe, not writing memoirs, and focusing on an African readership. The similarities are, according to Eppel, aspects “of which I am not proud: nostalgia, self-pity...” (Shaw 2012, 102). The writing on which I wish to focus in this thesis, then, obviously does not represent white writing in and from Zimbabwe as a whole.

In the narratives referred to above, life irrevocably transforms from a peaceful and prosperous existence to a violent, incomprehensible present. The gap between the past and the present is often emphasized. Godwin’s memoirs, however, move beyond these common themes of land reform, farm invasions and the uprooting experience of migration, which have often been dominant. His writing engages with a number of topics and there is a clear effort to go beyond simple nostalgia and privileged childhood in a paradise run by whites (an existence termed “post-belonging” by McDermott Hughes 2010, 141). Hence, his memoirs provide material for a more thorough analysis of the literary expression of descendants of white settlers in Southern Africa. Their experiences can address questions about colonial history, migration, socio-economic divides and unresolved racial issues. The colonial era defines this writing still to this day, and it is inseparable from the days of

white supremacy in Rhodesia. This is particularly visible in Godwin's often painful negotiations of politics, place and history.

Even though not many black memoirs have emerged in Zimbabwe, they seem to be coming from other African settings. Writers with Kenyan backgrounds such as for example Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Wangari Maathai and Binyavanga Wainaina have all published their memoirs within the previous decade. They are all well-known public or literary figures, and their autobiographical writing is also most certainly fascinating from a national as well as historical perspective. African autobiography is thus a genre that seems to still be emerging, and more of such personal narratives will hopefully be published in coming years. The title of this dissertation, "Memoir in Transit", refers to the current popularity of memoirs, the wide range of subjects dealt with within such writing, as well as Godwin's personal life and the experience of living in between two cultures and two families. The memoirs act as a bridge between these locations, both physically and psychologically, and also connect Godwin to other white Zimbabwean writers. Thus, memoirs as genre have changed significantly in previous decades and Godwin's life as depicted in his own memoirs also remains in transit. The change and development in his writing, from *Mukiwa* to *Crocodile* to *The Fear*, also add to this transitory dimension. Being in transit suggests suspense, waiting for something to come or for something that has already gone. It is a no man's land of packed bags, intercontinental flights and no place to call home. Autobiographical writing also resides in that no man's land; it is a genre of writing that builds on memories and lived life, but as no childhood or specific memory can ever be perfectly recreated, it is always a futile search for the past in the present.

The central aims of this dissertation hence emerge from a complex context. The three memoirs that are the focus of the analysis come to represent the genre of white Zimbabwean writing at large, while this study also challenges notions of representation in relation to Godwin's writing. The general aim is not to discuss *all* memoirs by white writers, set in Zimbabwe in one way or another, that have ever been published, but to focus on Peter Godwin and his autobiographical works that centre on Zimbabwe. To write about him and only him would mean ignoring the outpouring of these similar memoirs in the last two decades. The overlaps in themes and topics covered by the different writers as outlined above are indicative of a larger phenomenon, of a true genre in the making. It is a genre that as far as I am concerned has not been examined to this extent before. This genre is defined

to a large extent by colour, by the settler background that many of the writers have. Their own experiences have also been defined by migration and this has had a huge impact on their writing. One of my arguments in this dissertation is that Godwin along with these other writers form a kind of network or writers' community through their memoirs and become part of a larger phenomenon of migration literature with their diasporic perspectives. They grew up in, or lived in, a particular place at a particular time and felt the need to write about their experiences, for reasons I attempt to uncover in my analysis. However, Godwin remains at the centre throughout, despite the more general aims.

This introductory chapter presents Peter Godwin in more detail, as well as his memoirs and other publications. A brief account of Zimbabwean history is also necessary, as well as a particular focus on the land reform which began in 2000. Many writers studied here have been either personally affected by it or used it as a major source of inspiration for their writing, and it remains central to this study. Once again the historical context is more relevant than ever, and it is utterly complex. This introduction will also present each chapter briefly, and the theoretical framework used for the analysis and discussion in particular. Before introducing Godwin, it is also necessary to position myself. A lot of the discussion surrounding these memoirs written by people connected in one way or another to the white elite in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe has been about their privileged position (cf. McDermott Hughes, 2010 and Primorac, 2010), and the question as to whether these writers provide a Western gaze or an African perspective is central. My own perspective as a researcher is obviously one of privilege as well, coming from a quite homogeneously white European society where university education is still free and relatively accessible. My interest in the white Zimbabwean minority and their autobiographical texts stems, however, from the controversy surrounding these publications. They also represent a wider phenomenon of migration literature, albeit from a rather privileged position. As this genre of writing is so recent, the theoretical framework as well needs to be tailored to the genre's needs, as it remains quite contested. This is my task in this study, and one in which I engage with respect for the historical reality of Zimbabwe as well as for the experiences of the writers themselves and their surrounding society.

1.2 Peter Godwin

Peter Godwin was born in 1957 in Southern Rhodesia to a mother of British origin, who worked as a doctor at clinics in the Rhodesian countryside, and a father of Polish origin, who was a manager at a wattle factory (*Mukiwa*, 22; *Crocodile*, 113). He had an older sister called Jain who was killed in 1978 during the civil war, at the age of 27 years, and a younger sister called Georgina, who was only eleven when Jain died (*Mukiwa*, 312-315). This suggests that Jain was born in 1951 and Georgina in 1967, but very little is disclosed in Godwin's memoirs about his relationship to his sisters during his childhood. Georgina features more in his later writing. Godwin's parents arrived in Southern Africa after the Second World War, after having married in Britain and Godwin's father had become a British citizen (*Crocodile*, 150-151). Godwin grew up unaware of his father's true origins, believing he was British. Godwin's childhood was stereotypically colonial and white in many regards, and he grew up with a black nanny Violet and a black gardener called Alfred, as well as Knighty the cook (*Mukiwa*, 23). At the age of six he became a boarder at his school, instead of being picked up every evening by his parents. The security situation had deteriorated due to political tensions and that was a central reason for the change (*Mukiwa*, 59). At the age of ten Godwin transferred to another school in Umtali (*Mukiwa*, 145) which is now called Mutare. When Godwin was fourteen, the school closed down and he moved to Mangula with his parents, which was further north. The Godwins had previously lived in the east close to the Mozambique border (*Mukiwa*, 165). He began school in Salisbury, now Harare (*Mukiwa*, 169). The civil war intensified during Godwin's last years at school, and he also received his call-up papers at the age of sixteen (*Mukiwa*, 207). When school finished some time later, Godwin was drafted into the Rhodesian police forces and eventually stationed in Matabeleland (*Mukiwa*, 239).

Godwin tried to get permission to go to university and was refused several times (*Mukiwa*, 271), but eventually he was allowed release from military service and was able to go to Cambridge (*Mukiwa*, 308). This was in 1977. Godwin journeyed back in 1978 to bury his sister Jain, and as a result of returning to Rhodesia, he was forced to go back into the war (*Mukiwa*, 312-316). Eventually he was released from service once more and left Rhodesia for three years, coming back to the newly independent Zimbabwe with a law degree (*Mukiwa*, 325-327). He started working as a lawyer, becoming involved in a high-profile case which could not be won because of corruption.

Due to the inevitable outcome of this case, Godwin lost faith in practising law and went back to writing his doctoral thesis and working as a freelance journalist to make a living (*Mukiwa*, 338). He soon became aware of violence in Matabeleland and went to investigate it, only to find that an operation called *Gukurahundi* was being carried out, and that its purpose was to eliminate all dissidents in the area. It was thus a manifestation of politically motivated violence aimed at supposed supporters of ZAPU, the oppositional party Zimbabwe African People's Union (*Mukiwa*, 350-353). Godwin published a report about what he had seen and heard, and was eventually forced to leave Zimbabwe as well as being declared an enemy of the state (*Mukiwa*, 385). He lived in South Africa and the UK but was able to return to Zimbabwe after several years in exile (*Mukiwa*, 400).

Godwin writes in *Crocodile* that he found out in 1996 (the year of the publication of *Mukiwa*) that his father was seriously ill and had had a heart attack (*Crocodile*, 8). He also recounts where he had spent much of the previous decade, explaining that he lived for five years in South Africa from 1986 onward, and was after that based in London (*Crocodile*, 10). He later moved to the USA. In 1999, Godwin and his partner Joanna Coles had their first son Thomas (*Crocodile*, 52; *The Three of U.S.*), and not long after that, Mugabe began the controversial land reform programme. Godwin kept travelling back and forth between Harare and New York where he was living with Joanna and Thomas (*Crocodile*, 41). They had a second son called Hugo a couple of years later (*Crocodile*, 230), and in 2004, Godwin's father died (*Crocodile*, 304). His mother eventually moved to London to live with Georgina and her daughter Xanthe (*The Fear*, 1-2), removing the last family bond to Zimbabwe. The trajectory of Godwin's life as depicted in his memoirs is vague at times, for example with regard to the exact years of his exile or the birth of his children. This is information Godwin did not include when writing about his personal life, and all of the events in his life presented here are based on his own interpretation. But it functions as a chronological guide and background to his writing, as presented by the writer himself.

1.2.1 *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa*

A significant part of the information above about Godwin's life is taken from *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996), which is a childhood memoir. The

text begins with the murder of the Godwins' neighbour and friend Piet Oberholzer, which in many ways marks the beginning of the civil unrest in Rhodesia, at least for Godwin himself. This book was written and published not long after Godwin had been able to return to Zimbabwe again after his period of forced exile. The memoir traces his life through his childhood and years of adolescence, into the civil war as a police officer in the Rhodesian forces and finally to the time when he left Rhodesia for Cambridge towards the end of the war where he was to earn his law degree. *Mukiwa* ends with Godwin's return to the newly independent Zimbabwe, his expulsion a few years later and then, eventually, the return a decade later in the 1990s. The edition used in this study was published by Picador, and features some photographs from Godwin's childhood on its front and back covers. The memoir also has a map directly after the preface and it focuses particularly on the places where Godwin lived as child. The addition of photographs in autobiographies has been insightfully explored by Hazel Tafadzwa Ngoshi (2012, 56) who argues that photographs are "a visual record of the history and experiences of the autobiographical subject". Their presence in Godwin's memoirs is thus noteworthy.

Parts of *Mukiwa* are written from a child's perspective, most likely in an attempt to recreate events as Godwin remembered them. Tone and style are two aspects of Godwin's writing that change profoundly throughout his three memoirs, and *Mukiwa* is in many respects more neutral than the other two as it is centred on Godwin's childhood with much less political involvement. The memoir is dedicated to Godwin's mother and father, "with love", and in its preface Godwin has written that the book "is intended as a memoir rather than an autobiography". Laura Marcus (1994, 3) explains that the distinction most often made between autobiography and memoirs is that the former depicts life "as a totality", whereas the latter "offer only an anecdotal depiction of people and events". Such a definition is a necessary simplification of a highly complex literary field, but as Godwin has referred to his own book as memoir, I will follow his generic decision.

Mukiwa was also published before most of the other memoirs discussed in this study, and is in that sense both pioneering and ground-breaking, moving towards a style of autobiographical writing which is markedly different from that of for example Doris Lessing who also grew up in Rhodesia. *Mukiwa* is from another era engaging in a different discourse which is largely based on the bond to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, whereas the first part of Lessing's autobiography *Under My Skin: Volume I of My Autobiography, to 1949* (1994)

is a complex story of her colonial childhood and difficult relationship to her mother, offering introspection with regard to her marriages and political activities. She remains critical, perceptive and analytic throughout, with the hindsight of the well-established, well-known and much-loved Nobel Prize-winning author she had become. The many layers of *Under My Skin* make it a true autobiography according to Marcus's definition. Lessing was also considerably older than Godwin when publishing the first part of her autobiography (she was born in 1919). Another aspect of *Mukiwa* that sets it apart from previous writing is the child's voice which resurfaces in other recent memoirs as well (cf. Fuller, St John, Scott). Godwin is forging a new tradition with *Mukiwa*, one which has come to influence a large number of other white Zimbabwean writers and one which breaks with traditional autobiography where the elderly adult reflects on past life.

1.2.2 *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*

The second memoir is *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* (2006), which covers the period between 1996 and 2004. The book thus continues where *Mukiwa* left off and the focus of this memoir is largely on Godwin's parents and especially his father who died in 2004. One of the most defining revelations in *Crocodile* is Godwin's discovery that his father George was of Polish as well as Jewish origin and that he had lost most of his family during the Holocaust. George's real name was Kazimierz Jerzy Goldfarb and he later took his wife's name when they married, taking on a stereotypically British identity (*Crocodile*, 128, 151). These personal and very significant events in Godwin's life coincide with the escalating economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. After the failed referendum for a new constitution in 2000, Mugabe stepped up the politically motivated violence and also set the new land reform in motion. I will explain this reform in more detail when discussing the recent history of Zimbabwe, but for the moment it may suffice to say that it led to a huge number of displaced farmers and farmworkers. The effects on food production, national economy and the demographics of Zimbabwe have been devastating. Godwin interviewed some of these farmers and became quite emotional when reflecting over the losses people had experienced and the state Zimbabwe was in. The tone and style are quite different from *Mukiwa*, where Godwin remains less political and more anchored in the past.

Crocodile is divided into chapters which are named according to the month and year of the events described. They also evolve to a great deal around his travels to Zimbabwe to visit his parents and to work on various journalistic assignments. The book is dedicated to “the next generation: Hugo, Thomas, Holly and Xanthe”. Holly is Godwin’s daughter from a previous relationship (*Crocodile*, 41) and Xanthe is Georgina’s daughter. There is an *In Memoriam* inscription as well to George Godwin. Just as *Mukiwa* had maps, the edition of the work I will be using (published by Picador) also contains a map of Zimbabwe and one of Sub-Saharan Africa. At the end of the memoir, there is an *Acknowledgements* section where Godwin thanks various people and institutions who have helped him, as well as his immediate family. The memoir also has photographs in the middle of the book, and these depict George Godwin’s relatives, Godwin’s own childhood, as well as some more recent ones of his children. *Crocodile* begins and ends with the funeral of Godwin’s father, and the text in these pages is exactly the same. It is an interesting stylistic choice, and it emphasizes the discourse of loss which is present throughout the memoir. These losses are often expressed in angry and resentful notes, something which separates *Crocodile* from the two other memoirs.

1.2.3 *The Fear: The Last Days of Robert Mugabe*

The third and last book by Godwin examined here is *The Fear: The Last Days of Robert Mugabe* (2010), later subtitled and reprinted as “*Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe*”. The second subtitle is awkward and the reason for renaming the memoir is probably tied to the fact that Mugabe did not step down after the elections in 2008, despite Godwin’s prediction that he would be forced to do so. Keeping the original subtitle would have been more effective and less overly dramatic, as the book in itself is dramatic enough. *The Fear* is also divided into a large number of chapters, and these are titled according to the content of the chapter. At the beginning of the memoir, Godwin had just arrived in Harare in 2008 to “dance on Robert Mugabe’s political grave” (*The Fear*, 5). The story continues with a brief account of Mugabe’s life and interviews with farmers who were still hanging onto their land or political activists supporting MDC (the oppositional party Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai). The first part of the book

also has an air of suspense, as Godwin waits for the announcement of the official results from the parliamentary and presidential elections. The theme of being in transit surfaces again, as Zimbabwe is a country in transit in *The Fear*, waiting for a regime change that may or may not happen during the course of the book.

Another significant storyline that runs through the memoir is Godwin's travels with Georgina to their childhood homes. Some of the homes were found in complete disrepair, and there is a strong symbolism here. The door to his childhood has inevitably and irrevocably closed, and as this memoir is much less concerned with personal matters than the others, the conclusion can also be made that Godwin is moving beyond traditional memoir. A re-run of the elections was later announced, from which Morgan Tsvangirai had to withdraw due to the increasing violence against his supporters (*The Fear*, 184-185). The interviews with people affected by the violence in Zimbabwe are contrasted against Godwin's life in New York. Despite being much less personal than the previous ones, the personal dimension is still present even though it remains more subtle. It portrays a more detached Godwin, one more focused on being a journalist than a memoirist. His complex relationship to Zimbabwe has come full circle, beginning with the civil war and his childhood in Rhodesia and moving on to his life as a young man expelled from his country of birth. At that point he became a journalist and writer and kept returning to Zimbabwe to take care of his parents and try to make sense of his complicated heritage, eventually reaching some kind of closure with regard to that legacy. He also became the reporter that he thought Zimbabwe needed during a volatile period. These three memoirs are altogether quite different from each other, but they provide an examination and documentation of his relationship to Zimbabwe and his professional career as journalist and writer.

The Fear also has an *Acknowledgements* section at the end of the memoir, and this one is rather extensive as it contains a long list of people who had helped Godwin in one way or another. It also has a *Resources* section where Godwin suggests ways for readers to help people in Zimbabwe. The dedication is this time not directed towards members of Godwin's family, but to the people of Zimbabwe. Godwin also cites Nelson Mandela in an epigraph, a quotation which speaks of fear. Just like the two other memoirs, this one also contains a map of Zimbabwe. The maps in all three memoirs clearly function as a guide to help readers locate Godwin on his travels and to get an idea of the geography of Zimbabwe. The assumption would thus be

that readers are not familiar with Zimbabwe from before, at least not geographically, which might be an underestimation of his readership. The extensive accounts of Zimbabwe's history and politics attest to the same thing. This memoir contains no photographs relating to Godwin, either on the cover or in the book itself. The cover of the edition used here has a large picture of Mugabe above the title. This change confirms the move away from the personal investment in Zimbabwe to a more political and professional approach.

1.2.4 Other Writing

Apart from the three memoirs presented above, Godwin has also collaborated in the writing and publishing of a few other works. His very first publication was written together with Ian Hancock, and published in 1993: *'Rhodesians Never Die': The Impact of War and Political Change on White Rhodesia, c. 1970-1980*. Just as the title suggests, it is a study of the lives of white people in Rhodesia during the end of minority rule. The work has two *in memoriam* inscriptions of which one is to Jain Godwin "killed in the war, near Shamva, on 22 April 1978, aged 27". It is a well-researched study providing information about the civil war particularly from a white perspective. Another collaboration is *The Three of U.S.* (1999), written together with Godwin's wife Joanna Coles. It is a kind of diary detailing the couple's experiences through the pregnancy and birth of their first son Thomas. Godwin and Coles wrote every second chapter and the book thus contains two sometimes quite different perspectives and two distinct voices. This diary has little to do with Godwin's life in Zimbabwe, and is almost solely focused on his life in New York and the process of becoming a father. A third co-published work is *Wild at Heart* (2007), which contains photographs and texts about wildlife and natural surroundings in Southern Africa. Godwin has produced the texts and Chris Johns the photography. It has been published by the National Geographic Society, for which magazine Godwin has written several articles as well. Despite being something of a coffee table book, *Wild at Heart* has a few personal comments as well. Godwin is clearly unable to remain completely detached when writing about Zimbabwe, or Africa. Godwin has dedicated the book to "my young sons, Hugo and Thomas, in the

hope that you will one day be able to take up your African heritage”. This alludes both to his displacement as well as to an African identity.

As listed in both the memoirs as well as on Godwin’s own homepage, he has published a number of articles for several renowned journals and magazines such as the *New York Times* magazine, *Vanity Fair* and *National Geographic*. Some of these articles will feature in this analysis as well, in particular in the discussion about Godwin’s journalistic efforts and the events he recounts in *The Fear*. Two articles which shed light on Godwin’s professional career as journalist are “Zimbabwe: A Land Possessed”, published by *National Geographic* in 2003 and “Day of the Crocodile” published by *Vanity Fair* in 2008. The articles were published around the same time as *Crocodile* and *The Fear*, and feature similar stories as the memoirs, but often from a slightly different perspective. Godwin’s journalistic career is also mentioned many times in his memoirs, in particular in *Crocodile* where several of the trips he made to Southern Africa were paid for by a journal or magazine and the purpose of the trip was to gather material for an article. During these trips he often managed to visit his parents in Harare as well. The journalistic aspect of Godwin’s writing is significant as it permeates so much of his writing, and therefore his articles remain relevant for my discussion.

1.3 White Zimbabwean Autobiography as a Genre

According to Philippe Lejeune, autobiography can be defined as a “[r]etrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality” (Lejeune [1975] 1989, 4). Lejeune also explains that memoir does not fill all these requirements, which is in accordance with Marcus’s (1994) definition of memoir. Autobiographical writing, memoir, life narrative and nonfiction could all be used in this study to define the writing at the centre. However, Godwin chose to define his writing as memoir, and it is the term used here as well. Furthermore, both Lejeune and Marcus agree that an autobiography is something more complete, a “totality” (Marcus, 1994), whereas a memoir only reveals selected parts of one’s life or focuses on a particular period. That is exactly what Godwin is doing in his writing, even in

The Fear which is about a very short period of time. Other writers have also focused on specific periods in their lives; for example childhood or the land reform. Memoir cannot be quite so easily distinguished from autobiography or any other terms and labels, but another question entirely is about what really defines a genre. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *genre* can be defined as a “particular style or category of works of art; esp. a type of literary work characterized by a particular form, style, or purpose”.

The memoirs and autobiographies I examine in this dissertation do have a certain form, and most of these writers are still fairly young. Their memoirs are about a certain period in their lives, and are attached to a certain place. Godwin himself was born in the 1950s and several writers are even younger than that, born in the late 1960s for example (cf. Alexandra Fuller and Douglas Rogers). These autobiographical texts are not the works of people outlining the trajectories of their entire lives, but have been written by people who are still active professionals and often have children in their teens or early adulthood (cf. Godwin, Fuller, Wendy Kann, Catherine Buckle). Certain themes also emerge as especially prominent, for example the land reform or political instability in Zimbabwe. Other writers have engaged in the journalistic mode of writing, for example Philip Barclay, Andrew Meldrum and Douglas Rogers. Peter Godwin is thus a fascinating case for a study such as this: his writing combines a large variety of topics and he approaches issues both from a personal as well as a professional perspective. That does not, however, mean that he represents the entire group of white Zimbabwean writers, even though his memoirs allow for a discussion of a number of topics which emerge in other works as well.

Not all writers who have published memoirs recently chronicling their experiences in Zimbabwe were born there. Philip Barclay for example, with his memoir *Zimbabwe: Years of Hope and Despair* (2011), was a British diplomat stationed in Zimbabwe from 2006 to 2009, and he partly covers the same period as Godwin does in *The Fear*. Andrew Meldrum was not born in Zimbabwe either, and writes in *Where We Have Hope: A Memoir of Zimbabwe* (2004) that he arrived in the country in 1980 (p. 19) and was deported in 2003. Thus he spent a considerable amount of time in the country; more than twenty years. Alexandra Fuller, who has been equally prolific in her writing as Godwin with four memoirs so far detailing her Southern African experiences and those of her family, was born in England, but her parents only stayed there briefly and soon returned to Rhodesia where Fuller spent most of her childhood. Fuller is complex also in the sense

that her family moved to Malawi and later to Zambia when she was in her teens. Her experience is accordingly not solely Rhodesian/Zimbabwean but a mix of having lived in several countries in Southern Africa. Many of these writers have a mixed background, and this hybrid experience is clearly visible in their writing. Thus the incentive to write about personal experiences from Zimbabwe has less to do with heritage and place of birth than with other experiences, and the political situation in particular has inspired a number of these memoirs. Meldrum and Barclay belong to a group of professionals who decided to write about their time in Zimbabwe, and for Meldrum the reason was probably more personal than for Barclay, as he was deported in 2003.

There are writers who have focused almost solely on their childhoods and personal lives as well, and made less commentary on the political situation in Zimbabwe. Such writers include, for example, Wendy Kann with *Casting With a Fragile Thread: A Story of Sisters and Africa* (2006) and Lauren St John's *Rainbow's End: A Memoir of Childhood, War and an African Farm* (2007). Where Barclay and Meldrum emphasized hope, or the lack of it, in the titles of their memoirs, these two titles suggest something else and have a strong focus on family and 'Africa', which is a problematic generalization (and exoticization) that I discuss in my dissertation also in connection to Godwin's writing. Kann and St John both remain focused on their childhoods and in Kann's case also her adult life to some extent when returning to Southern Africa to bury her sister who died in a car accident. A personal calamity was the inspiration for her, and many writers have experienced losses of similar kind. The Fullers lost three children in their infancy, and, as mentioned above, Godwin's sister was killed during the civil war. Both Kann and St John grew up in somewhat dysfunctional families (a contingency which also seems to be a favoured theme among this genre of writers; Fuller describes in great detail her mentally unstable mother and poor childhood) where the parents of both writers ended up divorcing. Both memoirs are also set against the backdrop of the civil war, another common topic which also recurs in Fuller's childhood memoir. There are personal tragedies as well as collective experiences such as the war and the economic collapse which emerge again and again in these memoirs.

Another feature which ties this group of writers together is their perspective from the outside. Godwin had already permanently left Zimbabwe in the 1980s as a young man, and for many others the act of leaving Zimbabwe seems to have functioned as an incentive for writing a memoir. Alexandra Fuller left Zambia, where her family had relocated after a

brief stay in Malawi, in her early twenties after marrying an American. Wendy Kann also left Southern Africa for the very same reason, whereas Lauren St John remains more cryptic about the reasons for her leaving Southern Africa but she also left for good in the end, in 1987 for London to be exact (*Rainbow's End*, 257). Catherine Buckle has stayed in Zimbabwe, at least according to her homepage, but within this genre of writers she is in this case something of an exception. The outsider's perspective is a relevant part of my analysis as it has affected this type of writing so profoundly, and it is also an experience Godwin struggles to come to terms with in his memoirs. In this regard, his situation also changes to a great deal throughout his writing: in *Crocodile* his parents still live in Zimbabwe and at the end of the memoir his father dies, but in *The Fear* he no longer has any family left in Southern Africa. This experience is central for my discussion. Because of the importance of his background and the place he writes about, it is necessary to have some understanding of Zimbabwean history and politics, especially since independence in 1980. In the following section I give a brief overview of main events in Zimbabwean history with special focus on the land reform since 2000.

1.4 Zimbabwe: History, Politics and the Land Reform

The events in Zimbabwe during recent decades have been discussed in a number of studies, for example in *History of Zimbabwe, 1890-2000 and Postscript, Zimbabwe, 2001-2008* (2009) by Chengetai J. M. Zvobgo, and in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008* (2009) edited by Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo. Older works detailing Zimbabwean/Rhodesian history include, among others, Martin Loney's *Rhodesia: White Racism and Imperial Response* from 1975 and Robert Blake's *A History of Rhodesia* from 1977. Many recent works attempt to piece together colonial history and the current situation in Zimbabwe, which are related in many ways and also inherently complicated. The most relevant issue for this study has to do with landowning and especially the land reform which began in 2000 and which turned out to be a bloody and violent affair. This reform significantly affected white farmers and is thus a significant historical period for my analysis of these memoirs. Most writers also discuss the reform in one way or another. Godwin's memoir *Mukiwa* begins in the

early 1960s, at a time when most other colonies were gaining their independence. I will here outline Zimbabwe's colonial history in brief and then introduce the post-independence period. A few words about Robert Mugabe are also necessary, especially as he is featured in one of Godwin's titles. My aim here is not to come to any new conclusions about Zimbabwe or the country's complex history; rather, this introduction is needed in order to more fully grasp the historical and political dimension in Godwin's, and other writers', memoirs and the events they describe.

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, bordering South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. The large majority of its inhabitants speak Shona and a minority Ndebele. According to the CIA World Factbook online, 99,4 % of the population are "African", a category which presumably excludes people of white settler origin. Thus the number of descendants of white settlers is low in Zimbabwe. The country was colonized towards the end of the Nineteenth century. Zvobgo (2009, 12) explains how the area that is now Zimbabwe was attractive to several colonial powers in the late Nineteenth century, as explorers believed it was as rich in natural resources as parts of South Africa where gold and diamonds had been found. An agreement was made with the Ndebele king Lobengula in Matabeleland and in 1890, Mashonaland as well was officially occupied by British settlers (Zvobgo 2009, 15). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009, 39) adds that the early colonial period saw the first proper uprising as well, the first *chimurenga*, which is the Shona word for freedom fight or struggle, in 1896-1897. The new colony was named after Cecil Rhodes and "[f]rom the beginning, race and racial difference were articulated and institutionalised within the colonial state institutions" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, 58-59). From the beginning of the colonial era, Africans were thus separated from whites and kept away from politics and power.

Large parts of the best arable land were also taken over by the new settler farmers, leaving locals in a difficult situation (Zvobgo 2009, 21). The European settlers needed workers for their newly established farms, and Martin Loney (1975, 41-42) writes that Africans were forced to work for white settlers and to pay taxes. Thus the roots of the landowning problems go as far back as the late Nineteenth century, to the very beginning of colonialism in Zimbabwe. Zvobgo (2009, 37) concludes that a dual agricultural economy emerged; one where European settlers tried to "restrict African competition" (Loney 1975, 53). Various measures were implemented in order to restrict this competition, for example the Land Apportionment

Act of 1931 which further divided the land between European and African farmers and made sure that the best arable land was in the European areas (Loney 1975, 55). Loney (1975, 55-56) explains here that there was no real reason for making this division, and that the main part of the settler-owned land remained under-utilized. A Land Bank had also been founded to support white farming, and it provided loans to farmers so that they could make necessary purchases and develop their farming (Zvobgo 2009, 37). Special reserves were created for Africans, and the economic crisis in the 1930s further increased European measures to make sure Africans could not compete with their farming (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, 66-67).

The Second World War and its aftermath saw an increase in production and a growth of the national economy of Southern Rhodesia (Mlambo 2009, 76). Mlambo (2009, 76) further explains that the war had brought more white settlers to the country and the number of whites in Southern Rhodesia grew, creating more tension with the African population whose nationalist aspirations were also growing. Godwin's parents also arrived in Rhodesia at this time, quite soon after the war. However, separate ideals existed as well among the white population. Those who had stayed longer in the country wished to retain the status quo, whereas newcomers were more likely to support some kind of concessions at least towards the educated African elite (Mlambo 2009, 77). The growing African nationalism coincided with the emergence of communism in Europe (Mlambo 2009, 80), and the Soviet Union was to play a significant role in many freedom struggles. In 1953, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was founded, and it consisted of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) as well as Nyasaland (Malawi). This Federation was supposed to create a stronger and larger market and economy, but it was opposed in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Zvobgo 2009, 72-73). The Federation collapsed in 1963, and Zambia and Malawi became independent, whereas Southern Rhodesia saw the emergence of a right wing party strongly opposed to majority rule; the Rhodesian Front Party (Mlambo 2009, 93). Nationalist parties were also founded in the late 1950s, and among those rising to lead the new nationalist movements were Joshua Nkomo (Mlambo 2009, 105). A few years later, ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) was founded and led by Nkomo, but split shortly after when ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) was founded (Mlambo 2009, 109). Robert Mugabe, who had become politically active at the same time as Nkomo and had taken part in the foundation of NDP (National Democratic Party) in 1960, now became a member of the

newly-founded ZANU (Zvobgo 2009, 108; 118). The two parties were banned by the new Prime Minister Ian Smith in 1964, and most of the nationalist leaders ended up in prison (Blake 1977, 353), including Robert Mugabe (Mlambo 2009, 112).

White supremacist leaders of Southern Rhodesia argued for independence from Britain in the early 1960s, but Britain refused to grant them independence without including Africans in the political process. Hence, Ian Smith made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence in November 1965 (Mlambo 2009, 110). According to Mlambo (2009, 11), this was a reaction to the huge numbers of countries gaining independence in Africa. UDI led to severe sanctions against Southern Rhodesia by Britain in particular, but South Africa and Mozambique for example continued supplying Southern Rhodesia with goods (Zvobgo 2009, 129), making the sanctions ineffective to some extent. Ian Smith exclaimed in his speech when declaring UDI (as cited in Zvobgo 2009, 125) that “[i]n the lives of most nations, there comes a time when a stand has to be taken for principle, whatever the consequences. This moment has come to Rhodesia”. After the speech he reportedly said that “[t]here can be no happiness in a country while the absurd situation continues to exist where people, such as ourselves, who have ruled themselves with an impeccable record for over 40 years, are denied what is freely granted to other countries” (BBC, “1965: Rhodesia Breaks From the UK”). The irony is obvious here; there certainly could be no happiness either in a country where the large majority was denied what was freely granted to other nations. The situation was thus deteriorating and the banning of ZANU and ZAPU had forced the parties to go “underground and abroad, initiating a low-level insurgency campaign against the Rhodesian regime” (Preston 2004, 12). According to Preston (2004, 12), the violence was still under control at this point, but the civil conflict would soon turn into outright war.

Mtisi et al. (2009a, 132) have made some relevant observations with regard to Rhodesian production of goods during the early UDI period. The economy became more centralized and industrialization continued as it had since the Second World War. Another important reason for this success was the lax attitude towards the sanctions in countries important for Rhodesian trade (Mtisi et al. 2009a, 133). However, the countries that still continued to trade with Rhodesia also benefited from the situation as prices were lower (Mtisi et al. 2009a, 136). This could not go on forever and in particular the civil war which erupted after UDI also took its toll on the Rhodesian economy. The war had no definite starting point, but the first years after UDI were relatively

calm with few (white) casualties and in the early 1970s the guerrilla actions started escalating and the civil war entered a more serious phase. Zvobgo (2009, 156) writes that the situation changed partly because of the course of events in neighbouring Mozambique where FRELIMO, the liberation movement, offered support to the Rhodesian freedom fighters. During these turbulent years, Mugabe was also appointed leader of ZANU (Mtisi et al. 2009b, 145). In 1976 ZANU and ZAPU created a joint Patriotic Front, although differences between the two parties still existed (Mtisi et al. 2009b, 147).

In 1977 Smith finally agreed to seek internal settlement with the African leaders, with demands on seats in Parliament for white voters and other measures which were supposed to secure the position of whites in Rhodesia (Zvobgo 2009, 175). An agreement was signed in 1978 with Bishop Muzorewa, Chief Chirau and the Reverend Sithole (Zvobgo 2009, 177). This settlement was, according to Mtisi et al. (2009b, 162), convenient for Smith. He was on good terms with all three leaders, and Chirau and Sithole both lacked the support of armed forces. The new country was called Zimbabwe-Rhodesia at this point, and elections were organized. Muzorewa won the elections, but the war continued as Patriotic Front had been left out of the negotiations (Mtisi et al. 2009b, 163). In 1978 and 1979 two airplanes were shot down, events which particularly shocked the white population and “marked the beginning of the end of ‘white Rhodesia’” (Mtisi et al. 2009b, 164). Britain was brought in to negotiate peace, and at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979, Mugabe and Nkomo were also present. Peace and ceasefire were agreed upon, and elections organized soon after. Mugabe’s party ZANU(PF) won the elections, and in 1980 he was elected the first prime minister of independent Zimbabwe (Mtisi et al. 2009b, 165-166), later becoming president. Chennells points out that 100 000 whites decided to stay after independence (Chennells 2008, 36), which was after all a considerable number.

Mtisi et al. (2009b, 165) conclude that despite peace, the land question was definitely not settled once and for all during the conference. The conference decided that a willing-seller, willing-buyer arrangement was the best solution despite opposing views from the Zimbabwean Patriotic Front party. That meant that the government could buy land only from willing sellers, but very little money was available for such purchases. James Muzondidya (2009, 169-170) explores the situation in Zimbabwe post-independence and explains how the economy remained fragile despite a brief boom in the 1980s, and

how wealth was more and more unevenly distributed among Zimbabweans. His conclusion is also that the willing-buyer, willing-seller deal at the Lancaster House Conference was the “main obstacle to successful land reform” and that “white farmers were generally reluctant to relinquish their colonially inherited privilege” (Muzondidya 2009, 172-173). There was also still conflict between the two Zimbabwean parties ZANU(PF) and ZAPU, and fighting between their armies occurred in the early 1980s. ZANU(PF) accused ZAPU of hiding weapons in order to try to overthrow the government (Zvobgo 2009, 255-257). Nkomo was dismissed from parliament, and in 1982 the government initiated attacks in Matabeleland in order to eliminate dissidents hiding in the area (Zvobgo 2009, 257-260), an operation called Gukurahundi. According to Muzondidya (2009, 179), as many as 20,000 people were killed in Matabeleland and the Midlands between 1982 and 1987. Godwin’s reporting of these events got him expelled from Zimbabwe in the mid-1980s, and they are thus a significant turning point for him personally as well.

In the 1990s, the Zimbabwean economy started declining at a faster rate. Unemployment rose, the quality of health services declined and agricultural production decreased (Muzondidya 2009, 188-189). The question of land and landownership became relevant again, and the 1990s also saw a number of strikes (Muzondidya 2009, 194). In 2000, the ruling party ZANU(PF) proposed a new constitution which was turned down in the referendum. According to Rory Pilosof (2012, 43), this defeat was the start of the violent campaign against white farmers as they had quite openly been supporting the political opposition. Sam Moyo (2013, 33) writes in his article that by 1999, some land had already been redistributed but to a much smaller degree than expected, and parts of that land had been allocated to people of the black elite. He concludes that the farm takeovers were violent and brutal in many cases (Moyo 2013, 35). These farm invasions were put into motion as a collaboration between the state and so-called war veterans, some of whom had actually fought in the civil war, but there were also many participating in the occupations who were mainly ZANU(PF) youths (Raftopoulos 2009, 211-212).

The consequences for white farmers were obviously devastating. Raftopoulos (2009, 216) concludes: “[w]hile in 2000 there were some 4,500 white commercial farmers occupying 11 million hectares of land and producing over 70 per cent of agricultural output, by 2008 this number had

been reduced to approximately 500". The change was dramatic, in other words:

This enormous transformation in the fortunes of white farmers and their families did not just have significant political and economic implications: it also spurred a new genre of postcolonial 'white writing' that inscribed a new sense of victimhood on white identities.

(Raftopoulos 2009, 216)

The land reform was thus a significant source of inspiration for white Zimbabwean to write and publish their memoirs, and it is this sense of victimhood which has caused so much controversy, as it suggests ignorance with regard to the existence and history of black Zimbabweans and also to inherited privileges. One last point needs to be made about the attacks on white farmers and their property. Pilosof (2012, 49) underlines that the violence against white farms and farm owners was not simply racist; it was about the political support for ZANU(PF). The number of white farmers was small to begin with, but they employed a huge number of black farmworkers whose supposed support for the opposition was problematic for the ruling party. Chennells (2008, 37) also concludes that Mugabe's decision to remove whites from their farms came "when his own power was threatened and whites became a scapegoat for his growing unpopularity". In conclusion it can be said that the "sense of victimhood" was real indeed for writers who experienced the land reform first hand but the misfortunes of black farmworkers were often downplayed or ignored.

Since 2000 in particular, Zimbabwe has witnessed an "extraordinary exodus" of Zimbabweans leaving the country for South Africa, the UK, the USA and many other countries (McGregor 2010a, 3). According to McGregor (2010a), as many as 3 million people left the country. Concerning the farm occupations, Raftopoulos (2009, 216) states that they "broke the back of white land ownership in the country, and thereby transformed the legacy of the colonial land dispensation". The number of white farmers declined rapidly during this period, and this affected not only the actual farm owners but also farmworkers and people supporting the opposition. The consequences were also dire for the country itself as well, when food production went down and a lot of land became under-utilized (Raftopoulos 2009, 216-217). According to Raftopoulos (2009, 219), the reasons behind

Zimbabwe's financial decline in the 2000s have both "long-term and more contemporary causes". He explains the following:

The long-term legacies of colonial resource inequalities, narrow forms of capital accumulation that failed to build a broader productive base, a labour reproduction system based on low wages and migrant labour, and problematic development strategies in both the 'welfarist' 1980s and the neoliberal 1990s provide a schematic historical backdrop to the crisis that unfolded between 1998 and 2008.

(Raftopoulos 2009, 219)

Inflation, or hyperinflation, reached 230 million per cent in 2008, which made the income and savings of Zimbabweans practically worthless (Raftopoulos 2009, 220).

Raftopoulos (2009, 222) also writes about the "dollarization" of Zimbabwe when the Zimbabwean currency lost its value. This led to more people leaving the country as foreign currencies became essential. He concludes that "Zimbabwe has a long history of migration" but that the situation really escalated after 2000 because of the "political violence, forced removals and the general economic meltdown" (Raftopoulos 2009, 222). The parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008 saw a great deal of violence, especially in the post-election period. Mugabe lost the elections and a campaign of terror ensued (Zvobgo 2009, 338-340): "[m]uch of the violence had been specifically directed against members of the opposition, particularly those who had acted as election agents or monitors in the elections". This led to Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the oppositional party MDC, Movement for Democratic Change, pulling out of the re-run (Zvobgo 2009, 343). A power-sharing agreement was reached later the same year, but as Raftopoulos (2009, 230-231) observes, this was no quick and easy fix to Zimbabwe's deep political problems. These elections and the ensuing violence are at the centre of *The Fear*. The current situation in Zimbabwe remains in many ways unsettled, and the elections in July 2013 where Mugabe was re-elected once more raised suspicions concerning fraud and the coercion of voters (cf. Hungwe, 2013). Other reports from Zimbabwe have shown some turbulence within MDC (Harding 2013, 2014), but once again it remains unclear what actually happened. Tim Bowler (2013), for his part, reports that the economy of Zimbabwe was still unstable despite the improvements since 2008-2009. Unemployment remains a huge challenge, and Bowler (2013) seems to

conclude that, at the time that he was writing, there was yet no end in sight to Zimbabwe's economic, political as well as social troubles.

1.5 Chapters

This dissertation consists of four central chapters which each present a different aspect of Peter Godwin's memoirs and suggest a theoretical framework through which his writing and that of others which belong to the same genre can be analysed. As outlined in this introduction, several white Zimbabwean writers have taken their authorial inspiration from recent historical events in Zimbabwe and many focus on their colonial childhoods, the civil war and transition to independence in their memoirs. Historical reality and the colonial legacy remain the starting point and inspire much of this writing, and the particular situation of this group of writers is a central part of their stories. Hence, whiteness and a critical examination of white privileges is of utmost relevance, as it remains a defining feature in the lives of Godwin and his fellow writers. The experience of displacement in particular through the land reform is shared by many writers, and for Godwin, the expulsion adds a different dimension to it. His journalistic ambitions can also not be separated from his more literary endeavours, as is shown in *Crocodile* and *The Fear*. The framework through which his memoirs are analysed here is therefore largely defined by aspects that arise as particularly central in his writing. The starting place, however, is the literary marketplace and the publishing industry.

The first main chapter after this introduction, chapter two, engages in questions about authorship, memoir as genre, and the marketing of personal narratives. The publishing industry has developed significantly since the time of industrialization and also more recently in the digital age when self-publishing and e-books have become a new option for writers. Autobiographies have a great focus on their authors by default, as it is in their very nature to build on the writer's persona. Hence a discussion of authorship is also necessary, and in the case of Godwin, several aspects of his authorship and the literature he has produced emerge as significant. Memoirs and autobiographies are hugely popular at the moment (cf. Gilmore, 2001; Smith and Watson, [2001] 2010) and personal stories sell well in the literary market.

Godwin's memoirs, and the entire genre of white Zimbabwean autobiography, also have an awkward relationship with genres such as postcolonial literature or African literature. The place of these genres in the literary marketplace has been successfully negotiated by, among others, Krishnan (2014), Brouillette (2007) and Huggan (2001). The starting place of the analysis in this dissertation is thus the complex threshold at which Godwin's writing is located. Literary prizes and awards also deserve attention here, particularly because of their defining function when it comes to different genres of literature. Godwin's memoirs have a strong personal dimension as well as a professional one, and this requires a discussion of his place in the literary market, as his writing falls within, or at the threshold of, so many different categories.

Chapter three examines whiteness in Godwin's memoirs, and places a particular focus on questions of representation, anger and privilege. As previously mentioned, whiteness, and privileges that have historically emerged through discrimination based on colour, is a central theme in most of the memoirs and also in Godwin's writing. Some race theorists rightly question the need to categorise people into different groups according to their skin colour, and argue that it only reinforces divides between people who are, of course, essentially the same (this is discussed in for example Mohanram, 2007). However, in a Zimbabwean, or Southern African, context the situation is more complex than that. Colour has been and still is to some extent a delicate issue, and the memoirs explored here are deeply entrenched in the discourses surrounding it.

Whiteness is a feature which has profoundly affected the lives of the writers. This whiteness is part of the colonial legacy of Zimbabwe, and colour has also played a part in more recent events such as the land reform (although, as I concluded earlier, the motivation behind the land reform was ultimately also political). Godwin interviewed a number of white farmers who lost their land, and other white Zimbabweans affected by the political violence. He recounts further how his parents left Europe after the Second World War and saw Africa as a sanctuary. Throughout his writing, resentment and anger mix with guilt and insightfulness about the situation in which black Zimbabweans have found themselves. From time to time, Godwin seems utterly oblivious to his white privileges, yet from time to time he expresses great self-awareness, often through sarcasm. The question of who can represent Zimbabweans is also a part of the chapter on whiteness, and it is undoubtedly a complicated question. Godwin as a representative of

white Rhodesians as a group of people inevitably stuck in a colonial past; of Zimbabweans as a nation; or Zimbabweans outside the country is a difficult equation to solve. This also raises questions about who can be an African writer, or write African literature, which is a topic already partly discussed in the second chapter on the literary market.

That analysis continues in the next chapter, which focuses on displacement and migration. Part of the discussion is the migration experience, which is a rather popular topic in current African literature, as well as in contemporary Zimbabwean writing. The migration experience of black Zimbabweans has often been quite different from that of Godwin and his fellow white Zimbabweans, and this is something I examine in the fourth chapter which focuses on displacement. Privilege continues to be central also here, as for example labels for migrants vary greatly according to privileges. Other definitions and concepts are also at the centre of the analysis. *Diaspora* and *transnationalism* are discussed in detail as they are often used without proper clarification and *diaspora* in particular carries a significant historical burden. Godwin is also twice displaced; his parents arrived in Rhodesia as settlers after the Second World War, leaving behind their familiar surroundings and starting anew in the colony, and then Godwin himself left Zimbabwe as an adult.

The Rhodesian and the Zimbabwean migration experience are thus two separate phenomena but remain intertwined, and this is still just the white perspective. When European settlers arrived in what was to become Zimbabwe, they displaced the local population in order to appropriate as much of the good arable land as possible and make it available for the newcomers. As I explained earlier in this introduction, various measures were implemented to impede African farming and support European agriculture. Africans were also placed in special reserves or made practically landless, creating an unbalanced and thoroughly unfair situation in which a small minority of Europeans controlled most of the land. Thus black Zimbabweans have also experienced a double displacement; first during the colonial era and then in recent years because of the economic disaster and many have left for, in particular, the UK. These stories of loss, both concretely of land in some cases and in others of home or something much less tangible such as childhood in a country which has profoundly changed, are prominent in most of the memoirs studied here. Therefore nostalgia is a central part of this chapter as well, and I discuss how these writers express longing for Zimbabwe and uncertainty whether they can still claim it as their home. The passion

Godwin and his fellow writers express for Rhodesia/Zimbabwe deserves and requires attention. As it is such a prominent feature of this writing. It suggests something about what happens to people living transitory lives. More than this, it also exemplifies how literature, and autobiographical writing in particular, can become the medium through which these experiences, this passion, take physical form.

The final aspect of Godwin's writing to be analysed here concerns the extent of his ambitions as a journalist and how these are present in his memoirs, and this is at the core in the last main chapter, chapter five. *The Fear* in particular has a different scope than the other two memoirs, and it can even be questioned whether this piece of nonfiction should be called a memoir at all. It is much less detached and personal than *Mukiwa* and *Crocodile*, and is clearly focused on documenting events in Zimbabwe during the elections of 2008. The personal dimension is still present in the book, albeit to a smaller extent, but Godwin has moved on from the need to remember his childhood and to document the life of his father, as he did in *Crocodile*. The focus here is on making a difference through his writing, on working towards political change in Zimbabwe. Part of the framework for this chapter is accordingly built around the concept of contemporary literary journalism, a relatively new field, which is still trying to define itself and find its bearings within literary studies. The ethics of reporting from war or warlike situations also emerges as a relevant discussion, particularly as Godwin himself questions his own role in the midst of the political violence.

Godwin's journalistic ambitions began in the 1980s when he reported from Matabeleland about the campaign to fight political opposition, and that reporting saw him expelled. This means that the experience of displacement is tied to his journalistic work and it has remained a defining event in his life. Bearing witness is central to this final chapter, and that is also an activity which can be traced back to the 1980s. Godwin bore witness to the campaign in Matabeleland and wrote about it, just as he bore witness to the violence in 2008 and 2009. Engaging in autobiographical writing is also an act of witnessing, where the reader becomes a kind of secondary witness to the writer's life. All of the main themes addressed in the various chapters intersect in several ways. Godwin's displacement enabled his travels back and forth to Zimbabwe and brought forth a strong sense of nostalgia as well as also resentment due to the political and economic problems in Zimbabwe, and his journalistic assignments were often the pretext for his travels. The theoretical framework suggested here for the study of Godwin's memoirs, and

that of other white Zimbabweans, emanates from his writing itself and the personal and professional dimensions that guide it. The memoirs also bear witness to the lives of this particular minority in a particular time in history, and that can hopefully open up new paths for debates on migration, privilege and the role of personal (hi)stories.

2. “We Mid-List Godwins Are Nothing If Not Diverse in Our Literary Endeavours” – The Literary Marketplace

2.1 Introduction

The publication and promotion of books is a multinational business today, having developed over several hundred years and significantly expanded in terms of literacy, book production, and market economy. The market economy and its demands on literature being published at the present time is interesting from several perspectives. Who gets published, who becomes famous and what is the significance of the relationship between author and publisher? Peter Godwin’s memoirs also have their place in this market, and their place is an intricate one. The memoirs establish that he has become an authority on matters related to Zimbabwe, as he has been invited to radio programmes and TV shows to talk about the situation as described in *The Fear*, as well as having published a number of articles in renowned magazines. The memoirs themselves also participate in this attempt to raise awareness about Zimbabwe, and the reason they manage to do so is because they are in many respects quite marketable. He has won a few awards for his writing, and so has Alexandra Fuller as well, which makes the two writers stand out within contemporary white Zimbabwean autobiography. Simultaneously, some memoirists have chosen to self-publish their works. The discussion of postcolonial literature and its place and role in the literary market is inevitable as well, as Godwin’s writing is tied to that tradition because of its strong colonial dimension, but it is controversial as well in the sense that it has not been written by a ‘subaltern’ (Spivak, 1988). Postcolonial literature in the marketplace has also been criticized by Huggan (2001), and here the question of African literature and writers representing the genre emerges. Thus this chapter addresses a number of questions in relation to literature and its marketability, authors and their role, as well as the publishing industry and its development.

To begin with, the current status of autobiography is relevant. As Gilmore (2001) concludes, memoirs have become a popular mode of writing in recent

decades. An online article for *The Guardian* from the same year also reflects on the success of memoirs (Armitstead, 2001), its author writing that “[w]e wolf down terrible stories of abuse and neglect, we gobble up lives that somehow chime with our own; we nibble at the exotic, the strange and the exciting”. This, again, is echoed in Claire Squires’s (2007, 413) discussion of what makes a bestseller, where she compares different responses to Helen Fielding’s novel *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (1997), which became widely read and popular after publication and has since been made into a film as well as accompanied by a sequel. According to Squires, opposite views about the novel raise questions not just about “literary value, but also of literary fashion and form, empathy and audience appeal” (Squires 2007, 413). That, for its part, ties into what Gilmore (2001, 22) claims about trauma narratives and identification. Identification on the reader’s part can lead to sympathy towards the writer, but when identification fails, sympathy is withdrawn. The public response to memoirs is thus guided by the level of sympathy, or empathy, with the writer and his or her experiences, and particular experiences such as the terrible, the shocking and the unfamiliar, or the very familiar, may be used to evoke positive feelings in readers.

All of this is relevant for the publishing industry and the literary market. Gilmore (2001, 17) makes another observation with regard to the popularity of memoirs. She says that it is unclear whether “the current expansion is driven more by marketing and publishing choices (‘memoir sells! let’s have more memoir!’) than by writing practices”. That is a pertinent question: do we have a memoir boom because it has become a popular mode of writing, or because they sell well? A more recently updated study of the current popularity of autobiographies is offered by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson ([2001] 2010, 127), who observe that “life writing has become a prized commodity in print and online venues. Publishers seek the next hot topic and market particular kinds of memoirs to niche audiences”. With regard to topics in this genre, Smith and Watson discuss it in terms of nation, nationality and nationhood:

Increasingly, life writing published since 2000 reflects the powerful transformations taking place in nations around the world and the realignment of national interests across regions of the globe. These narratives probe the relationship of modernity, the nation, and citizenship in the twenty-first century.

(Smith and Watson [2001] 2010, 130)

The connection to Godwin and his autobiographical writing is apparent, as much of his memoir-writing concerns itself with the nation and citizenship, often very directly and explicitly. The entire genre of white Zimbabwean autobiography is concerned with redefining history and their place in Zimbabwe and the world, and most of it has been written post-2000. The year 2000 is thus a threshold in more than one sense.

Smith and Watson ([2001] 2010, 133-134) also specifically mention narrative of witness as a particularly powerful mode of autobiographical writing; an approach which emerged through the works of writers such as Nelson Mandela, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Breyten Breytenbach just to mention a few and to reference the African context in particular. These well-known writers and political figures were imprisoned for their political beliefs, whereas Godwin was not. However, his memoirs can still be called narratives of witness too, *The Fear* first and foremost. Hence, he has also joined many other writers in their attempts to use memoir as a testimony of human rights violations, his writing moving from the personal to the professional as discussed earlier, a development which will be analysed in the following chapters. Smith and Watson ([2001] 2010, 137) conclude that such engagement raises questions about “what constitutes a rights violation, as well as what contributes to suffering and trauma”. They also argue that the response of readers cannot be known beforehand, and that sometimes even “compassion fatigue” might emerge as a result of exposure to such texts (Smith and Watson [2001] 2010, 137).

This could partly explain some of the criticism directed towards white Zimbabwean memoirs, for example by Rory Pilosof (2012, 154) who writes that memoirs by farmers follow a tradition of Rhodesian writing but that these more recent publications are not a direct response to previous literature. “Rather, it is their response to events around them that prompts the farmers to think, for whatever reason, that it is important for them to write their story” (Pilosof 2012, 154). “For whatever reason” suggests that perhaps there may not be any good enough reasons for these farmers to tell their stories. Pilosof later lists possible reasons for the similarities found in these autobiographies, and among them he mentions “the need to defend their lifestyles and land holdings” and that the difficulties the farmers faced when losing their land and properties may have brought on a more strongly Rhodesian manner of thinking, a kind of radicalization (Pilosof 2012, 177). Compassion for these writers is in short supply, and that is probably not a

consequence of any kind of fatigue, it is merely a reaction to the sheer number of similar memoirs. Had there been only one white Zimbabwean memoir, say, Buckle's *African Tears* about losing her farm during the land reform, it may have elicited more positive responses. It is the phenomenon itself of white Zimbabwean autobiography that causes the lack of compassion. Compassion and sympathy require identification, as explained by Gilmore, and it is most likely more easily directed towards an individual than a group, particularly if that group remains highly controversial.

An autobiography which inevitably comes to mind in this context is *Not Without My Daughter* (originally published in 1987), written by Betty Mahmoody. The memoir recounts Mahmoody's ordeal in Iran, having been lured by her Iranian husband to visit the country with their daughter and later having been refused to leave. Eventually she managed to secretly escape with their daughter. Sanah Fotouhi (2014, 1) writes that this memoir "has been one of the most successful bestsellers of its genre since its publication" and has "sold 11 million copies and been translated into numerous languages" as of 2010. Maja Mugerle (2013, 40-41) adds that the memoir has helped shape popular images of Iranians and Muslims and portrayed them in a largely negative light. Mugerle also emphasizes the historical moment in which a certain text is produced, and argues that this greatly affects its reception. The book has become the focus of much controversy since publication, but the fact remains that it has been hugely popular among readers who fully believed the story. Other critics such as Gabriele Helms (2005, 50-51) draw parallels between reality TV and the autobiographical, stating that a lot of the storytelling in both genres is mediated by crises and appeal to readers through difficulties and hardships. Helms (2005, 60) mentions the "public desire for personal stories" as one reason behind the popularity of the auto/biographical and reality TV. A final view is presented by Bob Minzesheimer (2008) in his article in *USA Today* where he writes that "[i]n the age of reality TV and personal blogs, an older form of personal confession – the memoir – is booming". Helms (2005, 55) asks whether it is "the boom in trauma narratives" which has paved the way for reality TV. All of these notions bring to light the complexity of autobiography as a genre, its appeal to readers as well as the importance of examining this genre which has sometimes caused controversy. The moment for autobiography has not yet passed, quite the contrary. It is a genre that is alive and well, and which continues to cause discussion and debate, as well as eliciting both popular and academic response.

This chapter briefly outlines the rise of the publishing industry and its development since the period of industrialization, as well as the meaning and role of the author, famously discussed by Barthes (1967) and Foucault (1969), but bringing the discussion back to the present day. The sales of Godwin's memoirs are also relevant, as *Mukiwa* is presented as an international bestseller by Picador, and Godwin also kept track of the sales of that memoir himself. Unfortunately I was unable to get a hold of these sales figures, despite numerous attempts in the winter/spring 2016. I contacted Picador several times and also tried to reach out to the company functioning as Godwin's literary agent, as well as people listed on Godwin's website as contact persons. Despite many attempts over the course of several months, both via e-mail and phone, I received no replies. Hence, this information is unfortunately missing here. The literary marketplace remains the main focus, and an analysis of where African literature is located in that marketplace is significant. Madhu Krishnan (2014) has discussed this in great detail, and she also raises the question as to why so many of the most well-known African writers today are writing from outside the continent. Journalism in the marketplace will also be briefly touched upon. Literary prizes and awards are another feature of the marketplace which requires some examination, and Godwin himself has been awarded prizes for his writing. The chapter is guided by the notion that Godwin's memoirs participate in this "memoir boom", and also benefit from the current popularity and interest in autobiography. They also intrigue readers because of what Armitstead noted about "the exotic, the strange and the exciting". Parts of the memoirs are testimony, witness accounts, while other parts of them are personal, and it is in particular the personal stories which have been met with some controversy. Thus Godwin's writing represents contemporary popular autobiography in a number of ways, and a discussion of its place in the literary marketplace is therefore imperative.

2.2 The Publishing Industry

The publishing industry has developed tremendously since its early days. First and foremost it has become an industry in the true meaning of the word, something which has not always been the case. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (2005, 78) explain that the print industry evolved simultaneously

with the “general industrialization” in the Nineteenth century. Writing in itself had become an individualized activity in the late Fifteenth century, and the concept of ‘author’ has also changed significantly over time (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 69). An important development was the idea of authorial ownership and copyright which emerged in the Eighteenth century and soon became an essential feature of writing and the production of texts (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 70). John Feather and Andrew J. Large (2003, 11) have also studied the publishing business and conclude that the time limit on copyrights is also a legacy from the Eighteenth century, and the first time limits were seven years. This made the emerging publishing industry more competitive, and several of the big publishing companies that still exist today were founded around this time, for example Longman and Murray (Feather and Large 2003, 12).

The company which has published Godwin’s memoirs is Picador, and it is an imprint of Pan Macmillan, another significant actor in the international publishing business. Feather and Large (2003, 41) write that the company was founded in 1843 in Cambridge, and that its focus was particularly on “mainstream literature, although not without some adventurous authors, and solid non-fiction”. In the 1990s it became a part of the German company Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck (Feather and Large 2003, 42). According to Feather and Large (2005, 42), this company “can be taken to exemplify the trends in the development of the commercial infrastructure of publishing in the late twentieth century. It is multinational and has a wide range of interests in books, magazines and newspapers”. The developments that have taken place in the last decades have made the environment in which the publishing industry operates a lot tougher, with ever higher demands on profit as well. “Books are expected to sell quickly, and to have a short shelf-life” (Feather and Large 2003, 46-47). Hence, the pressure is now greater on individual authors and publishers as well as on literary agents.

The literary agent as a special player in the literary market has been examined by Eva Hemming Wirtén, who also analyses the publishing industry in the last three decades of the Twentieth century and concludes that new actors and a new economy appeared, one of these actors being the literary agent who helped negotiate good deals for authors (Hemming Wirtén 2007, 397). “Building a reputable stable of writers was a long-term rather than a short-term commitment”, explains Hemming Wirtén (2007, 398). Possible bestsellers could cover for less successful books, and thus the publishing business was built on prospects for the future instead of immediate revenue

(Hemming Wirtén 2003, 398). Godwin talks about the sales of *Mukiwa* in *The Three of U.S.* (1999) and explains how he tracked the sales of *Mukiwa* on Amazon. “Today my latest book, *Mukiwa*, a memoir of growing up in Africa, is the 20,181st best-selling book in American cyberspace” (*Three of U.S.*, 53). A few months later it was ranked in 9,127th place, something which according to Godwin’s friend did not necessarily mean that the book sales had gone up but that this often happened to books that were unavailable in bookstores. “Apparently when you get down into the thirty thousands, the sales are so slight that a single purchase can yank you up several thousand places” (*The Three of U.S.*, 226). A final reference to Amazon comes on page 245 when Godwin accidentally received the sales of other authors named Godwin instead of his own. These authors had written books about HIV in Asia, pelargoniums, and intra-uterine insemination. “We mid-list Godwins are nothing if not diverse in our literary endeavours” (*The Three of U.S.*, 245). Godwin remains sarcastic throughout these passages, as he clearly wishes to convey how self-indulgent it was to check the sales of his own memoir. That also points towards a paradox within book production and publishing: the publishing industry is openly about profit and creating bestsellers, but individual authors profiting from their writing seems to be more questionable, at least according to what is suggested by Godwin. Feather and Large (2003, 3) conclude that “‘publishing’ is a business activity; and that a publisher is concerned with making a profit”.

Mukiwa is called an “international bestseller” in the short introduction to Godwin in the first pages of the book. Picador has the very same text on their website where they introduce Godwin, which indicates that the short text in *Mukiwa* and the other memoirs is a marketing device, aimed at possible readers looking to buy the book. Having a major publishing company to support you and to market your writing has been the reality for Godwin, but self-publishing has also been the chosen method by some white Zimbabwean writers. For example Ann Rothrock Beattie and Graham Atkins have self-published their memoirs using online companies. In Atkins’s memoir there is no mention of how he published it, but his book can be ordered from the website of Lulu Press, suggesting he used them for self-publishing. Rothrock Beattie also used Lulu Press, which is a company that has specialized in self-publishing. Their website, www.lulu.com, offers videos and advice for people publishing for the first time, and also has forums where prospective self-publishers can ask questions or discuss matters relating to publishing or sales of books, or things related. Alex Palmer (2014, 138) writes in his article about

self-publishing and its future that it offers a possibility for voices which have previously not been heard to come forward. The rise of e-books is another aspect of current digitalisation trends which has increased possibilities for people to publish their writing (Palmer 2014, 139).

Godwin's memoirs too are available in electronic form for Kindle or other devices, according to Amazon. This divides Zimbabwean writers analysed here into two different categories: those, such as Godwin, Fuller and Buckle, who have been published by large publishing companies (Fuller by Picador and Penguin, and Buckle by Covos Day Books and Jonathan Ball Publishers), and those such as Rothrock Beattie and Atkins who have chosen to self-publish. It demonstrates that the writers who self-publish believe that there is a market for their writing, and also suggests that their desire to make their stories public has been considerable. What makes this even more intriguing is that for example Amazon sells both Rothrock Beattie and Atkins's memoirs, despite them not being published by a known publisher. My copies of their memoirs were ordered from Adlibris, which is a large Nordic online bookstore based in Sweden but operating also in Finland. This means that in effect, the memoirs can reach the very same audiences as Godwin's, or those of other more established writers despite not having received the support and marketing efforts offered by large publishing companies.

2.2.1 The Author

According to Finkelstein and McCleery (2005, 79), the authorial profession emerged fully in the Nineteenth century, largely due to "changes in legal statues, technology, business practices, and social formations" which enabled cheaper printing making texts more widely available to a growing audience. This increased profits for publishers which in its turn increased revenue for authors and also made it possible for them to have an income after the publication of their works (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 79). The concept of the author was also notably discussed in two essays by Roland Barthes (1967) and Michel Foucault (1969). Barthes argues that ceasing to analyse literature in order to find the hidden, true meaning of the text could enable readers to make their own interpretations. "The birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author" (Barthes, 1967). Foucault, for his part, argued that the author is tied to certain discourses (Foucault 1969, 211). He

also wrote that there is a great interest in the author's persona, and says that with anonymous texts, "the game becomes one of rediscovering the author" (Foucault 1969, 213). That is an interesting notion with regard to Godwin; autobiographical writing could not be more explicit about the author, as the entire book is about his or her life. But despite this strong presence of the author by default, the interest in the author's persona and that which may be hidden, purposefully or unintentionally, between the lines continues to fascinate critics. Godwin's persona is, to a large extent, also in focus here. Since Barthes and Foucault, the discourse has changed. Finkelstein and McCleery (2005, 82-83) observe that since the 1970s and 1980s, the focus has once more returned to the author. They say that authors today are seen "as a part of a complex, commodified, digitally rich public arena" (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 83). Particularly in an African context, the author remains as significant as ever. Spivak's (1988) subaltern also suggests recentring the author.

Identity has been a significant focus of for example postcolonial studies and particularly the struggle over identity formation (cf. Ashcroft 2001, 4). Judith Butler's texts on the subject have been ground-breaking. She rightly asks in her well-known book *Gender Trouble* (originally published in 1990; here reprinted in 2006) "[w]hat can be meant by identity" (Butler 2006, 22), later questioning the extent to which 'identity' is "a normative ideal rather than a descriptive feature of experience?" (Butler 2006, 23). Her insights on the subject were inextricably bound up with issues relating to gender, but they can be (and have been) applied in other contexts as well. Saying that gender is constructed, Butler argues, "is not to assert its illusoriness or artificiality, where those terms are understood to reside within a binary that counterposes the 'real' and the 'authentic' as oppositional" (Butler 2006, 45). It is inevitable that this research also emerges from constructed and preconceived binaries such as white/black, African/settler, writer/journalist and local/immigrant. However, as the analysis in this dissertation will show, attempts may be made to question Godwin's image of both himself as well as those of others portrayed in his memoirs. Hence, the position of the author is significant. Another definition of performativity is offered by Alan McKinlay who says that the concept is tied to "the fragility and the stubborn consistency of identity" (McKinlay 2010, 235). If gender is constructed and constituted by language, and it is an act that creates the very notion of gender, it begs the question as to whether the same can be said of race and whiteness in a Zimbabwean context. Godwin's racial identity is manifested through his self-

identification as ‘white’ (which is also stated in one of his book titles), and is further reinforced in studies such as this. In that sense he performs whiteness, along with many other identity markers such as his professional capacities as journalist and writer.

The fact that Godwin does not live on the African continent also has a performative dimension. Krishnan (2014, 2-3) asks in her work on contemporary African literature in English why so many of the most read writers today live outside Africa. Diasporic status has come to represent the whole continent; it has become African literature in its essence. A similar observation is made by Eileen Julien (2006, 684), who argues that several significant writers in an African context live elsewhere but “speak outward and represent locality to nonlocal others”. In the context of autobiography, the focus is always on the writer, the ‘I’ of the story. Even publishing companies have given the role of the author some thought, as is shown in this text taken from Picador’s website:

What defines a Picador book is the author’s voice: we believe the way the story is told is just as important as the story itself, and this is the case for all our fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

We publish writers from all over the world, bringing international authors to an English-language readership and providing a platform for voices that are often not heard.

We publish a list that includes literary fiction; new, relevant and challenging fiction; narrative non-fiction; authoritative, cultural non-fiction; and the best contemporary poetry; as well as a number of uncategorizable books that will surprise you.

(Picador, *About us*)

They clearly state that the author’s voice is one of the most significant features of works published by Picador, and the fact that they took on Godwin’s memoirs suggests that his writing met their demands on authorial voice. The author is hence no longer dead, quite the contrary.

The question of voice is discussed also later in this dissertation, in particular with regard to African writing and representativeness. It can be concluded that voice is relevant also from a perspective of the literary market; even publishing companies such as Picador admit that for them, author’s voice is an important aspect of the works they agree to publish. In the study

and analysis of autobiographies, the memoir begins and ends with the author's voice. Throughout the story, the author is strongly present and although autobiography as a genre is located somewhere between fiction and nonfiction and remains highly personal, the focus on the author's persona permeates both the writing as well as the analysis thereof. The writer and his/her role is a relevant issue in contemporary African literature today, as more and more writers reside beyond Africa's borders, and much of their readership is also situated elsewhere.

2.2.2 The Postcolonial Context

Recent studies of the literary marketplace have often focused on the place of postcolonial literature. For example Graham Huggan (2001) and Sarah Brouillette (2007) have conducted pioneering studies of literature in the marketplace, and particularly postcolonial literature. It is a genre to which Godwin's writing can be said to belong as well, although a brief discussion is needed here. Postcolonial literature today means something else than it did thirty years ago, and it has moved forward from its origins. Robert C. Young (2003, 2) observes that "[s]ince the early 1980s, postcolonialism has developed a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed". Founding works in postcolonial studies are for example *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said which focuses on Western perceptions of the Middle East, and Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) which is a study of hybridity and hybrid identity in particular. *The Empire Writes Back* (first published in 1989, second edition in 2002 and 2003) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin is another foundational work, and they discuss, among a number of other things, the problems of the term 'postcolonialism' itself. One of the issues with the term has been its preoccupation with history; formerly colonized countries cannot make away with their history but colonization is certainly not the only aspect that has affected contemporary societies (Ashcroft et al. [1989] 2003, 195). That is a relevant observation also with regard to Godwin, and his memoirs exemplify the complexity of postcolonialism and of societies which are now independent. The colonial history is still present and has affected recent politics in Zimbabwe (for example the land reform) as well as rhetoric, and

Godwin's position as the son of white settlers could not be more burdened with history.

The South African context is again applicable at least to some extent on the writing in focus here. Attwell (2006: 11) makes a comment with regard to postcolonialism and argues the following:

From the South African corner of the world, it sometimes seems that a largely white anglophone comparative-literary-historical practice has developed as an expression of the confident maturation of settler-colonial cultures, emphasising themes of displacement and the creation of new identities.

(Attwell 2006: 11)

"Themes of displacement and the creation of new identities" is exactly what emerge in Godwin's writing as well. A Southern African perspective on his writing goes, quite understandably, along these lines. Sally Matthews (2011) has studied attitudes among South African university students towards whites calling themselves African. The material she analysed was gathered from a forum where students could debate and discuss together, and she concludes that many of the black students "insisted that white people need to acknowledge past and present white racism and privilege" (Matthews 2011: 6). The "creation of new identities" Attwell refers to above could also mean that whites eventually become Africans, but according to Matthews, this is a sensitive discussion. Her conclusion is that whites should accept their position of being in between and "strive to find an appropriate way to belong in Africa and thus to aim at *becoming* African" (Matthews 2011, 12. Italics in original). Whites need to "recognise the need for reparations for past injustices" (Matthews 2011, 14). This all underlines the importance of history, the postcolonial condition as well as the present study. Godwin's memoirs capture and perform the complicated whiteness in Southern Africa, and it is a position that requires further analysis.

The notion of the postcolonial, and who can be postcolonial, is discussed by Ashcroft et al. as well. They argue that it is no longer about who is colonized or not, about black versus white in this sense, but a question of "all the varied manifestations of colonial power, including those in settler colonies" (Ashcroft et al. [1989] 2003, 200). They also argue that race remains relevant within postcolonial discourses, as it was a significant part of colonization in the Nineteenth century, and because it still today is "used as

the dominant category of daily discrimination and prejudice” (Ashcroft et al. [1989] 2003, 207). Whiteness and questions of privilege and representation emerge as central in the following chapter, and the fourth chapter is centred on Godwin’s experiences of displacement. Ashcroft et al. ([1989] 2003, 217) write that the movements of people across the world define globalization better than any other phenomenon, and that these movements “can be seen to be a consequence of the disparity in wealth between the West and the world”. Hence, the perspectives presented here regarding Godwin’s memoirs emanate from postcolonial theory but also move beyond the colonial legacy. Last but not least, postcolonialism has become a popular discourse in literary criticism, and Huggan (2001) in particular raises questions about definitions of postcolonialism and the place of postcolonial literature in the marketplace. He calls postcolonialism a “commodified term” (Huggan 2001, 1) and asks whether postcolonial studies are to be seen as “a form of wayward eclecticism, inviting cross-cultural comparison but with insufficient cultural knowledge, or claiming historical method but without a clear grasp of historical facts?” (Huggan 2001, 2). Thus it appears that postcolonialism is in itself controversial and an elusive concept.

Postcolonial theory is also a complicated discourse for contemporary African literature, which is no longer mainly concerned with liberation struggles or negotiating life in newly independent countries. Taiye Selasi’s (2005) famous article about the Afropolitan attests to this. Postcolonialism inevitably stems from a colonial past, whereas literature has moved forward. Another commonly used term within postcolonial studies is ‘hybridity’, explored in detail by Homi Bhabha ([1994] 2004):

The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The ‘right’ to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are ‘in the minority’.

(Bhabha [1994] 2004, 3-4)

The ‘historical transformations’ mentioned here refer to the end of colonialism and the independence of African countries for example, but “the right to signify from the periphery of power and privilege” once again complicate things with respect to Godwin’s writing. He is at the periphery

and at the centre at the same time. Bhabha's ([1994] 2004, xi) focus is also on people who remain outside of cultural, economic and social power. Godwin cannot easily be said to belong to that group.

One of the aims of this dissertation is to create a theoretical framework through which the texts of Godwin and other white Zimbabwean writers can be studied and analysed: a framework which is sensitive to the controversies regarding his heritage and the colonial history of Zimbabwe. Postcolonial theory with its analyses of the subaltern, hybrid identities and interstitial spaces, as well as its quest to give a voice to those who have previously been studied mainly through the Western gaze, is useful and relevant when studying literature from the era after independence in most African countries, but even when looking at literature by black Zimbabweans today, postcolonial theory is no longer enough in itself. My focus is on whiteness, transnationalism and displacement as well as literary journalism. All three main fields have a lot to do with postcolonial theory and they definitely intersect, but are more specific fields of inquiry and thus better suited for this analysis. Godwin certainly has a hybrid identity in many ways, and lives in interstices of many kinds, and questions of whiteness, power and privilege are certainly in agreement with postcolonial theory as well. The question also arises as to when the postcolonial period ends. Have we entered into a global era, less ruled by colonial legacies and more governed by market forces built on supply and demand? How much are these market forces guided by a colonial legacy?

2.3 Literature in the Marketplace

In order to address the questions above, in relation to African writing and postcolonial writing, a good starting place is offered by Huggan (2001), Brouillette (2007) and Krishnan (2014). Graham Huggan discusses the role the marketplace has played and continues to play with regard to the publishing and sales of postcolonial literature. He asks in his book (2001, 25) “[w]hat are the laws of supply and demand that govern the global cultural marketplace?”. That is a question which Sarah Brouillette (2007) and Madhu Krishnan (2014) also tackle in their works. Huggan's (2001) book concerns itself with a discussion of postcolonialism and postcoloniality, of which the latter according to him means “a value-regulating mechanism within the

global late-capitalist system of commodity exchange” (Huggan 2001, 6) and “it regulates the value-equivalence of putatively marginal products in the global marketplace. Postcolonialism, by contrast, implies a politics of value that stands in obvious opposition to global processes of commodification” (Huggan 2001, 6). His conclusion is, however, that postcolonialism needs postcoloniality in the “commodity culture” we have today (Huggan 2001, 6), and that its terms are largely dictated by the marketing and selling of products. Huggan (2001, viii) also claims that postcolonial studies have turned marginality into a “valuable intellectual commodity”. This is interesting from Godwin’s perspective as well. At the same time he is both marginalized and privileged, African and Western. Brouillette (2007, 7) seems to be of the same opinion and says that postcolonial authorship is “a generative and saleable feature of the industry that it aims to assess”. Thus the entanglements go deep and remain problematic to some extent. Postcolonial literature cannot survive without its readership and the literary marketplace, but by becoming a commodity in this market it conforms itself to certain expectations and inevitably loses some of its defiant edge.

Brouillette (2007, 49) also asks what kind of a commodity a book really is. Her conclusion is that it is not a commodity like other products that we consume, such as food or drinks for example. They are uniform whereas books come in all shapes and sizes and leave room for the reader’s own interpretation. But she concludes that it is not quite as simple after all since there are a number of huge publishing companies that also own media in different forms (Brouillette 2007, 50). “Books are a major industry” (Brouillette 2007, 51) is certainly a noteworthy comment. However, what Brouillette (2007, 58) identifies as problematic is the dominance of English. She writes that

Despite the undoubted prominence of works by writers not simplistically identifiable as Anglo-American, the locus of production and consumption that drives the trade, and hence the economic beneficiaries of its operations, remains centered in the Anglo-American metropolizes.

(Brouillette 2007, 58)

In addition to this, Brouillette (2007, 59) concludes that a lot of the scholarly work on this literature is also produced in Anglo-American metropolises. She also lists certain characteristics typical of postcolonial literature that is sold worldwide. Such characteristics are for example that the books in question are often novels written in English (Brouillette 2007, 58-59), “it is relatively

‘sophisticated’ or ‘complex’ and often anti-realist; it is politically liberal and suspicious of nationalism; it uses a language of exile, hybridity, and ‘mongrel’ subjectivity” (Brouillette 2007, 61).

These notions are also intriguing with regard to Godwin’s writing. He is not a novelist, but as I have concluded earlier in this chapter, autobiography and memoir have become very popular modes of writing in the last fifteen years, just in time for the outpouring of stories from Zimbabwe. Godwin also uses a language of exile and hybridity, and even the word ‘mongrel’ is there: “I suppose I am a chimera of sorts too. Half Jew, half Gentile. A hybrid, a cross-breed. A mongrel” (*Crocodile*, 175). His books are definitely complex in many ways, and are sophisticated too. One obvious example which comes to mind is Godwin’s use of sarcasm, irony and political incorrectness. In *The Three of U.S.*, Godwin lost a piece of one of his teeth and needed to urgently visit the dentist. The dentist noted that he had an impacted wisdom tooth. “He and his nurse, Evelyn, laugh pityingly at the examples of pathetic English dentistry on naked display in my gob. ‘Metal fillings,’ says Evelyn in wonder, as though observing rare examples of the lost folk craft of coracle weaving” (*The Three of U.S.*, 218). In *Mukiwa*, Godwin remembers a man who died during one of his mother’s rounds visiting her patients. “‘What were his last words?’ I asked my mother. ‘Remind the boys to spread compost on the top field,’ she said. So much for famous last words, I thought. I imagined it etched into a granite headstone in Gothic script. Not really the stuff of epitaphs” (*Mukiwa*: 108). Thus, Brouillette’s criteria do apply to them a great deal, and Godwin’s writing is most certainly written in English, published in Anglo-American metropolises (by Picador), and read and studied by people often located in the very same places. According to Picador, Godwin has also won prizes for *Mukiwa*: “*Mukiwa* was an international bestseller and winner of the George Orwell Prize for political writing and the *Esquire*-Apple-Waterstone’s Non-Fiction Award”. I will return to the discussion of awards and their role in the literary marketplace in the following sections.

The question of the role of the author also arises in this context. Brouillette (2007, 65-66) argues that authorship and the author’s own persona have become important factors when marketing literature, which was already discussed. Gerard Genette has published a well-known work titled *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1987, in English 1997) in which he outlines how different paratextual features of a book function and also affect the potential reader. His book is proof of how important it is to think about matters such as authorship in the literary marketplace, and in the case of Godwin’s

memoirs, for example both *Mukiwa* and *Crocodile* have photos on their covers of the author as a child. This certainly strengthens the market impact of authorship and the image of the writer and is clearly intended to appeal to the reader. To return to the question of specifically African literature, Madhu Krishnan (2014) argues that “the majority of celebrated contemporary African authors find their publishing audiences through British and American presses including Picador, HarperPerennial, Jonathan Cape, Bloomsbury and Granta” (Krishnan 2014, 36). Thus they use the same networks and gateways as writers in the Anglo-American world. Here it must be noted, however, that many celebrated contemporary African writers also reside in Anglo-American metropolises, just like Godwin, and so does their readership.

A few words on journalism in the marketplace are needed, as Godwin is also a professional journalist and this aspect of his identity is visible in his autobiographical writing as well. Media in the world has undergone some significant changes in the last twenty years due to digitalisation (cf. Grueskin, Seave and Graves, 2011). The readership for newspapers in particular has declined, and free access to online news has supported this development. Advertisements brought in money for different forms of media and ensured their profitability, but they also declined when computers and internet became more widely available (Grueskin et al. 2011, 8-9). There has been talk of a crisis within journalism (cf. Meyer, 2009; Reinardy, 2011), and Meyer pinpoints the developments that have taken place by noting that “[t]hese still developing media forms are the real competitors, and market share is an issue again. It is a more complicated market because the good being sought is neither share of circulation nor share of readership. It is share of the audience’s finite amount of attention” (Meyer 2009, 18). Ferrucci (2015, 196-197) argues that all news organizations are market oriented at least to some extent, as they need an audience. Russial et al. (2015, 300) add that “[n]ews consumers are in partnership as never before with news reporters”. They also talk about the presence of “noise”, which comes from commercial ads and intensive coverage of events which may not be necessary (Russial et al. 2015, 301). Hence, the audience has a greater responsibility than before, but also greater freedom to choose which media forums to follow. The following section deals particularly with African literature in the marketplace, as it is tied to postcolonial discourses. Just as the publishing industry and journalism have undergone significant changes in recent decades, so has African writing profoundly transformed.

2.3.1 African Literature

The place of African literature in the literary marketplace and in relation to postcolonial theory has changed in previous decades. No longer haunted by colonialism to the same degree or by the need to “write back” with the same fervour as earlier, African literature is emerging from varied locations and dealing with a wide range of topics. Godwin’s place within that genre is contestable, as he writes from beyond the continent and much of his readership is supposedly American and European. However, the life and surroundings he describes are African, white African if such a term can be allowed, and the setting against which all his stories are told throughout his memoirs is Zimbabwe. Huggan (2001, 37) argues that the market value of African literature is connected to something he calls the “anthropological exotic”. This exotic “describes a mode of both perception and consumption; it invokes the familiar aura of other, incommensurably ‘foreign’ cultures while appearing to provide a modicum of information that gives the uninitiated reader access to the text and, by extension, the ‘foreign’ culture itself” (Huggan 2001, 37). Godwin’s writing has some of these features mentioned by Huggan, and his memoirs to some extent function as a bridge between Zimbabwe and readers in Anglophone countries. Huggan (2001, 37) concludes that this enables a reading of African literature “as the more or less transparent window onto a richly detailed and culturally specific, but still somehow homogenous – and of course readily marketable – African world”.

The following example highlights what Huggan explained above about the anthropological exotic, and the passage also underlines the marketability of Godwin’s memoirs. First of all, the travels around rural clinics in *Mukiwa* with his mother express the exotic in a number of ways, but also participate in informing readers about specific customs and particularities among the locals. Godwin’s mother saw to a young woman named Mercy who wanted birth control as she already had many children and an unemployed husband. They discussed various options, and Godwin writes the following about what his mother heard from Mercy:

She learnt that if an African woman fails to conceive within the first two years of marriage, this is grounds for divorce. She learnt that in some cases if a woman bears only a small number of children, one or two, then this too can justify the husband returning her to her father, a poor breeder. She learnt that many African women, educated for the first generation now, no longer wanted the tyranny of a dozen children, especially when ten were

likely to survive, unlike the old days when they were lucky if two or three made it to adulthood.

(*Mukiwa, 91*)

This passage is troubling in a number of ways. First of all, Godwin clearly wishes to provide the reader with information about local customs in Rhodesia, although covering it up as something his mother learned. If that is the case, that his mother was, for the first time, learning about all these things from Mercy, it begs the question as to why she had not figured it out before, having worked at the rural clinics for some time. The passage also suggests that the customs were harmful, provoking readers to feel indignation on behalf of the “African women” who were considered as simply “breeders” and who had to bear “the tyranny” of many children. It underlines the difference between Godwin’s mother and Mercy, and functions as a reader’s guide to this foreign, incomprehensible culture. “African women” in the passage above also comes to mean women on the entire continent, suggesting that all African customs are the same.

Claims about African literature in the marketplace that emphasize the exotic suggest that it is still driven by a certain image of a totality called ‘Africa’, an image which does not fully distinguish between the various cultures and nations present on the continent. This supports Wainaina’s (2005) comments about the stereotypical image of Sub-Saharan Africa in Western texts in his essay “How to Write About Africa”. Krishnan (2014, 2-3), for her part, boldly states that many much-loved and read writers who are also seen as representing African literature are actually quite non-African. She mentions Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who spends much of her time in Europe and North America; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, who lives in California; Tsitsi Dangarembga, who like Adichie, also lives to some extent outside Africa; Brian Chikwava, who lives in London and Chris Abani in Los Angeles. I could personally also add Petina Gappah to that list, as she used to live in Switzerland but moved back to Zimbabwe only to return to Geneva (Armitstead 2015), and NoViolet Bulawayo, who lives in the USA. It seems to be more of a rule than an exception that renowned and famous African writers no longer live on the continent. Krishnan (2014, 3) quite rightfully asks why “this decidedly migratory African identity” has become representative of African literature as an entire genre. Paradoxically enough, this might suggest that the geographical locations where African literature is produced are less often interrogated than the heritage of the writers in

question. An obvious conclusion is that demands on both geographical locations as well as ancestry of writers would benefit from greater flexibility.

Another relevant issue is the question of politics in literature. Krishnan (2014, 149) explains that according to her, African literature today is much less preoccupied with the political and more engaged in personal matters. This is also visible in two interviews with Petina Gappah (Lea 2009, Moss 2009) in which the writer refuses to be called the voice of Zimbabwe and even contests the label 'African writer'. The issue according to her is largely about engaging in politics, or not. Lizzy Attree (2013, 36) has noted the same phenomenon and suggests that the fact that much of contemporary African literature comes from the diaspora is the reason why it is less nationalistic than it had been previously. Godwin does engage in politics to quite a large extent, and does not conform to these new criteria for African writers. He belongs more in the category with old political activists such as Ngũgĩ and Achebe; writers who explicitly took a stand in their writing and often risked their personal safety and freedom for it. This is also partly why Godwin has been criticized so much. He openly engages in Zimbabwean politics and writes for democratic change, something which most contemporary writers seem very reluctant to do or at least do not want to acknowledge that they are doing. Explicit politics seems to be out of fashion in contemporary African writing. Hazel Ngoshi (2013, 120) makes a relevant observation with regard to politics in writing that "the genre of autobiography itself is a fundamental form of evidence of how individuals attempt to define the self by positioning themselves strategically along the historical and cultural continuum". This suggests that memoir and autobiography may be even more politically explicit than other forms of literature, due to their very nature as personal narratives. Could a non-political Zimbabwean memoir even exist? Such a question implies that politics in literature is not determined by whoever happens to analyse it, but something of which it is an inherent part.

Huggan also asks what African literature is, and from what region it comes and concludes that African literature means texts by writers of African origin, studied both in Africa as well as parts of what he calls the First World, written in European languages and that African literature is thus an "export product, aimed at a largely foreign audience for whom the writer acts, willingly or not, as a cultural spokesperson or interpreter" (Huggan 2001, 34). To this Krishnan (2014, 21) may add that in the global literary marketplace, African literature has been made to represent certain visions, and thus part of its diversity is lost. She also talks of the "stereotypical image of Africa in

crisis” (Krishnan 2014, 6) and Africa “as a place of exotic fascination and unspeakable suffering” (Krishnan 2014, 8). “This is an Africa which cannot function on its own, always in need of the Western gaze to admire its wonders or Western intervention to save it from itself” (Krishnan 2014, 10). These are very postcolonial notions and obviously just one aspect of African writing or other cultural production set in Africa, and where I would like to argue that they are perhaps not as prominent as they have been, Godwin’s writing unfortunately does not support my case that well. He seems to act as the interpreter Huggan mentioned above.

Krishnan (2014, 134-135) adds that contemporary African writers today are often asked to comment on current events and trends in Africa and regarded as well-rounded experts on everything African. By contrast, Attree’s study (2013, 40) concludes that contemporary African writers want freedom from old constraints with regard to postcolonialism and representativeness:

Postcolonial theory, however liberating in one sense, seems to limit writers to continually writing with the colony as an ontological reference point, whereas many modern African writers [...] do not wish to write or be read within such boundaries. [...] Many of the new generation of African writers do not wish to speak on behalf of anyone and certainly not to the West. They simply wish to be read as writers, thinkers, and artists alongside their contemporaries in global literature and by readers in their own countries.

(Attree 2013, 40)

Attree makes a relevant observation about the need for African literature and African writers to detach themselves from postcolonial demands, and argues that this is essential in order for the genre to become as artistically free as it possibly can. The expression “in their own countries” is here obviously problematic, as it suggests simple belonging to one’s country of birth whereas writers such as Adichie and Chikwava certainly write for the audience in their second home countries as well (the USA and the UK respectively). Then there are also celebrated writers such as Taiye Selasi and Aminatta Forna, well-known and widely read authors with African ancestry (Nigerian/Ghanaian and Sierra Leonean) who were both born in the UK. Where should they be placed on the ‘African writer’- scale, and for whom do they write?

The need to generalize within African literature seems to prevail, and Huggan, Krishnan and Attree’s criticism all highlight real problems with the

way African literature is still perceived today. However, certain conventions still guide even recent criticism. Expressions such as “their own countries” (Attree, 2013) or “stereotypical image of Africa in crisis” (Krishnan, 2014) reveal that there are certain generalizations, and although Krishnan is right in her critique that expectations concerning African writing have to do with a particular portrayal of the continent, such comments can also be harmful. African literature has already moved into a state of being where it deals with a wide variety of topics no longer emanating only from the colonial past. Godwin’s memoirs and their place in the literary market might fall within African or postcolonial literature, but remain the product of someone who resides beyond Africa’s borders and whose literary focus is to a large extent on difficulties of life in modern Zimbabwe. Krishnan critically examines diasporic African writers, and Godwin is both diasporic and the son of white settlers. To complicate matters further, he writes about his own life and displays Zimbabwe in a rather negative light, asking for “Western intervention” (Krishnan, 2014) to save Zimbabwe from itself in his memoirs. Hence the place of contemporary African literature, the “export product” (Huggan, 2001), remains utterly contested and Godwin’s writing offers a platform on which to debate its past, present and future.

2.3.2 Literary Prizes

Before concluding this discussion on the literary marketplace, a brief analysis of literary prizes and awards is needed. Many of the famous African writers mentioned in this chapter have won prestigious literary prizes such as the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize (cf. Adichie, Forna; the criteria for the prize have since changed and it is now awarded to short stories), or the Orange Prize for Fiction which is now known as Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction (winners include Adichie also for this award). Last but not least there is the Caine Prize for African Writing, which has been won by, among others, NoViolet Bulawayo, Brian Chikwava and Binyavanga Wainaina. The Caine Prize in particular has been of interest for critics as it is directed at specifically African writing, and short stories to be precise, and Krishnan observes that this prize has also been accused of continuing a neo-colonial selection of writers by choosing which authors are allowed to represent Africa. Another troublesome feature of it is that it is awarded for English language stories

(Krishnan 2014, 135-136). Krishnan also addresses the Caine Prize guidelines which determine who is eligible for the award, and according to her interpretation of the guidelines, “African writing has to be, in some way, identifiable as African, be it through its authorial subject, content, form or function” (Krishnan 2014, 146).

A brief look at the Caine Prize website shows that there is a set of rules for submissions:

‘An African writer’ is taken to mean someone who was born in Africa, or who is a national of an African country, or who has a parent who is African by birth or nationality. The Prize is awarded to a short story by an African writer published in English, whether in Africa or elsewhere.

(Caine Prize, *How to enter*)

Here Africanness is attached to origin and heritage, and thus Godwin would qualify as well since he was born in Rhodesia. Recent winners include Brian Chikwava and NoViolet Bulawayo, both Zimbabwean writers. Krishnan (2014, 168) argues that the Caine Prize has been accused of supporting a view of Africa that once again emphasizes suffering. Attree (2013, 44) writes that the prize has been criticized, and shortlisted authors have been criticized as well for writing a “Caine Prize ‘type’ of story, as if a kind of ‘Caine genre’ exists”. Attree (2013, 39) seems to be generally positive towards the Prize, and says that it supports the production and evaluation of African writing.

Graham Huggan has focused on the Booker Prize in his work, and he argues that those winning the prize or coming very close enjoy commercial success, and that the prize has a huge influence on people’s reading habits (Huggan 2001, 108). According to him, the Booker Prize has also participated in the canonization of postcolonial writers and literature, and this creates a paradox as the prize has also made readers more aware of English language literature coming from writers and cultures of many different backgrounds (Huggan 2001, 119). Thus it is clear that literary prizes do affect the marketplace as well in many different ways, and they also define the literature for which they are awarded. The choices that have been made guide people’s reading habits and boost sales of particular writers, whereas they ignore others, who in this case might for example have written in other languages than English. In this case the hegemony of English is inherently problematic, but it is also a problem that will most likely not go away any time soon. Godwin also won prizes for his writing, and specifically for *Mukiwa*. The memoir won him the Orwell Prize for political writing and the Esquire-

Apple-Waterstone's Non-Fiction Award, and *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* won the Borders Original Voices Awards.

The Orwell Prize is presented as "Britain's most prestigious prize for political writing" and Godwin won it in 1997. Winning it for *Mukiwa* seems far-fetched, as his writing has taken on a much more political stance since, and *Mukiwa* remains a rather traditional memoir of childhood. The politics of *Mukiwa* have to do with the end of colonialism in Zimbabwe, but the focus is still mainly on Godwin's childhood, upbringing and experiences in the civil war. Hence the prize warrants a closer look. The website lists winners and books shortlisted for the prize, and presents a varied group of works including Petina Gappah's short story collection *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) shortlisted in 2010 along with for example *Rebel Land: Among Turkey's Forgotten Peoples* (2009) by Christopher de Bellaigue. According to the brief description, the book explores conflicts between Turks, Kurds and Armenians. Although Gappah's collection of stories is brilliant and undoubtedly political, it remains unclear how well it would qualify for the Orwell Prize, which seems more suited for nonfiction. According to the criteria for the prize, established in 1994 by its founder Professor Sir Bernard Crick, the prize aims "to encourage writing in good English – while giving equal value to style and content, politics or public policy, whether political, economic, social or cultural – of a kind aimed at or accessible to the reading public, not to specialist or academic audiences". Such a vague description could fit almost any work, even *Mukiwa*. Winners in more recent years include Arkady Ostrovsky's *The Invention of Russia* (2015) which won in 2016 and examines Russian politics from the end of the Cold War to the present day, as well as James Meek's *Private Island: Why Britain Now Belongs to Someone Else* (2014) which won in 2015, and is an examination of the privatization of British institutions such as rail and postal services, and its impact on the economy. Both Ostrovsky and Meek seem to have engaged in investigative journalism, most likely heavily popularized to meet the criteria of the prize, but the books still remain a far cry from Godwin's memoir. The political dimension of *Mukiwa* lies in its depiction of the colonial era and of Godwin's expulsion, but it is still to some extent quite surprising that it qualified for this award.

The Orwell Prize is the most significant of the three Godwin has won, and it clearly defines *Mukiwa* as political writing, which says something about the power of such awards. Categorizing the memoir as political literature ignores the explicitly personal aspect of the book. Alexandra Fuller is another white

Southern African writer who has won prizes for her autobiographical writing, for example the Lettre Ulysses Award for the Art of Reportage in 2005 for *Scribbling the Cat*, and the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize in 2002 for *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*. The Lettre Ulysses Award has not been active since 2006, but the idea behind the award was to develop a “worldwide form of recognition for literary reportage”. That award defines *Scribbling the Cat* as literary reportage, once more highlighting the categorizing effect of prizes. Having won awards and recognition for his writing, Godwin also participates in this capacity in the literary marketplace. Brouillette (2007, 71) writes about Amitav Ghosh withdrawing from the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2001, and explains that the reason behind this was not to protest against “the inevitable commercialization and consecration of literary production”; instead, it was a protest against the category of ‘Commonwealth literature’. All different categories presented in this chapter have received criticism: postcolonial literature, African literature and commonwealth literature. The latter is obviously more problematic than the former, as it suggests literature from countries that were formerly part of the British Empire. But this sheds light on the near impossible task to properly categorize literature, for example in the form of awards. The discussion of the Orwell Prize underlines the role of prizes and their responsibility to be transparent and straightforward in their judgement.

2.4 Discussion and Conclusion

Memoirs sell, particularly the exotic (Huggan, 2001; Armitstead, 2001) or the confessional (Helms, 2005). The personal has become quite public, and autobiography has its designated place within the literary market. Autobiography or memoir is the ‘reality’ dimension of literature; it constitutes writing where something quite personal is revealed and the reader is asked to join in the difficulties of surviving a terrible personal tragedy or follow the writer’s life from childhood to adulthood. Thus autobiography has many purposes, and readers’ responses are relevant to how the genre is perceived. Smith and Watson ([2001] 2010) mentioned “compassion fatigue” as a possible problem, which could well be tied to the extensive 24-hour news coverage available online on innumerable websites for anyone with a working internet connection. Tragedies such as war, natural disasters or poverty are

well-covered, but the success of memoirs (which sometimes cover very similar topics) lies in the personal dimension.

Another significant factor, which determines whether a memoir becomes popular or not, is the historical moment in which it is produced. Mugerle (2013) commented on this, and in relation to Godwin, the historical moment is highly relevant. The land reform beginning in 2000 was a turning point for white settlers in Zimbabwe, and it also inspired many of the memoirs which have since come forth. The interest in autobiography and particularly trauma narratives also enables these writers to reach wide audiences. The power of the personal story is exemplified by *Not Without My Daughter*, which has been the subject of much controversy since publication. In the context of Zimbabwe, Godwin and his peers have also been criticized for their writing (cf. Pillosof, 2012; Primorac, 2010), a contingency which reflects the present moment as well. Krishnan (2014) raised questions about African writers who are currently representing the genre; many of whom live and write from abroad. That is obviously the case of Godwin as well, and his place within that genre is even more contested. But the fact remains that Godwin's memoirs are marketable, tapping into the interest in autobiography, trauma narratives, the exotic, and the personal. Picador explained on their website that the author's voice is an important feature in books published by them, and that how a story is told is equally important to what is being told. Both Attree (2013) and Krishnan (2014) also claimed that African literature is less political and more personal today than it was formerly, and here Godwin is an exception. He has remained explicitly political throughout his writing, and his choice of topics also conforms to the stereotype that Africa is in perpetual crisis (cf. Wainaina, 2005). That could be Godwin's golden ticket into the literary market: writing from a personal perspective but being political and controversial too, and writing about a place in Sub-Saharan Africa which may not be too familiar to an Anglo-American audience. It is, in many ways, a recipe for success, although in the eyes of many critics, Godwin remains on the wrong side of the fence as the son of white European settlers.

The question of centre and periphery remains problematic, and this also refers to the discussion of postcolonial literature in the marketplace. This literature simultaneously represents the centre and the periphery, as it has gained significant attention in recent decades, while being written by people who have often been moved to the margins. Godwin's position is intriguing, as he and his fellow white Zimbabweans have been to some extent marginalized in Zimbabwe particularly since the land reform, but they are

descendants of the ruling class which held onto power in colonial Rhodesia for so long. Writing in English from New York, Godwin cannot be said to be marginalized linguistically, culturally or geographically. But the sense of marginalization is strong particularly in *Crocodile*, which is tied to his parents losing their life savings. Other writers such as Buckle have felt marginalized because of the land reform and its impact on white farmers. The forces that guide postcolonial literature have significantly changed, as current writers engage themselves in topics relating to everyday life for Africans in Africa or elsewhere, and the political dimension has transformed into something more subtle.

To conclude this discussion, different actors in the literary marketplace have had a significant impact on what literature is marketed and sold, and also on the definitions of certain genres of writing such as postcolonial literature or African literature. This means that some writers are elevated at the cost of others, and this selection process regarding who gets to be an 'African' writer for example seems to be dependent on several factors such as place of origin and visibility in Europe and the USA, and less focus is put on factors such as current place of residence. The commodity culture is a fact, however, and Godwin's own confessions about how he would regularly check the sales of *Mukiwa* on Amazon shows that he was interested in how popular his book was. The surge of white Zimbabwean memoirs in the last fifteen years still raises questions. Have these books emerged because of successful publishing, marketing and selling skills, or because readers have found the topics they deal with compelling, engaging and most of all important? The gap between popular reception and academic criticism is also evident, and the rest of my dissertation will be concerned with the latter. The particular historical moment we live in is important to bear in mind, as it has an effect on the publishing industry, readership and of course on individual writers. All three actors participate in shaping the literary marketplace in profound ways.

3. “I Feel the Beginnings of First World Panic”: Whiteness, Privilege and Representation

3.1 Introduction

White Rhodesia is perhaps best thought of, not as a firm island, but as a floating mat of thick vegetation, which in calmer waters might have appeared to have been a grounded land mass, yet during stormier weather it loosened and broke apart rather easily, with some pieces drifting off to distant shores, and others attaching together, as the last desperate clumps floating in the choppy African seas.

(Brownell 2008, 610)

This passage from Josiah Brownell’s article on white emigration from Rhodesia at the end of the colonial period effectively points to the situation of white Rhodesians and their unstable existence in what is now Zimbabwe. The metaphor of white Rhodesians as a “floating mat of thick vegetation”, easily broken apart by forces such as the civil war and majority rule, forming diasporas in countries such as South Africa, the UK and the USA, emphasizes not only the close ties between white Rhodesians but also their detachment from the lives of others in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Peter Godwin and his fellow white Zimbabwean writers are part of that floating mat, some of whom have drifted off to distant shores. Their memoirs symbolically form the “last desperate clumps” still bobbing around and become the writers’ attempt to share their experiences as members of a particular group of people who grew up under quite extraordinary circumstances, in a country which, for the most part, had been settled by their parents or grandparents. Despite Brownell’s interpretation, the memoirs express a strong sense of belonging. “‘Where would you like to be buried when *you* die?’ I ask [my mother]. ‘At home,’ she says, without breaking stride. ‘In Africa. Next to your father’” (*The Fear* 2010, 3).

Among the truly first insightful writers to explore the white predicament in Rhodesia was Doris Lessing in *The Grass is Singing* (1950), a novel which documents the life of the Turners, a white farmer couple in the Southern African bush. Other novels followed suit, and Anthony Chennells (1996), among others, has studied some of these novels in his chapter on Rhodesian

discourse and the civil war in Zimbabwe. He argues that many of the writers did not realize what was happening when the conflict (which was to become a full-blown war) begun in the mid-1960s, and that their time had come to an inevitable end (Chennells 1996, 102). Whereas Lessing's novel belongs to an early category of white Zimbabwean writing, other works by writers such as Wilbur Smith and Laurens van de Post mentioned by Chennells seem to belong to another category, one which is also different from the current memoirs. The problem with categorizing 'Rhodesian' (as in pre-independence) and 'Zimbabwean' (as in post-independence) writing is something many scholars have tried to solve. Ranka Primorac (2006, 13-14) suggests in her work *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* that critics have generally categorized Zimbabwean writing in three different groups. The first consists of early works published from the 1950s onward, which were written in African languages by black writers. In the second group, novels in English can be found, by celebrated writers such as for example Dambudzo Marechera. The third and last group comprises novels by white settlers writing in English (Primorac 2006, 13). Primorac (2006, 14) argues that a new way of categorizing Zimbabwean literature is needed, and concludes that the white novel in particular has been studied less "for obvious ideological reasons" (Primorac 2006, 15), implying yet again that politics and history are integral components in this writing.

A much earlier study of English writing in Zimbabwe by John Reed (1986, 251) suggests that Zimbabwean literature should be divided into three other types of categories: "Rhodesian literature, counter-Rhodesian literature and Zimbabwean literature". According to Reed, Rhodesian literature categorizes writing produced since 1890 which defended the occupation of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, and expresses the ideology of white settlers (Reed 1986, 251). Counter-Rhodesian literature was a reaction to this ideology. Mainly represented in the form of "personal and historical accounts", this has been written for a public outside Rhodesia (Reed 1986, 251). Zimbabwean literature is not directly defined, but Reed (1986, 260) seems to refer to literature which is not attached to the political struggle for independence or which is explicitly writing against white Rhodesia. Reed claims towards the end of his text that the counter-Rhodesian texts are bound to disappear. But he is not without some reservations: "the fullest imaginative expression of a way of life sometimes does not get written until that way of life has disappeared, [and] there is no reason to feel sure that the 'Rhodesian' trend will also vanish" (Reed 1986, 262). Now the question remains as to where

Godwin should be placed amid these categories, and this is a significant issue, as the way in which they are separated and distinguished between has to do with the colour of the writers and their relationship to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, something which remains central to Godwin's writing as well.

'Rhodesian' as opposed to 'Zimbabwean' is a problematic epithet, as it suggests a colonial condition. Interestingly enough, it seems to have become a term in its own right, no longer applied only to works actually written during the colonial era. To call Godwin's memoirs 'Rhodesian writing' would mean situating them in the past, in the colonial and white supremacist era and claiming that they express views that emanate from this Rhodesian past. To call them Zimbabwean would mean giving them a strong claim on the present, a claim which could be contested due to the fact that all the memoirs in question were written and published outside Zimbabwe by a writer who no longer lives there. Godwin's writing is not colonial, despite being to some extent about the colonial period, but published fairly recently, nor is it entirely engaged with the present. It is neither Rhodesian nor counter-Rhodesian, and it is not purely settler writing either. The need for categorisation and labelling can sometimes be counterproductive, but such categories do not appear without reason. The "obvious ideological reasons" Primorac (2006) referred to earlier play a particular role here. Diane Mehta concludes in her article that "a country's literature is key to its identity" (Mehta 2015, 77), which explains why categorizing Zimbabwean literature is so important for scholars. Distinguishing clearly between Rhodesian and Zimbabwean writing is an attempt to make up with the colonial past, and because literature is so important for national identity, it is understandable why white writing is such contested ground. This chapter looks at whiteness in Godwin's memoirs from a point of view of the specific situation in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, with focus on privileges, questions of authenticity and representation as well as anger or guilt. Whiteness from a more scholarly perspective is also part of this chapter. Racial studies have emerged as particularly important in the USA, and my discussion features a British and Southern African angle as well.

All three of Godwin's memoirs will be discussed in this chapter. They have been defined in a number of ways: as a new form of Rhodesian discourse (Primorac 2010, 204), as "an imaginative project of ecological belonging" (McDermott Hughes 2010, 102), as an expression of social and political responsibility in order to earn redemption (Harris 2005, 107), and all of the notions and definitions above have directly to do with whiteness; a whiteness

that carries a heavy colonial burden and which must be examined in connection to its historical and political legacy. This notion remains the most central throughout this chapter; Godwin's writing comes from a colonial setting and the whiteness attached to it has historical significance. *Mukiwa*, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* and *The Fear* tackle the whiteness issue in different ways, as the memoirs are written from different perspectives. *Mukiwa* as a colonial childhood memoir has a strong emphasis on typical colonial stereotypes with regard to whiteness, for example growing up with a black nanny. Towards the end of the memoir, Godwin remembers the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, and also explains how he was expelled from Zimbabwe. He moves from a child's perceptions of its own colour to a more sinister and serious attitude towards the newly independent country and the place of whites in it. This discussion continues in *Crocodile*, although the tone changes further. In this second memoir, Godwin's own position between his own family in New York and his old and ailing parents in Harare caused a lot of grief and distress. This coincided with the land reform in Zimbabwe and the rapidly dwindling national economy. The tone is angry and regretful, accusatory and seeking forgiveness at the same time. Matters of white privilege and guilt are especially prominent in this memoir. The third book, *The Fear*, has lost most of the self-righteous anger and instead of focusing inwards on Godwin's own feelings and experiences, it is directed outwards both in terms of who the book is about and who it is for. The question of who Godwin could be trying to represent, or be a representative of, arises in my analysis of this memoir.

3.2 Whiteness and Rhodesia

"The drama of colonisation was not just a white affair", writes Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009, 41) in his article on the early phases of colonisation in Zimbabwe. Through this comment, Ndlovu-Gatsheni emphasizes the participation of black people during colonization and says that it was "an encounter between humans, both white and black" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, 41). He objects to the interpretation that Africans would have lacked agency with regard to their own treatment during the colonial period. Zimbabwe was not yet Zimbabwe at this early stage (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009, 47-48). The first serious uprising against white settlers took place in 1896 and according to

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009, 49), this was the birth of Zimbabwean nationalism. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's comments can be read as a subtle and certainly justified critique against the Eurocentric view of Zimbabwe's, and Africa's, general history and that of colonialism. This section explores whiteness from a Rhodesian perspective, that is, the colonial era which was white supremacist by nature. Ndlovu-Gatsheni is absolutely right that colonialism was not a "white affair" exclusively, but in this chapter the colonial legacy of this particular whiteness is central.

Peter Godwin describes the arrival of his parents in Southern Rhodesia and says about his father that "Africa, for him, is clearly the antidote to Europe's great burden of history, the blood feuds and the Holocaust. It is a place where he can wipe his memory of past hurt and start again" (*Crocodile*, 152). A similar sentiment is expressed by Lessing in her autobiography about her father who wanted to leave Britain after The First World War (*Under My Skin*, 7). Lessing's parents arrived in Southern Rhodesia in 1924 (*Under My Skin*, 50). In an interview with Terry Gross on Fresh Air, National Public Radio, which is a media organization in USA, Godwin says that Africa was a "great sanctuary" in those days, and that this was probably why his father did not want to leave the continent, because he saw it as a "refuge" (Godwin, 2011). This brings a more human approach to the discussion of white settlers in Rhodesia and their exploitation of the country, and a more nuanced picture of the people who left Europe for Rhodesia. The post-war disillusionment in Europe was a push factor for people such as Godwin's father who had lost so much during the war, and Godwin writes that this 'Africa' his parents arrived in was a place full of possibilities, "at least if you are white" (*Crocodile*, 151). This comment shows that Godwin is fully aware of his parents' status when arriving in Southern Africa, and that their lives were totally different from that of the locals. However, the parallel to recent migration from Zimbabwe to for example the UK is naturally a different matter. People fleeing the unrest in present-day Zimbabwe probably also see Europe as a sanctuary and refuge, but their treatment there is often quite different (cf. McGregor, 2010a).

Josiah Brownell concludes in his article that Rhodesia was never able to maintain a stable white population despite serious efforts in some quarters (Brownell 2008, 592). According to Brownell, immigration was "the white Rhodesian population's greatest engine of growth" (Brownell 2008, 594). Birth rates were relatively low among the white settlers, but much higher among Africans (Brownell 2010, 97) which further complicated the situation

for whites and their future in Rhodesia. Martin Loney (1975) explains, for his part, in detail that Rhodesia was less of a typical British colony than others, and this was mainly due to its strong white government which was not “a present to give to whoever seemed best able to administer it in capitalism’s long-term interests” (Loney 1975, 103). These are relevant observations with regard to the prolonged colonial period in Rhodesia. Brownell writes:

An annual average of 4.1 per cent of Rhodesia’s total white population emigrated each year over the 24 years from 1955 to 1979, and an average of 4.6 per cent entered each year. This would be the percentage equivalent of the entire cities of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester being completely replaced by new people every year in the UK.

(Brownell 2008, 595)

Fluctuation was thus great, and when taking Brownell’s comments into account, it seems paradoxical how strongly rooted white people felt in Rhodesia, according to recently published memoirs, with regard to how little time they sometimes had spent there. McDermott Hughes (2010, 105), however, argues that “whites belonged to the nation like anyone else”. This is an important, albeit controversial observation when compared to Brownell’s argument (2008, 597) that whites lack of deep roots in Rhodesia resulted from their strong ties to other countries, for example the UK and South Africa. This lack of roots was also connected to the possibility of making a future in Rhodesia. People who were looking for a way to make a fortune stayed in Rhodesia for as long as it was financially justifiable (Brownell 2008, 598). Despite offering a quite different view of the belonging of whites, McDermott Hughes states that in order to keep a piece of land, settlers needed to “establish a credible sense of entitlement” (McDermott Hughes 2010, 1). Without deep roots in a sense of long-term ancestry in the country, entitlement and belonging had to be based on something else than heritage, family ties and a long historical presence in the country. These memoirs, by Godwin and other writers related to Zimbabwe, manifest that belonging.

The civil war which erupted after the UDI in 1965 became another problem for the white government, as there were not enough men to fight in the war (Brownell 2008, 601-602). Godwin’s own thoughts about the war are expressed in *Mukiwa* (p. 310) where he explains how he was finally allowed to leave Rhodesia and go to Cambridge. From the plane he thought to himself that “20,000 feet below, in that delicate patchwork landscape, people were laying ambushes, detonating land mines, tracking each other through the

bush and shooting one another. It all seemed monumentally pointless, from up there”. When he left, he signed a paper saying that upon return he would be drafted back into the security forces (*Mukiwa*, 310). A year later, in 1978, he returned because of the death of his sister, a tragic mistake by the Rhodesian side, and had to go back into the war again. “I couldn’t believe it, that they were this desperate for manpower” (*Mukiwa*, 317). This personal experience underlines Brownell’s comment about the lack of men to fight the war.

Katja Uusihakala (2008, 5), who has published a dissertation on the diaspora community of ex-Rhodesians (her term), claims that even when Rhodesia still existed, “its legitimacy as homeland for the whites could be justifiably contested politically and morally”. Thus she also concludes just like Brownell and McDermott Hughes that Rhodesia was never a stable home for settlers. Godwin’s experiences seem to confirm this, as he and his entire family have all left Zimbabwe, except for his father and sister who were buried there. That, however, does not diminish the fact that it was still *home* for them; a strong, personal and emotional experience that had formed a bond which was not to be broken easily. Salman Rushdie (2010, 10) beautifully describes the loss of home in his essay “Imaginary Homelands” and says that “the writer who is out-of-country and even out-of-language may experience this loss in an intensified form”. More importantly, he argues that “the past is a country from which we have all emigrated” and the loss of which “is part of our common humanity” (Rushdie 2010, 12). The question as to whether whites belonged in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe cannot possibly be objectively answered, unless the act of belonging is given clear criteria such as the number of years one’s ancestors have resided in a particular place. Whether or not Zimbabwe is their legitimate homeland, to borrow Uusihakala’s words, is impossible to determine from the outside. Memoirs exploring this belonging, this *home*, offer intriguing material for a discussion of nostalgia, the burden of colonialism and the relationship between the always political personal remembering and the struggle over self-definition and self-determination.

This particular whiteness in Rhodesia is something that Godwin also explores in his memoirs. Here his own awareness of the historical burden of colonialism becomes evident, but *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* in particular is complex and goes from historical insight to personal grief and anger. In *Crocodile*, Godwin writes the following about colonialism:

It is sometimes said that the worst thing to happen to Africa was the arrival of the white man. And the second worst was his departure. Colonialism lasted just long enough to destroy much of Africa's indigenous cultures and traditions, but not long enough to leave behind a durable replacement.
(*Crocodile*, 153)

This is a rather explicit and thoughtful passage, and it comes after Godwin has explained how his parents arrived on the continent. Interestingly enough, *Mukiwa* has a different tone. In *Mukiwa*, Godwin writes about the end of the civil war and the first years in independent Zimbabwe.

At first, the new existence in a majority-ruled Zimbabwe seemed to be quite blissful for Godwin and his fellow white Zimbabweans. He writes:

The restaurants were cheap, and the beer was cold and plentiful, sanctions were over, petrol rationing had finally been lifted, and no one was shooting at us. For the first time we were enjoying the country without a conscience. We were no longer in charge and, frankly, it was a relief.
(*Mukiwa*, 328-329)

The emphasis here is on *we*, which suggests that Godwin puts himself in this group of ex-Rhodesians who could finally enjoy the free Zimbabwe and all its pleasures, "without a conscience". It remains uncertain exactly what it was that was a relief to Rhodesians, but Godwin could refer to being relieved of the colonial burden, of living in a constant conflict between the desire to stay in power and the silent acknowledgement that majority rule was inevitable. McDermott Hughes has examined this very same passage and concludes that no longer being politically in charge "soothed nerves long jangled by wider moral responsibilities" and refers to the second military call-up which Godwin was able to avoid before starting to work as a journalist (McDermott Hughes 2010, 102). That is an intriguing interpretation as it suggests that the relief Godwin felt after independence, and perhaps that of many other white Zimbabweans too, had more to do with their being able to stop fighting for a white-ruled Rhodesia than with anything else.

It remains, however, a confusing passage, especially when piecing it together with a passage a few pages earlier in the book where Godwin had just returned from his studies in the UK to a majority-ruled Zimbabwe:

For most of the white community it was a pretty distressing time. [...] It was all too distressing for many, who poured over the border to South

Africa seeking sanctuary from change. From 300,000 at its peak, the white population was now down to about 150,000 and falling. [...] White society was seriously wounded. Peace had achieved something fifteen years of war could not. It had robbed us of our identity. [...] Slowly the whites were undergoing a metamorphosis from settler to expatriate.

(*Mukiwa*, 325-326)

It is hard to determine whether Godwin is speaking of himself or referring to other whites here. White Rhodesians moving to South Africa “seeking sanctuary from change” does obviously not refer to himself, but then again he says that peace robbed ‘us’ of ‘our’ identity. This exemplifies the slippage that is visible throughout Godwin’s writing in several different contexts; he clearly wishes to distance himself from white Rhodesia and white society, but simultaneously admits his own belonging to that group of people, whether he likes to or not. This internal struggle emerges many times in his memoirs, especially when referring to his status as a white Rhodesian/Zimbabwean.

The metamorphosis from settler to expatriate which Godwin mentions became true for himself as well. He was never a settler *per se*, but born to settler parents who were not farmers but still white professionals in Rhodesia, and he did, to some extent, become an expatriate when he left Zimbabwe as he continued to visit the country as often as he could. His perception is, however, accurate: many whites could not deal with change and left (cf. Godwin and Hancock 1993, 315). Thus whiteness in *Mukiwa* after independence centres on Godwin’s own efforts to understand his place in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe. *The Fear* also mentions the post-independence period and Godwin writes about Mugabe’s speech after independence where he asked white people to stay in the new Zimbabwe. “My parents gracefully accepted his offer. As did other whites, mainly farmers” (*The Fear*, 18). The central difference between the focus in *The Fear* and *Crocodile* is that in *The Fear*, Godwin looks at the violence from a point of view of the political opposition, whereas in *Crocodile* he focuses mainly on the fate of white farmers.

3.2.1 Land Reform and Resentment

The presence of something that could be called Rhodesian whiteness; a whiteness which is at least to some extent colonial in its nature, in Godwin’s

writing is mainly visible when he expresses anger or guilt in a specific situation. Thus my focus here is on anger and examining the expressions of self-righteousness in his memoirs, feelings which appear to be colonially rooted. This anger springs from several sources. The displacement is one reason for it, but by no means the only one. In several places, Godwin's writing leaves doubts as to what his personal views of whiteness really are. There are a number of problematic passages in his memoirs as well. One of these is towards the end of *Mukiwa*, when Godwin had been in the Rhodesian police forces for a while participating in the war and stationed in Matabeleland. He writes:

I learnt as much as I could about local politesse, and did my best to observe it. [...] I drove sick people to the clinic, I helped deliver babies, I gave lifts to people whenever I had room in the vehicle, I shot rabid dogs for them, I even slowed down when I passed people on the road, so as not to shower them in dust. And I didn't see another white man for weeks on end. I was, to use PO Moffat's phrase, 'a regular fucking *kaffir*-lover'.

(*Mukiwa*, 254-255)

This passage is trying to show how Godwin related differently to the locals, compared to his supervising officer Moffat who called him a *kaffir*-lover, *kaffir* being a racist and derogatory term for black Africans.

This passage emphasizes *them*, which underlines the difference between Godwin and the black people he met during his military service. It is also problematic because it echoes stereotypical colonial attitudes of Africans and portrays them as helpless people who needed the superior skills and knowledge of the white man in order to survive and improve their lives. Slowing down when passing locals "so as not to shower them in dust" should be an act of common courtesy, not the special favour it becomes in this passage. There is a strong colonial dimension to this part of the text. Interestingly enough, this very same passage has been interpreted quite differently by Tagwirei (2015, 12-13), who explains that Godwin "painstakingly immerses himself in Ndebele customs in order to appreciate the culture of the locals". Godwin says that he used to talk to the local constables and ask them about their culture and customs (*Mukiwa*, 254), but the passage above raises questions about the selflessness of Godwin's actions. He probably acted very differently from other people (for example PO Moffat) and showed more respect for locals, but listing good deeds in this manner is uncomfortable.

A similar passage can be found at the beginning of *Crocodile*, where Godwin writes about his mother who worked as a doctor in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe: “[b]ut my mother hasn’t given up. At seventy-three she still gets up at dawn every morning and comes into the hospital, working on well past her retirement age, paid only her meagre government salary, impelled only by her stubborn sense of duty” (*Crocodile*, 50). It is like the passage from *Mukiwa* about his own efforts during the civil war. I interpret both these passages as indirect references to Godwin’s own efforts to do the right thing (while they remain ambivalent such as the listing of good deeds above), to fight in a war he did not believe in (cf. *Mukiwa*, 310), and his mother’s personal struggle to fight corruption “on a medical compensation board, reviewing the claims from former guerrillas disabled in the independence war” (*Crocodile*, 50). A subtle anger is noticeable beneath all this, and it builds momentum throughout *Crocodile*. Godwin even admits to being angry some pages later: “I feel a rage building up inside me, a fury at all the people I have seen being humiliated and beaten, at the powerlessness of them all, at my own impotence” (*Crocodile*, 111). This refers to white farmers he met and talked to, who lost their properties or loved ones during the land reform. But it is also a general anger at the state Zimbabwe was in at the time of writing, something to which Godwin refers throughout the book. An example of this is from the end of the memoir, when the Godwins had just reburied their daughter Jain who was killed during the civil war. They ate pizza and drank whisky, and watched the street lights turn on in the street, only to go out a few minutes later: “and darkness is restored to our corner of Africa” (*Crocodile*, 261). This darkness here refers to his sister, as well as to Zimbabwe. It emphasizes a sense of hopelessness and an image of this “corner of Africa” as beyond repair. The colonial despair over the impossible state of ‘Africa’ is reproduced once more.

These expressions of anger in *Crocodile* have been examined by Susie Linfield (2007) as well in her essay on several writers with a link to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. She begins her essay with a lengthy description of recent history of Zimbabwe, and this forms the backdrop of her analysis, just as it does for me in this dissertation. Linfield (2007, 96) says that Godwin’s description of Zimbabwe is “alternately tender and furious”, which is my conclusion as well. At times he is totally and fully aware of the situation and his own privileged position, but when his anger takes over he becomes less understanding towards the history of the country and the part the white population played. According to Linfield (2007, 96), Godwin refuses to look

at the history of Zimbabwe, but I disagree with her. As I showed in the discussion of the end of colonialism above, Godwin is not oblivious to its impact. Later on, Linfield (2007, 97) adds that the book “is written in bitter anger”. Here she also refers to the situation Godwin’s parents are in, and their hardships. Linfield (2007, 97) admits too that his anger is justified. All of this supports my analysis as well of Godwin’s memoir, and even though the angry passages are problematic in places as I showed above and will discuss further in this section, the reason for them can at least to some extent be explained by the emotional distress he experienced due to the situation of his parents, both of them old and somewhat unwell in Zimbabwe, where the economy was rapidly declining.

At this point, it can be concluded that whiteness in a Rhodesian or Zimbabwean context is unique. Most whites moved there as settlers or immigrants, and many did not stay for long. According to the CIA World Factbook, there are a little more than 14 million people in Zimbabwe at the moment, and 0,4 per cent of them are classified as other than African, a statistic which presumably also includes whites. But remembering that they grew up in a country where their very small minority held onto power so forcefully is essential. This is Godwin’s background as well, and he cannot escape his whiteness or his white settler heritage in his writing. His family and he himself did not leave Zimbabwe or Rhodesia voluntarily; his father died in 2004 and was buried in Zimbabwe, and later on his mother moved to the UK because she could not afford to stay on her own in Zimbabwe anymore. Godwin himself was expelled. The anger I discuss above is subtle at times, but ever present in *Crocodile*. The following passage that I discuss is particularly controversial, and an example of how complicated *Crocodile* is as a memoir.

Godwin was unaware that his father was of Polish origins and a Jew, and writes in *Crocodile* how he finally found out about this. His relatives on his father’s side perished in the concentration camps, and Godwin made quite an effort to try to find out about their fate. Thus Godwin spent a considerable amount of time thinking about his own identity as well. He watched TV with his father one evening and saw a commercial supporting the fast track land reform, and his father uttered the following: “Fine lot of good it’s done us anyway. Being a white here is starting to feel a bit like being a Jew in Poland in 1939 – an endangered minority – the target of ethnic cleansing” (*Crocodile*, 174-175). David McDermott Hughes has commented on this passage in his book on whiteness in Zimbabwe and writes that although whites in Africa certainly never experienced anything like the Holocaust, “they have suffered

enough to warrant a more sympathetic interpretation than in the past” (McDermott Hughes 2010, 141). Linfield (2007, 98) has picked up on this passage as well in *Crocodile*, and calls it a “sloppy, fundamentally misleading” comparison. She asks if Godwin has forgotten what whites did during the white supremacist regime, and it is a reasonable question but it ignores the fact that Godwin is citing his father, something he explains in an interview with John Zuarino (2007):

I’ve been given a slight [sic] hard time by some critics on that who have immediately transposed it and treated it as though it’s my authorial point of view. It’s clearly what my father was saying, whether it’s right or not, that’s how he felt at the time. Given that he had had a Holocaust experience himself, I deferred to the way he feels. What I really tried to get at is that palpable sense of insecurity. [...] But really what I’m getting at there are the similarities – and this is sort of on the personal level that my father was starting to feel, and to a lesser extent, me, one generation removed – between white Africans living in Africa and Jews living in Europe. In both cases you had an ethnically and racially identifiable people, often better off than the average citizen in the country they inhabited, often doing well, often part of the upper-middle class, and often part of the elite. [...] So you’re always vulnerable as a group – that’s the kind of insecurity that you sense is there.

(Zuarino, 2007)

The anxiety felt by Godwin’s father was probably shared by a number of white Zimbabweans still left in the country at the time. Traumas cannot and should not be compared and weighed against each other, but neither should historical realities ever be forgotten. What is important to note here is that the farm occupations, which were a landmark in many ways for the white population in Zimbabwe and which were the reason for Godwin’s father uttering the words above, were mainly politically motivated and not just ethnic in their roots. Brian Raftopoulos (2009, 210) writes about the referendum in 2000 regarding a new constitution, of which the oppositional party MDC did not approve. Many of the party’s supporters were white farmers. Raftopoulos (2009, 211) emphasizes how important this vote was, the first major defeat for the ruling party ZANU(PF): “[i]n response to the referendum defeat, a series of land occupations ensued a few weeks later that radically transformed the political and economic landscape of the country” (Raftopoulos 2009, 211). According to Raftopoulos, Mugabe felt the pressure

from outside of the party and also from within, and thus started working together with the war veterans, who were largely in charge of the farm invasions.

These views are further developed by Chengetai J. M. Zvobgo (2009, 304) in his work *History of Zimbabwe, 1890-2000 and Postscript, Zimbabwe, 2001-2008*. Zvobgo writes:

In the general election held in June, 2000 the ruling party survived by the slenderest of threads. Putting a brave face on the election results, Mr. Mugabe said he looked forward to working with the new Parliament but three months after bowing to the election results with promises of cooperation, the honeymoon between ZANU (PF) and the MDC soon soured when the Government began to persecute the MDC Members of Parliament and proceeded with its land redistribution programme.

(Zvobgo 2009, 304)

Zvobgo (2009, 304) also points out that the MDC supported land reform, but they wanted the white farmers to be compensated for their land. The land reform was also frequently discussed in the British media, and this has been insightfully explored by Wendy Willems (2004, 2005), who, among other things, analyses the way the reform was portrayed in Zimbabwean and British media respectively. Her research highlights the complexities involved in the reform and how it was reported outside Zimbabwe, an issue which has political significance as well.

Sam Moyo and Walter Chambati (2013, 2-3) address the fast track land reform as well, and its political background, and they conclude that part of the problem was to be found in the Lancaster House Agreement from 1979, in which no real long-term decisions were made as to the inevitable redistribution of land. They also analyse the complex situation in Zimbabwe:

In Zimbabwe's historically specific context, grievances over settler-colonial dispossession and wider race-class inequalities and the limits to reform imposed by political compromise and market reforms after 1980, shaped and sustained land struggles which culminated in the [Fast Track Land Reform Programme] experiences. The political power struggles that ensued and the mobilisation of radical land movements, as well as the authoritarian posture of the state towards a new political opposition from 1999, reflected wider social struggles, which provoked confrontations with the judiciary, capital and the non-state media, as well as with the western

donors and related NGOs, most of which were opposed to radical land reform.

(Moyo and Chambati 2013, 15)

Land reform was inevitable, and certainly long overdue, but made more difficult by various intervening institutions. This is not to say that the reform carried out the way it was would have been justifiable in any way. The methods were all wrong, and did much more harm than good. But my discussion here goes to prove that the motivation behind the land reform was not just racist, and it is relevant to remember Chennells's (2008, 37) words that whites became a kind of scapegoat. It was also a class struggle, a postcolonial struggle and a political tool for Mugabe to gain support.

Some white farmers, however, felt quite differently about the events, and Dominic Pasura (2010, 111) met some of these farmers who had dual nationality in Britain, as well as undocumented black Zimbabweans, who participated in Zimbabwe Vigil protests outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in London (Pasura 2010, 109). One of these black Zimbabweans he met said that for the white Zimbabweans, the farm occupations had been personal and not national, and that was why they participated in the Vigil (Pasura 2010, 111). This is an interesting comment, and it would explain the number of autobiographies addressing the land reform. Experiencing the land reform as personal is visible in, for example, Catherine Buckle's memoir *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* (2001), where she calls her farm "[t]his little piece of our heaven" (*Tears*, 102), but she is also clear about the political dimension of the land reform, writing that "it broke our hearts to think that we might lose it all for someone's political survival" and calling the land reform "a dirty political ploy to get votes" (*Tears*, 102). This view, however, is a simplification of history. My analysis of Godwin's writing in relation to the land reform shows a similar deep feeling for the land on behalf of white farmers, and the entire reform becomes, as the black Zimbabwean in Pasura's article observed, a very personal matter.

White South Africans have also used autobiography to negotiate and respond to events in their country. Many novelists (cf. Marlene van Niekerk, Nadine Gordimer, André Brink and J.M. Coetzee) have focused on making sense of the post-apartheid era in their writing. Notable autobiographers include Antjie Krog, Alan Paton, Rian Malan, Joe Slovo and Christopher Hope. Annie Gagiano (2009, 262) argues in her article on recent South African autobiography that "adjustment is a major theme". That is a

noteworthy interpretation also for the memoirs in focus in this dissertation. Adjustment to the post-independence period for white Rhodesians was, as Godwin testified in *Mukiwa*, a problematic process which initiated some serious reflection about white identity in Rhodesia and the place of whites in this newly independent country. The land reform brought on the need for more adjustment, a process which in this case often ended with migration. The post-apartheid reality of South Africa is obviously different from the post-independence period in Zimbabwe, and the literary response has been vivid and varied. Zimbabwean novelists have also negotiated the new reality in Zimbabwe in their writing, and many have also been quite political, for example Petina Gappah in her short story collection *An Elegy For Easterly* (2009) and NoViolet Bulawayo in her novel *We Need New Names* (2013).

Godwin discusses the land problem in *Crocodile*, at the very beginning of the memoir. He admits that Africa seemed empty to most whites arriving there (*Crocodile*, 54). “For much of the twentieth century, whites possessed over half of Rhodesia’s/Zimbabwe’s agricultural land, even though they made up barely one per cent of the population, and this land disparity was seen as one of the main causes of the country’s civil war” (*Crocodile*, 55). But he continues by reminding his readers that Mugabe had asked the white farmers to stay on after independence and continue farming the land:

And they did. Their produce, in particular tobacco, brought in forty per cent of the country’s export earnings; their food crops fed the cities; they employed a quarter of the country’s workforce. Zimbabwe became the fastest-growing economy in Africa, and it was the continent’s breadbasket, frequently exporting food to neighbours in need.

(*Crocodile*, 56)

This passage is similar in tone to the one in *Mukiwa* where Godwin listed all the good things he did for local people. Godwin describes white farmers in Zimbabwe almost as if they were heroes, working hard to produce food for a whole nation and even exporting excess produce. The passage also underlines the difference between white farmers and black Zimbabweans, putting them into two distinct and separate groups. The land reform beginning in 2000 was, in many ways, a disaster waiting to happen. The unfair landowning situation in Zimbabwe could not go on forever after independence, and Godwin does seem to understand this. However, his comment above once more clearly shows that there is resentment beneath it all as well.

Rory Pilosof (2012) discusses memoirs by white Zimbabwean farmers quite extensively in a chapter in his book on the farming community, and he concludes that “these works have become agents in the identity politics of the white farmers, cultural artefacts of the community that represent their beliefs, and their understandings of their history and of their place in independent Zimbabwe” (Pilosof 2012, 150). This also characterizes Rhodesia as something of an illusion. Godwin was not a farmer and neither were his parents, but because of all the interviews he made with white farmers in both *Crocodile* and *The Fear*, it is obvious that their situation and hardships were of importance to him. Pilosof (2012, 152-153) claims that these autobiographies can be called white writing because of their intended audience, which according to him is European and not African. More importantly, he explains that

The choices the farmers make in their writing, such as in what language they deploy, how they frame themselves and those around them and how they comment upon their social, political and historic contexts, inform us not only of who they write for, but how they view themselves. What becomes evident is that they locate themselves as a distinct group and, as a consequence, are in their view the only ones able to fully comprehend what happens to their own. What they write is tailored for a limited number of distinct groups: the farming community, white Rhodesian/Zimbabwean communities of the diaspora, and international white/western audience.

(Pilosof 2012, 153-154)

Pilosof here seems to disagree with Primorac’s claim that Zimbabwean writing needs to be re-categorized; according to him, these farmers’ stories are clearly written with a specific purpose for a particular group of people. That is also why this literature fits poorly into traditional definitions of postcolonial writing: it is not the writing of a long oppressed group of people, finally able to freely express itself. Peter Godwin does, however, something more than just describe events that happened to his distinct group of white Zimbabweans. That is why *The Fear* is such an important piece of writing as it manifests Godwin’s transition from traditional autobiography and the attempts to explore and understand his personal relationship to Zimbabwe.

Pilosof (2012, 174) also criticizes the writers for their use of ‘Africa’ instead of being more specific about which country they refer to, which most

of the time is Zimbabwe. He says that this helps “generate more sympathy from the western world” but that, at the same time, it creates a wider gap between whites and ‘Africa’. His final point in this discussion is that this “is also a strategic marketing tool, because ‘Africa’ sells. Westerners can relate to and identify ‘Africa’, not necessarily Zimbabwe, Malawi, Chad or any other remote ‘African’ country of indistinct blackness” (Pilossof 2012, 175). Pilossof’s criticism is valid, but at the same time he underestimates the readership of white Zimbabwean autobiography. To continue the discussion of white farmers, Godwin – as already mentioned – met several of them and interviewed them about their experiences during the land reform. At one point, Godwin encountered a white Zimbabwean farmer who had relocated to Mozambique where white farmers were, according to him, welcomed by the government. Godwin writes:

The white people that came to Africa did a lot of things wrong,’ admits Coetzee. ‘But history has proven that the white farmer, the Zimbabwean farmer, is a producer. There’s no ways that anybody can tell me that the white farmer in Africa hasn’t benefited Africa.’

[...]

How long will it be before there is an official Mozambican backlash against Coetzee and his ilk? How long before they become victims of their own agricultural success? [...] [H]ow long before the politics of envy kick in once again?

(Crocodile, 161-162)

The name of the farmer has been changed to protect his identity. The way Godwin comments on this situation is controversial. He suggests that what happened to white farmers in Zimbabwe may well happen to them in Mozambique as well, and seems quite ignorant with regard to the reasons why that was the case. This passage refuses to see the other side of the problem, and does not recognize why white farmers were able to become so successful, and why there was such a strong reaction against white landowners. As I concluded earlier, this was largely politically motivated, but the uneven situation certainly gave reason for much more complicated emotions than envy among Africans.

Not all white farmers were even successful and this is something Doris Lessing and Alexandra Fuller for example testify to in their autobiographies

about their parents and their farming failures. However, Godwin gives another example of a farmer who was evicted from his land.

‘You know, we’re Africans, but we will always be the scapegoats, the aliens,’ he says. ‘My philosophy now is that you have no security in Africa. We’ve tried to kid ourselves that it was going to be different here. We ploughed everything back into our farms, it was all reinvested. And now look. We’ve lost everything.’

(*Crocodile*, 180-181)

I interpret this passage as something not only felt by the evicted farmer, but shared by Godwin himself. It is a rather direct reference to his own losses even though he never owned a farm, and his personal distress when travelling between two continents and having family to care for in both the USA and Zimbabwe. The reference to security is significant, as it is something Godwin himself mentioned in the interview with Zuarino (2007). He said that the comparison between Jews in Poland during the Second World War and whites in Zimbabwe at the turn of the millennium has to do with feeling insecure as a group. These interviews with white farmers about their losses emerge from a similar place; there is a strong *we* and *us* and references to group membership.

The emphasis on *we* in the passage above supports Pilosof’s (2012) conclusion that these memoirs help to create a distinct group of white Zimbabweans. Godwin participates in this creation with *Crocodile*, and “the politics of envy” in the previous passage is equally problematic in that sense. The memoir is an attempt to overcome the loss of Zimbabwe as a home, along with the loss of his father and accepting and learning to live with the secrets that were unveiled during the last years of his father’s life. *Crocodile* is a continuation of *Mukiwa*, but still very different in tone, and in some ways a prelude to *The Fear*. Godwin writes: “Later generations will shake their heads in incredulous contempt and ask: But why? Why didn’t you do something, why didn’t you rise up? How could all of you, so many millions of you, stay in the thrall of this one old man?” (*Crocodile*, 263). Here, Godwin places himself in the same group with all the other Zimbabweans, despite the fact he does not live in the country anymore. With regard to the passage above, the publication of *The Fear* seems a logical development. The book becomes one man’s uprising against political oppression and dictatorship, a book which could not have existed without the cooperation of other Zimbabweans who put their safety on line for Godwin’s journalistic aspirations. Harris (2016,

116), however, takes the discussion one step further and argues that “[v]iolence against the white body is the final frontier of white apologetics”. Such apologetics is detectable in the passages above about the plight of displaced white farmers, suggesting that colonial history has been, at least momentarily, forgotten. ‘Frontier’ here becomes symbolic of the existence of settlers in Zimbabwe, of the physical act of cultivating the land and feeding the locals; an act which inevitably implies a position of authority.

Despite Godwin’s interviews and obvious sympathy with white farmers, he does not lack sympathy for black Zimbabweans either. Towards the end of *Crocodile*, he was on yet another journalistic assignment, writing about safaris in South Africa. The areas along the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa were being used by Zimbabweans attempting to flee their country. That also proves that Zimbabweans did not “stay in the thrall of this one old man”; instead they chose to leave in huge numbers:

Today, the old elephant trails are being used by desperate Zimbabweans searching for food and refuge in South Africa. They cut across the wildlife reserve to avoid the authorities, who will arrest them and send them back. [...] When we drive around the bush, we come across odd shoes and remnants of clothing, miles from anywhere: all that remains of some fleeing Zimbabweans. [...] The rangers say too that some of the guards at the foot-and-mouth cordon see it as their ‘rent’ to rape women who cross over, and so do groups of black-market traders who chance upon them.

(*Crocodile*, 277-278)

This passage shows compassion and understanding for the situation of less fortunate Zimbabweans risking everything to get to South Africa. But the attitude Godwin assumes here is that of the observer and less as the commentator, just as in *The Fear*. Godwin manages to be objective, insightful and sympathetic in the role of the observer. Only when he clearly places himself on the outside can he see beyond his own life, his losses and needs. This is also where his writing becomes the most powerful and effective. This is evident especially in my discussion of *The Fear* in the fifth chapter.

One last passage from *Crocodile* neatly sums up the complexity of the memoir, especially in relation to colonialist sentiments about Zimbabwe, or Southern Africa as whole:

I have always wanted to love Cape Town, and I still do. In many ways it is the perfect place for me, a compromise city between Africa and the First

World. [...] I tried to live here, but after six months, I gagged on its isolation from the rest on the continent.

Somehow, Cape Town doesn't feel like part of Africa. The real Africa, Black Africa, stops five hundred miles to the east at the Great Fish River. [...] It sometimes feels to me as though Cape Town might also serve as the white man's last redoubt, where our vanguards will hold back the onslaught – the *swart gevaar*, the black peril, as P.W. Botha used to call it.

(*Crocodile*, 264)

Botha was prime minister and president in South Africa in the 1980s during apartheid, and very strongly against any kind of majority rule. Contrasting this passage to the words of Njabulo Ndebele (1998), who talks of “the archetypal image of the bleeding-heart, English-speaking liberal South African, who has no understanding why he is hated so much when he sacrificed so much for the oppressed” (Ndebele 1998, 26), offers some insights. A similar view is visible in Godwin's writing as I have shown above. In many ways he is that bleeding-heart, English-speaking Zimbabwean who does not quite understand why he and his fellow whites are so hated, who refuses to fully take in the legacy of colonialism which is still so clearly visible in Southern Africa and remains an open wound in many ways. On the other hand, he makes a conscious effort in *The Fear* to move beyond the approach to his past which can still be detected in *Mukiwa* and especially *Crocodile*. A lot of it has to do with privileges, how he sees them and talks about them. The anger is a result of not seeing them clearly enough, of retaining a personal perspective which focuses on the wrongs done towards whites in Zimbabwe. The following section of this chapter will discuss white privilege and discourse on whiteness in more detail. Eppel also reflected on his whiteness in the interview with Shaw cited in my opening chapter, and concluded the following: “I used to feel that being neither African nor European was a handicap for me, that I had slipped through the crack; but now I see it, not as a crack or a flaw, but as a threshold with all the paradoxical richness of thresholds” (Shaw 2012, 109). For Godwin too that threshold between all the positions and identity markers he possesses remains the only place where he can exercise his creativity.

To conclude, Rhodesia provided a unique place for white settlers. They held onto power for much longer than in most other colonies, but despite this, the white population remained quite reliant on immigration from Europe. Godwin's parents were two such immigrants, leaving Europe after the Second World War and coming to Southern Africa which to them

seemed a much more hopeful place than the Europe they had left behind. Godwin discusses colonialism in his memoirs and is understanding towards its disruptive effect, but he also admits in *Mukiwa* that the end of colonialism and independence of Zimbabwe were difficult for the white population. White Rhodesian identity was lost forever and replaced by an uneasy existence in a black-ruled Zimbabwe. The existence for those who stayed in Zimbabwe was further complicated by the land reform at the beginning of the new millennium. Several accounts of the land reform (Raftopoulos, 2009; Zvobgo, 2009; Moyo and Chambati, 2013) show that, as we have seen, it was not just a racially motivated scheme but that it was aimed at the political opposition as well. This interpretation of events largely seems to escape Godwin, whose attitude often shows support to a certain degree with white farmers and an unwillingness from time to time to acknowledge that their problems had colonial roots. The death of Godwin's father in 2004 coincided with the land reform, and these unfortunate events were demanding enough to deal with on their own. They were further complicated by Godwin's physical distance to Zimbabwe. *Crocodile* embodies in this way the painful divide between personal and collective experience, and shows how irreconcilable the two can be.

3.3 The (In)Visibility of Whiteness

“But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it?” asked W.E.B. Du Bois (originally published in 1920, here in Lewis 1995, 454) in his essay “The Souls of White Folk”. The essay has been fundamental for studies of race, and whiteness in particular, and has influenced later scholars. The question is significant as well: what is whiteness? Du Bois's answer to the question is, rather sarcastically, that “I am given to understand that whiteness is the ownership of the earth for ever and ever, Amen!” (Du Bois 1995, 454). In a Rhodesian, or other colonial, context this is not a completely unfounded comment. Colonialism made whiteness a desired trait, and one of the central questions in whiteness studies, and one in which the discourse has significantly changed over the last twenty years, concerns its visibility. Previous studies claim that the inherent problem with whiteness is that it is not seen as a race among others (this problem is discussed in for example Bonnett, 2000 and Dyer, 1997). More recent studies attempt to deconstruct

whiteness and to analyse its visibility in relation to privileges. Many also call for a completely new view of whiteness; one that allows a multitude of whitenesses instead of a rigid, fixed definition (cf. Ndebele in West, 2010; Bonnett, 2000; Rauwerda, 2009).

Peter Godwin's writings about life in Zimbabwe offer an intriguing perspective on whiteness because of his position. Being white in Zimbabwe (or Rhodesia) would be anything but invisible, and I argue that this outsider's position is, to a large extent, the reason why so many memoirs have appeared. It is not just because of the political events and the resettling of land, but also a way for these writers to write back. They have been displaced, some, like Godwin, at least partly involuntarily, and they have never been able to escape their otherness and whiteness. Godwin's anger and resentment in *Crocodile* in particular is an expression of this experience. It is like a reversed version of *A Small Place* (1988) by Jamaica Kincaid. In *Crocodile*, the narrator is not considered to be native (though Godwin is Zimbabwean by birth) and he is white. In *A Small Place*, on the other hand, the narrator is Antiguan and thus very much considered native to the place. The anger in Kincaid's novel, or novella, is directed at tourists who enable a kind of neo-colonialism which exploits Antigua. Godwin's anger is directed at the corrupt regime of a country which remained so long under white rule. Godwin's whiteness could thus not be more visible, and I will here discuss exactly what this whiteness means and how he views his privileges.

These studies have also been conducted in different settings, which is relevant to bear in mind when discussing whiteness. The American, British and African perspectives reach their own conclusions based on the different realities with regard to colour. A starting point for me is to ask what white privilege means, and a more popularized view is presented by Ian Ayres in an opinion editorial in *The New York Times*:

What does white privilege mean today? In part, it means to live in the world while being given the benefit of the doubt. Have you ever been able to return a sweater without a receipt? Has an employee ever let you into a store after closing time? Did a car dealership take a little extra off the sticker price when you asked? When's the last time you received service with a smile?

(Ayres, 2015)

Ayres (2015), a professor of law at Yale, also writes that this kind of privilege "continues in the form of discretionary benefits, many of them unconscious

ones”. The question arises as to how objective you can be with regard to your own colour and the benefits or advantages it may bring. I argue that whiteness for Godwin is ambivalent. It has given him privileges but it is also a significant source of loss and confusion for him.

To begin with, British scholar Alastair Bonnett (2000, 125) writes in his work *White Identities* that white studies originated in the USA as a result of anti-racist campaigns and political changes. He also notes that the discussion of whiteness is reflected in other discourses on privileges, for example concerning heterosexuality or gender studies (Bonnett 2000, 125). These are central observations, and privilege is an inherent part of my discussion of whiteness as well. Another question is whether whiteness should be studied at all, and Radhika Mohanram (2007), also a Britain-based scholar, proposes that discussing whiteness and race altogether is a way of reinforcing the elevated position it has. Mohanram (2007, xiii) makes the following point about the field of whiteness studies in her book *Imperial White: Race, Diaspora, and the British Empire*:

Critics of color seldom write about whiteness as a topic, because they feel that they would unwittingly reinscribe its dominance and privilege to the detriment of other political, racial, and social identities. Thus, in writing about whiteness, they recenter rather than decenter it. Further, writing about whiteness reinscribes colonialism in that it forces the critic of color to situate herself as Other in order to write about hegemonic whiteness. It also elevates whiteness and sustains it into a bodily and social ideal.

(Mohanram 2007, xiii)

Mohanram seems to be suggesting here that by being unnecessarily afraid of writing about whiteness out of fear for reinforcing its privileged position and dominance, this is exactly what happens. She concludes that “[e]ven completely assimilated, we will remain black as long as the category of race is given any emphasis” (Mohanram 2007, xviii). This proves my point above about how important it is for all scholars, including myself, to carefully consider their own position in such a delicate matter as colour.

According to Mohanram above, race should be given less emphasis in order to once and for all smooth out the differences. But she still asks the following questions: “[i]s whiteness the norm, the template from which people of color are aberrations, or is whiteness a race as well? If the latter, what are its determinants? Are all white people white in similar ways?” (Mohanram 2007, xx). It is as if she is uncertain about how much emphasis to

put on colour, and indeed it is a difficult decision. To pose a question such as hers, if all white people are white in similar ways, would be the same as asking if all black people are black in the same way too. Is a black Zimbabwean black in the same way as an African-American is, and is a white American white in the same way as Godwin is white? It is not the colour itself that matters but how it is perceived in each respective culture and in the surrounding world, and what advantages or possible disadvantages may come with it. Sustaining whiteness into a social and bodily ideal is not at all what I am attempting. This is a critical study of Godwin's memoirs and the way he interprets his own whiteness as it relates to and often defines his life in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe as well as his the travels back and forth between USA and Southern Africa. This I have already done to some extent in the previous sections of this chapter.

Simon Clarke and Steve Garner (2009, 3) also point towards this problem in whiteness studies: "although the actual objective is to deconstruct whiteness, objectifying it as 'white identity' risks reification". Their suggestion is that this deconstruction of whiteness has two primary purposes: to problematize white identity "as a raced, privilege-holding location that is part of the social relationship in which structural racism flourishes" (Clarke and Garner 2009, 3) and to address questions of "class, 'race', ethnicity and gender" (Clarke and Garner 2009, 3). White Zimbabwean identity, is being thoroughly analysed here as well, and notions of class, gender, ethnicity and privileges are certainly significant also for this discussion. Does my analysis of Godwin's whiteness reify it, as Clarke and Garner are concerned might happen? A white African identity as opposed to a black African identity are two different things from a historical, social and political perspective. It is inevitable to study whiteness in this context, in order to deconstruct it and address any privileges that surface in Godwin's writing. Anthony Chennells (2005) also concludes that the white minority in Zimbabwe has transformed from being "an arrogant and politically all-powerful white elite to an anxious and embattled minority" and that "the idea of a stable white-colonial identity is untenable" (Chennells 2005, 135). But, more importantly, he also observes that "a single black Zimbabwean identity that commands a single black-subjectivity" is equally problematic (Chennells 2005, 135). Generalisations are always difficult as they inevitably simplify and streamline a complex reality, and that is why perspectives and studies such as this are needed. Godwin's writing points towards a new dimension of white Zimbabwean identity and

autobiography, but his writing also demonstrates the transition and transformation he has experienced personally.

Race has traditionally not been applied to white people, since whiteness has been seen as the norm, which is observed by Richard Dyer (1997, 1), a third British scholar, in his work *White*. This echoes Mohanram's (2007) questions above. Dyer says:

The sense of whites as non-raced is most evident in the absence of reference to whiteness in the habitual speech and writing of white people in the West. We (whites) will speak of, say, the blackness or Chineseness of friends, neighbours, colleagues, customers or clients, and it may be in the most genuinely friendly and accepting manner, but we don't mention the whiteness of the white people we know.

(Dyer 1997, 2)

Last but not least, he concludes that “[t]he assumption that white people are just people, which is not far off saying that whites are people whereas other colours are something else, is endemic to white culture” (Dyer 1997, 2). This is one reason I deem it important to talk about *white* Zimbabwean writing; it distinguishes this group of writers from other Zimbabwean writers, and the literature they have produced is markedly different from other writing, often in autobiographical form documenting life from childhood to the point of departure from Zimbabwe (cf. Graham Atkins' *Once Upon a White Man: A Memoir of War and Peace in Africa* (2008), Lauren St John's *Rainbow's End: A Memoir of Childhood, War and an African Farm* (2008), Wendy Kann's *Casting With a Fragile Thread: A Story of Sisters and Africa* (2006), Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2002), and *Mukiwa*). On the visibility of whiteness, Dyer (1997, 45) concludes that “whiteness as a race resides in invisible properties and whiteness as power is maintained by being unseen”. Dyer distinguishes between whiteness as a hue, a skin colour and a symbol. It is the symbolic meaning of whiteness which is essential to this chapter. Mohanram suggests that talking about whiteness reinforces its position above other colours or races, whereas Dyer thinks that a silence surrounding whiteness can only be harmful. I am inclined to agree with Dyer, but it remains a delicate subject for discussion. By making Godwin's whiteness visible and studying it thoroughly in this dissertation and particularly this chapter, some conclusions can hopefully be drawn about the group of white Zimbabwean writers as a whole.

Alastair Bonnett (2000, 125) also makes a central observation in relation to the emergence of something that could be called white studies: “[a] nervousness about being seen to set up a specialism ‘for whites’, that ‘indulges whites’, hovers over the debate”. This is exactly what Mohanram also conveys above: specializing in whiteness can also be rightly criticized. My aim is not to specialize in whiteness, but as I explained above, when studying Godwin’s memoir and this whole genre of autobiographical writing, it is impossible to disregard the historical importance of colour. Rhodesia was one of a kind as a colony, both due to its strong white supremacist regime and to its fluctuating white population. The paradox is obvious and this is also visible in Godwin’s writing. Bonnett also makes the following point which relates to my discussion above about the invisibility of whiteness:

It is ironic that authors who invariably claim that their topic is ‘invisible’ should seem to want to flee the scene of their own enquiries. This fear of the subject seems related to a failure to distinguish different ways of ‘talking about whiteness’. The reification of whiteness, whether articulated through the celebration of white ethnicity or by other means, is, rightly, a cause for concern. But it is a concern that should have come into view *because* of the existence of more critical approaches to the subject. The historicisation and spatialisation of whiteness – showing where it came from and how its forms vary across the world – are inherently antagonistic to any attempts to portray whiteness as a natural identity.

(Bonnett 2000, 125)

Bonnett is right when he says that endlessly referring to whiteness as invisible reveals a fear of the subject by even the researchers themselves. This question of the visibility or invisibility of whiteness has been approached by American scholars as well. Knowles et al. (2014, 597) make another comment on this supposed invisibility in their article on white American privilege, and say the following:

The best evidence against the invisibility thesis comes from studies attempting to document the consequences of White racial identification. Some of this work suggests that, like other identities, White identity forges a link between perceived self- and group interests, leading individuals to see the fate of the ingroup as relevant to the self.

(Knowles et al. 2014, 597)

This has consequences for the writers in my study as well. There is most certainly a link between their personal interests and the interests of the group to which they belong. The fate of this group, white Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe and abroad in diasporas across the world, defines their writing and memoirs to a huge extent. Their writing is definite proof of such a link. Finally, Knowles et al. (2014, 598) conclude their discussion on the invisibility of whiteness with the following words: “[i]n this light, we suggest that whiteness is a critically important attribute not because Whites cannot see it but because they can”. Godwin can certainly see it too.

Another concept which emerges in this context is *whitely*, a term defined by Marilyn Frye (1992) and later discussed by, among others, Tagwirei and de Kock (2015), Sullivan (2006) and Vice (2010). Frye (1992) describes ‘whiteness’ as a trait among white people who “consider themselves to be benevolent and good willed, fair, honest and ethical”. Furthermore, she argues that whitely people “have a staggering faith in their own rightness and goodness, and that of other whitely people”. In relation to white Zimbabwean writing, this term has also surfaced. Tagwirei and de Kock (2015) have published an article discussing whiteness, and, to some extent, whiteness, in a few Zimbabwean works by white writers. Their starting point is that European settlers in Africa are not invisible by any means, and that in Zimbabwe, whites “are conspicuously marginal” (Tagwirei and de Kock 2015, 185). The conclusion in their article is that white writing since 1980 “and more so in the 2000s, makes whiteness increasingly visible in its marginality”. This is opposed to earlier texts that were “Rhodesian settler narratives” (Tagwirei and de Kock 2015, 196). That is a highly relevant point for this study and I do agree with their interpretation, although Godwin from time to time loses sight of his own whiteness. But the attempt to make it visible is definitely there, despite resorting to “whitely” behaviour occasionally.

A differing and quite controversial opinion is presented by Samantha Vice (2010) in her debated article on living in South Africa today as a white person. Her conclusion is that the white personal project is best negotiated “with humility and in (a certain kind of) silence” (Vice 2010, 324). She adds that “[w]hites have too long had influence and a public voice; now they should in humility step back from expressing their thoughts or managing others” (Vice 2010, 335). This is quite the opposite of what Godwin is doing with his memoirs, his journalistic assignments and other engagements which make him an authority on Zimbabwe and matters related. Vice acknowledges that South Africa for whites living there is obviously their home, but that it is

a relationship which cannot “be entirely comfortable” (Vice 2010, 337). Her views have been discussed by, among others, David Benatar (2012) and Dylan Futter (2011). Futter mainly criticizes Vice’s form of writing as unsuccessful, whereas Benatar engages in a more thorough analysis and criticism of the article and also questions the existence of anything that could be called whiteness. Benatar (2012, 623) makes a comparison to Zimbabwe when speaking of privileges and hegemony, and claims that “[t]here is nothing dominant about the so-called ‘white’ perspective in Zimbabwe”. Later Benatar goes even further, stating in a footnote that he fears that “the chances of becoming a banana republic are increased if ‘whites’ remained politically silent” (Benatar 2012, 630). The footnote comes after another reference to Zimbabwe, suggesting that whites remaining silent in South Africa could lead to a “Zimbabwefication” (Benatar 2012, 630). My interpretation of this interesting but also quite worrying discussion of Vice’s article, and the fact that it elicited such heated response, is that white Southern African writing definitely needs to be studied and researched as colour and all the aspects relating to it remain so utterly sensitive and difficult. Vice and Benatar represent two opposite sides of the issue, and that in itself is justification enough for a thorough discussion of a very visible whiteness in Godwin’s writing. According to Sullivan (2006, 160), *white* refers to skin colour whereas *whitely* refers to the way one sees the world and acts within it. It may be rightly questioned whether we actually need another term for what is ultimately white privilege, as everything comes down to it eventually.

3.3.1 White Privilege

The phrase cited in the chapter title, “I feel the beginnings of First World panic”, is from *Crocodile* (p. 16), and this brief quote exemplifies the privileges Godwin experienced as a white Zimbabwean, and also his own attitudes towards them. Here I examine white privilege from a scholarly perspective and their presence in Godwin’s memoirs as well. This is also a continuation of the visibility discussion above. Frances E. Kendall (2006) has published a book on whiteness, and despite writing from an American context, some of her conclusions are certainly noteworthy for a discussion on Southern African whiteness as well. She says: “[k]eeping whiteness explicit is important for a number of reasons. First, it makes those of us who are white

conscious of how being white affects our experience daily” (Kendall 2006 115). This is extremely relevant for my study as well; there is no way around the whiteness of my writers and keeping it explicit allows for a thorough analysis of privileges, the Rhodesian discourse and the role these memoirs play for the writers and for the image of Zimbabwe in the Western world. Even though Kendall offers an important observation about making whiteness visible, it is, however, often not the case. Hastie and Rimmington (2014, 187), also writing from an American context, point out that “[p]rivilege tends to be unspoken and rarely visible to those who possess privileged identities, and it also allows one to ignore the fact that others do not have access to such advantages”.

In the case of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, just as whiteness itself was visible, white privileges can hardly have been invisible either even to white people. Perhaps they were taken for granted which in many ways could be said to be the same as them being invisible, and white Rhodesians employing maids, farm workers, and other staff may have felt that this was the given order. Knowles et al. (2014, 595) also comment on whiteness and its supposed invisibility. They claim the following:

We concur that whiteness is an important attribute granting access to a wide range of unearned advantages. However, we depart from the traditional view that whiteness is important because it is invisible. Instead, we believe that whiteness is consequential because it is visible to many dominant-group members—forming, in fact, the basis of a problematic social identity with which Whites must often grapple.

(Knowles et al. 2014, 595)

This is an interesting observation especially in relation to the white Zimbabwean writing I study. The “problematic social identity” mentioned above is exactly what Peter Godwin and his fellow writers struggle with as well; an identity largely guided by historical and political events both before and after the independence of Zimbabwe. Their study focuses on white Americans, but these ideas can certainly be applied to white people of other origins as well. Hastie and Rimmington (2014, 187) also conclude that “[p]rivilege allows you to assume a homogenisation of experience, whereby you are not required to have knowledge of the experiences of others, instead assuming you can understand others through the lens of your own (dominant) culture”. How does Godwin write about privilege, and where does he position himself in relation to other whites? These are central

questions for me to look at. I also question the unawareness that is referred to previously, as Godwin is generally not unwilling to admit his privileges.

An obvious example of Godwin's privileged childhood has to do with his parents' professions. His mother was a doctor who travelled around African clinics attending to patients and his father was a supervisor at a wattle factory (*Mukiwa*, 15, 22). Godwin was allowed to sometimes help his mother in her work, for example by distributing polio vaccine to (black) children:

I carried the tray of sugar lumps and behind me came a health assistant with a bottle of polio vaccine. He would squeeze a drop of the bright pink vaccine into each lump and place one on every tongue. Then I'd call for 'tongues out' and march down the line checking that they'd swallowed. My biggest problem was to prevent the children from coming around again to get a second sugar lump.

(*Mukiwa*, 94-95)

This passage underlines the difference between Godwin himself and the children he met during his rounds with his mother. He was probably no older than ten years or so at this point, and much younger than the health assistant who, supposedly, was black. Still, he was in charge of the whole vaccination process and was clearly very much aware of his position of supreme power over the other children during the distribution.

Another example is the comparison Godwin makes between the black clinics and the white ones. His mother treated white patients three times a week, and young Godwin quickly learned that white people mainly had one of four illnesses: meningitis, malaria, typhoid or tick fever (*Mukiwa*, 103). According to Godwin, whites "tended to die in car accidents or because of old age" (*Mukiwa*, 103), whereas Africans had much more interesting diseases such as leprosy (*Mukiwa*, 96). Godwin also remembers a patient at his mother's clinic who had an arrow through his head: "[t]he point of the arrow stuck out of one temple, its tail into the other" (*Mukiwa*, 86). Godwin decided this man should be a priority case, and told his mother she needed to attend to him quickly: "I think you'll want to see this chap,' I said confidently, nodding reassuringly at my companion" (*Mukiwa*, 87). All of this is written in the voice of a young boy, as is the passage above about the polio vaccine, and my reading of this suggests that Godwin has made a serious attempt to write things as he experienced them as a child. Calling the man with an arrow through his head "chap" also shows condescendence for Godwin's part. The adult Godwin who wrote down these memories decades later is insightful,

humorous and just the tiniest bit sarcastic, mainly towards his own group of white Rhodesians and himself as a very self-confident little boy. But Godwin's position remains above the others, which is clearly shown in the examples.

One more example from *Mukiwa* reveals another very white experience indeed, and something that Godwin did not enjoy but which was still a privilege available only for children like himself: the boarding school experience. Godwin was six years old when he became a boarder and struggled to settle in at the school. His parents told him he could ask friends of the family, the Simpsons, who lived nearby the school, to call them at any time if there was a problem and they would come and collect him. Godwin tried to do this several times during his first week at the school, but the Simpsons always delayed making the call. After a few weeks his parents came to visit him, and Godwin was upset when he found out that the Simpsons had called them but they had decided not to collect him but instead give him time to get used to the new situation (*Mukiwa*, 59-64). Being forced to live away from home during the week at the age of six would most likely be a tough experience for practically any child, and the way Godwin describes his emotions from this period of his life makes it apparent that he felt his parents were not really fully present in his life. He even admits that they "were both fairly remote figures to me" (*Mukiwa*, 22). The contrast to the relationship he had with the family's black servants is striking, and it is another white stereotype and another example of white privilege. Godwin writes the following about Violet, the house maid:

As a baby I was strapped on to her wide back, in the pouch of a thin grey blanket, African-style. I can still remember the smell of her. It was a comforting musky smell, a mixture of wood smoke and Lifebuoy soap. She continued to carry me in this way, like a reverse marsupial, on longer journeys to the store or the compound, until I was four or five.

(*Mukiwa*, 24)

And when Godwin left for boarding school, "Violet enfolded me in a great damp hug and then turned away to hide her crying" (*Mukiwa*, 60). According to Harris (2005, 109), these experiences of a childhood with a black domestic help and the abrupt transition to a white boarding school was a "coming-to-awareness of white identity". It is an interesting comment in this context, but the question remains as to when Godwin began to develop an understanding of his own whiteness. The transition from a relatively sheltered life at home to growing up at boarding school with rigid rules and few of the comforts from

home marks, however, a clear break with regard to his childhood. The Godwin who wrote *Mukiwa* in 1996 was obviously not six years old anymore, and with the insights and experiences from his adult life, especially concerning whiteness, it is at this point quite difficult to determine when he became conscious of his whiteness as a child. What is more relevant to me and this chapter is how his views of whiteness change through the course of the three memoirs.

White privilege in *Mukiwa* is thus mainly a recollection of memories from Godwin's childhood. He is not very critical towards his own whiteness; it was merely a feature of his existence upon which he does not reflect too much. *Crocodile*, however, is an altogether different story. One of the most telling examples of the privileges Godwin was in possession of had to do with healthcare, the medicines and other equipment which he was able to acquire for his ailing parents. At the very beginning of the memoir, Godwin was in pursuit of a new drug for his father, a drug which was not available in Zimbabwe:

I check into the Grace Hotel in northern Johannesburg and sit with the open Yellow Pages, making calls to pharmacies and hospitals. I recruit various friends to help, but we get nowhere. Some say it has not been approved yet. Others say it is not yet commercially available. [...] But seven hours later I am on the way to the airport, and on the seat beside me is a small white insulated box containing rows of precious glass vials.

(*Crocodile*, 11)

Godwin managed to secure the drug with the help of a Zimbabwean pharmacist in Johannesburg who was willing to break some rules to help him. This strongly relates to Ayres's (2015) words about "discretionary benefits" among the privileged. A few pages later Godwin writes how he arrived at the hospital with the new drug, and he expresses complete awareness of the privilege in all of this. "Now [dad] has the new wonder drug I have tracked down in Johannesburg. A drug unavailable to the rest of the patients at Parirenyatwa. An expensive drug. A First World drug" (*Crocodile*, 15). The story continues on the following page where a doctor came to see Godwin's father, and the doctor proved to be Ugandan:

I feel the beginnings of First World panic. I take my mother aside. It is time to assert myself. 'Dad's life's on the line here,' I say. 'The time for

gesture politics is over. We must get him the *best* physician.’ She narrows her eyes. ‘Okwanga *is* one of the *very* best,’ she says. ‘He qualified in Britain.’

(*Crocodile*, 16)

The passage is, despite its serious and sinister topic, rather sarcastic and funny. The Ugandan doctor was first not deemed good enough by Godwin, until his mother helpfully declared that he actually had a British education. The old colonial power had educated one of its former subjects, in order for him to save the life of a pretend-British man who later turned out to be Polish. This passage is an extraordinary example of Godwin’s self-distance, self-awareness and general sense of quite politically incorrect humour.

Godwin’s mother, for her part, had problems with her hip and needed extensive surgery and a prosthesis to replace the damaged parts. However, such artificial hip joints were difficult to come by in Zimbabwe and Godwin tried to find the right prosthesis in the US. He worried about getting it through customs in Zimbabwe if he were to find one, and about the possibility of it getting stolen from his luggage. To his relief, his mother’s surgeon eventually found a suitable prosthesis in Zimbabwe (*Crocodile*, 201). Would it have been available for black patients? At least it is less likely that they would have had relatives or friends in a position where they could have tried to secure one in the USA. One last example about white privilege from a health perspective, which once again shows a glimpse of Godwin’s great sense of dark humour, comes towards the end of the memoir. Godwin was on his way back to Harare, and before descending to the airport he collected used flight socks from the other passengers. His mother had asked him to bring them, as they were good for keeping the bandages on his father’s legs in place. One passenger asked Godwin what he wanted the socks for, to which Godwin replied: “They’re for the sick in Zimbabwe” (*Crocodile*, 234). The irony is obvious, as the socks were for Godwin’s own father, who certainly was an unwell person in Zimbabwe, but probably not the kind of sick Zimbabwean the passengers handing over their socks pictured in their minds. There is also great irony in the fact that Godwin asked for these socks while on an intercontinental flight with ticket prices beyond the means of most Zimbabweans. It strikingly demonstrates the complexity of the situation.

All the passages above from both *Mukiwa* and *Crocodile* show how Godwin is aware of his status, and they demonstrate exactly what Knowles et al. (2014, 595) said about white people often grappling with a problematic

identity, which is partly due to its visibility. Godwin illustrates this in a number of ways. In his third and last memoir, *The Fear*, the dark sense of humour becomes more visible again, and an excellent example of this is the visit Godwin made to Harare with his sister Georgina. At the hotel, Georgina began to sort out her dieting product, which she had brought with her from London, into little piles on the floor:

In the background the TV is tuned to the BBC World. Across the bottom of the screen runs the news ticker: Zimbabwe now a crisis measured in hunger. She looks up briefly from her diet powders, registers the headline, and immediately fixes me with a look. 'I know, I know. D'you think I don't get the irony – that I'm trying to lose weight when half the people here don't have enough to eat'.

(*The Fear*, 44-45)

This is, again, quite humorous, and Godwin offers this incident to the reader without any personal comment. He does not refer to his own reaction, and merely cites Georgina. This can be interpreted as a ridiculing of starving Zimbabweans, but the way Godwin has described it leaves no room for misinterpretation. It is an allusion to his and his sister's status as white visitors in Zimbabwe, people who can afford to fly there in the first place and who live within societies where dieting is a fully accepted, and sometimes desperately needed, social phenomenon. The contrast to everyday life in Zimbabwe, just as in the passage above about the flight socks, could hardly be greater.

In another passage in *The Fear*, which directly refers to his attempts to make Zimbabwe and its situation more known to people in the Western world, Godwin once more manages to turn a tragedy into something almost ridiculous. He discusses an opinion editorial he wrote for *New York Times* where he suggested that South Africa could do more for Zimbabwe, and soon received a reply from the South African embassy, a "furious riposte" (*The Fear*, 189):

'Mr Godwin,' they write, 'whose family immigrated from England to Zimbabwe in the early 1950s', and they go on to call me rash, flippant, irrational, privileged, protected, emotional, subjective, and hypocritical. 'It is highly unlikely', they conclude, 'that Mr. Godwin will be sharing in the pain of Zimbabweans or South Africans, for that matter, from his high-rise

apartment in Manhattan.’ I consider a one-line reply, which would read:
‘How dare you impugn me – I live on the ground floor...’

(*The Fear*, 189)

Godwin knows fully well how his life differs from that of the average Zimbabwean, but he no longer tries to make any claims. This is very far from his writings in *Crocodile* and how he sees whiteness in that book. Here he has surrendered to his own status, and it may not have everything to do with his colour but it at least has a lot to do with it. Whiteness for Godwin becomes his fate in *The Fear*, a fate he can finally accept and move beyond the self-righteous anger and grief he expressed in *Crocodile*, especially in relation to farming and the land.

It can be concluded at this point that whiteness scholars are very much aware of the difficulties when studying this subject at hand, but generally agree that it is necessary to discuss it. I strongly agree with the idea that the importance of whiteness lies in the fact that white people are aware of their whiteness, and not the opposite. This is true for Godwin’s memoirs. I argue throughout this part of the chapter that he is aware of his privileges and his whiteness, and that this is exactly why whiteness is so interesting in his writing; how he talks about it and what it means to him. Hastie and Rimmington (2014) argued that those who possess privileges tend to be unaware of them, but this is thus not the case with Godwin. My examples from his memoirs focused mainly on health issues and how they were tackled by himself and his parents in Zimbabwe. This is an excellent example of privileges, and it goes to prove just how much easier it is to get adequate care when you have the necessary means. Godwin’s colonial childhood with the black maid and being able to follow his mother in her work are honest descriptions of what it was like for Godwin to grow up like this. Not all of the privileges were positive for him, as his boarding school experiences show. The examples of white privilege from *The Fear* again are of a different nature. They are written in a humorous and sarcastic way, highlighting the huge gap between lives of many people in Zimbabwe and those of Godwin and Georgina. My analysis of Godwin’s three memoirs hopefully shows quite clearly that visibility with respect to whiteness matter is crucial, and especially when one is studying writing such as this.

3.3.2 Authenticity and Representation

The well-known Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie says in an interview about *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007) posted on her website that “I wanted a device to anchor the reader who may not necessarily know the basics of Nigerian history. And I wanted to make a strongly-felt political point about who should be writing the stories of Africa”. Adichie refers to her white character in the novel, Richard, and to Ugwu, the village boy who works for Odenigbo. Richard attempts to write about the Biafran war but realizes that the war is not his story to tell. Instead it is eventually Ugwu who surprisingly enough becomes the storyteller, despite his modest education and background. Here is a strong reference to Richard’s whiteness and outsider status as a British writer. Bringing Ugwu to the fore as the true voice for telling the stories of a tragic war is more than just a symbolic choice by Adichie. Another black writer Petina Gappah, originally from Zimbabwe, also makes a point about being the voice of the country. She says in an interview from 2009 with Stephen Moss from *The Guardian* that she does not see herself as an African writer because that would mean that certain things would be expected of her. According to her, ‘African writer’ also means nothing because Africa is so vast with such a variety of cultures and nations. Hence, questions of who represents whom and what arise as central for several contemporary African writers in different ways.

Moss (2009) also enquires if Gappah feels guilty about having left Zimbabwe, a sentiment that is shared by Godwin as well and which will be discussed in the chapter on diaspora and displacement. Here Gappah answers that she does indeed feel guilty but that being away from Zimbabwe enables her to be more objective. All of this relates to Godwin as well, although his complicated relationship to Zimbabwe is largely caused by the physical distance. Representation and the sharing of stories are in no way arbitrary matters, and with regard to the genre of writing I examine, it is crucial to ask who gets to write about what and why. This discussion continues from the previous chapter. Godwin says in the radio interview with Gross at NPR that “the more that you don’t belong to anything in particular, the more advantageous it is as a writer” and refers to the status of writers as outsider observers. This is an interesting comment with regard to Godwin’s displaced status, as it certainly does not seem so positive in *Crocodile* in particular. A similar comment is made in *Wild at Heart*, where Godwin writes the following about himself and the photographer Chris Johns:

The fact that both of us repeatedly leave and then return to Africa has made the experience a bittersweet one for us. It has also permitted us, on occasion, to notice changes and trend that are not always immediately obvious to those who remain immersed in Africa, or to those who observe it from afar.

(*Wild at Heart*, 11)

Here Godwin is clearly of the opinion that he is not immersed in Africa because he does not permanently live there. As my analysis in the following chapter will show, his unstable position does from time to time blur his perceptiveness as well.

Gappah seems to distance herself from the idea of making a political statement in her writing (Lea, 2009, another online interview with *The Guardian*), and she acknowledges the difference it makes when writing from outside Zimbabwe. The fact that African writers are often supposed to represent their continent, or at least the country they come from, is something of which she disapproves (Lea, 2009). But she still calls herself an African writer when explaining what the new generations of writers are trying to do, which is to move away from earlier critiques of colonialism and instead “write about what it is to be a human being living in a particular African country” (Lea, 2009). This is exactly what Godwin does as well in his first memoir. Gappah is also expected to be representative of Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans, as one of the most well-known, current black writers from Zimbabwe (Lea, 2009). But she explicitly says in the interview that “the only perspective I represent is my own” (Lea, 2009). Towards the end of the interview she claims that the reason Zimbabwe has gained so much media attention world-wide is because “some of those beaten by Mugabe’s thugs are white”. Gappah thus also ends up referring to whiteness in a negative sense, and even though she does not specifically mention these memoirs, they too are a crucial part of the discourse on Zimbabwe. Taking Gappah’s latest novel as an example here, titled *The Book of Memory* (2015), suggests however that whiteness remains a topic of interest for herself as well. The main character in the novel has albinism, making her stand out physically in her community since she is essentially white while still being black. She is eventually raised by a white man, adding another layer of complexity to the story. Politics in literature thus comes in many shapes and forms, whether the writers themselves wish to acknowledge it or not.

These issues relating to representation and the act of being a representative of someone or something are discussed also by Bangladeshi-British writer Monica Ali (2007) in her article on the controversies concerning the filming of her book *Brick Lane*. Ali (2007) makes the following comment:

In any case, if we were to take the “authenticity” requirement seriously it must apply to everyone equally. What right does Roddy Doyle have to write a novel from the perspective of a woman who suffers domestic abuse when he is not a battered woman? Taken to its logical outcome, men are not “allowed” to write about women, or women about men, and we are left only with memoir and autobiography, for which admittedly there is a strong demand these days, perhaps because nothing else is authentic enough.

(Ali 2007)

But are even autobiography and memoir authentic enough? Godwin himself has been criticized for not being authentic and truthful enough (cf. Ranger, 1997). Ali (2007) explains that writers mainly from ethnic minorities are often expected to be “authentic” while white writers have more artistic freedom. I would say that in an African context this is not the case, and that memoirs such as these by Godwin do not enjoy a particular artistic freedom but are instead closely scrutinized and examined. The interviews with Gappah above do, however, testify to the quite understandable unwillingness to act as the representative of an entire nation or even continent.

Leigh Gilmore discusses the problem of truth and authenticity in her work *The Limits of Autobiography* (2001, 3) and argues that the “anxiety about invention, and its preference for the literal and verifiable” is problematic for the whole genre of autobiographical writing. I am strongly inclined to agree with her. She also offers her views on the question of representation: “[h]ow can the experience of a survivor of trauma stand for many” (Gilmore 2001, 19). Godwin as a survivor of trauma is obviously questionable, but if there is a trauma I argue that it is his involuntary displacement in the 1980s caused by the reporting of violence in Matabeleland. Becoming “an enemy of the state, a *persona non grata* in my own home” (*Mukiwa*, 385) is Godwin’s personal trauma, and I will explore this in more detail in the next chapter by focusing on his displacement and transnationalism. Other personal traumas are the war experiences and losing his sister, as well as the travels around Zimbabwe in *The Fear* and meeting torture victims. But Gilmore’s question is still

applicable to Godwin as well, and her observation about the interrelationship between representation and identification becomes even more relevant. The way identification works, according to her, in this case, is that the reader substitutes him- or herself in the writer's portrayal if the autobiography acts as a proper mirror for the reading experience: that is to say, if the reader can comfortably identify him- or herself with the writer. If representation fails to happen, if the autobiography is not representative enough, identification of this kind will not happen and Gilmore argues that the writer will therefore receive less sympathy as a consequence (Gilmore 2001, 22). Gilmore concludes that this is the reason why "trauma narratives often draw skepticism more readily than sympathy" (Gilmore 2001, 22). The reader of such an autobiography needs to feel either as if they are being represented in person or otherwise read the trauma narrative more leisurely (Gilmore 2001, 22).

This truly pinpoints the problem with Godwin's writing, and also at least to some extent explains why critics have sometimes been quite unforgiving towards this genre of writers. There is a lot of trauma in their memoirs; there are numerous accounts of violence they have witnessed if not experienced directly themselves, and most of the writers share the trauma of having been displaced, arrested or having had to leave their farms or Zimbabwe altogether in a hurry (Atkins, Buckle, Godwin and Meldrum just to mention a few). The problem that arises, and the obvious lack of sympathy for these writers, which is also visible in Primorac's (2010) text on the revival of a Rhodesian discourse, has to do with what Gilmore refers to above. Many critics and reviewers cannot, in all probability, identify with Godwin and his fellow writers because they have not lived as white people in Zimbabwe or elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some particularly severe critique has been offered by Muchativugwa Liberty Hove in the edited collection *Strategies of Representation in Auto/biography: Reconstructing and Remembering* (2014), to which he has contributed with two chapters of which the first (2014a) focuses on *Mukiwa* and *Crocodile*, and the second (2014b) analyses *The Fear*.

Hove begins with the following observation: "[t]o speak on behalf of family and to represent a multiplicity of perspectives that accurately represent a generation's beliefs, goals and values will always be contested space" (Hove 2014a, 39). There is plenty of truth in this, and he identifies some of the most central problems also present in Godwin's writing. However, he soon embarks on a close reading of *Crocodile* in particular, and mentions, among other things, "Godwin's selective memory" (Hove 2014a, 46). For him, "the memoirs are [Godwin's] struggle to control the representation of Rhodesian

and Zimbabwean whiteness” (Hove 2014a, 54), and still further in the second chapter he remarks that “[i]n being overtly judgmental, in selectively picking on conflict vocabulary, *The Fear* has been detrimental to its *honore causa*” (Hove 2014b, 102). These are serious accusations that suggest an agenda for Godwin’s part; an agenda that aims to present matters in a way that puts himself in a favourable light. They also suggest that, by doing so, he has ultimately failed particularly with regard to his activities in *The Fear*. Both chapters remain critical throughout. It is obvious that representation and identification have failed in this case, that Hove sees few if any redeeming features in Godwin’s writing. According to the notes on contributors at the beginning of the book, Hove is a researcher at a South African university (Hove and Masemola 2014, viii). This puts him in a Southern African context, one not too far removed from that of Godwin. Still, their two approaches could not be further apart.

A number of reviews of *Crocodile* remain critical as well. Arlene Getz (2007, 69) notes in her inspection of the book that “[t]he question of whether a white African is an ideal or an oxymoron goes to the heart of one of the world’s most difficult problems: can ethnic strife ever be stopped?”. This refers to the position of whites in Zimbabwe, and Getz seems both sympathetic towards Godwin’s struggles as well as critical regarding his defence of whites in ‘Africa’. Derek Cohen (2010) has reviewed the same memoir and criticizes the way Godwin defends white farmers. “Godwin’s compassion for the white farmer is commendable, but he might have shown more awareness of the century-long legacy of oppression and violence against the blacks” (Cohen 2010, civ). Cohen here seems to demand directly that Godwin represent the black population better, and accuses him of being sympathetic to just one part of the population; the smaller and ultimately more privileged one. In both Getz and Cohen’s reviews something rather surprising can be found: both suggest that Godwin is writing about Zimbabwe (Getz 2007, 69; Cohen 2010, cv). Perhaps it is the critics who have made Godwin the ‘voice of Zimbabwe’, a role so strongly denied and refuted by Gappah (Moss 2009), and not Godwin himself. My main argument in this section is that these memoirs should be read with fewer claims on representation, just as when reading Adichie’s description of the Biafran war or Gappah’s short stories of life in Harare. At the same time Godwin obviously becomes that representative as he writes for Western audiences who may not be very familiar with Zimbabwean history and politics from

before. This makes Godwin a complex case, and simplifying the analysis as Hove has done eventually leads nowhere.

The preface to *Mukiwa* is full of disclaimers, for example about the truthfulness of the memoir. Godwin writes that Mukiwa is not “a work of forensic research”. He also says explicitly that he has tried “not to preach or to politic”. This is a rather peculiar way to begin an autobiography of one’s childhood, and it also sounds unnecessarily apologetic. My guess is that Godwin was quite aware of the attention with which this book might be met, and Ashleigh Harris (2005, 107) has noted the same thing: “[t]he international climate into which Godwin’s text emerged was one that had not yet been saturated with narratives of white Zimbabwean experience. Godwin made use of this international lack of information to tell what he saw as an untold story”. Whether publishing the memoir was a calculated decision or not is impossible to tell, but Harris is right that at that stage, Godwin’s memoir did fill a certain void. Lessing’s *Under My Skin* was published only a few years before, but as concluded earlier, it belongs to a different category of autobiography and Lessing to another group of white settlers, particularly due to her age at the time of writing. It may also in its turn have inspired other writers to come forth with their memoirs. *Crocodile* has no preface and nowhere does Godwin indicate for whom it is written, but *The Fear* has the following epigraph: “*This book is dedicated to the many Zimbabweans who have been threatened, hurt or killed in the struggle to be free from the dictatorship. May their sacrifice not be forgotten*” (italics in the original). The book ends with a link to Godwin’s own homepage and an invitation to visit the page for more information on recent events in Zimbabwe and ways to help, which makes it sound rather calculated.

The aim and agenda of this third book are thus thoroughly different, but I still argue that it has fewer problems with representation (and authenticity as well perhaps) than the two other books. Alex Perry (2011) writes in his review of *The Fear* that it is “the kind of tale best told by an impartial observer” and says that Godwin is not that kind of writer, because he is white. Perry remains positive, however, even though he criticizes Godwin for focusing too much on white farmers: “Godwin cannot hope to tell the tale of a country of 12 million black Africans through the experiences of a few thousand whites, many of whom fit the profile of old colonialist, by turns full of grit and bitter about their reduced circumstances” (Perry, 2011). No, he certainly cannot, and Perry’s review is another vivid example of the lack of sympathy that Gilmore (2001, 22) has observed. In Godwin’s own words, his role in *The*

Fear is to bear witness (*The Fear*, 133). The fourth chapter in this dissertation focuses on bearing witness and literary journalism, and this topic will be more thoroughly explored there. Who can be that much of an “impartial observer” anyway? Am I an impartial observer with regard to Godwin’s memoirs? A personal bias will always affect all analysis and research. The question is more about whose interpretation we want to support and endorse, and whose story becomes the official version. Resentment among Southern African scholars is hence justified, as the memoirs of a son of white settlers could never become the official story.

As I concluded earlier in this chapter, Godwin does in places refer to *us* and *we* in his writing, especially when talking about the end of white rule in *Mukiwa*. That suggests group membership, and if he is not fit to represent all Zimbabweans, perhaps he can represent white diasporic Rhodesians/Zimbabweans such as himself. This examination of *how* to represent and more importantly *whom* in Godwin’s memoirs as well as the complex question of authenticity reinforce the difficult and also controversial notions of what it means to be an African writer. Godwin makes no such claims for himself, and neither do Adichie or Gappah. Being an African writer comes with the expectation of representing an entire continent, something which these writers quite rightly oppose. One single French, British or perhaps Portuguese writer would most likely not be presumed to represent the entire European continent in terms of literature. We see varieties and nuances closer to home but further afield, ‘African’ can come to mean so many different aspects of utterly complex phenomena. Gappah’s words in the interview with Moss (2009), “if I write about Zimbabwe, it’s not the same as writing for Zimbabwe or for Zimbabweans”, do ring true for Godwin as well. Godwin may write about Zimbabwe as well, but it is definitely not the same as writing for its people, or on behalf of them.

3.3.3 Southern African Whiteness

Last but not least a discussion of Southern African whiteness and what critics have said about it in relation to white Zimbabwean memoirs, or other types of Southern African writing, is relevant. In this part of the chapter I also look towards the future and where whiteness and its definitions are headed. Quite a thought-provoking view of African whiteness is presented in Antje M.

Rauwerda's (2009) article where she discusses Alexandra Fuller's travel memoir *Scribbling the Cat* (2004) and whiteness. Rauwerda (2009, 52) argues that Fuller's memoir "raises questions about the place of African whiteness and displaced Rhodesian whiteness in particular" and that this Rhodesian whiteness does not belong anywhere anymore and is thus unstable by nature (Rauwerda 2009, 54). This echoes Brownell (2008) as cited earlier in this chapter. Such instability is certainly seen in Godwin's writing as well, and it is one explanation for the confusing passages in *Crocodile* where Godwin on one page seems to be fully aware of his privileges and position, but on the next defends white settlers. Rauwerda also asks a question which is significant for Godwin's writing as well; she wonders whether one can "intentionally sidestep the shameful wrongs of the past in order to try and build a future?" (Rauwerda 2009, 61). This is followed by another question as to whether African whiteness removed or detached from its history "can or even should remain both African and white" (Rauwerda 2009, 62). The answer in Godwin's texts seems to be no, eventually. This is visible in first and foremost *The Fear*. Godwin's mother moved back to 'England' (his expression) and Godwin speaks of it as her "returning" to England (*The Fear*, 202). Godwin also visited the places he lived in with his family, and it is another way of saying goodbye to 'Africa', and to his own Africanness (*The Fear*, 115, 119).

Godwin and his sister Georgina decided to visit their old homes during a stay in Zimbabwe, and visiting the place where the Godwins lived for 25 years proved to be difficult. The house was lost to inflation and became worthless before it was sold, and Godwin wanted to meet the housekeeper who helped look after his father when he was ill, only to find out that he had passed away too (*The Fear*, 116). This symbolizes the fact that so little of Godwin's earlier life remained in Zimbabwe. The visit to the second old home is similar.

We pull in at the Mhangura Mine Club, where we whiled away much of our school holidays. The swimming pool is defunct. [...] The thatch umbrellas that provided shade over the garden tables have rotten and fallen onto the lawn, and now all that remains are their rusting metal ribs, like the hoops under Victorian skirts. Georgina is dying to go to the loo, but the stinking toilets in the pool changing rooms are without water.

(*The Fear*, 124)

Decay is imminent, and inevitable. Godwin and his sister meet some children close to the swimming pool and Godwin asks them if any whites are still living in the area, to which the children answer that they left long ago. It is

one more reference to the end of Godwin's existence in Africa. The house in itself, where the Godwins used to live, was in a terrible state and on the brink of collapse (*The Fear*, 125). With the old housekeeper gone and the childhood home beyond repair, it is obvious that displaced whiteness and Africa do not easily combine, at least not for Godwin. Interestingly enough, Fuller as well seems to have changed her mind slightly since the publication of *Scribbling the Cat* in 2004. In an article written in 2013, she writes in capital letters that she is not a Zimbabwean now (Fuller, 2013). This could suggest that she does not think it completely impossible that she would be a Zimbabwean again one day, but the only way to read it as far as I am concerned is to see it as a renouncement of any claims on Zimbabweanness. These examples testify to the burden of living in a contradictory situation.

The question of white guilt also arises in this context. Knowles et al. (2014, 599) comment on this and say that “[h]igh levels of White identity are associated with self-conscious emotions, such as guilt, shame, and embarrassment, upon learning about historical wrongs committed by the racial ingroup”. This guilt, shame, and embarrassment are clearly visible in Godwin's writing as well. Lynne M. Jacobs (2014, 300), another American scholar, confirms in her article on white shame and guilt what has already been said that “we live in a white-affirmative world and that is taken for granted. It is never problematized. Our sense of ourselves as individuals *first*, and members of a racialized category only secondarily, remains a powerful fiction”. She also explains how important it is to acknowledge the shame and the guilt as a white person and refusing to do so would mean not acknowledging the privilege that comes with being white (Jacobs 2014, 304). Another important point made by her is that whites can also claim to have been marginalized and discriminated against (Jacobs 2014, 306), something which is very true for white Zimbabweans and Peter Godwin. Kendall (2006, 91) talks of this as well and calls it the “Pain Olympics, the process by which we downplay the pain and hardship in other people's lives and experiences because we believe we are playing a zero-sum game – if I win a star, then there are fewer for you”. Those who have suffered the most shall write, which is an absurd thought that seems to gain some support among Godwin and Fuller's critics. Kendall also says that being well-meaning plays a significant role for white guilt. “Seeing yourself as ‘well-meaning’ removes responsibility for our actions. If no harm was meant, no offense should be taken!” (Kendall 2006, 96-97). This is very visible in Godwin's writing as well, especially in *Crocodile*. The passage I cited earlier about the white farmers providing for all

Zimbabweans and creating the “breadbasket”, the abundance of food for which Zimbabwe used to be known, is an example of what Kendall refers to here. In that passage, Godwin sees whites as well-meaning, as having only wanted to farm and live their lives in peace providing food for all Zimbabweans, black or white. He forgets the colonial reality which so profoundly thwarted land ownership. White guilt in Godwin’s writing is also symbolized through the travels he makes to complete the journalistic assignments for which he has been employed by various magazines, and which enable his travels back and forth between Southern Africa and New York. The father’s illness and the medicine Godwin is able to provide him with also evoke feelings of white guilt.

In relation to Southern African writing and white guilt, a large number of studies have been made on South African writing in particular. The Zimbabwean context is obviously not exactly the same but there are some similarities. Both countries have so far had a relatively short history of majority rule and a long one of white supremacist regimes. George Horrell (2005, 2) observes in his article on masculinities and guilt in white South African writing that “[p]ost-apartheid South African fiction and autobiography form a field which bears the marks of whiteness in painful transition. Guilt, postcolonial white guilt, is a well-worn track in discourses which run as paths through the literature”. This “painful transition” is precisely what Godwin and his fellow Zimbabwean writers tackle as well in their memoirs. David McDermott Hughes (2010, 130) concludes that “[f]or Zimbabwe’s whites, the imaginative project of belonging has reached a point of rupture, at which it will change course or end completely”. The “painful transition” or “point of rupture” both refer to the same thing, to something much more difficult than the adjustment Gagiano (2009) observed in South African autobiographies. Zimbabwean whites experienced a significant transition when Rhodesia became independent Zimbabwe, but also during the land reform and farm occupations. Horrell (2005, 3) continues: “South Africa’s white, patriarchally dominated past is explored and renegotiated by a crowd of (literary) witnesses eager to exorcise its demons, or at least reveal them”. Godwin is one of these literary witnesses, and Horrell’s conclusion is that “[m]uch contemporary South African white writing represents a moment in whiteness which attempts to negotiate the existential terms for a humiliating present and a disrupted, uncertain future” (Horrell 2005, 8). Here it is interesting that Horrell chooses to call it a “humiliating present”, as whites in South Africa certainly lead quite comfortable lives in many regards.

The present has been, in comparison, much more humiliating in Zimbabwe in recent years.

Godwin's memoirs are at least to some extent about a very humiliating present, especially *Crocodile*. This is echoed in Linfield's (2007, 97) article as well where she comments on Godwin's relationship to his parents and says that he is "especially sharp, and heart-breaking" when writing about their difficulties in Zimbabwe. An excellent example of this is when Godwin went grocery shopping in Harare with his father, and due to increasing inflation, they were unable to pay for all of their groceries. "The cashier nods her head towards the queue that has formed behind us, to a tall, well-dressed black woman. 'She is paying the extra for you,' says the cashier" (*Crocodile*, 243). It is an unexpected situation, where the white, previously rich and privileged people, cannot afford their groceries and are offered help by a black person. Privilege in Zimbabwe has long since seized being a solely white affair. The lack of money was one reason for the meagre shopping, but another was the constant electricity outages which made grocery shopping difficult as the refrigerator was often without power (*Crocodile*, 207). Soon after, Godwin's mother was admitted to hospital for her hip surgery, and when Godwin went to see her, she was just having a meal consisting of "chicken, sautéed potato and red jelly. She is wolfing it down – the best meal she's had in months, she says" (*Crocodile*, 213). Not having enough to eat, or being able to afford food in the grocery store, is certainly not something too often attributed to white middle class Africans, and these examples above all go to show that the humiliating present Horrell (2005) mentions above is truly present in this memoir. The idea that all white Africans are rich and successful is thus at least partly a myth, yet Godwin does not succeed in undermining it sufficiently. The question is whether he even tries to. In *The Fear*, he also writes about the rampaging inflation in Zimbabwe and what it did to his parents, and especially his mother who outlived his father: "[s]he has lost her house and her savings and her friends and her dogs" (*The Fear*, 2).

The humiliating present also includes the slow deterioration of Godwin's father, and especially the terrible condition of his feet. His mother tried her best to take care of them but the situation was serious:

She gingerly pulls away the gauze that covers his feet, right one first. [...] The foot is swollen and puffy, and the toes and the pad underneath are blackened and oozing. I had no idea it was this bad. It is an appalling sight, and the smell is rancid. [...] I rise to flee but she fixes me with a steely gaze,

which says, don't-you-bloody-dare-wimp-out-on-me. So I sit back down and make small talk to Dad, as though this is no big deal, really, rotting alive from your feet upwards.

(*Crocodile*, 246)

This situation was trying for everyone involved, and Godwin's father was in a lot of pain, and according to his mother also quite depressed because of his condition. Afterwards his father had a talk with Godwin about the quickly worsening situation: "I'm in so much pain now, Pete. I've taken all my meds at once and I'm still in pain. [...] We spend over five hundred million Zimbabwe dollars a month on medications. Our savings are gone" (*Crocodile*, 280). The chapter is titled "December 2003", and according to the IMF's Statistical Appendix for Zimbabwe in 2004, the official exchange rate of Zimbabwe dollars per US dollar was 663.8 million, up from 55 million in 2002 (IMF, 2004). That means that the sum Godwin's father spent on medication was less than 1 US dollar in 2003, whereas it would have been almost ten dollars in 2002. This is an example of the outrageous inflation which caused people's savings to practically disappear. A month later Godwin writes that he phoned his parents from New York and was told that his father suffered from chronic diarrhoea. "I was just about to email you,' Dad says, 'but it would have been a one-word email: shits.'" (*Crocodile*, 301). Not many weeks after this his father passed away. These passages show Godwin at his most personal and exposed, and through the death of his father the lives of the Godwins in Zimbabwe was also coming to its end.

The painful transition from the past to the present has also been noted by Tony Simoes da Silva (2008, 12), who writes in his article in *Transnational Whiteness Matters* (2008) that "[i]nsofar as childhood will always presuppose, indeed signify a degree of innocence from broader ideological elements, frequently it is through the voice of the small child that White South Africans seek to negotiate the past with an eye on the present". This is true for Zimbabwean memoirs as well, and it is no coincidence that so many writers have chosen to explore their childhoods, and Godwin also exercises a certain kind of child's voice in his childhood memoir. It gives him more freedom to look past the inequalities and injustices in Rhodesian society, as they were children and could not be held responsible for their lives and the surrounding attitudes. Simoes da Silva (2008, 13) continues:

The repudiation of hegemonic Whiteness as a dominant identity produced by the end of apartheid has transformed both the stage on which identity

politics are 'performed' in South Africa and the directions by which individuals exercise their autobiographical acts. The 'making of personal memories' in contemporary South Africa both conflicts with and complements the making of a collective national memory. Thus I contend that we might see the recent redefinition of political systems and discourses in Southern Africa as one of the catalysts for the recent growth in 'White' memoir.

(Simoes da Silva 2008, 13)

Once again, this is all very true for white Zimbabwean autobiographies as well. The end of colonialism as well as recent political events have certainly been a catalyst for these writers, and just as Simoes da Silva concludes, these memoirs are both useful and problematic for the "making of a collective national memory". Whites cannot be removed from Zimbabwe's history; they have their place in it and they played a significant role, but the problem lies in their legacy which is irrevocably tied to white supremacy and colonialism.

In a Southern African context, contemporary whiteness is thus a complex matter. Njabulo Ndebele, literary scholar and writer, says in an interview (West 2010, 117) on whiteness in South African life and literature that "there is a multiplicity of 'whitenesses'". According to him, the apartheid era tried to streamline all black as well as white subjectivity. Looking at these whitenesses from a broader perspective allows for more interpretations and "fresh possibilities for dealing with South African questions of race, class and ethnicity" (West 2010, 117). Finally, Ndebele suggests that we might look at these whitenesses and withhold our judgement. He refers to a South African context specifically, but these ideas can certainly be applied to Zimbabwean writing as well. Ndebele also points out that the global white power which was so prominent during the colonial era, especially in the European countries and also the USA later on, is now shifting again towards China and India for example (West 2010, 118). Ndebele therefore concludes that instead of whiteness, Englishness is taking over. This is in the sense of 'english' with a lower case letter (West 2010, 120). The interview ends with Ndebele's words:

We need to understand one another more, go into a new adventure of understanding the South African experience that is no longer dictated by inherited structures, but that reflects how human beings fashion new possibilities through new interconnections. I would hope then that in the writing of the future, in the music of the future, in the dances, in new spatial environments and their new architecture, we'll be enriched by this

new world that many of us never thought existed. If only we were to learn to look again, and look closer.

(West 2010, 123-124)

Ndebele suggest something very important here, even though he is overly optimistic when stating that the South African experience “is no longer dictated by inherited structures”. The born-free generation I mentioned in the introduction to my dissertation is proof of the deep complications still present in South African society. Apartheid may be over but real equality is still not yet reality in the rainbow nation. According to Ndebele, we are moving towards new kinds of whitenesses that are perhaps more multifaceted and less rigid than before. The memoirs in my study are obviously retelling a time gone by, a place that no longer exists, a place that was heavily racist. However, these memoirs were written recently, not thirty or forty years ago. Thus I argue that the subtle beginnings of a new kind of whiteness can be observed also in Godwin’s writing. At least he makes a true effort to overcome old stereotypes and ways of being white in Zimbabwe in *The Fear* in particular.

Bonnett (2000) and Dyer (1997), as well as Rauwerda (2009), also suggest a multiplicity of whiteness, and Dyer (1997, 12) says that “going against type is a feature of white representation”, meaning that diversity is allowed and even encouraged. He states that “going against type and not conforming depend upon an implicit norm of whiteness against which to go”, but concludes, however, that “stereotyping [...] does characterise the representation of subordinated social groups and is one of the means by which they are categorised and kept in their place, whereas white people in white culture are given the illusion of their own infinite variety” (Dyer 1997, 12). Stereotyping thus concerns mainly people from other backgrounds, and white people perceive that there is no white stereotype to which to conform, that whiteness is inherently individual whereas other races have more distinguishable features. This is far less positive than Ndebele’s comments above. Mohanram (2007, xx) asked if all white people are white in similar ways, and here a follow-up question would be that if they are not, what then distinguishes them from each other. Godwin has no answer to that, and it is more relevant to conclude that Zimbabwean whiteness has certain specific features, which are strongly tied to history.

Southern African whiteness has not been defined *per se* in this part of the chapter. Rather, the discussion has been moving towards a more

contemporary way of looking at whiteness, as presented by for example Ndebele (West 2010) and Rauwerda (2009). Rauwerda (2009), in particular, makes it clear in her article that writers such as Godwin and Fuller have nowhere to go now that colonialism is over and that even the critics and researchers may not want to have anything to do with them. Rauwerda's suggestion that stability can become reality for such writers only when past wrongs have been overcome and that a more flexible whiteness is needed for them is true to a degree. I do agree with her, in particular when she says that a new flexible whiteness is necessary, but I do not quite agree that Godwin is attempting to overcome past wrongs in order to create a new present. Perhaps he is, and *The Fear* is his road to absolution. But who is supposed to grant him forgiveness with regard to a history for which he is not personally responsible, and for possessing privileges he has not asked for but with which he was born? The Western audiences for whom he writes? I am left in doubt with regard to Ndebele's words (West 2010), when he states that South Africa "is no longer dictated by inherited structures" as much as before. These inherited structures, remnants of colonialism and apartheid, have not been fully overcome and the controversy surrounding Godwin and his fellow white Zimbabweans and their writing is proof of that. Southern African whiteness may be going towards a multiplicity of whitenesses but it is definitely not yet there.

3.4 Discussion and Conclusion

The floating, detached mat of white Rhodesians transformed into desperate clumps when making their way in the world after colonialism ended in Zimbabwe. White Rhodesian identity was both unstable and passionate, fighting hard for its existence and pushing through a unilateral declaration of independence and a civil war, only to find its nemesis in Robert Mugabe and his land reform from 2000 onwards. Since then the number of whites in Zimbabwe has decreased significantly, and speaking of a white Zimbabwean identity today requires utmost care and sensitivity. Making the distinction between black and white also inevitably invokes colonial divides, particularly in a country such as Zimbabwe. A black Zimbabwean identity is equally hard to define, and as with the study of autobiography, identity formation is always both a collective as well as a personal process. Godwin's parents arrived in a

Southern Rhodesia which welcomed whites and offered them possibilities to farm and create successful lives for themselves. That Rhodesia does not exist anymore. These memoirs by Godwin and others are an attempt at creating a kind of legacy, a testimony of what it meant to grow up under a white supremacist regime, to live through the civil war and experience first-hand the transition to Zimbabwe and majority rule.

The discussion of colour, of whiteness in this instance, is problematic from many different perspectives. Godwin's memoirs exemplify this complexity, as he struggles with his sympathies towards both white farmers as well as black Zimbabweans attempting to flee the country, and as he tries to take care of his parents in the midst of hyperinflation and political instability. The imbalance between insight and personal distress is particularly apparent at times, for example when Godwin interviews the white farmers in *Crocodile*, or when he explains how Mugabe asked white farmers to stay after independence and help build the new country. The criticism towards these memoirs by reviewers has often addressed these issues as well as discussing the comment by Godwin's father about the Holocaust. Godwin is clearly also aware of the criticism he has received, as is shown in the interview with John Zuarino (2007). Comparing whites in Zimbabwe during the land reform to Jews in Poland during the Holocaust is interpreted by several critics as an incredible *faux pas*; the systematic killing of millions of Jews during the Second World War must not ever be compared to the brutal treatment of white farmers in Zimbabwe, who more often than not escaped alive and were able to rebuild their lives elsewhere. Critics forget, or purposefully overlook, the fact that Godwin's father did suffer from the Holocaust on a very personal level. This comparison along with the criticism directed towards Godwin for writing it, helps to reveal the complexity of the discourse of whiteness in Zimbabwe and how important it is to continue to talk explicitly about it. Critics and reviewers have apparently been very ready to judge Godwin for this passage, and that again reveals a lot about their preconceptions concerning Godwin as a writer, as a Zimbabwean and as a white person. Godwin clarified that his father's comment had to do with insecurity and feeling vulnerable as a group, and that is certainly true for white Zimbabweans from a historical perspective and to the present day. That also reveals the need for a more nuanced reading of Godwin's memoirs, and of this genre of white Zimbabwean autobiographical writing.

The discussion of whiteness must begin and end with an examination of privileges. Du Bois sarcastically concluded that whiteness is the ownership of

the earth, and in a Rhodesian context that has literally been the case. People of European descent owned the earth, or at least most of the arable land in Rhodesia. Godwin's privileges in his childhood were explicitly white, despite not growing up on a farm. His parents had good jobs and were educated, and they had black servants like so many other white families. Godwin also went to boarding school, a difficult and tough experience for the little boy he was. And when he grew up, he participated in the civil war on the Rhodesian side, afterwards being able to begin his studies at Cambridge in the UK. That was a very privileged experience and certainly a very white, colonial one. Several critics have discussed the emergence of multiple whitenesses, and this helps to answer Mohanram's questions about whiteness and whether there is only one kind. Whiteness comes in many shapes and forms, as does blackness or Zimbabweanness or Southern Africanness. Thoroughly examining colour in this way does not reinforce hegemonic structures; rather, it allows for multiple identities and definitions to come forward.

Peter Godwin's use of sarcasm and irony is his forte, and several of the passages analysed in this chapter testify to that extraordinary skill. Knowles et al. (2014, 598) wrote that "whiteness is a critically important attribute not because Whites cannot see it but because they can". Godwin's refined sense of humour, often directed at himself or white Zimbabweans in general, is evidence of this insight. Collecting socks on a flight to Harare, worrying about the medical expertise of his father's Ugandan doctor, or watching his sister Georgina sort her dieting product into neat little piles on the hotel room floor reveal self-distance and self-awareness at a high level. Godwin admits to being selfish and privileged, expecting only the best for, in this case, his father. He manages to pick whiteness apart himself, laying it out in the open for everyone to observe and judge for themselves. The many layers in his memoirs, in *Crocodile* in particular, enable a variety of emotions and attitudes to surface. It goes from a thorough understanding of the problems caused by colonialism to a passionate defence of white farmers and their hard work for the good of Zimbabwe and its people; from a moving description of his father's ill health, death and cremation to a nostalgic trip with his sister to their old childhood neighbourhoods, now completely deserted by whites. For Godwin, as for Brownell, it would appear that the Rhodesian legacy for whites in Zimbabwe seems to be the near complete disintegration of those last desperate clumps floating around the choppy African seas.

4. “I Must Become a Real Immigrant, Positive, Engaged, Hopeful”: Displacement and Migration

4.1 Introduction

I am tempted each time to tear up my return ticket and stay. For whether I like it or not, I am home.

(*Crocodile*, 60)

The movement between two countries and continents, two rather different lives and roles within them, as well as an ambivalent relationship to Zimbabwe, are all central themes throughout Godwin’s writing. As I concluded in the previous chapter, there is both anger and frustration at the way things have turned out, and, from time to time, Godwin expresses a strong and almost desperate desire to belong in Zimbabwe. The phrase “whether I like it or not, I am home” demonstrates the complexity of this existence, a reluctance to admit to belonging in Zimbabwe but a strong desire to do so, in a country greatly affected by its colonial history and postcolonial present. This reluctance is a regular feature in Godwin’s descriptions of his life in New York as well as that in Zimbabwe, a reluctance both to stay and to leave. Almost inevitably, it also creates a position of being in between, of never finding the solace of home in any place. This is a difficult situation for Godwin, as he was first expelled from Zimbabwe. Unable to return, he then established his life in the USA: subsequently finding himself constantly on the move between North America and Southern Africa.

Many Zimbabweans have left their country in recent years, as the economy has been unstable and employment difficult to find. Political persecution and an oppressive regime have contributed to the waves of migrants leaving Zimbabwe and settling elsewhere, often in the UK or the USA. For many white Zimbabweans, Australia has also been an attractive option. The discussion of colour, and whiteness in particular, which I initiated in the previous chapter, will accordingly continue here from the perspective of migration. In particular, my focus will be on the relationship white Zimbabwean writers have to *home* and to Zimbabwe, and on the

significance of this relationship for their autobiographical writing, considering that many of the writers in question have left the country. Their memoirs suggest that strong ties, at least emotional ones, still remain, and that a sense of nostalgia permeates large parts of their writing. This is true for Godwin as well, as is attested by my opening citation from *Crocodile*. The use of the word *home* in itself suggests nostalgia, particularly because Godwin no longer lived in Zimbabwe at the time.

A few concepts emerge throughout my discussion and analysis of Godwin's memoirs as both complex and contested, and a number of them have been widely used without proper clarification. *Diaspora*, for instance, has been discussed and explored in a number of ways by scholars. Some of them have attempted to define the concept more generally (cf. Cohen, 2008); some have attempted to define it in a specifically African context (cf. Koser, 2003; Ifekwunigwe, 2010); others in a Zimbabwean context (cf. McGregor, 2010a, 2010b; Pasura, 2012), and certain scholars have focused for the most part on diasporic literature (cf. Wisker, 2007; Walters, 2005). The discussion of the term *diaspora* is thus multidimensional and quite varied. In the context of white Zimbabweans, diaspora is more interesting in terms of what it implies for the writers themselves. Definitions are of course relevant, and I will take account of recent texts on the meaning of the term, but my main attention here is trained on what it means for these writers to be living in something that could be called a diaspora. The question also arises as to who can belong to a diaspora. If we look at the UK for example, with its large numbers of both white and black Zimbabweans, Dominic Pasura (2010, 107-108) concludes that certain groups of white Zimbabweans have not even wanted to identify themselves with the Zimbabwean diaspora, as they still generally see themselves as Rhodesian. This does of course not encompass all white Zimbabweans, but the 'Zimbabwean diaspora' is, without a doubt, a term that should be used with care and the question of Godwin's belonging to such a diaspora will form a central part of my discussion in this chapter.

Displacement and *transnationalism* are two other concepts closely tied to *diaspora*, and the present chapter features a discussion of them, too, in the context of white Zimbabwean writing. Angelika Bammer (1994, xi) has defined displacement as a "separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation [...] or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture", and many scholars have discussed transnationalism on its own or its relationship to diaspora, for example Dominic Pasura (2010, 2012), Linda Basch et al. (1994) as well as Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist (2010).

Displacement occurs in many different ways in memoirs by white Zimbabwean writers. There are for example the experiences of Catherine Buckle, whose farm was taken over by war veterans, forcing her and her family and all their workers to leave. Godwin himself left for university, then returned to an independent Zimbabwe and was later forced out of the country for more than a decade. Alexandra Fuller also left for university, but by that time her family was already living in Zambia. They also lost their farm in Zimbabwe due to a land resettlement programme after independence. Sharing a similar fate to Godwin, Andrew Meldrum was forced onto a plane to London and deported because of his reporting, with no time to pack anything and without his wife. Douglas Rogers on the other hand does not report any such violent events concerning himself, and at the end of his memoir his parents were still living in Zimbabwe and trying to manage their business. Wendy Kann also moved from Zimbabwe of her own will, as did Lauren St John. Thus there are many very different stories of displacement and migration, and the consequences for these memoirs also vary. The question can also be asked as to whether autobiography is the ultimate mode for negotiating belonging and displacement, and what the personal stories can tell us about the phenomenon in a wider sense. The focus here is on Godwin's memoirs, but other experiences provide a larger perspective and a backdrop for my analysis.

A discussion of Zimbabwean diaspora and topics relating to it are also relevant, and in connection to that, issues such as remittances and the various labels for immigrants need clarification. Are the people in question to be called immigrants, or simply migrants, or expatriates, exiles, diasporans? For example Sheila Croucher (2009) has studied these different labels and their meanings in her book about the lives of Americans migrating to Mexico, and Robin Cohen (2006) also touches upon this theme in *Migration and Its Enemies: Global Capital, Migrant Labour and the Nation-State*. The difficulty with these labels is in their underlying meanings. Would Godwin be called an immigrant in the USA? Would he even call himself that? He does, actually, refer to himself as an immigrant in *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, and ponders the different labels and their meanings. *Expatriate* usually suggests a choice of some kind, whereas *immigrant* has different connotations. *Exile* again suggests involuntary removal of some kind. Many scholars as listed below have also studied the lives of black Zimbabweans abroad and their often difficult existences. Colour is here also a defining factor in many ways, and a comparison of the situation for white Zimbabweans and black

Zimbabweans living abroad is inevitable. Scholars relevant to this discussion are, among others, Mbiba (2012), Pasura (2012), Ndlovu (2010) and Forrest et al. (2013).

In the third section of this chapter I move towards nostalgia as an integral part of the displacement of these writers. They often write about 'Africa' when they are really talking about Zimbabwe, or some other country on the continent in particular, and I argue that this is partly an expression of the displacement the writers have experienced and the ensuing feeling of nostalgia. An important aspect of the discussion of nostalgia is the relationship to land and the surrounding landscape in which the writers lived and grew up. David McDermott Hughes (2010) writes about this relationship, what it meant for white people, and why they so heavily romanticized their natural surroundings. I interpret the way nature and 'Africa' are portrayed in the memoirs is the result of a displaced present. Thus this theme is a central part of the chapter. In particular, *Mukiwa* and *Crocodile* provide material for this discussion but other autobiographies will also feature. Godwin was never a farmer and neither were his parents, but Catherine Buckle and Ann Rothrock Beattie for example write about the loss of their farms in their respective memoirs. The discussion of nostalgia also ties into the importance of childhood memories, and the fact that childhood can only exist in our imaginations, an issue which has been discussed by Rubinstein (2001). Every adult is by default displaced from their childhood. These are important notions, and are especially relevant here because Godwin seems to move beyond nostalgia in his last memoir, *The Fear*, yet again setting it apart from the other two.

4.2 Exploring Diaspora, Displacement and Transnationalism

White Zimbabweans living outside Zimbabwe today, for example many of the writers, who have published their memoirs, are twice displaced because of their heritage. Their parents, or ancestors, moved to Rhodesia as settlers and their offspring have in many cases since left the country for different reasons. Godwin is also twice displaced in this regard, born to settler parents and forced to leave the country in his twenties. Such a starting place offers insights for a new perspective on concepts such as *diaspora* and

transnationalism, which have been the focus of numerous studies in the last fifteen years. One of the main questions has been the definition of diaspora; how could we move away from the traditional definition which refers to the Jewish diaspora and expand the concept to encompass the millions of people all over the world living in diasporas today, in very different situations and leading varied and complex lives? When does the concept become meaningless due to its broad use? The Zimbabwean diaspora has also been studied quite thoroughly, especially the one in Britain (cf. Mbiba, 2009; Pasura 2012; McGregor, 2010b). This experience is significant for Zimbabwe as a whole as well as for the receiving countries, but first and foremost its impact is felt by the individuals who have left. There are immense gaps between these diasporic experiences. On the one hand there is Godwin, a white professional with a successful life in the USA, and then on the other there are people like Shona (not her real name), interviewed by Radhika Sanghani for *The Telegraph* in December 2014 in one of Britain's immigration removal centres. Shona left Zimbabwe in 2008 and lived for several years in Britain but never gained legal status despite applying for asylum and was eventually brought to the removal centre. Their experiences could hardly be any more different. Thus this chapter will also look at Zimbabwean migration and its many forms, with special focus on white migration.

Transnationalism and *transmigrancy* are two other central concepts that have been studied by, among others, Basch et al. (1994), Dutt-Ballerstadt (2010), Faist (2010) and Levitt (2001). Many scholars also attempt to distinguish between diaspora and transnationalism. All of these terms have to do with the relationship between home country and receiving country, and in Godwin's case it is not a straightforward relationship as he left Zimbabwe as an exile and later returned as a visitor, and when finishing his last memoir *The Fear* he no longer had any family living in Zimbabwe and returned mainly for professional purposes. Thus there is a significant change and development throughout his writing, both in terms of his own status as well as in terms of what he chooses to write about and how. Is it completely arbitrary whether he would call himself diasporan, an immigrant, or a transmigrant? Most labels carry some kind of connotations, either with regard to politics or privileges or both. Godwin is a migrant who has settled in New York, but his transnational experience is complicated by the fact that he does not express any strong desire to return permanently to Zimbabwe. Despite his words about tearing up the return ticket and staying, he does not.

Therefore a discussion of diaspora, transnationalism and what it means to be displaced remain relevant for him. Godwin's memoirs and the tangled and confused position they describe are excellent for a revision of these concepts.

4.2.1 Diaspora and Displacement

He bids the assembly raise their glasses to absent friends and then, as the sun dips behind the green hills of Africa, a young farmer walks slowly out along the jetty over the golden lake, tartan bagpipes under his arm, and pipes them out. Pipes them away into their diaspora, to Britain, to Australia, to Canada, to America, and points beyond.

(*Crocodile*, 199)

When Godwin refers to diasporas or discusses them in any way, he sometimes includes and sometimes excludes himself. The passage above clearly indicates that at least farmers, those displaced by the land reform, have become members of diasporas in the countries listed. The reference to "the green hills of Africa" and the young farmer playing tartan bagpipes imply nostalgia to a significant extent and act as symbols for something irrevocably lost. *Green Hills of Africa* is also the title of a nonfictional work, or memoir, by Ernest Hemingway (1935) that describes a safari in East Africa in which Hemingway and his wife participated. Perhaps the reference by Godwin is unintentional, but it is of some relevance that Godwin chose to use this phrase in a passage that describes the "demise" of white farmers in Zimbabwe (*Crocodile*, 198-199). "Green hills of Africa" captures the nostalgia, the romantic relationship to nature and the land, as well as a view of 'Africa' as the promised continent. The passage also echoes some of the anger previously discussed, but here it is no longer only about losing the land but about leaving Zimbabwe for good, for reasons that originate from a colonial past.

Godwin's sympathies with white farmers have already been established, but he makes another direct reference to diasporas, this time partly referring to himself as well.

And the only solace I can find in all of it is that Jain has been spared the intervening tragedy in which we are all now embroiled, the needless moral and physical debasement of this place we used to call home. She has been

spared the scattering of so many of its sons and daughters in a far-flung diaspora from which each passing day makes a return less likely.

(*Crocodile*, 259)

“This place we used to call home” is a significant phrase, as it emphasizes how white Zimbabweans, or perhaps all Zimbabweans, have been forced to leave their country. According to Godwin, the “sons and daughters” who have left and formed diasporas across the world have no intentions of returning, which suggests a more traditional approach to the diaspora concept. Robin Cohen has attempted to define *diaspora* in his work *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (2008). Cohen (2008, 2) observes that scholars have found it difficult to distinguish between forced and voluntary migration, and says that phenomena such as “over-population, land hunger, poverty or a generally unsympathetic political environment” are radically different from other, more violent, forms of outside pressure. This emphasis is on victim diasporas, which, according to Cohen (2008, 3-4), have been the “prototypical diasporas”. Here he refers, for example, to the African slave trade and Jews in Babylon. “Land hunger”, “poverty” and an “unsympathetic political environment” are certainly true for Zimbabweans who have left the country. Cohen (2008, 2) also mentions “being expelled by a tyrannical leader” as an example of an event so brutal that it can “compel emigration or flight”. Mugabe as that tyrannical leader is not far-fetched, and Godwin was expelled by a corrupt and dictatorial regime. In a Zimbabwean context, both black and white, the distinction between voluntary and forced migration is definitely difficult to make. The voluntary decision to migrate can be made due to circumstances that practically leave no other option.

Godwin’s memoirs, as well as those by other white Zimbabwean writers, participate in creating a network of people with similar experiences and a shared need to document their lives. I argue that this network is diasporic due to certain homogeneity among its writers and purposes. In relation to Zimbabweans living in diasporas, JoAnn McGregor (2010a, 10) concludes that “[a]t its most straightforward, the term ‘diaspora’ has been invoked in this extension of the Zimbabwean social and political field beyond national borders simply to mean Zimbabweans outside the country’s borders”. This is a broad approach to the concept, but some considerations need to be taken into account: “[t]he idea of diaspora is broader than that of exile, as the latter forefronts the act of banishment whereas the notion of diaspora can invoke a

degree of choice” (McGregor 2010a, 11). She also discusses *diasporan* as opposed to *migrant*.

To be ‘diasporan’, in contrast, is honourable, implies a certain level of consumption and education, and a familiarity with technologies such as the internet and mobile phones. It implies responsibilities and obligations, both towards family and dependents, but also in the political sphere through civic engagements to extend the boundaries of political community both *in situ* and at home.

(McGregor 2010a, 12)

This is a very relevant observation; living in a diaspora can thus be something quite positive and empowering. Here it is essential to remember Godwin’s own words from the interview with Gross at NPR and in *Wild at Heart*, where he stated that it is advantageous for a writer not to belong anywhere in particular. In that way he has become empowered too through his diasporic existence. However, *exile* and *diaspora* do not exclude each other. Exiled people can be part of diasporas in their new home countries, and the difference lies merely in the reasons behind the banishment or voluntary migration. That gives the formation of diasporas a rather personal dimension.

The essay “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” (1990) by Stuart Hall has been foundational for contemporary diaspora studies, and Hall explains what a diaspora identity is: “[d]iaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Hall 1990, 235). Godwin’s memoirs would thus be an example of producing and reproducing such identities, going from relief about getting away from Rhodesia and the war in *Mukiwa* (cf. p. 308) to resentment on behalf of white farmers forced out of the country in *Crocodile* (cf. p. 161-161, 180-181), and eventually towards a self-detached approach which gives space for other voices to be heard in *The Fear*, for example that of Dr Godfrey Mungwadzi who treated victims hurt by the political violence and even ran in elections as an independent candidate, placing himself in a precarious position. “[Central Intelligence Organization] agents came to my house the next day... ‘I didn’t understand what I’d done wrong. I didn’t understand why this country could be so much theirs, and not mine” (*The Fear*, 271). The development is quite pronounced here and supports Hall’s notion that diaspora identities are not stagnant. How could they even be, as they emerge from change and transition and are transformational in their very nature.

The role of diasporas in literature is also a contested one. Gina Wisker (2007, 28), for instance, writes the following in her work *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Literature*: “[d]iasporan and migrant writers reflect on, record, imagine beyond and articulate newly changed, merged, differently focused perspectives on their adoptive cultures, and on their position as writers with multiple roots in the history of several cultures”. Later she concludes that “[d]iaspora suggests a space between two places, emphasising belonging to two cultures, feeling some gap in between, a gap into which you might fall culturally” (Wisker 2007, 98). This gap, the space between two places, suggests confusion and even discomfort at belonging neither here nor there. But Wisker’s words above on diasporic writers manifest a kind of hopefulness. According to her, diasporic writers have a unique position from which they can view the adopted culture in a different way. Godwin certainly has the “multiple roots in the history of several cultures” that Wisker (2007) talks about. He and his fellow white Zimbabwean writers rarely occupy themselves with life in their adoptive countries in their writing, but focus on what has been lost. These definitions of diaspora are slightly more positive than Cohen’s, as he observes for the most part the traumatic and forced exile. The situation is naturally not the same for every Zimbabwean living outside Zimbabwe. Hence the term “Zimbabwean diaspora” suggests something common, an experience shared by every Zimbabwean living outside the country, just as McGregor observed. This is problematic as those experiences have been varied. The central problem with diaspora seems to be its general use and meaning; despite careful definitions it remains a concept that encompasses too many too different lives and realities.

Literature that connects to diasporas is another feature of the general discussion of the concept, and it also ties into politics a great deal. Wendy Walters (2005), among others, discusses diasporic literature in her work *At Home in Diaspora: Black International Writing* and explains that the focus of her book is on showing how diasporic writers use narratives to create, define and describe homes in diasporas (2005, x, xxiv). She also examines her primary material as something beyond the merely literary. “I intend this book to show how the articulation of diaspora identity in writing is more than a literary performance; it is, in fact, a political act” (2005, ix). These are also important notions for my study of memoirs. Walters further explains the link between narratives and politics, and says that “[d]istance, then, couples the longing of nostalgia with the liberty of critique. These entanglements and complications are fruitfully articulated in literary narratives” (Walters 2005,

viii-ix). This is exactly my reading as well of the Zimbabwean memoirs; several writers (and Godwin in particular) combine nostalgic memories and longing for Zimbabwe with a critique of the current regime. The political critique is an equally large driving force as the experience of loss and bereavement. Literature and politics remain intertwined in numerous ways, and many literary categories also emphasize the political dimension, for example literature written from postcolonial and feminist perspectives, which both attempt to analyse and expose hegemonies. Walters takes this discussion a bit further than Wisker above, and concludes that “displacement creates a distance that allows writers to encode critiques of their homelands, to construct new homelands, and to envision new communities” (2005, viii). This is another positive view of displacement and it is articulated here particularly with regard to writers. However, as will become clear in the discussion of transnationalism, this distance can sometimes be quite painful. Writing these narratives of displacement creates stability and home in diaspora, and to some extent they might do that for Godwin and his fellow writers as well. My interpretation is, however, that the autobiographical writing of these writers is specifically part of their legacy, a documentation of their lives in a country that meant so much for them and a way to write back at a regime they often see as the sole reason for their displacement. Godwin takes his writing a few steps further and goes beyond that need to document life (*Mukiwa*) and write back at the regime who displaced him (*Crocodile*) to something less self-involved and less autobiographical (*The Fear*).

A commonly recognized problem with the concept of *diaspora* is its widespread use, which I too find problematic. Thomas Faist (2010, 14) writes in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods* that diaspora has become “an all-purpose word” and that it is more relevant to study how the concept is being used. This is exactly what Cohen (2008, 18) also observes in his writing, and it is very relevant for my analysis of Godwin’s displacement. Faist (2010, 33) also says that “[d]iaspora and transnationalism pay more attention to agency and processes within global structures and thus are less prone to sweeping generalisations”. This is a crucial remark, as my thesis focuses on a genre of writers in a rather special situation. They are not the typical immigrants living in diasporic communities in the host country; they focus on remembering childhoods and also in this case on assessing and discussing the current political situation in Zimbabwe. Hall concludes that narratives of displacement give rise to “a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to ‘lost

origins” (Hall 1990, 236), and argues that this nostalgia is a common experience. “Who has not known, at this moment, the surge of an overwhelming nostalgia for lost origins, for times ‘past?’” (Hall 1990, 236).

This is exemplified in Godwin’s writing in several places. For example, Godwin explains in *Crocodile* where he had been living in the years before writing this second memoir. He speaks of the Drakensberg mountains in South Africa and how he used to come there on holiday as a boy, but also that he spent time there from 1986 to 1991 as a journalist and wrote about the last years of apartheid. During that time he was still unable to return to Zimbabwe. “Since then, I have been based in London, though I come back often to Africa, and I know in my bones that I will return here to live one day, that this is still my home” (*Crocodile*, 10). This chapter is dated 1996, which is the year *Mukiwa* was published. The longing for Zimbabwe is deep according to him, ingrained in his very bones. Therefore it is surprising to read about his life in New York and the intention to stay. In the chapter dated May 1998, Godwin writes that he had then been living for a year in New York with his partner Joanna, and that she was pregnant with their first child:

In order to be able to work in New York, I have also begun the lengthy process of applying for permanent residence in the US, a so-called green card, under the portentous category, ‘alien of exceptional talent’. For this I’m endeavouring to prove that I’m an invaluable cultural asset to America, which, as my father suggests, grinning, ‘might be a bit of a reach’.
(*Crocodile*, 41)

These passages from the very beginning of *Crocodile* seem to show that Godwin had left Zimbabwe and found himself a life elsewhere, and that he did not even have any immediate plans to return, despite the comment that “this is still my home”. He had thus definitely left Zimbabwe for good. “I know in my bones that I will return to live here one day” expresses something else, however, and the nostalgia clearly present in that short phrase is in stark contrast with the neutral, matter-of-fact and slightly sarcastic passage where Godwin explains that he is applying for permanent residence in the USA. The overwhelming nostalgia for “lost origins, for times past” is further analysed later in this chapter, as it is a central part of not only Godwin’s writing but this genre of autobiography at large.

The discussion of home surfaces again and again in Godwin’s writing. The passages cited here (*Crocodile*, 10, 60, 259) all mention home in one way or another. Interestingly enough, Godwin also talks of home in *Wild at Heart*

when referring to Africa as “the mother continent”: “[t]his is home. However far you may have strayed from it, between these covers at least, welcome home” (*Wild at Heart*, 13). It is an allusion to the origin of the human species, and for the reader who is unfamiliar with any other of Godwin’s writing, the passage probably means nothing more. However, having read his memoirs makes it impossible to ignore the personal aspect present here. Avtar Brah (1996) argues in his significant work *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* that “the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as the desire for a ‘homeland’” (Brah 1996, 180). That is true for Godwin as well, as he apparently has no desire to return to his homeland, but seems to express constant longing for a home in a more symbolic sense. Home here thus means something else than his place of birth. Brah also concludes that autobiographies can be useful when studying the politics of location (Brah 1996, 180). Godwin is in constant transit in his writing; in *Mukiwa*, he is finally able to leave the country after having served in the police forces during the war, and then he is expelled, a consequence which makes movement back and forth impossible. In *Crocodile* and *The Fear*, that movement forms the structure of the memoirs. Even the chapters in *Crocodile* are named according to Godwin’s travels. Location and dislocation remain central themes throughout his writing. Godwin’s negotiation of displacement, diaspora, the politics of Zimbabwe simultaneously seen both from the outside (as a person no longer living there) and the inside (as someone who grew up there and retains a strong bond) results in three memoirs that all attest to the same thing: autobiography can be a powerful and useful tool in the creation of diasporic identity. Displacement, or dislocation, transforms into something empowering and positive at least from a collective point of view. This identity remains painful and disruptive for individuals themselves.

4.2.2 Rhodesian/Zimbabwean Migration and Diaspora

When Godwin was expelled from Zimbabwe in the 1980s, he tried to forget about ‘Africa’, and even denied his nationality when people asked him where he was from (*Mukiwa*, 386). He returned many years later and visited his childhood home in Melsetter, which was later renamed Chimanimani

(Mukiwa, 405). There he realized that of the three hundred settlers who used to live there, only three remained, and he decided to visit two of these farmers, the Plunkets. Their farm had been attacked twice and on both occasions the Plunkets had been abroad in the UK and escaped the attacks (Mukiwa, 406-407). Godwin thought about the irony of this couple still living in Zimbabwe when so many others had left:

Here were the Plunkets, a pretty exotic species themselves, who had always returned to Britain for more than half of every year. Yet hundreds of the real settlers, the roots-down settlers, had fled. And the Plunkets were virtually the only ones to survive, the only ones to live on here in one of the most beautiful corners of Africa. [...] Still here after all of us had gone away.

(Mukiwa, 408)

The expressions “real settlers” and “roots-down settlers” are significant and imply that according to Godwin, the Plunkets were not as real and roots-down as others were, since they spent more than half of the year away from Zimbabwe. He also seems to put himself into this category of real settlers, which is given away by the “us” in the passage.

As I concluded in the previous chapter, the situation for whites in Rhodesia was often not very settled or stable. Josiah Brownell (2010, 2) speaks of “the transience of the white population” in his work *Collapse of Rhodesia: Population Demographics and the Politics of Race*. Brownell (2010, 2) explains further:

[T]he population trends of decreasing white birth rates, continued white transience, and a growing African population were all moving in a direction that weakened the settler state. This left Rhodesia’s white population, after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, as one of the most demographically fragile ruling ethnic castes in any polity anywhere in the world.

(Brownell 2010, 2)

This fragility and transience are clearly visible in Godwin’s writing in the passage above. The “real settlers” with their roots deep in the ground had fled; the very people who according to Godwin should have remained. There is clearly both envy and bitterness in this passage. That the Plunkets kept coming and going does perhaps not demonstrate that their roots were not

that deep after all, but it shows that they had the means to leave and come back, many times over just like Godwin himself, and also that their existence was a transnational one too, located in between two places.

In *Crocodile* as well, Godwin refers to the transient status of white Zimbabweans. He called his parents from New York after the vote for the new referendum which ZANU(PF) lost, and told them to consider leaving the country as things were getting more and more unsettled. His father told him that he was not a

[...] *soutpiel*. It's an Afrikaans word meaning 'salt penis', a term for us Anglo-Africans who, they say, have one foot in Africa and the other in Europe, causing our genitals to dangle in the ocean where they pickle in the brine of cultural confusion. *Soutpiels* are not 'real Africans'. We are the first to cut and run.

(*Crocodile*, 100)

The remark by Godwin's father about not being a *soutpiel* is significant, as he was European and had moved to Rhodesia as an adult. Godwin also adds that "people of all races are starting to leave" (*Crocodile*, 100). This chapter is dated June 2000, when the land reform had just begun previously that year and elections were also underway. The emphasis on "real" surfaces again in this passage, and pickling in "the brine of cultural confusion" is another of Godwin's vivid expressions. The division into *us* and *they* is present here as well. Another interesting term here is "Anglo-African", used by Godwin to define "us"; presumably people living in Africa with European origins. Could this be the answer to Coetzee's (1988) discussion of how to define people who are no longer European but not yet African? Is the answer this simple, and so subtly provided by Godwin himself?

The *Oxford English Dictionary* does not recognize such a term, but Mohamed Adhikari has discussed it in the introduction to the work *Burdened By Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa* in the context of people of racially mixed origin, who are often referred to as coloureds. "Today the term 'Anglo-African' is regarded as anachronistic" (Adhikari 2009, xvi). Christopher Lee discusses the use of the term in Nyasaland, which is now Malawi, and concludes that Anglo-African was preferred "over 'coloured' and 'half-caste'. Although all three were used, 'Anglo-African' had the advantage of emphasising their partial descent from colonists" (Lee 2009, 209). *Anglo* obviously refers to the Anglophone world, and that could explain Godwin's use of the term. 'Anglo-African' has been used in a slightly different context

in Jeremy Foster's work on whiteness in South Africa. He mentions that white soldiers in South Africa during the Second World War came into contact with British officers and soldiers, and that they emphasized their "Anglo-African identity, using South African cultural and verbal references, and idealizing the empty, hot, dusty landscapes of home" (Foster 2008, 43). Hence, the term has been applied to white Africans as well, at least historically. Godwin's use of the concept is a far cry from colonial meanings of the word in connection to people of mixed origins. Some parallels can also be drawn to 'Anglo-Indian', which has also had two distinct meanings: it could mean a person of British origin who had spent a considerable amount of time in India, or a person of mixed ancestry (Gorra, 1997). Caroline Lusin has analysed Anglo-Indian life writing in her article from 2013, using the term to describe British people living in India. Hence, it seems that Godwin's use of 'Anglo-African' may have derived from Anglo-Indian; at least it is used in a similar manner. McDermott Hughes (2010, 106-107) offers two other terms; "Euro-African" and "Euro-Zimbabwean", for white Zimbabweans of European descent. These different terms and concepts just go to show how difficult and contested the naming of a particular group of people can be, and emphasize the power dynamics that are important aspects of certain terms and labels.

In a Zimbabwean context, migration and diaspora are significant phenomena which have profoundly changed Zimbabwean society as well as the lives of large numbers of people. *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora* (2010) is a collection of articles on the displacement and diasporic experience of Zimbabweans today. In the introduction to the work, JoAnn McGregor (2010a) attempts a definition and clarification of this diasporic existence with special reference to Zimbabweans living abroad. She makes a very important observation about those who leave: "[t]hese migrants are drawn predominantly from Zimbabwe's elite and middle classes. They have been formed from those who could afford the long distance flights, and had the professional qualifications or contacts necessary to make the journey" (McGregor 2010a, 3). She does not refer only to white Zimbabweans but to all privileged citizens. It is of great importance to bear in mind the status of Godwin here. He was able to leave, and perhaps more importantly, he also had the means to return when he wished to do so, just like the Plunkets who, however, do not receive much of his sympathy. Other writers have also approached this matter of leaving in their writing. Alexandra Fuller observes the following in *Scribbling the Cat* (2004, 143-144): "How you see a country

depends on whether you are driving through it, or living in it. How you see a country depends on whether or not you can leave it, if you have to". This is an important observation, and contrasted to Godwin's comments about the Plunkets leaving and coming back, it is interesting that Godwin cannot see that his status is quite similar to theirs. However, Godwin was born in Zimbabwe whereas the Plunkets were settler farmers. Paradoxically enough, Godwin seems keen to defend white farmers but not the Plunkets, who do not spend enough time in the country to warrant deep roots. Godwin sees his own fate in the Plunkets, but refuses to acknowledge the similarities with his own status.

Graham Atkins (2008, 242) also discusses the possibility to leave in his memoir, and explains how he and his family prepared for Australia where they were emigrating. Having spent some time with his black gardener Michael on the day they were going to leave, he thought to himself:

I could catch a plane to Australia, and find a new job, and predictably survive, but none of that was possible for Michael. He and his family would have to face Zimbabwe's future at ground level, coming face to face with the gathering political storm that was sweeping across our land. What madness might engulf him? What would be the odds of his survival? I couldn't bear to contemplate it.

(Once Upon a White Man, 242)

Atkins's insight concerns his own position, which was radically different from that of his gardener. Atkins had the means to leave but his gardener apparently did not. However, it is quite patronizing and also quite colonial to think that "madness might engulf" his gardener and that he might not survive, or find a new job, without his former white boss. Michael could have had a perfectly good life after Atkins left, and the presumption that he was left alone unable to fend for himself is problematic. Facing problems at "ground level" also suggests that Michael is on a different level than Atkins himself, somewhere much lower. Buckle expresses something similar in her memoir, and writes about the responsibility she felt for her farmworkers who were left without jobs when her farm was occupied: "[t]hirty-four people had put their trust in me. Thirty-four people depended on me for a roof over their heads, clothes on their backs, food in their stomachs and I had betrayed them. I had let them down" (*Tears*, 197). Godwin felt a similar kind of guilt as these other writers, although it is expressed quite differently and more explicitly: "I feel the profound guilt of those who can escape" (*Crocodile*, 229). The long

distance flights, professional qualifications and contacts mentioned by McGregor (2010a) above are essential for the migration of Zimbabweans, and these are referred to in both Godwin and Fuller's writing. The conclusion, simply, is that some are able to escape and others are not. Dominic Pasura (2012, 146) writes in his article on Zimbabwean migration that three to four million Zimbabweans are estimated to be living abroad. It is thus certainly no marginal phenomenon.

African and Zimbabwean migration and diasporas have been the focus of many recent studies by African scholars in particular. Often a distinction is made between old diasporas relating to the slave trade and new diasporas which are a consequence of colonialism (Ifekwunigwe 2010, 315; Paul Tiyambe Zeleza 2009, 42-43). Zeleza (2009, 32-33) examines diaspora in a more general sense as well, and concludes that it is a broad and complicated term which refers to "a process, a condition, a space, and a discourse" and that it is "a state of being and a process of becoming" (Zeleza 2009, 32). This also refers to Coetzee's comment about white people in Africa being in that in-between space. Zeleza (2009, 33) addresses the problem of a generalized use of 'Africa' as well, where Africa can be both a material and an imagined place (Zeleza 2009, 34). In the case of Peter Godwin and his autobiographical writing, diaspora is certainly both a state of being and a process of becoming, as the memoirs so aptly demonstrate. His Africa, or 'Africa', is also both a material and an imagined place. The passage about the Plunkets mentions that they live in "one of the most beautiful corners of Africa", which should perhaps read "one of the most beautiful corners of Zimbabwe". Here Africa becomes an imagined place, a place to which the Plunkets have no claim according to Godwin. The perceived beauty of the place only highlights their lack of roots and right to the land, in his opinion. 'Africa' symbolizes simultaneously both that which is most familiar and that which is utterly foreign; and the Plunkets themselves are also both familiar and foreign to Godwin, as he refuses to see the transience of his own status. 'Africa' is his place of roots, yet it remains out of reach.

According to Robin Cohen (2008, 39), Africans and Jews have experienced similar historical events that have led to the creation of diasporas. "Servitude, forced migration, exile and the development of a return movement" are common features of both diasporic traditions (Cohen 2008, 39). Khalid Koser (2003), who has edited the book *New African Diasporas*, writes in the introduction that the more recent migration from the African continent to other parts of the world has created a number of new diasporas,

and this is what the book centres around. One of the main questions posed by Koser (2003, 3) is about the power of these diasporas, and he asks “to what extent [African diasporas] can be targeted on tackling some of the manifold problems that hound most of their countries of origins”. Koser (2003, 7) talks about the self-definition that Cohen (2008) mentions above, and he concludes that it is “just as legitimate a reason to describe a group as a diaspora as any other”. According to him, ‘diaspora’ does not evoke as many negative connotations as for example ‘refugee’ or ‘immigrant’ (Koser 2003, 7). He even goes as far as claiming that ‘diaspora’ is becoming a term equal to globalization in popularity and use. That supports my analysis that *diaspora* is a broad term, one which frequently ignores the personal experiences of displacement that went into its creation.

4.2.3 Transnationalism

Godwin’s trips between the USA and Zimbabwe in *Crocodile* in particular express a great deal of pain involved in the constant travelling back and forth. Several instances in the memoir are clear evidence of this: “I buckle myself into the seat of the South Africa Airways flight from JFK, and the screen lights up with the physical reality of my separation from Africa. Distance to destination: 7,969 miles. And then I still have to connect from Johannesburg up to Harare” (*Crocodile*, 202). This was in May 2003 when Godwin went to Zimbabwe to see his mother off to hospital and support her through the hip operation she badly needed. He helped her settle in at the hospital and tried to do what he could for his father who was managing on his own at home while his mother was away. The chapter ends with Godwin leaving his father at his mother’s bedside, and the care and worry for his parents is apparent:

And then, suddenly, I’m gone. It’s like the end of a macabre fairground ride. From my expense-account seat, I listen to the comforting tones of the British Airways captain wafting through the air-conditioned cabin. [...] And as we soar away into a crisp, cloudless sky, I feel the profound guilt of those who can escape. I am soaring away from my fragile, breathless father with his tentative hold on life. I’m soaring away from my mother, who still lies in her hospital bed surrounded by wounded demonstrators. [...] I am

abandoning my post. Like my father before me, I am rejecting my own identity. I am committing cultural treason.

(*Crocodile*, 229-230)

This passage is filled with guilt, guilt both regarding his parents and not being there for them, but also with regard to his own privileges which enable him to travel back and forth and to leave Zimbabwe for his life in New York. The last part of the passage hints at something else, however. “Abandoning my post”, “rejecting my own identity” and “committing cultural treason” are quite strong expressions. Instead of staying in Zimbabwe and working for democracy and supporting people engaging in the political opposition, instead of staying and caring for his parents, Godwin leaves, because he can. This act of leaving is in many regards a transnational act, emphasizing the two locations to which he belongs, and the pain involved in this status challenges the claim that being a member of a diaspora is empowering.

Transnationalism as a concept has been defined and discussed by a number of scholars (cf. Basch et al. 1994), and is altogether a relatively new term. Many scholars have also attempted to distinguish between diaspora and transnationalism, for example Thomas Faist (2010) and Dominic Pasura (2012). Linda Basch et al. (1994, 7) write the following in their work *Nations Unbound*:

We define ‘transnationalism’ as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. [...] Immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political – that span borders we call ‘transmigrants’. An essential element of transnationalism is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants’[sic] sustain in both home and host societies.

(Basch et al. 1994, 7)

This is an important definition, and one that has been cited in a number of much later articles (cf. Pasura 2012, Levitt 2001). Godwin’s multiple relationships have to do with family mainly, but they are also work-related as he travels back and forth between Southern Africa and New York on assignments. They are also political to some extent as he interviews white farmers who have lost their farms or are in the process of losing them (cf. *Crocodile*, 61, 63, 76, 78-86).

Godwin's restless present and painful transitions between USA and Zimbabwe are noteworthy. Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt (2010, 5) writes about transmigrants, a term she defines as follows:

A new kind of an intellectual migrating population has emerged where the migrant's several activities in life encompass both his/her past and present nations— where the past is never quite viewed as the past, and the present is always temporary, ambiguous, restless and suspended. Sociologists have begun to call these migrants “transmigrants” whose motions are circulatory rather than a linear backward and forward movement. Invariably, in order to maintain these haphazard circulatory movements between two or more nations, the migrants must travel, arrive and depart to and from their past nations into their present nations multiple times, under new visas granting them particular timeframes for legitimate stays within the foreign country.

(Dutt-Ballerstadt 2010, 5)

The “circulatory movements” Dutt-Ballerstadt refers to above are certainly accurate for Godwin as well. The following part is particularly interesting with regard to Godwin's displaced status: “the migrants must travel, arrive and depart to and from their past nations into their present nations multiple times, under new visas granting them particular timeframes for legitimate stays within the foreign country” (Dutt-Ballerstadt 2010, 5). The particular timeframes for Godwin's visits to Zimbabwe or Southern Africa have to do with his journalistic assignments that take him back to Africa and give him an excuse to visit his parents. *Crocodile* has several accounts of these travels (cf. p. 5, 41, 102, 153, 262). Bruneau (2010, 49) has also defined *transmigrant*, noting that: “[t]ransmigrants are far too dependent on their community of origin and on their host country to become as independent as people of the diaspora are”. This dependency and also ambivalence are present in Godwin's memoirs, as the passage above from *Crocodile* proves. Godwin's present in *Crocodile* is definitely “temporary, ambiguous, restless and suspended” as Dutt-Ballerstadt (2010, 5) suggested. Thus Godwin becomes something of a transmigrant in his writing, but the concept does overlap with *diasporan*.

More views on this circulatory movement have been presented by, among others, Peggy Levitt (2001). Her article on transnational migration examines transnational practices and movement across borders. She claims that “[m]ovement is not a prerequisite for engaging in transnational practices” (Levitt 2001, 198). The transnational practices she refers to have to do with

those who travel frequently, those who travel periodically and those who do not travel at all (Levitt 2001, 198). Thus, according to her, movement is not a necessary part of the transnational experience. This is an important notion, and quite opposed to the definitions of transmigrants above that emphasize the transitional experience and constant movement. *Transnationalism* is a broader concept, and Levitt (2001, 201-202) asserts that transnationalism is not the same as transnational migration. She argues that transnationalism “de-emphasizes the role of geography in the formation of identity and collectivity”. That is an interesting thought, as transnationalism strongly suggests relationships and ties between at least two different countries and thus geography would presumably be extremely central.

Transnationalism as I see it can be distinguished from transnational migrancy as a state of no real home, whereas a migrant has moved and is, despite the transnational activities, creating a new home for him- or herself in the receiving country. Thus transnationalism would suggest a lack of roots, but also something less permanent than diaspora. Michel Bruneau (2010, 49) writes that diaspora encompasses a stronger tie to the host country and sometimes even a break with the home country if it is no longer possible to return, and this leads to a firm rootedness in the host country. Transnational communities, on the other hand, do not experience any kind of break and do also not root themselves as firmly in the host country. Bruneau (2010, 49) also says that people living in diasporas “will try to set up their very own place, one that is redolent of their home place within the bosom of which their identity, that of their kinfolk, of their ancestors, has been formed. De-territorialisation goes with, or is followed by, re-territorialisation”. This does not happen to transnational people in constant transit between two or more countries. Obviously Godwin made New York his new base and lives there with his family, but the ongoing transitions between the USA and Zimbabwe made his present certainly very temporary and suspended, to confirm Dutt-Ballerstadt’s (2010) words.

In conclusion it can thus be said that diaspora is seen as more empowering by these scholars than some kind of transnational status, and in this regard Levitt’s words above about the lack of focus on geography in transnational migration makes sense. Diaspora is more set, both with regard to physical movement and to identity, whereas transnational migration is much more fluid. An example of this can be found in Godwin’s writing, when his mother had just told him about his father’s secret, that he was actually a Jew of Polish heritage and not British by birth as Godwin had believed all his life. Godwin

did not know what to do with this new information, or what it meant for himself personally. “And then I begin to wonder what this means for my own identity. I’m already muddled enough trying to work out where I fit in – between Africa, England and now America, where I’ve been living for four years. [...] What am I supposed to do now?” (*Crocodile*, 115). The question at the end of the passage is honest and pinpoints the confusion his father’s secret brought upon him, and how it further complicated his already “muddled” identity. A page later, Godwin writes about his “Anglo-African-Ashkenazi-American flesh” (*Crocodile*, 116). Suffice to say, he is not the only writer who has experienced such confusion.

Another example is found in Alexandra Fuller’s memoir *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness* (2011), where she writes about her mother’s Scottish heritage:

In spite of living all but a fraction of her life in Africa, Mum considers herself one million percent Highland Scottish, ethnically speaking. [...] I can see that Scotland is beautiful, or that parts of it are, but I don’t fall to my knees as soon as I land on the Isle of Skye or begin inhaling the peat. [...] ‘Which just goes to show you,’ Mum says. ‘You must have been swapped at birth. You’re missing that clan loyalty. Fidelity to family above else. Blood, blood, blood.’ To rub it in, she has started introducing me to people as ‘my *American* daughter.’ Then she leaves a meaningful pause to let my otherness, my overt over-there-ness sink in.

(*Cocktail Hour*, 16-17)

The passage is written with humour, but the same kind of confusion or “muddledness” is there as well as in Godwin’s writing. In the following pages, Fuller recounts her own process of becoming a naturalized American citizen, and it is a similar experience to Godwin’s attempt to get a green card. Fuller (*Cocktail Hour*, 18-19) remembers the questions she was asked and then writes that “I entered Scotland in the early autumn of 2002 as a foreigner. My brand-new blue American passport looked very flat and shiny, and as a consequence, a little counterfeit, as if I were a spy for hire, equipped with temporary documents” (*Cocktail Hour*, 18). This short passage gives away several things. Fuller uses the words “counterfeit” and “temporary documents” which quite rightly echo what both Levitt and Bruneau concluded above about the position of people living in transnational communities, and also Dutt-Ballerstadt’s comment about the present. There is no rootedness, Fuller does not feel properly Scottish, British or American

and there is no reference to her Africanness, implying perhaps that she does not feel she can make any claims on such an identity either.

Thomas Faist (2010, 9) for his part defines transnationalism as being, simultaneously, a both narrow and wide term, which can refer to individuals and their ties to several countries, or networks and groups that have activities across borders. Michel Bruneau (2010, 44) also defines transnationalism, and relates it to diaspora. He says that members of a transnational community wish to become citizens in their new country but also wish to keep the citizenship of the home country:

This double affiliation is not only a question of facility, but also a chosen way of life. However, there is no uprooting from the territory and society of origin, nor trauma, as in the case of diasporas. There is no strong desire to return, because transmigrants never actually leave their place of origin, with which they retain family and community ties that are greatly simplified thanks to the growth, regularity and safety of communications.

(Bruneau 2010, 44)

This is another complication with regard to Godwin's status. If a transnational existence is based on choice (here it should be noted what McGregor (2010a) said above about diaspora invoking a degree of choice) and not on trauma as diasporas traditionally have been, then Godwin can quite comfortably fit both definitions, which is another sign of the lack of clarity with regard to this concept. His original expulsion from Zimbabwe was involuntary and a matter of force, but he has since been able to travel back to Zimbabwe. Godwin was by every means an immigrant planning to stay when he moved to the USA in the 1990s. He also refers to himself as an immigrant in *Crocodile* (230): "I must become a real immigrant, positive, engaged, hopeful".

When looking at the dispersal of white Zimbabweans, their existence in Zimbabwe or Rhodesia was born out of migration to begin with. European settlers moved there during the colonial era, and many moved away at independence or later on during the political upheavals in the 2000s. Bruneau (2010, 47) comments on this historical legacy of diaspora, of its "sedimentation over time, often a long period of time", and concludes that diasporic communities "have been formed, over the course of time, by several waves of migration, each of which could have different or several causes at once" (Bruneau 2010, 47). Transnational communities on the other hand are much more recent and formed due to different reasons. The transnational or

diasporic status of the writers explored in this dissertation have a very ambivalent relationship to Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, on one hand romanticizing it and feeling belonging and ownership very strongly (cf. *Rainbow's End*, *African Tears*), and on the other hand leaving it voluntarily (*Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, *The Last Resort*). Both diaspora and transnationalism are complex terms with wide reaches, and while some scholars argue that diaspora is based on trauma and suggests a choice, others argue that the concepts of 'transnationalism' and 'transnational' migrants presuppose choice. The rootedness of people in a diaspora is, according to my reading above, stronger than that of transnational migrants. Diaspora also requires groups of people and networks, activities and communities whereas transnational migrants and their networks are different. They span borders and remain more individual whereas diasporans create new networks in the host country with other diasporans. However, as my reading of Godwin's memoirs showed, the personal dimension is crucial when defining diasporas. The concept remains too broad and all-encompassing for unambiguous application, and instead of just focusing on whether the person in question has left voluntarily or not, it must be remembered that sometimes voluntary departure is due to insurmountable difficulties in the country of origin.

The memoirs by the writers in focus become the diasporic network, also due to the fact that many of the writers seem to know each other, or at least know about each other and of the memoirs that have emerged. For example, *Twenty Chickens for a Saddle* by Robyn Scott has an *Acknowledgements* section where she thanks Peter Godwin and Judith Garfield Todd, another memoirist who is the daughter of Sir Garfield Todd who acted as Prime Minister of Rhodesia in the 1950s, for their encouragement (*Twenty Chickens*, 447). Philip Barclay also gives thanks to Judith Todd in his *Acknowledgments* (*Despair*, 230). Alexandra Fuller for her part mentions Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock as authors of a most useful work in the acknowledgements to *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness* (p. 271). This goes to show that there is some kind of contact between these writers, some of them seem to know each other personally and others have reviewed some of these memoirs. The central point is that a network, a kind of diasporic community, of white writers writing Zimbabwe from a personal perspective clearly exists. It is a diverse group of writers who have formed a network amongst themselves, but still homogenous enough to form a specific genre of its own. The reasons for their existence in and departure from Zimbabwe have varied greatly, and their commitment to the country also

varies in their texts. But they remain both diasporic and transnational, as does Godwin with his three memoirs. In the end, he is actually more diasporic than he is transnational. He no longer harbours any hope of a permanent return to Zimbabwe, making him an immigrant in the USA who is there to stay. The transnational activities also diminish as his father dies and his mother moves to London. His connection to Zimbabwe remains highly personal, but takes on a more professional dimension.

4.3 Zimbabwean Diaspora and Politics

The possibilities for people in diasporas to become political actors have already been acknowledged by Walters (2005), and Basch et al. (1994) came to the same conclusion. This is relevant with regard to Godwin. Koser (2008, 8) also makes some important observations. He discusses return migration and says that many never make a full circle because they are waiting for political change to happen in their homeland. This is an interesting remark in connection to Peter Godwin, as I argue that a lot of the motivation behind his writing has to do with exactly this, the possibility for political change at home and for making a personal contribution to it. The close of *The Fear*, Godwin's most explicitly political memoir, does, however, express a kind of defeat. His narrative begins with these bold words: "I am on my way home to Zimbabwe, to dance on Robert Mugabe's political grave" (*The Fear*, 5), but ends with the following words: "On my last day in Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe" (*The Fear*, 346), which is evidently an acknowledgement that the long-awaited change has not taken place. Zimbabwe has remained Mugabe's own, despite Godwin's hopes and efforts. During this last day Godwin visited therapy groups for torture survivors: "they sit in their circle of hard-back chairs with their newly issued *koki* pens and their pads of paper, trying to draw away their suffering, struggling to heal themselves, because no one else will" (*The Fear*, 349). Those are the very last words of the book: the hope and defiance at the beginning of the book seem to have receded into nothing and Zimbabweans are left to their own devices to make sense of their brutal experiences in a ravished country. Political change has not happened, and in that sense Godwin, and his memoirs, are left in suspense.

Many of these people living abroad have dedicated a great amount of their time and efforts to fighting the oppressive regime in Zimbabwe, and this is in

many ways much easier to do from the outside since Mugabe has clamped down on newspapers and radio stations (McGregor 2010a, 8-9). I strongly believe that this is part of Godwin's agenda as well, and it is echoed in Primorac's (2010) article. She concludes that "narratives of personal memory are used as a means of critiquing the dominant version of Zimbabwean nationalism" and directly refers to *Mukiwa* (Primorac, 2010, 211). A displaced perspective can thus be used as a political weapon as well. Writing from the outside can in this manner be even more productive than writing from within an oppressive regime. A similar interpretation is offered by Simon Turner (2008b), who has studied the Burundian diaspora and made several conclusions with regard to the use of the concept of transnationalism. He emphasizes the role of people in exile as political actors and their desire to claim political citizenship (Turner 2008b, 743). Regarding the term 'diaspora' he proposes that it be seen as an adjective or verb instead of as a noun (Turner 2008b, 746): "To be *diasporic* is to aspire to being part of a community centred on loss". That is an apt description of the writers analysed here as well, being part of a community often centred on loss. This loss not only creates nostalgia and longing; a desire for political citizenship also surfaces. He goes on to discuss the various meanings and functions of the Burundian diaspora in several countries, as well as to examine the relationship between homeland and diaspora. His conclusion is that because of such a varied diaspora, "from refugee camps to clandestine lives in Nairobi to doctors in Belgium", it is more useful to talk about it as a "transnational political field" (Turner 2008b, 759). That also supports my discussion of diaspora and its inevitable broadness.

By getting involved in politics in the homeland, from the diaspora, one can "claim political citizenship rights to the nation-state" (Turner 2008b, 760). This is the way I read Peter Godwin's writing as well, as an attempt to claim this political citizenship from abroad. Pasura (2012, 155) writes for his part that "members of the Zimbabwean diaspora have built networks of political activism across borders, with those in Britain, South Africa, the United States, and in the homeland engaging in robust debates on how to guide the country out of its political and economic crisis". All of this is exemplified in *The Fear* (p. 188):

In a small way, I am trying to draw attention to the Zimbabwean tragedy. I sit at my study desk writing up the tales of torture for a *Vanity Fair* magazine article, I appear on cable news shows, and speak to the White

House fellows in DC. I go on the public radio WNYC's Brian Lehrer Show with a Zimbabwean DJ, Chaka Ngwenya, who used to be a media personality back home with Georgina, but fled in 2000.

(*The Fear*, 188)

This is an explicit, and not very humble, list of all the things in which Godwin is engaged in order to shed light on the situation in Zimbabwe. His third memoir is also a product of this same kind of engagement and agenda. The political activities and aims could not be more obvious. This is a clear change in Godwin's writing and something that will be explored in more detail in the following chapter on literary journalism. *Mukiwa* with its disclaimers in the preface makes no claim of being political, and *Crocodile* is still mainly a family story with a significant political backdrop. Another writer who is very specific about the purpose of her memoir is Catherine Buckle. She writes in *African Tears* (2001, i) that "I wrote *African Tears* because I wanted all Zimbabweans, of all colours, to know what it was like on the other side of the farm fence. I wanted the world to know what this 'peaceful demonstration' was really all about, to see beyond the colour of my skin". Buckle has remained in Zimbabwe and is thus not writing from a diaspora, but the emphasis on politics is still there. Beacon Mbiba (2012, 239) concludes in his article that diasporic efforts have had an impact on the awareness of what goes on in Zimbabwe, stating that the ultimate goal is a change of regime.

In his other article from 2008, Turner (2008a, 1161) argues that the Burundian diaspora has made it the task of exiles and diasporans to address issues that could not have been addressed within the country, because of political oppression. "In other words, diasporic opinion and transnational engagement depend strongly on the political situation in the homeland and must be explored in relation to political reforms there" (Turner 2008a, 1161-1162). I strongly agree with this, and Godwin's writing is proof that this is the situation for Zimbabweans outside their homeland as well. It is from the "unimaginable and unspeakable" (Turner 2008a, 1162) that diasporas emerge:

[Diasporas] are not the result of transnational practices; nor are they 'dispersed seeds' or 'imagined communities'. They are connected to the nation by giving expression to its negativity, not simply in the sense of critique, but in the sense of non-being. Diaspora expresses the unspeakable void around which the nation revolves.

(Turner 2008a, 1178)

In the case of Zimbabwe, a state lacking democratic rule with a president who is well into his nineties and in his fourth decade as head of state (Fleming, 2014), this unspeakable void is deep enough. Mano and Willems (2010, 183) discuss Zimbabwean internet forums and state that internet “has often been celebrated as a medium which enables those subject to censorship to evade regimes of control”. This is exactly what Turner (2008a) concludes above about transnational engagement, that it addresses issues in the homeland that cannot be spoken of freely.

The titles of the books edited by Koser (*New African Diasporas*, 2003), McGregor and Primorac (*Zimbabwe’s New Diaspora*, 2010), and also *The New African Diaspora* (2009) edited by Okpewho and Nzegwu, suggest that we are dealing with a new twist of an ancient phenomenon. The emphasis is on something new within African and Zimbabwean diaspora, and that is something Godwin’s writing can hopefully help determine. One of the central issues has to do with diaspora politics, and the agenda of people working for change from abroad. In this sense the Zimbabwean memoirs are no exception. Godwin has also talked about the number of Zimbabweans leaving the country. In *Crocodile* (p. 230) he writes the following:

No one knows exactly how many of us have fled, because few of us emigrate officially. But the numbers are high – between one and two million, mostly black, energetic, educated, experienced people, the leadership cadre of a country – the Katyń cadre. And the irony is that from our exile, we, whom Mugabe has chased away, inadvertently contribute to his survival. The money we send home to our relatives, our hard-currency remittances (often multiplied by the black-market exchange rate), support millions of people in Zimbabwe, and help to defer the country’s continuously imminent collapse.

(*Crocodile*, 230)

Here he uses the word “us” and clearly refers to himself as well as one of the migrants who have left the country. “The Katyń cadre” is another reference to the Second World War, and the massacre of educated professionals in Katyń in Poland. Godwin speaks of exactly the same thing as Kaba (2009) and Ndlovu (2010) addressed above about educated Zimbabweans leaving the country. Their fate has been chronicled in fictional works as well, for example by Petina Gappah in her short story collection *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) and by Irene Sabatini in her novel *The Boy Next Door* (2010). Something else

of importance emerges in the passage from *Crocodile*. Godwin mentions remittances, the money sent home to Zimbabwe from the different communities abroad. This is an important feature of Zimbabwean migration and something I will address in the next section of this chapter.

When Godwin's mother was in hospital after her hip surgery, she received physiotherapy from a physical therapist called Sue Francis. Godwin's mother relied on Francis a great deal.

I walk [Sue Francis] outside, out of earshot, and tell her how much my mother has come to rely on her. Sue looks stricken and she takes a deep breath. 'I'm so sorry, but tomorrow's my last day at work,' she says. 'I'm emigrating to the UK.' Her eight-year-old son has managed to get a cricket scholarship at a public school in North Yorkshire, and her husband – a game ranger who has lost his job since the collapse of tourism – is going to be a groundsman there. Sue will work physio at the local hospital.

How strange is that? A whole family getting a lifeboat out of here on the back of an eight-year-old kid's talent with a cricket bat and ball.

(*Crocodile*, 219-220)

What is central here is that migration movements from Zimbabwe to other mainly Anglophone countries have been a massive event that has changed the lives of so many Zimbabweans. The unfairness about some being able to leave while others are not is expressed in this passage, and interestingly enough, it almost sounds as if Godwin is envious of the good fortunes of Sue Francis's family. Perhaps Godwin's sole intention is to refer to the absurdity of it all, and how arbitrary it is who is able to escape and who is not. Godwin's lack of enthusiasm with regard to the emigration of Sue Francis may also have to do with the fact that he is concerned for his mother. It is a selfish feeling in that sense, relating to Godwin's care for his mother. One more comment by Ifekwunigwe (2010) is central here. She writes that "[i]n Fortress Europe, borders remain permeable for the transnational flow of capital, commodities, and information but not people" (Ifekwunigwe 2010, 321). Getting out of the country on "the back of an eight-year-old kid's talent with a cricket bat and ball" is after all not available to everyone. This is privilege at its most straightforward.

The most central conclusions that emerge from this discussion have to do with recent African diasporas being a new phenomenon. In a Zimbabwean context that is certainly true, as the situation in the country in recent years has driven people to seek better fortunes elsewhere. The migration experience

has also concerned both white and black Zimbabweans alike, though the memoirs in focus here attest to a difference in possibilities and attitudes. Godwin's ambivalence is particularly visible here; he explicitly explains that he feels guilty because he can escape, but has no sympathies for the Plunkets as they spent more than half of the year in the UK away from the reality in Zimbabwe. They escaped the attacks on their farm, an experience many white farmers have had to endure. "Roots-down" remains a significant expression that conveys a lot about Godwin's views of himself and other whites in Zimbabwe. The brain drain and its effects on Zimbabwe is, according to Godwin and several scholars, difficult with regard to Zimbabwe's future, but as my discussion has shown, a political engagement from diasporas is sometimes more effective than working from within an oppressed regime.

Godwin's aim in his writing is to raise awareness, at least through *The Fear*, and his critique of Mugabe is outspoken. Koser (2003) claimed that many people living in these diasporas have no particular interest in working for less fortunate people and instead support the elite at home. In Godwin's case, the author moves towards more general sympathy regarding every Zimbabwean in his memoirs, and the outrage becomes less self-centred. Pasura (2012) even spoke of "networks of political activism" and of actively working for political change in the homeland. This is partly true for Godwin as well through *The Fear*. The memoir cannot be accused either of working only for the Zimbabwean elite, as the individuals Godwin met and interviewed were often completely ordinary people in the countryside or smaller towns. Migration and the return to the homeland has become a recurring theme in contemporary Zimbabwean literature and African literature as a whole. It is an extremely urgent theme at the moment, and the displaced or diasporic statuses of writers probably make the topic even more current. Thus I can conclude that this discussion is important, not just for my dissertation but for studies of contemporary world literature as a whole. In the following section I will go into more detail about various labels for migrants, other than that of the transmigrant, and the question of privilege and colour resurfaces here as well. The next section will also include a discussion of remittances and their role both for Godwin and his family as well as in a more collective context.

4.3.1 Remittances

The money we send home to our relatives, our hard-currency remittances (often multiplied by the black-market exchange rate), support millions of people in Zimbabwe, and help to defer the country's continuously imminent collapse.

(*Crocodile*, 230)

Remittances, the money or goods people send home from diasporas, is an important phenomenon that has emerged out of the migration movements across the world, and one which carries great significance both for the sender and the receiver, as well as for national economies at large. In this section I will briefly address the concept of remittances and how it is portrayed in Godwin's writing, and also how it connects to these migrants' lives. The passage from *Crocodile*; "our hard-currency remittances [...] support millions of people in Zimbabwe, and help to defer the country's continuously imminent collapse", suggests in no uncertain terms that these remittances are important and keep Zimbabwe from disintegrating completely. What role do scholars give these remittances, especially in a Southern African or Zimbabwean context? Are they as important as Godwin suggests, and if they are, what does this mean on a grander scale? Alice Bloch (2006, 2008) has, among others, studied remittances from Zimbabweans living abroad, and she argues that these economic transactions are a transnational activity (Bloch 2008, 287-288). In her study of 500 Zimbabweans living in the UK, she found out that "80 per cent of the respondents remitted money to Zimbabwe, most often to support family members" (Bloch 2008, 294). According to her, the main factors contributing to these remittances were "the presence of close family members, owning property or land, interest in returning to Zimbabwe to live in the future and interest in contributing to development" (Bloch 2008, 297). In the case of Godwin, the main reason for his remittances was the presence of close family members in Zimbabwe.

The sending and receiving of remittances suggests two separate phenomena: first of all, they are very personal transactions in the sense that people send money from diasporas to those who stayed behind, and secondly, they become political as the money enables people to buy goods and commodities, which supports national economies. Daniel Makina (2013, e149) concludes in his article on Zimbabwean remittance senders in South Africa that while the brain drain from Zimbabwe has seriously affected the

country, migration has also been beneficial in the sense that it has brought foreign currency into the country. But no one knows exactly how much money has been sent, as the channels have been mainly informal (Makina 2013, e149, e151). Tatenda Mukwedeya (2011, 118) writes that an estimate for these remittances is more than one billion US dollars per year. He also argues that one of the central uses for remittances has been healthcare (Mukwedeya 2011, 122), and that is particularly true for Godwin as well. I examined a few passages in the previous chapter about whiteness where he travelled around Johannesburg looking for a new drug for his father (*Crocodile*, 11) and finally managed to get hold of it and bring it across the border to Zimbabwe. A similar thing happened with his mother's hip prosthetic (*Crocodile*, 201) although she was able to locate one in Zimbabwe after all. Godwin also went shopping for his parents while visiting them (*Crocodile*, 207-208) and helped them acquire fuel which was expensive and hard to come by and had to be bought from a black market dealer:

I drive over and pay my US dollars and fill the tank of my car and drive back to my parents' house, and Isaac siphons the tank into the forty-four-gallon drum hidden in the back of the garage, and I repeat the journey several times until the drum is full to the brim, and the needle on the fuel gauge in the car is hard over to the right, as far as it can go.

(*Crocodile*, 222)

Godwin also brought various things over from the USA which were difficult to get hold of in Zimbabwe, especially things his father needed. "My main haul consists of various medications he needs that are impossible to get here. [...] The rest of the loot includes single-malt Scotch, a pair of nail clippers, a dozen books and printer cartridges my father has specifically requested" (*Crocodile*, 237).

Godwin's remittances were quite specific, but for a lot of people they often consisted of something as simple as food. Mukwedeya (2011, 122) writes that food remittances grew more common during the economic downturn in Zimbabwe and he writes that "eighty-seven per cent of respondents who had relatives in South Africa received remittances mainly in the form of goods". Mukwedeya (2011, 126) explains that households engaged in urban farming to support themselves and that this spread also to wealthier areas. This is also described in *Crocodile*, where Godwin's parents decided to turn the swimming pool into a fish farm: "I find [the gardener] on his knees planting reeds into the swimming pool, their roots encased in hessian sacks of earth. It

is the final stage of its conversion into a fish farm” (*Crocodile*, 111). This was due to an increase in the price of chemicals needed to keep the pool clean, and Godwin suggested he would pay for the chemicals and have them delivered to his parents every month. His parents refused to accept help, however, and decided to turn the pool into a fish farm anyway. His mother added that it was getting difficult to find fish in the shops and this would contribute to their diet (*Crocodile*, 60-61). Bloch (2006, 82) also discusses these remittances in kind and says that they have been a very common feature in Zimbabwe.

A more political take on these remittances is offered by Alejandro Portes (2009, 6) who argues in his article that there are two opposing views on migration. One of them is that out-migration supports sending countries through remittances, but the other side claims that migration “allows governments to escape their responsibilities by relying on migrant remittances” (Portes 2009, 6). Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera (2010, 320-321) conclude for their part that there is a “double irony” with regard to remittances in Zimbabwe. The huge numbers of people migrating from the country and responding to problems caused by the economic crisis have helped households survive through the worst of this crisis because of the remittances. Peter Godwin and the remittances he describes in *Crocodile* do not perhaps represent the typical Zimbabwean migrant sending money home to family members. Bloch (2008, 291) explains that only 12 of her respondents confirmed that they were monolingual English speakers (thus suggesting they were white). The large majority of the respondents spoke Shona. This implies that Godwin’s situation does not by any means represent the situation of the average Zimbabwean migrant in, say, South Africa or the UK. The remittances with which he provided his family were also less typical, consisting of more specific goods such as medicines and printer cartridges for his father or the pool chemicals he was willing to pay for. He does not mention in any of his memoirs that he had been sending money to his parents, it was merely a question of helping out when and where it was possible.

This “double irony” has been noted by others as well. Sarah Bracking and Lloyd Sachikonye (2009, 220-221) write the following:

Thus the economic crisis is being mitigated by this sector to some degree, and ironically, by Zimbabweans who have themselves exercised the “exit” option. However, the issue of sustainability of this support role in the

longer term remains a critical and open question, not least because of the tightening of conditions in the principal migrant receiving areas of South Africa and the United Kingdom, toward their Zimbabwean residents.

(Bracking and Sachikonye 2009, 219-220)

They are quite right that the situation is unstable in more than one way and subject to serious changes. Immigration to South Africa or the UK is no straightforward matter, and supporting family members at home through remittances does not necessarily work towards a better future of Zimbabwe. It is more about instant help and relief for those left at home. In Godwin's case as stated above it is different, but the help he offers his parents is still central to my discussion of his displacement. He is taking part in activities that are simultaneously part of a wider phenomenon of thousands, if not millions, of Zimbabweans and Africans living elsewhere today, as well as remaining a very personal transnational activity.

4.3.2 Black Immigrants, White Expats

So far, my analysis of displacement in Godwin's memoirs has shown that it is a multifaceted experience that includes both positive notions such as the possibility to have an impact on the situation in Zimbabwe, and negative ones such as a feeling of dislocation that permeates large parts of Godwin's writing. The terminology that emerges in this chapter has included central concepts that guide the discussion and study of migration, but labels for various groups of people within this migration movement are also relevant. Godwin himself has touched upon this subject as well, and he writes the following in *Crocodile*:

I know I must snap out of this. That I cannot live the life of an exile, a perpetual sojourner, feeling my past more emphatically than my present, carrying this sadness within me, this spiritual fracture, unspoken mostly, but always there, an insistent ache. I must become a real immigrant, positive, engaged, hopeful.

(*Crocodile*, 230)

Here he refers to himself in three different ways, calling himself an *exile*, a *sojourner* and finally *immigrant*. His distinction between the labels seems to stem from nostalgia, living in the past in the country he has left behind instead of focusing on the future in the country to which he has come. This is an important notion, especially with regard to the following section of this chapter where I will discuss nostalgia and belonging in more detail. It is a recurring theme in many of these memoirs. What Godwin clearly is getting at in the passage above is that he needs to become firmly rooted in the USA, and it also suggests that he really had no intentions of returning permanently to Zimbabwe. All that was left for him, as he seems to be implying, was a nostalgic longing for his childhood home. The word “real” resurfaces again in Godwin’s writing, suggesting that when defining himself as an immigrant, there is more permanence to his status. These labels clearly have different meanings for Godwin, and are also significant in other contexts.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word *expatriate* means “a person who lives in a foreign country” and “living in a foreign country esp. by choice”. Being in *exile*, on the other hand, means “a banished person; one compelled to live outside of his native home”. These two terms are almost opposites of each other, one suggesting choice and the other suggesting involuntariness. Godwin became a *persona non grata* in the mid-1980s, something he recounts in detail in *Mukiwa*. That experience certainly earns him the label *exile*, but he was allowed to return again in the 1990s and was no longer in exile. Sheila Croucher (2009) has published a book on American migrants in Mexico and she tackles the issue of terminology in her writing. She says that who we are is also based on who we are not (Croucher 2009, 139), which is interesting in relation to Godwin’s comment about what he does not want to be. Croucher (2009, 5) asks in the introduction to her book whether Americans living in Mexico should “be characterized as ‘immigrants,’ or something different: ‘expatriates,’ a ‘diaspora,’ ‘settlers,’ ‘sojourners,’ ‘legal or illegal aliens,’ ‘colonists?’”. Croucher’s argument is that none of these terms are actually neutral. She discussed the use of the term *immigrant* with her respondents, discovering in the process that few of them deemed it fit as a description of themselves and their position in Mexico. Croucher claims that *immigrant* suggests poverty and inferiority (Croucher 2009, 18). Her following question is certainly important for Godwin as well:

What does the choice of terminology, when used self-referentially, convey about an individual’s sense of cultural and political belonging; and what do

commonplace uses of one term as opposed to another, whether by scholars, politicians, the media, or the actors involved, reveal about the workings of power and privilege?

(Croucher 2009, 18)

This suggests that both the terms used by people about themselves as well as those implied from the outside are relevant also for my discussion. Godwin's insistence on the label 'immigrant' for himself is a way of combating the negative connotations attached to it, being the white, privileged person he is and someone who has never had to go through rigorous asylum processes or enter the host country with fake papers or travel across borders in the back of a lorry. His statement thus becomes political as well. According to Croucher (2009, 19-20), there are typically a few factors which are used to distinguish between different groups of immigrants: "the intended permanence of the move, the motivation for it, and the degree of privilege that underlies it". Croucher (2009, 22-23) concludes that *expatriate* could be a more useful term for these Americans if an emphasis is put on privilege. She admits, however, that the term has become popular and is widely used in various contexts, with the consequence that its meaning loses clarity, just as happened with *diaspora*.

Gabriel Sheffer (2003, 16) has also discussed the various meanings of terms used to describe people no longer living in their home countries. His conclusion is that the distinctions between the words are unclear at best:

Nevertheless, the conceptual and definitional borderlines between individuals and groups of tourists, international immigrants, guest workers, asylum-seekers, and refugees, some of whom reside in host countries for extended periods, on the one hand, and members of permanent ethno-national diasporas, on the other, are still rather blurred.

(Sheffer 2003, 16)

I agree with Sheffer that these borders are certainly very blurred, as it is very difficult to ascertain who is permanently living elsewhere and who still plans to return home one day. Linda Basch et al. (1994, 4) have also discussed this problem with immigrants and what it means to migrate, and they conclude that "[t]he popular image of immigrant is one of people who have come to stay, having uprooted themselves from their old society in order to make for themselves a new home and adopt a new country to which they will plead allegiance". This seems to be exactly what Godwin means above when he says

that he needs to become “positive, engaged, hopeful”, and thus plead allegiance to his new home. But this is a popular view, just as Basch et al. emphasize, and Sheffer’s comment rightly emphasizes that the difficulty in distinguishing between these labels and groups of people is significant. The question arises as to whether labels are even needed, as they seem to remain vague and without proper distinctions. Calling Godwin a white Zimbabwean throughout this dissertation already labels him to quite a large extent. Adding immigrant or expatriate, transmigrant or transnational, diasporan or diasporic to that mix further puts him into certain categories. That is exactly why this discussion is relevant; not in order to once and for all decide how Godwin should be categorized, but in order to deconstruct already existing definitions that he himself has also used. Sheffer above also mentions ‘refugee’, a term which has featured frequently in the European press over recent years due to the crises in for example Syria and Iraq. Edwards (2016) has explained the term as opposed to migrant in an article for UNHCR as, according to him, migrants having the possibility to return home and “continue to receive the protection of their government”. ‘Refugee’ is thus a term officially bestowed upon people for whom asylum is an absolute necessity and it implies a certain status. ‘Migrant’ remains more vague and broad.

Another question that comes to mind in this context involves the labels and terms Godwin and his peers use for black Zimbabweans. I referred to a passage in *Mukiwa* (p. 245) in the previous chapter where Godwin was called a “regular fucking kaffir-lover” by his supervisor. In the same memoir he also explains the word *mukiwa*, which meant a wild fig of a pinkish colour, a word which was used by black people when they were referring to whites (*Mukiwa*, 128). He also mentions that whites were called *mabhunus*, a term first used for Afrikaners (*Mukiwa*, 110) and, later, employed as a derogatory word for all whites (*Mukiwa*, 277). Graham Atkins, too, reveals questionable attitudes with regard to terms for black Zimbabweans in his memoir. He calls them “terrorists” (cf. *Once Upon a White Man*, 47, 49, 56) when talking about the civil war and remembering his own days in the war. When citing himself he uses the word *gook* (p. 74) and later uses the same word outside the citations (p. 109) along with the word *gondie* (p. 105). If Atkins is hoping to reconstruct reality as it was for him and his fellow white soldiers in the 1970s, it remains doubtful that this revelling in the pejorative; his provision of an outright feast of derogatory terms, is the best way to do it. If these words are there for emphasis and authenticity, they do not work well rhetorically. Could

Atkins have described his military service without these terms, except for when he directly cites himself or someone else? Yes, he certainly could have. Alexandra Fuller has also used a similar kind of rhetoric in her memoir *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, but the reason for that is more straightforward than in Atkins's memoir. The child's voice Fuller employs in her memoir when describing the racist environment in which she grew up seems less offensive than Atkins's writing. Harris (2005, 109) has noted this in *Mukiwa* as well and explains that the "naïveté of the narrator puts him beyond reproach". This is also applicable to Fuller.

Fuller explains at the beginning of her book that white people in Rhodesia had different names for the civil war, which black Africans called *chimurenga*. For whites it was "the troubles', 'this bloody nonsense'" (*Dogs*, 25). She also lists the different names whites had for black Africans, for example *gondies*, *boogs*, *wogs* and *affies* (*Dogs*, 25). Her book is much more matter of fact than Atkins's and is deliberately written in a child's voice, the text being strewn with sarcastic comments much like Godwin's memoirs are. Fuller gives a brief account of Zimbabwe's history along with the uprising against colonizers at the end of the nineteenth century, the first *chimurenga*, and she is very sarcastic towards white settlers:

The welcome mat had only been out for a relative moment or two when the Africans realized a welcome mat was not what they needed for their European guests. When they saw that the Europeans were the kind of guests who slept with your wife, enslaved your children, and stole your cattle, they saw that they needed sharp spears and young men who knew how to use them.

(*Dogs*, 25)

Place names were also changed according to European pronunciation and spelling, another example of the arrogant attitude among settlers (*Dogs*, 26). Fuller ends the chapter with the following words: "how can we, who shed our ancestry the way a snake sheds skin in winter, hope to win against this history? We *mazungus*. We white Africans of shrugged-off English, Scottish, Dutch origin" (*Dogs*, 28). This question is echoed in McDermott Hughes' (2010, 73-74) writing:

In the 1990s, whites ignored warnings of a more thorough land reform. In 2000, when paramilitary bands occupied their land, farm owners reacted with shock and disbelief. Unprotected by the police and frequently

barricaded in their houses, they still felt that they *belonged*, as owners, on the highveld. How could they – indeed, how could any European-derived minority – develop such a resilient claim to extra-European territory?

(McDermott Hughes 2010, 73-74)

That is also one of the topics of the next section of this chapter, which focuses on nostalgia and belonging. McDermott Hughes places a significant emphasis on origins, on one's birth right to the land. Once again Godwin exemplifies the complexity of the situation: he was born in Zimbabwean but is part of this "European-derived minority". These are definitions and distinctions that only make his status more muddled and confusing.

What we call ourselves is not arbitrary, and as Croucher (2009) concluded, who we are is also based on who we are not. Godwin was an exile, and to some extent he has been an expatriate, but he really is an immigrant in the USA. He seems to acknowledge this himself as well, and it is not just about the term itself but what it means to him. The passage from *Crocodile* above about the need to start living more in the present and less in the past has everything to do with these labels as well. Basch et al. (1994) concluded that the popular view of immigrants is that they have come to stay, and that they build loyalty towards their new adoptive home. That is the case for Godwin as well, although I am inclined to agree with Sheffer (2003) who claimed that all these terms remain blurred and unclear. Just as with whiteness, it is not the term *per se* that is the problem, it is what we mean by it. Whites also had different derogatory names for black Africans, and were themselves called *mukiwas*, *mabhunus* and *mazungus* by the black population. This underlines the intricate position of whites in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe; they were of European origin most of the time but laid claims to Zimbabwe and its land. This discussion of different labels also emphasizes the *us* and *they*, distinguishing between people of different status and colour. Politics and privilege arise here as well as essential key factors.

The last part of this chapter turns to notions of home, belonging and nostalgia for Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. These topics have been analysed by a number of scholars and constitute a prominent feature of this genre of white Zimbabwean memoirs. My question is whether it is the present displaced status of the writers that has caused such a surge of nostalgia to come forward, or if these white Zimbabweans by default feel more nostalgic towards their childhood homes, as their parents arrived there as settlers, uprooting themselves from their places of origin. What is the place for these

writers now? Have they forfeited their right to belong in Zimbabwe and if they have, what does *home* mean to them? These are some of the questions I will look at. McDermott Hughes's question as to how they could develop such a claim to non-European territory is also relevant. The memoirs are a way to express all these emotions and claims, or a way for writers to officially announce that Zimbabwe is theirs no more. Godwin also goes beyond nostalgia in his writing.

4.4 Nostalgia and Belonging

In its simplest form, nostalgia can mean longing for a past, or a place in the past, which is no longer retrievable or relivable. Often that sense of nostalgia also makes the past seem more glorious than it was. Nostalgia is like a time capsule: it preserves certain carefully selected memories and objects from the past, and equally selectively ignores or remains oblivious to other memories. Memoirs and autobiographies enable nostalgia to come forth, in many shapes and forms. Nostalgia in Godwin's memoirs has already been mentioned previously in this chapter, and it remains a prominent feature in his writing. In *Crocodile* (p. 230), he noted that he needed to start living in the present and move away from the past, enabling himself to be more fully engaged in his life in the USA. Godwin, along with other Zimbabwean writers, has also been criticized for expressing such strong nostalgia in his memoirs (cf. Simoes da Silva, 2002; Pilosoff, 2012; McDermott Hughes, 2010). This discussion is a logical continuation of previous parts of the present chapter, as Hall (1990, 236) claimed that everyone has sometimes longed for "lost origins" or "times past", trivialising nostalgia and making it the everyday occurrence that it also is, affecting most people from time to time. Diaspora was also defined by Turner (2008b, 746) as a community of loss, making nostalgia an inherent part of diasporic communities. At the centre of this discussion is the nostalgia present in Godwin's memoirs and the ways in which he expresses it, and how it has been analysed by other critics. The question of who can be African or Zimbabwean also ties into this discussion. Who can belong?

An interesting starting point can be found in Ashleigh Harris's (2005, 103) chapter where she argues that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa encouraged people to engage in personal testimonies as a way of

healing the whole nation. This healing process also included a chance of redemption (Harris 2005, 104), especially for white people. Harris draws parallels to Zimbabwe, which has moved from its own style of rainbow nationhood after independence towards a politics in which whites are no longer welcome (Harris 2005, 105). According to Harris (2005, 108), whose primary material consists of Godwin's *Mukiwa* and Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, nostalgia in Zimbabwean childhood memoirs "allows the writer to imagine a space of political and racial innocence and naïveté; a prelapsarian [sic] state of unquestioned belonging as a white child in Zimbabwe or Rhodesia". The important point she makes here is that while these stories are personal to a large extent, they also make claims on Zimbabwe and its land through these memoirs.

It would appear that the narration of one's childhood experiences in a place that denies one's belonging, and offers no recourse to the discourses of reconciliation and redemption through which to articulate white identity, becomes a means to inscribe one's self into the historical, political, and geographical landscape of Zimbabwe.

(Harris 2005, 109)

This is a relevant point, and an important reminder that despite certain parallels between South African and Zimbabwean literature and political history, the two countries have gone their separate ways in recent years. These memoirs thus become almost the only way for white writers to reclaim Zimbabwe as home, if only as an imagined home as it once was according to their memories. However, even though this general point may be true particularly for *Mukiwa*, Godwin, and Fuller as well in her childhood memoir, edge away from this mode of writing and move towards something quite different in which there are no longer any claims on home and belonging in Zimbabwe.

David McDermott Hughes (2010, 2) seems to agree with Harris when he says that "[b]y writing and in writing, then, extra-European whites have forged senses of belonging more enduring and resilient than empire". He also explains why land and the environment became such a focus for white belonging. According to him, immigrants "negotiate their status from outsider to guest to peer" but whites refused to do so (McDermott Hughes 2010, 23). That is why they focused their energy on the environment, instead of making an effort to bond with their fellow Africans. Katja Uusihakala (2008, 5) writes that reflections about belonging to a certain place seem

“everywhere to be intensified when people are displaced from what they conceive of as their rightful place of belonging, their homeland”. She also concludes that this reminiscing and strong sense of community among ex-Rhodesians centred to a great deal on the past, and that this was necessary in order to uphold the sense of community. This has earned ex-Rhodesians the name “the *Whenwes*” (Uusihakala 2008, 6). Uusihakala conducted interviews with ex-Rhodesians living in South Africa for her study, and explains how she arrived in South Africa and was met at the airport by a white person who himself had moved there from Kenya. This man told her the following joke: “‘What’s the difference between a jumbo jet and an ex-Rhodesian?’ [...] ‘A jumbo jet stops whining when it lands’” (Uusihakala 2008, 6). Despite the blunt joke, the question as to how it relates to Godwin’s memoirs is a serious one. Are the memoirs by white Zimbabweans (or ex-Zimbabweans?) merely a way of continuing this “whining”, a final attempt to draw attention to the plight of this particular group of people? Uusihakala (2008, 7) also explains that the diaspora of Rhodesians in South Africa “is significantly a community of memory, a group constituted by retelling its story, bound together through socially remembering experiences in the past”. This is also true in many ways for the childhood memoirs by white Zimbabwean writers. They remember colonial childhoods in Rhodesia, childhoods which were by no means always happy and idyllic (cf. *Dogs*, *Rainbow’s End*, *Casting with a Fragile Thread*), but which all share the same experience of having grown up in a place that no longer exists and feeling at least partially displaced.

This feeling of displacement brings forth not just nostalgia but also homesickness, which is a perhaps more tangible and concrete emotion. It is a feeling present in Godwin’s writing as well. Roberta Rubinstein (2001, 4) writes in her work *Home Matters: Longing and Belonging, Nostalgia and Mourning in Women’s Fiction* the following:

While homesickness refers to a spatial/geographical separation, nostalgia more accurately refers to a temporal one. Even if one is able to return to the literal edifice where s/he grew up, one can never truly return to original home of childhood, since it exists mostly as a place in the imagination.

(Rubinstein 2001, 4)

This is true in two separate ways for Godwin and his peers. No one can revisit the places where one grew up, not even when one is physically present in the place in question. For Godwin this meant several places in Rhodesia, a country that no longer exists in the same form and manner. In the chapter on

whiteness, I referred to a passage from *The Fear* where Godwin and his sister Georgina visited one of their childhood homes during a trip to Zimbabwe, only to find it completely rundown and dilapidated (*The Fear*, 124). This nostalgia for a place and a time long lost also comes in more concrete forms. Godwin writes about a visit to London to see his sister Georgina and her daughter Xanthe who were living there, when he was *en route* to Zimbabwe. They had left Zimbabwe in 2001 because of the increasing threats against Georgina as she worked as an independent radio journalist (*Crocodile*, 118), and when Godwin visited them in 2003, Georgina complained about her homesickness.

As I check my ticket to Harare she bursts into tears. ‘It’s not bloody fair! I want to get on the plane with you and go home too,’ she sobs. ‘And I can’t. [...] I so miss my life in Africa. I just want it back.’ [...]

‘Xanthe will never know Africa the way we did,’ she weeps, and lowers her head into her hands. She is crying still when I leave for the airport.

(*Crocodile*, 233)

When their sister Jain was reburied in 2003, Godwin thought about how he was absent at her first funeral, not wanting to risk being arrested if he would have flown home to Zimbabwe. At this second burial it was Georgina who was the *persona non grata* and could not come home (*Crocodile*, 258). Rubinstein (2001, 4-5) concludes that “we are all – regardless of gender, homeland, or place of origin – exiles from childhood”. It is thus a complex situation for Godwin and his fellow displaced white Zimbabweans: they have all irrevocably left their childhoods behind, as we all must, but the feeling of loss and nostalgia is strengthened by the experience of displacement. Having been part of white Rhodesia and now longing for a place in majority-ruled Zimbabwe complicates it further.

Many of the memoirs contain photos and maps, all of which reinforce the nostalgic atmosphere. The maps in Godwin’s memoirs have already been briefly discussed, and as they act as a guide to the non-African reader, they become almost condescending. The assumption is that the Western reader is unfamiliar with Zimbabwe’s geography and history, and such a patronizing attitude is problematic as it reinforces the supposed divide between the West and other parts of the world. Other memoirs also have maps, for example those of Atkins and Scott, which both seem to have hand-drawn maps of Zimbabwe and Botswana respectively. Many of the stories are also similar to one another. Lauren St John writes about her family’s return to Rhodesia in

1975: “[o]ne year after moving to South Africa to start a new life, we were in a car crammed with possessions and we were barrelling once more into the indigo haze, into the thorny, blond bush, somewhere beyond which our next life was waiting” (*Rainbow’s End*, 9). This passage reinforces McDermott Hughes’s (2010) observation that Rhodesians often created stronger bonds to the nature than to people. A slightly different return to Rhodesia is described by Alexandra Fuller. Her parents had left the country after the death of her older brother Adrian, and Fuller herself was born in Glossop in England (*Dogs*, 33) where the family decided to stay but soon changed their mind:

When the rain came in the winter and as far as the eye could see a grey shroud hung over the hills, the adventure of England wore off. My parents were more broke than ever, but they were not going to rot to death under a dripping English sky. [...] Dad went ahead to Rhodesia by plane. Mum followed by ship with two dogs and two children. When the ship veered into the Cape of Good Hope, Mum caught the spicy, woody scent of Africa on the changing wind. She smelled the people: raw onions and salt, the smell of people who are not afraid to eat meat, and who smoke fish over open fires on the beach and who pound maize into meal and work out-of-doors. She held me up to face the earthy air, so that the fingers of warmth pushed back my black curls of hair, and her pale green eyes went clear-glassy.

‘Smell that,’ she whispered, ‘that’s home.’

(*Dogs*, 37-38)

This lengthy passage emphasizes the difference between grey, wet England and the scents of ‘Africa’. Just as in the passage above from Godwin’s memoir where Georgina complained she missed ‘Africa’, it is ‘Africa’ also in this passage. The passage from *Dogs* is also significant in other ways. ‘Africa’, in this case South Africa where the ship arrived and more specifically Cape Town, became a place of smells that evoked old memories and made her mother teary-eyed. Nostalgia is thus expressed here in a very physical way through different smells.

The problem with nostalgia is that it can blur one’s perceptions of a place as emotions take over. Above, the nostalgia is directed towards something quite abstract despite its seemingly concrete forms such as scents and smells: it was based on memories of Africa that had stayed with Fuller’s mother after they left the continent. With regard to the nostalgia of Godwin himself, or

people such as Fuller, Dutt-Ballerstadt (2010, 7) offers some interesting insights:

First, both longing for home and belonging in either a particular or multiple spaces is not an abstract phenomenon. It manifests itself physically as well as emotionally. Also, the images through which “home” is articulated and reconstituted are sensuous, material, place, time, and geographically specific. Secondly, both the act of scripting and the language with which the migrant subject writes about home, past or present, involves excavating the Unheimliche, the unhomely, the uncanny. (Dutt-Ballerstadt 2010, 7)

The notion of longing for home as a physical manifestation is essential. Fuller writes about her own returns to Zambia, where her parents moved when she was a teenager, after having left for university overseas. The text reveals the emotional dimension of longing for home:

I step off the plane in Lusaka and when that sweet, raw-onion, wood-smoke, acrid smell of Africa rushes into my face I want to weep for joy. The airport officials wave their guns at me, casually hostile, as we climb off the stale-breath, flooding-toilet-smelling plane into Africa’s hot breath, and I grin happily. I want to kiss the gun-swinging officials. I want to open my arms into the sweet familiarity of home. The incongruous, lawless, joyful, violent, upside-down, illogical certainty of Africa comes at me like a rolling rainstorm, until I am drenched with relief. (Dogs, 295-296)

A specific place, time and geographical reality are also significant in this passage. The smells emerge again, as well as “Africa’s hot breath”. “The sweet familiarity of home” reveals a deep sentimentality towards ‘Africa’, and the fact that the name of the continent is mentioned thrice in this short passage suggests that there is something more than simple homesickness at play here. Fuller appeals to the reader’s emotions by referring to certain stereotypes and emphasizing the “lawless”, “violent” and “illogical” nature of the continent. This is then contrasted to the “sweet familiarity of home” which leaves her “drenched with relief”. There are no comparisons to her life in Wyoming.

Godwin is less romantic and emotional when expressing his own homesickness and the joy of returning to Zimbabwe. He recounts a similar story to Fuller’s about landing at Harare airport, but in a different tone. On arrival, he describes the heavy rain and the leaking roof of the airport

terminal, and is asked by the official why he does not stay in Zimbabwe, which, according to the official, needs people like him (*Crocodile*, 60):

By people like you, he means white Zimbabweans. I shrug and feel half pleased, half ashamed. It always has this sweet-and-sour effect on me, this place. Even as it gets poorer, more ramshackle, more dangerous, its slide accentuated for me by my periodic overviews, snapshots separated by absence, I am tempted each time to tear up my return ticket and stay. For whether I like it or not, I am home.

(*Crocodile*, 60)

Godwin expresses his homesickness and wish to return for good to Zimbabwe, but in much less romantic and nostalgic terms than Fuller above. It is obvious that they both still feel very much rooted in Southern Africa, but Godwin's focus is also on the crumbling economy of Zimbabwe, a reality he does not overlook. Dutt-Ballerstad (2010, 7) makes another conclusion that is worth noting in this context. She writes the following: "What does it mean to belong to two or more places? Does one really belong to any of these spaces, or do they simply perform memories of belonging? Can one long for a place without having any sense of belonging to that particular place?" My conclusion with regard to Godwin, and Fuller as well, is that they do perform belonging to a large extent, and that it is extremely difficult if not impossible to belong to two or more places.

This became especially clear at the beginning of *Crocodile*, where Godwin explained how he was applying for a green card. Later on in the memoir he writes that he and his wife Joanna bought an apartment in New York:

As we begin the arduous task of making the apartment liveable, I teach part-time at Princeton, where I have been appointed for a semester as a visiting professor of journalism. Though my green card hasn't come through yet, I now have a temporary work permit. With two little boys, a new, ruined apartment and a temporary job, it is starting to feel like I am finally nesting.

(*Crocodile*, 164)

This phase in Godwin's immigrant experience was coming to a close. He had a family, owned his apartment and was making progress in his professional life. Still, the passage ends with him explaining how he still missed Africa and took every possible assignment just to be able to go back. Once again it is

relevant to return to the passage I cited earlier in this chapter where Godwin writes that he must become a real immigrant. He speaks of an “insistent ache” and a “spiritual fracture” when living more in the past than the present, when focusing more on Zimbabwe and his past there than his present in the USA (*Crocodile*, 230). This partly answers Dutt-Ballerstadt’s questions above. *Crocodile* is a manifestation of what it means to belong to two places or more; on the one hand, there is a real desire to belong in the new place, something which is not easy in the USA where you need to be an “alien of exceptional talent” (*Crocodile*, 41) in order to be allowed to stay and work, but an “insistent ache” due to the separation from the old place. It is in this space that nostalgia forms.

But Godwin is also aware of his childhood memories and the nostalgia they inspire. At the beginning of *Crocodile* he writes that he visited Chimanimani, a childhood home, with his girlfriend Joanna who later became his wife:

Chimani has supplied a seedbed of images in my memory that seem as fresh today as when they first sprouted in my childhood. [...] It was here, in the Biriwiri valley, that I used to play with the lepers at their colony. [...] Here where I padded around after Albert the Mozambican, our gardener, wrenching weeds out of the rich red African earth and tossing them into his big green wheelbarrow.

(*Crocodile*, 33-34)

There is nostalgia here, but it is mostly a revival of childhood memories from a place that was important to Godwin. The “rich red African soil” and the “big green wheelbarrow” make for powerful images and reinforce the general nostalgia of this particular memory. It is relevant, however, to note that he once again uses ‘Africa’ when he actually does not refer to the entire continent. Tony Simoes da Silva has studied these white memoirs and South African writing on several occasions and writes in his article on African childhoods that autobiographies about white African childhood often belong to two different frameworks: “nostalgic reminiscing and a coming to grips with brutal political contingencies” (Simoes da Silva 2002, 2). According to him, Fuller and Godwin definitely belong to the first group. He even says that *Dogs* “revisits the colonial imaginary archives of a love affair with Africa” (Simoes da Silva 2002, 5). This “love affair with Africa” is visible in Godwin’s writing as well, but I argue that their nostalgic longing for Africa ceases to exist towards their third (and fourth, in the case of Fuller) memoirs.

Comments such as this also raise the question as to whether they are not allowed to love 'Africa'. It is the colonial aspect that becomes highly problematic here; the fact that even if Rhodesia was a paradise for white children growing up, it was not nearly as idyllic for black Africans. Godwin, and other writers examined here, will not be met with the sympathy and colour-blindness they desire due to their privileges. The strong nostalgia in places is exactly what provokes readers and critics, and while they have their artistic freedom to express themselves in any way they see fit, passages such as the ones from *Crocodile* above have too strong a colonial dimension to be fully acknowledged and accepted.

This colonial nostalgia and "love affair" is particularly visible when it comes to the land and landscape. McDermott Hughes (2010, 73-74) asked earlier in this chapter how Europeans could become so attached to the land in Rhodesia when it was not theirs to begin with, and Ashleigh Harris (2005, 106) has also commented on this:

The identity of the 'exile' and the 'refugee' is one deeply entwined with the loss of land, or belonging in/on the land of one's nation of origin. This has allowed white Zimbabwean (ex)land owners to shed, along with their land, the identity of 'settler': in the past the marker of colonial occupation and oppression. Ironically then, in the loss of ownership of land the somewhat tenuous relationship between self and land implied by the word 'settler' is replaced by a seemingly authentic claim to the land as the place of origin.

(Harris 2005, 106)

This viewpoint is certainly very relevant for my discussion as well, and these definitions of exile and refugee are intriguing. Their attachment to land is in my opinion more symbolic than physical or concretely manifested, and in the case of Godwin, whose family never farmed, it is problematic. He became an exile for political reasons, not because his farm was taken away from him. What is more important here is that Harris seems to suggest something similar to McDermott Hughes. The loss of land among white farmers created a stronger bond to the land, land which had often been acquired during colonial times. That was however not always the case.

Catherine Buckle explains in her first memoir of the occupation of her farm that since 1977 the government had already tried to redistribute white-owned land. She also admits that white farmers remained too arrogant and were not willing enough to try to solve the situation. When she and her husband Ian bought their farm in 1990, they had applied for permission from

the government to do so, and were able to buy the farm as the government had no interest in it. They started planting and building it, “thinking it was ours forever” (*African Tears*: 11), which in hindsight was an unrealistic dream. A few pages later she writes very emotionally about the felling of trees by war vets, trees she and her husband had planted on the farm: “[t]he plantation was being raped: huge trees that I had intended to harvest this coming winter, were gone” (*African Tears*, 24). The nostalgia and apparent feeling of ownership is present here, and even more so in the following passage:

We both had a deep love for wild life and Zimbabwe’s beautiful countryside and with our farm we had managed to capture a tiny part of it. This little farm was going to be the legacy we would leave to our son. Ian had planted hundreds of indigenous trees. We had had reedbuck, duiker, steenbok and even kudu on the farm. The birds were exquisite, attracted by Ian’s wild fruit trees, and in a three-month period I had recorded over 100 species of birds in our garden. This little piece of our heaven was to be for Richard and it broke our hearts to think that we might lose it all for someone’s political survival.

(*African Tears*, 102)

Here Buckle seems to forget what she wrote at the beginning of her book about white farmers being partly to blame for the unresolved land question. It becomes once more a “love affair” with the landscape of Zimbabwe. Maurice Taonezvi Vambe has commented on the way nature has been viewed and says that “[v]iewing land as space for cultural and personal memory has in other cases led to romanticizing the environment and prevented from creatively using it in innovative ways that balance the ecosystem in order to benefit the communities involved” (Vambe 2013, 1-2). This is opposed to the view of nature as a commodity, and both are equally problematic. Buckle also writes how the farm was to be inherited by their son Richard, disregarding the completely skewed division of land in Zimbabwe. The romanticizing is clearly present in Buckle’s writing above, and also in Rothrock Beattie’s memoir.

Ann Rothrock Beattie is an American who moved to Zimbabwe in her mid-twenties to marry a Zimbabwean and live on his farm. From 2000 onwards, farms in their community were being occupied as well (*Tengwe*, 117), and when their farm was listed in the newspaper as one of those that would be appropriated, Rothrock Beattie writes: “I couldn’t help thinking ‘What have we done to deserve this?’ [...] I could not envision another life for

us. Where would we go and what would we do?" (*Tengwe*, 126-127). Just as Buckle expressed grief at not being able to hand over everything she and her husband had worked for to their son when the time would come, Rothrock Beattie also says that her husband Dave talked about "how he regretted that [their son] would not have the wonderful childhood he did and that he would not know his family's farm" (*Tengwe*, 144). The family relocated to USA, and bearing in mind that Rothrock Beattie was American by birth and had moved to Zimbabwe as an adult, it seems surprising that she asked where they could go and complained that she was unable to envision a different life for them. The relocation also proved very difficult: "[s]tarting over has meant living a completely different kind of life, one that places us in a lower and more humble lifestyle than before" (*Tengwe*, 149). Relocating from one continent to another with a small child would obviously be a major challenge for most people, but Rothrock's text suggests that the real difficulty lay in giving up her (white) privileges.

A more critical view is offered by Rory Pilosof (2012, 160), who has studied the same memoir. He concludes that "[f]or a recent arrival to adopt so fully aspects of the white farming discourse, as well as accepting a number of their founding mythologies, demonstrates how efficient this group is at disseminating its ideologies". Pilosof (2012, 178) also argues that the farm invasions caused a huge identity crisis for white Zimbabweans, because "the farms and properties they owned, and the 'Africa' of which they had felt such a part, had gone" (Pilosof 2012, 178). Godwin's sister Georgina expressed homesickness and grief at the thought of her daughter Xanthe not getting the same kind of African childhood they had, and this seems to be a recurring source of grief and nostalgia for several writers. They wanted their children to have a similar experience of the Zimbabwean paradise, to live with similar privileges, and when this was no longer possible in Zimbabwe, they felt nostalgic not just for their own part but on behalf of their children as well.

The experiences of white farmers are still different in this context to those of Godwin or Fuller, who never owned farms themselves and left Zimbabwe or Southern Africa on completely different terms. According to Harris above, *exile* and *refugee* are tied to losing the land, and such a resentment and bitterness, and grief most of all, is strongly present in Buckle and Rothrock Beattie's memoirs. They literally lost their land, land in which they had invested a lot of money and hard work. Godwin and Fuller left Zimbabwe for university, and Godwin later became a true exile as well. But their relationship to Zimbabwe evolves throughout their memoirs. The bitterness

recedes in Godwin's case, and the love affair with Africa is overcome by Fuller. *The Fear* is Godwin's proof of this, as it does not express feelings of nostalgia to any significant degree, and Godwin relates to Zimbabwe quite differently as can be seen in the examples cited in the previous chapter where he joked about living on the ground floor in Manhattan (*The Fear*, 189) and where his sister Georgina was taking dieting powders in a famine-stricken Zimbabwe (*The Fear*, 44-45). Fuller's proof of this development is her most recent memoir, *Leaving Before the Rains Come*, which was published in 2015. There she remembers a talk she gave in Dallas in 2010 about her Southern African childhood (*Leaving*, 63-64). Someone in the audience asked her whether she considered herself African:

I thought about explaining that identity is fluid; it is not only the colours of my skin, or my mother tongue, or where I was raised, or even a combination of all those things that makes me who I am. [...] I thought about explaining that, technically speaking, in terms of passports and birthrights, I had only ever been African in the loosest sense of the word and even then for only a fraction of my life. [...] The fact that I felt more at home in southern Africa than I did anywhere else on earth, and that I missed the countries of my youth with a physical ache, didn't make me a legitimate citizen of Zimbabwe or Zambia any more than an amputee's cruel sensation of a missing limb renders them whole again.

(*Leaving*, 64-66)

Fuller ends her discussion of belonging in Africa explaining that she wanted to say she was African but could not do so. She concludes that "I would never apply the label of African to myself again, and not only because it wasn't strictly correct (how can a person belong to a whole continent?), but also because it was something I would be called upon to defend endlessly" (*Leaving*, 67). This entire passage in the memoir is ambiguous, as it is clear Fuller would, to some extent, still like to claim the title African, and also to some extent sees herself entitled to it, but admits that it would cause too much controversy. She has resigned to outside pressure in this case, to some general and unspecific demands on what it means to be African. Privilege, and whiteness too, works against her.

It seems as if 'African' is a label many writers remain wary about, which became obvious also in the interview with Gappah earlier. Would Fuller rather call herself American? Would it be less controversial? The need for definitions is evident, but 'African' seems to come with a huge responsibility,

to be something that represents a variety of things. Fuller renounces her Africanness because she does not want to be forced to defend it endlessly, and while Godwin is not as explicit about it, it is clear that he does not want to call himself African either. With that they become fully uprooted, as immigrants in the USA but with no claims for the countries of their childhoods. In a way they belong nowhere, and remain wholly rootless and stateless, despite their white privileges. Perhaps this is the reason why both of them have published so many autobiographical works chronicling their African experiences in great detail, and even the lives of their parents, in order to create an anchor of sorts to which they can attach their memories, their feelings of homesickness and confused identities. The memoirs try to grasp and hold onto the 'Africa' they feel should have been theirs but of which they have had to let go. This ambiguity explains the confusion in *Crocodile* in a particularly clear way.

Nostalgia thus comes in many shapes and forms. Dennis Walder (2009) has analysed the term in his article on writing, representation and postcolonial nostalgia and concludes that nostalgia emerges out of the gap between the "present writing self and the past that self is trying to capture" (Walder 2009, 941). It is a gap that cannot be crossed, as Walder also acknowledges, and he says that it is not enough to just "recall the past, and turn it into a personal narrative" (Walder 2009, 938). He calls for responsibility for remembering and argues that nostalgia is often seen as "a distorted memory of the past that is morally questionable" (Walder 2009, 939). This is certainly true for the white Zimbabwean writers I have cited in this discussion. The responsibility Walder talks about is, according to him, about memory being shared and that the experiences of others need to be taken into account as well and not just ones' own (Walder 2009, 938-939), and I would conclude here that Godwin does attempt to write something of a collective and shared memory. He takes other people's experiences into account, especially in *Crocodile* and *The Fear*. That does in the end reduce the nostalgia, or at least Godwin no longer feels the need to explore it in his writing.

Fuller mentioned above not being a legitimate citizen in Zimbabwe or Zambia, and Godwin also writes about his endeavours to get a green card in USA. How important is citizenship for these writers? At the beginning of *Crocodile*, Godwin mentions a speech Mugabe gave after the results of the referendum about the new constitution had been made official and it was clear that the ruling party ZANU(PF) had lost. According to Godwin, Mugabe directed his fury at white Zimbabweans, who had "broken the

unspoken ethnic contract. We had tried to act like citizens, instead of expatriates, here on sufferance” (*Crocodile*, 57). Later on in a chapter called “February 2002” he writes about dual nationality being banned, a ruling which mainly affected white people. Godwin’s parents decided that his father, being a naturalized British person, would keep his British passport whereas his mother who was born British would give up hers and keep the Zimbabwean one (*Crocodile*, 159). In the end Godwin’s mother was forced to sign a document “which states that she turns her back on the Queen and any possibility of British nationality, that she is irrevocably African” (*Crocodile*, 160). Once again Godwin resorts to using ‘African’ instead of Zimbabwean, but despite this, the efforts by his parents to sort out their citizenships in accordance with the new laws remain farcical. To them it may have been merely a pragmatic question. They seem to have lacked nostalgia with regard to their citizenships; their future was strongly based in Zimbabwe even though Godwin’s mother would eventually leave the country. There is great irony in this. The gap between the present self and the self of the past is much wider for Godwin; hence the nostalgia is also more prominent.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Peter Godwin is a writer of many origins and a complex present. His experiences of migrating first to the UK to study, and later leaving Zimbabwe in a hurry under the threat of being arrested, are documented in detail in his memoirs. The memoirs reveal how tired and disappointed he was after his expulsion, and how utterly complicated and painful his present situation was in *Crocodile*, when trying to look after his parents. Godwin’s displacement from different periods in his life offered several insights for the discussion of concepts such as diaspora and transnationalism. The most significant finding was that *diaspora* in particular still remains too broad to capture his experiences and writing. The term carries a heavy historical burden, going back to Biblical times, and in an African context the slave trade is often seen as the original diasporic experience. Diaspora also signifies entitlement; as McGregor (2010a) suggested, it is more positive than exile, and Koser (2003) argued that it has less negative connotations than immigrant. In that sense, the slave trade is a poor example of historical diasporas. Today the situation is markedly different with millions of people having left Sub-Saharan Africa and

Zimbabwe for various reasons. Cohen (2008) put emphasis on the distinction between voluntary and forced removal from a home country, but I suggest that here we need to take personal stories into account. Godwin experienced both forced and voluntary departure from Zimbabwe, and interestingly enough, it seems to have been the latter that caused more pain.

The analysis in this chapter featured many other writers in addition to Godwin. Buckle and Rothrock Beattie focused on the land reform and the trauma of losing their property in their writing, whereas Fuller has published several memoirs just like Godwin, and displacement remains a central theme in them all. If diaspora in itself is too broad for proper clarification, then Turner's (2008b) idea that we should think of it in terms of an adjective or verb instead of noun is insightful. Whether Godwin lives in a diaspora is impossible to determine for many reasons; most of the critics cited here emphasized an involvement in the new community. Diaspora requires a network of people from the same place and in a similar situation. Diasporic, however, allows for a different definition and use of the term. One of the most important conclusions that arise in this chapter is that the writers analysed here form a kind of network, or writers' community, together. That network is diasporic in its nature. Despite the different experiences and backgrounds of the writers, they are still quite homogenous being of American or European origin and more often than not having left Zimbabwe within the last thirty years. Their memoirs have been published recently, during a period which has seen Zimbabwe's economy collapse and millions of its people leave the country. This period has been historically and politically significant. The memoirs, along with other Zimbabwean writing such as that of Petina Gappah and NoViolet Bulawayo among others, are the legacy of this period, a period largely defined by displacement.

The memoirs are not preoccupied with negotiating life in the new place, the host country. Most of the writers focus only marginally on their new diasporic lives, and when they do, it is often to contrast that existence towards the old which has been lost. As personal experiences of displacement, the memoirs are evidence of an often painful present. Godwin suffers greatly from the distance to his parents in *Crocodile*, and the inability to be in two places at the same time. It is a constant disappointment in himself and his limits. Whereas some of the other writers have merely written a tribute to what has been lost, for example Lauren St John and Wendy Kann, Godwin pulls himself through the pain of times past and lost origins (Hall, 1990), making his memoirs into more than just a tribute to something irretrievable.

From a collective point of view, diaspora and diasporic activities can be empowering. It is the personal perspective that contains the agony of displacement and which gives birth to nostalgia. Godwin eventually moves on from his personal perspective, the instances of nostalgia decrease significantly as his career progresses, and his third memoir becomes a markedly less personal, as well as more political, act. Many scholars have underlined the political dimension of activism in the diaspora, and another conclusion from that discussion is that working from the outside can in some cases be more useful than working from within. Sometimes activism from within is not even possible. The following chapter focuses on Godwin's journalistic approach in his writing, and the outsider/insider perspective remains relevant there as well.

From a point of view of privileges and political connotations, the discussion of various labels for immigrants is significant. Europe has seen waves of migrants travelling from the Middle East and North Africa in recent years, and it is a phenomenon which is likely to continue. The way in which these people are referred to reveals a lot about general attitudes towards migration and the reasons behind it. Godwin's position is ambiguous here as well; he is a transnational, diasporic writer and an immigrant to the USA. He has also been an exile, perhaps even an expatriate when he lived for a short while in South Africa. What Godwin should be called is less relevant here than what is meant by all these different labels. The fact remains that Godwin had the possibility to leave Zimbabwe, even when he was exiled, without having to risk his life crossing the border in some remote place, or putting himself at the mercy of smugglers. The discussion of labels also raises the questions as to what 'Rhodesian' means in this context. Uusihakala (2008) studied ex-Rhodesians in South Africa, people who were often called *whenwes* because of their preoccupation with the past and reluctance to let go of their Rhodesian identity. As the joke goes, a jumbo jet stops whining when it lands but a Rhodesian does not. For many, 'Rhodesian' is thus merely a state of mind. It has a historical dimension, a strongly colonial one, which is inextricably bound to a time when white settlers were in power and ruled the land in what is now Zimbabwe.

However, as Brownell (2008, 2010) concluded, this white population often remained loosely attached to the land and migrated to and from the colony in large numbers. That makes 'Rhodesian' a fascinating concept; it embodies the longing for times past and lost origins, to borrow the words of Stuart Hall once more (1990). It also demonstrates how much displacement has affected

this group of people. McDermott Hughes (2010) rightfully asked why white settlers in Rhodesia developed such a strong bond to the land, and critics such as Pilosof (2012) also raised similar questions when analysing, for example, Rothrock Beattie's memoir. Godwin's father made the controversial comparison between Jews in Poland and whites in Zimbabwe, which Godwin explained as a comment about the insecurity among whites in Zimbabwe. White settlers developed such a strong feeling of ownership of the land because of exactly this: a certain sense of displacement always coloured their existence in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Deep roots or no roots make no difference here, and, anyway, cannot be determined except on a personal level. Fear of losing their piece of paradise created a bond so strong that even the act of leaving Zimbabwe could not break it. Here is the core of what, for many, it means to be 'Rhodesian': it is an existence forged by displacement and moulded by privileges and fear, having always represented the interests and experiences of a relatively small and somewhat unstable minority.

Just as Rhodesia cannot be revisited anymore, except in people's memories, childhood can also not be recreated in a memoir. Godwin's writing explores displacement from a number of perspectives: there is the inevitable exile from childhood, a state of being which will never be relived again, and there is the physical reality of travelling between two continents. He has also been both forced out of the country as well as left voluntarily. Godwin's memoirs manifest both longing for a geographical as well as for a temporal place, as has been suggested by Rubinstein (2001). The use of 'Africa' instead of specifying the place in question is something Godwin also resorts to from time to time, and this is another indication of nostalgia and of the distance these writers now have to the places where they grew up. For although Rhodesia, or later Zimbabwe, is in many cases their unuttered referent, the insistent use of 'Africa' reveals both the physical as well as the psychological distance they have developed to their childhood homes. It is also a rhetorical device the purpose of which is to underline the difference between the writers' current lives and their African experiences. Africa and Zimbabwe, too, have to some extent become imagined places, only existing in memories. Godwin's memoirs negotiate the painful transition from the past to the present, from a painful preoccupation with lost origins to a more empowered use of his muddled identity and dislocated position. What emerges from this effort are new insights about the uses of *diaspora*; ways of seeing displacement as an inherent part of white Zimbabweanness; and last but not least the realisation that Godwin's parents were more rooted in Africa

than he himself ever was despite his having been born there. Civil war, forced exile and the growing dictatorship destroyed Godwin's possibilities of reclaiming Zimbabwe as home. Godwin's memoirs eventually show that the lack of belonging in one place can be eventually become a productive space; it did, after all, inspire his memoirs to come forth.

5. “I Am Bearing Witness to What Is Happening Here – To the Sustained Cruelty of It All”: Literary Journalism and Bearing Witness

5.1 Introduction

He is a big man with his head partly shaved to expose a violet-tintured wound tacked together by black nylon sutures. Both his arms are broken too, and one leg.

‘Who did this to you?’ I ask.

He looks at me as though I am an imbecile. ‘ZANU-PF,’ he says. ‘Mugabe’s people.’

(*The Fear*, 130)

Peter Godwin has worked as a professional journalist for most of his adult life. According to *Mukiwa*, he studied law and worked as a lawyer for a while before abandoning the profession and pursuing a career as a journalist instead. It was his first serious piece of journalistic work that got him expelled from Zimbabwe as well, and thus his professional activities are central in his otherwise often quite personal writing. The third of his memoirs, *The Fear*, also clearly exhibits journalistic ambitions and is largely composed around interviews with Zimbabweans, which makes it less of a traditional memoir. The personal perspective is present to a much lesser extent than in previous memoirs, and the focus here moves towards his professional life and achievements. *Crocodile* already shows these tendencies, which were to become dominant in *The Fear*, but the development between the two memoirs is apparent. Godwin has also published a number of articles in journals and magazines, many of which are also mentioned in his memoirs. The interviews he conducted for *The Fear* reveal a dictatorial regime at its absolute worst, as is shown in the passage above; the stories are graphic and published under the interviewees’ real names, with their permission. Several questions emerge as particularly important: what are the ethical considerations of reporting in this way? What is Godwin’s responsibility as a journalist, and what is his aim in *The Fear*? Godwin talks about bearing

witness, but what does the act of bearing witness entail? Last but not least, can *The Fear* work as reportage despite its personal dimension, which is more marginal than in previous memoirs, but still present to an extent?

The analysis here builds on my earlier discussions of whiteness and displacement in Godwin's writing, as Godwin's ability to observe events in Zimbabwe is largely due to the fact that he is an outsider, and has the means to travel back and forth between USA and Southern Africa as a professional journalist. I have discussed his privileges, the difficulty in managing life in two separate places, and argued that the memoirs form a diasporic network with links to other white Zimbabwean writers. This chapter takes the discussion further and beyond my previous conclusions. My focus here is on Godwin as an observer, Godwin as a journalist, perhaps even Godwin as a political activist, and the way he portrays people and events in Zimbabwe. In order to create a framework through which Godwin's journalistic ambitions can be examined, the field of literary journalism emerges as significant.

Contemporary literary journalism has developed in several phases ever since the Eighteenth century both in the UK and the USA, when writers such as Daniel Defoe published pieces of nonfiction with remarkable journalistic importance (cf. McKay, 2011) and later developed in an American context to signify writing that combined reportage with fictional narrative (Wolfe, 1973; Pauly, 2014). According to some critics (cf. Hartsock, 2011), literary journalism or literary reportage is also place-specific and strongly locational in character. The Anglo-American traditions have been essential for the development of this field, but the question remains as to whether literary journalism can become something more global and generalized. Godwin's writing can also offer new insights with regard to this framework. Literary journalism is still working to establish its boundaries and most studies so far have been exploratory and ground-breaking, trying to find a place for the field within journalism and literary studies (cf. Greenberg and Wheelwright, 2014; Bak, 2011). The discussion here evolves around contemporary literary journalism, and defining its borders while analysing Godwin's writing brings two contested literary phenomena together. In order to understand Godwin's position and the place he writes from, it is also important to have some insight into the situation of the press and media in Zimbabwe. Thus the first section includes a brief discussion of this as well. Censorship and oppression of the media have been features of Zimbabwean society ever since the colonial days. The impact on both the country as a whole as well as individual reporters and journalists has been great.

This chapter is entitled *Bearing Witness*, and the act of bearing witness is a significant one for journalists in war zones or other precarious situations where human lives are at risk. It is an expression that Godwin uses of himself too, and is at the centre of the third main part of this chapter. He visited hospitals and talked to victims of the political violence and chose to call his activities acts of bearing witness. Several critics and scholars address the journalists' responsibility towards readers and the subjects who have been interviewed or observed (cf. Mitchell, 2014; Tait, 2011; Peters, 2001). The question of truthfulness arises as well, a problem that plagues autobiographical writing too. Journalists reporting from for example war zones or conflicts around the world become authorities on the subject at hand, and literary journalism, which also has elements of the novel, can quite rightfully be contested in this way. Karin Samuel (2010) argues that a fictional novel can bear witness, her example relating to the genocide in Rwanda, broadening the definition a great deal. Norman Sims (2012) again discusses the delicate balance between objectivity and subjectivity, and all these notions remain very much relevant for my inquiry.

Critical voices also emerge, and Godwin's writing can be contrasted against, for example, *The Bookseller of Kabul* (2002), which is a piece of nonfiction by Norwegian writer and journalist Åsne Seierstad about an Afghan bookseller and his family, with whom she lived for several months. The book caused controversy when it was published and the family she lived with and wrote about felt they had been misled and falsely portrayed. Godwin's *The Fear* is obviously quite a different story as he does not focus on just one family, nor is he in any way critical towards the victims of the violence he meets. Seierstad's book is not just reportage but also a personal interpretation of what she saw and experienced, whereas Godwin does not supply much commentary when interviewing victims. He is also not the only journalist with a connection to Zimbabwe who has written about violent elections. Douglas Rogers covered the same period in 2008, and Andrew Meldrum wrote about earlier troubles at the beginning of the new millennium. Even though their approaches are slightly different, as I will demonstrate, such reporting takes a huge toll on journalists and this will also be briefly discussed in this chapter. Feinstein (2006) has written about post-traumatic disorder among journalists, and PTSD is also something Godwin himself refers to in *The Fear*, albeit somewhat sarcastically.

The chapter at hand tries to address a number of complicated questions as outlined in this introduction, and a thorough analysis of *The Fear* goes a long

way towards an understanding of literary journalism as a concept and genre. Godwin's place remains obscure to some extent, just as it has been in the previous chapters as well. In his memoirs, he is an outsider both in Zimbabwe and in the USA, emotionally and psychologically more than anything, and while the two previous chapters have focused a lot on this unstable position and constant movement between the countries, this third and last chapter is less about Godwin personally, his emotions and conflicting interests, and more about his writing and journalist-writer's persona. It is less about understanding Godwin through his writing, and the experiences of his fellow white Zimbabweans in a historical and political context, and more about the role his writing (particularly in *The Fear*) can play both for his readers, the subjects he interviews as well as for literary journalism itself.

5.2 Literary Journalism as a Theoretical Field

Long live literary journalism (whatever it may be)!

(Tulloch and Keeble 2012, 18)

The ever-changing world of journalism also encompasses the category *literary journalism*; a field of research which exists alongside journalism and literature and transforms according to these two disciplines. It is a field of study that has gained more attention in recent years, as is attested by the founding of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies (IALJS) in 2006, after the first international conference on literary journalism in Nancy, France. Accordingly, the present chapter aims at discussing this field of research in relation to Peter Godwin's third book *The Fear*. His work of nonfiction in all its complexities and the delicate balance between memoir and journalism makes it an intriguing piece of writing for such analysis. Conclusions can be made both about Godwin's professional activities and about contemporary literary journalism which is still working to define itself. A working definition of literary journalism is essential here as well in order to fully engage in this discussion, and also to look at how and where it has been used before and to what kind of writing it has been applied. Its origins will also be briefly explored, although the most relevant issue at hand in this study is what form and role it plays today. This section of the chapter begins with a

brief overview of literary journalism and its roots, and then moves on to discuss definitions and attempts at defining the concept by various scholars. The analysis of literary journalism, and journalism in other contexts as well, is strongly connected to readership and the literary marketplace. That is a central part of the exploration of Godwin's memoirs and in particular of any journalistic efforts detected in his writing.

5.2.1 Defining Literary Journalism

As I concluded above, the founding of IALJS has been a significant event for studies of literary journalism, and according to John S. Bak (2011, 3), the organisation “has promoted the definition of international literary journalism as journalism *as* literature, as opposed to journalism *about* literature”. From the outset, this reveals a desire to include literary journalism in the literary disciplines, and suggests that the boundary between literature and journalism can be, if not completely erased, at least blurred. Tulloch and Keeble's (2012) exclamation above refers to the ambiguity that surrounds this field, and the admirable enthusiasm among its leading critics. Two pioneering works emerge as central for the examination of contemporary literary journalism as a concept: *Literary Journalism across the Globe: Journalistic Traditions and Transnational Influences* (2011), edited by John S. Bak and Bill Reynolds, and *Global Literary Journalism: Exploring the Journalistic Imagination* (2012), edited by Richard Lance Keeble and John Tulloch. A theme that arises as significant in both volumes is literary journalism as a global phenomenon. Studies conducted in for example Slovenian, Finnish and Brazilian contexts feature as part of the global framework. This suggests that, as outlined in the two central works introduced here, literary journalism seems to remain quite place-specific. Place and location are important features when analysing such writing.

Global Literary Journalism: Exploring the Journalistic Imagination also contains an entire section exploring war reporting and even a chapter on a “war memoir” by Dexter Filkins (Maguire 2012, 253). Maguire writes that comparing Filkins's memoir with his newspaper articles “comes not from its potential for arriving at some true account of events but for its potential in revealing the hidden side of the writer's process” (Maguire 2012, 255). This process, later identified by Maguire as defined by ambiguity (Maguire 2012,

266), also justifies an examination of *The Fear* as literary journalism. Godwin's writing process is also characterized by ambiguity, balancing on the threshold between the personal and the political, the private and the public, as well as memoir and reportage. It adds to the discussion of literary journalism as a global phenomenon, emerging from varied settings and locations and negotiating sometimes extremely difficult circumstances both for writers themselves as well as the people they live with, interview or report about.

So far, as suggested above, one place to look for the origins of literary journalism is, according to critics, in the writings of Daniel Defoe (McKay 2011, 52) and Dickens (Wolfe 1973, 49). The field developed simultaneously in other places through genres such as the pamphlet in particular (Bak 2011, 11-12). Doug Underwood (2008, 2) writes in his work *Journalism and the Novel: Truth and Fiction, 1700-2000* that Defoe is one of the "earliest prototypes of the journalist-literary figure". He also points out that scholars today study the relationship between literature and journalism, but that in earlier times the differences between these two genres were not differentiated so rigidly (2008, 2-3). With regard to the American tradition, Karen Roggenkamp (2005) argues that *New Journalism* was originally coined by Matthew Arnold in 1887, and that this came about in a time when newspapers were increasingly trying to entertain their readers, a goal which was often achieved at the expense of accuracy (Roggenkamp 2005, xii-xiii). *New Journalism* was an approach to journalism that emphasized its relationship to the novel or short story (Hartsock 2011, 24) and it is part of the legacy on which contemporary literary journalism is built. This idea was presented by Tom Wolfe in his ground-breaking anthology *New Journalism* (1973) which aimed to define this creative approach to journalism. Wolfe writes:

What interested me was not simply the discovery that it was possible to write accurate non-fiction with techniques usually associated with novels and short stories. [...] It was the discovery that it was possible in non-fiction, in journalism, to use any literary device, from the traditional dialogisms of the essay to stream-of-consciousness, and to use many different kinds simultaneously, or within a relatively short space... to excite the reader both intellectually and emotionally.

(Wolfe 1973, 28)

Wolfe also reveals that this made it possible for journalism to raise its status instead of settling for “mere emulation of those aging giants, the novelists” (Wolfe 1973, 36). This highlights the literary qualities of journalistic work.

McKay discusses literariness in works of this genre, and remarks that it is all about “the dependence on character, the way the reader becomes engaged in a narrative” (McKay 2012, 183). Norman Sims (2012 209), for his part, argues that the term *literary* can be defined in three different ways. The first criterion is that the work is well written, a requirement which in itself obviously poses problems. My question is how we can distinguish between a well written and a poorly written piece of literary journalism, or any kind of literature. In terms of features such as readability, structure and the use of language, it is clear that some of the memoirs discussed in this thesis do not meet Sims’s first criterion. For example, Graham Atkins’s memoir *Once Upon a White Man* is disorganized, chapters do not follow each other in a logical fashion, and it contains banalities such as “war had helped us hone our ability to make the most of a bad time” (*Once Upon a White Man*, 170), or “hoping to catch my last shred of optimism before it danced mockingly out of the window, I took a deep breath” (*Once Upon a White Man*, 210). The writing is full of clichés such as these, and even Godwin falls prey to platitudes from time to time, in particular when referring to ‘Africa’. Godwin and Atkins are not easily compared, as Godwin writes for a living whereas Atkins reveals in his memoir that after the war he worked as a town planner (*Once Upon a White Man*, 163), and later with a Swedish aid project (*Once Upon a White Man*, 175), only to become a store manager in the 1990s (*Once Upon a White Man*, 195; 215).

The second criterion according to Sims (2012, 209) is that the ‘literary’ work has “symbolic elements that resonate with the reader or with the culture in which it is produced”. One such element in *The Fear* is when Godwin visited a diamond field which had not yet been taken over by the army, as others had been. Zimbabweans had swarmed the fields in hope of finding diamonds that could enable them to embark on a better life (*The Fear*, 245-255). Godwin met people who were running the syndicates that controlled the diggers. They thought Godwin was a buyer, and when he revealed that he was there only to observe, the crowd got very angry. Godwin managed to escape the threatening situation by mentioning the name of a politician he had recently visited in prison, someone the locals were very fond of. All this time Godwin had been holding a diamond in his hand, the diamond the illegal diggers wanted him to buy. “I unfurl my hand from around the

diamond, and offer it back to [one of the syndicate bosses]. There is blood on my palm from gripping the jagged stone so tight” (*The Fear*, 258-260). The symbolism is powerful, blood and diamonds in Sub-Saharan Africa are strongly connected to each other. These pages about the visit to the illegal diamond field are also symbolic with regard to poverty and disillusionment in Zimbabwe, and to the image of the white man as the perpetual exploiter.

The third feature suggested by Sims (2012, 209) is that the work is “a form of *personal expression* and connection for the author” (italics in original). Sims explains this as a form which bridges the gap between novels, which are normally expected to express their authors’ identities, and journalism, which has a strong emphasis on objectivity. According to Sims (2012, 209), most works of literary journalism meet the first two criteria and sometimes the third. In Godwin’s case the third feature is definitely present in his writing. Sims (2012, 209) also argues that literary journalism is used to describe works of nonfiction with “qualities such as immersion reporting, personal voice, elaborate structures, symbolism and accuracy”. Some of these I have already discussed above, but the term *immersion reporting* perhaps requires some further examination. McKay (2012, 186) calls *The Bookseller of Kabul* immersion reporting, and Hartsock (2011, 36) describes it as “immersion or saturation on the experience of others”. Nick Mulgrew, in an article on narrative journalism in South African writing (2014, 22), says that immersive writing has become more popular, and that “authors are increasingly focalizing the experience through their own cultural lenses, often attempting to mitigate any potential interpretative *faux pas* with a great deal of self-reflexivity, self-awareness, and self-censure”. Mulgrew concludes that the racial or cultural other is more and more written about and observed “through immersive, fundamentally journalistic techniques” (Mulgrew 2014, 22). Once again parallels can be drawn to Zimbabwe, although the situation there is obviously unique. Fiction certainly has its place in South African writing, but it is perhaps no coincidence that so many writers have also chosen to use the journalistic or autobiographical mode of writing alongside fiction (cf. Alan Paton, Antjie Krog, André Brink and J. M. Coetzee). Thus it may not be a coincidence that for example both Godwin and Fuller have not written any fiction about Zimbabwe to this day. Mulgrew (2014, 14) argues that “one may be able to identify nonfiction as the literary form that is most useful with regard to any attempts to negotiate the gaps of imagination left by apartheid” and he also raises the issue of representation which I have already discussed in a previous chapter.

The immersive technique is closely connected to the question of ethics, as has been noted by Greenberg and Wheelwright (2014, 512) as well. They describe such writing as a contract between the author and the reader, and also with the subjects of the work in question. I will discuss the ethics of literary journalism later on in this chapter, but it is a relevant remark that immersion requires a very sensitive and honest approach from the writer. Whether literary journalism, or narrative journalism as Mulgrew prefers to call it, is more useful in countries such as South Africa is another question entirely. I would not argue that Zimbabwe needs its autobiographies or works of literary journalism more than it needs its fiction. Writers such as Petina Gappah and NoViolet Bulawayo effectively address a multitude of issues in their works of fiction, perhaps even more effectively than Godwin, whose works might lose some of their argumentative force because of their strong personal perspective.

The question as to whether fictional literature or literary journalism is more useful for discussing and negotiating history and events in countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe is rather secondary. A more important question is what literary journalism can do, and what Godwin can achieve in a work like *The Fear*. Different literary genres should not be pitted against each other as their value cannot be measured in such a way. Sims's criteria for literary journalism also remain thin and quite generic. Taking account of the devices listed by Wolfe which journalists turned to when discovering the "techniques of realism" (Wolfe 1973, 46) is also relevant, as one of these is the third-person perspective which he argues is more useful than the first-person point of view. The most beneficial method of engaging with the subject, according to Wolfe (1973, 46-47), is the interview. Godwin uses first-person storytelling when talking about his travels, his activities and his thoughts in *The Fear*. But the interview is his most frequently used tool, which suggests that his approach when writing *The Fear* was to include both his own experiences as well as those of others. This makes the book a bit disjointed from time to time, but it is also effective. *The Fear* becomes the voice of one man and of so many others, exemplifying the "artistic excitement" Wolfe defined as the 'new' in *New Journalism* (Wolfe 1973, 37).

John J. Pauly (2014) has also written an article on New Journalism, and argues that the genre emerged from a struggle over interpretation within the journalistic profession (Pauly 2014, 597). There was a significant change in journalism, one that was based on a larger audience of educated readers, and the growing popularity of paperbacks, some of which were written by

journalists who based their stories (long-form journalism) on articles they had written before (Pauly 2014, 597). Pauly (2014) specifically discusses three magazines that featured texts which could be defined as New Journalism and concludes that they “challenged three conventional beliefs: that newspapers offered the best venue for serious reporting, that objectivity was the surest means to guarantee the cultural authority of a report, and that readers highly valued a dispassionate style of interpretation” (Pauly 2014, 598). This matter of interpretation became a central issue and according to Pauly (2014, 600), reporters thought about their own approaches to stories and magazine editors participated in this discussion by addressing choices of style and voice for example. What New Journalism did was to bring these issues to the surface, even though they were not new *per se*. Pauly’s conclusion is that New Journalism is significant because it “helps us understand the journalism profession’s struggle over interpretation as a permanent, institutional dilemma, not just a private quandary” and that the conditions within which a journalist works need to be taken into consideration as well when studying journalists’ ethical choices (Pauly 2014, 601). This is a relevant point and the situation in Zimbabwe has been of great significance for Godwin when he conducted his interviews. It also highlights the relevance of New Journalism to this day, despite having developed several decades ago.

These questions of interpretation and the journalist’s own voice within the story are significant. Voice and the role of the writer are also emphasized by Tulloch and Keeble (2012, 5), who argue that voice is tied to the eternal problem of trust and reliability. “A factor that disposes us to trust a particular voice is the sense that the writer is continually reaching out to other human beings, actively thinking, actively attending, using original expression” (Tulloch and Keeble 2012, 9). The voice and role of the journalist is something Godwin thought about in *The Fear*, as well as in his work reporting from Zimbabwe during the violent parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008. *The Fear* has been called “a kind of wartime diary” by reviewer Joshua Hammer in 2011. Hove (2014b, 98), for his part, defines it as an “apocalyptic drama” and as “advocacy journalism” (Hove 2014b, 102). Emily Witt (2011) speaks of the book as “long-form narrative”. These definitions all relate to literary journalism in one way or another, and as I have already discussed above, according to Norman Sims’s (2012) list of features required in literary journalism, *The Fear* seems to fit the descriptions at least to some extent. John S. Bak (2011, 1) argues the following:

[I]nternational literary journalism has established itself as one of the most significant and controversial forms of writing of the last century – significant because it often raises our sociopolitical awareness about a disenfranchised or underprivileged people; controversial because its emphasis on authorial voice jeopardizes our faith in its claims of accuracy.

(Bak 2011, 1)

These “disenfranchised and underprivileged people” he mentions are certainly present in *The Fear* as well. The claims regarding accuracy are strong indeed and are something many scholars have discussed. I will look at that more closely later on in this chapter.

Bak (2011, 18) also argues that literary journalism should not be called a genre, because that would put it somewhere between fiction and journalism, and it would make it a “subcategory of literature, alongside poetry and drama” (Bak 2011, 18). Making it a subcategory of nonfiction would, according to Bak (2011, 18), set it on “even ground with biography, travelogues, policy analysis, history, cultural studies, and memoirs, some of which can be literary journalism but are not by definition that alone”. Bak’s suggestion is that it should be called a discipline in order to avoid these problems of definition and make it a more independent field of study, one perhaps not always compared to other more established fields. Bak certainly has a point, and one may ask why we need another term for nonfiction such as *The Fear*, which I also label memoir in this dissertation. Definitions alone are not important; it is what we mean by them that matters. I argue that *The Fear* has a completely different scope than *Mukiwa* and *Crocodile* (something Witt, 2011, also points out), that it relates to literary journalism because of the task Godwin has undertaken. His reporting from Zimbabwe is more detached, or, to borrow the words of Witt (2011), “the least burdened with the past”. This is exemplified in *The Fear* on page 147, where Godwin describes safe houses where people could hide from the persecution. Another is a description of the Courtaulds, a wealthy couple who settled in Zimbabwe and built a castle-like home called La Rochelle (*The Fear*, 234-235). These are just a few examples of the detached and informative style often present in the book.

The development of New Journalism in the 1960s and 70s was also inspirational for what can be called contemporary literary journalism today. As a market force it has risen to compete with the novel for status, readership as well as literariness. The novelty of the field today lies in its global reach and has seen it move forward from a strictly Anglo-American context also from a

scholarly perspective. When defining literary journalism, I cited Jenny McKay (2012, 183) who wrote that the literariness in pieces of literary journalism has to do with how well the work and the narrative engage the reader. Literary journalism is thus more multidimensional than journalism, but still struggles with eternal demands on the reliable truth which journalism is expected to provide. Traditional literature, on the other hand, sometimes takes real events and turns them into fiction. We may then ask what the role of literary journalism really is: if journalism covers the need for facts, and fictional literature the need for pleasure and emotional engagement.

As is seen in *The Fear*, a combination of both can be useful. This chapter began with a passage where Godwin spoke to a person who had been badly injured. *The Fear* has plenty of such interviews, testifying to the journalistic approach. But there are also glimpses of Godwin's personal life and of the sarcasm he so skilfully uses when referring to himself or other people in his position. His mother, who was living in London when he was writing the book, was going to an interview conducted in order to assess whether she qualified for charitable help. She had been to such interviews previously but found them humiliating and the interrogators difficult to understand due to their accents. "I try to tease her about the irony of her returning to England from the Third World only to find that the Third World has followed her here. 'It's revenge for colonialism,' I laugh, but she finds it quite unfunny" (*The Fear*, 202). This is both the strength and the weakness of Godwin's writing, and what has also provoked critics: he retains a personal perspective, albeit to a much more marginal extent, but asserts his professionalism when travelling around Zimbabwe and interviewing torture victims. These overlaps make the definition of the field difficult in this context in particular, but rigid lines need not be drawn. Godwin's third memoir *The Fear* is an excellent example of the fluid borders and loosely defined categories of literature at large.

5.3 Peter Godwin as a Journalist

As we have seen, Peter Godwin was expelled from Zimbabwe in the mid-1980s because of his reporting from Matabeleland. He writes in detail about these events in *Mukiwa*, and also about the changes in media practices during the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. "The Rhodesia Broadcasting

Company was now the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, and it had gone from being the publicity arm of Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front to being the enthusiastic trumpeters for ZANU(PF) the new ruling party" (*Mukiwa*, 325). Thus it is obvious that media control existed long before Mugabe's rule, it just changed form and agenda. Godwin had graduated with a degree in law (*Mukiwa*, 327), and worked as a lawyer for a while before abandoning the profession, as stated in the first chapter. "I went back to writing my [doctoral] thesis, and in between time I took up freelance journalism to earn a living" (*Mukiwa*, 338). He began writing for a number of publications and also for radio stations, until he was approached by a woman who told him about something brutal and violent going on in Matabeleland and asked him to go there and report about it. "You must write about this thing in your newspapers, otherwise it will never stop until all of us are killed" (*Mukiwa*, 339-341). The woman's words in themselves were telling enough; she believed not only in Godwin's ability to write about the things that were happening but also in the power of "his" newspapers to make the events public and in their ability to somehow stop them. Godwin soon realized after travelling to Matabeleland that the killings and torture were planned and organized and not isolated incidents. James Muzondidya (2009, 179) writes that this operation was planned by the state to quell opposition in Matabeleland, and it was called *Gukurahundi* which meant 'the rain that sweeps away the chaff'. People were systematically abducted, tortured, raped and killed.

In Matabeleland, Godwin gathered notes during his travels while under disguise, and in this way explains how he had already filled one notebook with witness accounts "but many of the details I was collecting could not be used without compromising the identities of the witnesses and placing them in further danger" (*Mukiwa*, 357). Eventually he returned to Bulawayo and wrote down the experiences he had heard. "We tried to dilute my exposure by adding extra bylines and fudging the dateline, but it did little to divert the government's fury when the story broke" (*Mukiwa*, 372). The government arranged a trip to Matabeleland in order to prove that Godwin's accusations were false, and they forced Godwin to go with them. In the meantime, government forces had threatened people in the area not to speak to journalists (*Mukiwa*, 374-375). The government thus tried to undermine Godwin's story, and threatened him with prison. A few days after the trip Godwin was doing some shopping at a mall when he was approached by a man who was on the arrest detail which had been ordered to pick him up the

following day and put him in jail for spying. The man told him to get out of the country immediately, and Godwin decided to leave for a few weeks until everything calmed down (*Mukiwa*, 382-383):

It didn't blow over and I wasn't back soon. [...] In parliament, a few days later, the Minister of Home Affairs made a statement about Matabeleland, while introducing a motion to extend the state of emergency. Reports of widespread atrocities by Zimbabwean security forces against civilians there were the result of an orchestrated propaganda campaign by the British press, he said. [...] And then he revealed some dramatic news to the hushed House. 'In fact we know that Peter Godwin was a secret agent'.

(*Mukiwa*, 384)

Godwin concludes the chapter with the following words: “[s]hortly afterwards I was declared an enemy of the state, *persona non grata* in my own home” (*Mukiwa*, 385). He explains how he worked as a journalist in a number of countries after this, writing articles for *The Sunday Times* (*Mukiwa*, 386) and was finally able to go back to Zimbabwe a decade later “so long as I didn't do any reporting” (*Mukiwa*, 400). Parallels can here be drawn to Doris Lessing, who was exiled by the Rhodesian government in the 1950s and unable to return until the country became Zimbabwe. She also wrote a book about the trips she was able to make once allowed into the country again; *African Laughter* (1992).

Godwin's expulsion from Zimbabwe is significant in more than one way. So far I have discussed it in terms of displacement, as one of the main reasons for his writing these memoirs and for choosing to do it in the way he did. His expulsion carries different meanings from a point of view of literary journalism and reportage. It came as a consequence of his first major reportage about something the government did not want to become known in the rest of the world. Hove (2014b, 102), who remains critical towards Godwin's writing, observes that “reporting can provoke anger and exacerbate violence. This is the fate that has befallen *The Fear* in Zimbabwe: it is censored literature and its vicious images cannot be read by the same readership that it intends to memorialise”. Hove is certainly right, and Godwin's articles in the mid-1980s also provoked anger and exacerbated violence in Matabeleland. Hove also underlines the journalist's responsibility towards his subjects, and that is definitely something Godwin had given some thought as well. In *The Fear*, he explains the following about the people he interviewed: “I offer to conceal their names or geographical districts to

prevent them being identified. But again, and again, they volunteer their names, and make sure I spell them correctly” (*The Fear*, 133). According to him, the people he talked to wanted their stories recorded under their real names.

The articles covering the events in Matabeleland for *The Sunday Times* were probably not read by the people who featured in them, it is most likely that the same can be said for *The Fear* as well. The way I interpret Hove’s critique above is that according to him, Godwin does not pay enough attention to the consequences of his writing for the people who feature in the book, and that his choice of words and general attitude only make things worse. Thus one may also ask if he was to be blamed for the killing and torturing and threatening of people in Matabeleland after his articles were published, and if he is to blame for any potential violence towards the interview subjects in *The Fear* after the publication of the book. This raises questions about a journalist’s ethics and the responsibility of the journalist, something I will return to later. What is central for the moment, however, is that Godwin’s career change from lawyer to journalist had a profound effect on his life and was a central turning point, causing his inevitable and permanent departure from Zimbabwe. Hence, the development which eventually culminated in the publication of *The Fear* can be traced all the way back to the early 1980s.

Underwood (2008, 22) has attempted to define *journalist*, and *journalist-literary figure* in particular, which is his preferred term. A few of these notions are relevant for Godwin: “identifying professionally with journalism and thinking of oneself as a journalist or participant in the periodical world”. Godwin is presented as an “award winning foreign correspondent, author, documentary-maker and screenwriter” on his own homepage. The editions of *Crocodile* and *The Fear* used in this dissertation have the same introduction to Godwin: “Peter Godwin is the author of *Mukiwa* and *The Fear*, both published by Picador. He writes for various publications including the *New York Times* magazine, *National Geographic*, and *Vanity Fair*. He lives in Manhattan”. The edition of *Mukiwa*, on the other hand, has a much more extensive introduction:

Peter Godwin is an award-winning author and journalist. Born and raised in Zimbabwe, after military service he studied law at Cambridge University and international relations and African history at Oxford. He was a foreign correspondent for the *Sunday Times*, and a founding

presenter and writer of *Assignment/Correspondent*, BBC television's premier foreign-affairs programme.

(Mukiwa)

Foreign correspondent is a recurring term, but *journalist* also appears in the introduction in *Mukiwa*. Underwood continues his list of criteria for the journalist-literary figure and argues that he or she identifies “the mission of journalism, including the mission of the journalist as the watchdog of institutions, and the role that journalism plays in democratic institutions” (Underwood 2008, 22). The introductions in all three of Godwin's memoirs confirm his development into a professional journalist, and also emphasize his role as an author. The self-identification is there, although it is unclear who has written the introductions. They also all allude to Picador, the publishing company, presumably for marketing reasons.

5.3.1 The Media in Zimbabwe

The situation of the media in Zimbabwe is a significant part of this discussion, as the political climate there has been anything but tolerant towards journalists. The hostile treatment and expulsion of Godwin are also not isolated events. American by birth, Andrew Meldrum is another journalist who, just like Godwin himself, was expelled from Zimbabwe due to his reporting. Meldrum says in his review of *The Fear* that his own book is called a memoir although it really is about all the Zimbabweans he had come to know while living in the country from 1980 to 2003 “when the government expelled me” (Meldrum 2011, 59). Meldrum explains in his memoir how he wrote an article in 2002 about an incident during the violent post-election period, a story which turned out to be based on hearsay, and was arrested for it and put on trial (*Where We Have Hope*, 218-219). Meldrum was acquitted of charges but ordered to leave the country within 24 hours (*Where We Have Hope*, 236). Also this case was won in court and Meldrum resumed his work as a journalist. His friends tried to convince him to write “wildlife stories” and be less critical of the government, but Meldrum replied that he could not do that (*Where We Have Hope*, 243). In 2003 agents came to Meldrum's home to pick him up and he fled, staying in hiding for a short while, and then tried to solve the situation at the immigration office with his lawyer (*Where*

We Have Hope, 271-273). Despite these efforts Meldrum was immediately deported from Zimbabwe (*Where We Have Hope*, 275). Daniel Compagnon (2010, 135) writes in detail about various measures by the government against the independent media in Zimbabwe, and also mentions Meldrum and his deportation. “Although the courts upheld Meldrum’s rights as a permanent resident in Zimbabwe for twenty-two years, he was arbitrarily arrested and deported on 16 May 2003, a few hours after his resident’s permit was illegally revoked by immigration officials” (Compagnon 2010, 136).

Meldrum’s story is another personal account of harassment of journalists and media in Zimbabwe, and the conclusion can be made that censorship was widespread, while violence against journalists was all too common. Godwin writes at the very beginning of *The Fear* that he had returned to the country to witness the downfall of Mugabe (this was immediately after the elections in 2008) and that he and Georgina had booked rooms at a pension in the northern parts of Harare, but upon arrival, the rooms turned out to be unavailable after all. “Later we find out that the lodge is being raided by the police looking for Western journalists, who are banned from reporting in this country” (*The Fear*, 7). Instead they decided to stay at Meikles Hotel:

Once, all journalists stayed here. Now none do. Neither of us is really supposed to be here. We are in double jeopardy: not only from Mugabe’s banning of Western journalists, but also because I was once declared enemy of the state, accused of spying, and Georgina worked for an anti-Mugabe radio station, in London, and she also featured on a list of undesirables, excluded from the country.

(*The Fear*, 7)

This passage highlights the situation both Godwin and his sister were in as foreign correspondents, and Daniel Compagnon writes that “[t]he state monopoly on radio and television in Zimbabwe was another legacy of the Rhodesian era that the ruling elite was happy to retain” (Compagnon 2010, 122). Godwin’s sister Georgina used to work at the state-owned radio station ZBC at the end of the 1990s in Zimbabwe, reading news and hosting a morning programme as well as a TV show with guests whom she interviewed (*Crocodile*, 28). But it becomes clear quite soon that the job was not what she wanted. “I’m thinking of leaving ZBC,” she continues. “There’s so much political interference now, I can’t bear reading the news anymore, it’s lies, total crap. I’m beginning to feel like such a hypocrite” (*Crocodile*, 43). Compagnon (2010, 122) confirms that ZBC was completely state-owned after

independence and that the content of the programmes was strictly controlled. From 2000 onwards the control became even more rigid and journalists lost the little independence they might have had (Compagnon 2010, 129). Georgina finally left the radio station in 2000, and joined Capital Radio, “a new, independent station, Zimbabwe’s first, which will be critical of the government, moving into what the political commentators are calling ‘democratic space’” (*Crocodile*, 99). Six days after they set up the station and started broadcasting, it was raided by the police (*Crocodile*, 99). According to Compagnon (2010, 135), they broadcast for eight days. After that Georgina felt more and more threatened and eventually decided to leave Zimbabwe and move to London so as to continue broadcasting Capital Radio from there (*Crocodile*, 117-118), setting up the “anti-Mugabe radio station” Godwin mentions. This confirms what Compagnon says about the government having tolerated free press to some extent until 2000 (Compagnon 2010, 124).

Reporters Without Borders place Zimbabwe in the 131st place out of 180 countries in their world freedom press index for 2015. Meldrum (2011, 58) writes at the beginning of his article which reviews *The Fear* that “[r]eporting can be tough, if not impossible, in Zimbabwe”. Both Last Moyo (2011, 746) and Daniel Compagnon (2010,118) conclude that the failed referendum in 2000 in Zimbabwe was a reason for the decreasing media freedom and freedom of expression. Moyo (2011, 746) lists a number of different acts and laws which were imposed on media in Zimbabwe after 2000. He also explains that arrests, threats and torture were commonly and widely used to keep journalists from working and to scare them into silence. Compagnon (2010, 119) explains that after independence, state-owned print and electronic media became more and more politically controlled but that, in the 1990s, the privately owned press grew and became more popular. Censorship and media control was already widespread during the Smith regime, so it was definitely not a new phenomenon by any means in the era post-independence, but it obviously escalated as the new regime turned towards outright dictatorship.

Personal approaches among writers and reporters have varied to some extent, in particular with regard to their own task as journalists and the dangers in which they have found themselves. Godwin and Meldrum display quite different attitudes in their writing, as does Douglas Rogers. Meldrum, for his part, writes the following in his memoir:

As a journalist I have learned to shy away from making excuses for the failings of any government. I am determined to expose torture, state

violence, corruption, and repression wherever I see them. That is not an onerous burden; it is a privilege. In this modern world, where so many question the meaning of life, I am honored to be able to stand up for human rights, press freedom, and democracy. I know they will win in the end.

(*Where We Have Hope*, 287)

The passage above is from the very end of Meldrum's epilogue to his memoir. His words are probably completely honest, and written not long after his expulsion; a fact that should not be overlooked, but they still end up sounding more naïve than he probably intended. It is a demanding task Meldrum has set himself, and he has been in real danger because of his work. Douglas Rogers, another journalist who has written a memoir or piece of travel writing about Zimbabwe, explains his attitudes towards the journalistic profession in his book *The Last Resort*:

Hundreds of local journalists worked in Zimbabwe for little money or recognition, and at great risk to their personal safety. [...] The stories I did for British and American newspapers were relatively well paid, and I risked little reporting them compared to these guys. They were on the front lines: followed, threatened, their offices bugged, their newspapers banned, even bombed, their friends bribed to become informers. But still they did it; it was their life.

(*The Last Resort*, 249)

He diminishes his own role, and emphasizes that of local journalists who were not backed by big, international newspapers and magazines. This is something Godwin acknowledged as well when reporting from Matabeleland and eventually being forced to leave the country. He wondered what would happen to the people who had dared to speak to him and give their witness accounts (*Mukiwa*, 384).

In contrast to Meldrum's comments above about the privilege of the journalist, or at least his personal privilege, and the honour of standing up for human rights and fighting violence and corruption, are the following words by Rogers which concern the election of 2008:

The terror campaign went into overdrive. [...] So where was I for this big story? Where was I during my country's – and my parents' – darkest hour? In Zimbabwe? Not a chance. Six years on, I still wasn't the fearless foreign correspondent Zimbabwe clearly needed. I could say that I had a book to

write, a deadline to meet, which was true. But who am I kidding? I was too *frightened* to go.

(*The Last Resort*, 396-397)

This is an honest confession, about personal fear and about having the choice not to go. It sounds similar to Godwin's words in *Crocodile* (p. 230) where he wrote that he is abandoning his post and committing cultural treason by leaving. Still, Godwin stayed in Zimbabwe during the elections and interviewed victims, and tried to be the "fearless foreign correspondent" Rogers could not be. The contrast to Meldrum's heroic attitude is enormous, but his defiance may have come from the threats he received and ultimately the deportation, suggesting an attitude that there was nothing more to lose. However, Godwin himself did experience fear as well:

It's odd really, but when I'm here, I mostly do a pretty good job of suppressing the thought of what might happen to me if I am picked up by the police. [...] It might end up [...] with a week or two in cells [...] followed by expulsion from the country. [...] It could, I suppose, end up with the resuscitation of spying allegations against me [...] and following a trial before a pliant Mugabe judge, years in a ghastly, shit-fumed Zimbabwean prison. Or, as seems to be happening more these days, I suppose it could end with being blindfolded and driven to some waste ground outside the city to be shot in the back of the head, and dumped there, doused with kerosene and burned, like rubbish. But if you went around imagining that you wouldn't do anything, you'd be paralysed by the fear of it.

(*The Fear*, 167)

The scenarios Godwin paints in this passage are not entirely unlikely at all, and he was all too aware of that. Rogers admits to having been too afraid to be there, but Godwin went. These different perspectives on both the task of journalists and the demands on themselves personally are reminders of the privileges foreign correspondents such as Godwin and Rogers enjoyed, but also reveal the machinery of fear and oppression which has guided media in Zimbabwe to a large extent. Working as a journalist in Zimbabwe has been difficult to say the least, and in the following section a couple of Godwin's articles published by magazines and newspapers are introduced to this discussion. Some of the events presented in these articles and reportages appear in Godwin's memoirs as well, and they make for an interesting analysis of the slippage between the journalistic point of view and

autobiographical storytelling. It is also in these slippages that literary journalism can thrive.

5.3.2 “Day of the Crocodile”

As presented in the brief introductions to Peter Godwin both in his memoirs and on his own webpage, he has published articles in a number of renowned magazines and newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *National Geographic* and *Men’s Journal*. These articles have addressed a variety of topics. For example, a piece for *Men’s Journal* covered the Victoria Falls located between the borders to Zimbabwe and Zambia (*Crocodile*, 102). Some of his articles, however, have been more directly about Zimbabwe and its political and economic troubles. Two such articles emerge as particularly interesting, as parts of their content also appear in Godwin’s memoirs, but they present events from slightly different angles: “Zimbabwe: A Land Possessed”, published in *National Geographic* in August 2003 and “The Day of the Crocodile”, published in *Vanity Fair* in August 2008. The earlier article was published before *Crocodile* and *The Fear*, and the later one was published after the publication of *Crocodile* but before *The Fear*. The following brief analysis of these two articles demonstrate the similarities and differences between Godwin’s outright journalistic writing and the mixed approach he resorts to in his memoirs, trying to be both personal and professional at the same time. This ties in with my discussion of literary journalism, as it is the space which Godwin occupies in his memoirs and particularly *The Fear* that highlights the balancing act between two literary disciplines.

To begin with, the earlier of the two articles, which was published in 2003, is about the consequences of the land reform that displaced white farmers as well as their farmworkers. The article presents a more nuanced view of the land reform and the problematic situation preceding it in Zimbabwe than *Crocodile* does. As shown in the discussion about land in the previous chapter, Godwin expressed both nostalgia and resentment when writing about the land reform and interviewing white farmers who had been forced to leave. He admitted that the situation was unfair (*Crocodile*, 55), but the article in *National Geographic* offers a deeper analysis. Godwin writes that the “farm chaos” was “understandable, perhaps, in light of past injustices” (Godwin, 2003), and that “[a]lthough white farm owners have been the

principal target of Mugabe's land campaign, it is the black farmworkers and their families who have become its main victims" (Godwin, 2003). This is an important insight and spelling it out like this is central. The article also offers several different viewpoints of the land reform. There are the white farmers who have lost everything, just as in *Crocodile*, but there is also the story of Chris Lunga, a Zimbabwean man who was able to acquire land after having read an advertisement in the newspaper about free white farms. He applied for a farm, and was given 120 acres of land formerly owned by Brendon Fox, a white farmer (Godwin, 2003). Fox helped Lunga get started, as Lunga had no previous experience of farming. According to Godwin, Lunga saw the land reform as something positive: "The British pushed us out, and we're taking it back. Don't get me wrong, I don't regret the British coming. I wouldn't be talking to you in English if they hadn't, and we would have still been in the Stone Age" (Godwin, 2003). Lunga also criticized the way the land reform had been carried out, despite being one of the people profiting from it.

Similar attitudes were also presented by Tapfumaneyi Manzira, who also acquired land for free. He expressed discontent with the new farm owners who often did not farm the land properly. Here Godwin is sympathetic towards the new Zimbabwean farmers who were promised help in the form of seeds, tools and equipment by the government but waited in vain. The previously well-kept farms had also fallen into varying degrees of disrepair (Godwin, 2003). There is, however, an allusion to whites making Zimbabwe the breadbasket it once was after independence, a topic which, as we have seen, is even more explicitly expressed in *Crocodile* (p. 56). Godwin writes in the article that the whites who stayed after independence started "farming with vigour in a country freed from wide-scale war. [...] By 1997 Zimbabwe was Africa's fastest growing economy – southern Africa's breadbasket – frequently exporting food to neighbours in need" (Godwin, 2003). The same passage is to be found in *Crocodile* almost word for word. It is information Godwin is eager to repeat and it sounds like an excuse for appropriating so much land to begin with. The people who took over the farms are also mentioned in Godwin's article, and he writes about the Selbys, whose farm was invaded by "graduates of a notorious militia training camp". Godwin calls them "overlords" and describes how they were drunk and behaved erratically (Godwin, 2003). Such descriptions can be found in *Crocodile* as well, and in greater detail.

In *Crocodile*, Godwin recounts his trip to Rob Webb's farm, where he talked to Webb and observed the situation after the occupation of the farm.

Webb was trying to harvest his tobacco crop as fast as he could, before most likely losing the farm for good.

The occupiers spend much of their time drunk or stoned. They squabble incessantly, contradicting themselves from one day to the next. They live parasitically, depending on the farm for their survival even as they destroy it. Their behaviour plays to every colonial prejudice about the chaos and hopelessness of Africa.

(*Crocodile*, 67)

In this passage, Godwin quotes Webb who calls the occupiers “warlords” (*Crocodile*, 67). The passage from *Crocodile* is clearly more elaborate and filled with more emotion, while he stays more matter of fact in the article. This is also shown in the meeting Godwin had with some of the ‘war veterans’ involved in the occupations of the farms. One of them, Comrade Muroyi, explained that unlike many other participating in the land reform, he actually fought in the civil war and afterwards tried to support himself and his family by farming only two acres. According to him, the government had promised people land but never kept their promise, so they took matters into their own hands. Godwin also talked to Comrade Satan, another veteran, who said that they were going to live and farm together with the white farmers (*Crocodile*, 81). This demonstrates that the land reform and its consequences for different people were complicated and that the brutal outcome was probably not in the interest of the parties involved. Godwin’s article is more nuanced than his memoir and presents the land reform from several viewpoints, whereas he remains more biased in *Crocodile*. The perspectives of Lunga and Manzira are particularly interesting, as they present the views of ordinary Zimbabweans benefiting from the land reform. A greater bias is obviously allowed in Godwin’s memoir, but the difference to his more purely journalistic approach is still relevant. This emphasizes the ambiguity discussed by Maguire (2012).

“Day of the Crocodile” from 2008 is an extensive article covering the presidential elections and their aftermath, just like *The Fear* does. Godwin explains his own ties to Zimbabwe at the beginning of the article and says that “I grew up and was educated in Zimbabwe, served as a conscript, and maintain close ties to the country. Because of these roots I have been able to live and travel there even at times, such as the present, when other foreign journalists have been expelled” (Godwin, 2008). This is an important

introduction, and it positions Godwin for his readers. He was able to travel incognito because of his background. The article as well as *The Fear* both contain detailed introductions to Robert Mugabe, but while the article remains focused on his political career, Godwin gives a detailed account of his personal life in his memoir (*The Fear*, 15-16). The text in the article is more explicit and Godwin uses his trademark sarcasm when writing that, for example, the Queen stripped Mugabe of his knighthood, and when describing his second wife Grace and her interest in shopping (Godwin, 2008). The personal tone is, however, very much present in Godwin's article as well. When explaining about the hyperinflation and the long queues for commodities such as gasoline, bread and maize, he asks "[h]ow can I convey what it's like to live with this kind of hyperinflation?" (Godwin, 2008). The article works as a kind of dialogue between the reader and Godwin himself, and the question is a rhetorical one. It also emphasizes Godwin's role as a reporter on Zimbabwe, as the authority whose articles and texts can inform and educate readers.

The article and *The Fear* have many similar stories, and they even feature stories about the same people. It is obvious that Godwin used the same material he had gathered for the article and then the book. When explaining what was to also become the title of the memoir, he says in *The Fear* that "people have given this time of violence and suffering its own name [...] They are calling it *chidudu*. It means, simply, 'The Fear'" (*The Fear*, 105; italics in original). Almost the exact same phrases can be found in the article, where Godwin writes: "[p]eople in Zimbabwe have a name for what has been happening. They call it simply 'The Fear'" (Godwin, 2008). The article then continues with the story of Denias Dombo, one of the victims of the political violence. The same person features in *The Fear* as well. These two stories are very similar, almost word for word. In the article, Godwin writes how Dombo had a copy of Robert Louis Stevenson's book *Kidnapped* on his bedside table at the hospital where he was being treated for his injuries. "'I've just finished it,' he said, following my gaze. 'I have form two'" (Godwin, 2008). In the memoir, Godwin writes about the same novel and cites Dombo again: "'I'm halfway through it,' he says, following my gaze. 'I passed tenth grade, you know'" (*The Fear*, 80). These two citations are not the same although they are similar. In the article Godwin explains in brackets that form two is the equivalent of tenth grade, which could mean that he simply changed the citation for the memoir in order to make it more straightforward for the (Anglophone) reader. However, it remains a mystery whether Dombo had

actually finished reading the novel or only made it halfway through. Dombo has been incorrectly cited either in the article or the memoir, but this is of course a minor detail.

The story continues about Dombo and Godwin explains in *The Fear* how he came to be tortured and badly hurt. Here the stories are almost exactly the same in the article and *The Fear*, but something more has been added to the story in the memoir. There Godwin explains how Dombo was unable to go on with his story for a little while as he became overwhelmed with emotion. Godwin writes: “it is the first time he has really recounted the detail of what happened, and faced the enormity of it all. At his bedside Georgina is crying too, and she reaches over to grasp his hand” (*The Fear*, 83). This part is missing in the article, and it has an autobiographical and literary approach, appealing to readers’ emotions, that separates *The Fear* from the article. The story about Dombo is much more detailed in the memoir, and has for obvious reasons been shortened down in the article. It is, however, interesting how similar the passages are and that the very same people and events are present in both texts. Another example is a party Godwin attended where he met Father Fidelis Mukonori, a person who was very close to Mugabe himself. In the article, Godwin describes briefly how he met this man but did not recognize him, and “angrily described the torture victims” (Godwin, 2008). In *The Fear*, however, the story is once again more elaborate and personal: “[b]ecause my head is bursting with the torture stories, and because I assume that as a churchman he should be particularly appalled by man’s inhumanity, I let the stories tumble out of me (*The Fear*, 94). Godwin writes about Father Fidelis at great length and describes how he convinced him to visit Dombo and other victims at the hospital, and a similar but much shorter version is available in the article.

The rest of the article reports events that are also documented in *The Fear*. It is also reported in the article that Godwin travelled around with an American diplomat called McGee. Godwin’s own arrest is also mentioned, a further example. The article ends with the Harare International Festival of Arts which Godwin visited, and he writes the following: “[a]ll around me in the packed arena Zimbabweans wept for their country. And so did I” (Godwin, 2008). This ends the entire article on a very personal note, and in conclusion it remains a piece of writing that also balances between the professional and the personal just as *The Fear* does despite often remaining more matter of fact. Godwin is more visible between the lines in the article from 2008 than in the earlier one from 2003, and it is clear that *The Fear*

emerged out of all the material he had gathered and the interviews he had conducted, as well as from his personal engagement. The question remains as to how much has been altered for aesthetic purposes, but the passages examined are very similar and sometimes almost exactly the same. The article from 2003 presented a more varied view of the land reform, and that testifies to Godwin's skills as a reporter. It is also a reminder to read his memoirs as artistic expressions of his life and events around him. Hence, in terms of voice, the term 'literary journalism' remains a useful description for *The Fear*. The work Godwin did for his article as well as for the memoirs was largely based on meeting people, talking to them, and noting down their experiences. These acts will be further examined in the following section, as questions of ethics urgently arise in the context of reporting from scenes of violence, torture and oppression.

5.4 Bearing Witness

As previously described, Godwin visited torture victims in hospital noting down their experiences and injuries in the aftermath of the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008. In response to these experiences, he wrote the following: "I feel helpless, frustrated and angry. I'm not sure what I can do to help. My role is unclear to me" (*The Fear*, 132). This is a far cry from Meldrum's heroic attitude towards reporting as discussed earlier. Yet, it is clear that Godwin too experienced some kind of higher purpose as well:

I seem to be part chaplain [...], part scribe, part journalist, part therapist. Part lawyer (as I once was) taking testimony. And as these shattered people recount their full experiences in a complete narrative, many for the first time, they sometimes break down. It is as if, until now, these brave men and women have concentrated on staying alive, by taking each minute, each hour and day, at a time, and only now, as they join it all together for a stranger, into a complete narrative, do they see the enormity of the whole thing, of what they have been through.

(*The Fear*, 132)

The story of Dombo is a good example of this; someone badly injured, or "shattered", who broke down in tears when they finally had a chance to talk about what had happened to them. Godwin is here also trying to be honest

about himself, both in terms of his own role in the midst of all if it, as well as the role of the people whom he interviewed.

Further, he is not only struggling to define what he himself was doing, but also contemplating a suitable definition for his interviewees:

I wish there were a better word than ‘victims’ to describe what these people are. It seems so inert, so passive, and weak. And that is not what they are at all. There is dignity to their suffering. Even as they tell me how they have fled, how they have hidden, how they have been humiliated and mocked, there is little self-pity here. Survivors, I suppose, defines them better. Again and again, as I play stenographer to their suffering, I offer to conceal their names or geographical districts to prevent them being identified. But again, and again, they volunteer their names, and make sure I spell them correctly. They are proud of their roles in all of this, at the significance of their sacrifice. And they want it recorded.

(*The Fear*, 133)

The passage above emphasizes the ‘us’ and the ‘they’, but Godwin’s empathy towards the people he had been interviewing is apparent. They elicit his respect and he seems to admire them for what they have gone through, and what ordeals they have survived. But he is also simultaneously capable of engaging with it in his professional capacity as a journalist, as he continues his introspection:

I shrink from generalizing what ‘they’ have gone through, because it can feed into that sense that this is some un-differentiated, amorphous mass of Third World peasantry. [...] And for the first time, in trying to work out why I am here, and whether it is constructive, doing what I am doing, I find myself settling on a phrase that I have always avoided, a description I had found pretentious, but that now seems oddly apt – *bearing witness*. I am bearing witness to what is happening here – to the sustained cruelty of it all.

(*The Fear*, 133)

Godwin acknowledges the distinction between *us* and *they*, and the danger in generalizing too much. Eventually he concludes that the most accurate description for his own role in the events is *bearing witness*. He ends the passage with the following words: “I have a responsibility to try to amplify this suffering, this sacrifice, so that it will not have happened in vain” (*The Fear*, 133). This explicitly outlines the purpose of *The Fear* and Godwin’s own

calling to write this book. The article from 2008 was written in a format suitable for a magazine, but the stories Godwin wanted to share were simply too many to fit into one article. The personal touch makes *The Fear* less journalistic and more literary, but essentially it works as reportage and Godwin bears witness to “this suffering, this sacrifice”.

Hence, *bearing witness* is a central concept for the analysis of *The Fear*, and especially when talking about works of literature that are considered witness accounts, the complexity of bearing witness becomes evident. The discussion of Godwin’s perception of the activity in which he is involved has revealed how complex it is for him. In the end he finds no better expression for it than bearing witness, and according to him, these words involve a certain responsibility. The work *Citizen Witnessing: Revisioning Journalism in Times of Crisis* by Stuart Allan (2013) explores the nature of witnessing among ordinary people who temporarily take on the role as witnesses and journalists. Godwin’s situation is different as he is not a temporary witness or journalist, but engages in reporting as a professional journalist. However, the personal dimension of his writing adds another layer to the story. Naturally enough, the issue of responsibility in relation to reporters or journalists emerges in several other studies, for example in *Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning* (2012, ninth edition), edited by Christians et al. Their perspective on ethics derives from a number of case studies, and one of their central observations has to do with the journalist’s relationship to his or her sources (Christians et al. 2012, 60-61). This issue has been convincingly examined in Philip Mitchell’s article (2014, 534-535). There, Mitchell argues that a journalist has responsibilities towards the original source and towards the readers or audience, observing that in literary journalism, the source is often someone being interviewed, just as it is in *The Fear* as well. According to Mitchell (2014, 535), this responsibility has to do with “*fairness and faithfulness*” (italics in original). ‘Fairness’ means being honest in human interactions and complying with interviewees’ wishes to be anonymous. ‘Faithfulness’ again means being true to words used by interviewee, to their meaning and the way in which they are spoken (Mitchell 2014, 535).

With regard to journalistic responsibility towards readers, Mitchell (2014, 535) concludes that this has to do with transparency about the reporters’ working methods, and also a correct use of interviews and quotations: using them only in the right contexts is imperative. Another relevant point raised by Christians et al. is that a story should not be allowed to go public until the journalist is certain he or she has taken all the facts into account. This is

problematic in relation to *The Fear*, as the memoir suggests that Mugabe was going to step down, which he eventually did not do. However, that is not necessary a major flaw but adds to the suspense of the memoir. Sue Tait (2011, 1223) also speaks of responsibility concerning the reader, noting how “[t]estimonial literature anticipates that the reader will share responsibility for remembrance and prevention”. This is certainly true for *The Fear* as well, for instance when looking at the very end of the edition used in this study. After the *Acknowledgements* (p. 351-353), right before the back cover, Godwin has added a *Resources* section in which he has written the following: “If you want to help the people of Zimbabwe, or just to follow their continuing struggle, please go to www.petergodwin.com for links to charities operating in Zimbabwe, and for news of the latest events there”. He wants the reader to feel responsibility after having read the book, to get engaged in one way or another. However, checking his website now (October 2016) shows that it has not been updated for a while. The website claims that Godwin is currently the president of PEN American Center whereas according to the website of the PEN American Center, Godwin was the president in 2012-2013, making it quite old news.

The act of witnessing has been discussed by John Durham Peters (2001) who writes that the activity “raises questions of truth and experience, presence and absence, death and pain, seeing and saying, and the trustworthiness of perception” (Peters 2001, 707). Godwin as a witness is contestable as he was not there when Zimbabweans were being tortured and killed, and merely noted down their experiences afterwards. He was, in essence, a second-hand witness. During one of his rounds to hospitals he met Tichanzii Gandanga whose “head is bruised and bloody, he peels off the bedspread to reveal two massively swollen legs” (*The Fear*, 88). Gandanga was abducted by some men who interrogated him because of his involvement in oppositional politics. Finally they tortured and beat him very severely. Gandanga also expressed his concerns about his safety to Godwin, as he thought they might come after him again (*The Fear*, 89-90). Another example is an interview with a doctor at the CSU (Counselling Services Unit) who had been treating the victims of this violence, and Godwin asked her what she felt about it all. The doctor replied that she was angry, but that she had not cried once. “She has a look I recognize. Georgie du Plessis, the CSU nurse, has it too, a closed-off look, the one that says you can’t get too emotionally involved, because there is too much to do. I recognize it because my mother had that look for twenty-five years” (*The Fear*, 105-106). These two

experiences were remarkably different, as one was seriously injured and the other worked to treat and heal people like him, but there is another difference too. Throughout the book, Godwin does not make any personal comments about the victims and their injuries. He really is endeavouring to function as a scribe, and one of few comments he makes is the one I cited above about him settling on the phrase 'bearing witness' for lack of a better term. But when speaking to people treating the wounded or otherwise working for political change, he has a different attitude. There he allows himself to be more personal, just as he does when talking to staff at the CSU. But the hurt and broken are allowed to speak for themselves and Godwin only bears witness to their injuries. This was the right choice both stylistically as well as ethically; commenting in any way on the victims' injuries and experiences would have restricted their voices in favour of his own. An interview with a man whose legs have been broken in the course of torture needs no other commentary, no excessive expressions of sympathy or condemnation. Godwin's skills as journalist/reporter and literary writer are evident here, as sometimes it is that which is not present which makes all the difference.

Peters (2001, 722) also concludes that "[f]acts are witnessed, fictions are narrated". I argue that facts can also be narrated, as in the case of literary journalism. To return to the passages above, Tait (2011, 1227) observes that a survivor "bears witness to that which cannot be seen; the embodied knowledge of suffering; the limit-experience that defies representation". This underlines the uniqueness of suffering and the impossibility of transferring the experience into text. Karin Samuel (2010) has written an article about a novel that examines the Rwandan genocide in the mid-1990s, and she explains how the author of the novel, Boubacar Boris Diop, visited Rwanda (he is himself of Senegalese origin) and wrote the novel based on this visit. "His own encounters with the aftermath of the genocide led to the novel, which can then be seen as a means to bear witness to the trauma and suffering of individuals in the genocide" (Samuel 2010, 366). The story is told by Cornelius, a Rwandan who had left the country before the genocide took place. He returns to try to make sense of all that happened, and Samuel (2010, 366-367) concludes that through Cornelius, readers are able to "gain access to the scene of the genocide in a way that, as outsiders with no likely connection to Rwanda, is not available to them".

This is a similar situation to that of Godwin; he is also an exiled writer returning to Zimbabwe to cover the events during and after the elections in 2008. Through his writing the reader who is not familiar with the situation in

Zimbabwe or far removed from it can gain access to what has been going on there. In all its simplicity this is, at its core, the meaning of bearing witness. What makes the story of Cornelius even more special is that through the course of the novel, he finds out that his father, of Hutu origin, had organized the killing of his mother, who was Tutsi, his siblings and a huge number of other people. Cornelius thinks to himself that “[h]e had suddenly discovered that he had become the perfect Rwandan: both guilty and a victim” (*Murambi*, 78). The question of guilt and victimhood is more straightforward in a Rwandan context, but Godwin, and whites in Zimbabwe in general, is also to some extent both a victim and a perpetrator. There is another unsettling similarity between Cornelius and Godwin (although its implications push in different directions); both of their fathers carried secrets they knew nothing about. Godwin’s father was greatly affected by the Holocaust, the genocide of Jews, and Cornelius’s father was one of the perpetrators during the Rwandan genocide.

The discussion of victims and perpetrators and their lot is a complicated one, and here a highly relevant viewpoint is offered by Gabriele Schwab (2010: 82), who suggests a dialogue between descendants of victims and those of perpetrators, as both sides have stories that need to be told. In a Zimbabwean context that would mean acknowledging white writing as part of the literary colonial legacy, and bridging the gap between black and white writing. This problem is also addressed by Michael Rothberg (2009: 2) in the introduction to his book *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*: “[w]hat happens when different histories confront each other in the public sphere? Does the remembrance of one history erase others from view?” and, eventually, “must a competition of victims ensue?”. Rothberg concludes that “as soon as memory is articulated publicly, questions of representation, ethics, and politics arise” (Rothberg 2009, 36). The colonial past remains painful, and descendants of settlers cannot escape their heritage. Studying their literary legacy does, however, enable a more critical approach to the postcolonial present. Ignoring these stories will not make up for past wrongs. Another relevant viewpoint from a different context is offered by Mark Sanders in his work *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of a Truth Commission* (2007). Here, Sanders examines testimonies and documents gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission after the end of apartheid in South Africa. The matter of forgiveness arises in his study as well, and he concludes that it is a complicated process. Equally complex is the question of reparations as no

amount of money can ever be enough to make up for past sufferings such as these (Sanders 2007, 115).

To continue the analysis of Godwin's writing, Samuel (2010, 370) makes some observations about Diop's novel that are not applicable to *The Fear*. She explains that the story is told from multiple perspectives, also from those of the perpetrators, and that the reader has to identify with more than just the victims. This is not the case in *The Fear*, where the story is told from the victims' perspectives, or from the perspective of people who are trying to help Zimbabweans caught in the political violence. Godwin's situation was, of course, different, and he exposed himself to great risks when travelling around hospitals and talking to people involved in oppositional politics. Interviews with alleged perpetrators, or people supporting the ruling party, would probably not have been possible. Samuel (2010, 376) ends her article with the following very significant note: "literary narratives can provide access to that trauma and thereby bear witness to the trauma of the genocide". This is written from a specifically Rwandan context but is certainly applicable to other writing as well. What is particularly interesting here is that Samuel has no problem with calling this novel a witness account, or attributing the act of bearing witness to it, despite the fact that it is a fictional novel and despite the fact that the writer himself did not bear witness to any actual events during the genocide. This would allow for a much broader interpretation of bearing witness than is suggested by Peters (2001, 722) when he asserts that fiction is narrated and fact is witnessed. In Diop's novel there is no first hand witness, and Diop himself was not present in Rwanda during the genocide. By contrast, Godwin remains somewhere in between. He is also a displaced Zimbabwean living outside the country and travelling back and forth for the story. Whether he is a narrator or witness is difficult to determine but it can be argued that he is both. Can a novel be a testimony to trauma, or does it need to be written in the form of autobiography, or literary journalism or other more "truth"-based genres of literature? The demand for truthfulness always arises in such a context, but novels can certainly witness trauma as well. Sometimes their abilities to overcome traumas are even more successful as they reach a wider audience and often have a more general appeal than autobiographies.

The act of witnessing raises questions about truth as well, and Leigh Gilmore (2001, 3) argues that "conventions about truth telling, salutary as they are, can be inimical to the ways in which some writers bring trauma stories into language". Thus demands on truth can be harmful for a genre

that relies on lived lives and “real” stories, but which undoubtedly has an element of fiction and invention as well. John Tulloch (2014, 630) for his part says that “[t]he foundation of trust in journalism lies not in the objective truth of its observations but the truthfulness of its practice. Fundamental to this is the construction of an authentic narrative voice, a voice we are disposed to trust”. Thus it is the reliable narrator that is the most significant, and that is a suggestive viewpoint with regard to Godwin. He is certainly ‘authentic’, and Witt (2011), who ends her article with a few words about the lack of coverage of the Zimbabwean elections, says the following: “maybe it’s just that nobody does it as well as Peter Godwin”. Hove (2014b, 112) nevertheless remains critical of Godwin, claiming that *The Fear* is a “politically provocative memoir” and that it “inscribes Western mediasque [sic] perceptions of Africa, conditioned by disaster pornography and racial stereotypes” (Hove 2014b, 114). The question as to whom the memoir is so politically provocative and what makes it so provocative requires some thought. Hove clearly positions Godwin as an outsider, as revealed in the passage quoted above discussing Western perceptions of Africa. This may be the reason for his criticism; to him, Godwin is nothing more than yet another journalist coming to Africa to report about the suffering and brutal violence on the continent and making conclusions he has no right to make. Thus there is both criticism and praise for Godwin’s narrative voice. To return to the question of truth and objectivity, Mary Angela Bock (2011, 648) argues in her article that the “reporter is expected to observe, not participate; to report, not feel”. Expecting reporters not to feel is not realistic and a certain amount of feelings must be allowed in reportage. Godwin ended his article in *Vanity Fair* explaining how he wept for Zimbabwe. The appeal in *The Fear* also comes from Godwin himself, as was evident in the passages where he reflected upon his own role as a reporter.

The response to Godwin as a reliable narrator is to a large extent based on how he portrays himself. *The Fear* is not his first piece of nonfiction, and thus he has already established himself as a writer. It is also obvious that he works as a journalist and has written a number of articles for several renowned magazines. In *The Fear* (p. 188), Godwin explained how he worked for awareness concerning the violence in Zimbabwe, as has already been cited earlier. He attended radio and news shows, and wrote articles. According to Godwin’s wife Joanna, the reason none of the efforts seem to make any difference is that “we lack a celebrity cheerleader, a Clooney, a Farrow, a Damon, Jolie, or Pitt” (*The Fear*, 189). Godwin also explains that Zimbabwe’s

struggles are not classified as civil war, like the troubles in Congo or Darfur, and that, thus, no real international interest emerges (*The Fear*, 189). He refers to this in the *Vanity Fair* article as well, stating that the surrounding world will probably not take any actions against Mugabe: “Zimbabwe lacks both of the two exports – oil and international terrorism – that attract direct intervention” (Godwin, 2008).

To return to the difficult question of truth and reliability, one more viewpoint is offered by Harbers and Broersma (2014), who discuss the demand for truth in *narrative journalism* (their expression), and they say that

Some stories seem too good to be true. Narrative journalism is often praised because it provides a good read and offers valuable insights. However, it is also regularly challenged on the grounds of factual accuracy and stretching the truth. The fear is that if one creates a coherent, compelling and engaging story this will be at the expense of veracity; what reads like a novel will probably be as truthful as a novel.

(Harbers and Broersma 2014, 640)

Their insight is important; a good read raises more questions about accuracy than a story that is perhaps less engaging. Being engaging can thus be a negative thing as well, which seems quite paradoxical. Harbers and Broersma (2014, 640) also conclude that the position of narrative journalists is therefore difficult, as they are supposed to be truthful but still use a style of writing that is closer to literary fiction. Norman Sims (2012, 214) also discusses the difficult relationship between objectivity and subjectivity but argues that the gap between the two is perhaps not as wide as it may at first seem. A personal connection to the material does not take away the possibility of being ‘objective’, in the sense of “not being an advocate or propagandist, exercising balance and even-handedness, and remaining open to persuasion from the facts encountered in research” (Sims 2012, 214).

Godwin sees his own role in *The Fear* as only part journalist, and part several other things such as therapist and scribe. It is clear, though, that he is aware of his responsibility to record events, to bear witness in his own words. Mitchell (2014) talked about duties and said that the journalist has a responsibility both towards subjects as well as readers, to which Tait (2011) added that readers in their turn share responsibility once they have read a particular story, they too become involved once they know about events. Peters (2001) for his part concluded that facts are witnessed and fiction narrated, a simplification which seems problematic when studying literary

journalism. Works of literary journalism can most certainly be both witnessed and narrated according to my interpretation. Samuel (2010) argued that Diop's novel about the Rwandan genocide is a work of witness as well, although it is a fictive story by a Senegalese writer. Thus there are both demands for a stricter definition of what it means to bear witness, as well as more broad definitions allowing fiction to be called testimonies of trauma. I agree with Samuel here; novels can definitely also be witness accounts even though they are presented as fiction. Memoirs and autobiography can also bear witness. In the following section of this chapter I will discuss the ethics of witnessing, of bearing witness to trauma and writing about it. Does Godwin truly exploit his subjects for a good story? What are the ethical dimensions of reporting on, from and about war? These are difficult questions that need to be addressed.

5.4.1 Ethics and Literary Journalism

One of the most controversial passages in *The Fear* involves the encounters and travels Godwin experienced in Zimbabwe in the company of James McGee, an American diplomat stationed in Harare. According to Godwin, “[McGee] was looking to elevate the profile of the Zimbabwe crisis, and get it onto the UN Security Council agenda” (*The Fear*, 136). McGee's diplomatic status also helped Godwin in his work: “the diplomats have immunity from arrest, and the rest of us stand a better chance if we stick with them. Trying to get in to the battleground areas any other way is more or less impossible, with numerous roadblocks and roaming militia checks” (*The Fear*, 137). When they arrived at the first village where a torture centre had been set up, villagers emerged to tell them of their experiences. “They are understandably scared of what will happen to them after we have gone, so McGee's staff distributes business cards with the embassy's emergency number, and then the diplomats' road show reassembles and rolls out” (*The Fear*, 139). The sarcasm here is quite apparent. Talking to authorities (in this case, McGee and other embassy staff as well as Godwin) would most likely cause repercussions for the villagers, but handing out business cards is like bad satire. Did the villagers have phones with which to call for help, and who would even run to their rescue if they were harassed after the visit? The futility of this action is evident, and Godwin's comment about the “diplomat's

road show” shows that he knew that they could not really help anyone, only collect information to be distributed abroad. His hands were tied, and he seems to have been aware of the negative consequences of the visit for the villagers.

The next place they visited was a hospital where people were treated for wounds that were the result of torture and interrogation. When trying to leave the hospital, police officers arrived refusing to let the convoy out of the gates, and threatened to arrest McGee. Eventually, McGee walked down to the gates himself and opened them, despite protests from the armed officers (*The Fear*, 140-142). “McGee hops up into his vehicle. ‘Let’s go!’ he tells the driver, and we accelerate on through the open gate ourselves. As we drive away in a gratifying shower of dust, he turns to me, breaks into a huge grin, and whoops. It’s clear this is the most fun he’s had in years” (*The Fear*, 142). There is more than a hint of sarcasm here as well, as the situation had evidently been threatening and quite serious. McGee’s excited reaction seems rather misplaced in that regard. When returning to Harare, the convoy was stopped at a police road block, and two officers threatened a staff member of the US embassy. However, the resulting commotion led to the eventual release of the convoy, and the chapter ends with McGee expressing his doubts about lasting the full term as a diplomat (*The Fear*, 145-146). These events and the way Godwin writes about McGee are quite different from his style and tone when interviewing Zimbabweans who had been targeted during the violent campaign. Godwin seems to have respect for McGee, but the whole trip definitely carries farcical elements. Was it morally right of them to go on the trip and thus put victims in an even more precarious position? These events demonstrate how complicated reporting can be in a situation where the free press does not exist. Did the villagers benefit from the visit? Most likely not, but it did become a part of Godwin’s book and has since reached global audiences. Hence, it has had some impact. Remembering what Christians et al. (2012, 61) had written about journalists and their sources is significant here: “a responsible press must continually agonize over its treatment of sources to prevent lapses”. Hence, in terms of ethics, the travels with McGee raise a number of questions as outlined above. Godwin is not just a regular citizen who happened to be travelling around with McGee, and happened to come across villagers who had been tortured.

The relationship between Godwin and the people he met is in many ways one of authority, and as demonstrated in *Mukiwa*, people seem to have believed in his abilities as a reporter to actually make a difference. “The result

is that writers about other cultures inevitably assume an air of superiority over their subjects. What is presented as objective reportage is, in fact, a form of moral judgment” (McKay 2012, 179). This is an important observation, but Godwin shows little if any superiority with regard to his subjects. The central issue here is that he set out to uncover violence and other atrocities directed against Zimbabweans in the wake of the elections, and the only moral judgement he engaged in was aimed at the regime. Godwin spent time in his own country of origin, among people he often knew from before and whose language(s) he spoke, and in a culture with which he was familiar. Godwin also mentions that he offered to hide people’s real identities but that they themselves wanted their names documented. The same ethical dilemma does not emerge here as it does in for example *The Bookseller of Kabul*. McKay (2012, 182) writes that Seierstad could not have known that people in Afghanistan would also read the book, including the family about which she wrote. McKay (2012, 178) makes an important observation here. She argues that previously it had been thought that only reportage of this kind “can bridge the distance between two quite different worlds”. However, the Afghan family brought the matter to a Norwegian court, and Seierstad and her Norwegian publisher were first found guilty but later cleared in the Norwegian appeals court (McKay 2012, 177). The role of the reporter is changing and he or she is no longer the sole authority on any particular event or place. Godwin too has at least partly built his career on being an authority on Zimbabwe, on bridging distances between the Western world and Southern Africa.

The question of moral judgement is relevant here, and Godwin’s judgement is much more explicit but also less problematic as it is not directed towards his interviewees so much as the political system in Zimbabwe. The details in *The Fear* are graphic, and the memoir remains quite negative in its general tone. In the case of Zimbabwe in 2008 and afterwards, the situation was, however, problematic. According to McKay (2012, 183), the problem with ethics ties in with the question of literariness. The writer must be able to engage the readers and to make the story and the characters compelling, but without compromising the accuracy of the story. In conclusion, McKay (2012, 184) argues that for the responsible journalist,

[T]he motivation is to present an account of what she sees and hears and to try to understand what is going on in a given society or set of

circumstances. It is not necessarily her responsibility to provide a vision of the world that will be acceptable to the people she describes.

(McKay 2012, 184)

This is an important notion, and obviously a reason for journalists being harassed in countries such as Zimbabwe. Godwin also writes that “[w]ith no foreign journalists allowed here, most of the opposition leadership having fled, and NGOs hamstrung by restrictions, there is a vacuum in which Mugabe can conduct his campaign of violence” (*The Fear*, 135). His book attempts to fill a void, to do something that local journalists were perhaps unable to do, and which is even easier to do from abroad with the resources he possesses.

Another perspective on ethics in literary journalism comes from reporting on war in different contexts. Godwin does not report from a war, but it is still to some extent a comparable situation as the violence in Zimbabwe was widespread and often systematic. Gillian Whitlock (2010) has studied memoirs that emerged from the war on terror in for example Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. She (2010, 132) writes the following:

Spawned in literature, journalism, and ethnography, recent life narratives by professional journalists working in Iraq reflect personally with some anxiety and concern about the role of journalists as public intellectuals who have been scripted into a key role as witnesses in the war on terror.

(Whitlock 2010, 132)

As I have already established, Godwin can also be called a professional journalist and Whitlock (2010, 132-133) continues: “[t]o date, many of these authorized witnesses of the war in Iraq are journalists, and journalism is often the first stage of writing to capture traumatic experience for the public record”. Here the question of trauma emerges, and trauma’s role in these accounts. Whitlock (2010, 139) also asks about ethics and its place: “What are the ethics of using memoir to bear witness to trauma? What rights do journalists have to craft a powerful and professional self through witnessing in this way? When do they become complicit by trading in the damage?”. These questions are partly answered by McKay (2012) who concluded that it is the journalist’s responsibility to report and to try to understand what is going on. Godwin also mentioned his feeling of responsibility in *The Fear* regarding his obligation to document what was happening.

Questions similar to those posed by Whitlock above have also been expressed by other scholars. Simpson and Coté (2006, 4) ask in the introduction to *Covering Violence: A Guide to Ethical Reporting About Victims and Trauma*: “[w]hat are the personal and professional costs of trading in the injuries and hurts of other humans?”. According to them, the “goals that define journalistic excellence” are important to bear in mind (Simpson and Coté 2006, 4). “Among these goals are searching responsibly for the truth, keeping the public interest in mind, caring for the people in the story and others close to them, respecting the voices of people at the center of an event, knowing that the storytellers also are at risk, and doing no harm” (Simpson and Coté 2006, 4). One could talk of these goals above as a definition of the journalist’s ethical code, and Godwin certainly tries to follow these unwritten rules.

Godwin recounts how the stories he heard during his trips around Zimbabwe impacted him and negatively affected him. As he puts it:

I struggle to compartmentalize my life. Shaken by what I have seen in Zimbabwe, I’m acutely grateful that my family is safe here in New York. That we aren’t awoken by the shattering of glass, the reek of kerosene and the room in flames, that we don’t have to run out into the night carrying our sons, pursued by Mugabe’s henchmen. But I feel guilty and ineffectual too, maudlin and distracted and angry.

(*The Fear*, 193)

Godwin also explains that he was trembling for no reason and getting flashbacks of the victims he had met and talked to (*The Fear*, 193). When he had just returned from Zimbabwe, his wife Joanna had been to Paris to write about the latest fashion collections. “‘When two worlds collide,’ I joke, ‘couture versus torture.’ She suggests that I may be suffering from some form of PTSD by proxy” (*The Fear*, 194). This is another example of Godwin’s sarcasm, but it is not surprising that all of what he had seen and heard greatly affected him. Godwin was not subjected to any kind of violence himself, but studies have shown how war reporters are affected by what they have seen. Simpson and Coté (2006, 5) conclude that

It is now clear that journalists suffer trauma and its most chronic form—post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—at rates comparable to the general population’s and that some journalists— those who regularly chase

violence in big cities, war zones, or in civil conflicts— risk suffering PTSD at rates as high as 30 percent.

(Simpson and Coté 2006, 5)

Thus it is after all perhaps not an overstatement to say that, in all probability, Godwin was seriously affected by the things he saw and experienced, perhaps even traumatized to some extent. That is, of course, hardly comparable to all the unimaginable hardships the people he interviewed had been through.

The Fear ends with Godwin visiting a support group for torture survivors, people who suffered from real and serious PTSD (*The Fear*, 346). As no official therapy or counselling was available, these groups had been started on a voluntary basis. There is a notion of hope when Godwin writes about these gatherings, but the central message is that Zimbabweans have gone through all this pain and suffering alone, and will have to try to heal themselves alone without help (*The Fear*, 349). Some of Godwin's actions while bearing witness can be questioned in terms of ethics, but *The Fear* is not pretentious about anything. Anthony Feinstein (2006) has interviewed war journalists about their experiences and various problems caused by their reporting from war zones and other dangerous places, and writes in his book *Journalists Under Fire: The Psychological Hazards of Covering War*, about the “buzz” many reporters feel when they are in dangerous places. One of the journalists interviewed says that it was really difficult to adjust to being back home in England when his assignment was over (Feinstein 2006, 48). *The Fear* is Godwin's way of coming to terms with the things he saw and the people he met. A similar conclusion has been drawn by Maguire (2012, 265) as well about Filkins's memoir, calling the account of events as provided in his book a “therapeutic process”. It is also important to remember that unlike many other journalists covering war or unrest around the world, Godwin did so in his own country of birth.

The Fear is not just the result of numerous interviews and hospital visits, it has also come out of a sense of responsibility for Zimbabweans and a desire to give them a chance to tell their stories rather than letting their ordeals go unnoticed. Godwin can be criticized for not making a more coherent story out of the post-election violence. *The Fear* is, perhaps, a little disorganized, it is as if he had just gathered all his notes and written the book very quickly, in order to get it published as soon as possible, or perhaps because he needed to write down all the terrible things he had seen in order to make sense of it all for himself. Kate Douglas (2010, 151) has noted of childhood autobiographies

that they “are commonly commended for offering insights into traumatic experiences. In this instance, literature is thought to play a reparative role after trauma, mediating between the trauma and the witness”. This can certainly be said for other forms of writing as well, and most definitely for works of literary journalism. *The Fear* mediates between the trauma and the witness, and also between the trauma and the reader. The reader becomes a witness too, just as Godwin intended.

5.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Moving from the personal dimension in Peter Godwin’s memoirs to an examination of the professional aspect in his writing changes the perspective on themes and topics that emerge. The land reform is still a current topic, and so is the question of belonging, voice and the outsider status. All the themes that were central in previous chapters remain relevant, but the professional perspective enables new insights. Focusing the analysis around literary journalism and bearing witness provides the possibility of looking at the place of *The Fear* and its agenda, as well as examining Godwin’s distinct voice as journalist-writer. Godwin’s own actions remain utterly central as no material would have been available either for the book or his articles without his efforts. Literary journalism remains a somewhat elusive concept and one which is still trying to find its bearings, but it is also in the process of becoming a more distinct genre of writing. Bak (2011) preferred to call it a discipline, fearing that calling it a genre would diminish it into a subcategory of literature and journalism, but *The Fear* is, to a large extent at least, located in the gap between literature and journalism. Its strengths lie in the slippage between autobiography and reportage, and my conclusion is that literary journalism also thrives in these gaps. *The Fear*, then, could be characterized as a literary but journalistic memoir which also functions as reportage. Godwin’s writing skills and personal voice make the book an engaging read and his professional efforts as a journalist provides the often unsettling content.

The comparison between Godwin’s two articles published in 2003 and 2008, and his memoirs helped generate the insight that he has a distinct voice in *The Fear*, and that although the articles in *Vanity Fair* and *National Geographic* are separate pieces of writing and may easily be distinguished as

reportage, they too contain a personal dimension. This particularly concerns the article from 2008, “Day of the Crocodile”, which ends with Godwin weeping for Zimbabwe. He is strongly present in the article, in a similar way to that which is present in *The Fear*. This shows that he has a personal way of writing, and as a journalist-literary figure (Wolfe, 1973), this sets him apart from other writers. Meldrum stated in his memoir that reporting is not an “onerous burden” (*Where We Have Hope*, 287), but something in which he is proud to be involved. Godwin, however, is clearly burdened by his task, analysing his own place in the political violence and settling on the phrase “bearing witness” which quite accurately describes his actions. There is a certain serenity to his interviews with injured Zimbabweans, and his own presence in the stories decreases. However, his travels with McGee and other embassy personnel showed the farcical side of the job he was trying to do. Those passages are central to *The Fear*; Godwin’s hands were tied and the two choices were not reporting at all from the villages they visited, and talking to them but possibly putting the interview subjects at even greater risk. The “diplomats’ road show” (*The Fear*, 139) encapsulates the futility and the frustration which is visible throughout the book, and which culminates at the end when Godwin visited the groups for survivors of torture. Despite being an authority on Zimbabwe, and having made a significant effort to raise awareness in the West, much of the suffering had been in vain as no regime change had taken place. The bold title of the edition used here, *The Fear: The Last Days of Robert Mugabe*, becomes a caricature of not just the efforts of Godwin himself but also a mocking salute to the seeming futility of it all.

Throughout the memoirs and in various contexts, Godwin has referred to *us* and *they*. Sometimes he has included himself when talking about Zimbabweans, sometimes not. This is less of an issue in *The Fear* where he places himself in the position of the scribe. That makes him a secondary witness, a second-hand witness. Despite the complexity of *The Fear*, and the many interviews and people it contains, along with a long list at the end of the book of people who provided Godwin with material for the book, some perspectives are missing. It is understandable that the memoir provoked Hove (2014a,b) so much, as it appeared to conform to stereotypes of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of perpetual oppression, violence and corruption. Godwin’s article “Zimbabwe: A Land Possessed” manages to achieve something *The Fear* does not; it gives a varied account of the consequences of the land reform, and the interviews with Zimbabweans who benefited from the reform but remained critical towards the way it had been carried out are

notable. Interviews with regular Zimbabweans who were not victims of the political violence would have provided *The Fear* with another fascinating dimension. The hopelessness present in it gives a sense of complete and utter defeat.

As already noted, *The Bookseller of Kabul* became so controversial after publication that a court case ensued. Godwin would most likely not have to face similar consequences as his focus is largely on people who wanted to make their voices heard, who had nothing to hide and whose experiences will elicit the sympathies of most if not all readers. In that sense Godwin's task was easier than that of Seierstad, but emotionally, and also physically, it was, of course, exhausting and dangerous. The reporter's task is to be true to his or her story, while a fiction writer enjoys more freedom. The question remains as to whether one hundred per cent truthfulness is the only way to be one hundred per cent ethical. Godwin certainly made his own personal conclusions while gathering material for his book and writing everything down. In this sense fiction can sometimes occupy a more neutral ground, as it does not claim, unless so specified, to be about real people and real events. Fiction is of course also often based on real events. It is a precarious balance that all forms of journalism struggle with: to be honest and true about real events but to remain insightful about ethical considerations and consequences for the people involved. Should some stories not be told? All stories certainly have a right to be told, but the integrity of subjects must be respected. Literary journalism is thus faced with a double-edged sword: it must remain honest and truthful in its literary expressions, but also ethical towards its subjects. A fictional content will undermine its reliability, but retelling everything as it was might expose its subjects. This problem does not exist in *The Fear*, which makes it an intriguing piece of writing for the study of literary journalism. Godwin's skills as a writer have been confirmed in previous chapters, and here his skills as a journalist also come to the fore.

6. Beyond Memoir, Beyond Belonging

This dissertation has shown how fraught a territory literature can be. It goes beyond controversy, the presence of which was one of the main starting points for the present study and which initially brought my attention to this writing. It becomes a question of wrong and right, of the clash between the subjective and objective claims to a past. This is exemplified in numerous ways in Peter Godwin's memoirs. His whiteness and the character of his displacement, and his activities as a journalist all share a common feature: they all suggest privilege. As a defining concept throughout this analysis, privilege in *Mukiwa*, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* and *The Fear* comes to mean many things. In the literary market, he writes in English, which is a widely published and read language that dominates much of the market, and he is also based in one of the world's largest metropolises. His complex British-Zimbabwean-now-American heritage places him in a fortunate position in the literary market; a place where he can express the exotic, relating to his Zimbabwean experiences while retaining enough familiarity for readers to identify themselves comfortably with him. White privileges and differences in migration experiences between white and black Zimbabweans have been discussed in detail, and as a journalist the privileges come full circle as he is able to travel in and out of Zimbabwe and report for prestigious journals and magazines abroad.

Hence, the backlash against his writing and that of other white Zimbabweans is not surprising. As I have shown in my analysis, this criticism is often justified. Godwin refuses from time to time to fully acknowledge his privileges, and this is often expressed through resentment and nostalgia (cf. the interviews with white farmers in *Crocodile*, p. 161-162, 180-181). When resorting to sarcasm, however, he is most of the time extremely perceptive and insightful (cf. *The Fear*, p. 44-45; 189). White Zimbabwean autobiography is a complex genre in this regard, inseparable from history and colonialism and representing a still privileged, albeit often displaced, present. History remains a battleground, and the criticism aimed at the memoirs of Godwin and other white writers demonstrates that there is a strong desire to right colonialism's wrongs by giving the floor to voices of those previously colonized. The fear that white stories would become the official version is evident. Even in their misfortunes, many of the writers examined here remain privileged.

My analysis has also shown that it is worthwhile to study these narratives, as they shed light not only on history but also on migration experiences, on loss and nostalgia, on the deep and utterly human desire to feel at home and to belong, and last but not least on the sometimes perplexingly strong bond to the African continent. Godwin's memoirs have been published during a time when autobiography, works of literary journalism and personal stories are being read like never before, and they remain highly popular. 'Reality' in the form of TV series, reportage and memoirs has become a commodity reaching an audience looking for the personal, the tragic, the exotic, or the 'ordinary' experience with which they can identify themselves (or at least with which they can sympathize). The emotional response from readers is at the centre. Godwin's memoirs tick many boxes, as they are personal and document his childhood, upbringing and early adulthood, as well as the lives of his parents and particularly his father. They are also tragic, as they contain interviews with farmers who have lost their property and sometimes even close family members, as well as interviews with people who were victims of political violence. They are also tragic from a personal perspective. The life of Godwin's father was extraordinary having lost his family during the Holocaust, and the civil war also killed Godwin's sister Jain. Zimbabwe and its political situation from the colonial period to the aftermath of the elections in 2008 is more than just a backdrop to Godwin's stories; the country in itself and its history becomes another central character in the memoirs. Zimbabwe is contested space, and the representation thereof that is presented by Godwin raises questions about the personal and the collective.

What is the role of personal narratives in a wider context; can they document the collective, the general? Should we place a greater emphasis on that which can be generalized or that which is unique? There are obviously no answers to these questions, but my analysis of Godwin's memoirs has shown that the personal can become quite controversial and contested, as it comes to play a greater role collectively as well. The personal and the collective are intertwined in inseparable ways, and as concluded previously, literature is significant for the making of national identities. Hence, Godwin's memoirs can never come to represent the average Zimbabwean. His experiences are from another context, a world apart, and the colonial history tied to them remains an insurmountable obstacle. No literature ever fully represents any group of people, but the political implications of this writing are significant. Godwin has not only lost his country of birth along with his sense of belonging to that particular place; the door to a common Zimbabwean

experience has also been tightly shut behind him. When taken as being a representative of a contested minority, his writing can never be seen as solely one man's adventures, but will always come to embody something more. The 'rainbow nation' has not yet succeeded in embracing a truly colour-free future, and Zimbabwe has not yet come to terms with its own past. In that sense, Godwin's memoirs remain personal to a significant extent. They are his attempt to overcome the past, and therefore it is not surprising that he chose to write autobiography instead of fiction. As he stays in the past, Zimbabwe and its current, accomplished fiction-writers are moving forward. Their representation of Zimbabwe is less contested, as it emanates from a more easily defined postcolonial setting. In conclusion, even though privilege must be openly discussed and examined, the narratives of descendants of settlers enable the personal and the collective to be unveiled: simultaneously providing the opportunity for the painful colonial legacy to be cleaned, aired, and eventually covered with fresh layers of protective bandage, just as you would an infected wound.

A significant part of my discussion has focused on labels and terminology, and on analysing the various ways in which Godwin himself or his writing have been defined. This has been an important element in part of the creation of a framework through which, at a broader level, Godwin's memoirs and other writing within the genre can be read and analysed. Among the most contested terms have been 'African' or 'African writer' (not to mention 'Africa' itself). Different viewpoints came forward in my analysis, and many of them suggested that being African or an African writer is a complicated space. Petina Gappah chose not call herself an African writer due to the responsibility that comes with it; an assumption about being representative of an entire nation or even continent. This demonstrates that the term 'African' has different connotations depending not only on to whom it is attached, but also on who is attaching it. If it comes through the Western media, for example, as a strategy for marketing a particular book through the exotic, Gappah is right in her critique.

However, 'Africa' suggests something more than this. Godwin often resorts to it when feeling nostalgic, when being angry, or when some other negative emotion is present. He spoke of Africa when writing about the Plunkets and their farm, suggesting that they did not deserve to live in such a beautiful place as they were not permanent residents but divided their time between Zimbabwe and Britain. He also tried to forget about 'Africa' himself after his expulsion in the 1980s, and when visiting his parents later on, the

lights went out one evening due to electric outages. Godwin calmly recounted this as something that was to be expected. 'Africa' thus comes to mean more than just an exotic continent. It is a simplification which, like the maps in the books, assumes that readers may not notice if the writer does not specify the particular location. It also suggests an imagined place, as it often refers to times and places that have long been lost. This concerns both childhood as well as white Rhodesia. Surrounded by a certain kind of wistfulness, 'Africa' becomes a place of both old memories as well as a place of misery and darkness and loss. Godwin envies the Plunkets because they were still living, at least part of the year, in Zimbabwe when he himself had been forced to leave. 'Africa' thus means everything that he has lost, all that is irrevocably gone, never to return. Referring to the entire continent instead of Zimbabwe suggests that the bond to the country, and perhaps the continent itself, has been broken. The only thing that remains is to remember and to note it down, with all the shortcomings of human memory.

The title of this final chapter refers to Godwin's efforts to move beyond memoir and issues relating to belonging in his writing, and it could also be titled "beyond postcolonialism". Postcolonial literature suggests writing which is still caught in the web of colonialism, and despite the inevitable fact that African countries for example are still obviously affected by colonialism and its legacy, much more is being negotiated in contemporary African literature. This was Attree's (2013) observation as well, but here it is important to note that in many regards Godwin is stuck in the colonial world. Not just because of his settler heritage, but because of his displacement. Godwin left Zimbabwe in the 1980s and has, despite his many returns since, remained something of an outsider. This is perhaps one reason for his strong politics, and for writing in the spirit of liberation; liberation not from colonialism but from Mugabe. In that regard the postcolonial discourse of freedom from oppression is still present in Godwin's writing. His third memoir in particular is a one-man uprising against dictatorship. *Postcolonial* as a concept is also well-established and prestigious, and establishing its future direction would require another dissertation. In this context it shall hopefully suffice to say that the colonial dimension in Godwin's writing is significant, and that Zimbabwe itself still struggles to come to terms with life in the postcolonial era.

Throughout my analysis of the three memoirs it has become evident how much they differ from each other, but at the same time a striking development has become visible from *Mukiwa* to *Crocodile* to *The Fear*. The

two articles analysed, “Day of the Crocodile” and “Zimbabwe: A Land Possessed” also attest to this change. Godwin begins with his childhood, with the exotic in its true meaning. The stories from his childhood about the leper colony he would visit or the patient, “Mr Arrow Head”, who came to his mother’s clinic, participate in exoticizing Godwin’s childhood in Southern Rhodesia. Towards the end the tone changes, particularly with regard to the civil war and Godwin’s desire to leave the country and go to university in the UK. Independence changed everything for all Zimbabweans alike, and eventually the situation in Matabeleland escalated which led to Godwin’s own expulsion. Gagliano (2009) claimed in her study of white South African autobiography that whites there have adjusted to the new system and their new existence, whereas McDermott Hughes (2010) referred to a “point of rupture” for white Zimbabweans. This suggests that the situation has been more dramatic in Zimbabwe, and the adjustment to the new regime has been difficult if not impossible. This intransigence is visible throughout Godwin’s writing as well, even though it does reveal adjustment too, particularly in *The Fear*, but the road to such acceptance is painful for him.

If one looks at the three memoirs as three separate entities, *Mukiwa* thus represents the exotic phase. It is quite a traditional childhood memoir and, as concluded earlier, through it Godwin introduces a new tradition within white Zimbabwean autobiography. The child’s voice which he frequently employs is revisited in other memoirs. *Mukiwa* portrays white Rhodesia for the Anglophone reader and begins with descriptions of Godwin’s everyday life, in all its intricacies. The slow change towards the end of the memoir is evident, as it becomes darker and more disillusioned. The bitterness which the expulsion gave rise to in *Mukiwa* becomes partly self-inflicted in *Crocodile*. The disillusionment reaches new heights as Godwin becomes resentful towards his country of birth and the state in which he finds it. *Crocodile* represents the diasporic phase and reveals how difficult and excruciating the process of becoming someone trapped between two places can be. However, as Godwin himself has admitted, the lack of proper belonging can be a productive space as well. But the general feeling of helplessness, of not being able to affect (or accept) his fate, turns into something much more sustainable and useful in *The Fear*.

The Fear is his atonement for leaving, when he at least to some extent feels he should have stayed. He was able to leave, and it is as if he puts himself into perpetual danger when gathering material for *The Fear* to make up for the privileges he possesses. The constant movement which has characterized his

life as depicted in the memoirs also decreases in *The Fear*. This memoir symbolizes the immigrant phase; a phase in which Godwin has dealt with his anger and made some kind of peace with the past. Travels between the continents occur for professional reasons and no longer for personal ones, and the ending of the memoir; the therapy group for torture survivors who try to help themselves “because no one else will” (*The Fear*, 349), is also symbolic of his own detachment from Zimbabwe and particularly the past. The political change Godwin wished and hoped for did not happen, and the only thing that has profoundly changed, the only one who has undergone significant change, is Godwin himself as a writer. The three memoirs, and the three phases as indicated here, present a clear trajectory of Godwin’s life and the development within the memoirs sets him apart from other white Zimbabwean writers. However, the connection to other writers remains strong throughout, as a community of writers with similar interests and agendas slowly takes form. The doubly diasporic existence; first through settler parents and later as exiles or immigrants in a new country, has encapsulated both the belonging of their parents as well as that of themselves. The memoirs that have sprung from this displaced position perform belonging, perform history and reshape identity. Zimbabwe is the imagined home, more strongly in the past than the present, as was articulated by Godwin as well when he expressed his need to become a “real immigrant”. The network these writers create is based on shared nostalgia, movements across space and time and an extensive analysis of their own place: not just in Zimbabwe, but also in history. At the same time, Zimbabwe is acutely present and takes physical shape in their memories and experiences.

What is the way forward for these writers, and for Godwin? Will an eventual regime change in Zimbabwe cause a second wave of memoirs to come forth, perhaps from other settings and inspired by other events this time? That remains to be seen in years to come. For the moment it may suffice to note that the white Zimbabwean condition has been quite extensively negotiated in current literature. Godwin’s personal and professional lives are well-documented in his memoirs, and a thorough study of this writing has shown the importance of sometimes going back in order to move forward. As a once powerful minority, white Zimbabweans have been reduced to ordinary citizens, if not in Zimbabwe, then elsewhere in the world. Peter Godwin’s well-written and insightful memoirs enable a careful analysis of where that minority has been and what it has come to. From a collective perspective it is easy to dismiss his story and that of others in a similar

situation as 'Rhodesian', or inherently colonial, but the personal experiences reveal a much more complex reality. Which direction that reality takes is yet to be discovered. As Godwin balances between his two lives on different continents, between his roles as writer and reporter, and between his positions as Western and African, this study has attempted to find a balance between his privileges, displacement and personal struggles. That balance is based on thorough knowledge of Zimbabwe's history and the place of whites in it, as well as a careful investigation of previous criticism. Godwin's memoirs offer valuable insights into the migrant condition, the journalist's predicament in terms of interview subjects and ethics, and the writer's role as activist, cultural interpreter and just regular son, brother, father and human being. Ultimately, Godwin's attempts to reconcile these roles and experiences against wider forces of historical and political change bring to light the ambiguity and tensions which, in their essence, make a study such as this worthwhile.

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Svensk sammanfattning

Denna avhandling analyserar Peter Godwins självbiografiska böcker om hans liv i Zimbabwe. Memoarerna som står i fokus är *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996), *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* (2006) och *The Fear: The Last Days of Robert Mugabe* (2010). Sedan den stora jordreformen inleddes i Zimbabwe år 2000 har ett stort antal memoarer skrivna av vita zimbabwier getts ut. Reformen var politiskt motiverad och ledde till att många jordbrukare förlorade sin egendom och sina hem, vissa fick även sätta livet till. De arbetare som fanns vid gårdarna blev utan jobb och trakasserades också svårt. De memoarer som gavs ut efter jordreformens brutala inledning handlar ofta om förhållandet till Zimbabwe, om den koloniala bördan som fortfarande påverkar livet där, och om nostalgi i relation till barndomen och det privilegierade liv vita kunde leda i Sydrhodesia. Godwins memoarer har analyserats tidigare men inte i denna utsträckning. Utvecklingen som blir synlig i hans böcker är ett centralt tema för diskussionen i denna avhandling.

Analysen utgår ifrån fyra centrala områden och teman som framkommer som särskilt viktiga i Godwins texter: den litterära marknadsplatsen och dess betydelse för dessa memoarer; vithet och privilegier i samband med det koloniala arvet; migration, diaspora och nostalgi, och sist men inte minst en diskussion om litterärt reportage och Godwins roll som journalist och författare. Eftersom så många memoarer getts ut under de senaste tjugo åren, är det relevant att också diskutera fenomenet som en helhet, som en egen genre. Denna genre betecknas av flera gemensamma faktorer så som tidpunkten för publikation, ofta återkommande teman och en liknande uppbyggnad av texten samt fokus på den personliga diasporiska upplevelsen. Den största delen av de memoarer som analyseras här har skrivits av personer som inte längre bor i Zimbabwe och detta gör en central utgångspunkt för min studie.

Peter Godwins memoarer och de artiklar han skrivit för olika välkända tidskrifter har gett honom något av en auktoritetsposition och expertroll gällande frågor som berör Zimbabwe. Hans position har därmed också kritiserats i tidigare forskning, (se till exempel Primorac, 2010; Hove, 2014; Pilosof, 2012) och han har anklagats för att förespråka en specifikt rhodesisk synvinkel i sina memoarer. 'Rhodesisk' i detta fall är en problematisk term, eftersom den syftar till den koloniala perioden då Zimbabwe fortfarande styrdes av en vit minoritet. Hela genren bestående av vit zimbabwisk

självbiografi väcker frågor om vem som har företräde till berättelser, vems röst vi ska lyssna till, och även vem som slutligen lyckas nå ut till en världsomfattande publik med sin personliga berättelse och vilka faktorer som bidrar till detta. Det personliga är således alltid politiskt, och så är fallet i allra högsta grad även gällande den litteratur som studeras här. Frågan vem som kan tänkas representera afrikansk litteratur och vad begreppet står för idag är också viktig och ytterst komplex.

Resultaten i avhandlingen visar att förekomsten av nostalgi och ett ibland romantiskt förhållningssätt gentemot Zimbabwe och dess historia ofta härstammar från författarens utifrånperspektiv. Trots detta är Godwin, till skillnad från många andra författare med liknande bakgrund, ofta häpnadsväckande insiktsfull och självvironisk gällande sig själv och sina privilegier som till stor del har att göra med hans sociala status och vithet. Sarkasm är hans forte och memoarerna är generellt välskrivna. Den omfattande kritik de bemötts med bevisar dock att denna typ av litteratur fortfarande är politiskt mycket känslig. En sådan rätt problematisk utgångspunkt är i sig ett berättigande för en studie så som denna, där en bredare analys av Godwins memoarer ifråga företagits, något som inte gjorts förut i denna omfattning.

Kolonialismens arv lever ännu starkt kvar i södra Afrika, och det finns en lång väg att gå innan gamla ärr läkts helt. Hudfärgen påverkar fortfarande bemötandet både inom och utanför kontinentens gränser, och smärtan efter det koloniala våldet är påtaglig än i denna dag. Den personliga berättelsens popularitet för tillfället är också något som Godwin kunnat utnyttja i sina memoarer, samtidigt som hans sätt att skriva lagt grunden för något nytt som skiljer sig markant från tidigare liknande litteratur, till exempel jämfört med Doris Lessings självbiografi som kom ut 1994. Analysen visar på att Godwin inspirerat andra författare att ge ut memoarer och beskriva sitt eget personliga förhållande till Zimbabwe. Balansgången mellan det personliga och det politiska färgar både memoarerna i sig samt även analysen som företagits i denna avhandling.

Lena Englund

Memoir in Transit

Whiteness, Displacement and Journalism in Peter Godwin's Autobiographical Writing

Peter Godwin's three memoirs – *Mukiwa* (1996), *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* (2006) and *The Fear* (2010) – raise important questions about the relationship between the personal and the political, as well as between history and the place of particular individuals in society. For those growing up, as Godwin did, during the years of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe's transition from a colonial past to a post-colonial future, the value of white autobiographical experience has been disputed. Many individuals, including Godwin himself, have found themselves, by choice or necessity, living outside the country of their birth. The present study analyses the three memoirs and contextualizes them in relation to the claims and rights of white Zimbabwean life writing as a genre.

