‘SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?’ ZIMBABWE’S WHITE WRITING, 1980 TO 2011

by

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis finds its epistemological basis in two related motives: the re-conceptualisation of white writing in Zimbabwe as a sub-category of Zimbabwean literature, and the recognition of white narratives as necessarily dialogic. The first motive follows the realization that writing by Zimbabwean whites is systematically marginalized from "mainstream" Zimbabwean literature owing to its perceived irrelevance to the postcolonial Zimbabwean nation. Through an application of Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, this thesis argues for a recognition of white writing as a literary sub-system existing in relation to other literary and non-literary systems in Zimbabwe's polysystem of culture. As its second motive, the thesis also calls for a critical approach to white Zimbabwean narratives built on the understanding that the study of literature can no longer be left to monologic approaches alone. Rather, white narratives should be considered as multiple and hence amenable to a multiplicity of approaches that recognize dialogue as an essential aspect of all narratives. The thesis attempts, by closely reading nine white-authored narratives in Zimbabwe, to demonstrate that white Zimbabwean literature is characterized by multiplicity, simultaneity and instability; these are tropes developed from Bakhtin's understanding of utterances as characterized by a minimum of two voices. To consider white writing in Zimbabwe as a multiplicity is to call forth its numerous dimensions and breadth of perceptions. Simultaneity posits the need to understand opposites/conflicts as capable of existing side by side without necessarily dissolving into unity. Instability captures the several movements and destabilizations that affect writers, characters and the literary system. These three tropes enable a re-reading of white Zimbabwean narratives as complex and multi-nuanced. Such characteristics of the literary system are seen to reflect on the experiences of "whiteness" in postcolonial Zimbabwe. The white narratives selected for examination in this thesis therefore exhibit crises of belonging that reflect the dialogic nature of existence. In sum, this thesis is meant as a dialogue, culminating in the proposition that calls for a decentred and redemptive literary experience.

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Opsomming

Hierdie tesis vestig sy epistemologiese basis in twee verwante motiewe: die herkonseptualisering van skryfwerk deur wit skrywers in Zimbabwe as ’n sub-kategorie van Zimbabwiese letterkunde, en die erkenning van wit narratiewe as onontkombaar dialogies in aard en wese. Die eerste motief volg die argument dat die skryfwerke van wit Zimbabwieërs stelselmatig gemarginaliseer is uit “hoofstroom” Zimbabwiese literatuur, as gevolg van dié skryfwerke se beweerde irrelevansie tot die koloniale Zimbabwiese nasie-staat. Deur Even-Zohar se polisisteem teorie toe te pas, pleit hierdie tesis vir die erkenning van letterkunde deur wit skrywers as ’n literêre sub-stelsel wat bestaan in verhouding tot ander literêre en nie-literêre sisteme in Zimbabwe se polisisteem van kultuur. As sy tweede motief, vra die tesis ook vir ’n kritiese benadering tot wit Zimbabwiese narratiewe, gebou op die verstandhouding dat die studie van letterkunde nie meer suiwer aan monologies benaderings oorgelewer behoort te word nie. Inteendeel, wit narratiewe moet as veelsydig beskou word, en dus vatbaar vir ’n verskeidenheid benaderings wat dialoog as ’n noodsaaklike aspek van alle verhale erken en verken. Deur nege wit outeurs se verhale in Zimbabwe noukeurig te lees, dui hierdie tesis aan dat wit Zimbabwiese literatuur gekenmerk word deur veelvuldigheid, gelyktydigheid en onstabiliteit; hieride is teoretiese konsepte wat ontleen is aan Bakhtin se begrip van uitsprake (“utterances”) as bestaande uit ’n *minimum* van twee stemme. Om wit lettere in Zimbabwe as *veelvuldig* te verklaar is om die talle dimensies en breedtes van persepsie in letterkundige korpus te erken. Gelyktydig postuleer die tesis die moontlikheid dat teenoorgesteldes/konflikte langs mekaar kan en móét bestaan, sonder om noodwendig in ’n eenheid te ontaard. Onstabiliteit, soos dit hier verstaan word, omvat die verskillende bewegings en ontstuimige roeringe wat skrywers, karakters en die literêre sisteem beïnvloed. Hierdie drie konsepte laat ’n herlees van wit Zimbabwiese verhale toe wat as kompleks en multi-genuanseerd bestempel kan word. Sulke kenmerke van die literêre sisteem moet in ag geneem word om die ervaring van “witheid” in post-koloniale Zimbabwe effektief uit te beeld. Die wit verhale wat gekies is vir herlees in hierdie tesis beeld dus krisisse van bestaan uit wat die dialogiese aard van die menslike bestaan omvat. Ter afsluiting is hierdie tesis bedoel as ’n dialoog wat kulmineer in ’n oproep vir gedensentraliseerde en verlossende ervarings van die letterkunde in sy geheel.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my loving friend and wife Beatrice Mazviita Kahlamba and our children Tawananyasha, Tinayeshe …

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I am indebted to all those with whom I constantly dialogued. Without dialogue, any dialogue, this thesis would not have materialized. Like the mythical Adam, it would have remained locked in its own silences, unable to be heard or to hear the voice of another.

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I am hugely indebted to Rebecca Rafunya, my loving mother and friend whose love is like no other. She never misses a moment to pray for me, my family and all those she loves. I can never repay what she has done for me.

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Chapter 1: Reconceptualizing white writing in Zimbabwe

> Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence. (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 252)

> The aim is not to construct a premature identity, but a tensile unity of simultaneities. (Holquist xi-xii)

> Uniformity need not be postulated. (Even-Zohar 291)

1.1. Introduction

This thesis forms part of what must at this stage still be regarded as a constricted dialogue on white writing in Zimbabwe. The dialogue is constricted precisely because prevailing discourses on nationalism have the effect of excluding white voices from any meaningful "narration of the nation" (cf. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*) in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, the thesis has been written in the awareness that, in literary evaluation, "there is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 170). The intention is to open up and expand the dialogue on white writing by proffering an alternative conceptual perception of this sub-field as inescapably multivalent. Broadly, the research takes its cue from an acknowledgement, following Bakhtin, of the fundamentally *dialogic* nature of utterances. For Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination* 104), two aspects define the text as an utterance: its intention and the fulfilment of this intention. The nature of every text-as-utterance is therefore determined by a dialectic relationship consisting of its intention, on the one hand, and the process of realizing the intention, on the other. The intention represents the "centripetal" need to unify a text and stabilize its meaning while the process fulfilling this need demonstrates the "centrifugal" destabilization of the text amid heteroglossia (cf. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 269-270; 272; 423). One might argue, extrapolating from Bakhtin and others, including Derrida, that this process involves divergences, slippages, simultaneities and contradictions as utterances move through the "normative-centralizing system of a unitary language", participating in its "centripetal forces and tendencies", while "at the same time [partaking] of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces)" (*Dialogic Imagination* 272). This is a struggle,

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an ongoing process of dialogic tension, which is widely acknowledged in critical theory at large to be a significant feature of all writing, in particular novelistic writing, and it would take a very long stretch of the critical imagination to find that white writing in Zimbabwe should be any different. To consider white writing in Zimbabwe as representing multiple forms of utterances is to acknowledge its dialogic potential. It is to concede that literary works, white writing in this instance, reveal divergences, contradictions and simultaneities as manifestations of the centrifugal/centripetal struggle, within a Bakhtinian understanding of textual dialogism. In this way, white writing in Zimbabwe might cease to be regarded as a monologue, as unacceptably monologic, a characteristic this thesis sees as imposed on it in Zimbabwe's critical tradition.

"Should I stay or should I go", taken from a headline in the London-based *The Times* (2009) which ran: "Should I stay or should I go: what every white Zimbabwean asks",[1] typifies an ambivalence characterized by a certain dialectic tension. It exemplifies the existence of two voices in the simplest form. In Shona, the paradox is much more forcefully encapsulated in the saying *gumbo-mumba-gumbo-panze*,[2] which entails not just contradiction, but also a crisis of belonging. This crisis ensues when someone is unsure of his/her place in society. His or her attitude to the world is at best ambivalent. Staying/going transcends the literal and the physical. It denotes more than individual white writers' choices about staying or leaving the country. As will be noted, some writers have left the country while others have remained. Nevertheless, staying and leaving are not coherent and stable signs. They are provisional and multi-nuanced; and they operate at various levels that include both the temporal and the spatial.

Staying/going cannot therefore be regarded as a neat division. As Bhabha says of Frantz Fanon's metaphor "black skins, white masks", "it is a doubling, dissembling image of being in *at least two places at once*" (*The Location of Culture* 44; emphasis added). Staying/going is a transition, a two-ness, a state of in-between, or a liminality: someone is caught in the act of going and staying. The ambivalence that these traits suggest, in the Bakhtinian view, is ontological, a characteristic of existence itself. Bakhtin (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 252) reminds us: "Two voices is

[1] The first part of the headline borrows from a pop song by well-known rock band "The Clash" about a lover seeking clarity from a beloved on where their relationship stands.
[2] Literally, "one leg in the house, one leg outside". At best it refers to a state of deep-seated ambivalence, and at worst, untrustworthiness.

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the minimum for life, the minimum for existence." Such multivalence, often expressed as ambivalence and paradox, is evident on multiple levels: the dilemma of ordinary whites in Zimbabwe regarding their place in independent Zimbabwe; individual white writers and their place in Zimbabwe's literary history; the status of literary texts; the attitudes of critics and readers; and literary categories. It is, in addition, an ambivalence which to a large extent determines how white writers see themselves and their black Zimbabwean counterparts and how they feel they are perceived as citizens or as aliens in the context of gradual but seemingly permanent loss of power and privilege.

A selection of white writing in Zimbabwe is seen, here, to address this crisis of staying/going. Examples include works such as Tim McLoughlin's *Karima* (1985), Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa* (1996), Ian Smith's *The Great Betrayal: The Memoirs of Ian Douglas Smith* (1997), Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2003), Eric Harrison's *Jambanja* (2008), John Eppel's *Absent the English Teacher* (2009), Bryony Rheam's *This September's Sun* (2009) and Douglas Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009). This literature's discernible qualities – which this dissertation suggests include multiplicity, two-ness, in-between states, paradox, mutation, transience, ambivalence, simultaneity and a crisis of belonging – constitute an alternative conceptual angle from which selected white Zimbabwean texts might be understood. In addition, staying/going finds textual expression in the exploration of various topics, principally conflict, reminiscence, landscape, whiteness and change. It is around these themes that the thesis is structured. Conflict, reminiscence, change and the question of whiteness are never far from articulation in most white narratives in Zimbabwe. Landscape writing, a prominent feature of what J.M. Coetzee famously typified as "white writing in South Africa", is also discernible in white writing in Zimbabwe. In the case of white landscape writing in South Africa, the impetus of landscape writing seems to be conditioned by the movement from country to city and the conflict between peasant and capitalist modes of production, whereas white writing in Zimbabwe largely responds to political events such as the transfer of political power from whites to blacks in 1980, the shifting discourses on belonging and citizenship since the first decade of independence, and the land redistribution programme in the 2000s. Both literatures, nevertheless, derive from "the concerns of people no longer European, not yet African" (Coetzee 11). The paradox of liminality – "no longer European, not yet African" – observed by Coetzee is in core

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respects very similar to the predicament of the staying/going crisis, or what I have called *gumbo mumba gumbo panze*.

The historical and social context of the kind of ambivalence characterized above needs some elaboration. When formal colonialism ended in Zimbabwe in 1980 many whites – having lost colonial privileges and perhaps unable or unwilling to live under a black government – immediately emigrated. An estimated 100,000 whites emigrated during the first years of independence (Uusihakala 1). By 1992, around 82,000 were left in the country and 62,000 of these considered themselves Zimbabwean citizens (Fisher xi). The 2002 census recorded fewer than 50,000 whites still in Zimbabwe, of which more than 10,000 were elderly and fewer than 9,000 were under the age of 15.[3] Central to such a pattern of flight is the question of nationhood and its narration since 1980 in a majority black Zimbabwe. The nation has, since this date, been characterized within broadly poststructuralist critique as "an invention" that is inseparable from its narration.[4] Bhabha (*Nation and Narration* 1) draws attention to "a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write it and the lives of those who live it". This ambivalence, which grows out of an awareness of the nation's mutability, is central to the research in this study. Kinloch rhetorically asks: "[W]hat happens to intergroup attitudes when a previously colonized population gains political independence?" (820). His response: a movement from "initial optimism" to "inevitable ambivalence". It is in the present research's interest to ask the question: how do marginalized narratives – particularly those of white writers in a black-ruled Zimbabwe – narrate white subjectivity, nationhood and belonging in the face of the nation's own sense of ambivalence and the ambivalence of discourses seeking to inscribe the nation's immutability?

In the field of literary studies, some narrations of nation may be regarded as inseparable from the "institutional" uses of fiction, where certain literary works are employed and deployed in the service of nationalist ideology (Brennan 47). Accompanying the literary works in conveying nationalist ideology in Zimbabwe are several historical texts studied in schools.[5] These "national

[3] The *Irish Examiner Report* (2005).
[4] See B. Anderson; Bennington; Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*; Brennan; Gellner.
[5] Barnes (633) notes that Zimbabwean secondary school historical textbooks which include Proctor and Phimister (1991); Prew et al.; Mukanya; and Mlambo (*Focus on History Book 4*) were all produced to

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narratives" not only result in the creation of "foundational fictions" (Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* 5) which, in current Zimbabwean literary criticism, are likely to refer to black "patriotic" writing (as will be discussed later); such narratives also create "moments of disavowal, displacement, exclusion, and cultural contestation" (ibid). They delineate boundaries of national belonging by disowning and excluding specific groups.[6] The texts contain monolithic representations of "white colonizers" and settlers, on the one hand, and "black decolonizers" and indigenes, on the other. This black/white racial binary, accompanied by essentialized notions of indigeneity, is key to how the new Zimbabwean nation has been imagined in recent times.[7] It is not lost on this researcher that Rhodesia as a nation was also predicated on essentialist notions about race. Colonial policies and behaviours were heavily reliant on, and faithfully reflected, fixed notions of race. In Zimbabwe, ethnic minorities, such as coloureds, Asians and descendants of immigrants from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, are alienated.[8] Ndlovu-Gatsheni (*Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist?* 3) typifies monolithic narratives that inscribe essentialist narratives of Zimbabweanness as "praise-texts"; for him, they contribute to a "monologic account of the past" that reinforces ZANU PF's authoritarian construction of the nation.[9]

In Zimbabwe after 1990 (and especially since 2000), the ethnic and vernacular aspects of the construction of the nation – which emphasize descent, common ancestry, myths, history and presumed family ties – have prevailed over the civic elements, which emphasize law, institutions

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meet the requirements of "a nationalist, Africa-centred and Marxist-inspired history syllabus introduced in 1991".

[6] Fisher argues that whites and other minorities, such as coloureds and Asians, have been reproduced as "aliens" and "exiles" in official narratives about Zimbabwe, while Raftopoulos ("The Crisis in Zimbabwe" 21) identifies "whites, the MDC and the civic movement, urbanites and farm workers" as part of "a series of outsiders".

[7] See Raftopoulos, "Unreconciled Differences"; "The Crisis in Zimbabwe"; and Muzondidya.

[8] Descendants of immigrant workers, however, integrate with some success into "mainstream" Zimbabwean society through inter-marriages, sports, arts, education and politics. Alick Macheso, who is widely considered the best Zimbabwean "Sungura" musician, is a descendant of immigrant workers from Malawi. Both Benjani Mwaruwaru and the late Moses Chunga, born of parents of Malawian descent, played for the Zimbabwe soccer national team with Mwaruwaru captaining the team at one point.

[9] ZANU PF, led by Robert Mugabe, was exclusively at the helm of Zimbabwe from 1980 until 2008, when a government of national unity comprising of ZANU PF and two MDC political formations was formed. However, the "national unity" referred to here is widely regarded as a sham for exclusive control by ZANU PF, which continues in all notable respects to exert its dominance in virtually every area of national life.

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and territorial boundaries.[10] Such ethnic and vernacular elements find expression in what has been referred to as "patriotic history".[11] Patriotic history – or in Muzondidya's terms (6), "ZANU PF's populist politics of racial nationalism" – has often been used to alienate minorities and, more significantly, their narratives from what one might describe as *orthodox* national discourses. In most respects, Zimbabwe's pre-1980 nationalist war memory is central to these discourses, providing "a classificatory scheme, the wherewithal to think about who belongs, and how, to the Zimbabwean nation" (Fisher 79). The struggle is reconstituted as "the central legitimizing factor" framing "the boundaries of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' to the nation" (Raftopoulos and Mlambo xxviii). Notably, orthodox nationalist discourses resemble a "monologue" (Raftopoulos, "Unreconciled Differences" xiii). They are monologues precisely because they proscribe the space for dialogue. Nevertheless, alternative cases of narrating the nation immediately come into the equation the moment any orthodox version of nationalism is set up or held up as a preferred narration of nationhood. "At the centre", Bennington (121-22) observes, "the nation narrates itself as *the* nation: at the borders, it must recognize that there are other nations on which it cannot but depend" (emphasis in original). The question of monologue quickly falls away. Vambe ("Zimbabwe's creative" 93) notes that "literary cultures [...] are less amenable to total destruction" even during ideological proscriptions. This thesis is specifically concerned about one such literary culture representing the displaced narratives of nationhood in Zimbabwean literature, in particular the narratives of white writers in Zimbabwe. The issue of "whites", for better or worse, is never far from articulations and discussions of Zimbabweanness.

1.2. Justification for the Study

The absence of white writing from discussions of Zimbabwean literature creates an unintentional vacuum in the understanding of the full spectrum of Zimbabwean literature and experience. This research draws attention to the existence of what has been a previously neglected literary historiography. Through this excavation, the different ways in which white writers mediate issues of belonging and citizenship in view of the often radical social, economic and political

[10] For a discussion of "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism one can read Anthony Smith's *National Identity* (1991).

[11] Ranger uses this phrase in reference to the ruling party's self-serving history where the nationalist war is re-interpreted as a struggle between ZANU PF black revolutionaries and white settlers or the indigenous against the aliens.

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changes in post-independent Zimbabwe are brought into view. By focusing on "crises of belonging", it is hoped that the research will provide a deeper understanding of "white" postcolonial literary and aesthetic worldviews, especially their sources or points of departure, present manifestations and future directions. The archive of African literature potentially stands to benefit from additional, complicating knowledge, rendering a formerly incomplete account more inclusive and adequate.

1.3. Goals and Theoretical framework

In particular, the thesis is limited to three major points of focus. The first is a reconceptualization of white writing in Zimbabwe as a literary system. The motive of such an endeavour is to set the stage for a systematic study of white writing in Zimbabwe as one of the many sub-categories of Zimbabwean literature. From this viewpoint, white writing is restored and (re-storied) within the historical and cultural archives referred to as Zimbabwean literature as one of its sub-categories, together with black Zimbabwean literature. This is particularly important in that it makes possible the integration of white writing into the Zimbabwean literary historiography where it has been previously ignored and rejected. The second major point of focus is related to the first. It concerns a dialogical narrative analysis of selected texts by white writers in Zimbabwe in order to appreciate the complexity and multiplicity of voices in the white literary sub-system. The idea, as Holquist (xi-xii) notes, "is not to construct a premature identity, but a tensile unity of simultaneities". A close reading of selected texts will demonstrate the need to understand all utterances, white writing in Zimbabwe in this particular instance, as inescapably *dialogic*. Significantly, I look at the various, multiple positions (perceptions, attitudes and evocations) which writers, literary works and characters assume amid ambivalence, while considering the possibilities of occupying multiple positions. Such an investigation is intended to go against the grain of bland assumptions about the ideological and monologic content of white writing, and the so-called "white world-view" (if such a monolithic institution can be said to exist at all).

The objectives may be expressed thus:

- To draw theoretical attention to a complex body of Zimbabwean literature written by white authors;

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- To critique prevalent (existing) monolithic accounts of writing in Zimbabwean literary criticism; and
- To examine dimensions of "whiteness" and perceptions of belonging, ambivalence or rejection in an ever-changing postcolonial Zimbabwe as they are represented in a selected corpus of prose works written by whites in/from Zimbabwe between 1980 and 2011.

The first objective is premised on polysystem theory, which considers all semiotically conveyed categories (literature, language, ideology, politics, culture and economy, for example) as systems "of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap" (Even-Zohar 290). "Polysystem", as opposed to "uni-system", accounts for the dynamic, diverse and stratified nature of each system with a view to exploring the relations existing among the various strata constituting a system and with those of other systems.

Considering literature as part of a semiotically communicated polysystem, one which comprises various literary systems distributed between the centre and the periphery of the polysystem, calls for an understanding of "stratificational oppositions" (Even-Zohar, 296) or, in the Bakhtinian sense, the dialectical tensions that characterize all polysystems. These tensions, marked by the push-pull forces of centre and periphery, are always already inherent in literary systems of all kinds. In the case of Zimbabwe's literary polysystem – comprising sub-systems such as black writing, white writing, literature in the vernacular, children's literature and translated literature, among others – these tensions manifest themselves in the tentative positions literary works hold in the polysystem at any given historical moment and the displacements that occur as some literary texts move from the periphery to the centre and vice versa. In situations where literary systems are clearly marked, certain kinds of literary works are canonized while others are not, and this study seeks to problematize and bring such processes of inclusion and exclusion into the light of critical examination. Even-Zohar (293) calls such interactions "conversions". During the time of the old Rhodesia, for example, white writing occupied the centre of the literary polysystem and black writing existed in the margins. However, after 1980 this hierarchical structure was transformed. Such transformation, almost a hiatus, explains why the writer here chooses to begin the current study in 1980. 2011, on the other hand, does not signal the end of

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the transformation referred to, but is chosen merely as a convenient cut-off date to satisfy pragmatic periodization demands.

1980 to 2011 serves another purpose besides delimiting the period in which texts are here chosen for examination. It also represents a period of marked transformations in politics of nationhood and belonging in Zimbabwe. Although the title's first part, "should I stay or should I go" implicates a narrower historical range − after the land crisis in the 2000s, and the emergence of the afore-mentioned "patriotic history" almost at around the same time as land reform − it should be emphasized that the discursive range that is suggested by the question dates back to the 1980s, and even beyond. It is a question which, when considered at its metaphorical level, can be broken down into a sub-set of multiple questions and indeed responses to the nationalist war, independence, reconciliation, land reform, economic challenges, and political crises, among other developments in the postcolonial state. White narratives of the 1980s, such as Bruce Moore-King's *White Man Black War* (1988), equally struggle with questions of staying/going, albeit in their peculiar ways, as do narratives of the post-2000s. One encounters ambivalences of a spatial and temporal nature in a selected corpus of white narratives spread across the period 1980 to 2011.

The "oppositions" of canonicity and non-canonicity which characterize the literary polysystem are understood not as primarily literary, but socio-cultural. In other words, the literary polysystem interacts with other polysystems, such as language, ideology and politics, to the effect that the stratified relations governing it are constrained by other systems (Even-Zohar 301). In Zimbabwe, the literary polysystem is largely responsive to a socio-cultural polysystem dominated by a black governing elite (ZANU PF), whose official ideology on belonging has distinct racial undertones. The official ideology has influenced other systems, such as literature, by affecting and helping to fix (or determine) their respective centres and peripheries.

Accordingly, "facts of 'literary life' i.e., literary establishments such as criticism (not scholarship) publishing houses, periodicals and other mediating factors, are often 'translation' functors of the 'more remote' constraining socio-cultural system" (Even-Zohar 297). The question of which literary texts should be celebrated and which derided in Zimbabwe after 1980

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is largely extraneous to the literary polysystem. For the most part, it is an element of an ongoing dialogue between the Zimbabwean literary polysystem and a socio-cultural polysystem governed by core principles of black nationalism. The part played by critics across various disciplines, by educators, the media and government in the creation of centre and periphery in a literary polysystem cannot be overstated. It appears that the call for a revision of the education system by the Zimbabwean government in the 1990s, culminating in the publication of history texts deemed appropriately "nationalist, Africa-centred and Marxist-inspired" (Barnes 633), has also been met in the literature components of school curricula. In this regard, examinable texts studied at schools, especially after the introduction of the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC), were either texts written by blacks or white narratives considered pro-nationalist, for example Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1973), largely acclaimed for its anti-colonialist sentiments, and Patricia Chater's *Crossing the Boundary Fence* (1988), seen as contributing towards a ZANU PF agenda of reconciliation grounded in silences about the "politically incorrect" aspects of the past (Tagwirei).

In his choice of texts for analysis, Rino Zhuwarara (*Introduction*) cites the study of texts in schools as his basis for discussing black writing only. This reliance on an education system agenda by a literary critic reflects a dialogic interaction across systems within the cultural polysystem. Until 2001, when Zhuwarara's text was published, only two white-authored texts with a Zimbabwean focus had been studied in Zimbabwean schools. These are *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* (1988), a children's text by Michael Gascoigne, and *Rumours of Ophir* (1998), a detective story by Paul Freeman. Currently, the only other notable white Zimbabwean text included in the Advanced Level Literature in English syllabus is Bryony Rheam's *This September Sun* (2009), albeit included under the "African" literature section despite the presence of a Zimbabwean Literature section. Literature courses at the three universities that teach literature in Zimbabwe (University of Zimbabwe, Midlands State University and Great Zimbabwe University) explicitly focus on black writing. Only Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (initially published by Michael Joseph in 1950, thirty years before independence) attracts the interest of the university curriculum designers. By determining which literature set books will be examined at various levels in schools, for example, curriculum designers and educators make certain texts visible while simultaneously making others invisible.

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Pro-government media has also contributed to literary consecration in Zimbabwe. *The Patriot*, a weekly Zimbabwean newspaper established in 2011, has led the crusade against virtually all white writing. Ironically, it is to the newspaper's credit that it has given more attention to white writing than most literary critics of Zimbabwean literature combined. In its book review section, one is almost always likely to come across predictably damning reviews of white writers. In "a round-up of 2013 book reviews" published in *The Patriot* of 19 December 2013 under the same title, Melinda Chikukura-Teya and Shingirirai Mutonho rightly point out what has been, and remains, the core objective of their reviews of white writing when they say:

> We have been accused of many things one of them which is giving unfair coverage to the white narrative. Some of our readers felt that the white contribution to our Zimbabwean literature was of no consequence as the reading culture was fast diminishing. Our response is simple. If you see a snake in your house playing with your child you first kill the snake and save your child whom you will later admonish.

They further emphasize the need to "expose the serpent-like characteristics in some of the narratives." The implication is that white writing is important to Zimbabwean literature only for the ideological and political dangers it poses for (black) Zimbabweans. A recurrent theme in *The Patriot* reviews of white narratives is that Zimbabwe is under siege from "Rhodesian" literature, an essentialist descriptor of all white narratives after 1980. What we get from the ensuing criticisms of white writing in the media is what Macherey labels criticism-as-condemnation. Macherey makes a useful distinction between criticism-as-explanation and criticism-as-condemnation, explaining that the latter tends towards "a gesture of refusal, a denunciation, a hostile judgment" (3). Because white narratives in Zimbabwe are considered a threat to the nation, the tone of criticism that critics adopt towards it is that of hostility.

To this effect, the study of the Zimbabwean literary polysystem is largely a study of black writing and the exclusion or marginalization of white writing. The ongoing dialogue between polysystems is critical to a discussion of white writing in Zimbabwe. Of course there is another level at which the polysystem interacts: with polysystems belonging to a different community

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such as when white writing in Zimbabwe borrows from white writing in or from South Africa. Nevertheless, attention is here predominatly given to the relationships subsisting between the white Zimbabwean literary system and other cultural systems in Zimbabwe as a way of contextualizing white writing in Zimbabwe.

Although official censorship against white writing in Zimbabwe has never been effected, broader social mechanisms have managed to proscribe white writing with relative success. As a result, studies of the Zimbabwean literary polysystem generally cover black writing and exclude or marginalize white writing. In consequence, a more critical dialogue between polysystems is key to discussions of both Zimbabwean literature and white writing in Zimbabwe. In the absence of such dialogue, white writing and its (minimal) support structures might increasingly be tempted to affiliate with South African writing or transnational literary systems from the outset, denuding Zimbabwean literature of a vital systemic substrate.

The second and third points (to critique prevalent monolithic accounts of writing in Zimbabwean literary criticism; and to study dimensions of "whiteness" and perceptions of belonging, ambivalence or rejection) find theoretical grounding in Bakhtin's dialogism; a notion which refuses one-dimensional description. Holquist characterizes dialogism as "an open event" and warns that any claims to comprehension or authority are "misguided" (x). The term "dialogism" is thus necessarily used to account for the primacy of the principle of dialogue in Bakhtin's writings while retaining their "dynamic heterogeneity" (Holquist 14). In this regard, three conceptual motifs that explicate the current researcher's objectives in this dissertation will be defined and examined in the bulk of the thesis, all of them subsumed under the trope of staying/going. These are:

- Multiplicity
- Instability
- Simultaneity

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Multiplicity

Dialogism recognizes the existence of multiple forms of perspectives. Characters, for example, enter into dialogue with each other as independent voices that remain unreconciled throughout any particular narrative account. The author's voice is just one of the possible modes of expression about, for example, whiteness in a postcolonial Zimbabwean context. Even in cases where the author uses seemingly authoritative language, other voices remain autonomous, refusing to be tamed by the unifying/centripetal voice of the author. Bakhtin (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 252) expresses this when he says "a single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing. Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence". A monologue, even when desired, is untenable. Multiplicity is a feature of all utterances: "Any one voice always comprises multiple voices" (Frank 34). According to Frank, any analysis that gives emphasis to dialogue needs "to recognize that any individual voice is actually a dialogue between voices" (35). Bakhtin calls this attribute *polyphony*, where every voice resonates with other voices. To perceive individual white narratives in Zimbabwe as polyphonic is to unbundle them. It is to erode the boundaries imposed on white writing by authoritative discourses that insist on reifying these texts. In this regard, dialogue becomes the intersection of multiple voices, each representing a form of consciousness. White narratives in Zimbabwe represent this multiplicity in so far as they link voices. Typically, in any individual text one may come across voices by politicians, farmers, expatriates, business people, the religious, young, old, men and women. In her reading of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Sanchez points to the existence of fifteen distinct voices in this classic of twentieth-century fiction. It is such a recognition of multiple voices that this thesis regards as essential to an understanding of white Zimbabwean prose.

Instability

In dialogism, absolute values and fixed positions do not exist. Dialogue remains open to the extent that nothing is finalized. Literary works, characters and meanings remain open to interpretation and reinterpretation. To quote Bakhtin:

> There is neither a first word nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even past meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once

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> and for all) – they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future developments of the dialogue [...] Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival. (*Speech Genres* 170)

Understanding that "nothing is absolutely dead" allows for multiple re-readings of texts in order to uncover other possible meanings from them. Because utterances are multiple, one is always confronted with a myriad of inexhaustible voices. It is inevitable that some voices will escape the reader. More importantly, some voices may be ignored. Texts are never transparent or self-evident. Both writing and reading are best understood as provisional.

Likewise, the "white" in "Zimbabwe's white writing" is not about essentialized racial distinctions in literary studies, but about understanding the network of relations among the literatures within a cultural polysystem where unstable racial distinctions exist. The same is true of the term "black". Renan rightfully defines race as "something which is made and unmade" (15). "White", along with other racial descriptors, is considered an "omnibus identit[y] that cover[s] diverse, sometimes conflicting loyalties" (Chege 78), or "a hot potato variously juggled and differently handled, grasped, welcomed or rendered problematic across time and space" (De Kock, "Call of the Wild" 15), and it is precisely for this reason that the term is used to denote subjectivities that are not only multiple, but also divergent and contradictory. It will be noted that today, in Zimbabwe, a *murungu*[12] is not just a racial category that is made to stand for "white" alone. Rather, it is often unmade in such a way that anyone who displays "white-like" qualities – for instance, "the one with the most cash" – is a *murungu*. Its use, therefore, evolves, is context-specific, and multiple.

The pronoun "I", as has rightfully been noted by Jakobson, is "a shifter" in the sense that it invokes multiple positions as it moves from one speaking subject to another. It is in these movements that utterances become multiple and unstable. In her discussion of identity and difference, Trinh T. Minh-ha calls for an approach to difference that disrupts the notion of essentialized identities. Her rejection of a unified "I" finds application in the study of white

[12] The term itself is traced to Swahili for "Lord", and existed long before whites arrived on the continent. Colonial history played a huge part in conflating "*murungu*" with "white"/"boss"/"my lord"/"bwana".

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writing since it permits the existence of a multiple, slippery and contradictory self who is "[n]ot quite the same [and] not quite the other" (n.p.). Such an understanding upsets conventional monolithic identities. The "I" in "Should I Stay or Should I Go" is similarly considered multiple. It does not have a centre, hence the need to constantly explore it. In the narratives by white writers in Zimbabwe, every use of "I" invokes difference, which is why Even-Zohar's (291) observation that "uniformity need not be postulated" is important.

Simultaneity

Simultaneity recognizes the existence of infinite possibilities for oppositions in all utterances. It is a relation of unresolved difference (Holquist 39). Nevertheless, contradictions are not mutually exclusive. They overlap. "Should I stay or should I go" does not point to exclusive possibilities. Bakhtin assures us that

> [e]very concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance. (*Dialogic Imagination* 272)

What may be deduced from the quotation above is that contradictions *do* live side by side. It is not enough to acknowledge that voices are multiple. One needs to focus beyond multiplicity to embrace the idea that many voices can live side by side without necessarily being reduced to one consolidated voice. Centripetal forces, which find nourishment from official or authoritative ideologies, seek just that. Their goal is synthesis: "[T]he negation of one statement by another (thesis/antithesis) [...] differences are subsumed into a unified, integrated position" (Lillis 199). De Santis, who applies the dialogic approach to depictions of exile experiences, notes that it recognizes "contradictions, simultaneities, and conflicts" (1) not as problematic, but as manifestations of the centripetal-centrifugal dynamic. Unlike "monological thinking" which "denies the possibility of contradictory ideas existing simultaneously" (De Santis 1), dialogic thinking acknowledges the unending struggle between centripetal forces, which seek unity and sameness, and centrifugal forces, which gravitate towards separation and difference (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* xx).

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Dialogism signals a celebration of dynamism, instability, variability, multiplicity and simultaneity; all of which are central to the understanding of the ambivalence that characterizes prose works by the white Zimbabwean writers selected for examination in this study. Monologue, which is the antithesis of dialogue, is regarded with suspicion. Perceptions and attitudes depicted in white writing in Zimbabwe are best understood as multiple, dynamic and simultaneous. Bakhtin's dialogic approach is applied to white writing in Zimbabwe with the intention of subverting the seemingly popular mode of reading white texts as homogeneous, uniform and monologic. This approach involves studying white writing as indicative of the "centripetal/centrifugal" forces operating in the lives of white writers in Zimbabwe.

Dialectic tensions and dialogues occur within and across systems, where system is considered "a heterogeneous, open structure" (Even-Zohar 290). A system can hence be understood as "the authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 272). Bakhtin emphasizes that the environment, or in this case the system, is "dialogized heteroglossia" (*Dialogic Imagination* 272). In his discussion of the novel, Bakhtin raises awareness of the importance of understanding "every concrete utterance" as "a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear" (*Dialogic Imagination* 272). These forces demonstrate the dialectic nature of existence where paradoxes, tensions and contradictions are consistently rehearsed.

Whereas the "poly" of the polysystem refers to the multiplicity of intersections among the latter's systems, the "poly" in Bakhtin's polyphony relates to "how one speaker's voice is always resonant with the voices of specific others – people whom the speaker listens to and whose response she or he anticipates" (Frank 35). Where polysystem theory emphasizes dialogue between two or more systems, dialogism recognizes dialogue as embedded in any one utterance. As observed by Frank (34), "any one voice always comprises multiple voices". Whereas Even-Zohar emphasizes the need to focus on the interactions among the various repertoires within a system, Bakhtin provides a methodological route to explaining the double-voiced nature of the individual utterance. The advantages of polysystem theory and dialogism, especially when understood in relation to each other, are that they offer the possibility of transcending strictures

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set in place by rigid theoretical boundaries and enable a broader and relatively more nuanced and adequate conceptualization of literature. In the case of white Zimbabwean writing, we are enabled to understand this body of work as one of various sub-systems in the Zimbabwean literary system. Such approaches depart from the less dialogic-systemic approaches so often evident in the discussions of Zimbabwean literature, in general, and white Zimbabwean writing, in particular. The approaches advocated here, to the contrary, recognize contradictions, simultaneities and conflicts in the writings of white Zimbabweans.

1.4. White writing as a literary system in the Zimbabwean literary polysystem

Arguably, one of the chronic blind spots in Zimbabwean literary criticism has been the failure to conceptualize the literature written by whites in Zimbabwe since 1980. As already pointed out, some of the criticism practised on white writing adheres to the category of "criticism-as-condemnation" (Macherey 3). This form of criticism can also be noted in Irele's ambivalence towards white South African writers, such as Paton, Gordimer, Fugard and Coetzee, whose work's commitment to the experiences of the black community in South Africa he finds distinct from that of metropolitan writers such as Conrad. Despite this difference, Irele insists that the white writers referred to are "bound [...] to the European literary tradition" because "they do not display the sense of a connection to an informing spirit of imaginative expression rooted in an African tradition" (60). This informing spirit expresses itself through oral literature, "the basic intertext of the African imagination" (56). Such potentially divisive approaches, when they are applied to Zimbabwean literature, seek to deny white writing in Zimbabwe entry to the category of Zimbabwean literature.

Ironically, white writing in the old Rhodesia suffered a similar fate. Chennells's *Settler Myths and the Southern Rhodesian Novel*, described by its author as "the first study that has been undertaken of novels which are wholly or partly set in Southern Rhodesia and which are written by whites" (vii), points to an ambivalence about white writing well before 1980. Critics either ignored Rhodesian novels or treated them as South African. In rare cases, critics focused on "the more substantial names like Haggard, Kipling and Buchan" (*Settler Myths* viii). Despite this marginalization, Chennells (*Settler Myths* x) insists on the Rhodesianness of white writing before 1980 on the basis of its writers' "sense of community and future". He identifies different "settler

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myths" and how they informed various novels of this period, from the earliest writings by explorers and missionaries to the time of the liberation war. In other words, Chennells argues that a white Rhodesian literary tradition existed on the basis of shared perceptions by white writers.

White writing in Zimbabwe shares certain relevant properties and satisfies a set of relations, two characteristics identified by Van Dijk in his discussion of types of texts belonging to particular disciplines or systems. The descriptive schemata frequently used to classify a narrowly conceived sense of "Zimbabwean" literature (Zimunya; Veit-Wild, *Teachers*; Zhuwarara, *Introduction*) and an equally constrained sense of "Rhodesian" literature (Pichanick et al.) can also be adopted for use in classifying a more encompassing totality of Zimbabwean literature, with minor adjustments. Pragmatism and flexibility, two approaches demonstrated by Pichanick et al. in their classification of Rhodesian literature, seem suited, in part, to resolving the question of what Zimbabwean literature ultimately might be, or become. Generally, all works with Zimbabwean themes and settings; all works by writers who may be considered Zimbabwean by virtue of being born in colonial or postcolonial Zimbabwe; or writers with a significant association with the country; are considered under the rubric of Zimbabwean literature. Of course, white writing did not begin in 1980. However, pre-1980 white writing is recognized in literary criticism as a specifically *Rhodesian* literary category.[13] The term "Rhodesian writing" is at times interchanged with "settler" writing as a way of highlighting its links to empire, racism and prejudice. Critics such as Javangwe (*Contesting Narratives*) insist on describing even white writing produced after 1980 as "Rhodesian".

The present usage of "white writing in Zimbabwe" or "Zimbabwe's white writing" amounts to a recognition of the politics surrounding nationhood and citizenship. It is conceded that being Zimbabwean is never something one appropriates for the self successfully, but an ascription one receives from the outside. Politicians, courts, official narratives and even fictional accounts all participate in the game of attributing Zimbabweanness to individuals and groups. Nations, as it

[13] See Chennells *Settler Myths*, "Rhodesian discourse"; Pichanick et al.; and Zhuwarara, *Introduction*.

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were, are also transitive, and identities are never stable.[14] One minute, one is recognized as a Zimbabwean, and the next, one is an alien. A personal experience involving my mother is one such case. For more than fifty years she has lived in Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe, taking it as axiomatic that she is Zimbabwean. In all these years she has been able to vote and indicate her citizenship as "Zimbabwean", only to be informed recently, while trying to get a new passport, that she is an alien and therefore has to regularize her Zimbabwean citizenship. The pretext for this move is the fact that her father was a Mozambican who came to work as an expatriate labourer during the time of Rhodesia. Further, even politicians accuse one another of being outsiders. ZANU PF accuses MDC of disloyalty for not behaving like Zimbabweans because they fraternize with whites and are the beneficiaries of sympathy from Western countries. MDC politicians on the other hand base their opposition to ZANU PF and Mugabe on the argument that they have abandoned the ideals of the liberation struggle, paradigms that make one a "true" Zimbabwean. Even national symbols and events are contested. Citizenship and qualification as a Zimbabwean writer depend on subjectively normative, abstract and changing criteria such as one's "vision", one's "sensibilities", one's "consciousness" − all of which ignore the reality that human subjects seldom radiate with self-evident or coherent values, but combine multiple and unstable qualities. I therefore settle for the term "white writing in Zimbabwe" or "white Zimbabwean literature" as a suitably broad and inclusive marker of post-1980 white-authored literature that shows a direct link with the larger Zimbabwean cultural polysystem.

Unlike literature written by blacks in Zimbabwe, literature by whites does not enjoy a central position in the country's literary and cultural systems. Such literature is deemed to belong to a subset of narratives that fail to satisfy the demands of "patriotic history". Consequently, white writing in Zimbabwe exists in the margins, an alternative, sub-cultural literary form. In terms of "white" literary production in Zimbabwe, John Eppel has published more than ten literary works, Margaret Tredgold has more than fifteen texts for children to her credit, and Pauline Henson has at least four detective stories to her name. Rory Kilalea (a.k.a. "Murungu") has published plays and short stories, while writers such as Pat Brickhill and Annie Holmes have had stories published in various Zimbabwean short story anthologies. Since 2000, a significant number of

[14] These are themes which have been raised time and again by scholars who include Benedict Anderson (2005).

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memoirs and autobiographies have emerged from writers such as Peter Godwin, Ian Smith, Judith Garfield Todd and Douglas Rogers, not to mention the popular transnational Zimbabwean author Alexandra Fuller. It is no exaggeration to say that it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep track of literary production by white Zimbabweans. It would, however, be handy if an updatable bibliography of white Zimbabwean literature were to be compiled.

Existing literature on Zimbabwean writing since 1980 pursues a literary historiography symptomatic of the orthodox narratives mentioned earlier – in two ways. Firstly, it commits an error of omission by disproportionately focusing on black Zimbabwean writing, thereby ensuring the exclusion of white writing. This can be accounted for by the fact that some critics[15] adopt a black nationalist-cum-socialist ideological approach to Zimbabwean literature in line with prevailing state-centric ideology. To date, no substantial or widely recognized discourse on white Zimbabwean writers exists, even amid the insistence by some critics (Veit-Wild *Teachers*; Zhuwarara, *Introduction*; Primorac) that there is indeed a white Zimbabwean literary tradition. Christian characterizes such exclusionary tendencies as a "refusal […] to mention specific works of creative writers" in what she calls "the race for theory" (149). Of course, it will be seen that it is not just a question of theory. Many other facets are involved in issues of classification. In addition, the major preoccupation of literary critics appears to be the creation of what De Santis (4) deems "false unities", where literary texts are reduced to unitary themes, visions and styles. Such critics (who include Veit-Wild *Teachers*; Primorac and Muponde; Vambe "The Poverty of Theory"; Primorac; Pilossof), even while disavowing the nationalist/socialist approach, nevertheless tend towards a racially monologic approach to Zimbabwean literature.

Zimunya's *Those Years of Drought and Hunger: The Birth of African Fiction in English in Zimbabwe* (1982) explores the emergence of "serious" fiction in Zimbabwe during the pre- and post-1980 period. Zimunya's interest lies in "the birth of African literature in English", where "African" signifies black. It appears that Zimunya unwittingly borrows from Rhodesian-style discourse, which often refers to literature written by blacks during colonialism as "African" (Krog; Gerard) as opposed to "Rhodesian"; in such usage, "Rhodesian" exclusively meant literature written by whites written during colonialism. Zimunya's approach is "socialist" in so

[15] Chivaura ; Zimunya; Zhuwarara, "Zimbabwean fiction"; *Introduction to Zimbabwean* Literature.

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far as he emphasizes the social commitment and quality of social "seriousness" in the fiction he selects. His analysis is evaluative and finds favour in "the social intention" of literary works, regardless of form (16). *Jikinya*, for instance, is described as "one of the slightly better written novels" (43); Charles Mungoshi "is too good to need any apology" (68); and Marechera is "a mature version of [*Waiting for the Rain*'s] Lucifer" (97). Because Zimunya operates within an abstract black consciousness which has at best a vague bearing on the heterogeneous lived experiences of blacks, his critical work does not even engage with the possibility of entertaining white writers, whose kinship with Europe makes them unmoving targets of Zimunya's scorn. Primorac and Muponde (xvi) allude to Zimunya's use of "European" as a "denigrating descriptor" in their critique of mainstream Zimbabwean literary criticism's demands for "patriotic" writing. In the context of Zimbabwe's nationalist-cum-socialist critics, works written by whites seem to warrant automatic exclusion from the nationalist project since whiteness, for these critics, connotes not just foreignness and a lack of indigenous status, but also a perceived lack of patriotism. In later criticism (Veit-Wild, *Teachers*; Primorac), the polarization between black writing and white writing persists, but in line with Zimunya's rigid demands for "seriousness". As will be noted below, this latter standard has slowly begun to accommodate white writing.

Veit-Wild's *Teachers, Preachers and Non-Believers: A Social History of Zimbabwean Literature* (1993), examines the works of black Zimbabwean writers from a sociological perspective. She focuses on the influences of the external colonial environment on the works of early black writers. Veit-Wild's sociological approach borrows from socialist principles that demand "political correctness in 'socialist' Zimbabwe" (Primorac and Muponde xvi) where (as Primorac and Muponde's scare-quotes isolating the term "socialist" imply) socialism was more rhetoric than practice and akin to black-nationalist practice. In view of this, it is not surprising that Veit-Wild focuses on the literature of blacks and their engagement with the colonial and postcolonial situation. Majority rule automatically entailed, it seemed, a total focus on majority literature. Concern for nuance, crushed by the rabid politics of Ian Smith's UDI and settler myopia, took a back seat once again. In any case, Veit-Wild's sociological analysis seems to be undercut in its execution because it follows from an unwarranted contention that white Zimbabwean literature has already been allotted its fair share of analysis, singling out Chennells's *Settler Myths and the*

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Southern Rhodesian Novel (1982) as evidence that a comprehensive study on white Zimbabwean literature has already been carried out, despite the fact that Chennells' work covers pre-1980 (Rhodesian) novels and not the period thereafter.

Operating in a more or less similar vein is Zhuwarara's *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (2001), whose title is misleading in as much as it (deliberately) fails to qualify that the "Zimbabwean literature" alluded to exclusively signifies texts written by blacks. Zhuwarara appears to assume implicitly that the term "Zimbabwean" automatically and exclusively means "Black African". There is, from the outset, a deliberate move to exclude white voices. Ironically, there were similar deliberate projects to silence (much louder) black voices under settler rule. One of Zhuwarara's intended goals is to demonstrate that the term "Zimbabwean literature" axiomatically depends for its very existence on its being rooted in oral forms, an attribute that many Zimbabwean scholars do indeed – and rightly – associate with black Zimbabwean literature in a more general sense.[16]

Zhuwarara's ambivalence regarding the nationality of some white writers is demonstrated by his reluctance to engage with Doris Lessing as a Zimbabwean writer, even as he commends her for being "the only white novelist who succeeds in capturing the nature of the painful contact between whites and blacks, and the source of conflict between the two races" (*Introduction* 12). Lessing is one of three white writers to whom Zhuwarara makes reference, and she remains the only one who is deliberately and explicitly denied a nationality. The other two, Olive Schreiner and Colin Style, are "South African" and "a white Zimbabwean poet", respectively. That Colin Style has to be qualified as "white" demonstrates the racial and political polarization that has found its way into the criticism of Zimbabwean writing. Moreover, the question why he should be referred to as "a white Zimbabwean poet" while some of his white contemporaries are simply "white writers" (*Introduction* 21) or "Rhodesian" writers, illustrates the discursive problem of nomenclature central to existing conceptualizations of white writing in Zimbabwe. At the end of his introductory chapter, Zhuwarara justifies his selection of writers on the somewhat technical basis of their works being found "either on school syllabi in Zimbabwe or on literature curricula at universities both in Zimbabwe and abroad" (*Introduction* 25). However, Zhuwarara neither

[16] See Chiwome; Vambe, *African Oral*; "The Poverty of Theory"; Zhuwarara, "Zimbabwean fiction".

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points out the virtual exclusion of white writing in studies of literature in Zimbabwean schools and universities nor does he try to redress it. In fact, the reality that white Zimbabwean writers are left out of school syllabi and university curricula seems not only to suit him but also to sit very well with his ideological preferences.

Contrary to the critical works reviewed so far, Primorac's *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* (2006) challenges Zimbabwean literary criticism to rise above the classifications and subsequent stratifications of literary traditions based on language and race. Primorac (6) objects to the fact that previous discussions of Zimbabwean literature have been characterized by "the separation of the national literary field into several 'streams'", a habit that, she indicates, she intends to overcome. She claims that her approach, informed by "the concept of literary function" (16), allows her to go beyond categories linked to race and language. She also acknowledges "the pre-eminence of black writing in English" in Zimbabwean literary criticism (6) and the tendency by critics to judge writers along political lines. *The Place of Tears*, Primorac tells us, "is an exploration of the ways in which Zimbabwean fictional texts rehearse, refract and interrogate political themes and events. It starts from the premise that all literature has the capacity to participate in and comment on social change" (2). Literary function in this case is the engagement of texts with "political themes and events" (2).

Disappointingly, Primorac's approach appears to land her in the same cycle of conceptual fixity and discursive poverty that she tries so hard to break. Her choice of "key novels" betrays a residual, if not deep-seated, distrust of the "authenticity" of works by white Zimbabwean writers. After dividing the "Zimbabwean" novels before independence in 1980 into three groupings – novels written in Shona and Ndebele, novels written in English by blacks and novels written by white English speaking settlers – Primorac, who initially promised to rise above the divisions tied to race and language, apologizes because "*The Place of Tears* cannot undertake to outline in detail the interplay between the Zimbabwean fictional formations as they continued and were modified in the post-independent era" (30), but would rather "concentrate on the most prominent of the post-1980 inheritors of the pre-independence aesthetic and socio-analytical fictional formations" (30). It turns out that Primorac, like most of her peers, will focus on black writers such as Chenjerai Hove, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Yvonne Vera in five chapters, after a

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two-paragraph rundown of single works by Angus Shaw, Tim McLoughlin, David Lemon and Paul Freeman. Implicit in her selection of texts is the view that white writers do not fit appropriately in her approach informed by literary function. One can only ask: are there no white Zimbabwean writers whose works "rehearse, refract and interrogate political themes and events" (2)? Is whiteness not worthy of discursive interrogation, whether or not we agree with the real or perceived colonial heritages that "tarnish" the place of whites in contemporary Africa?

A key work on Zimbabwean literature in English is Vambe's *African Oral Story-Telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English* (2004), which posits a defining relationship between black Zimbabwean writing in English and orature. Vambe argues that orality is a significant feature of the black Zimbabwean novel and he develops this theme in his criticism of Veit-Wild's sociological treatment of black Zimbabwean literature. Vambe (*African Oral*) deploys a range of texts by black Zimbabweans, all of them assumed to be confirmation that orality is somehow an exclusive marker of Zimbabweanness. It is on the basis of orality that Vambe entirely ignores white writing. This gesture echoes that of Irele, mentioned earlier.

Kahari's *The Search for Zimbabwean Identity: An Introduction to the Black Zimbabwean Novel* (1980) shows a similarly untroubled, settled assumption that white writing in Zimbabwe neither fits the national grid nor makes the national grade. Instead, it traces the social and cultural background of black Zimbabwean literature. Unlike Zhuwarara, Kahari declares his interest in black writers from the beginning. His study focuses on the works of Stanlake Samkange, Solomon Mutswairo, Ndabaningi Sithole and Charles Mungoshi. Kahari's study concentrates on the ways in which black Zimbabwean literature has responded to the socio-cultural context of its time. Berndt's *Female Identity in Contemporary Zimbabwean Fiction* (2005), which examines images of women in some novels by black Zimbabwean writers from both sides of the gender divide, does not include a single white writer. The writers examined include Hove, Dangarembga, Nozipo Mararire and Vera. In a different category, one finds critics who provide historical backgrounds for individual black Zimbabwean writers and discuss their works independently: Veit-Wild and Chennells' *Emerging Perspectives on Dambudzo Marechera* (1999); Veit-Wild's *Dambudzo Marechera: A Source Book on his Life and Works* (1993); and Vambe and Chirere's *Charles Mungoshi: A Critical Reader* (2006).

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Other critical texts that examine Zimbabwean literature written in English, Shona and Ndebele concurrently include Gaidzanwa's *Images of Women in Zimbabwean Literature* (1985), which examines gender representation in fiction written by blacks in Shona, Ndebele and English. She identifies various stereotypes about women that are supposedly perpetuated in Zimbabwean fiction. Malaba and Davis's *Zimbabwean Transitions: Essays on Zimbabwean Literature in English, Ndebele and Shona* (2008) is a collection of essays on "Rhodesian" and "Zimbabwean" literature of different languages and genres. The text locates white writers within the Rhodesian space. The white writers do not, as part of the "transition", evolve into Zimbabwean writers. They remain settler/Rhodesian writers. The other essays focus on black Zimbabwean writing in English, Shona and Ndebele.

Veit-Wild (*Teachers*) and Primorac associate the white tradition of Zimbabwean literature with the work of the critic Chennells (*Settler Myths*; "Rhodesian discourse"), whom they cite to illustrate the point that Zimbabwean literature has largely been treated separately by critics along ethnic and racial lines. As mentioned above, the texts in question by Chennells focus on "settler myths" and how they informed the works of "Rhodesian writers" before independence in 1980. Considering that Chennells examines the works of "Rhodesian writers", the problem of how his study can be incorporated into the corpus of Zimbabwean literature becomes, in addition to an issue of nomenclature, at once a political and an ideological issue, which requires the construction of a line separating Zimbabwe from Rhodesia. The challenge that such delineation poses is part of what my research seeks to address. The problem in current criticism of Zimbabwean literature has to do partly with basic inconsistencies in the classification of works and their writers' affiliation to country and tradition. Some of these inconsistencies will be illustrated in the reviews of Chennells ("Self-representation") and Javangwe (2011) to follow.

Javangwe (*Contesting Narratives* 64) categorizes work by Smith (1997) and Godwin (1996) as "white Rhodesian settler life narratives" and later defines Godwin as "a white writer in Rhodesia" (90) despite setting out to examine how the self and the nation are constructed in "*Zimbabwean* political auto/biography" (7; emphasis added). Lessing is depicted as "a prolific Rhodesian/Zimbabwean writer" (190) even though it is not stated which part of her is Rhodesian

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and which Zimbabwean. After a detailed analysis of Smith and Godfrey's autobiographies, Javangwe (*Contesting Narratives* 112) concludes that writings by whites in Zimbabwe expose "a reluctance of settler identities to metamorphose into the parameters that define the new Zimbabwean identity". This observation echoes Karin Alexander who considers whites in Zimbabwe "Orphans of the Empire" because "their self-perceptions and identity construction […] has prohibited them from 'emigrating' to Zimbabwe" (210). It should be noted, contra Alexander's assertion, that "reluctance" is just one of many responses – and by no means the only one – that characterizes white belonging (or unbelonging) in Zimbabwe.

As can be seen, isolated discussions of white Zimbabwean literature, mainly focusing on personal narratives in the form of autobiographies and memoirs, are slowly emerging, but the conceptualizations within which such narratives are examined remain restrictive, failing to account for the mutations, paradoxes and ambivalences that can be seen to characterize individual texts. The stage for a polyphonic reading of Zimbabwean literature is set by Muponde and Primorac, who maintain that literary texts "imagine multiple *versions* of Zimbabwe, and it is only a multiplicity of approaches and opinions that can do this variety true justice" (xv). Muponde and Primorac place emphasis on "plurality, inclusiveness and the breaking of boundaries" (xviii). It is in the spirit of this critical elasticity that Harris, Chennells and Muchemwa, all appearing in Muponde and Primorac's *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*, are to be understood. Whereas Chennells (*Settler Myths*; "Rhodesian discourse") addresses what he refers to as "settler myths" and illustrates how these informed the Rhodesian (i.e. white) mentality before and during the war of liberation, the later work, "Self-representation and National Memory: White Autobiographies in Zimbabwe" (2005), examines the autobiographies of Ian Smith, Peter Godwin and Doris Lessing in relation to how the writers reconstruct individual and national memories. By perceiving the autobiographies as "ethnic narrative(s)" ("Self-representation" 133), Chennells takes a strong view of the texts as "white" subversions of "the self serving historical memory of Zimbabwe's ruling party, ZANU (PF)" (133). In his classification of white narratives, Chennells remains guarded, referring to the texts not as white Zimbabwean autobiographies, but as "white autobiographies in Zimbabwe" ("Self-representation" 131). Considering that all three writers exist outside of Zimbabwe geographically and at times ideologically (as is the case with Ian Smith), Chennells' guarded approach seems

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justified. Nevertheless, such an angle underlines the problem of categorizing white writing in Zimbabwe as essentially extraneous.

Harris's "Writing Home: Inscriptions of Whiteness/Descriptions of Belonging in White Zimbabwean Memoir/Autobiography" also focuses on the autobiographical form and the memoir. She selects the texts of Godwin's *Mukiwa* and Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* and takes a different approach from that of Chennells ("Self-representation"). Harris dwells insightfully on the nostalgic and traumatic aspects of white writing in Zimbabwe. The way she handles the two texts demonstrates that white writing in Zimbabwe does not subscribe to a single mode of expression. Trauma and nostalgia are singled out as two of the several modes of white writing that one is bound to encounter in the literary system. She helpfully points out that whiteness "has a somewhat ambiguous space in the discursive matrix" ("Writing Home" 117) and it is this ambiguity, giving rise to crises of white belonging, that largely informs the current thesis. Moreover, when Harris is read alongside Chennells ("Self-representation"), for example, a richer and wider experience of white writing is gained.

Muchemwa's "Some Thoughts on History, Memory and Writing in Zimbabwe" (2005) represents a refreshing juxtaposition of black and white Zimbabwean writers whose texts are not only "Zimbabwean", but are also "shaped by history […] and respon[sive] to it" (196). Of the eight texts Muchemwa examines, three are by white writers. Muchemwa demonstrates that Zimbabwean literature by both blacks and whites can share certain thematic and aesthetic aspects. Such a view acknowledges the importance of white writing in Zimbabwe's literary tradition.

Pilossof is by far the closest any one critic has come to focus on a body of texts by white Zimbabwean writers. He examines white Zimbabwean farmers' "voice (or voices)" (2) by drawing on *The Farmer* (a magazine that served the farming community during Rhodesia and Zimbabwe until 2002), autobiographies written by white farmers, and oral testimonies by white farmers. Pilossof is convinced that despite drawing from this particular range of sources rather than others, one will not fail to see "a remarkable cohesion of discourse, narration of experience and understanding of what transpired in Zimbabwe's rural landscape after 2000" (9). In total,

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Pilossof examines six prose works by white Zimbabwean farmers before concluding that white farmer narratives culminate in a "consolidated voice" predicated on shared myths about the land, the past, themselves and Africa. The narratives are symptomatic of what he terms "affirmative parochialism", which represents what he considers the voluntary decision by white farmers to be simultaneously Rhodesian and Zimbabwean after the attainment of black majority rule. Accordingly, "white farmers in Zimbabwe *are* 'orphans of the empire' *unable* to progress past [being Rhodesian] and thus 'become' Zimbabwean" (emphases added) (206). It is ironic that Pilossof should use "are" and "unable", words that denote fixity, when earlier he discarded the term "identity" for "identification" because the former has reifying connotations (4). Despite acknowledging that white farmers' voices are multiple, Pilossof insists on reducing them to a "consolidated voice". The effect of such a criticism is that differences are subsumed under the one voice whose chief characteristic he calls "parochialism".

What the above review of literature on Zimbabwean literature has demonstrated is that early critics of Zimbabwean writing adopted a radically pro-nationalist, state-centric stance that saw them associating the term "Zimbabwean" with "black" to such an extent that white writers found themselves excluded from the category "Zimbabwean" almost entirely. It is commendable that more recent criticism has slowly begun to consider the works of white Zimbabweans. This thesis contributes towards this revisionary trajectory by reconceptualizing white writing in Zimbabwe as an open system with inherent contradictions and tensions, one that is capable of entering into dialogue with other sub-systems in the Zimbabwean literary field. On the basis of an alternative conceptualization, then, one that finds support in both Even-Zohar's (1979) polysystem theory and Bakhtin's (*Dialogic Imagination*) dialogism, this thesis seeks to consolidate the revisionary trajectory outlined above.

1.5. Methodologies

In pursuit of the research objectives outlined in this introduction, subsequent chapters will build on close reading and textual examination of selected prose works by white Zimbabwean writers (in particular novels, memoirs and autobiographical accounts). These works are as seen as being embedded within an ambivalence that characterizes three key categories: the individual, the nation, and the nation's narration. Attention will be paid to passages and extracts that

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thematically point to the contradictions, simultaneities, and dialectic tensions characterizing individual texts by white writers in Zimbabwe. This will be done with a view to examining how issues of white identity and belonging in Zimbabwe are informed not only by conditions external to the text, but also by an ever-emergent textuality of Zimbabwean whiteness. Such a category is seen not as a static or monolithic entity but as something always in the process of rewriting itself. In keeping with Bakhtin's dialogical ontology, the thesis critically potentiates the possibility of contradictory views and ideas occupying the same text, or a number of texts by the same author, seen within a comprehensively polysystemic literary tradition. This approach forms the conceptual foundation of the methodology adopted in this thesis. The theoretical drive here conjoins Even-Zohar's peculiar brand of "dynamic Functionalism" with poststructuralist emphases on anti-foundationalism such as found in the work of Bhabha and his co-authors in *Nation and Narration*, for example, and in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). Although Even-Zohar's work builds on Russian Formalism to some extent, including Bakhtin, it should not be confused with Saussurian-based structuralism. As Damrosch, Melas and Buthelezi suggest in *The Princeton Sourcebook In Comparative Literature* (240), Even-Zohar developed his conceptual model partly out of dissatisfaction with "what he saw as rigid interpretations of Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics, [proposing] the idea of 'dynamic Functionalism' as a way to reckon with the interplay of historical and contemporary aspects of any cultural system, citing the Russian Formalists and Prague structuralists as his main theoretical predecessors".

Regarding the body of literature dealt with in this thesis, it should be stated that although a fairly large corpus of prose works by white Zimbabwean authors is surveyed, the volume of prose featured for analysis has hopefully been rendered manageable by a thematic selection of texts set aside for fuller treatment. In addition, the focus in such instances falls on very particular aspects of, and passages from, the listed texts. Such thematic selection seeks to ensure the achievement of both a broad overview of the body of writing under discussion and allow probing, careful scrutiny of particular texts. It should, however, be understood that the assumptions of multivalence, instability and simultaneity raised so far about white writing are not exclusive to prose works. The same is true of other genres such as poetry and drama, but I have decided to

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restrict myself to prose works for the sake of delimitation of topic; that is, for pragmatic reasons rather than qualitative ones.

I have deliberately confined myself to white voices, particularly those that I find to be concerned with issues of belonging, not as a way of foreclosing other numerous voices, but in order to demonstrate the thesis that white writing is as complex as it is multiple, and that it cannot easily be subjected to the imposition of a monolithic identity without severe critical foreshortening. Notably, "bringing all voices to the fore is neither practical in terms of resources (time and length of report), nor strategic in terms of giving voice to stories that are less often heard and may be suppressed, by either commission or omission" (Frank 38). The methodological challenges posed by a dialogical approach are thus acknowledged.

1.6. Chapter Delineation

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is a motivated declaration of intent. It traces the background of the research and maps the direction that the thesis takes, clearly stating its objectives and justifying the perceived need for such research. More importantly, Chapter One challenges literary criticism to rise above monologic approaches that have the effect of constricting dialogue on Zimbabwean literature.

Chapter Two proposes a conceptual model of white writing in Zimbabwe as a multiplicity, instantiating this proposition via a reading of two war narratives, namely Tim McLoughlin's *Karima* (1985) and Bruce Moore King's *White Man Black War* (1988). The chapter seeks to demonstrate how the white Zimbabwean literary system fulfills the requirements of a multiplicity. A comparison of these two texts, for example, reveals that white narratives do not share modes of speaking so similar in nature that they constitute an essence, or a unitary, essentialized voice. Rather, such modes of address are differentiated and, consequently, multiple in both their (provisional) nature and their (moments of) enunciation. *Karima* narrates the war from multiple independent sites and is inescapably polyphonic, whereas *White Man Black War*, which is less polyphonic, incorporates several genres into its narrative and allows for the destabilization of the authorial voice in the process. The analysis of an individual work-utterance such as *Karima* further illustrates that every utterance exists alongside other utterances,

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rendering it unavoidably plural. Monologue in white Zimbabwean writing is something that is posited but never fully attained.

Chapters three, four and five take a more thematic line. This is an approach that serves not only to highlight and examine some of the pertinent issues with which white Zimbabwean narratives engage, but also to showcase some of the dimensions of white writing and, by extension whiteness in Zimbabwean literature – in particular, instability, simultaneity and multiplicity. Chapter three, for example, discusses the search for emplacement in white Zimbabwean stories. Through a reading of Peter Rimmer's *Cry of the Fish Eagle* (1993) and Douglas Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009), the chapter demonstrates how the bush and the farm appear as significant locales in white narratives through their invocation as places of white belonging. Central to the analysis is how such narratives demonstrate a deep-seated ambivalence with regard to place, rendering their attitudes towards "bush" and "farm" inherently unstable.

Chapter Four considers the complex ways in which the Rhodesian past is inscribed in white Zimbabwean narratives. Ian Smith's autobiography, *The Great Betrayal: The Memoirs of Ian Douglas Smith* (1997), and Peter Godwin's memoir, *Mukiwa* (1996), are used in the analysis. The key argument in this chapter is that the Rhodesian past and the Zimbabwean present inhabit shared space and time in certain white narratives through the condition conceived of in this thesis as simultaneity. Regardless of how one reads such texts, however, the ways in which the past is depicted in them demonstrates that white narratives do not succumb to a single mode of remembering.

Chapter Five dwells on some of the questions around "whiteness" in postcolonial Zimbabwe and how it is dealt with in three white narratives, namely Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher* (2009), Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2003), and Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011). It is demonstrated in this chapter that white Zimbabwean writers foreground whiteness in their narratives, question its conventional assumptions and render it complex. Chapter Six summarizes and concludes the thesis. It presents the findings of the preceding chapters and tentatively proposes a newly conceived way of reading Zimbabwean literature,

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based on the findings in this project – a model that potentially frees literary systems from the always-looming traps of fixity and stale categorization.

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Chapter Two: White Zimbabwean writing as a multiplicity

> Any concrete utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere. The very boundaries of the utterance are determined by a change of speech subjects. Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 91)

> A semiotic system is necessarily a heterogeneous, open structure. It is, therefore, very rarely a uni-system but is, necessarily, a polysystem - *a multiple system*, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent. (Even-Zohar 290; emphasis added).

2.1. Introduction

The study of any body of literature has to consider, among a number of factors, that the literary system is *a multiplicity*. This is as true for white Zimbabwean writing as it is for any other sub-category of literary work. Only once the full implications of multiplicity are acknowledged can a fuller and richer experience of the literature be realized. Taking white writing as a multiplicity means regarding it as having "neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions" (Deleuze and Guattari 8). The pursuit of the speaking individuum as if it were hermetic and the bias towards unitary language become exercises in futility. Like a rhizome, a conceptual metaphor used by Deleuze and Guattari to denote a system which is open, heterogeneous and multiple, white writing has multiple points of entry as well as countless points of exit. Deleuze and Guattari (7) observe that:

> A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages.

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The rhizome is defined in opposition to a tree, which is attached to roots. It may be added that the rhizome, on the other hand, has *routes* or, more in tune with Deleuze and Guattari, "lines of flight" (9). What endures in a multiplicity are not fixed origins, but dimensions and possibilities. In its present state, white Zimbabwean writing is seen to fulfill the requirements of a multiplicity owing to the dialogic interactions that necessarily subsist in the Zimbabwean literary system. These interactions serve as points where several forms of connection develop and thrive − across work-utterances (such as when one text incorporates another into its narrative design), within single work-utterances (for example the numerous verbal exchanges that one encounters in McLoughlin's *Karima*, which will be discussed later), and within extra-literary systems (such as the political discourse around whiteness in Zimbabwe). One is also compelled to recognize the literary system's amenability to several entryways and, as a consequence, countless possible outward vectors.

Deleuze and Guattari alert us that the rhizome is a map. Its distinguishing features are primarily the existence of "multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight" (21). Furthermore, "[the] map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation" (12). Such openness, however, is often a matter of degree, as the argument in this thesis suggests. Entering the white Zimbabwean literary system, for example, is not as heavily predetermined as negotiating black Zimbabwean literature is likely to be. For the general reader and student of literature, encountering white writing does not begin with anointed "fathers" or "mothers" such as Charles Mungoshi, Dambudzo Marechera or Tsitsi Dangarembga, whose works are considered canonical.

"Lines of flight", posited by Deleuze and Guattari as "the reality of a finite number of dimensions that the multiplicity effectively fills" (9), can be seen as potentialities that characterize white literary voices, enabling them to escape the deathly grip of unitary language or control. Also described as "deterritorialization" (21), lines of flight enable the opening up of new pathways, new perspectives and new worldviews. In other words, they deconstruct "territorial" or unitary and foundational boundaries imposed on any system of understanding,

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including literary ones. In the present case, flight can be seen to occur from centripetal forces that seek to throttle diversity and difference in white narratives. "Fugitive" voices can escape from even an author's monologue, from dominant ideology or conventional wisdom. Voices defy foundational, monolithic discourses and multiply in various directions in order to connect with other voices in relations of difference. In this regard voices, because they are heteroglot and multiple, refuse to be co-opted into a unitary language at times represented by the author's consciousness.

It should be recognized that white Zimbabwean writing is by no means uniform, and that it displays a wide range of differently accentuated positions, both more and less dialogic. As observed in the first chapter of this thesis, some of the literary criticism that emerged after independence occupies positions within what has been described as a socialist-cum-nationalist paradigm. Zimunya, for example, is keen to identify "serious African fiction in English in Zimbabwe" (2), where "serious" fiction suggests departures and ruptures from colonial modes of writing and the affirmation of "subaltern" cultural and political space within the colony. Such literature includes the writings of Stanlake Samkange, Charles Mungoshi and Dambudzo Marechera. Coming barely two years after independence, Zimunya's study is unrepentant in its complete disregard of white writing. This nationalist bias finds various expressions in latter criticism of Zimbabwean literature. The few critics who deal with white writing[17] barely address the question of multiplicity as an intrinsic feature of white writing, and in their subjective ways, their arguments tend to privilege the singularity of individual works and an assumed coherence of white writing as a sub-system of Zimbabwean literature. These approaches, termed *monologic* in the first chapter of this thesis, not only impose upon white perspectives a myopic narrative of closure, but they also deny whiteness any individuation.

Perceiving white writing as *a multiplicity* means seeing it as a system of several units, "repertoires" in Even-Zohar's terminology, which disperse from the centre, at times overlapping, but never crystallizing into a single unit. The white Zimbabwean literary system is seen to intersect and overlap with other semiotic systems in the cultural polysystem, in relations of

[17] See Chennells, *Settler Myths;* "Rhodesian discourse"; "Self-representation"; Moyana; Javangwe, *Contesting Narratives;* Pilossof.

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continuous dialogue. Through these intersections arise linkages or connections, but clearly not fusions. In this thesis I focus specifically on multiplicity occuring at two levels: firstly at the level of the system and secondly at the level of the individual work-utterance. In this chapter, two prose works, considered on the basis of their preoccupation with the war of independence in Zimbabwe,[18] are analysed to illustrate the point. Tim McLoughlin's *Karima* is considered in terms of its internal dialogization (within a single work-utterance) conditioned by the creation of character zones in its representation of the war; this approach stands in contradistinction to the treatment of individual works as reducible to "a single objective world illuminated by a single authorial consciousness" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 6). Bakhtin describes such internal dialogization as "polyphony", following Dostoevsky's creation of the novel of multiple consciousnesses, which is seen as the equivalent of a "multivoiced world" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 8). Bruce Moore-King's *White Man Black War* serves to illustrate a similar point, albeit with the emphasis placed on the narrative's use of incorporated genres as a way of amplifying discourse on the war. It will be demonstrated that as we move from one work-utterance to the next, white perceptions of the war become increasingly varied to the point where uniformity, as noted by Even-Zohar, "need not be postulated" (291).

The objectives of this chapter, therefore, are to explore the proliferation of meanings, aporias (in the sense of blind spots) and contradictions that characterize white writing in Zimbabwe. This is fundamentally a characteristic of the system as a whole and it will be noted throughout the thesis that white writing is essentially multiple. The decision to focus on war narratives is merely one of several possible points of contact. The exploration here centres simultaneously on what the war narratives do and do not say. The gaps and fissures between what is written and not written (or is written out) are analysed for what they demonstrate about the multivocality of white writing in general. For the purposes of this chapter I address the question of how any subject, the nationalist war in this case, lends itself to dialogic interactions among characters, writers, literary and extra-literary utterances. I am interested in what white writing about the war suggests and reveals about white writing in Zimbabwe. Monologic approaches, as intimated in the first

[18] Between 1970 and 1979, war broke out in Rhodesia between Ian Smith's settler government and the African nationalist parties opposed to colonial rule. For black people in the country, this was a war of independence (Ellert; Godwin and Hancock). For most whites, however, it was a terrorist war sponsored by the forces of international communism (ibid).

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chapter, are focused on the emergence of textual coherence, unity and sameness. Granted, similarities abound in the literature by whites on the war. Chennells (*Settler Myths*), for instance, draws attention to the existence of a shared corpus of settler myths. Chennells' approach can be described as a search for *coherent patterns* linking white texts to each other. The importance of this approach is that it illustrates shared features that validate the existence of a white literary tradition of sorts. Such an approach, however, has its limitations. Specifically, the search for patterns and unities potentially obfuscates differences which are vital to a nuanced understanding of literary representations of the war.

Contradictions, in particular, are important for a more nuanced cultural contextualization in which whites appear more, rather than less, human. Whereas unity, consensus and coherence are important for an understanding of hegemonic structures and the presentation of outward power, they also lead to the perception of a universal laager mentality. Seeing the white worldview as equally burdened with silences, loss, and anxiety instead of just imperious certainty allows for a productive analysis of whites as being simultaneously powerful and powerless, free and trapped, self-assured but also possibly tormented, or angst-ridden. This approach strategically destabilizes the coherence assumed to be at the heart of white writing not to dismiss or weaken this body of work but in order to return the analysis of white writing to a more complex critical engagement. Such an approach recognizes that white Zimbabwean writing is indeed problematic, but also full of alternative possibilities or "lines of flight", and amounts to a lot more than merely a dead weight of "colonizer" writing. Considering white writing in Zimbabwe as a multiplicity is meant to re-write dialogue and the carnivalesque into what may easily be read as repressed, ideologically narrow texts. Focusing on the narratives written after 1980 sheds light on the complexities that abound in discourses about white citizenship and belonging.

2.2. ZANU PF meta-narrative on the war in Rhodesia

A brief discussion of *context* serves to illuminate the scope of dialogue on the war in Zimbabwe. The context explored here consists of voices that will be referred to as ZANU PF's meta-narrative about the war. Rather than viewing white writing as an independent literary sub-system, "the multiplicity of intersections" (Even-Zohar 291) afforded by the cultural polysystem need not be ignored in our understanding of white Zimbabwean literature. Following Terdiman

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in *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* (16), context may be considered as "an *enabling* condition of any cultural expression" instead of "a regrettable *limitation* upon it" (both emphases added). Of course when context operates in the manner of unitary language that is naturally opposed to heteroglossia, it imposes "specific limits" on the existence of other languages (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 270). These limits can in certain contexts be concretized in the form of statutes and laws censoring the publication of certain texts (as was the case with the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act[19] in Zimbabwe) or the arrest of certain speaking subjects. Nevertheless, such limits, recognized by Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination* 271) as "the centripetal forces of the life of language", cannot escape the reality of multiplicity.

The ZANU PF meta-narrative is not given here as mere background, but as a rejoinder in a continuing dialogue about the war. Rather than disappearing as backdrop, it remains to make possible the proliferation of voices on the war even as it seeks to impose a monologue. Paradoxically, dominant discourses pave the way for counter-discourses even as they seek to impose monologues. They enable what is regarded as "a discursive explosion" (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 17). Regardless, counter-discourses do not supplant established discourses in a simple process of substitution. Terdiman insists that between the established discourse and its counter-discourses remains "an intricate and continuous interplay of stability and destabilization" (13). It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine counter-discourses that are not interlocked with established discourses. The two forms of discourse share a "conflicted intimacy" (Terdiman 16). Dialogue is thus never finalized. It is the inevitable condition of existence. Interlocution demands that there be always the existence of more than one utterance.

Arguably, the ZANU PF rendition of the war has been the single most important factor in defining who belongs, and who does not, to the Zimbabwean nation. The war has been made "the singular expression of nationalism in Zimbabwe" (Muwati and Mutasa 153). It is for this reason that the ZANU PF meta-narrative is considered a significant context within which the dissonance that characterizes narratives about the war in Rhodesia is enabled. ZANU PF has provided the "official" script for the war in Zimbabwe, making it the most vocal of the multiple

[19] The Act, commonly referred to as AIPPA, was introduced by the ZANU PF government in 2000 as a means of curtailing counter-discourses against the government. It was eventually repealed in 2010 during the life of a government of national unity in Zimbabwe.

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voices that speak about the war. In the process, this script has made possible the emergence of various other voices articulating alternative renditions of the war.

A profound characteristic of the post-1980 imagining of Zimbabwe nationhood by ZANU PF is the affirmation that Zimbabwe was birthed in a nationalist war.[20] This war, it is believed, has a longer genealogy, dating back to the first anti-colonial war fought by blacks – groups of Ndebele and Shona people who fought separately against white settlers in 1893. This first war came to be known by the term "First *Chimurenga*" among black nationalists and their supporters. The liberation war, seen as a continuation of the First *Chimurenga*, was therefore named the "Second *Chimurenga*" in order to denote the idea of succession. Land reform (beginning in 2000) was termed the "Third *Chimurenga*" to lend it a sense of historical importance.

This conjoint narrative of *Chimurenga* has since been recognized by Ndlovu-Gatsheni ("Construction and Decline") as "the ideology of *Chimurenga*". It is an ideology "premised on [a] doctrine of permanent nationalist revolution against imperialism and colonialism" (5), and one that places the war at the centre of nationhood in Zimbabwe. More significantly, it is used by ZANU PF "to fragment the people of Zimbabwe into patriots, war veterans, puppets, traitors, sell-outs, born-frees and enemies of the nation" (8). These numerous subject positions, resonant of war discourse, have dominated − and continue to dominate − the rhetoric of ZANU PF ever since independence in 1980. Generally, whites are construed as enemies. In 2000, Robert Mugabe, leader of ZANU PF, referred to whites as "[the] real enemy".[21] Blacks and erstwhile nationalist comrades such as Edgar Tekere, Joshua Nkomo, and Ndabaningi Sithole have also been variously construed as sell-outs, traitors and enemies. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has been labelled a puppet organization. Such is the putative power that a war discourse seeks to engender in Zimbabwe.

The war has been especially invoked in recent years because it lends itself to an immediate memory that can be used to define the parameters of belonging and nationhood in Zimbabwe. The first *Chimurenga* has since become an incubator feeding into the resistance of the 1970s

[20] See Fisher; Kriger; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Dynamics of the Zimbabwean Crisis"; "The Construction and Decline".
[21] *Irish Times*, 15 December 2000

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war, which boasts a generation of heroes, some of whom are still alive today, appropriating for themselves the legitimacy of validly narrating the story about the war to the nation. At every opportunity the nation is reminded about the war. At least five national events have been held annually, since 2000, in commemoration of the war. These commemorations serve as platforms through which the government reminds citizens about the war. The celebrations include Independence Day, Heroes day, Defence Forces day, Unity day, *Mzee bira*, Umdala Wethu Gala, and the burials of individuals designated provincial or national liberation war heroes.[22]

Technically, a typical year in Zimbabwe involves constant reminders about the war. Dabengwa rightly notes that "the liberation war has had and will continue to have profound consequences for the future of Zimbabwe" (24). Some eighteen years on, the discourse on the nationalist war remains animated. After winning an election disputed by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 2013, ZANU PF and some of its supporters expressed views that the defeat of the MDC was made possible by the part ZANU PF had played in the war. Predictably, George Rutanhire, chairman of the Zimbabwe Fallen Heroes Trust, which focuses on the exhumation of war heroes' corpses, stated that "the fallen heroes and heroines can now rest in peace following President Mugabe and ZANU-PF's victory in the elections".[23] Winning an election is thus perceived as tribute to the nationalist war and its heroes.

Memorialization and war symbolism have found greater visibility through the national Heroes Acre memorial (Fisher). The memorial expresses a dominant nationalist narrative about selfless sacrifice, patriotism and heroism against colonialism. At the monument, appointed heroes are buried and commemorated, while being exalted for emulation by all patriots. Fisher notes that

[22] Independence Day is celebrated on 18 April to mark the end of colonial rule, Heroes day and Defence Forces day are normally held on 11 and 12 August respectively to remember the Africans who died during the war and to extol the work of the army in Zimbabwe. Unity day, held on 22 December, is a celebration of the Unity Accord signed between ZANU PF and ZAPU, the two nationalist parties that were at the forefront of the war against the Rhodesian colonial system, to mark the end of "Gukurahundi" or the violence perpetrated against inhabitants of Matabeleland and Midlands by the government. Mzee bira, normally held in September, is a tribute to the life of Zimbabwe's late vice-president Simon Muzenda for his record in the Rhodesian war and service as vice-president, and Umdala Wethu Gala is also a tribute to Joshua Nkomo for his role in the nationalist struggle and as vice-president of Zimbabwe. The political import of galas and biras has been discussed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni ("Construction and Decline") and Muchemwa ("Galas, Biras, State Funerals").

[23] Sunday Mail, 11 August 2013.

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through the war memory, objectified by the monument, the Zimbabwean government has been able "to constitute nationhood and create its own authoritative code of membership" (79). She further explains that "Zimbabwe's war memory provides, as it were, a classificatory scheme, the wherewithal to think about who belongs, and how, to the Zimbabwean nation" (79). War memory is thus used to create nationals and non-nationals. The memorial simultaneously reveres black African heroes and maligns white colonialists. In this discursive design whites are ZANU PF's convenient other. Explaining the projection of whites through the memorial, Fisher observes that:

> Heroes Acre does not exclude memories of the Rhodesians so much as evoke and entrap them as the enemy. The shrine, said Mugabe, memorializes the 'callous nature of those who ruled us yesterday' and serves 'as a reminder of the crimes perpetrated by the Smith regime'. (84)

The war memorial serves to remind the nation about a past in which ZANU PF occupies a higher moral pedestal enabled by the depraved status of whites during the colonial era. The uses of war memory in the official transcript has therefore served to construct opposing monolithic subjectivities distinguishable through "a dialectic of those who are in place and belong naturally, who are authentic and at home, and the former colonists who, as different and threatening, are out of place and can never belong in the same way" (Fisher 84). The significance of the war should not be lost to critics and citizens alike, especially because of the place it held and continues to keep in the political imaginary of the nation.

The official script about the war is largely visible because its proponents have tirelessly worked to prevent other voices from coming to the surface. Evident in these efforts are attempts to narrow and close the dialogic space. These efforts have not been successful. Other views about the war, some of which are diametrically variant, tend to subvert the official monologue. For instance, the black/white dualism epitomized by the Heroes Acre memorialization is subverted

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by the memory of Guy Clutton Brock, a white man, at the shrine.[24] The following sections focus on several rejoinders to the narratives about the war.

2.3. Alternative meta-narratives about the war

Alternative meta-narratives represent what are considered "lines of flight" (Deleuze and Guattari). As already suggested, in a multiplicity, flights from a dominant centre are ever-present and varied. There are narratives which undermine the official monolithic account of the war from within. These opposing narratives, operating within the hegemonic narrative, produce flashes of what one might term the "carnivalesque". In explaining Bakhtin's theory of carnival and the carnivalesque, Elliot points out that "carnival shakes up the authoritative version of language and values, making room for a multiplicity of voices and meanings" (129). The strength of carnivalization is in its disruption of uniformity both in thought and voice. It should be noted that ZANU PF's meta-narrative does not always enjoy hegemony. Ndlovu-Gatsheni ("Construction and Decline") refers to alternative articulations that characterize ZANU PF's narrative of war. Among these are Edgar Tekere, Margaret Dongo and Edson Zvobgo's intermittent statements against the government.[25] One may also add the autobiographies of Joshua Nkomo (2001), Fay Chung (2006) and Wilfred Mhanda (2011), which create new discursive spaces through which the war can be mediated.

These narratives express views about the war that demonstrate the fragility of a monolithic war script. Dominant in these counter-stories is the view that the war, and the nationalists who led it, were not a super-united front. The narratives challenge the popularized version of black African nationalists united in a single cause and fighting against one enemy, the white man. They reveal some of the internecine conflicts of the liberation war period that have been conveniently omitted in the periodic renditions of the war by the ZANU PF government. Owing to these and other narratives, Ndlovu-Gatsheni concludes that "the nationalist struggle was characterized by

[24] Guy Clutton Brock is credited for actively supporting the nationalists during the war. His political activities got him deported from Rhodesia in 1971, only to return to Zimbabwe after 1980. He was declared a national hero in 1995 and his death commemorated in "a subdued affair, devoid of the customary pomp and media attention" (Fisher 89).

[25] Tekere and Dongo left ZANU PF to form their own political parties, which challenged ZANU PF during the 1990s. Zvobgo, on the other hand, remained an errant child of ZANU PF until his death in 2004.

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complex ambiguities and contradictions to the extent that the liberation war became fraught with intense intrigues, frictions, factionalism, violent purges and assassinations" ("Dynamics" 103). This part of the war is screened from the official script. What subsists in the sanitized script is that blacks fought the war in unison under the leadership of the nationalists.

Another category of alternative narratives, or counter-discourses, about the war comprises individuals and writers, operating from the vantage point of other political parties, who challenge ZANU PF ownership of the war of liberation. These individuals include Joshua Nkomo and Edgar Tekere, both of whom fell out with Robert Mugabe after independence. In their autobiographies they contest the narratives of the nation and the war in particular, which they still position as the foundation of Zimbabwe. Interestingly, those who challenge ZANU PF's meta-narrative do not dispute the depiction of war as the founding event of the Zimbabwean nation. What they do is to substitute one meta-narrative of war for another.

It deserves mention that most critics of ZANU PF historiography have failed to consider the postcolonialist traits that a history of Zimbabwe's past (or any former colony in that matter) cannot escape. First and foremost, such a history is a history of displacement. In asserting the agency of the formerly oppressed a certain degree of generalization and essentialism is inevitable, thus Spivak's concept of "strategic essentialism". The discourse of *Chimurenga* is used strategically by ZANU PF to draw a line between former colonizers and the formerly oppressed with the intention of containing both discursively and functionally. In its counter-discursive or counter-displacing project, this is seen to be a necessary strategy. Postcolonial theory by its very nature evokes a dialogue between the various subalterns and various centres of power. In the case of ZANU PF, it is a case of the formerly oppressed dialoguing against a colonial past and a perceived neo-colonial present. The result is an essentialist mode of narration, which for Spivak needs to be recognized as such and used strategically rather than foundationally, as a tactic, and only in the short term. In ZANU PF's narrative, the *chimurenga* strategy nevertheless ossifies and becomes foundational, in statues, memorials and commemorations – against the grain of Spivak's caution that strategic essentialism in the service of oppositional agency should be provisional. It culminates in the positing of a seemingly final

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and monologic voice, which is an exercise in futility, as alternative voices about the war amply demonstrate.

This dialogically contested space, where the nationalist war narrative is central, is the space within which white Zimbabwean narratives exist. The preceding discussion is therefore important in describing the field of dialogue in which white Zimbabwean war narratives written after 1980 participate. A multiplicity is characterized by the establishment of links within and beyond the boundaries of the system. Wittingly or unwittingly, white Zimbabwean narratives find themselves drawn into a dialogue about the war. They do not however enter into dialogue as a coherent voice. As the discussion of texts will demonstrate, the white voices remain autonomous, fractured and multiple.

2.4. White narratives about the war

Bhebe and Ranger (*Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War Vol. 2*) have commented on the dissimilarity between black and white accounts of the war in Zimbabwe. They contend that black accounts focus on the impact of the war on peasant societies, the experiences of black women, the part religion and ideology played during the war, and the need for healing in the post-war years. This literature, it is noted, is not much interested in armies or military tactics. On the contrary, white accounts of the war dwell on military operations and tend to ignore the impact of the liberation war on white civilians. Bhebe and Ranger claim that:

> We know a great deal on the African side about civilians and about religion; a great deal on the Rhodesian side about military operations and 'dirty tricks'. But we still know very little about the guerilla armies or guerilla intelligence services, just as we know hardly anything about Rhodesian ideology and religion, or about the effect of the war on White civilians […] The guerillas always had a keen appreciation of the supreme importance of the social, ideological and political 'fronts'. But on the Rhodesian side – both during the war and in the retrospective literature − it often appears as if the military factors only are significant: as if the war could (and should) have been decided purely by military superiority. (3)

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The two historians are certain that in their "almost exclusive military focus", white narratives demonstrate a "continued failure of understanding" (Bhebe and Ranger 3). The irony is that it is Bhebe and Ranger whose characterization of white narratives, which they call "ex-Rhodesian literature", is symptomatic of a failure of understanding, the very failure on which monologic criticism of white narratives appears to be fixated. Bhebe and Ranger's characterization is based on an inadequacy which they then project onto the works in question: the foreclosure of multiplicity in white writing and its voices. When the inherent multiplicity of white war stories are given sufficient air, it will be seen that they cannot be shrunk into a single, unwavering point of focus without significant critical foreshortening.

Contrary to what Bhebe and Ranger tell us, white narratives about the war are not only abundant relative to black narratives on the same subject, they are also varied and broader in scope than we have been led to believe. Bhebe and Ranger are of the view that little can be deduced from white narratives about Rhodesian society, ideology and religion during the liberation war since most of these narratives focus exclusively on military exploits and army tactics by the Rhodesian security forces. The argument that there is a major preoccupation with military exploits in white narratives about the war can be sustained only by conveniently choosing not to focus on the full breadth of literature on the subject (that is by focusing solely on one category of narrative, for example, historical or nonfictional at the expense of others such as fictional texts). A look at literary narratives will demonstrate the misleading nature of their assertion.

One of the unfortunate predicaments facing white writing is its virtual oblivion in reception terms. There are more white fictional narratives about the war than the same written by black authors. This is partly due to the publishing economy in Zimbabwe after 1980. Black writers were slow to take up the challenge of writing about the war, whereas whites had alternative/external publishing options not available to most black writers. Nevertheless the fact remains that white narratives about the war, despite their relative abundance, remain largely unknown to literary critics, students of literature and ordinary readers.

Besides *Karima* and *White Man Black War*, this category boasts of other narratives such as Sylvia Bond Smith's *Ginette* (1980), Angus Shaw's *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place*

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(1985), Patricia Chater's *Crossing the Boundary Fence* (1988), Nancy Partridge's *To Breathe and Wait* (1986), Peter Rimmer's *Cry of the Fish Eagle* (1993), Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa* (1996), Alan Thrush's *Of Land and Spirits* (1997), and Derek Huggins's *Stained Earth* (2004). John Eppel's *D.G.G. Berry's The Great North Road* (1992), which includes significant treatment of the war with an unusual range of comic self-reflexivity, as well as wide-ranging social satire, won a major prize in South Africa (the M-Net Prize, in 1993), but does not appear to exist for critics of Zimbabwean writing. The range of issues and perspectives concerning the war in the above works, which is not exhaustive, are varied. For example, *Crossing the Boundary Fence* is a children's book which focuses on the war experience of two female friends, one black and the other white; *Stained Earth* is a collection of short stories; *Of Land and Spirits* focuses on the plight of both white and black fighters during the war; *Mukiwa* is about the author's personal experiences during the war; whereas *To Breathe and Wait* and *Ginette* are about the experiences of single women and mothers during the war. These are by no means the only white narratives on the war, but such a list is meant to provide indexical evidence, at the very least, that a plurality of white narratives on the war exist and that this existence is not acknowledged in mainstream Zimbabwean literature or literary criticism.

Bhebe and Ranger are not alone in their dismissal of white narratives about the war. Writing in 1995, Chennells continues the theme raised in his 1982 thesis, namely that Rhodesian war novels are predicated on a limited number of myths informing white Rhodesian settler society in general. While focusing on pre-1979 novels, he insists on a thread that unites the literature about the war while downplaying contradictions that characterize these same novels. According to Chennells, whites writing about the war in the 1960s were "victims […] of their own myths about Africans" ("Rhodesian discourse" 142). What is disturbing is not his conclusions per se, but a tacit failure to point out, in 1995, that whites continue to write about the war after independence; and to explore how this "new" literature responds to changing circumstances.

Moyana follows the same beaten track, isolating what she supposes are monolithic voices from selected white narratives and smothering numerous counter-discourses in these very texts. She makes sweeping remarks about individual texts in the following manner: "In telling the story of the Second Chimurenga, Denys Roberts's voice is sarcastic, Peter Stiff's denigrating, Angus

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Shaw's amusing and cynical, Bruce Moore-King's mournful and Tim McLoughlin in his novel, *Karima* pessimistic" (368). The flaw in Moyana's criticism is her failure to recognize the multi-voiced nature of individual utterances. Besides, a text is not the sum total of the author's voice; it comprises of the voices of others with whom the author enters into dialogue (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*).

It is worthwhile to pay greater attention to the contradictions in texts in order to have a more profound picture of society during this period. Another implication is that white writing is given a phony sense of continuity – not to mention uniformity – which no literary category can boast of entirely. The disjunctions that characterize white writing before and after 1980 should not be ignored. They demonstrate changes in the communities from which these writers emerge. Such literary disjunctions in fact need to be emphasized. In other words, while it was possible and quite relevant in 1982 to write about white narratives on the war and how they share certain myths founded in settler/colonial existence, it is inaccurate to suggest nothing had changed by, say, 1996. Such a feat can only be accomplished, as Chennells does, by ignoring the white literature that emerged in Zimbabwe between the years 1980 and 1996. Early white Zimbabwean narratives written after 1980 were indeed preoccupied with the war in one way or the other. Whereas in Chennells (*Settler Myths*) we are made aware of the white writers who wrote amid war action, while feeding from and into settler myths about whites and blacks in Rhodesia, post-1980 narratives are retrospective in content. The discursive economy that informs the post-1980s is different from that of the pre-1980 period. In the post-independence era, white writers are responsive to the change in government and the discourses accompanying this change.

In the post-independence period, whites were indeed called upon to choose whether or not they would be Zimbabwean, as opposed to Rhodesian (Fisher). Participating in national events such as the Heroes Day celebrations, for instance, was used to judge whites' commitment to Zimbabwe. The nation was constructed as "a community of obligation" (Fisher 95), with whites being called upon to make themselves visible in public events. A discourse of racial reconciliation existed side by side with a discourse of expulsion. Smith (*The Great Betrayal*) notes that as early as the 1980s, Mugabe was assuring whites that they would remain citizens of a multiracial Zimbabwe while some of his cabinet ministers simultaneously made public

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statements to the contrary (371). Whites were therefore trapped in an ambivalence deriving from fluctuating official discourses on nationhood in Zimbabwe. In later years, the war increasingly provided the political frame through which whites could belong or not.

Whites generally snubbed national events in Zimbabwe in protest against the manner in which they were framed in official war discourse. They rejected the foundation on which discourses of their belonging and/or unbelonging were premised, that is, the war itself (Fisher 99). Having been alienated from the discourses about the war through the nature in which war memory was discursively manipulated, whites "sought to wrest from ZANU PF some moral high ground and control over the parameters of the debate regarding the nature of a just society" (100). This, apparently, they did by refusing to be interpellated as villains of the war and its aftermath.

Fisher does not give much agency to white authorship of the war. She observes that whites suggested alternative forms of nationhood because they had been alienated in the official narrative and therefore could not legitimize themselves via war narratives. Apparently, "without a sense of authorship and unable to position their identity within the state's narrative, white Zimbabweans have failed to develop a sense of national belonging out of the civil war memory" (86). True, whites were alienated from the official narrative about the war but some did attempt to write themselves into Zimbabwe through narratives about the war. It is an oversight to say white authorship on the war did not exist in any meaningful way when one considers the fundamental conditions of possibility of a literary system. It is duly noted that "[i]n the history of literary language, there is a struggle constantly being waged to overcome the official line" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 345). As the overall thesis demonstrates, whites did suggest alternative forms of belonging − through land, by invoking the past and by challenging several dominant assumptions about whiteness. This chapter argues that whites developed a sense of authorship about the war and in their narratives justified the need for more nuanced interpretations of the war.

Indeed, white narratives do not share any uniform perspective. As will be demonstrated in the arguments to follow, these story-lines are characterized by a dissonance which finds expression through intra-narrative contradictions and ambivalences as well as inter-narrative contradictions.

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The analysis of how writers grapple with such ambivalence is important to an understanding of issues to do with citizenship and belonging in the new Zimbabwe. The remaining sections of this chapter closely examine individual narratives by focusing on how Rhodesian society is depicted during the war, the sentiments held by different individuals and groups towards the war, the contradictions that characterize individual narratives and conflicts that exist among narratives.

2.4.1. Polyphony in Tim McLoughlin's *Karima*

Published in 1985 by Mambo Press, *Karima* recounts a war incident ("incidents" would be a more apt term, owing to the variations that subsist through multiple versions) in remote Karima village in the North-Eastern part of Mount Darwin during the nationalist war. The various narratives evident in this novel circle around the events that lead up to the death of villagers in Karima during the war. Through several voices the reader is drawn into both individual and group sentiments with regard to the war. The following sections draw on some of these voices to highlight the manifestation and significance of multivocality in white narratives about the war. An interrogation of these voices is crucial to an understanding of *Karima* as an intra-multiplicity: a transient conglomeration of several consciousnesses about the war. *Karima* is used here to demonstrate that Rhodesian society was fragmented; it was divided over the reasons for fighting the war, possible solutions to the crisis, and attitudes towards blacks.

The novel opens with an apparent attempt by the author, through a first person narrator, to broaden the scope of dialogue through his acknowledgement of the multiplicity of stories about the Karima massacre during the liberation war. In the opening two lines a voice explains: "If I was to tell the story of Karima it would differ from what follows. But I am not the story-teller, just one of the many characters in the narrative" (McLoughlin 7). The capitulation of authority evident in this statement is quite useful because it is indicative of the nature of authorship: it exists in conflict with other forms of authorship to the extent that it acknowledges the always-already differential nature of all discourse, in line with Derridean conceptions of the conditions of possibility of speech and writing in general. The author recognizes that he can tell only part of the story; an incomplete version which exists on the borders of other similarly partial and incomplete stories. In a multiplicity, a story cannot be temporally or spatially fixed for no individual can possess it. Indeed "the text belongs to language" (Spivak in Derrida, *Of*

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Grammatology lxxiv). In language we find the existence of multiple consciousnesses that participate in the dialogue on war. In this regard the author's voice is merely "a link in the chain of speech communication" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 91). It is to the novel's credit that it gives licence to the existence of multiple voices on the Karima incident and the liberation war in general and demonstrates a multiplicity of white narratives.

The characteristic of some novels where a "*plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world*" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 6; emphasis in original) interact has been duly defined as "polyphony". In this novelistic genre[26] the dialogic horizon expands in only one direction: the multiple. The polyphonic novel is a "novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice" (Lodge 86). The position of the author is no longer a privileged one. His/her voice is reduced to an alternative, one in conflict with numerous others. Suffice it to say *Karima* is self-consciously polyphonic. It rejects both its author and narrator in order to lend the story of the Zimbabwean war a multivalent quality. Indeed it rejects a centred subject in accordance with its sense of a multiplicity. The posited author finds himself speaking alongside his characters in a relationship of unresolved polemic.

What obtains in McLoughlin's *Karima* is the co-existence of several voices about the war. The author deliberately develops numerous independent zones from which several conflicting voices about the war are allowed to emerge. A typical chapter in the novel is divided into autonomous sections in accordance with the views of characters from whose perspective we penetrate the world of *Karima*. Each section is further fragmented into several sites of narration enabled by the creation of independent character zones, so much so that any one section is never singly accentuated. Our access to the zone of the liberation war in *Karima* is therefore relatively

[26] Bakhtin (*Speech Genres* 7) notes that the polyphonic novel is a genre that means that not all novels fit the description in the same way. While the novel by its very nature is multi-accentuated because it incorporates other languages (heteroglossia), some novels are more polyphonic that others, whereas others are not polyphonic altogether. The quality of being polyphonic lies primarily in the plurality of independent voices representing fully valid ideological positions in a text. In this regard, Bakhtin applauds Dostoevsky as the creator of the polyphonic novel because of the space he grants his characters' voices to enter the literary work *alongside* the author's voice and not as objects of the author's discourse.

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unpremeditated. As several voices operate on the same discursive plane as that of the author, we cannot postulate a singularity of consciousness. The white narrative commits to dialogue with the effect of broadening the scope of our understanding of the war. It creates several valid pathways through which the war can be assessed.

The first chapter, entitled Friday (following the prologue), for example, is divided into thirteen sections, typically representing at least thirteen narrative dimensions on the war. The section on Dewu, a black boy, affords the reader a glimpse into Rhodesian war propaganda in "African" schools. This exposition occurs amidst a heteroglossia that involves the voices of Mr Sidomba (a school teacher), Takurayi (an old villager), Cyprian (a young boy), and Rhodesian soldiers appearing in a propaganda film. Successive sections introduce the perspectives of the District Commissioner, Cyprian, Richard, the District Commissioner's son who is fighting in the war against his wishes, and several other military and civilian individuals. This narrative style is upheld throughout the novel, thereby giving it its polyphonic quality. The existence of multiple voices is in accordance with the import of the District Commissioner's introductory testimony: "[W]e are living through a war in which each individual has a story to tell" (McLoughlin 12). That "each individual has a story to tell" concerning the war creates multiple sites of discourse about the war, effectively rendering it authorless. In a condition where every individual is a potential storyteller, the subject is thus eliminated, rendering the text a multiplicity. No individual can therefore claim supreme ownership of the narrative about the liberation war. One is always aware that there are other voices out there with which his or her voice is in dialogue.

The war meta-narrative in *Karima* is therefore fragmented into numerous narratives in a relationship of both concord and discord. In this way, the reader is afforded a richer experience of the liberation war. These voices, constitutive of various languages, are not subjected to the unitary language-world of the author's consciousness. Rather, they represent multiple socio-ideological views about the war. For instance, Fitzpatrick's voice carries the forceful and decisive accent of military language, Falkland's a religious intonation, and the district commissioner's voice is paternalistic and protective. Characters therefore utilize this space, "granted" them by the author, to expand on the dialogue about the war. In other words the existence of different centres of perception is deliberately encouraged in *Karima*.

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Accompanying these voices are several plot trajectories that are easily decipherable as narrative pathways, lending the novel a multiply vectored character. These vectors include the District Commissioner's ambivalent reflections on the war; Takurayi, Dewu and Cyprian's pursuit of Sylvester, a suspected informer against the African nationalists; the experiences of young white soldiers, such as the District Commissioner's son Richard, in the war; and military preparations for revenging the killing of Selous Scouts by suspected black fighters. These narrative paths intersect at various points in the novel, for example during the attack on Karima village where Richard's unit is directly involved, Dewu dies and the District Commissioner arrives to bury the dead and pacify the villagers. Still, the plots retain their narrative energies, managing as they do to chart separate discourses about the war. This coming together of plot trajectories does not amount to a synthesis or final resolution of the war narrative. Instead, the various plots retain their narrative energies: the military justifies its punitive strategies; the district commissioner continues to dither about the war while Takurayi and Cyprian continue their pursuit of Sylvester. In this regard, no single centre eventually dominates the narrative.

A speaking multitude that refuses easy identification is enlisted in *Karima*. In this text, we witness a process where the familiar is substituted with the unfamiliar. What the reader is bound to get from the narrative is a supposedly neutral story from a "stranger" (McLoughlin 16) who, as it later turns out, is nobody in particular. In fact, "stranger" seems to be the appropriate term for the undifferentiated assemblage of voices which constitutes the war narrative. When opposed to the familiar, the notion of a stranger points towards the unknown and the inconclusive. The same voice explains that "in disqualifying myself from telling the story of Karima I do the same for the rest of us who were involved because that very involvement has debilitated our sensitivity to the facts" (15). This rejection of the familiar is consonant with a multiplicity. It does not boast of a genealogy. A multiplicity appears in a more or less similar form to the rhizome, which is "an antigeneaology" or "antimemory" (Deleuze and Guattari 21). It should be stated that a multiplicity has no centre that differentiates it in absolute terms. In this regard, it appears to us outside the realm of the familiar. What is rejected in the polyphonic novel is the idea that in language one speaker suffices. The idea of a self-sufficient speaker is discredited in *Karima* because it suggests a "mythical Adam" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 93). An utterance has an author

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who speaks with several others in mind, a quality termed "addressivity" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 95-99). Addressivity renders language multiple. It is in their linkages or connections that voices gain credence.

Owing to the author's willing capitulation to the voices that exceed his own, to the creation of numerous sites of discourse and the polemic nature of dialogic interaction in the novel, *Karima* makes no absolute claims to truth. In a multiplicity truth does not subsist. The way, the truth and the life are myths. A multiplicity recognizes *ways*, *truths* and *lives*. There are no absolutes. The text that eliminates contradictions and dialectics, Barthes (*A Barthes Reader*) tells us, gravitates towards the mythical. The text that allows for doubt, on the other hand, is one which is polyphonic, and one which allows for the existence of multiple viewpoints. It permits conflicting views to thrive independently of one another without necessarily forcing a synthesis in which one or the other must be eliminated or effectively compromised.

Karima is not about the truth of the Karima incident. We are told that "the hard truths of this war" will soon become "a fantasy of bravery and hope" (McLoughlin 12). It is imperative to add that cowardice and despair are also part of this fantasy. Indeed "the story grows in the telling" (13) precisely because rejoinders in dialogue keep materializing. Nothing is absolute in this narrative design. All stories are bound to be "elaborated, embellished, glamourized and salted" (12). This resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's map, which is "detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification" (12). In *Karima*, the District Commissioner appears to provide a civilian account of the war that finds amplification from the voices of the military, the church, the younger soldiers and the women. Instead of diminishing the story, every new voice serves to stretch the discourse of war beyond the imaginable.

The above is true of the white Zimbabwean literary system. Every writer, every text and every character contribute towards a multiplicity. When considered a multiplicity, the polyphonic design of *Karima* approximates the broader white literary system of which it is a part. It is a system that thrives amid many languages, what Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination*) calls heteroglossia. When we consider the character Major Fitzpatrick, for example, we can see how forces of centralization and decentralization enable a multiplicity of utterances. Major

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Fitzpatrick's voice represents the military perspective on the war. As head of security operations his voice seeks to unify all colonial forces, including those falling outside the military's direct sphere of control (for example the civil administration), against the perceived terrorist threat in Rhodesia. A military solution to the war is what he envisages; in other words, success against the nationalists is to be judged on the basis of black casualties.

This centripetal desire for order is seen to be a necessity during the crisis of war. Even John, the District Administrator, concedes to the need for law and order although he disagrees with the military approach in principle. The meeting Fitzpatrick convenes following the death of five Selous Scouts demonstrates this desire to cohere all colonial forces in retaliation against the black soldiers who are the alleged perpetrators of the attack on the Selous Scouts. To the District Commissioner, Fitzpatrick was "at his new game of turning the country into a military camp" (McLoughlin 72). Turning the country into a military camp would mean making everyone speak the language of the military and creating a coherent people responding to the military voice alone. Part of this military resolve includes taking a hard-line stance towards all black people, who are regarded as potential terrorists or terrorist collaborators. Already, John realizes that the meeting is marked by an "air of grave military consensus" (72). In theory, the military does obey and regurgitate a single voice. Through a regime of discipline and punish, the military is projected as a machine comprising different parts that all add up neatly. It can therefore be easily argued that the military represents the desire for monologic conformity.

The desire for monoglossia, *Karima* demonstrates, is not attainable. Even during war when, according to Fitzpatrick, "the barrel of the gun" (McLoughlin 102) is the only perspective, we are informed that "a District Commissioner [is] not part of the army" (73). In other words, not all sections of the colonial community are directly involved in the war. Neither are all individuals in harmony with the military voice. The District Commissioner is of the view that "most of the population did not want the war. They wished it was over" (72). He is also aware of the irreconcilable contradictions that exist between the civil administration and the army during the war. Fitzpatrick's retort that "there is only one perspective in war" is made as a response to the District Commissioner's insistence that "we need to keep our perspectives" (102). These two

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statements, operating at cross-purposes with each other, demonstrate the centripetal-centrifugal dynamic to which existence subscribes.

What Fitzpatrick holds on to is a false sense of unity informed by his refusal to permit the existence of other views except his own. In Zimbabwe's cultural polysystem, Fitzpatrick's voice would be the mark of officialdom; a rigid expression of monoglossia. Like the ZANU PF meta-narrative, he is motivated by the need to foreclose dialogue. He insists on imposing a monologue but much to his chagrin he meets with contradiction every step of the way. His views keep bouncing off him into the arena of dialogue where they are contested and reduced to a mere version among others. He knows that his best chance of imposing a monologue is by eliminating all opposition, and that includes fighting other arms of the colonial regime such as the civil service, which he boasts the army can do without in the war (McLoughlin 104), as well as the church, which he finds "soft" (104). Yet, paradoxically, he needs these institutions to handle blacks on behalf of the army by gathering intelligence about the movement of the freedom fighters. What he also fails to understand is that interrogating blacks about the ambush on the Selous Scouts is to sanction dialogue by attempting to eliminate it. Once the blacks are given the chance to speak, they amplify the dialogue on the war, which has hitherto been restricted to white voices. This paradox holds true of all discursive practices. Foucault notes this when he talks about efforts to stifle discourse on sex in Europe. Having identified some of the repressive methods that existed with the goal of imposing a silence on sexual matters in Europe, he observes that "practically the opposite" occurred (*History of Sexuality* 18). The result was a multiplication of discourses on sex.

Fitzpatrick's centripetal attitude fails to hold even among his own ranks. Within the military, dissenting voices exist. Richard, the District Commissioner's son, epitomizes this dissent. He is cynical about the motivation for fighting against black people. Rather than toeing the official line that the war is morally justified, Richard sees through the facade. He accuses the older generation of whites of pawning the youth in the war when he tells Powell: "You older people are pushing us out there to secure you, to safeguard what you have made out of the country, but you are compromising us and that is what sticks in my gullet" (McLoughlin 44). These sentiments find deeper expression in Moore-King's *White Man Black War*, as will be seen later.

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Karima is a challenge to numerous other narratives that fail to accommodate contradictions and doubt about the war in pursuit of meta-narrations. The retention of doubt is made an integral component of the war narrative. Nothing is entirely certain. The author is aware of the infallibility of narrative. Narratives, McLoughlin seems to be arguing, must necessarily doubt their modes, their motives, their founding assumptions, their codes and their purposes. This doubt, noted by Mboti (16) as "an important and critical common factor" in his discussion of film, is important to all narratives. The writer needs to enter what Harris ("An awkward silence" 39) calls "the awkward spaces of 'not knowing'" where s/he does not pretend or claim to know everything. The potentialities that proceed from such a move are described by Harris thus:

> The awkward silences that ensue might prompt real dialogue, respecting both what the other refuses to say and being challenged by entering into the discourse of the foreigner and in listening (albeit partially, incompletely) to what he/she is saying. This means that knowledge production comes to be a sharing of the world, not in the sense that the world we share is the same (it is not, it can never be), but in the sense that the circuits that create meaning become multidirectional, allowing for participation from all locations and respecting the misunderstandings and confusions that must ensue. ("An awkward silence" 39)

The white narrative is therefore seen to effect a deterritorialization of discourse throughout. The narrative opens up to the voices of numerous others with whom it shares the world. The narrative paths are not ultimately contained or harmonized. As already indicated, they intersect only briefly and retain their narrative energies in order to guarantee the multiplicity of the text.

2.4.2. Heteroglossia in Bruce Moore-King's *White Man Black War*

Through a reading of Moore-King's *White Man Black War* this chapter seeks to show that white narratives belong to a heteroglot world, a world of multiple languages, which destabilizes the putative monologism of the white Zimbabwean literary system. In such a scenario neither the system nor the other languages can be successfully unitary. The system is already multiplied from within. It suffices to say in comparison to *Karima*, *White Man Black War* is a novel "of the

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monologic type".[27] Its monologism, like that imposed on the white Zimbabwean literary system, is, in Bakhtin's terms, "posited" (*Dialogic Imagination* 270). Bakhtin further observes that "at every moment of its linguistic life [unitary language] is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia" (*Dialogic Imagination* 270).

This chapter explores how a bogus sense of multiplicity is achieved in *White Man Black War* through a repressive incorporation and discursive straightjacketing of heteroglossia. The import of this assertion is that this violently dualistic text should be read in view of the inevitably more heteroglot world from which it emerges despite its own severe channeling of voices. This point needs underlining specifically because in *White Man Black War* the dialogue among characters is constricted in the name of one version of "truth" above all others. Unlike in *Karima*, where polyglossic utterance is expansive, energetic and open, in *White Man Black War* the author seems to be pursuing a dualism in which he deliberately sets up two orders of discourse against one another, precisely in order to show how the one destabilizes the other. In such a reading, Moore-King is working against the perception that white people uniformly share "settler" myths and stereotypes, as suggested by Chennells (*Settler Myths*). He is seeking to demonstrate, as a white man, and as a so-called settler, how vulnerable settler mythologization is to destabilization. This is performed simply by an orchestrated employment of events in the war carrying its own inevitable logic − a logic that refutes the white meta-narrative, and by implication also the ZANU PF meta-narrative about whites. Moore-King's novelistic plan employs a putative polyphony in a strategic sense. It consists of juxtaposing contrasting views in order to demonstrate how the one trumps the other.

Two processes, which will be discussed together, contribute towards the novel's ultimate contextual multiplicity, despite the author's less expansive design: Moore-King's novelistic plan, achieved through the aforementioned dualism, and the text's refusal to be contained by what is in effect a monologic authorial set-up. It is argued that the limitation of Moore-King's novelistic plan is precisely that the voice of the author is unitary and seeks to reduce the socio-ideological content of the novel into a single authorial consciousness. Nevertheless, the incorporation of

[27] The "novel of the monologic type" is fundamentally different from the polyphonic novel in that it does not create "a world of autonomous subjects" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 7; 82-83)

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heteroglossia, defined by Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination* 272) as "languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, 'professional' and 'generic' languages, languages of generations and so forth", where literary language is just one of the many languages, ensures that the novel retains multiple dimensions, lines of flight, which point the narrative towards other meanings besides that of the author. It is important, then, to establish the dialogic parameters of Moore-King's narrative.

The differences between *Karima* and *White Man Black War* serve to show that white Zimbabwean writing generates *multiple modes of speaking*. Whereas in *Karima* the war is told from multiple sites created through character zones, in *White Man Black War* multiplicity (despite its attempted foreshortening) is achieved as a result of an incorporation of speech genres. *White Man Black War* is a multi-generic narrative that combines literary fiction, rhetoric, song and reportage. Among the voices present in the text are attributions to the former Rhodesian Prime minister Ian Smith, David Brooks of the Rhodesian Special Air Services, and a writer, Diana Mitchell. Dividing genres into primary and secondary, Bakhtin (*Speech Genres*) notes that primary genres – which consist of short responses of daily conversation, everyday recitations, brief model military orders, verbal signals in industry, letters, diaries, minutes, and so forth, notable for their referentiality to and function within the pragmatic communicative contexts of "extra verbal reality (situation)" (83) − appear in novels to expand the scope of its dialogue in order to enable the heteroglossia of a fictional narrative. Heteroglossia, when incorporated into the novel, enables the existence of a multiplicity. The work-utterance ceases to function as a single unit. On the contrary, it becomes a site of many languages and, of course, the socio-ideological views they represent.

Guo-Wei explains that "the notion of multi-genre is primarily a functional one: the realization of a goal [...] it is an overall goal or purpose that connects a number of different genres with each other" (85). The narrative's use of other voices, thus contained in primary genres, is inseparable from the overall purpose of the text; what Bakhtin calls the "*specific authorial intent*" or "the speaker's *speech plan* or *speech will*, which determines the entire utterance, its length and boundaries" (*Speech Genres* 77; emphases in original). In *White Man Black War*, the author insists that this purpose is Truth about the war. The author exhibits what Nietzsche (Levy 197)

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refers to as "the Will to Truth", a tendency whose overall effect is the elimination of perceived falsehoods. Truth is made the objective of the narrative, a feat that of necessity requires a special kind of relationship among genres.

It is important to demonstrate how monologism or a unitary language is posited in *White Man Black War* from the outset. In the process, it should be borne in mind how the white literary system is similarly rendered in nationalist narratives. On the back cover of the 1989 edition of *White Man Black War* one finds a comment attributed to *Africa South*[28] that the text is "[t]he first book to tell *the truth* about an ignoble war written by a former Rhodesian soldier who strips away *the lies* he had been fed from his cradle" (emphasis added). The merits of this assertion notwithstanding, it appears that *Africa South* adopted a very particular reading of the text, that is, one which is consonant with the author's intended meaning. Moore-King himself is keen to develop the truth element in his account of the war to the extent that the word "truth" appears in his text at least twenty times, fifteen of them capitalized. Words such as "lie", "fact", "real", "reality", "true" and "truly" are sprinkled throughout the narrative to extend the discourse of "truth". A typical opening statement to a passage in the text reads thus: "[T]his is the way it was" (15). Statements, events and people are judged on the basis of a truth that the author seeks to render transcendental. From the outset, the reader is drawn into an ironclad binary coding which pits "truth" against "lies" in a discursive arena where only one of the two terms is allowed to survive. For Moore-King, the terms are irreconcilable and their conflict has only one solution: the banishment of "lies" in order for "truth" to flourish. This corrosive polemic permeates the discourses of *White Man Black War*.

The narrative itself commences with the rejection of a contrary view of the war by an unnamed "long-time friend and ex-regular soldier". This contrarian view is dismissed, in the author's note, for falling victim to "selective memory and convenient myth" about the war. A declaration that "this is not the Truth" (Moore-King 4) immediately follows against perceived falsehoods perpetrated by the older generation of Rhodesians. The resolution towards the end of the narrative is a declaration of what is deemed the "Truth". The narrative structure is clearly based on the dichotomy between what is supposedly not true and what is taken to be true. As if to

[28] Africa South is published quarterly by Africa South Publications (Pty.) Ltd in Cape Town, South Africa.

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augment his case for the truth, the author provides a list of twenty three references − ranging from historical, literary and newspaper sources − at the end of the narrative. The author's voice exists in a relation of polarization against the other voices permitted by the incorporated genres. Unlike in *Karima* where other voices exist to make possible dialogically alternative sites of discourse, the authorial voice in *White Man Black War* challenges, purges and limits the scope of alternative positions and voices. This latter tendency is described as "dialogic contraction" (Martin and White 102).

Events in the novel are not sequentially connected. Nevertheless, they are all connected by an authorial thread consisting of the need to debunk settler mythologizations that largely informed the war on the white side. Narrations and descriptions of events are generally preceded by examples of such myths or their questioning in the form of epigraphs by historical figures who include the former Rhodesian prime minister Ian Smith. Events draw us to the challenges that young white soldiers had to go through in serving the interests of the white elite, who included the politicians. One such depiction is of "tired and filthy" (Moore-King 6) soldiers who are furthermore "fatigued with the monotony of their tasks" (12), brutalizing innocent civilians and burning their huts down in an inhuman fashion. The soldiers described in the story are "not zealots, not idealists, not even exceptional soldiers" (15) as Rhodesian propaganda has been keen to portray. They are vulnerable men with fears and doubts concerning the war. Right in the midst of war, some of these young soldiers − cooks, radio operators and accountants by profession − think about going home. As the war rages on, white soldiers have to contend with defeat and post-traumatic disorder states resulting from the horrific deeds they execute during the war. Such renditions, following immediately after epigraphs such as that from Ian Smith claiming that "we have struck a blow for the preservation of Justice, Civilization, and Christianity" (5), demonstrate how the narrative shapes its sense of the "truth" and the "lies." The descriptions of soldiers' shabby outward appearances, their troubled inner feelings and their uncoordinated actions serve not only to refute but also to purge white mythologizing discourses incorporated into the novel through primary genres.

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A binary coding of truth versus lies therefore holds the narrative together, where "Truth" and "lies" are structural motifs in the novel. The division informs the overall structure of the narrative. This division can be illustrated by a table as follows:

Truth	Lies
'The black tribe'	'The white tribe'
The black war	The white war
'The young ones'	'The Elders'
Zimbabweanness	Rhodesianness

In this binary coding we observe what Spivak (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* lxix) has termed "[a] longing for a center, an authorizing pressure, that spawns hierarchized oppositions". Undeniably, "[t]he superior term belongs to presence and the logos; the inferior serves to define its status and mark a fall" (ibid). In *White Man Black War* "truth" comprises an array of attributes that characterize people and inform both actions and narrative. These attributes are seen to endure in the face of opposition. Among these attributes is the discursive sanctity of an indistinctly categorized "black tribe". This so-called tribe is seen as a mass of black people sharing a single identity, history and future. The "black war" is seen as containing a truth basis. It is a legitimate war founded on singular truth. Zimbabweanness is an identity that also has its basis in truth while the authorial voice and the young ones represent the true predicament whites face during the war despite the Rhodesian government's propaganda. Lies are constructed as the opposite of the truth. While the "white tribe" is not depicted as a phony tribe, some of its elements are. These elements, which include "The Elders" and their "High Priest", "the enemies" and the various incorporated voices, are shown to thrive on lies.

What is nevertheless worrying about the narrative is the creation of heavy dualisms, the paradox of a deeply ingrained and pervasive authorial voice imposing a single, subjective version of the war and its aftermath, and the representation of this version in transcendental or monological terms. This putative transcendentalism seeks to establish monologic closure by banishing alternative viewpoints about the war in the final analysis. Numerous other voices are ingeniously incorporated into the authorial monologue in order to buttress the alleged "Truth". In fact, the

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declaration "the only Truth is what I see" (112) can be said to be fundamentalist in nature. One of the contradictions in this designation is its coupling of subjectivity and transcendentalism. The authorial voice, therefore, claims the ability to see what others cannot. On that basis, the author claims absolute ownership of "truth". Furthermore, his "Truth" is represented as something permanent, fixed, absolute and eternal. However, this is not all. The author's truth is also presented as irrefutable. Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination* 342) tells us that "[t]he authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it [...] is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher". We see this tendency in the authorial voice through its claims to legitimacy. The ability to speak the truth is apparently validated by the author's direct participation in the war. Boasting of having fought the war in various Rhodesian security units such as the Rhodesian Light Infantry, Police Anti-Terrorist Unit, Rhodesian Intelligence Corps, First and Second Rhodesian Regiments, Rhodesian African Rifles and the Special Branch, the author is confident that this unparalleled extent of experience makes him an authentic voice about the war. This is contrary to the narrator's voice in *Karima*, which argues that involvement debilitates one's sensitivity to facts.

In dismissing other views as false, the author privileges his methods of dualistic signification and claims that his is the last word, or the "official line" on the liberation war. Monologic accounts of white writing work in a similar fashion. They privilege a dualistic signification which regards black and white Zimbabwean literatures in hierarchical fashion where white writing is ultimately dismissed as inferior and irrelevant. The positing of a unitary language in the Zimbabwean literary system is thus rendered complete. Such is also the result we get in *White Man Black War*. However, and significantly so, a unitary language is never achievable in the novel. Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination*) observes that the very essence of the novel is dialogism. For Holquist this dialogism "is the name not just for a dualism, but for a necessary multiplicity in human perception" (21). A novel that maintains a monologic style of utterance, and contains no stratification of discourse, is by definition not a novel but a tract, a work of propaganda or "bad drama" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 327). In dialogue there can be no last word. As Spivak notes in the introduction to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, "all conclusions are genuinely provisional and therefore in-conclusive" (xiii). Dialogue persists even in the face of resistance. It will be noted that other writers have also voiced their own "truths" about the war, thereby

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making Moore-King's voice merely one among others. Of course any claim to truth suggests a binary opposition. Following Derrida, we insist that the presence of a binary pairing ineluctably suggests that meaning cannot be transcendental and that the binary inevitably deconstructs itself through the process of erasure. Every binary opposition must of necessity give way to other forms. What should be said of Moore-King's narrative is that it presents the liberation war in a certain way and not that it presents the truth about the war. What gives the imaginative literary text, as against more instrumental texts, its value is dialogism and polyglossia: the ability to represent multiple voices about the same incident in stratified, non-unified levels of human discourse (cf. Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* xx).

Despite the apparent authorial attempt to secure an unimpeachable version of truth, *White Man Black War* discursively speaks alongside the afore-mentioned *Karima*, several other work-utterances in the white Zimbabwean literary system and multiple additional extra-literary utterances on the war of liberation. Precisely, it is "a link in the chain of speech communication" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 91). In this regard, the authorial voice maintains "a sideways glance" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 32) that not only recognizes the existence of several other voices, albeit unwillingly, but also lends the novel its inevitably heteroglot quality. Bakhtin explains:

> Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from outside itself − but it is not in any case concentrated simply on its own object; it is accompanied by a continual sideways glance at another person. (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 32)

Never mind that the author insists that the truth is *what he sees*; these glances enable him to see other ideologues uttering voices that are at odds with his own. The war, it should be underlined, is an object already internally dialogized. It comprises the accents, values and judgements of other speakers. To narrate the war means speaking with a sideways glance. One need always be conscious of the several voices already spoken about the object and the several that will be inevitably spoken.

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In order to validate the authorial voice, several other ideologues are incorporated into *White Man Black War*. Of course, the author intends to hold these consciousnesses hostage, so that they contribute towards his ultimately monological composition. The incorporated voices, just like "the Elders", show no discursive movement. They appear dead and closed compared to the author's voice, which is given multiple accents, albeit unified. It is as if the incorporated voices are incapable of exceeding the full stops that appear at the end of their sentences. In a strategically essentialist sense this might in some cases be regarded as meritorious. Indeed, in privileging the voices of those previously ignored (such as those of the young white soldiers in Moore-King's case), the voices of perceived oppressors need not necessarily be elaborated upon extensively; they are ultimately implicit in any case. However, in a *dialogic* sense such an approach is not only limiting, but seeks the unattainable, as Bakhtin suggests when he notes that "such ideas as a special 'poetic language,' a 'language of the gods,' a 'priestly language of poetry' and so forth could flourish [only] on poetic soil" (*Dialogic Imagination* 287). To this list we may add *a language of Truth*. In the novel, incorporated voices are not objects under display.

Multiplicity therefore enters *White Man Black War* through the incorporation of various speeches, all guaranteeing the ultimate relativization of the authorial voice, despite its own intentions to the contrary. Once absorbed into the novel, the incorporated voices weaken the monological composition of the text, consequently weakening its claim to (excessively declared) truth. Disjunctions give the narrative its dialogic character. Between every incorporated genre and the narrator's voice there are disjunctions that provide discordant notes in a manner that allows the reader to see the polyvalent nature of discourse. Bakhtin (*Dialogic Imagination* 339) explains that "not all transmitted words belonging to someone else lend themselves, when fixed in writing, to enclosure in quotation marks". In other words it is not always a successful feat to limit the words of another once they are incorporated into a novel. It is interesting that among the voices Moore-King is at pains to undermine is precisely that of Smith, represented in the narrative as "the High Priest", a straw-man version of the real Ian Smith, incorporating speeches by the former premier on Rhodesian radio and at political rallies.

Monologic stabs at capturing the "truth" in Moore-King have a special significance that is nevertheless matched by the same tendency in other narratives such as Ian Smith's *Bitter*

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Harvest: The Great Betrayal and the Dreadful Aftermath (2001), in which the term "truth" appears at least eighty times and the author takes every opportunity to accuse his enemies of "twisting" or "bending" the truth. In this autobiography, Smith insists all he ever wanted was "to find the truth" (171). He arrogantly claims, despite the nationalist uprising during the war, that "the truth was that [blacks in Rhodesia] were better off than the blacks anywhere else in Africa, with more freedom, better justice and a higher standard of living" (375). Elsewhere he recommends the appointment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission similar to what transpired in South Africa after apartheid (I. Smith, *Bitter Harvest* 430). Ironically, Moore-King is authorized by the same discourse which authorizes Smith – the discourse of a self-righteous and indisputable truth about the war. This juxtaposition of Smith and Moore-King is by no means evaluative. It is not an attempt to privilege one "truth" over another. Rather, it demonstrates that truth, thus polemically dialogized despite these authors' attempts to contain its range of reference, slips from one to the other, becoming in fact a weapon against each of them.

Owing to *White Man Black War*'s use of competing discourses and despite the text's evident attempt to objectify incorporated speeches, multiplicity is ultimately achieved in a critically informed reading of the text. The authorial voice, because it is multi-accentuated (seeing that it carries other incorporated literary and non-literary voices), contains lines of flight that point the reader towards directions not necessarily sanctioned by the author. The incorporated speeches, in the case of a text that seeks unification, are indices. They are signs that direct attention towards other voices. In *White Man Black War*, lines of flight are not readily given. They are not part of the author's design as they are in *Karima*. Instead, these lines of flight appear through the indices that subsist in the text. They point to alternative directions through which the reader can gain access to the object of discourse, in this case the liberation war. Some of these voices, and their utterances, palpably on the wrong side of history, are nevertheless voices on the war. They enable a discursive explosion about the war and the consequent creation of a multiplicity in white writing.

Indefensible as the utterances of Smith and his ilk are − having served as propaganda of the worst kind, supporting a racist war against a majority population − they still lend the war narrative its heteroglot quality. Lines of flight can appear as part of the author's design; or they

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can function as the novel's unconscious, so to speak. Once the text points us towards other directions, unconsciously drawing lines of flight, we as readers encounter another work utterance, and in that work utterance we will find other pointers as well, so that we are left not with a single work utterance, but with a chain of work utterances containing multiple pointers; a chain of consciousnesses multiplying at every opportunity. What we thus find is deferral. Eventually we are left with a text existing within "a chain of significations" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 66).

We definitely know, because the authorial voice carries an index, that there are several other voices besides that of the author and that these voices have another life separate from the life they are afforded in the novel. For instance, the utterance "we have struck a blow for the preservation of Justice, Civilization, and Christianity and in the spirit of this belief we have this day assumed our sovereign independence" (Moore-King 5) attributed to Smith, when considered in other speech contexts, assumes a radically different intonation than it has in *White Man Black War*. In Smith, the utterance is submitted by the authorial voice as an expression of patriotism and courage. Conversely, its inflection in *White Man Black War* renders it absurd. This is achieved through juxtaposition. Following immediately after the incorporated speech by Smith is the authorial voice polemically repudiating Smith's voice in the representation of "tired and filthy" programmed soldiers who brutalize defenseless blacks and burn their huts (Moore-King 6). The dialogization arising from the juxtaposition between the epigraphs and the descriptions of events that follow them are indeed deliberate and part of Moore-King's novelistic plan. He intended to show that white society was, and is, by no means uniform. This dialogization also has an extended effect; that voices, even when enlisted into a text to serve as objects, retain a life beyond that to which they are appended, thereby rendering the text a multiplicity.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has established that white Zimbabwean writing is a multiplicity. The multiplicity of white writing appears through various stylistic modes, particularly the creation of multiple sites of speaking afforded by character zones and the incorporation of speech genres. White Zimbabwean writing is a link in a cultural polysystem that includes several voices on the war. Among these voices are the ZANU PF meta-narrative and the counter-discourses that the meta-

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narrative enables. Through a comparison of *Karima* and *White Man Black War*, it can be concluded that some white Zimbabwean narratives are more open to dialogue than others, thereby establishing the non-uniformity of work-utterances in this literary sub-field. *Karima* is polyphonic in the true Bakhtinian senses of creating multiple, independent and fully formed consciousnesses that operate alongside that of the author. In *Karima*, characters' voices are not mere objects of authorial consciousness. Rather, they represent autonomous world-views about the war. This characteristic of *Karima* enables the multiplication of discourses on the war. *White Man Black War*, on the other hand, is less polyphonic. Yet it assimilates other speech genres with the effect of expanding the dialogic horizon of the war narrative. Heteroglossia is incorporated in *White Man Black* in such a manner that the monologic composition of the text is undermined.

When considered in the general sense, what subsists in *Karima* and *White Man Black War* is a refraction of the white literary system. It is a system comprising writers whose differentiations are inexhaustible. It is possible to render the system complex by pointing out that its writers are of different generations. Writers such as Bryony Rheam and David Hulme, authors of *This September Sun* (2009) and *The Shangaan Song* (2005) respectively, belong to a generation of whites born after 1980. The lines of flight they create within the white literary system are obviously in conflict with the generation of writers who were actively involved in Rhodesian colonial experiences such as Doris Lessing, some of whose writings belong to the 1950s. It is possible to cite occupational differences. Ian Smith, author of *The Great Betrayal* was the Prime Minister of Rhodesia during its most troubled years. He dictated colonial policy, whereas a writer such as Peter Godwin was once a policeman and wrote *Mukiwa* when he had taken up journalism as a career. In their heterogeneity, white writers are similar to the several characters that constitute the voices in any one text-utterance.

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Chapter Three: The search for emplacement in white Zimbabwean narratives

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter argued that white Zimbabwean literature is a multiplicity. Using white Zimbabwean narratives about the war as examples, the chapter proposed that the white literary system and the texts that comprise it need to be differentiated and understood in the context of dialogue which is multiple, contradictory and polyvalent. In this chapter I discuss how places of belonging are imagined in white Zimbabwean narratives on landscape. Under this category there appear 1) writings that primarily focus on the politics of land, such as ownership and dispossession (what may be considered land reform narratives); and 2) those that include significant references to the physical environment in the representations of other issues besides land reform. I demonstrate that these narratives are symptomatic of the need for *emplacement* and therefore constitute a dialogue about how white Zimbabwean subjectivities are interactively constituted within particular places carved from and/or into the landscape, especially in an environment when notions of home are rendered irrevocably unstable. It is argued that the primal need and search for emplacement in fact engenders landscape narratives by white Zimbabwean writers.

For the white writer, emplacement, considered the process whereby an alien objective space is transformed into a personalized social place (Hammond 9), involves forging relations with particular places, through stories, in order to belong. In this manner, different notions of place as home are constructed. White characters are shown to inhabit unfamiliar space, whether bush or farm, to which they have no relation whatsoever. Then, in the process of time, the strange begins to appear familiar and comfortable. The bush, which initially appears hostile to white habitation, subsequently becomes accommodating. The key process is identification. Whites are forced to negotiate their forms of emplacement within a changing social environment. Change, for example the process of land reform, crucially influences writers' constructions of white emplacement.

As can be imagined, most stories are situated in specific places. Ethington explains that "all action and experience takes place, in the sense that it requires place as a prerequisite, and makes

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place, in the sense of inscription" (483). These places lend stories, more importantly the events and characters comprising the story, a particularity which inevitably contributes to the story's signification. Landscape is a feature of every white Zimbabwean narrative, more so because of the discourses on place that have dominated the social, economic and political thinking about citizenship and belonging in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. At one level, "should I stay or should I go", the title of this thesis, is an orientation towards place and emplacement. Underlying issues of place and emplacement represent a deep-seated human need to be "in place" somewhere, or placed within a particular environment. White narratives have indeed grappled with the question of place and emplacement, to the extent that the reader is almost always certain to come face-to-face with literary and symbolic configurations of landscape. Indeed, the recent proliferation of white Zimbabwean literature was, to a great extent, occasioned by disputes over land following land reform measures instituted in 2000. I would argue that land reform narratives have by far been the most frequent avenues through which white Zimbabwean literature has extensively developed the themes of place and belonging. Attention to place is dictated by the need to break with dominant discourses on land and landscape writing, accounts that fail fully or generously to unpack the complexities of imagined spaces of landscape in a search for (white) belonging. In particular, the chapter focuses on how the bush and the farm emerge as white Zimbabwean writers' preferred imaginative terrains of belonging.

Zimbabwean white narratives about landscape seek to imagine anew what may be called "senses of place". Regardless of the challenges presented to them by "land" and "landscape", individuals' experiences of the land metamorphoses from non-identification to semi-complete recognition. Within an occupied or perceived space of settlement, a process of emplacement occurs and it is in particular kinds of locales that the question of belonging is often negotiated. I argue that despite the reality that individuals always occupy wider spaces, writers transform certain spaces into *places* as part of a process involving the need for *re-emplacement* that is enabled by moments of writing. The process of transforming space into place is explained by Gans as follows:

> Natural space becomes a social phenomenon, or social space, once people begin to use it, boundaries are put on it, and meanings (including ownership, price, etc.) are attached to

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> it. Then the air-over-dirt becomes a lot or a plot, and if residential users obtain control over the bounded space, it becomes their place. (329)

In autobiography or memoir, one could say that writers place their multiple selves within specific environments as part of a dialogue between self and place. The mere act of writing involves a conscious choice of which places to include or exclude in the broader context of belonging. In the context of Zimbabwean writing, Hughes argues that "by writing and in writing, extra-European whites have forged senses of belonging more enduring and resilient than empire" ("The Art of Belonging" 2). It is therefore important to think critically about how white Zimbabwean narratives dialogically engage places in a pursuit of belonging. A useful distinction between space and place is given by Schmidt (22), who contends that "place occurs when spaces have acquired particular meanings through the interactions of people with/in that space". Place is thus seen as space humanized. Regardless, places are not entirely cut off from the landscape: "[E]ach place embodies the whole at a particular nexus within it" (Uusihakala 19).

In this section I focus on two narratives: Peter Rimmer's *Cry of the Fish Eagle* (1993) and Douglas Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009). I consider the ways in which two distinct places, the bush and the farm, enable an understanding of place as provisional, unstable and ambivalent. In both texts, as in all Zimbabwean narratives, place is a central organizing concept which is dialogically entangled with individual identities. The choice of *Cry of the Fish Eagle* is informed by the need to locate a study of places of belonging outside the overriding context of the land reform process in Zimbabwe. As already indicated, land reform in Zimbabwe has engendered a burgeoning of white narratives, especially focusing on land reform, and this may potentially deflect attention from other narratives about the landscape which do not share this historical moment. *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, though it anticipates the land reform exercise, is not entirely conditioned by it. The way it imagines the bush is therefore predicated on factors other than just land reform. The choice of *The Last Resort*, on the other hand, has been made in order to examine how literary configurations of the farm and the bush as places of belonging are predicated on perceptions held about the land reform exercise. Read together, the two narratives "loosely" encapsulate white Zimbabwean literary configurations of places of belonging. I say

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"loosely" because shades of literary representations are quite inexhaustible and remain open to dialogue.

3.2. Dialogic places

To see place as dialogic is to affirm its interactive potential. The transformation of space into place results from dialogic encounters between particular environments and distinct sets of human subjects. This chapter postulates an understanding of landscape as a *context* where "con" suggests a dialectic that presupposes dialogue.[29] *Context* is the part of a text that dialogues with other texts in order to expand the scope of dialogue. "Should I stay or should I go" is a problem partly addressed to this context. The reading of landscapes as context is informed by an understanding that literature does not merely report on external spaces; rather it invents or constructs spaces external to the text. Landscape is not empty space on which characters act. It is in itself a heteroglot text in dialogue with other texts. Alternatively, it is a signifier always under erasure as new differential meanings accrue to it. In part, landscape as "place" suggests "the relation of sensation and emplacement; the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested and struggled over; and the multiple ways places are metonymically and metaphorically tied to identities" (Feld and Basso 11). In light of writers taking a backward glance at particular places once encountered, the landscape is there to be read as text. Its codes come into contact with the modes of narration that writers employ, often to *recode* its apparent meaning.

In this dialogic conceptualization, landscape and its narration are not mere sites of observation, the product of an Archimedean gaze. Rather, they constitute one way of being or belonging to Zimbabwe among many. Seeing recognizes the ordering and appropriation of space into the gaze, but dialogue recognizes the interactions that occur between textually inscribed landscapes and textually inscribed human subjects, and the range of entanglements that emerge as a result of these dialogic encounters. The current research takes cognizance of this important point in the discussion of white Zimbabwean narratives in order to create a basis for understanding how

[29] Context derives from the Latin *contextus* which refers to "a joining together" or, in the case of its past participle *contexere*, "to weave together" (http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=context).

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belonging in particular places is based on forms of entanglement, defined by Nuttall as "a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; [which] speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited" (*Entanglement* 1). Landscape is seen to speak a variety of languages − dialoguing with characters and authors. It contributes to the heteroglossia of belonging, contributing idioms and metaphors through which characters and authors reflect upon the landscape as they share their understandings of place. Landscape invokes several dialectics and dialects whose list, when drawn from the repertoire of narratives, is open, contradictory and endless.

It should be noted that places speak only to the senses, hence the common usage of the phrase "sense of place". The senses enable the language of the landscape through what may be referred to as "heteroglossia of the senses". This extension of Bakhtin's heteroglossia to accommodate other sensory events is the subject of Mboti and Tagwirei where the "ear" is seen to make possible the heteroglossia of drama. Individuals sense the landscape in spite of themselves. They feel the scorching heat on their skin and get sun-tanned. They hear the sounds of creatures at night. They see the darkness and smell the rains as they come. Places are therefore agents. Sensing place and making representations of these places is part of the production of meaning that, nevertheless, contends with "word[s] within the very object itself" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 195).

Much as we may find it tempting to consider characters and authors in the context of their landscapes, we often forget that the published text also serves as context in relation to landscape, such that its meaning is governed by the dialogue occurring between published text and the represented landscape. We often forget that in as much as characters are situated within specific environments − landscape in particular − the same contexts (a river flowing, a kopje, a path) are equally situated within specific imaginaries (of characters, authors and eventually readers), so much so that the character/author/reader are all *contexts* equally enabling the meanings of the landscape.

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3.3. The politics of land in Zimbabwe[30]

White configurations of place in Africa date back to the race for overseas territories by several European countries such as Britain, France, Portugal, Germany and Italy in the nineteenth century. This process was characterized by the marking of land within territorial boundaries as colonies. The net result was the creation of numerous places distinguished on the basis of the colonizing nation. Such construction of place occurred with absolute disregard for the places black people had also carved from, and into, the landscape. In Zimbabwe, 1890 marks the official period when whites begin to conceive places on and within the landscape. These symbolic acts were seen in the erection of fortresses, aptly named in the mould of British antecedents (for example Fort Salisbury and Fort Victoria, now Harare and Masvingo, respectively) and the hoisting of the Union Jack, the British flag, on the landscape. Monuments, burial sites, conservancies, dams, resort areas and farms all fall under the category of places that white people created in Rhodesia.

Because the original pursuit, for minerals north of the Limpopo, did not materialize, Rhodesia was founded on the apportionment and distribution of land. Creating portions of land for redistribution, designating certain places on the landscape as white and others as non-white, and transforming the landscape became key activities in the colony of Rhodesia. Land, and by extension, labour to work the land became the basis of the Rhodesian socio-economic and political existence (Maravanyika and Huijzenveld). Several land ordinances and commissions enacted in 1894, barely four years after colonial occupation, appropriated places on behalf of whites and designated barren country as the black people's place. In particular, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 created the foundation upon which the country would be effectively divided into (black) African and (white) European places.[31] It sanctioned the creation of black African reserves and therefore availed the best land for Europeans while disenfranchizing "85,000 African families" in the ten years after the Second World War, when more land was redistributed to post-war immigrants (Machingaidze 561). The Act came to be considered the cornerstone of white Rhodesia (Machingaidze 558). Each amendment of the Act had provisions to seize more land from black people (Musara).

[30] For detailed explanations about the land question in Zimbabwe on can read Palmer, *Land and Racial*; Moyo; Sachikonye; and J. Alexander.
[31] See Kramer; Kwashirai; Machhingaidze; Palmer, *Land and Racial*.

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At this macro-level, then, places were created and governed by the colonial administration, although individuals retained a considerable measure of autonomy. It is this autonomy that enabled whites to further fragment the land into several micro-places that would, for example, include the farmhouse, the barn, the outlying bush, the labourers' cottages and the fields. Some places whites physically invented, some they appropriated within the spaces of dialogue. Several pieces of legislation on land were formulated in the ninety years of the colony's existence, and these land ordinances had one thing in common: the physical and attendant imaginative construction of places inside the territorial boundaries of Rhodesia. Inevitably, white emplacement relied on forms of black displacement. Such processes lead Löfving to argue that "being emplaced […] means 'being placed by others' and becomes a direct counterpart to displacement. Emplacement is re-displacement" (51).

With the coming of independence in Zimbabwe, whites, especially commercial farmers, were called upon to contribute to the country's economic development by the new black government (Fisher). Resultantly, most white farmers retained their land. The Lancaster agreement signed between the British government and the nationalists during the transfer of power ensured that whites kept their farms although the government could purchase the land on a willing buyer willing seller basis.[32] Scholars such as Fisher and Pilossof insist that whites took advantage of this agreement to keep their lands despite failing to utilize all of it. Whites therefore remained in control of much of Zimbabwe's productive land. When a political crisis arose characterized by the emergence of a strong opposition party in Zimbabwe, following the rejection of a referendum for a new constitution in 2000, the reality of white land privilege played into the hands of a beleaguered government (Selby). Two weeks after the announcement of the results, armed militia, war veterans of the liberation war and like-minded youth went on a spree of land invasions. Initially, the government ordered the eviction of these people from white-owned farms but later on publicly lent support to the farm occupations and proceeded officially to launch what later came to be known as the Fast Track Land Reform and Resettlement Programme.[33]

[32] See Harold-Barry; Herbst; Moyo.
[33] See Harold-Barry; Hammar et al.; Murombedzi.

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This bout of land reform in Zimbabwe – comprising two phases: the first from 1980 to 1996; and the second, commencing in 1997 when 1,471 farms were listed for compulsory acquisition (Lebert 45), has changed the geography of place in Zimbabwe. It is the second phase, culminating in the farm invasions of the year 2000, that dealt the strongest blow to white Zimbabweans' sense of place. Whites, especially farmers, were forced to rethink their place in Zimbabwe. Having lived comfortably on farms for so long, it is understandable that they had imagined these farms as permanent or stable places of belonging. It is during this period of *displacement* that white Zimbabwean literature blossoms and heightens the search for *emplacement*. Not surprisingly, therefore, displacement and emplacement exist side by side in white Zimbabwean narratives.

3.4. White landscape writing: an overview

Broadly, Zimbabwe's landscape narratives fall within at least two temporal categories: narratives inspired by the 2000 land reform in Zimbabwe and those appearing before this season of land upheaval. Land has always been a subject of interest to most white Zimbabwean writers. Prose works primarily focusing on subjects other than land invariably find themselves invoking specific images of and about the landscape. The significance of place in white African narratives cannot be underestimated. The idea that "all white African literature is the literature of exile" (Lessing, "Desert child" 700) underlines the significance of place in white narratives, for images of place are very often linked to feelings or thoughts of exile. It is difficult to identify a category of white Zimbabwean literature that does not emphasize the importance of place. Whether it is the war narrative, the autobiographical account or the female narrative, one encounters familiar descriptions in which place is invested with a strong load of meaning.

Land reform narratives emerging after 2000 are a different category only in the sense that their utilization of place is more often than not agrarian. They construct dialogues between events, characters and the land, the farm in particular. Among the works of this period are Catherine Buckle's *African Tears* (2001) and *Beyond Tears* (2003), Ian Holding's *Unfeeling* (2005), Richard Wiles' *Foredoomed is my Forest* (2005), Ann Beattie's *Tengwe Garden Club* (2008), Eric Harrison's *Jambanja* (2008), Douglas Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009) and C. G. Tracey's *All for Nothing? My Life Remembered* (2009). Ostensibly, much of this literature emerges from

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the farming community, be it from white farmers themselves or their relations such as in *The Last Resort*. This observation prompts Pilossof to examine the representations of land in white farmer narratives in order to bring their "voice" into the existing dialogues about land reform and belonging in Zimbabwe. Pilossof rightly notes that white farmers' renditions of land reform and attendant land issues betray an "affirmative parochialism" (70) that owes its existence to a tradition of colonial myths about the land and "Africa" noted by Chennells (*Settler Myths*). Pilossof's examination of texts is part of a larger analysis of white farmer voices on land reform gathered from oral sources and a farmer's magazine, "The Farmer". Regardless, the analysis of white farmer's autobiographies is very insightful.

Chennells's works (*Settler Myths*; "Rhodesian discourse") are by far the most articulate on the depiction of place in white literary narratives, although both studies are circumscribed by a discussion of the Rhodesian pastoral novel. Chennells's observations about representations of the landscape are nevertheless useful to an understanding of existing modes of representation through which white Zimbabwean literature enters into dialogue. For instance, we learn from Chennells (*Settler Myths*) that the Rhodesian pastoral novel created and relied on settler myths about empty land in Africa, the unreliability of the black labourer and white inventiveness. These same myths feed into the parochialism of the white farming community and its writers, who perform the role of Gramsci's "organic intellectuals" (Pilossof 158). Relying on oppositions between "bush" and "art", the Rhodesian pastoral novel reveals the ambivalence of place that haunted Europeans coming to Africa.

Uusihakala examines the manner in which past Rhodesian places of belonging are remembered in diaspora through what he calls "social memory practices" that comprise dialogues, recollections, social gatherings, material displays and writings about the past. Two important factors govern this examination: the remembrance of "Rhodesian" places and the diasporan identities of the informants in the research. Through oral interviews with whites living in South Africa, Uusihakala observes how Rhodesia as place of belonging has been kept alive via social memory practices which rely on "Rhodesian imagery" such as that of "'wide open space' or 'bush'" (62). It is important to underline that this mode of seeing also characterizes the discourse of whites when they claim a Zimbabwean identity.

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Maravanyika and Huijzenveld are of the view that whites wanted to create a neo-Britain in Rhodesia in the mould of America, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. They attempted to do this through immigration policies that sought to attract settlers from Britain with the overall desire to rearrange the population ratio in favour of whites. Underlying this desire was the need to create a sense of place through demographic composition and superiority. What is left unsaid in this understanding is how particular projects on the land itself were configured to serve a similar purpose (Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*). Engineering projects such as the construction of national parks, conservation sites, farms, ranches, dams and, in particular, Lake Kariba, were all part of this design (Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*). These physical exertions on geographical space in order to create recognizable places were accompanied by imaginative projects from writers, painters, photographers and artists, all of whom sought to justify as well as invest physical creations with symbolic meaning. Referring to the construction of Lake Kariba, Hughes observes that whites felt "out of place" in Rhodesia's arid environment, hence the need to create "a waterscape reminiscent of glaciated Europe" (*Whiteness in Zimbabwe* 67). Whites in Rhodesia, and subsequently Zimbabwe, were therefore forced to engineer belonging through the physical and symbolic creation of places.

Hughes provides a nuanced understanding of colonial and postcolonial landscapes that are important to our understanding of the crises of belonging characterizing white individuals. Hughes suggests that white literature, referred to as "Euro-African" literature, demonstrates an obsessive attachment to the landscape, an attachment, he writes, that borders on the pathological (*Whiteness in Zimbabwe* 4). He argues that this condition can be attributed to the need by all colonizers to "propagate the conviction that they belong on the land they have just settled" (1). White Rhodesian narratives, like any settler narratives, therefore constituted an "imaginative project of belonging" which operated alongside the "administrative project of belonging" (2) during the establishment and maintenance of the Rhodesian colony. In other words, white narratives took to landscape writing as a way of forging places of belonging within a colonial set-up, something that could not fully be achieved by missionaries, colonial officers and other arms of the colonial administration acting on their own. The following sections draw attention to

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the representations of place in white Zimbabwean narratives and how belonging is negotiated in particular places.

3.5. Peter Rimmer's *Cry of the Fish Eagle* (1993)

Cry of the Fish Eagle narrates the stories of white individuals, all of whom are caught up in a tangle involving war, land, love and loss. The events in the story span more than fifty years, beginning in 1943. Predictably, the story covers a wide range of interesting subjects such as Smith's UDI, the liberation war, independence and the changes that occur during the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence. Rimmer, therefore, takes an expansive backward glance at places of belonging that whites carved out for themselves. The account places the "African" bush at the centre of its narrative beginning, with the protagonist Rupert Pengelly's loss of "King's Water", a farm in Cornwell, England. Driving this land dispute is a family feud that eventually leads to the Pengellys losing their farm to distant relations, the Geakes, who happen to be the original owners of "King's Water". Land dispossession, coupled with his mother's suicide under circumstances involving the loss of family land and loved ones during the Second World War, combine to sharpen Rupert's senses in relation to the African bush, which he initially encounters during the search for a late friend's daughter, Sasa Savage. Having been warned by Jamie Grant, his first white contact in the Umvukwes district, where much of the story takes place, that the bush − symbolized by the sound of the fish eagle − is "totally addictive" and "the only cure is to hear that sound again" (41), Rupert finds himself travelling back to Africa. Other white characters, including Lewdly Jones, a former English remittance man, Freddie, and Dee, a female ranger, all respond in a similar way to the "call" of the bush.

This section of the chapter examines how Zimbabwean white narratives espouse the bush as a place of belonging for whites in "Africa". I argue that the construction of the bush as a place of belonging is founded on an image of Africa as wilderness characterized by "empty" spaces paradoxically labelled "bush". In this reading, I point out that white Zimbabwean narratives that construct the bush as place of white belonging do so with both an abstract and material idea of Africa in mind. Their characters and the resolutions of emplacement consistently collocate bush and Africa so that the place imagined is neither explicitly Rhodesian nor Zimbabwean but

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African. Such a construction, as will be seen in the analysis of *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, betrays a deep-seated ambivalence about, and suspicion towards, national places.

3.5.1. The Discursive Appropriation of "bush"

One of the striking passages in *Cry of the Fish Eagle* reads:

> Man had not lived on the plateau since the days of Monomotapa, those ancient kings and queens of Central Africa who some thought had built Zimbabwe. All they had left behind were legends and a vast and empty land with only the Rongwa's, their rough, stone-built fortifications long fallen to ruin, as evidence of their existence. Into the void had first come Mzilikazi, a renegade Zulu general who had feared the wrath of King Shaka and taken his regiments deeper into Africa […] But he and his impi were few and the land, so vast and wild, made man seem so very small among its hills. This part of the earth had stood fallow for hundreds of years, the roof of the world. And then in 1890, the white man had taken up the challenge. (Rimmer 32-33).

This passage encapsulates the visualization of Africa as vast and all but empty space consisting of bush, wild animals, scattered peoples and wasteland. The obvious paradox of emptiness loaded with wild animals, human beings, bush and wasteland suggests the myopic colonial attitudes held by whites about Africa and blacks who, in the case of the Shona in Zimbabwe, had been on the continent for at least a thousand years before colonial occupation (Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe*).

Vastness and emptiness suggest the absence of black people on the land. A white character responding to the suggestion that black nationalists are fighting to reclaim land on behalf of black people in Alan Thrush's *Of Lands and Spirits* (1997) retorts "[t]here was nothing here before the Pioneers arrived. Nothing at all […] Just wild animals and disease" (72). Rupert, the protagonist in *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, is informed during his initiation in the bush by Jamie that the last proofs of human life in the Zambezi valley, traditionally home to the Batonka people of Zimbabwe, were an old camp-site, an old spoon and a can written "made in Birmingham", all of which were presumably "fifty years old" (Rimmer 41). A black nationalist leader in the text is

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made to echo similar sentiments when he says the land whites were given by the colonial government of Rhodesia after the Second World War was uninhabited bush (228).

There is no gainsaying that the image of Africa as vast and empty space has been recognized as a myth in several scholarly works on African literature.[34] Chennells observes that "one image of Rhodesia that has, until very recently, had an extraordinary durability in the settler imagination is of the emptiness of the land" (*Settler Myths* 160). He rightly points out that this concept was a myth, one which substantially informed beliefs and behaviours in Rhodesia. What Chennells had not anticipated, when he says "until recently", is that this myth would persist in white Zimbabwean narratives more than a decade after the publication of his thesis. In imagining places of belonging for whites, Zimbabwe's land narratives written long after the demise of colonialism continue, in varying degrees, to draw on this myth. It should be noted that in Rimmer's *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, white characters appropriate the so-called empty spaces as a way of staking claims to place. Whereas a Rhodesian pastoral ideal created oppositions between nature and art manifesting themselves through characters' dual allegiance to Rhodesia and Europe (Chennells, *Settler Myths*), a reading of white Zimbabwean narratives sheds light on the significance of white emplacement in the bush as claims to belonging to Africa.

In *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, the bush is depicted as mostly inhabitable and acutely dangerous, so much so that when whites eventually inhabit it, against the odds, it becomes a place of belonging. Indeed, Rupert's first encounter with the bush is characterized by alarm and fear. The feeling of "being lost in the middle of nowhere" (Rimmer 26) dominates. The miles, we are told, "were endless" and Rupert feels like "the last man on earth" (26). In this bush narrative, the police post is "a small outpost of civilization" (27). The bush is the mythical empty space that is transformed into a recognizable place by the writer once whites humanize and demystify it. On Jamie's map of the Umvukwes district, ninety percent of the landscape is represented by wilderness. When Rupert asks him if people live there, Jamie proclaims "No-one. Tsetse-fly area. Domestic animals die. Kills people too. No cure. Place up there is full of game … Wild country. Very beautiful but wild" (29). Later, as they tour the Zambezi valley, Jamie tells Rupert that black people did not make it in the valley: "If it isn't the malaria that gets them it's the

[34] See Chennells *Settler Myths*; Coetzee; Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*; Pilossof.

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sleeping sickness. Bilharzia in the rivers. […] Black man never had a cure and to keep the cycle of death going he pissed in the rivers and started the little buggers breeding all over again. Africa" (39). He concludes by warning: "*Africa* doesn't want to be disturbed, laddie" (39; emphasis added). Despite this we are told Jamie was "at home in the wilds" (27). Being at home suggests a sense of place. Not only does the narrative depict blacks as interlopers with little regard for the natural order of bush life, it also eliminates them from the historical narrative of the Zambezi valley.

In the process of appropriating the bush as a white place of belonging, blacks are estranged from the bush. Charehwa, a former labourer at Savage farm, owned by Sasa following the death of her father during the world war, moves into the farmhouse, reasoning "why go and live in the bush when there's a good house for the taking" (Rimmer 34)? Blacks are depicted as averse to the bush. In fact, the bush is averse to blacks. If it isn't the tsetse-flies or diseases that is killing them, then it's the animals. Chimanimani, the place Charehwa flees, is gradually depopulated by disease. A white pathologist informs Jamie that in Chimanimani black people die from "pneumonia, malaria, cancer, influenza, cholera. Every disease known to Africa" (128). Included in this list is "a new disease [that] [d]oesn't affect the white man" (128). Even the climate interdicts the black people from living on the land. In *Ginette* (1980), a war narrative by Sylvia Bond Smith, we encounter Gondo, a black man fighting on the side of the Rhodesian army as a Selous Scout, as someone with "a great fear of wild animals" (26). Not only do the tsetse-fly settle on his arm, but his predictions of rain, supported by a black colleague, are ridiculously more than six days off the mark. It is only later, after Gondo no longer professes knowledge of the African landscape and is comically snatched away by a lion in a predatory kill, that it rains. In white Zimbabwean narratives, blacks either shun the bush or (if they attempt to court it) it is they who come off second best. In the process, white claims to the bush as a place of belonging are strengthened. By imagining Africa as bush, whites become the more "natural" inhabitants of the continent. Clearly, white emplacement in the bush is predicated on black displacement.

In white narratives the bush is therefore adopted as a place of belonging by whites, subjects who also choose to expunge blacks from the bush. This obviously contradicts other colonial narratives that were content to designate the bush as the primitive place in which black people might be

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found. In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1995), as in the representation of Dick Turner in Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1973), the bush plagues whites. Their efforts to court the bush result in psychological meltdown, as we gather from Conrad's Kurtz and Lessing's Mary. Lessing, in particular, shows that not all whites were at home in the bush. Dick Turner and, particularly, Mary Turner are not eagerly embraced by it. In a synecdoche typical of colonial discourse, the black people of imperial novels such as *Heart of Darkness are* the bush. They are entangled in this primitive space to the extent that at times it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other. In *Cry of the Fish Eagle* the bush overwhelms its initial inhabitants, who all happen to be black, and retains its status as empty space. That the landscape has remained fallow and the stone walls built by the Rozvi had "long fallen to ruin" further demonstrates that black people had totally failed to humanize Africa, thereby failing to transform it into a place of belonging.

While not all white Zimbabwean narratives are as crude as Rimmer's, the appropriation of the African bush, in varying degrees, is a predominant theme in most. White Zimbabwean writing claims the African bush by imagining how white characters get entangled or entwined within it in diverse ways. *Cry of the Fish Eagle* contributes to the symbolic appropriation of the bush through its depiction of characters that thrive inside its frontiers. The literal cry of the fish eagle, appealing to the sense of hearing, invokes the "sense of place" in Jamie, Rupert and later Lewdly Jones, all of whom become residents of the bush. Lewdly Jones can "hear" the fish eagle's cry all the way from Europe and also during his wanderings across the oceans. He associates this call with the beckoning of Africa, to which he eventually "submits". Although born and raised in Europe, we are told that by going to live in the Africa, which he calls "historical wilderness" (Rimmer 134), Lewdly Jones "had comfortably gone back to his roots" (264). Kobus and his granddaughter, Sasa Savage (named after the indigenous Msasa tree), are said to have "disappeared into the bush" (25). These incidents are represented as forms of consummation; the coming together of humankind and bush. By and by we are informed that Sasa "*had* the bush [and] the animals that lived in it" (31; emphasis added). Consistent with the discourse of tenure suggested by the term "had", Sasa raises a lion's cub that later develops into a fully grown lion. The lion later watches over Kobus' body when he finally lies down to die peacefully in the bush. Furthermore, Sasa's children, brought up in the ways of the bush, are accommodated by the wild.

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"Recognizing who they were" as they wander the bush, a leopard rolls back on its side and goes to sleep (254). As can be expected, the bush speaks the language of whites. Only white characters perceive the sound of the fish eagle. What is consistent about such a representation in *Cry of the Fish Eagle* is that white subjects that claim the bush ultimately receive its recognition, presented almost as a kind of benediction.

What emerges in the text, though, is that the bush can easily slip from being a white place to an ominous black place. The author observes that, following Rhodesia's declaration of independence (UDI) in 1965,"if the white settlers were going to take over the country with their UDI, black nationalism was going to take to the bush and train an army" (Rimmer 306). Indeed, the war was mostly fought in the bush (Uusihakala 39). Blacks fighting against the colonial administration are subsequently referred to as "[t]he 'boys in the bush'" (Rimmer 423). By inserting quotation marks, the author distances himself from such labelling, which would otherwise contradict the success of white claims to the bush as their own place. Here, "boys in the bush" is a description conferred upon black fighters by other black subjects. The author remains cautious in this regard, making blacks' claims to the bush a cause for doubt. In reality, blacks used the bush as a site of resistance during the liberation war. Their military bases were hidden in the bush, from whence they launched a guerrilla war that was to last until independence in 1980. The bush, as a signifier for white belonging, therefore refuses to be contained by imperialist discourse. "Boys in the bush" represents a negation of the bush as a white place of belonging. Undoubtedly, calling the liberation war the "bush war" reflects the ensuing contest for place that was central to the war.

The import of the slippage of "bush" from a "white" place to a "black" place is not thoroughly examined in white Zimbabwean narratives, though. In *Msasa Morning* (1992), Maureen de la Harpe explicitly points out what the "bush war" meant to whites' sense of place; she explains that "the good African magic was swamped by something sinister and chilling – but never quite destroyed" (41). The narrator's sense of "African magic" encompasses the African landscape, the bush in particular, and the sounds associated with the wild. There is an acknowledgement in literary texts that white places of belonging had transformed into landscapes of violence over which whites had little control. Nevertheless, the slippage of bush from white to black is shown

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to be temporary. "African magic", represented by nature, is "never quite destroyed" (De la Harpe 41). Blacks' taking to the bush is considered a mere nuisance whose duration is fleeting. For whites, the bush was much more than a case of small portions or limited temporalities. It was the indomitable, eternal Africa.

3.5.2. Bush as metonym for Africa

The following excerpts, taken from different white Zimbabwean narratives, demonstrate that to evoke the bush is to call forth Africa:

> Tell us about Africa. Tell us about the bush. (A white Portuguese soldier talking to the young Godwin; Godwin, *Mukiwa* 159)
>
> Just the African bush; eternal, hot, unending, tsetse flies biting and sweat dripping and the sun dripping and the sun beating mercilessly into their eyes and on their backs, enveloping them in a sweltering, life-sapping humidity". (The narrator; S. Smith, *Ginette* 1)
>
> "The land itself, of course, was careless of its name. It still is. You can call it what you like, fight all the wars you want in its name. Change its name altogether if you like. The land is still unblinking under the African sky". (Bobo, the narrator; Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* 26)
>
> "'Africa!' I insisted. 'It's so exciting, can't you see! Not London, or Dublin, or Manchester or Kent, or any of the boring places that people live. We,' and I pointed to each of them and myself in turn, 'we live in Africa – with bushmen, and leopards, and witchdoctors and Zulus and jungles and deserts …'". (The narrator; De la Harpe, *Msasa Morning* 39)

The fact that whites, and not just writers, are in the habit of referring to a homogeneous "Africa" has been the subject of much examination (see Mudimbe; Mbembe). The refusal by white Zimbabwean writers to unpack earlier histories of Africa, a condition that has underpinned

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European thought for quite some time, is viewed as serving several purposes (Pilossof 174-75). First, it generates sympathy on behalf of white farmers from the western world. Second, it alienates whites from the Africa to which they claim to belong. Third, it serves as a marketing tool, a trope in a familiar European imaginary, for a distanced audience more familiar with the idea of "Africa" than with individual countries. Africa is considered homogeneous regardless of the fact that it has more countries than any other continent in the world, rendering its relative heterogeneity greater than that of other continents. The above observations by Pilossof about the use of "Africa" in white Zimbabwean farmers' autobiographies are confirmed by some of the titles that have emerged in the white Zimbabwean literary system, including Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996), Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood* (2003), Catherine Buckle's *African Tears* (2001), David Hulme's *The Shangaan Song: Stories from the Bush* (2005) and Graham Atkins' *Once Upon a White Man: A Memoir of War and Peace in Africa* (2009).

Of course, all these narratives are set in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe but from the titles it is "Africa" that emerges as the prime site of belonging; the definite places these works evoke are not immediately clear. It is only when one reads beyond the paratexts of these works that micro-locales, actual places – in the form of country, cities, villages and farms − begin to stand out before ultimately retreating again into the body of Africa. What Pilossof does not highlight is that in white Zimbabwean narratives, "bush" is a metonym for Africa. In the discourse of places of belonging, the "bush" is a convenient way of negotiating belonging in wider and relatively permanent places. The permanence of "bush" as Africa is only possible when considered in opposition to the mutability of nation-states. Recent events in Sudan, where the country split into South and North Sudan,[35] demonstrate that nation-states are fragile. Not many people are keen to acknowledge that continents, as supra-nations, are equally liable to instability. That Africa can cease to be Africa is unthinkable, or at least that is the way it is presented in white Zimbabwean literature. White narratives claiming the bush for their authors and characters are therefore more in danger of alienation from the nation than the continent.

[35] Following decades of conflict between Christians and Muslims in Sudan, the country split into South Sudan and North Sudan in 2011.

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In *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, as in several other white Zimbabwean narratives published after 1980, white characters claim the bush as a way of relinquishing national identities. Africa, as place of belonging, enables a supra-national identity that is not always at the risk of transmutation, such as when "Rhodesians" suddenly find themselves having to become "Zimbabweans". Characters are placed within the ambit of an Africa imagined as bush, a place that outlives nations and governments. In the bush, identity is permanently African and temporarily Rhodesian. Arthur and Julian, raised in the bush by their mother Sasa to be "true Africans" (Rimmer 254), provisionally claim a Rhodesian identity during the war, a reflection of the revival of white Rhodesian nationalism during the time (Godwin and Hancock 1995). Speaking about Arthur and Julian after independence, when the country has been renamed Zimbabwe, Rupert clarifies: "My sons *were* both Rhodesians" (Rimmer 444; emphasis added). Considering that both sons are still alive and in the "bush", there is an implicit acceptance that Rhodesia, as physical place, no longer exists. White characters do concede that Rhodesia is gone. They realize that Rhodesia, after all, was expendable, whether because of Britain's betrayal, which Smith (*The Great Betrayal*) is at pains to describe, or because of the nationalists' unconquerable determination to annul the existence of the Rhodesian colony. But Africa, or the bush, stands firm. It is not expendable. In the event, characters are re-placed within the setting of "bush". This is obviously in variance with "ex-Rhodesian" or "post-Rhodesian" communities that exist to this day as typified by websites such as "Rhodesians worldwide" and physical communities in South Africa (Uusihakala; Pilossof). Regarding literary representations, one feels compelled to ask of whites that have staked a claim to the bush: If they *were* once Rhodesian, what are they now?

For those who leave, such as Jamie and Rupert in *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, their longing for place is not for Rhodesia, but Africa: "Rupert had a terrible longing to be back in *the continent* from which he had just come. England, after so many years was a foreign country. There were no African doves, no sunbirds, no louries" (Rimmer 441; emphasis added). A white respondent to Uusihakala's interviews with whites who have left Zimbabwe for South Africa explains that the decision to migrate to South Africa after Zimbabwe's independence had been simple despite the options available to him to go to Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada: "I'm an African. I don't think that I could ever leave Africa" (Uusihakala 46). Not surprisingly, therefore,

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in *Cry of the Fish Eagle* we find Rupert making a final return to Africa despite having lost his farm during the first phase of the land reform programme in Zimbabwe.

In the text, some white characters remain in their place, that is, in the bush. These include Arthur and Julian, of whom the author says:

> Neither of them had the slightest intention of following their parents. Both were Africans, white Africans whose bloodline went back 300 years to the time of Nicholas Loubser and his farm at Helena Bay. Governments came and went, some friendly, some hostile, but the people of Africa stayed behind, no matter the colour of their skins. They had nothing in common with cold climates, pocket sized living and a view of life that was necessarily cut off by the neighbours [sic] brick wall. They both belonged to the veld and their eyes were used to looking into the far distance with little to disturb their vision but the hills, trees, tall grassland, wild game and cattle. (Rimmer 451-52)

This passage resonates with one in Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2003), where the narrator states:

> Between 1889 and 1893, British settlers moving up from South Africa, under the steely, acquiring eye of Cecil John Rhodes, had been … What word can I use? I suppose it depends on who you are. I could say: Taking? Stealing? Settling? Homesteading? Appropriating? Whatever the word is, they had been doing it to a swath [sic] of country they now called Rhodesia. Before that, the land had been movable, shifting under the feet of whatever victorious tribe now danced on its soil, taking on new names and freshly stolen cattle, absorbing the blood and bodies of whoever was living, breathing, birthing, dying upon it. The land itself, of course, was careless of its name. It still is. You can call it what you like, fight all the wars you want in its name. Change its name altogether if you like. The land is still unblinking under the African sky. It will absorb white man's blood and the blood of African men, it will absorb blood from slaughtered cattle and the blood from a woman's birthing with equal thirst. It doesn't care. (26-27)

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What the two narratives share is the vision of permanence and continuity associated with Africa as bush. The permanence of place is seen to guarantee permanent belonging. Black African governments have indeed regarded whites in Africa differently. The postcolonial nation of South Africa is imagined by successive governments as a multicultural society which does not discriminate against whites on the basis of race. The practicality of such a vision aside, whites in South Africa have not suffered for the sake of place in the same manner that whites in Zimbabwe have. White Zimbabwean narratives express the hope that the African identities they affirm will endure despite the challenges they encounter in convincing national governments about their place of belonging. Arthur in *Cry of the Fish Eagle* explains to his girlfriend that he is an African with a white skin "and sooner or later everyone has got to understand […] I could never live so far from the bush" (Rimmer 391). Furthermore, his brother Julian "was a human bloodhound who was able to see the unusual in the bush in much the same way that others would notice a naked girl walking in the streets […] He was more African than most of the blacks he knew" (374). The association of bush and Africa remains a critical aspect of these narratives as they construct identities that outlast prejudicial national governments.

Supra-national identities have enabled whites to feel a sense of place in other African countries where diaspora communities have been created. Uusihakala (4) notes that "after losing their farms, many white ex-farmers have moved to other African countries – mainly Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda and Nigeria – and started anew." This idea of Africa is consistent with the image one gets in white narratives where white individuals can identify themselves as Africans after the collapse of colonial polities, especially in the case of Rhodesia and when their citizenship is questioned in Zimbabwe. Departing for other African countries, such as we see in Julian and Arthur's temporarily going to Mozambique after independence, is a perpetuation or continuation of an identity they have constructed for themselves in a "bush" called Africa. We find in Fuller an assertion of identity where she claims: "I'm African. But not black [...] I was born in England […] But, I have lived in Rhodesia (which is now Zimbabwe) and in Malawi (which used to be Nyasaland) and in Zambia (which used to be Northern Rhodesia)" (10). She is able to straddle a number of African countries because she does not imagine her identity as entirely confined to national boundaries. Bryony Rheam, author of *This September Sun*, having left Zimbabwe, still lives in Zambia. The concept of bush could not have been more convenient.

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It is a concept taken up by writers in order to create a sense of continuity in the post-independent period. What therefore changes are nations, governments and people's perceptions about Africa, but to white writers, Africa itself is an unwavering site of white belonging, as putative "Africans". If the place of belonging can thus be permanent and stable, then whites can belong to Africa with ease. In the bush they can *replace* themselves through imaginative works such as literature.

3.6. Enclaves in the bush

In what is perhaps an interesting shift of signifier, the bush in white Zimbabwean land reform narratives is no longer the primary place of white belonging. Suddenly "bush" becomes the antithesis of progress. Destroying it is the celebrated symbolic act of constructing white places of belonging chiefly posited as farms. In truth, no one really lived in the mountains, in trees, on rocks and in rivers. "The very idea of wilderness", Uusihakala (78) observes, "is a cultural construct rather than a precise physical entity". In *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, Lewdly Jones clarifies to a surprised listener who is failing to grasp the idea of Kobus living in the bush that "he lives in the countryside. In Africa we call the countryside the bush" (Rimmer 178). We have already observed that bush served as metonym for Africa. To say "countryside", however, is to substitute a more hospitable term for a barely habitable "bush". Bush had symbolic potential, but was practically uninhabitable and an inconvenient metaphor of belonging under different circumstances involving white dispossession of farms. Land reform narratives battle with an ambivalence of belonging that manifests itself through shifting and unstable uses of farm and bush metaphors.

It can be argued further that whites symbolically appropriated the bush mainly as a way of disenfranchizing blacks in order to develop farmlands as places of belonging entailing economic value. Belonging, in this regard, was an experience tied to property and economic interest. Open spaces, such as the bush, could easily be anyone's place. The liberation war demonstrated this when nationalists took to the bush and made it a site of resistance against white colonial rule. The bush could be contested and taken. White narratives therefore imagine closed places of belonging carved out of the open bush. Moreover, the bush was not economically profitable. Land reform narratives depended on the economic factor to countersign white belonging. As the

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analysis, below, of *The Last Resort* should demonstrate, the farm was an economic resource, much as this fact is understated, through which white farmers could make profit and, more significantly for my argument, endear themselves to the state as committed citizens who deserve their places on the farms.

3.6.1. Rogers' *The Last Resort*

The Last Resort highlights the experiences of Lyn and Ros Rogers, owners of a resort farm, from the early stages of the white-owned farm occupations through the official launch of the fast-track land reform and resettlement scheme by the ZANU PF government, the economic meltdown in the country, and the period of political unrest in the country following the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), with its subsequent challenge to ZANU PF hegemony in Zimbabwe. The question of white belonging in Zimbabwe was never far from these events, which are all cast retrospectively in the white Zimbabwean land reform narrative. Politically, the question dealt with is how far whites are willing to go in preserving their places of belonging by supporting an opposition party. Economically, it is a case of how much whites are losing due to the economic crisis resulting from the occupation of white commercial farms. The story, which happens to be a memoir, is told from the perspective of Douglas, son of the Rogers family.

While the Rogers' farm, "Drifters", is not formally occupied by the end of the narrative, the family are at the centre of transformations that occur on their farm, their neighbors' farms, their home town, and the country at large, to the extent that the author hypothesizes the farm as a microcosm of the entire nation. It is interesting to examine, through an analysis of *The Last Resort*, how the farm is constructed as a white place of belonging in opposition to the bush. I argue that land reform narratives shift the discourse of bush to a new extreme, one that involves the emplacement of white characters on the farm and certain Africans in the bush before *re-emplacing* whites in the bush. White land reform narratives also take the discourse of white Zimbabweanness head-on by associating the farm with Zimbabwe. This time around places are clearly distinguished and given specific names, unlike imaginings of the bush.

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3.6.2. The entanglement of farm and country

Land reform narratives in Zimbabwe recall the promises of reconciliation put forward by Robert Mugabe and his new government at the time of independence in 1980. Whites, especially farmers, were constantly reassured that they had a place in Zimbabwe. Speaking to white commercial farmers in 1980, Mugabe pledged: "There will be a place for white farmers, who have an important role to play in our new nation […] you must go on farming […] there is a place for you in the sun."[36] In this discourse of place, the farm and the nation loomed large as sites of white commitment to Zimbabwe. Ironically, Rhodesia's early land titles had also insisted on "improvement or 'beneficial occupation', without which settlers could forfeit their land" (Palmer, *Land and Racial* 60). Whites were encouraged to "go on farming", effectively meaning that their accommodation in Zimbabwe would be confined to the farm and what they did on such farms. White Zimbabwean writers persistently utter the "word with a sideward glance"[37] in their land reform narratives as an indictment against discourses of belonging set in motion by the Zimbabwean government. If, as white narratives claim, white farmers did indeed accept their place on farms and continued to farm, what became of their place in the sun?

The Last Resort represents a shift from "bush" to "farm" characteristic of white Zimbabwean land reform narratives that seek to address white Zimbabwean experiences during the land reform process. White Rhodesian narratives emphasized what they saw as the importance of farms, albeit not as property but as extensions of the bush. Farm novels by whites were by and large indictments of urban livelihoods, regarded as corrupt and spiritually inept (Chennells, *Settler Myths*; Coetzee). In other words, farms were celebrated for the rural and pastoral values that they encoded. The farms per se were not considered places of belonging. Rather, white writers' ties to the land were rendered as appeals to a rural ideal constructed in opposition to cities and city life. Before 2000, white Zimbabwean literature has little to say about the farm. Of course one comes across the rare farm in pre-2000 white narratives such as in the liberation war novels *White Man Black War* (1988) and *Ginnete* (1980). In these texts the farm does not always provide the core narrative as is the case in land reform texts. In *The Last Resort*, the farm is at the centre of the action.

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[36] An extract from Robert Mugabe's speech to commercial farmers, Glendale Country Club, June 1980.
[37] Bakhtin (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 196) explains the word with a sideward glance as an utterance that takes note of what others have said and their likely responses.

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Like other land reform narratives, *The Last Resort* does not make bold claims about rural values or corruption in the cities. It principally lends primacy to Drifters farm and draws attention to the larger polity of the country. Stating his intentions for writing the book, Douglas Rogers says: "I wanted to write about the farm as a metaphor for the condition of the country" (Rogers 136). Compared to the bush metaphor in earlier landscape narratives, belonging is conceptualized as necessarily entangled with farm ownership and residence. This sense of entitlement to one's farm is presumed to indemnify one against the charge of being a foreigner. During one conversation with their son Douglas Rogers, following the murder of a white farmer by armed men during the land invasions, Ros declares: "We are Zimbabweans. This is *our* land" (3; emphasis in original). The discourse of white Zimbabweanness is considered by Ros in the context of belonging to − or more crudely, possessing − the farm. Being Zimbabwean is imagined in the context of farm ownership and attachment to plants, crops and labour. Harris observes, and accounts for, how the discourses of belonging and land ownership became entangled during and after the land reform exercise in Zimbabwe:

> Recent constructions in the western press of emigrated white Zimbabweans as exiles and refugees reinstate the significance of the relationship between white Zimbabwean identity and ownership of land. 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. ("Writing Home" 105-106)

Several white identities – exile, refugee and settler − are seen to coalesce in these discourses of ownership and/as belonging and they all point to an ambivalence of belonging to Zimbabwe. In the crudest form, belonging occurs inside the parameters of the fence that marks the boundary of

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the farm.[38] Never mind what happens beyond the fence. The white Zimbabwean farmer's place is his farm, which bears his name and to which he has title deeds. It is both an assigned place, one which the government has conferred upon the white man, and a self-entitled place, one to which the white farmer has earned the right to belong permanently.

The farm is thus conceived as the single defining place of national belonging despite the reality that most whites lived in towns during and after colonialism (Godwin and Hancock 1995). Moreover, the majority of Zimbabweans were displaced from farms during colonialism, thereby concentrating the black population in towns and cities. Belonging envisaged this narrowly thus disenfranchizes the majority of people who imagine themselves as Zimbabweans. Leaving the farm is now, suddenly, regarded as renouncing one's Zimbabweanness. Although most white farmers had houses in towns, they did not identify these houses as places of belonging. A town house was seen as a temporary or provisional place of residence but never in the manner in which the farm was regarded. The Rogers family purchases the Drifters farm as a retirement home. The farm is therefore supposed to serve as a mark of stability. It is the white man's permanent place of belonging. In this regard, white farmers in both Rhodesian and Zimbabwe were *settlers* in the full sense of the word. On the farms, whites marked their gravesites as a way of permanently fixing their identities on the farms. The last place Harry, the protagonist in Harrison's *Jambanja* (2008) visits as he grudgingly leaves Maioio farm after being persistently intimidated by war veterans, is the spot adjacent to his orchards where he has marked his burial spot (246).

To Rogers, white farmers defended their farms as symbolic acts of safeguarding their Zimbabwean citizenship. Summarizing his father's laborious efforts to retain ownership of Drifters, the narrator pronounces: "[H]ere was my father having to defend his right to be a Zimbabwean – to be an African" (Rogers 35). During the land reform exercise, whites were indeed given the option to "go back to England", where they supposedly belonged. Whites were persistently interpellated as foreigners during this period (Fisher). Because the government justified the land reform on a historical basis, a blanket designation of all whites as foreign not

[38] White owned farms were almost always bordered by high fences and walls as a way of preserving private spaces. Signs reading "trespassers will be prosecuted" could be found on most farm gates and fences.

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only to Zimbabwe, but also to Africa, fuelled the "go back to Britain" crusade that characterized the actions of farm invaders and the government. President Mugabe is quoted saying: "We want whites to learn that the land belongs to Zimbabweans."[39] During this period the farm occupations and the government "recast Zimbabwean whites as European settlers – minus colonial power" (Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe* 109). Inevitably, white Zimbabweanness and farm ownership became complexly entangled. Consequently, white belonging came to be measured by one's relationship to the farm. White narratives are therefore seen to adopt this form of entanglement in their depiction of the farm as a place of belonging. As long as one was on the farm, he or she belonged to Zimbabwe.

A further association of farm and country is developed in *The Last Resort* through the staging of events and character composition at the cottages at Drifters during the farm invasions. Alarmingly, illicit activities such as gold smuggling, prostitution and marijuana cultivation are now frequent occurrences at the farm. The farm has also become a hideout for black and white political activists. Rogers contends that Drifters "was more than just a piece of land. It had become a stage set, a metaphor for the state of the nation. You could literally see the fortunes of the country unfolding in microcosm from [my parents'] front lawn" (116). To his credit, Rogers' rendition of the period following land reform in Zimbabwe is quite broad and thorough. As the farm deteriorates, so does the economy. The few politicians hiding at Drifters are a reflection of the political repressions that characterized most election periods in Zimbabwe since the beginning of the land reform programme in 2000. The illicit dealings at Drifters are reminiscent of the illegal activities that came to be associated with a thriving "black" market economy that had taken over following endemic economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

What is barely mentioned in land reform narratives are the larger political, natural and economic forces that contribute to the crisis in Zimbabwe, such as the imposition of economic sanctions upon Zimbabwe, the international isolation that resulted, and the effects of drought, which coincided with the land reform programme.[40] This omission is nevertheless matched by the omission or downplaying of the disastrous effects of the land reform programme in official

[39] International Crisis Group (2004, 75).
[40] For more on the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe one can read Bond and Manyanya 2003; Hammar *et al*. 2003; Harold-Barry.

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narratives. As can be expected, conflating farm and country in land reform narratives provides writers with the option of a myopic representation of events in Zimbabwe. What is significant in this depiction is that the land reform programme, in its crudest sense the invasion of white places of belonging, transformed the socio-economic geography of the nation that white Zimbabweans recognized, rendering it unfamiliar territory. The sense of alienation accompanying the burning of crops, the killing of livestock and the destruction of property on farms is powerfully conveyed in *The Last Resort*. From one dispossessed farmer to the next, we get a narrative of farm and country falling apart at the same time. It emerges in the narrator's interviews with refugee farmers in the cottages at Drifters that in losing the farms, they have also lost their place in Zimbabwe. Drifters becomes a temporary shelter from which most of them would eventually leave the country.

3.6.3. The transformation of bush into farm

White land reform narratives often include references to the appropriation of bush as the first step towards white emplacement. A dispossessed white commercial farmer in *The Last Resort* complains: "[T]his government says we stole [the land], but the country was empty back then. No one around. We had to recruit workers from Mozambique and Malawi.[41] We cleared the bush and planted tobacco" (Rogers 103). The Rogers' purchase Drifters farm in 1990 at a time when "there was nothing […] but bush" (10). The narrator fervently points out: "My parents had taken a barren range of hills in Africa with nothing on it but bush and stone and turned it into a thriving resort" (13). The significance of transforming bush into "a thriving resort" is that "[t]hey had staked a claim on the land in Africa" (13). Ironically, the "bush" the narrator refers to had been in the possession of an old Afrikaner and his wife, who part with it in order to go and live where they can find good television reception. The narrator reluctantly concedes that "it was a farm" while maintaining that it was more bush than farm (11). The narrator, therefore, deliberately recycles a white Zimbabwean narrative pattern of bush to farm in order to legitimate his parents' claims to it.

[41] The use of expatriate labour is cited as evidence that the country was uninhabited although contrary accounts about the labour question in Rhodesia cite factors such as competitive wages in South African mines and African resistance to forced labour as reasons why whites had to find workers outside the country while simultaneously introducing stringent laws such as the Hut Taxes and the Compulsory Native Labour Act of 1942 to force Africans in Rhodesia to work on Rhodesian farms (Maravanyika and Huijzenveld).

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In land reform narratives the bush has a different identity. It is now a place that must be transformed at all costs, pushed to the margins or at best destroyed. The black Zimbabwean government, by courting the friendship of white farmers, had set the stage for this resourcefulness by acknowledging the country's dependence on white farmer contributions to the national economy (Stoneman and Cliffe; Palmer, "Land Reform"). Since 1980, the Zimbabwean government had "signalled white accommodation, the conditional acceptance of minorities and their inclusion on the basis of personal change and contributions to national projects" (Fisher 32). Whites were called upon to "[f]ight poverty or leave the country."[42] Whites were co-opted into Zimbabwe as "potential nation-builders" (Fisher 33). This was the price for emplacement.

Land reform narratives take up the discourses of nation-building and commitment on the farm as motivations for belonging. Through hard work on the farm white characters cultivate their Zimbabweanness. This hard work and commitment is demonstrated through spatial practices appearing in two distinct forms: environmental practices and social practices. White discourse of the farm as place of belonging depended heavily on the transformation of bush into farm. On the farm, white characters apply themselves to the land and to the welfare of black people as symbolic acts of ridding the farm of bush. The farm is made productive so that it can generate much-needed approval on behalf of the white man. Responsive to the discourses of conditional belonging, white land reform narratives are by and large success stories.

Environmental practices

The typical white Zimbabwean land reform narrative catalogues several environmental practices that enable the creation of productive farms. These practices, confined to the farm, almost always suggest white ingenuity, creativity and commitment to the land. The suggestion is that without such practices, the farm would remain bush – unproductive in this visualization. Environmental practices not only ensure that the bush is kept at bay, but it also grants whites entitlement to land.[43] In the case of Lyn and Ros, whose farm is developed into a resort business, the reader

[42] Fight poverty or leave the country. *The Herald* (19 September 1980, 10).

[43] Besides responding to calls for white commitment to Zimbabwe, such narratives have a basis in Nozick's (*Anarchy, State, and Utopia*) and Locke's (*Second Treatise*) entitlement theories which state that individual rights of tenure are assured by mixing one's labour with a claimed resource. White

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learns that in just three years they erected an electric fence and stocked the land with animals. They build a two-storey lodge with an open restaurant, a bar, an art gallery and a kitchen. They plant lawns around the lodge and develop a campsite as well as "a dozen chalets modeled on African huts, all set around a gleaming swimming pool" (Rogers 13). Furthermore, the Rogers build sixteen "two-bedroom brick cottages" for renting out (13). Their entire pension goes into this successful project, demonstrating the risks whites took in transforming the bush. Extolling the virtues of his parents for these environmental exertions, Rogers reiterates: "My parents had taken a barren range of hills in Africa with nothing on it but bush and stone and turned it into a thriving resort. They had staked a claim on the land in Africa" (13). It emerges from Rogers' assertion that physical constructions and the erection of buildings are meant to be insurance against unbelonging. The Rogers' successfully negotiated the hills and the bush in their claim to emplacement. These exertions are represented as affirmations of whites' affinity to the land. Ostensibly, the Rogers' paid a sufficient price to guarantee an unbreakable bond with the land.

Because the same government that was taking away white commercial farms had provided the blueprint for white belonging, land reform narratives partly address themselves to this discourse by projecting white characters toiling and suffering for emplacement on their farms. Having been called upon to contribute to the national economy by environmental farm practices, the farming community's writers emphasize this aspect of white agrarian existence. About an evicted farming family, the narrator notes: "Like my parents, the De Klerks had invested all their money into their farm; they hadn't filtered a fortune outside the country, as other white farmers – wisely, it could now be seen – had done. They were paying a price for investing in their own country" (Rogers 111). Piet de Klerk is credited as the chief instigator in the construction of Osborne dam, which made possible the cultivation of crops on the farm and surrounding areas. Before Kondozi farm is taken, he boasts of a modern office complex with computers, a clinic, "millions of dollars' worth of equipment", which includes forty-eight tractors, transport buses, twenty-six motorbikes, tons of fertiliser and chemicals, all of which are eventually looted by the farm invaders. Rogers ends this catalogue with the all-too-familiar aphorism: "The farm [the de Klerks] had created out of raw bush thirty-six years earlier had been ransacked" (110). The

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narratives appear to draw on both official promises of accommodation in independent Zimbabwe and entitlement theories.

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success of Kondozi farm is also documented in *Jambanja*, where Harry is cynically asked by his wife: "[If] Kondozi can be smashed, what chance do you think little bloody Maioio farm has?" (Harrison 127). Underlying the story of Kondozi farm is a sense of disorientation about the indiscriminate manner in which the land reform programme is conducted. There appears to be no regard for the economic viability of farms.

Almost every narrative on land reform insists on this transformation of bush into farm by recording minute details of individual efforts to improve the environment or to make it economically productive. No individual white writer, however, takes environmental farm practices to the extreme that Tracey does in *All for Nothing? My Life Remembered* (2009). Evident in this narrative is the sense of futility that white farmers feel when their farms are occupied by blacks. This futility derives from the financial investments white farmers make in the land. Huge descriptive sections in *All for Nothing* outline details of how cotton and tobacco were farmed, the agricultural activities that were conducted on farms, the machinery bought and the methods applied in farming. Chapters are devoted to the cultivation of crops and the rearing of livestock. In *Jambanja*, providing details of the farm activities that whites conducted in order to develop farms is part of an inventory exercise targeting possible financial compensation when or if at some point normalcy returns to the white farming community in Zimbabwe. Regardless, this is seen as a stance that whites have been pushed into taking. Land reform narratives seek to demonstrate that white farmers applied themselves to the farms as a way of belonging to Zimbabwe.

In *The Grass is Singing* (1973), Lessing suggests that not all whites met with success in their farming endeavours. Dick Turner is a miserable failure. Land reform narratives, on the other hand, are by and large success stories of whites transforming the bush into viable and enduring farmland. Their environmental practices, although sometimes met with challenges, generally succeed in the long run. Rogers laments that "a country that once had been known as the Breadbasket of Africa, able to feed itself and its neighbours […] was turning to bush" (Rogers 6-7). In the discourse of environmental practices, then, a calculated silence on agrarian failure predominates. What we get is a picture of white characters falling in love with their agrarian environments, settling comfortably on the farm and experiencing a sense of emplacement, a valid

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attachment to place, in the process. Challenges and hardships are mentioned in the narratives in order to strengthen the white cause of commitment and hard work. The more whites apply themselves to the farm, the more they distance themselves from the bush. All the land reform narratives mentioned so far present the image of viable farms prior to the land reform programme. Indeed, white commercial farms flourished throughout the 1980s and performed surprisingly well in the 1990s, when the politics of land reform began to become increasingly intense (Selby). A favorite cliché in land reform narratives and white farmer discourses is that prior to land reform, Zimbabwe, and Rhodesia before it, had been the "breadbasket of Africa". The reality is more complex than this. Not all white farmers were successful farmers,[44] not all commercial farmland was being utilized,[45] and both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe at one period or another imported grain from other countries in the region.[46]

In truth, any transformation of the landscape also violated the laws of nature. Land reform narratives prefer to associate environmental degradation with the land invasions and land reform, maintaining a silence on the ecological strain their practices also exerted on the landscape. The discourse of environmental ruin enters *The Last Resort* with the arrival of farm invaders. They are seen indiscriminately to chop down trees, burn crops and kill animals. Rogers fails to see the irony in Lyn and Ros' transforming the bush by creating a resort farm and still posing as conservationists. Having cleared the bush, an act which certainly should scare wild animals away, the Rogers proceed to stock the farm with animals captured in the bush elsewhere. Posing as conservationists, whites escape blame even when their actions such as the construction of Kariba Dam prove to be ecological and human disasters (Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*).[47] Kwashirai observes that land degradation was a feature of colonial agriculture and "a

[44] Stoneman (133; 136) notes that less than half the total population of farmers could afford to pay tax in 1976 and 1977. More than half the farmers were insolvent in 1980 despite benefiting from government subsidies. Selby claims that farmers who decided to stay in Zimbabwe after independence mainly comprised those who were economically solvent.
[45] According to Manjengwa et al., "[t]he white farmers never succeeded in occupying their half of Southern Rhodesia" (4).
[46] Ibid.
[47] Not only did the construction of Kariba Dam result in the displacement of 57,000 Tonga speakers, the dam disrupted the natural flow of the Zambezi River. More than 7,000 animals were endangered when the dam flooded, providing whites with the triumphalist narrative of saving these animals in what came to be biblically referred to as Operation Noah. The damage to plants and the soil by Kariba floods was equally catastrophic. For more on the Kariba Dam project see Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*.

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combination of ignorance and neglect resulted in the widespread destruction of natural resources" (548). Yet, a binary template of African environmental destruction versus white conservation is common in land reform narratives.

Social entanglement

On several occasions former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith claimed that Rhodesia could boast having among the happiest blacks in the world (I. Smith, *The Great Betrayal*). He consistently claimed that the white man in Rhodesia had done more for black people than did Britain in any of its colonies. In Rhodesia, blacks could share in the benefits of civilization and proudly claim to be part of the Rhodesian community. Whether or not Smith genuinely believed in his assertions is a different question. What motivates the present reference to Smith is how white belonging to colonial place has always been predicated on a triangular relationship involving the colonizer, the native and the land (Fredrickson 4). Critics have established that white colonial and postcolonial[48] narratives minimize, ignore or erase black people in their rush to embrace the landscape.[49] In other words, black people as a point in the triangular relationship of belonging to the colony are minimized although "the small white population depended on blacks for *all* manual labor. Blacks, therefore, circulated in all white spaces, including the home when the man of the house was away" (Hughes, "The Art of Belonging" 15; emphasis in original). What white Zimbabwean land reform narratives share with Smith's claims of happy blacks is the chimera of white "beneficial occupation".

In land reform narratives, the farm is not just a white place of belonging. It is a shared place. Unlike the bush, where black people are blighted by disease and animals, the social environment of the farm is seen as far more beneficent. Whites therefore create farms and extend the parameters of their embrace to include blacks, who are then duly depicted as comrades. John Muranda, servant to the Rogers, is said to be "more than just an employee at Drifters", becoming Lyn's "right-hand man" (Rogers 82). Douglas even contrives a resemblance between the two in order to underline their racial entanglement enabled by the farm environment. Seeing John Muranda would remind Douglas of his father and the identical role they seemed to be playing to

[48] The use of postcolonial in this case is temporal. It refers to the period after the end of colony.
[49] See Chennells, *Settler Myths*; Coetzee; Hughes, "The Art of Belonging"; Pilossof.

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combat the farm invasions (83). For Nuttall, entanglement suggests the rejection of overstated difference and sameness (*Entanglement*).

In the narratives under discussion, white farmers stimulate "pride of place" among the blacks on the farm. The average black person in land reform narratives is shown to identify with the white farmer, with whom s/he joins forces to combat farm invasions. Rogers explains that:

> John had as much to lose if Drifters was taken as my parents did. Here, he and Naomi had a house, a job, a salary, regular food […] Who could beat that kind of deal? John must have known that if the war vets took over, all that would go. It was just as much in his interest for my dad to hold on to the farm, and therefore he kept my father abreast of the more important developments in the valley so he could plan ahead. (83)

Blacks are therefore projected as being happy and content in the space of farm. The depiction of whites in the service of blacks takes precedence over blacks labouring for whites. What we get from the depiction of Kondozi farm further reinforces this image. The De Klerks are credited for providing black workers with modern facilities such as offices with computers, transport, modern medicine, formal education and farming practice (Rogers 107-8). The narratives highlight that whites created a sense of place on behalf of blacks, who would otherwise have remained in the bush, fighting and killing one another. Implicit in this formulation is that in the process of creating farms, whites created places of belonging for black people. By extension, the transformation of bush into farm was also a transformation of black lives, a provision for black belonging. The land reform programme is seen to disrupt all this. It takes away not just the white man's basis for belonging but also the majority of black people's stability, who relied on the white man's finding a place for their own "place in the sun", as the popular cliché goes. The farm typifies white benevolence, creativity, industriousness and fulsome capabilities. It shows the ability of whites to transform bush into habitable place. Invading the farms is seen as a return to bush, a reversal of progress.

Hughes ("The Art of Belonging" 21) observes that "in the creative discourse with which whites portrayed themselves and their place in Africa, blacks bulked small; the land, plants, and animals

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bulked large." The South African pastoral also exhibits a similar bias as whites seek environmental accommodation with blacks who have been written out of the landscape narrative (Coetzee). In Zimbabwean land reform narratives, white writers still sympathize with the landscape but they are also able to see past it in order to feign sympathy with blacks. In reality, however, this is a way to strengthen whites' moral case for belonging. I contend that such sympathy with blacks is a ruse that does not represent much genuine effort towards equitable relations. The farm was first and foremost a white place of belonging. By apportioning land into European Areas, Native Reserves and Native Purchase Areas, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 effectively demarcated places for whites and blacks. Commercial farms were white places. Blacks were pushed out of areas designated as "European" and *re-placed* as labour. Independence did open up former white urban places to blacks but the Lancaster agreement ensured that the farm remained a white place of belonging. To suggest therefore that blacks also belonged to the farms is sheer mischief. Black people were on the farms primarily as labour.

Although Coetzee has shown that the farm novel in South Africa could deal with the problem of blacks by expunging them from narratives, in white Zimbabwean land reform narratives this could not be so easily done. A common accusation levelled against whites during the land reform process was that whites treated their workers badly. White narratives therefore *re-place* black people in land reform narratives as objects of the white man's social benevolence, albeit bordering on paternalism, by claiming an affinity towards them, and not forgetting to note how much blacks accept whites in turn. Black contributions to the creation of farms are not recognized. Where they are acknowledged, they are overwhelmed by the white farmer's overmastering individual practices. The writers concerned often point out how white farmers built schools for the benefit of blacks, but then fail to mention that the labour and sweat that physically erected these same buildings came from blacks. On the farm, tobacco, cotton, cattle and wheat loom large whereas the black workers who made the production of such bounty possible retreat into the background or disappear from the narrative altogether. Rogers confesses that he only begins to notice the two Johns, who have worked for his family for twelve years, during the land reform campaign when he begins to see a similitude between the black worker, John Muranda, and his own father. The Johns, like most of the farm workers, appear as unwitting

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victims of land reform so as to bolster the narrative of violence and dispossession that threatens the white man's place of belonging.

Typically, the white farmer is good-natured and friendly despite the reality that some white farmers underpaid and ill-treated their workers. In the 1980s the Zimbabwean government set up farm workers' committees to oversee the plight of farm workers immediately after independence. Harrison blames these committees for creating a rift between farmers and labour. While he does not openly deny that some white farmers ill-treated their labourers, Harrison suggests that whites appeared "cold, impersonal and unkind" to blacks only because they understood the importance of putting hard work and economic sense ahead of familial sentiments. He dismissively notes that "[whites] were never as unkind to [Africans] as the Africans are towards each other" (103). Overall, white farmers are imagined as creating bonds with black workers.

3.6.4. Juggling the bush

During the first years of independence, Don Goddard, a former Selous Scout, advised Mugabe's ministers to "go back to the bush where you belong" (Caute 440). The paradox contained here is not immediately evident. But when one recalls that the Selous Scouts, a secret branch of the Rhodesian security forces, is based on the legend of Frederick Selous, whose hunting expeditions have inspired naturalists and conservationists, the concept of bush becomes what De Kock in a different context calls "a hot potato variously juggled and differently handled, grasped, welcomed or rendered problematic across time and space" ("The Call of the Wild" 15). It has been observed that whites appropriated the bush when it suited them. Once their belonging to place was threatened by the liberation war and land reform, belonging in the bush was no longer a viable option. Belonging through environmental and social activities became imperative.

Consistent with the narrative of progress symbolized by the transformation of bush into farm is the redeployment of the bush metaphor with regard to the farm invasions. The return to bush is captured in Douglas Rogers' description of an invaded neighbouring farm formerly owned by one Frank:

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> Instead of the usual luminous green fields, all I could make out was delinquent bush and a few listless crops on rough, unploughed ground. Dozens of mud huts had sprung up where maize and tobacco once grew, and wood smoke wafted out of the thatch, like kettle steaming on bush fires. I knew then that the valley had been hit hard. (9)

The references to "bush" and "bush fires" serve to reinforce the idea that with the land invasions, farms had returned to the bush and that blacks had adopted bush life, a life denied them in other narratives that exclusively claim the bush for whites. Suddenly, black people are allegorically disengaged from farmlands in order to inhabit the bush from whence they subsequently resurface, wielding knives and axes as part of their intimidation campaign against the white farmer and his family. We get such an image in Eames' *Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011), where Jonah, who has worked for the white farmer, suddenly "disappears" into the bush only to resurface later with a group of land invaders. Reminiscent of the nationalist war, farm invaders attach themselves to the bush and attack farms from there. In cases where they seize farms, for example the case of Frank's farm, they return it to bush.

Rogers draws on the association of farm and country when he notes that

> two years after the start of the violence, a country that once had been known as the Breadbasket of Africa, able to feed itself and its neigbours, a model of tolerance and development, was turning to bush, its economy in freefall. (6-7)

It can be seen, therefore, that the invasion of the farm serves as a marker of a retrograde return to bush. In this current usage bush is a primitive place, a place of regression and neglect. "The history of development in Africa", Rogers explains "is one of clearing the bush. My father had to clear the bush to build Drifters. That was progress" (43). In land reform narratives whites recognize the bush as primitive and transform it into places fit for human habitation. The land reform process, on the other hand, is the antithesis of "progress". White land reform narratives distance themselves from the bush as it invokes images of war veterans and like-minded supporters invading and destroying farms. White characters increasingly retreat from the bush

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and either dig into the farms or, if they are still alive, escape to the cities from which they had earlier symbolically fled.

Still, a third option is imagined in literary works: the white man's return to the bush. The bush embraced by Lyn in *The Last Resort* is different from the bush black people inhabit. The black African bush, it has already been said, is a primitive place. Whites on the other hand return to a bush decorated with images of animals cohabiting with man, of safety and bounty. Douglas speaks of the bush his parents adopt with amusement. He describes the return to bush as "adapting" and "surviving" (Rogers 72), and notes that his parents were indeed surviving. While underscoring the importance of destroying the bush, land reform narratives strategically *re-place* whites within the bush in response to the farm invasions. If whites could not claim the farm, they would still be sheltered by the bush. The Rogers encourage the bush to grow once they realize that in order to survive "they had to go back to the bush, let the earth grow wild again, return it to its natural state" (43). Once more the bush is seen to collude with the white man against the blacks. Not only do the Rogers manage to evade the early invasions, they are also in possession of the farm-cum-bush by the end of the narrative. In *Jambanja*, Harry, having left Maioio farm, suddenly expresses an emotional attachment to "the bush", an attachment that had been lacking throughout the narrative (Harrison 248). All along, the economic significance of his loss had dominated the narrative.

White writers also reawaken the discourse of conservatism accompanied by bush imagery. White characters project their predicament of place on bush creatures, with which they create numerous senses of entanglement. It is as if to narrate the story of the bush is to render the story of the white man. The image Douglas sees of ants invading a hornet's nest on his bedroom ceiling is an allusion to the impending invasion of the white man's place by blacks during land reform. As a hornet screeches, Douglas becomes convinced that his parents would not survive the land invasions. Later, when Rogers sees the hornets' nest on the side of his mattress, the reader gets the sense that the Rogers family will improvise and survive, which they do. In moments of cynicism, Douglas equates his parents to "rabbits" in headlights (Rogers 60). Animals observed by the narrator gaze at him "with sad eyes" (24) as if to empathize with the plight of whites. Elsewhere, Lyn sees an eland just when he thinks the farm invaders have destroyed all life on the

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farm. He is emotionally drawn to it, feeling "so much pity", "so much love" and "so much elation that something out there – something *else* out there – was surviving" (127; emphasis in original). In this rendition of the "sentimental fallacy", both man and animal are caught up in a similar tangle involving the indiscriminate invasion of place. When the eland is later killed by settlers, Lyn regrets not having killed it himself. Spiders and an albino frog find residence in the Rogers' house and they develop a strong attachment to these bush creatures. When Ros later finds the frog dead, she hopes for its reincarnation (306). White alliances with animals, the soil and the forests resulted in imagined bonds that conflate the fates of people with that of the landscape. In conserving the environment, whites also preserved identities constructed in relation to animals and the bush.

The return to bush seems inevitable once the farm as a place of white belonging has been destabilized. Writers such as Ian Holding, in *Unfeeling* (2005), have also experimented with the restoration of farms. In this novel the white protagonist goes back to his parents' farm to revenge the murder of his parents by war veterans. He travels a circular journey through places that include the bush, until he reaches the farm. Unfortunately his need for revenge is unfulfilled since he finds the woman who murdered his parents already dead. As it turns out, whites had faithful allies in farm workers who have killed the new black owner and reclaimed the farm.

Coetzee notes that the pastoral novel in South Africa, like other European pastorals, was in many ways a response to industrialization and the decadence of urban life. In other words, farm novels were shaped within the binary framework of rural (read bush in our case) and urban. This bi-structural mode of understanding the landscape shapes white Zimbabwean land reform narratives less definitively. Hesitancy characterizes the application of such a narrative trope holus-bolus in land reform narratives, whose major trump card is the depiction of white characters successfully *destroying* the bush in order to make land productive. White Zimbabwean narratives have therefore battled with a paradox that involves the creation of places of belonging through images of bush and farm, despite the contradictory valences of these spaces when they are transformed into places of belonging. On the one hand, the temptation is strong to claim the bush as one's place of belonging, thereby severing oneself from the industrialized urban environments of Europe and embracing an abstract place called Africa.

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The white obsession with the bush is partly construed in opposition to Europe (Godwin and Hancock 1995). White farmers going to the city for supplies or to visit friends and family find themselves "out of place"; they long to be back in the bush environment of their farms. On the other hand, to be seen to be transforming bush into farmland, thereby staking a direct claim to one's place, is an urgent need characteristic of land reform narratives, especially during a time when hegemonic land reform narratives undermine whites' sense of belonging to the farm in particular. Chennells (*Settler Myths*) recognizes this paradox when he writes that Rhodesian writers battled with the temptation to allow white characters to live in harmony with the wilderness, in juxtaposition with the economic benefits of destroying the wilderness. In white narratives, such a paradox is partly evaded by emphasizing that the farm was always to be found in the bush.

3.7. Conclusion

It has been argued that white Zimbabwean landscape narratives imagine the bush and the farm, in varying degrees, as places of belonging. The representations of these places exhibit an ambivalence of place that characterizes white Zimbabweans in the postcolonial period. Bush, it has been argued, is appropriated in white narratives as a way of excluding blacks from the land while simultaneously including whites on the same land. Even as white characters claimed the bush as a place of belonging, what they have in mind is an enduring and permanent Africa to which whites can belong with ease, minus the demanding constraints of nation-states. This metonymic approach enables whites to become supra-national citizens, belonging to a larger geo-political environment. Even as whites claimed the bush, a separate narrative undermined this assertion of belonging. The nationalist war in Zimbabwe took place in the bush and it is there that nationalists created a home. The bush would not quietly lend itself to white appropriation. It remains a contested place, unstable and shifting as it moves from one group to another.

The discussion of Rogers' *The Last Resort* has suggested that in white Zimbabwean land reform narratives, the bush still serves an important function in the project of belonging, although in different ways. The bush came to represent the antithesis of white belonging while paradoxically lending itself to other forms of belonging. In land reform narratives, it is the farm that looms

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large as the white place of belonging. The farm is not construed in this manner for its own sake. Rather, it is seen as the embodiment of white ingenuity and, more importantly, commitment to place; a commitment which, as argued, should entitle whites to the farms. In land reform narratives, white individuals are seen to exert their financial resources, time and energies in service of the environment as well as black people. In this case, belonging is tied to practices that occur on a particular site or place. The uses of bush and farm that have been identified appear, in varying degrees, in the bulk of white Zimbabwean narratives. There are always exceptions to the rule, of course. It remains to be seen how greater dialogue on white Zimbabwean literature will help to provide insight into further nuances regarding the representations of the landscape, places of belonging in particular.

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Chapter 4: The simultaneity of past and present in white Zimbabwean narratives

> The "past-present" becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living. (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture 7*)

> Time is not a series but an *interlocking* of presents, pasts, and futures that retain their depths of other presents, pasts, and futures, each age bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous ones. (Mbembe 16; emphasis in original)

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated the importance of emplacement in white Zimbabwean narratives by highlighting several modes of representing "bush" and "farm" in land and landscape narratives. Through a reading of Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009) and Rimmer's *Cry of the Fish Eagle* (1993), it was argued that pre-land reform narratives build on Rhodesian settler myths in their appropriation of the "bush" as a white place of belonging, while land reform narratives construe white belonging on the site of the "farm". Slippages that occur in the representations of place were underlined. This chapter raises the fundamental point that most white Zimbabwean narratives re-imagine, or re-invent, the Rhodesian past. While variations occur in the extent to which the "Rhodesia" of the imagined past exists in individual narratives, and the manner of this re-invented past's representation, it should be noted that a "Rhodesia" of the past, in one form or another, is a key feature of white narratives.

Hegemonic political and critical accounts, as will be shown, suggest that uses of the Rhodesian past in white discourse undermine white claims to belonging to Zimbabwe. Indeed, some white narratives exhibit a deep-seated fixation with Rhodesian sensibilities, rendering them an awkward fit in a more strictly defined Zimbabwean literature. Some of the architects of these narratives have indeed declared their loyalties to Rhodesia and have thus refused to acknowledge the existence of Zimbabwe.[50] This chapter does not intend to pursue the discourses and

[50] Some of the forms these narratives take are magazines and websites. Examples include *Rhodesians Worldwide*, a quarterly published magazine, which commenced publication in Australia in 1985. The

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arguments of these narratives. Instead, I propose a reading of white Zimbabwean narratives that takes cognizance of how the Rhodesian past and the Zimbabwean present inhabit shared time and place. This reading suggests that white Zimbabwean narratives are characterized by simultaneity – "the recognition of difference within the 'same' moment of time" (Bastian 152). In these texts it can be seen that the (Rhodesian) past and the (Zimbabwean) present appear incommensurate but nevertheless coeval. They exist side by side and occupy an intersecting temporal plane. This condition of simultaneity characterizes white Zimbabweans as much as it does every other human being. What this chapter pursues is the acknowledgement of the observation that "two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 252).

Two texts, Ian Smith's *The Great Betrayal: The Memoirs of Ian Douglas Smith* (1997), hereafter referred to as *The Great Betrayal*, and Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996), hereafter referred to as *Mukiwa*, inform the present discussion. Smith's autobiography is by far the most unapologetic remembrance of Rhodesia that one will encounter anywhere in the white Zimbabwean literary system. Its analysis will nevertheless demonstrate how Smith ultimately concedes the existence of a Zimbabwean present that retains remnants from both Rhodesia and Britain before it. While acknowledging that Rhodesia "had gone" (*The Great Betrayal* 361), Smith perceives the role whites can play in Zimbabwe within the framework of values belonging to the past, that is, from Rhodesia and imperial Britain. The putatively "glorious" Rhodesian and British pasts are regarded by Smith as incongruous with (his version of) an ignominious Zimbabwean present, but he enables their simultaneous existence in the Zimbabwe of his autobiography. Smith never abandons his Rhodesian identity. The past is made to subsist alongside the present. The analysis of Godwin's *Mukiwa* shows how a re-imagined childhood consciousness enables an understanding of the Rhodesian past. Through this narrative strategy, Godwin is supposedly faithful in rendering the past, including its imperfections. Furthermore, the

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magazine's electronic equivalent http://www.rhodesia.com boasts of "Rhodesian" associations operating in Britain, USA, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, with several branches in each of these countries. Some of the associations are organized around former Rhodesian regiments and institutions. For example, one may encounter the names Air Rhodesia Association or British South African Police Regiment Association. Other "Rhodesian" websites include Rhodesians Worldwide Web and *Rhodesiawassuper* (http://www.lekkerwear.com). Films such as *Rhodesianaland* (1990), produced by Mark Williams, serve a similar purpose.

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Rhodesian past is depicted as a baneful entity that estranges whites from the Zimbabwean present. In brief, this chapter proposes a reading of white Zimbabwean narratives as accounts of a (Rhodesian) past that bear upon the present (Zimbabwe) through contexts of narrative simultaneity.

4.2. The uses of the past in Zimbabwe

Richardson (91) encapsulates the basis of this discussion when he affirms: "The past is important because we don't and can't 'leave it behind': it is the secret meaning of who we are (and what we do)." The past does not die; rather "it has a kind of 'presence' in us, constituting us now as who we are, determining the meaning of what we now do" (91). The present does not exist outside of its past. The past is a familiar stranger that we harbour in our consciousness. One can argue that it is the equivalent of what Freud labels the "unconscious". Research in psychoanalysis certainly acknowledges the importance of the past in shaping present attitudes and behaviours. Such judgments coincide with the notion of simultaneity.

All people remember the past although this does not occur in the same way. In the postcolonial state, the past is relived differently by former victims and victimizers. While the latter two categories are not self-evident and exclusive, I use them as a way of differentiating between black Africans and former white Rhodesians in Zimbabwe, respectively. The memories of former "victims" of injustice find their way into public spaces with ease. Their literature circulates in public schools, their songs and films are broadcast on national television and they can gather in public spaces and reminisce without too much concern for moderation. On the other hand, there is an accepted rule that former perpetrators of injustices should not dwell on the past lest they be regarded as bitter, diehard colonialists, and nostalgic to boot. Former victims are counseled *always* to remember the past. Former oppressors, on the other hand, are not invited to share in these remembrances, or they find themselves unwilling to participate in the new discourse of the past that construes them as perpetual offenders. Fisher (86) affirms that "remembering differently has, in effect, made it difficult for past protagonists to recognize each other as part of the same nation." Such has been the case in Zimbabwe where memories of the Rhodesian past are not shared by whites and blacks alike.

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Lollini advises, however, that for democracy to develop and consolidate new democratic institutions after political transition, there is need "to establish a particular space in which to execute the fundamental and collective process of dealing with the past" (61). For former perpetrators of injustice, the space to publicly remember the past comes in the form of what Lollini terms "the hypertrophy of judgements" (64). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (TRC), for example, is regarded by Lollini as a space of remembrance where former victims and victimizers share experiences of the past. In this space, white architects and practitioners of apartheid in South Africa have been afforded the chance publicly to reconstruct the past. However, their narratives are predominantly confessional, which means that admission of guilt for past actions and a quest of absolution prevail over other modes of remembering.

Debates regarding reparations in countries such as the United States of America over slavery, lawsuits against European corporations and banks for damages inflicted in the Nazi past and apologies issued to Japanese Americans incarcerated during the second World War by the United States government in 1988 point towards a "legal reading of history" (Rousso 86) that contributes to the said "hypertrophy of judgements" (Lollini 64). Former perpetrators of injustices are mandated publicly to accept responsibility for past crimes. The importance of this cannot be denied. McCarthy rightly observes that "redressing past wrongs is essential to establishing conditions of justice in a society scarred by the enduring and pervasive effects of those wrongs" (751). However, the space for remembering is narrow and often predetermined. Resultantly, former perpetrators end up being custodians of largely private memories.

In Zimbabwe, it has been considered key to reconciliation that whites should "forget" the past. In his famous reconciliation speech in 1980, Mugabe set the tone of reconciliation thus: "I urge you, whether you are black or white, to join me in a new pledge *to forget our grim past*, forgive others and *forget*"[51] (emphasis added). Official thinking has always been that white ties to Rhodesia or to things Rhodesian would and should eventually fade. White Zimbabweans, for example, are compelled to drive a wedge between the Rhodesian past and the Zimbabwean present, attach values to both and choose only one of the two. In the official narrative, the

[51] Mugabe, Prime Minister Elect, Address to the Nation, Zimbabwe Department of Information, 4 March 1980.

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Zimbabwean present is regarded as an annulment of the Rhodesian past; equally, it is hypothesized that "what came after is superior to or an improvement over what came before" (Shih 98).

The call to forget the past and assimilate the present is not only utopian, it also participates in the "metaphysics of presence" (Derrida, "Negotiations in Rottenburg"), which is a denial of difference. Renan suggests that the project of nation-building owes something to a forgetting of the past. Even as black Zimbabweans are constantly provoked by the government to remember the past, it is not everything to which their memories are directed. The motivation to remember is always accompanied by the requisite need to forget aspects that might destabilize the nation-building project. The gaps that characterize official narratives of the past, such as are evident in internecine struggles in the nationalist movements, have been pointed out by several writers in Zimbabwe.[52] What seems to motivate the calls to forget directed at whites is that eventually they have to choose between the past and the present. Indeed, towards the end of his war narrative, Moore-King insists that one should "choose to be Zimbabwean or choose to be the enemy" (132). This binary mode of thinking is what underlies the "should I stay or should I go" dilemma. Choosing to be Zimbabwean is conceived in official narratives as submission to the ideal of essentialized similarity, or oneness. Rather than the past disappearing, as demanded by the "official" diktat of nationhood, it should be seen as finding a place in the present where it retains a constitutive role through an understanding of simultaneity. The past cannot be erased from white narratives because, quite simply, it is irrevocably there, albeit in discursive strands that cannot be subsumed into any metaphysics of unwavering presence. In trying to erase the past, one paradoxically enables and strengthens a deeper heteroglossia, a variety of discourses about the past.

While it is hardly surprising that texts incorporate the past, it should be pointed out that for whites, belonging as they do to a class of former oppressors, remembering the past is always regarded with suspicion in hegemonic political and critical circles. In reality, only whites were expected to forget the past while blacks did the exact opposite: they ritualized the past. "The

[52] See Chung; Muzorewa; Nyagumbo; Nkomo; Tekere. For a detailed discussion of how the concept of nationhood is contested in black Zimbabwean narratives one can read Javangwe's *The Politics and Poetics of Writing Self and the Nation in Zimbabwean Autobiography* (2013).

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emergence of patriotic history" in Zimbabwe (Ranger 220) supports this point. This phenomenon, described as "the self-serving historical memory of Zimbabwe's ruling party, ZANU (PF)" (Ranger 133), is characterized by an intensified propagation of official history in Zimbabwe. Overall, the subject of this history is the colonial past in which black people, nationalists in particular, are recast as heroes fighting white Rhodesian adversaries. In this official narrative, whites are objects of representation that serve to legitimize the need to create a racially polarized Zimbabwean nation. Rather than being forgotten, the past is increasingly hoisted in the present, at full mast, like a flag condemning whites as perpetual oppressors and alienating them from an imagined national community.

Explaining how patriotic history works, Ranger explains that:

> It is […] variously propagated – in courses taught by war veterans in the [militia] camps, in collections of Mugabe's speeches, in [education Minister] Chigwedere's syllabi and textbooks in the schools, on state television and radio, and in the writings of Mahoso and others in the state-controlled press. (235)

The government therefore uses any space available to invoke the past while simultaneously narrowing the spaces through which opponents can publicly remember the past. For former victims the past is therefore a public event orchestrated by the nation's postcolonial leaders. It exists entirely within a re-evaluation of pastness that repositions the new leaders at the centre.

Fanon (*Wretched of the Earth*) predicted this exercise of re-creating the past in a seminal essay entitled "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness", in which he explicitly states that the new ruler

> asks the people to fall back into the past and to become drunk on the remembrance of the epoch which led up to independence […] Today he uses every means to put them to sleep, and three or four times a year asks them to remember the colonial period and to look back on the long way they have come since then. (135-136)

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In Zimbabwe, public commemoration of the past within the official realm is vigorously executed (Werbner 73-75). Heroes' day, Independence Day, national museums, national galas and political jingles serve as re-enactments of a victim-centred past now read as a heroic past. Consistent with this is the government's forceful remembrance of the past in the Heroes Day epitaph that reads: "We remember. We must never forget." The state appropriates public space for its ritualization of memory while denying its opponents the opportunity to do the same. For Fisher, "it is a telling that insists minorities 'forget' or discard memories incompatible with the State's narrative, thereby suppressing dialogue necessary to, and productive of, reconciliation" (223). The government takes every opportunity to rekindle the memories of the past as a way of legitimating its rule while simultaneously denying opponents the room to remember. It remembers on behalf of everyone, thereby making the memories of others objects in a hegemonic consciousness.

Ironically, colonialism works through a similar logic: "[I]t turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* 169). There is therefore a precedence, also noted by Kaarsholm in the following assertion:

> The mobilization of historical mythology has played a prominent part both in relation to the endeavours of white colonizers to appropriate and legitimize power and to the battle of African nationalists to take it away from them and install themselves as rightful rulers. (85)

Remembering the past is therefore critical to any nation-building project. Once colonialism is displaced, the new rulers find themselves having to revise the past in order make it relevant to a new political dispensation. Contestation among histories is quite persistent, as Chennells ("Self-representation") observes of the Zimbabwean case, where "minor and major histories have swapped places and probably will swap places again" (136). He goes further, suggesting that "it is extremely improbable that a history produced by white memories will ever again be dominant" (136). What Fanon (*Wretched of the Earth*) and Ranger observe is a use of the past that serves the interests of an elite few against the masses. Interestingly, the further Zimbabwe has travelled from the past, the more memorialization has taken place. What seems to motivate the current

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need for remembering by the Zimbabwean government is *athazagoraphobia*: the fear of being forgotten or ignored and the fear of forgetting. Fisher (2010) explains that the erection of the Heroes' Acre is premised on the view that naturally "'the people' are forgetful and must be taught to value their heritage" (87). She adds that ZANU PF's obsession with remembering the past betrays "some anxiety about the credibility of its idea of nationhood" (88). Once the past is forgotten, the whole political fabric on which Zimbabwe stands, as imagined by ZANU PF, disappears.

In diaspora communities, whites have nevertheless been able to remember the Rhodesian past in public spaces. These reminiscences enable ex-Rhodesians[53] to maintain links embedded in shared memories of a Rhodesian past that they are unwilling to discard. For ex-Rhodesians:

> The ability to remember and the motivation and determination to nurture and cultivate that experience in the past connect the people in diaspora both vertically to the "homeland" and horizontally to the worldwide community of ex-Rhodesians within which one's memories are socially sharable and within which one's memories are socially shaped. (Uusihakala 2)

Ex-Rhodesians hence forge shared memories of the past in order to connect with one another in the various places where they are dispersed. They simultaneously emphasize communal belonging to a Rhodesian past and a diasporic present. In South Africa, for example, ex-Rhodesians remember the past through food events or eating together, celebrations such as those held on the centenary of Rhodesia in 1990, comprising a re-enactment of the arrival of the pioneer column in Zimbabwe and flag-raising ceremonies (Uusihakala 153). Commemorations also include the writing of books and running anti-Zimbabwe websites such as Rhodesia Worldwide. This has nevertheless been enabled precisely by the fact that these people have left Zimbabwe and have declared their severance from Zimbabwe. Otherwise whites who claim to be Zimbabwean, especially those who have chosen physically to remain in Zimbabwe, find

[53] Uusihakala uses the term "ex-Rhodesians" to designate whites who have left Zimbabwe for other countries in acknowledgement of the reality that with Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 Rhodesia as a political entity becomes officially dead. When they leave Zimbabwe, Rhodesia as a way of life also becomes history but they continue to collectively reminisce about it as "homeland".

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themselves somewhat bottled up about the past. They cannot easily make public displays of it unless it is dressed up in the language of "patriotic history".

Patriotic history does not go unchallenged, however. Private press operations in Zimbabwe provide an avenue through which alternative histories can be conveyed. Ranger cites cases where individuals question patriotic history through several privately owned newspapers and acknowledges that these responses tend to be scattered (238). Resultantly, the various criticisms "do not amount to an alternative historical narrative capable of displacing patriotic history" (240). White Zimbabwean narratives provide an alternative form of destabilization although they do not amount to anything resembling a monolithic voice. Insofar as a number of memories in white Zimbabwean literature oppose patriotic history, they become what Chennells ("Self-representation" 133), following Palumbo-Piu, calls "ethnic narrative[s]". In the case of Smith's autobiography one is compelled readily to agree. Responses to the Rhodesian past in other white Zimbabwean narratives, such as will be seen in the discussion of Godwin's *Mukiwa*, are quite complex.

Invariably, most white narratives maintain a retrospective view of Rhodesia and by so doing have provided some critics with the excuse of denying them entry into the category of Zimbabwean literature. Such narratives are accused of hoisting aloft unwanted remnants of the Rhodesian past.[54] It is argued that "their self-perceptions and identity construction […] has prohibited them from 'emigrating' wholeheartedly to Zimbabwe" (K. Alexander 210). Because whites forge identities that have traces of the Rhodesian past, they are seen to be failing to emigrate to Zimbabwe. As a result of this failure, whites in Zimbabwe are "orphans of the empire" (ibid). Javangwe sees in this incorporation of the Rhodesian past in white narratives "the reluctance of settler identities to metamorphose into the parameters that define the new Zimbabwean identity" (*Politics and Poetics* 66). For such critics, Rhodesia ranks too high in the narratives; therefore, the writers and characters concerned have chosen to stay in Rhodesia rather than do the right thing and "move" to Zimbabwe. Literary critics tend to express misgivings about any inclination towards memorializing the Rhodesian past.

[54] See Moyana; Chennells, "Self-representation"; Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe* ; Javangwe, *Politics and Poetics*.

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In truth, however, no one ever belongs entirely to the past or the present. "In-between" spaces of identity, where culture, the individual or the utterance is "neither the one nor the other" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 36), are ever-emerging. The points raised above by Zimbabwean critics are valid in many ways and they help one to understand the ambivalence and paradoxes that characterize whites in the postcolonial state. However, their misgivings are grounded in a linear understanding of time that does not fully consider the possibility of simultaneity. There is almost always an assumption that the past and the present are two discrete times, periods that succeed each other, cancelling each other out in the process. A re-conceptualization of temporal moments as susceptible to simultaneity, such as noted by Mbembe when he says "time is not a series but an *interlocking* of presents, pasts, and futures that retain their depths of other presents, pasts, and futures, each age bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous ones" (16; emphasis in original), has the benefit of opening up alternative ways of understanding the significance of the Rhodesia past in white Zimbabwean narratives.

4.3. Conceptualizing simultaneity

It is clear from the discussion on the uses of the Rhodesian past in Zimbabwe that, contrary to the opening of Hartley's novel *The Go-Between* (1953), the past is rarely "a foreign country". It remains a constitutive element of the present, continuously dialoguing with the latter. Such an understanding clearly upsets any conventional conception of time as comprising distinct moments that appear in succession. Such a conventional understanding informs the theories of several Western thinkers who regard existence in terms of successive stages that appear sequentially. The history of Western philosophy is littered with such beliefs: Marxism and the stages of historical development, Darwin's theory of evolution, the division of Western feminism into first, second and third waves, and Freud's stages of sexual development. Kant encapsulates this Western conception of time by contending that "different times are not simultaneous, but successive" (A31/B47). Bastian clarifies the Western philosophical outlook towards time by observing that:

> Within the West, space and time have traditionally been understood as shaping our sense of how we are with others in two key ways: we are together with others insofar as we

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> occupy the same space; but divided from ourselves and from others due to the movement of time. The assumption that space brings together, while time divides, arises from the idea that different parts of space remain within the same all-encompassing space, whereas different moments of time are necessarily separate. Without the movement of time there would be no change or differentiation, while without the stability and sameness of space there could be no continuity. (152)

These views give the impression that moments in time are exclusive and closed. Each moment exists independently of the other and moments give way to each other in a linear fashion. It is believed that various stages are inherently contradictory and cannot therefore occupy the same temporal plane. Not surprisingly, these views leave little room for simultaneity.

Bakhtin (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 252) insists on the point that "two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence". Dialogue recognizes that existence consists of differences occupying the same spatial and temporal planes. Opposites inhabit the same space and negotiate cohabitation through simultaneity. Indeed, the understanding of heteroglossia is that any language exists alongside other languages, without which it cannot survive. Languages of the past therefore exist within heteroglot languages of the present. Although these languages refer to different times, they are nevertheless coetaneous through simultaneity. Individuals from the past are contemporary people in that they exist in the "now" of the present. Concerning the notion of simultaneity Bakhtin elucidates:

> Dostoevsky's mode of artistic visualizing was not evolution, but *coexistence* and *interaction* […] Dostoevsky attempted to perceive the very stages themselves in their *simultaneity, to juxtapose* and *counterpose* them dramatically, and not stretch them out into an evolving sequence. For him, to get one's bearings on the world meant to conceive all its contents as simultaneous, and *to guess at their interrelationships in the cross-section of a single moment.* (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 28; emphases in original)

Bakhtin celebrates Dostoevsky's recognition of simultaneity in his works, a reality Bakhtin consistently emphasizes throughout his work. Holquist positively asserts that "'being' for

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Bakhtin then is, not just an event, but an event that is shared. Being is a simultaneity; it is always co-being" (24). The key elements of simultaneity are thus underlined as coexistence, juxtaposition and counter-position, all of which characterize white Zimbabwean narratives' remembrances of the Rhodesian past.

Concerning past and present, individuals are never in one place; they oscillate between the two. The centripetal-centrifugal forces operating in language (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 272) also operate in white Zimbabwean narratives, where remembering the Rhodesian past marks an overlapping of times. In the words of Levitt and Schiller in their discussion of migration experiences, "movement and attachment [are] not linear or sequential but capable of rotating back and forth and changing direction over time. The median point on this gauge is not full incorporation but rather simultaneity of connection" (12). Richardson's reading of a passage taken from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* also provides numerous possibilities for understanding the simultaneity of past and present. The passage reads as follows:

> Behold this gateway, dwarf! I continued. It has two faces. Two ways come together here: nobody has ever taken them to the end. / 'This long lane back here: it goes on for an eternity. And that long lane out there—that is another eternity. / 'They contradict themselves, these ways; they confront one another head on, and here, at this gateway, is where they come together'. (Nietzsche 2)

Recognizing that the past is "a problem" demanding, in the present, that we resolve the conflict between looking ahead (prospective gaze) and looking back (retrospective gaze), Richardson sees in Nietzsche the intention to fuse past and present in a progressive manner. To be fully Zimbabwean, when understood as forgetting the past, is impractical. We should rather think of white Zimbabweanness (and black Zimbabweanness) not as a choice of either past or present, but a combination of both aspects.

Simultaneity challenges the propensity to divide affiliations or loyalties from each other and organize them singly along a linear timeline. Rather, by conceding the need for responding to contradictions at once, it shifts primacy from exclusive unity of self towards the recognition of a

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unity that recognizes the heterolosssia of language and the attendant coexistence of conflicts, divisions and contradictions in individuals and literary texts. The self/other dichotomy refuses to be collapsed into one. It is not an either/or relationship but one that can be represented as both/and (Holquist 40). Harlene Anderson argues that "past, present and future […] are reflexive processes and cannot be separated" (216). Similarly, Bhabha (*The Location of Culture* 7) notes that "the past-present becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living." In remembering the past, white Zimbabwean narratives express their present connectedness to specific and multiple aspects of the past. As Bastian observes of Anzaldúa's works, in remembering the Rhodesian past white writers demonstrate a "refusal to split [their] contradictory heritages, and the political demands each makes upon [them]" (157). They provide alternative ways of conceiving temporal existence by constituting difference as simultaneity. The following sections demonstrate how white Zimbabwean narratives remember Rhodesia in ways that suggest a simultaneity of past and present.

4.4. Ian Smith's *The Great Betrayal*

The Great Betrayal is an evocation of a heroic Rhodesian past embodied in the person of Ian Smith, former Prime Minister of Rhodesia. It alternates between the documentation of national history and the rendition of personal agency within the broader Rhodesian and Zimbabwean historical frameworks. As a form of voluntary remembering, Smith's autobiography is "a goal-directed process" (Berntsen 139). In other words it is inseparable from needs that were current at the time of writing. The heroic past of Smith's life narrative inhabits the present in at least three forms: as an endurance of the founding principles of British Empire that have since migrated from Britain and found a stable residence in heroes such as Smith; as an indictment of the Zimbabwean present; and as a strategic emplacement of white Rhodesians within a new Zimbabwe. The past is therefore seen as constitutive of the present, much as one might want to eliminate it. In this regard, the retention of the past in white Zimbabwean narratives is cast as inevitable. The same Rhodesian past also serves to confirm past righteousness and heroism and, as a consequence, the endurance of such attributes in the present. In *The Great Betrayal* the narrative of endurance appears alongside a narrative of change in which the past is strategically altered in order to inhabit the present with greater ease. In white Zimbabwean narratives, the

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forms in which the past exists alongside the present are quite varied. The three functions of the past in Smith's narrative will be explained in the sections that follow.

4.4.1. The past as an endurance of founding principles of colony

In Smith's imaginary, the founding of Rhodesia marks the triumphant transfer, from Britain to Rhodesia, of Western Christian civilization with its "proper standards of freedom, of justice and the basics of education, health and hygiene" (*The Great Betrayal* 3). The pioneers of this act are described as "men of British stock" (3) whose sons "were more British than the British" (3). In 1923, when Rhodesians are given a choice between joining the union of South Africa as a fifth province or responsible government with dominion status, they choose the latter course, preferring to "retain [their] British identity" (4). South Africa, it was felt, had "too many non-Britishers […] the Afrikaners, and Rhodesians were not prepared to accept such a change of national character" (4). Maravanyika and Huijzenveld argue that from the time the colony was established in 1890 until the Federation of 1953, both imperial Britain and the colonial government envisaged a "neo-Britain" (18). Underlying this desire was a bigoted belief that the British were of "good quality" (1) as opposed to Portuguese, Greek, Polish and Boers, who were considered not only "as 'foreigners', but also as of a lower caliber" (19). The net result was that non-British immigrants to Rhodesia constituted less than five percent of the total white population in the first thirty-one years of the colony (Mlambo, "Building a White Man's Country 144).

Rhodesia, therefore, had a strong British inheritance that could not easily be discarded. Because this inheritance, comprising "honesty, discipline and efficiency" (Smith, *The Great Betrayal* 38), is considered essentially British and thus superior to all others, it endures throughout the narrative. Smith uses the notion of inheritance in several places in the narrative as an indictment against a Britain that, according to him, has since abandoned its own principles. To speak of a Rhodesian past in *The Great Betrayal* is simultaneously to speak of a British heritage. To demonstrate the ties Rhodesians have with a Britain they have left behind but still feel bound to, Rhodesians volunteer to fight on the side of Britain during the two world wars and are identified as English or British officers, such as is the case with Smith during an expedition in Italy (I. Smith 17). Smith himself claims a British identity at the end of the second world war when he

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proudly states "the things we 'Britishers' had been brought up to believe in had triumphed" (23). At this point in Smith's life, "Rhodesia" and "Rhodesian" are geographical identities, territorial extensions of Britain. While claiming a British identity, Smith simultaneously recognizes that in the squadron to which he is assigned he is the only "African" (24). In a foreword to a later edition of the autobiography, he describes this experience by saying: "I was the only Rhodesian, indeed African, and was impressed by the respect acknowledged for the part played by Rhodesians in the war effort" (I. Smith *Bitter Harvest* xii). Smith's Rhodesian-ness, it appears, is a question of geography whereas his British-ness is cultural.

However, the explicit claim to a British identity does not last. For Smith, UDI represents the culmination of a struggle for independence against British colonialism by Rhodesians. Smith proclaims that "[Rhodesians] fought against British colonialism, and finally had to revert to UDI in order to break the shackles – a replica of what happened a few centuries previously in the USA" (*The Great Betrayal* 375). Smith is quite liberal in his use of the term colonialist, which he also uses to describe ZANU PF after independence (I. Smith, *Bitter Harvest* x).[55] Nevertheless, in this imaginary, UDI marks a juncture that distinguishes between a British past and a Rhodesian present. Although the name "Rhodesian" existed prior to UDI, what emerges after UDI is a supposedly new nation with distinct features and symbols, a peculiarity of every nation. New nation-states are always accompanied by new flags, anthems and constitutions. Such a scenario subsisted with the establishment of Zimbabwe as an independent nation in 1980. In linear conceptions of time, independence therefore marks a temporal rupture: the colonial past gives way to an independent present. Regardless of Smith's attempts to paint post-UDI Rhodesia as futuristic, the British past remains a formidable presence in this Rhodesia's cultural and political fibre.

Following UDI, Smith underlines that Rhodesians are "of Africa and, therefore Africans" (*The Great Betrayal* 202). He insists that, together with South Africa, "unlike the British, we were both part of Africa, it was our continent, our home, and we had to go on living with the decisions we made" (163). Suddenly, the severance of political ties with Britain becomes urgent. It is

[55] Javangwe argues that Smith's use of "colonialist" with regard to ZANU PF is meant "to invoke ideological nuances of the meaning of colonialism" (*Politics and Poetics* 34). Such a strategy entrenches settler claims to nativity and challenges ZANU PF's legitimacy.

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precisely when Rhodesia is threatened by Britain's failed colonial policy (I. Smith, *The Great Betrayal*), culminating in majority rule for former colonies, that Smith retreats into a supposed African identity. When dealing with British duplicity, Smith's African-ness becomes entrenched. He distances himself from the British past by stating that "I have lived in Africa all my life" (*The Great Betrayal* 264) and "we understood Africa and its problems – we were after all Africans, albeit white Africans" (223). Referring to his ascension to the position of Prime Minister, he boasts as follows:

> For the first time in its history the country now had a Rhodesian-born PM, someone whose roots were not in Britain, but in Southern Africa, in other words, a white African. Unlike his predecessors who, when they talked about "going back home", were thinking about Britain, his home was Rhodesia. (67)

The post-UDI period, after Britain abandons Rhodesia, represents "a time when it was a privilege to be able to say: 'I am a Rhodesian'" (I. Smith, *The Great Betrayal* 210).

Despite the rhetoric of Africanness that intensifies following UDI, Smith does not abandon Britain's imperial ideals, even at a time when the political empire is coming to an end. Rhodesians are distinguished by having remnants of a British imperial past and surviving international ostracism, a nationalist war and the threat of majority rule. They do not entirely abandon past allegiances. Instead, they retain vestiges of their former "British" identities and use them to differentiate themselves not only from blacks, but from other whites, too. Smith records his "anguish, indeed disgust, at being banned from participating at the Armistice Day Service at the Cenotaph in London" (I. Smith, *The Great Betrayal* 125). This function, commemorating the death of British soldiers during the world wars, is as important an aspect of Rhodesia's past as it is for the British. The two world wars serve as sites of a shared past between Britain and Rhodesia, and such a memorialized past remains an integral component of "independent" Rhodesia. The commemoration of Pioneers' Day, when the flag was raised, also serves an almost similar purpose. The function acknowledges the arrival of the pioneer column in Rhodesia, despite the fact that the pioneers and their children are "more British than the British" (3).

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Clearly, Rhodesia owes its existence to this past event, which is then relived in "independent" Rhodesia despite the severance of political ties that have occurred through UDI.

Interestingly, Smith justifies UDI and his position against majority rule by simultaneously embracing his Afro-Rhodesian-ness and white European ideals of civilization and Christianity. The afro-Rhodesian (presumably the mark of presence) and the Euro-Rhodesian (presumably the mark of absence) coalesce in the single act of UDI. When Britain refuses to recognize Rhodesia's independence and calls for majority rule, Smith accuses the British of abandoning the virtues that guide pioneers in their founding of colonies. Such virtues are seen to have migrated to Rhodesia, which exists as a bastion of Western civilization. In the same vein, Smith proclaims Rhodesia's acquired African identity as justification for not conceding to foreign demands. Smith is at once African and British, either of the two values materializing simultaneously in his narrative.

To the Rhodesians, especially the pioneers, imperial Britain is a past that needs to be resolved. After UDI, Smith battles with his loyalties. He alternates between an affirmation of white African identity as well as the reclamation of British ideals. Throughout the narrative, Smith's identity alternates between the two. What we can gather from this reading is that Rhodesians could not exist outside the history of British imperialism. It is through Britain's expansion into overseas territories that Rhodesia is established. That legacy, and that heritage, is a significant part of Rhodesia. Smith feels betrayed by Britain, and this sense of treachery spearheads the declaration of independence (UDI), which marks a political severance from Britain while simultaneously pledging loyalty to the Queen.

4.4.2. The Rhodesian past as an indictment of the Zimbabwean present

In Smith (*The Great Betrayal*), the past regards the present with righteous condemnation. Such a construction of the past enables Smith self-righteously to say to his detractors, who include successive British governments, South Africa and white Rhodesian liberals, "when I look back at what has happened to our country over the past 20 years, it would be easy for me simply to say: 'I told you so'" (I. Smith, *Bitter Harvest* x). Such an indictment is made possible when one reads the Zimbabwean present in the context of a glorious Rhodesian past. The narrator subject

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achieves a symbolic juxtaposition of past and present by placing the professedly unwavering Rhodesian spirit he embodies within a Zimbabwean environment whose political, social and economic fabric is seen to be eroding at a rapid rate.

Smith consistently hammers home the point that Rhodesia had everything good going for it before the British and South African governments buckled to OAU pressure for majority rule. The Rhodesian past is construed as a success story. Smith writes:

> Rhodesia was an oasis of peace and contentment. Visitors to our country invariably commented on 'the happiest black faces we have ever seen' […] Proportional to population we had provided double the amount of facilities in the fields of education, health, housing, recreation and culture than Britain to our north". (*The Great Betrayal* 409)

Zimbabwe, on the other hand,

> is a total disaster, absolute chaos – indeed anarchy. The country is bankrupt, the people are denied basic freedom and justice, intimidation of the opponents of Government is rampant, with assault, torture, rape, even murder being commonplace. Basic food is in short supply and expensive, with children going to bed hungry at night; people have inadequate clothing, lack of shelter and basic housing. Education standards have plummeted, and simple and necessary medicines are unavailable. (I. Smith, *Bitter Harvest* x)

Javangwe rightly observes that "post-independence Africa is described in terms of regression to primordial forms of existence" (*Contesting Narratives* 32). Smith stresses the need to "rescue what we can" from "those high standards of Western civilization, which the pioneers brought with them" (*Bitter Harvest* x). He observes that "the new ZANU (PF) colonialists" secretly want to preserve these benefits from a Rhodesian past (x). In Smith's narrative, the Rhodesian past is consciously summoned to reflect upon and condemn the Zimbabwean present.

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The textual framing of the portraits of Robert Mugabe and Ian Smith in *The Great Betrayal* serve to further this function of the past. Smith, who is presented as the embodiment of a glorious past, is shown as moderate, well-groomed, honest and principled. Mugabe, embodying the present, is represented as a sworn communist, temperamental, dishonest and inefficient. Both inhabit the same temporal plane, indeed sitting in the same room at times, such as at Mugabe's house in Mount Pleasant, in parliament and in Mugabe's office. In their first meeting, Smith sees in Mugabe someone who "behaved like a balanced, civilized Westerner, the antithesis of the communist gangster I had expected" (*The Great Betrayal* 342). However, during this meeting and the ones that follow, right up until their very last meeting in early 1981, Smith reserves the right to continue doubting Mugabe; nevertheless, their meetings are cordial and relatively productive. Smith assumes the role of stabilizer, constantly visiting Mugabe, giving him advice and encouraging him to remain on the path that Smith deems correct. Among other things, Smith informs Mugabe that his main function is "to boost white morale, and encourage them to stay and contribute" (360). This, according to Smith, can be achieved only through moderation on the part of the new government in its black empowerment policies. The veiled point is that whites will stay only if benefits accrued in the past, such as land ownership, subsist in the present. However, before long Mugabe is shown to revert to his earlier image as a "communist gangster" (342). From this point on, past and present become decidedly polarized. The two eras display separate loyalties. Smith's past pays allegiance to the ideology of free enterprise, a euphemistic description of capitalism, whereas the present belongs to a counterfeited form of communism. Smith's past also belongs to the civilized and the Christian domains, whereas the present is seen as subscribing to primordial and barbaric values. In his condescending manner, Smith sees the past that he stands for as becoming an anachronism that is lodged in a present set on a course of disaster.

Using the past to condemn the present in this way is made possible by Smith's representation of his own political subjectivity as coherent and constant; and secondly through what Eagleton (35) refers to as "significant silences". Typical of vaunted autobiographical self-knowledge, Smith represents himself "as a psychologically coherent entity persisting through time, whose past experiences are remembered as belonging to the present self" (Klein et al. 463). Past and present coalesce in this representation of self. Chennells ("Self-representation") notes that "Smith

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inhabits a stable world that is destabilized only by other people's lies and treachery" (137). Despite the changes that have taken place in Rhodesia as a result of nationalist agitation and the subsequent transfer of power from the white minority to the black majority, Smith fully approves of the observation made by a group of his supporters that "[he] was one of the few constant factors they could find in this world" (Chennells, "Self-representation" 331). Smith, therefore, adopts a modernist view of his own self as "consistent, observable, and knowable by him- or herself and others" (H. Anderson 217). From this viewpoint, "self is an entity that exists, endures over time and can be known – observed, measured and quantified" (218). Naturally, Smith's greatest misgiving towards his enemies is that they are dithering and duplicitous.

Furthermore, Smith chooses to overlook ugly aspects of the Rhodesian past. As a form of re-membering or "re-collecting fragmented parts of a whole" (Morton 129), *The Great Betrayal* selectively dwells on what are deemed positive aspects of the Rhodesian past at the expense of the negative ones which may potentially undermine the image of a successful and heroic Rhodesian past. While truth in autobiography is always subjective, one cannot help but notice the narrative elisions in Smith's narrative. Explaining "significant silences", a notion developed from Macherey, Eagleton says "it is in the significant silences of a text, in its gaps and absences that the presence of ideology can be most positively felt […] The text is, as it were, ideologically forbidden to say certain things" (35). Macherey insists that "in order to say anything, there are other things *which must not be said*" (85; emphasis in original).

In order for Smith effectively to use the Rhodesian past to condemn the present, he inevitably finds himself in the position where he has to maintain silence about certain aspects of the Rhodesian past. He is forced to exclude almost everything that contradicts his thesis of a glorious Rhodesian past. For example, the injustices committed against black people in Rhodesia are not even mentioned, despite the more-than-apparent apartheid style management in the old Rhodesia. Godwin and Hancock (46) observe that "[w]hites lived in the best houses, owned most of the best land, enjoyed a high standard of living, and controlled the executive, the legislature, the judiciary, and the means of coercion." Smith romanticizes the past in order to lend it the legitimacy it needs to relate to the present as an implicit adjudicator. Characteristically, then, no mention is made of injustices towards blacks. The war is depicted as a just war against what

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would typically be seen as a bunch of terrorists-cum-communists whose successful targets are gullible Africans in the rural areas. The constitution of Rhodesia is applauded for being non-racist despite its entrenchment of segregation policies such as the Land Apportionment Act, which divided Rhodesia into white and black areas. All these well-founded facts about Rhodesia, which threaten to destabilize Smith's narrative of a glorious past, are deliberately omitted from the text. Even as Smith mentions that black people had benefited from Rhodesia's education system, Western medicine and good housing, he remains silent about the reality that blacks, ironically seen as backward, were still given an inferior education. In her autobiography, Fay Chung (2006) argues that educational deprivation in Rhodesia, like land deprivation, was a key reason for blacks fighting against the colonial administration.

Smith devotes the last part of his autobiography to talk about ZANU PF's misrepresentation of the land issue. While he is eager to point out that the government failed to capitalize on unutilized land in Zimbabwe, at no point does he draw attention to the apartheid-style legislation that gave rise to the land problem in Zimbabwe in the first place. Chief among such lawmaking was the aforementioned Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which divided the country into (white) European and (black) African areas,[56] and subsequently became the cornerstone of white Rhodesian society (Machingaidze 558). Smith boasts that a black middle class, comprising people who had formerly been servants, emerges in Rhodesia as a result of the colonial government's black empowerment policies. However, he does not tell us for whom these black people used to work and under what conditions. Such silences are the subject of black nationalist narratives, such as Samkange's *Year of the Uprising* (1978), Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1981), Hove's *Bones* (1988) and Marechera's *House of Hunger* (1982), which of course contain their own silences. The point is that Smith relies on significant silences so that his case of a glorious Rhodesian past, in the face of which the Zimbabwean present stands condemned, can endure.

At any rate, Smith's discourse of gradualism undermines his claims that Rhodesia was a place for both whites and blacks. In this philosophy of meritocracy, a remnant of social Darwinism, black people do not occupy an equal place with whites, or a simultaneous temporal line of

[56] See Kramer; Kwashirai; Machingaidze; and Palmer, "Land Reform".

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development. They exist outside the Rhodesian present, which itself is considered 2000 years ahead of black development (*The Great Betrayal* 149). The Rhodesian present is considered an advanced state to which only whites, raised in European ways, British in particular, can belong. The black person in Rhodesia, on the other hand, is an anachronistic being. Resorting to the "white man's burden thesis", Smith explains that for Rhodesian whites, "[the] problem was to bring these Africans across, to try to bridge a 2,000-year gap in the shortest possible time" (149). Elsewhere Smith refers to the black person's perceived backwardness when he says:

> [W]e were, after all, living in different worlds, and they were not at all enthusiastic over the white man's calendar and watch and the importance he attached to time. Their lives were governed by the sun, as they always have been. (56)

Smith concludes that "the indigenous population needed time to adapt to the rapidly changing world which was surrounding them" (56). Smith recognizes that blacks inhabit the geographical space named Rhodesian but insists on denying them full participation in Rhodesia on the grounds that whites and blacks do not inhabit the same temporal plane. His discourse, in this particular case, falls back on Western values where individuals and groups are perceived to "occupy the same space, but divided from ourselves and from others due to the movement of time" (Bastian 152). The results of this are that black people in Rhodesia had to make do with inferior forms of education, health, housing and livelihoods. They also became targets of the white man's paternalism and exploitation, all of which are absent in Smith's narrative.

4.4.3. Rhodesia as country and tribe

In the white narrative, Smith in particular, "Rhodesia" and "Rhodesian" are simultaneously the names of a country and a tribe.[57] But it's interesting that "Rhodesian" becomes the descriptor of a tribe after 1980 when whites find themselves an endangered species, at risk of becoming irrelevant. As long as whites insisted on a Rhodesian identity as a form of national identity after the country's name had changed to Zimbabwe, they were bound to become irrelevant and anachronistic. Writers like Smith increasingly invoke the identity signified by the term "Rhodesian" as a way of reclaiming and resurrecting a lost claim to being that exists in the past.

[57] Moore-King's *White Man Black War* also makes reference to the "white tribe".

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They do this so that "Rhodesian" identity can survive alongside the national identity signified as "Zimbabwean". To Smith:

> There are many tribes in our country – the Matabele in the west, the Karanga in the midlands, the Zezuru and Manyika in the east, the Venda and Shangaan in the south, and the Makore Kore and Tonga in the north – all composed of black people. There is only one white tribe, the Rhodesians, who are indigenous to this country. (*The Great Betrayal* 326-327)

Whites in Smith's formulation have no identity problem. Like the Matabele and the Shona among them, whites can identify themselves as Rhodesians in Zimbabwe. In this instance, all the tribes in Zimbabwe have to be composed of black people in order to create the space for a racially constituted tribe known as "Rhodesians". Besides being distinguished by race, as white, Rhodesians in Zimbabwe are also distinguished by cultural attributes that are remnants of the British colonial past, as we have observed above. Whereas black tribes are constituted geographically, Rhodesians are culturally situated in Zimbabwe. This peculiar definition of tribes enables Smith to refer to "white Matabeles" (376) when it suits him. Speaking about ZANU-PF governmental attacks on whites and the Ndebele in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces during the dissident era in Zimbabwe, Smith reveals "the plan […] to divide Matabeles – white against blacks" (376). Clearly, the black tribes are spatially marked whereas the Rhodesian tribe is racially exclusive, a preserve of whites who adhere to the founding principles of the British Empire. In Smith's narrative, the Rhodesian past and, by extension the British colonial past, find continuity in Zimbabwe.

Writing of two by-elections in Zimbabwe in 1981, Smith resorts to the tribal character of whites. Noting the success the Rhodesian Front during the by-elections, he says: "I was deeply grateful that in both cases our white Rhodesian tribe was firm and constant" (*The Great Betrayal* 372). The qualifier "white" serves as confirmation that "Rhodesian" in this case could describe only whites. Indeed, Smith makes a habit of differentiating between whites and blacks in his autobiography, where whites are described as "we Rhodesians" (375) and blacks as "our Africans" or "our blacks" (327). The representation of Rhodesia as a tribe therefore serves to

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situate whites within Zimbabwe. They can claim to be Rhodesians living in Zimbabwe, a claim clearly betraying the long-held view that Rhodesia was strictly a white man's country.

In one stroke, conflating a Rhodesian past and a Zimbabwean present, Smith resolves the problem of white identity in a Zimbabwe that is obsessed with the matter of allegiance. Whites in Zimbabwe are unthinkable outside of their Rhodesian identity. It is taken as a fact that Rhodesia made the whites who lived there what they were. Whites can now embrace two heritages, the tribal and the national, just as the Ndebele or the Shona would be inclined to do. More importantly, they can imagine a Zimbabwe through Rhodesian eyes. A tribal identity is one that is peculiar to a particular group, although interestingly it can range across different ethnic derivations. Such an identity is distinct and is not necessarily subsumed into a national identity. The Ndebele remain Ndebele even as they call themselves Zimbabweans. They are different in fundamental ways from, for example, the Kalanga. Yet both the Ndebele and the Kalanga belong with ease to Zimbabwe. Smith argues the case for whites in Zimbabwe along similar lines. The objective of rebranding whites as a tribe is "to establish parity [between white Rhodesians and the several African tribes] which would then deflect [whites'] being designated as aliens in Africa" (Javangwe, *Politics and Poetics* 34). Smith betrays this need from the beginning of the narrative when he draws parallels between the Ndebele and the white Rhodesians as latter-day settlers in Zimbabwe. White consciences are clear as they settle on the far side of the Limpopo because "the Matabeles had recently moved in" to the west (1). Both the Rhodesians and the Ndebele travel a similar trajectory, moving from the south, across the Limpopo into Zimbabwe.

Smith's identification with the Ndebele is not coincidental. This African group is part of Smith's remembered past because it mirrors the Rhodesians when it comes to a presumably shared non-indigeneity. Smith therefore endears himself to the Ndebele nation and even takes responsibility for the Ndebele during the war years, especially when it looks almost certain that whites have to relinquish power. He narrates several incidents where he communes with the Ndebele over the need to find strong leadership so that they can keep their nation strong, especially in the face of a Shona hegemony. He also participates in their spirituality when Ndebele chiefs inform him that a rock on Rhodes's grave has fallen (*The Great Betrayal* 81). Smith advises Nkomo, the ZAPU leader, to assume leadership of the Ndebele, but this is to no avail as Nkomo claims he is the

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leader of Zimbabwe and not a tribe. Even the Ndebele, feeling a leadership vacuum in Rhodesia, supposedly confide in Smith that he is "the only one they could trust and talk to" (279).

Identification with the Ndebele, a process that began with the arrival of whites in Rhodesia, continues to the present, in which Smith constructs an affinity between whites and blacks based on a shared persecution by the Shona-dominated government of Robert Mugabe. To Smith, whites and the Ndebele are the stumbling blocks to Mugabe's ambition for a one party-state, hence they must be eliminated. The Ndebele, in Rhodesia, therefore constitute an aspect of the past that Smith needs in order to create a social entanglement between Rhodesians and the Ndebele. This enmeshment is characterized by shared migratory patterns and spirituality in the past and present, and shared victimhood in the new, postcolonial period. Interestingly, other white Zimbabwean narratives, where they mention ethnicity in Zimbabwe, often also draw ties between whites and the Ndebele; this vaunted bond is largely characterized by an allegedly shared persecution at the hands of the Shona-dominated government. In Peter Godwin's *Mukiwa*, the narrator finds himself admiring the Ndebele army, and later defending ZAPU leaders against charges of treason; he also exposes postcolonial injustices allegedly perpetrated against inhabitants of Matabeleland during the period in the 1980s when dissidents were targeted on a wide front.[58] In John Eppel's *Absent the English Teacher* (2009), George, the main character finds himself thrown in jail together with Ndebele subjects.

To mark the change that has occurred in Zimbabwe, the name Rhodesian Front is revised to the more appropriate Conservative Alliance Zimbabwe (CAZ) "in order to avoid provocation" (*The Great Betrayal* 381). This gesture certainly demonstrates Smith and company's acknowledgement that Zimbabwe is a new country with its own rules. The change is therefore in line with present expectations. Regardless, a retrospective glance and the retention of the Rhodesian past expresses itself in the traditional composition of the Conservative Alliance Zimbabwe. Not only is Ian Smith its leader, but its philosophy remains unchanged. Smith believes the role whites should play in Zimbabwe's politics is that of preserving or, as the name of the party suggests, conserving white Rhodesian standards. Throughout his political career, as the autobiography testifies, the idea of maintaining "civilized" standards reigns supreme. The

[58] See Fisher; Nkomo; CCJP and LRF, *Breaking the Silence.*

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Rhodesian past therefore remains an integral component of the Conservative Alliance Zimbabwe's political philosophy.

4.5. Godwin's *Mukiwa*

Unlike the case in Smith's *The Great Betrayal*, where the Rhodesian past is represented as a glorious time undermined only by the treachery of South African and British politicians, the Rhodesian past is not wholly celebrated in *Mukiwa*. Like Godwin, most white Zimbabwean writers demonstrate ambivalence about their "Rhodesian" past. The Rhodesian past is not reclaimed as what one might call a total package, as is the case in *The Great Betrayal*, in which Smith does not apologize for any aspect that he considers to be truly Rhodesian. In *Mukiwa*, the past is split into several conflicting parts, some of which Godwin distances himself from and attempts to leave securely behind while simultaneously connecting with others and carrying them into the present. These varied responses enable Godwin to record conflicting details about the Rhodesian past so that the narrative becomes neither a total celebration nor a complete condemnation. The question that seems to inform the division is "should the past stay in Rhodesia or should it go to Zimbabwe?" *Mukiwa*, unlike *The Great Betrayal*, is more complex and expansive. It renders Godwin's memories from childhood to adulthood in a linear trajectory that is nevertheless disrupted at times by the narrator's digressions and brief interjections on behalf of the narrated child. In this discussion of Godwin's *Mukiwa*, I focus on how detachment and intimacy characterize the remembrance of the Rhodesian past in white Zimbabwean memoirs, and how the Rhodesian past is represented as the white man's curse in Zimbabwe.

4.5.1. Narrative Distance and the past in *Mukiwa*

Godwin's *Mukiwa* opens with the following passage:

> *I think I* first realized something was wrong when our next door neighbor, oom Piet Oberholzer, was murdered. *I must have been about six then*. It was still two years before *we* rebelled against the Queen, and another seven years before the real war would start. (3; emphases added).

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From the outset, Godwin adopts two narrative strategies for recording the Rhodesian past: meta-representation involving a re-imagined childhood consciousness; and shifts from the personal pronoun "I" to the amorphous collective "we". As an example of meta-representation, that is, a representation about a different self's or another person's mental representation (Klein et al. 470), the first line not only calls attention to the problems of remembering so far into childhood through the phrase "I think", it also creates distance between the subject narrator represented by the first "I", and the narrated child's consciousness (the second "I"). Already, Godwin's narrative comprises several selves. "The self, the narrator", H. Anderson (220) explains, "is many *I*s, occupies many positions, and has many voices". Rather than proposing entirely fragmented selves, it is useful to follow Hermans et al., who argue that "it is the same I that is moving back and forth between several positions" (28). In pursuit of the current objective, I therefore postulate a reading of three narrative subjects. I shall refer to "Godwin" or "the narrator" as a composite of the historical "I", the narrating "I" and the ideological "I".[59] "The child Godwin" and "the older Godwin" refer to Godwin's younger and older versions of the self. This is to avoid the use of the more conventional "narrated I" because the two Godwins are as much narrated selves as they are narrating selves. More precisely, they are agents through which that which is narrated, is seen. Each, in their separate capacities, is what Genette would call "a focalizer". Deleyto clarifies that the focalizer is "the origin of the vision or agent that performs the vision" (160). Readers watch with the eyes of the focalizer. Narrator and focalizer may of course coincide, which is why there is a need to make the above distinctions.

In Leslie's account ("Pretense and representation"; "Theory of Mind"), meta-representations consist of an agent, the agent's attitude towards a proposition, and an embedded proposition. Godwin's first line is thus constituted: [Agent: "I"] − [Attitude: "think"] – [Proposition: "I first realized something was wrong when our next door neighbor, oom Piet Oberholzer, was murdered"]. Klein et al. stress that "[meta]-representation has an important function: It allows useful inferences to be made while preventing false information from being stored as true in semantic memory" (471). It can be added in the case of *Mukiwa* that through meta-representation, white Zimbabwean writers are able to narrate a childhood past in ways that

[59] For a detailed explanation of the various "I"s of life narrative one can read S. Smith and Watson's *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2001).

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preserve close or intimate connectedness with such a history while simultaneously distancing themselves from this same past.

Godwin reinforces the distance between himself and the past in his justification for not remembering things with complete certainty: "I must have been about six then." Incidentally, the Rhodesian past in *Mukiwa* is partly mediated through the consciousness of a narrated child. S. Smith and Watson (2001) explicate this strategy of life narratives by saying that

> [the writer] conjures herself up at the age of five or eight or ten. She sets that child-version in the world as she remembers her. She may even give that younger "I" a remembered or reimagined consciousness of the experience of being five or eight or ten. She may give that child a voice through dialogue. That child is the object "I," the memory of a younger version of a self. (61)

In white Zimbabwean memoirs such as Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2003), Armstrong's *Minus the Morning* (2009) and Eames' *Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011), we encounter re-imagined childhood foci of consciousness that all enable an ambivalent rendition of the Rhodesian past. The child Godwin, through whose consciousness we get part of the Rhodesian past in *Mukiwa*, is characterized by innocence and naivety. The overall meta-representation in *Mukiwa*, including as it does the (narratively distanced) *representation* of such innocence and naïveté, creates distance between Godwin the author and the Rhodesian colonial vices in which Godwin the child wittingly or unwittingly participates.

Mukiwa is divided into three sections. The first section is where the Rhodesian past is rendered through the consciousness of a gullible white boy who is bemused by things such as dead bodies, knives and black illnesses, without much appreciation of the wider political implications or events that are taking place in Rhodesia. One area of remembrance in *Mukiwa* is the experience of encountering blacks in Rhodesia. The young Godwin does not necessarily show complicity with colonial injustices against blacks as such. Nevertheless, through his re-imagined consciousness, we can make inferences about the wider existence of such injustices. We learn, contrary to what Smith (*The Great Betrayal*) tells us, that in Rhodesia "Africans died at any age"

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(75), unlike whites, who died in old age and could actually prepare for death, as is the case with Old Mr Boshoff, who has the time to smoke his pipe and make a few instructions before dying while young Godwin "watched him do it" (Godwin 103). Of course, the young Godwin does not tell us why experiences of death differ between blacks and whites or why only blacks get leprosy (96), but he provides a glimpse into the Manichaeism of the colonial world in his descriptions of the (black) African and the (white) European worlds, as suggested in the following paragraph.

Godwin recalls a Rhodesia characterized by racial discrimination and segregation. The black people's clinic in Melsetter is "a small ramshackle building, easily overwhelmed by the swell of humanity that swarmed there" (Godwin 86), whereas the white European clinic is "a smart three-bedroomed bungalow" comprising "one or two [patients] sitting in the waiting room paging through old copies of *Illustrated Life Rhodesia*, *Scope* and *Fair Lady*" (103). At Mangula, where his family stays after moving from Melsetter, there is a "bright and carpeted" (189) bar for whites only and "a beer hall" (189) for black people, to which young Godwin can go even though he is white. We observe the segregation that characterizes Rhodesia and the racial disparities that ensue therefrom. Blacks are condemned to perpetual servitude, marked at times by less-than-fully-human treatment. Godwin remembers that his "days were filled with dogs and servants" (23). Not only are these servants illiterate, they also do not have surnames and prefer to live in tree kennels above the black African compound (36). Their customs are scorned and they regularly encounter overt racism from whites. Although St Georges enrolls a few blacks, the school is not allowed to play sport with government schools (182). Such facts make a mockery of Smith's claims that Rhodesia had the best health and education facilities for whites as well as blacks. Godwin points out these discrepancies matter-of-factly, without attaching any explicit political significance to them. He maintains distance by re-imagining a childhood self whose rendition of the past is informative and detached. Nevertheless, such a strategy enables the revelation of colonial injustices with which white adults are complicit in Rhodesia.

Not once, but a couple of times, the "I" of the narrative disappears briefly and resurfaces with moral validation for colonial prejudices. Throughout the narrative, black servants are referred to as "boys". Knighty, one of the Godwins' black servants, is initially introduced as "our cook boy" (Godwin 14). Immediately after this designation, the author intervenes by saying "in those days

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we called African men 'boys'. We had cook boys and garden boys, however old they might be" (14). Through shifts from "I" to "we", "the readerly gaze is averted or distracted" (Stockwell 109). It represents a transfer of focalization from the child Godwin to the larger white Rhodesian society from which the child takes his cue. Although the discourse community represented by "we" is not explicitly stated, its intimation of a class consciousness is evident. "We" is therefore the vehicle through which the child Godwin inter-subjectively participates in the racial prejudices of his time.

Once this cancellation of the personal "I" is achieved concerning the degradation of black men, the narrator adopts the pejorative term "boy" throughout the narrative. Elsewhere, he now makes reference to "Knighty the cook boy" (Godwin 23-34), "the garden boy, Albert" (23), "Sixpence the lantern boy [who] was actually a very old man with a bush grey moustache" (66) and Tickie "the school cook boy" (66). The narrator is also ignorant of black people's surnames, including that of Sergeant Solomon, a policeman he claims as a friend (13). Such mis-identification is said to owe its existence to the fact that "in those days Africans did not have surnames to us. We knew them just by their Christian names, which were often fairly strange" (23). Again, Godwin accounts for the child's behavior by telling us about "those days". Such a parenthetical feature, "a digressive structure […] which is inserted in the middle of another structure" (Biber et al. 1067), serves to specify the Rhodesian discursive threshold in which the child Godwin's own discourse and sentiments are embedded. It therefore typifies a slippage "between confession and exculpation and redemption" (Harris, "Writing Home" 108). By drawing on an associative connection between his childhood consciousness and the white Rhodesian collective consciousness, Godwin is able to come clean about the racial prejudices he unwittingly participates in as a child while also clearing himself of personal guilt.

Godwin's sustained use of pejorative terms demonstrates his need to structure his narrative about the Rhodesian past mimetically, retaining the sociolect of the day; however, the parenthetical interjection, "in those days", registers an implicit self-distancing from practices of pejorative naming. Narrative distance in *Mukiwa* therefore simultaneously serves a truth-telling function and an ideological, distancing function. It is clear that the child Godwin is a historical presence through whose eyes the Rhodesian past is rendered, but this persona is at odds with the mature,

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ideologically more considered Godwin, whose adult political consciousness makes him disavow aspects of this past. By imagining the child as bound to tradition, Godwin makes us conscious of his interpellated younger self.

We find similar tendencies in most white narratives, where the earliest reminiscences are cast far into the past at a time when the narrated self is re-imagined as a mere spectator, if not victim, of the colonial circumstances around him, circumstances that apparently overwhelm the narrated self. What informs such representations are notions of childhood innocence founded in Western romantic sensibilities in terms of which the child is regarded as pure and innocent, only to be corrupted by an adult environment that has no regard for childhood innocence. The white narrators concerned are, in a sense, self-exonerating and almost apologetic about a past in which they indulge as children, benefiting unduly from racist policies biased against black people.

4.5.2. The uses of a re-imagined childhood consciousness in white Zimbabwean narratives

A re-imagined childhood consciousness in white Zimbabwean narratives has several functions. As already shown, it gives the author license to depict ugly aspects of the Rhodesian past. Harris characterizes the slippage that occurs between childhood and adulthood as *Mukiwa*'s "most significant area of slippage" ("Writing Home" 108). Through a childhood consciousness, "legitimacy and authenticity are inscribed" ("Writing Home" 108). Harris further explains that "the naïveté of the [child] narrator puts him beyond reproach, and yet the broader political conditions are made clear to the reader" (109). Childhood consciousness also enables the disclosure of Rhodesian myths about Africa. Within this consciousness, therefore, resides a stock of white Rhodesian myths and stereotypes about Africa and Africans that formed the cultural and political firmament of white Rhodesian society (Chennells, *Settler Myths*). Seen through the child Godwin's consciousness, albeit rooted in a racist Rhodesian settler tradition, blacks appear as drunkards "forever falling into rivers" (Godwin 83). They are irresponsible, overly spiritual and superstitious. Black people's customs such as that of leaving food at gravesites are ridiculed by the white adults with whom the child Godwin associates.

The child Godwin is also privy to conversations that occur among white adults as they perpetuate stereotypes and myths about black people. At one gathering of white adults, following the killing

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of a leopard by one of the white men's dogs, a group of blacks arrive and demand that they be allowed to see the leopard and take its heart, as part of their custom, arguing that it has killed a baby "because of a spell" (Godwin 49). Lovat, at whose homestead the whites are gathered, refers to the blacks' customs as "bloody voodoo nonsense" (48). Meanwhile, Godwin's father counsels the other whites by saying "we ought to find out exactly what they'll do with [the heart] […] It's all tied up with witchcraft. God knows, they might end up killing someone" (49). Having ridiculed black people's customs, Lovat concludes by asking a rhetorical question: "[W]hen are you *munts* going to get civilized?" Typically, white Rhodesians would also scoff at "the Clocadile [sic] Gang", through whom the narrative of black African nationalism is introduced at the beginning of Godwin's narrative. The gang claims responsibility for the murder of a white man, and they are described in *Mukiwa* as "a bunch of bloody ignoramuses [who] can't even spell the name of their gang, and they want to rule the country" (12). This attitude towards the "Clocadiles" is consistent with the Rhodesian propaganda machine, which constantly depicted black nationalists as ignorant and morally inept. Godwin's re-imagined childhood consciousness therefore provides a window through which white Rhodesian myths and stereotypes about black people can be viewed.

To his credit, Godwin's narrative enables the reader to challenge the myths that the child Godwin's consciousness brings back into concrete recall. It turns out, ironically, that the same black fighters whom white Rhodesians are keen to undermine and downplay, proceed to do precisely what the Rhodesians cannot fathom them doing: wage a successful revolution that topples the settler government, leading to the installation of a black government. Godwin's admiration of ZIPRA fighters during a contact is quite telling. He explains that "their tactics were different from ZANLA, however: they were better trained and most had been through conventional infantry courses" (Godwin 306). After some skirmishes with the guerrillas, Godwin's corporal shakes his head "in admiration" (307), the reason being that for the first time black fighters do not flee the scene of fighting. The fighters are not the gullible fighters of the white Rhodesian imaginary. They are well-trained, efficient and brave. Although it is true that during the early days of the war black fighters were disorganized, they later rose above Rhodesian mythical representations that seek to confine them to inefficiency and a lack of vision.

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It is also quite interesting that although the Africa of young Godwin's consciousness is filled with "Matabele thorns and the crocodiles and the hippos" (Godwin 138), bilharzia, malaria and rabies (159-160), at no point in the narrative do we find a white person falling victim to these perceived threats. It should therefore be underlined that the child Godwin's image of place is a product of received knowledge rather than experience. His fear of "Africa" is matched by a yearning for the England he perceives through books, pictures and films (139).

Godwin's narrative also incorporates the voices of blacks challenging myths about Africa. A black pupil at St George explains to the child Godwin that the smell whites associate with black people results from the fact that it is difficult for them to wash without running water − a veiled indictment of the colonial administration's delivery of services to black people. He adds that blacks smell of wood smoke from cooking on open fires. Godwin testifies afterwards that "the smell of Africans that I recognized so well from my childhood was nothing more than wood smoke" (181). The re-imagined childhood consciousness therefore serves to expose some ills of the Rhodesian past while simultaneously enabling the author to challenge the myths that the author accurately brings back into concrete recall. The fact that Godwin chooses not to "whitewash" the racism and "othering" practices of settler Rhodesians shows his commitment to remember against the grain of the Rhodesian past.

4.5.3. The Rhodesian past as bane in the Zimbabwean present

Unlike Book One of *Mukiwa,* in which some ugly aspects of the Rhodesian past are rendered matter-of-factly and in a detached manner, Book Two is opinionated and more forthright in its condemnation of the Rhodesian past. Godwin is downright critical of Ian Smith and the Rhodesian war. The reader no longer has to rely on inferences. In this regard, it can be said that Godwin remembers against the grain of Ian Smith's supposedly stable Rhodesia. Harris ("Writing Home" 103), citing Nuttall's ("Telling 'Free' Stories" 75) definition of autobiography as "a public rehearsal of memory", suggests that the memoir is never a stabilization of the past. What one gets from the attempts to stabilize the past through memory is an illusion. Godwin's *Mukiwa* affords a destabilization of the Rhodesian past by pointing out its cracks and interstices while articulating the silences that constitute Smith's (*The Great Betrayal*) narrative. *Mukiwa* is thus to some extent a counter-narrative in relation to Smith's story of a glorious and successful

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Rhodesian past. Unlike Smith's *The Great Betrayal*, where criticism is reserved for aspects deemed non-Rhodesian, such as British duplicity and African "terrorism", most white Zimbabwean memoirs are more complex in their remembrance of the past. White Rhodesians' misjudgments − from supporting Smith to antagonizing the black masses during the war − contribute to the precarious position in which they find themselves in Zimbabwe.

Book Two of *Mukiwa* is therefore a different kind of remembering altogether. It takes us into the consciousness of a politically-minded older Godwin who does not hide his feelings about the past. This Godwin, like the child Godwin of Book One, comprises multiple conflicting selves. What this effectively means is that the narrative retains a number of contradictions and inconsistencies, for example the older Godwin's use of "guerrillas" and "terrorists" interchangeably in references to the black fighters. These nuances are subordinated to a more pertinent objective in this section: an analysis of how the Rhodesian past is rendered as the white man's curse in the Zimbabwean present. In the discussion of Smith's *The Great Betrayal* it was observed that the Rhodesian past is used for the purposes of condemning the present. In *Mukiwa,* past deeds, past decisions and past misjudgments complicate the crises of belonging in the present. Godwin remains conscious of white estrangement from both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe throughout the narrative, so much so that in later life he "tried hard to forget about Africa" (386).

In Godwin's narrative, Ian Smith is a stumbling block to white Rhodesian progress, and consequently makes it difficult for whites to belong in Zimbabwe. A similar perception prevails in Moore-King's *White Man Black War* (1989), in which Smith is accused of antagonizing the blacks in both the past and the present, where he makes utterances that are deemed provocative. Smith is accused of being oblivious of "the reality of our situation, the reality of the fact that we are a tiny group hoping to build a future together with the people who were our enemies" (Moore-King 117). The Ian Smith of the Rhodesian past is a target of mockery, accusation, scorn, anger and hatred in many white Zimbabwean narratives. Often, he is made to shoulder the blame for the wrongs of the past. He is the embodiment of everything that was wrong and went wrong in Rhodesia. In Zimbabwe, blaming Smith for the past has never been more convenient.

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In *Mukiwa*, the adult Godwin's criticism of Smith is direct and unrelenting. He refers to Smith as "the bastard" whose fault it is that Rhodesia is in a mess (262). The Smith of this re-imagined past lacks vision and direction. He has "no bloody idea where to lead [white Rhodesians]" who nevertheless follow him "blindly" (262). As they sit across from each other, during Smith's visit to Gwanda, where Godwin has just finished a combat refresher course, Godwin toys with the idea of shooting him, certain that "the war would be bound to end sooner with Smith gone" (263). Allowing himself to imagine the consequences of assassinating Smith, he inter-subjectively reckons himself a liberation hero in the mould of the Crocodile Gang members, who kill a white man in the name of Chimurenga (the liberation war), and "Blackie" Tsafenadas, who was prompted to assassinate South African prime minister H.F. Verwoerd by his aversion towards apartheid.

Yet, Godwin does not shoot Smith, despite imagining that Smith's eyes "seemed to be begging me to go ahead and do it, to give him an honourable way out of this fiasco" (263). Smith is not the unyielding character of *The Great Betrayal*, who refuses to give up during the toughest of times. Godwin's Smith is frail and resigned to his own ineptitude. Under his leadership, the Rhodesian past is "a fiasco" (Godwin 263). The narrator is aware of the futility of war even as Smith asks for more call-ups. Smith's resignation suggests that he is aware of his own failure but cannot find a way out. At this point, Godwin sees himself as holding the key to Rhodesia's future. Godwin reconstructs himself as Smith's opposite. While Smith is morally deficient, Godwin's moral agency swells. Even the photo of Smith on the wall "bores" down on him with mouth "pursed in dour disapproval" (262). Godwin thus represents his past self, outside of the disastrous Rhodesia created by Ian Smith. The photo on the wall is an object in the narrative of estrangement from Rhodesia first, and Zimbabwe, second. Had he killed Smith, perhaps Godwin would have been at one with the black nationalists, belonging to Zimbabwe with greater ease.

The veiled criticism against white Rhodesians for blindly following Smith is quite apparent. Godwin observes that "good ol' Smithy" is "followed blindly by white Rhodesians even though he had no bloody idea where to lead us. This was our icon" (Godwin 263). True, blaming Smith alone is a gross over-simplification of the past. Smith himself might have taken it upon himself to determine the course of Rhodesian history and does not dispute his identification as "the

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person responsible for creating this incredible nation" (I. Smith, *The Great Betrayal* 331). However, the reality is that Smith had the support of die-hard Rhodesians who were not prepared to relinquish their dominance in Rhodesia. Godwin reserves some criticism for whites who gang up with Smith during the time of Rhodesia while demonstrating that Rhodesians were at no point a coherent community of whites. Besides the fact that Godwin is against Smith's policies, his parents support the Rhodesian Party, which believes in a negotiated settlement with black nationalists. To them fighting in the war is to hold the line while politicians negotiate.

To remember against Rhodesia is to create points of intimacies with black people, who are marginalized from Rhodesia. In Rhodesia Godwin finds himself forging belonging among several blacks, from servants at home, schoolmates at the multi-racial St Georges School, revelers at the African beer hall in Mangura, pupils at St Peters, workmates in the Rhodesian security forces, and black civilians at Filabusi, where he is stationed during the war. Later on, after independence, Godwin finds himself defending former ZIPRA guerillas accused of treason by the new ZANU PF government. His subjectivity is therefore entangled with several black subjectivities, something that ends in an acute sense of failure and isolation.

Godwin's personal claims to belong among blacks are undermined by racist policies, individual and group acts of white prejudice and, of course, Smith's own arrogance. The racist slurs of people like Radetski make black people suspicious of all whites to the extent that when Godwin makes a satirical joke aimed at South Africa's racist policies, he finds himself rejected by certain black people who initially regard him a friend. His search for a middle ground, a "third space" in which culture can be negotiated (Bhabha *The Location of Culture*), ends in failure. He complains: "[T]here really wasn't much room in the middle of Africa – all sides ended up despising you" (Godwin 195). His training at Morris Depot makes him conscious of how he is conditioned to kill the same people who have been his friends. The training "[t]urned you into a fighting machine and set you loose on people who were writing letters to you" (227). This contention is made following a mission by Godwin and fellow police recruits to defuse a potential riot in a black township. Among the rioters is his former pupil, who has kept touch by writing letters after Godwin joins the police. On leaving, Godwin advises him not to wear red,

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recalling the riot-breaking simulations involving a "man in the red shirt" used as a target during training.

Godwin avows that white Rhodesians are fighting the wrong war. In other words, they are placing themselves on the wrong side of the past, of history, where they will be remembered contemptuously. Following his parents' resolve that he honour his call-up, Godwin reflects:

> I was very conscious of the fact that each of them had spent five years in the services during the Second World War. But they were lucky, theirs had been a simple war to fight. A moral war. A just war. The right war. This war seemed messier and more complicated. (208)

The war against Nazi Germany is considered by many a just war. By fighting in both world wars, Rhodesians are considered to have been on the right side of history. Being on the wrong side therefore makes whites' cases of belonging in the present problematic. Such is indeed the case in Zimbabwe. The Rhodesian past becomes a bane, a burden that whites carry with them as long as the Zimbabwe of the present is imagined through a war discourse that pits righteous nationalists against aggressive whites. Further, the manner in which the war is fought on the white Rhodesian side destroys any hope of either winning it or forging proper relations in the Zimbabwean present. Godwin is incensed that whites refuse to see the wisdom of his advice either to create or retain ties with the black African masses. This is for both the short-term goal of ending the war and the long-term friendships. Godwin therefore rues the fact that whites have not done enough to endear themselves to blacks since the establishment of the colony in general. He notes:

> We'd been here for a hundred years. But not many of us came into the TTLs.[60] The odd government vet, the lands adviser and, on special occasions, the District Commissioner. A few missionaries, but they didn't really count. And now me. (250)

[60] TTLs refer to Tribal Trust Lands that were created under British ordinances and Rhodesian laws in order to drive Africans off productive land into congested areas with poor soil and weak rainfall.

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For him, this reveals a fundamental flaw on the part of whites. It shows that whites prefer to insulate themselves against the very people on whom their colonial identities depend.

By endearing himself with black people, Godwin therefore forges a white subjectivity that is entangled with the subjectivities of blacks. He painstakingly immerses himself in Ndebele customs in order to appreciate the culture of the locals. This is revealed in the claims that:

> I learnt as much as I could about local politesse, and did my best to observe it. I tried not to rush people to whom time was unimportant, even though I fairly danced with impatience. I tried to remember to show respect to age, even when the old one was dressed in rags and appeared to have no status. I never walked on to the area of beaten earth around a cluster of huts, for this was as bad as barging into someone's house unannounced […] I was, to use PO Moffat's phrase, 'a regular fucking *kaffir*-lover'. (254-256)

Godwin, claims the description "*kaffir*-lover"' because it encapsulates his attempts at aligning himself with blacks since childhood. This is consistent with his acceptance and consequent use of "*mukiwa*" (person of European descent) in references to himself. Although initially meant to be derogative, both labels are appropriated and used to advantage, as Godwin's claim to belong to Africa. He also supports Chief Maduna's involvement in the nationalist struggle, albeit passively, when he hides a banned ZAPU newsletter that could incriminate him during a search of his home. In other words, Godwin creates an identity that contradicts the dominant Rhodesian identity. Nevertheless, his white compatriots complicate his case for belonging. Not only do the Rhodesians arrest Maduna, they also treat unarmed black civilians as enemies, burning their huts and publicly humiliating them until the black villagers become indifferent to the hatred of whites. At this point relations are no longer redeemable.

Godwin consistently stresses the importance of not antagonizing black civilians if the war is to end and even records these sentiments in a report that inspector Buxton decides to send directly to the Rhodesian military command in Godwin's name. His reluctant participation in the war is paradoxically matched by his obsession that whites should employ tactics that might enable the

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war to end. Smith's failure to win the war, although it is something he anticipates early, leads him to conclude that the peace following independence "had robbed us of our identity. All around me, as I watched, white society shriveled and changed" (326). Peace is what Godwin wants but not one that involves continued antagonism in Zimbabwe. His mockery of the "so-called 'internal settlement'" (319) captures his disillusionment about the Rhodesian government's commitment to end the war. Muzorewa, "the main 'internal leader'", is "a diminutive man that not even the whites took seriously" (319). What is even worse is that "even while [white Rhodesians] tried to build him up, they tore him down" (319). Godwin is therefore aware of, and critical, of white insincerity with regard to the internal settlement. In other words, white Rhodesia's commitment to a lasting solution to Rhodesia is rendered as questionable. It is fraught with deceit and duplicity, an accusation Smith (*The Great Betrayal*) is only too eager to level against his perceived detractors.

4.6. Conclusion

It has emerged that in remembering the past, white Zimbabwean narratives are varied. The differences that characterize individual narratives confirm the view that "there is no canonical way to think of our own past. In the endless quest for order and structure, we grasp at whatever picture is floating by and put our past into its frame" (Hacking 89). The analysis of Smith's *The Great Betrayal* showed how the writer uses the Rhodesian past as a condemnation of the Zimbabwean present. Smith reconstructs a glorious and successful Rhodesian past that prevails over British and South African duplicity, internal betrayal and the African nationalist war. This past, sometimes embodied in the person of Smith, acts as referee or adjudicator in the present. A slippage in the use of Rhodesia as both country and tribe ensures that whites can belong to Zimbabwe without necessarily having to abandon their past values, which are seen to reach back into the founding ideals of the British Empire. In Godwin's *Mukiwa*, it was argued that the Rhodesian past is by no means seen as perfect. Its imperfections are rendered through a re-imagined childhood consciousness that enables the detached representation of colonial ills and injustices. The various uses of a re-imagined childhood consciousness were noted, and Godwin was seen as representing the Rhodesian past as a bane to white belonging in Zimbabwe. Godwin evinces disapproval about past white Rhodesian misjudgements which make it difficult for whites to belong to Zimbabwe with ease.

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Significantly, white Zimbabwean narratives remember the Rhodesian past despite persistent calls to forget this very past. By so doing, white narratives act as counter-narratives to hegemonic discourses about the past, thereby assuming the status of ethnic narratives (Palumbo-Piu). There is a conscious awareness among white writers that the Rhodesian past is never a foreign country; rather, it inhabits the Zimbabwean present, shaping and determining how contemporary subjects see themselves as belonging. By drawing on the concept of simultaneity, the chapter has argued that conventional notions of time fail to accommodate the reality of past and present coalescing and partaking in a continuous dialogue on white belonging or unbelonging in Zimbabwe.

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Chapter 5: White Zimbabwean narratives and the question of "whiteness"

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter looked at how the Rhodesian past is re-imagined in white Zimbabwean narratives. It was established that the past is never far from present articulation, hence the need to frame the discussion of the Rhodesian past in white narratives within the context of simultaneity: the cohabitation of seemingly opposite and conflictual temporalities, along with their divergent values. An analysis of Smith's *The Great Betrayal* suggested that the Rhodesian past exists as a condemnation of the Zimbabwean present. Smith's Rhodesian past is a successful and glorious past characterized by "superior" British imperial attributes. The reading of Godwin's *Mukiwa* suggested that whites do not in fact share identical modes of remembering Rhodesia. Godwin's narrative is able to depict the colonial past together with its imperfections through a re-imagined childhood consciousness construed as innocent and naïve. The Rhodesian past, for Godwin, is littered with misjudgments by whites, which make it difficult for whites to belong to Zimbabwe with any kind of ease. What emerged from the discussion is that the Rhodesian past is a constitutive element – in distinct and divergent ways – of white Zimbabwean narratives.

This chapter looks at inscriptions of whiteness in selected white Zimbabwean narratives. Through a reading of Andrea Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011), Alexander Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2003) and John Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher* (2009), the argument proposes that white Zimbabwean narratives situate whiteness within the context of change and marginality in Zimbabwe. The narratives under discussion deal with lived experiences of change marked by the transfer of power from white minority rule to black majority rule, in which political and social modes of imaging whiteness are enabled – or disabled. The section dealing with *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* examines how whiteness in the postcolonial Zimbabwean state is perceived through an outsider's gaze and results in what this thesis typifies as double consciousness. It is argued that the text depicts whites who are torn between two unreconciled streams of consciousness, a division that reinforces their sense of alienation from Zimbabwe. Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* represents whiteness as an ephemeral experience. The meaning of whiteness is mediated through perpetual physical movement as whites travel from one point to another. Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher*

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affords a rethinking of whiteness as an unstable form of identity contingent on historical and political factors. The text destabilizes whiteness as a sign and makes a transition from perceiving whiteness as an essence to an understanding of whiteness as a trace (De Kock "Call of the Wild") whose referentiality is multiple and often contradictory.

5.2. Understanding whiteness in Zimbabwe

Whiteness has assumed a privileged status in Western academia in the form of whiteness studies as instantiated in the works of Roediger (1991), Morrison (1992), Harris ("Whiteness as Property") and Frankenberg (1993), among others. In this sub-discipline, theories of whiteness emerge as conceptual models employed to unlock and explain the significance of whiteness in the present as well as the past by interrogating its assumptions and making it a visible object of scrutiny. Chief among the various trajectories in whiteness studies is the rendering of race as socially constructed (Wiegman 122). Broadly, "eliminativists" and "critical conservatists" are identified as the two strands informing the discipline. Eliminativists pursue the elimination of whiteness as a concept in order to undo its potential abuses of power. Critical conservatists, on the other hand, call for a modification of whiteness so that it can survive as an anti-racist category.

In these dominant streams of whiteness studies, largely based on studies of race in the United States and Europe, we gather that whiteness, domination and invisibility are intertwined (Giroux). Whiteness, we are told, "is an unrecognized and unacknowledged racial category" whose invisibility enables it to act as "the standard or norm against which all so called 'minorities' are measured" (Keating 905). Non-presence and invisibility are therefore the commonly mentioned attributes of whiteness in America (405). Manson explains that whiteness in the US is an absence because whites constitute a significant majority and therefore experience whiteness unconsciously, such as when they maintain mainly or only white friendships, send their children to white schools and vote for whites: "[W]hite identity becomes so pervasive as to be invisible because it is assumed" (30). The same would apply to Europe, where whites find themselves a majority immersed in things "white". In critical whiteness studies, the absence of visibility associated with whiteness is revealed as a function of hegemonic normalization; "non-

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whites" are visibly "other" only under a discursive and material regime that stigmatizes deviations from the supposed norm.

Although some of the assumptions informing mainstream understandings of whiteness apply in African contexts, there are also large differences between whiteness in Africa as against the West. Whiteness does indeed carry associations of dominance and assumed supremacy in Africa, as elsewhere; indeed, in Africa, whiteness and colonialism can fairly be seen as amounting to much the same thing. Colonialism in Africa, in its very essence, has been a triumphalist (though embattled) performance of whiteness. In African colonies, however, whites fail to achieve demographic superiority. Unlike colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and North America, white subjects in Africa come to know themselves as a distinct minority among greater numbers of black citizens. In addition, they see themselves as provincial subjects estranged from far-off metropolitan centres. Cut off from mainstream whiteness, where their dominance is more universally assumed and therefore less visible, they go in the opposite direction and make themselves *more* visible by consciously shouldering the "white man's burden" – civilizing and reforming "indolent" and "backward" blacks, as we know from any number of studies of colonialism in Africa. Away from a critical mass of whiteness, European settlers in Africa cannot afford the luxury of invisibility. Resultantly, they legislate whiteness into statutes and perpetuate the explicit racialization of the native.

Melissa Steyn, a pioneer of whiteness studies in South Africa, argues that "even before April 1994, white South Africans were acutely aware of their whiteness – that it was a position of privilege, the absolutely defining factor in their life chances" (63). In Rhodesia, whiteness was visible in land policies in which, similar to apartheid style, the materiality of social life was explicitly marked "white" and "non-white." Steyn calls for a break from dominant or mainstream understandings of whiteness by arguing that South African whiteness has peculiarities not necessarily shared by whiteness in other parts of the world. Apart from whiteness in South Africa being more conspicuous, Steyn argues, it consists of two dominant streams – British whiteness and Afrikaner whiteness – and these tributaries contend for space, manifesting themselves in divergent ways. Whiteness in South Africa, she adds, has also been forced to come to terms with "postmodern displacement" characterized by dramatic changes, not least of which was the loss of

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white colonial power (155). Of course, given the historical links between apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia, whiteness in this regional context is a shared African/colonial and postcolonial experience, but it is one that cannot unproblematically be equated with dominant global tropes of whiteness.

In Zimbabwe, as in much of Africa, whites find themselves in a minority and therefore cannot escape the reality of their racial marking. Unlike in Europe and America, whites in African countries are conspicuously marginal. This means that during and after colonialism, they find themselves demographically inferior, albeit benefiting from entrenched colonial privileges at the expense of the majority of black people. During colonialism, whites present themselves as normative human beings – they do not see their race as a mark of divergence, but as a natural substance. They take it as axiomatic that they are European (and incidentally white) and therefore the norm in societies where *others* are racially marked as different. In other words, they fail to see their whiteness lest they are called upon to reflect on their minority status. Yancy expresses this by stating that "whiteness fails to see itself as alien, […] refuses to risk finding itself in exile, in unfamiliar territory" (13). Even as whites work hard to normalize their whiteness by ignoring it, two corresponding responses govern their dealings with blacks. First and foremost, whites take every opportunity to racialize the other, making him or her feel that indeed they are the "wrong" colour. Fanon demonstrates this feeling in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008) where the black man finds himself interpellated by a white child: "Look! A Negro!" (91). From then on, Fanon explains, the black man sees himself through the eyes of the other, struggling to transcend the external boundaries imposed by the white man's gaze. Whites in the colony legislate against these racialized others because in their imaginary they are the wrong colour and, therefore, objects of the white man's consciousness.

Secondly, whites turn away from the racialized other in principle. They ascend their ivory towers, cocoons from where they no longer *see* the racialized black person. This is in principle because whites in the colony have to rely on the labour and services of the black man in every sphere of life. Hughes (*Whiteness in Zimbabwe*) notes how in Rhodesia and other colonies whites forge identities into and through the landscape. Explaining this as a choice to belong ecologically as opposed to socially, Hughes concludes that whites find themselves unable to

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relate meaningfully to blacks. These various dispositions all reinforce a process in which whiteness assumes normative "invisibility". Only those who are other to whiteness are racialized. This perspective has the advantage of enabling whites to partake in colonial privileges with a good conscience. Whiteness is not seen as tied to political and economic privileges; rather, blackness is seen as a stumbling block to advancement and the attainment of similar privileges. Whiteness, perceived thus as the norm, is an absence; something that needs no validation.

Nevertheless, the colonial situation frequently demands that whites become conscious of their whiteness. Although such enunciative moments are numerous, we can cite three significant ones that demonstrate white awareness of selves as whites during Rhodesia. UDI marks one such moment. Proclaimed in the spirit of preserving "civilization" and "Christianity", UDI was an entrenchment of whiteness in Southern Rhodesia. It should be understood that UDI was a direct response to transitions from white minority rule to black majority rule in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi), leading to the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Smith's Rhodesian Front Party was founded during this period to represent white interests against majority rule. The liberation war also foregrounded whiteness in Rhodesia, especially when the black nationalists began to make progress in their fight against colonialism. Whites found themselves confronted by a war that was largely fought along racial lines. This gave impetus to individual and group recognitions of whiteness, some of which led to the hardening of colonial attitudes, while others led to an exodus of whites who saw in their colour a target for nationalist anger. Finally, the transfer of power from white minority rule to black majority rule enabled whites to experience their whiteness anew. Independence signified the loss by whites of (control of) a country to blacks. Again, this event was followed by an exodus of whites and the various re-evaluations of whiteness by those who remained behind. Because whites were, and continue to be, a minority in Zimbabwe, whiteness could no longer fully enjoy the privilege afforded by its supposed invisibility as the invariant norm of public conduct.

In black-ruled Zimbabwe, whites, not accustomed to being referred to as "whites" in public discourse, find themselves interpellated as such. The Lancaster House Constitution, which marked the transfer of power from whites to blacks, recognized the former rulers as "whites"

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through a reservation of parliamentary seats marked thus. Not only was this an acknowledgement of a visible whiteness, it was also a construction of new forms of whiteness: as a threatened or marginal category. Because whites suddenly perceive themselves as threatened, their minority status now clearly demarcated, it becomes increasingly imperative that they be seen, and they see themselves, as whites. This is the period after 1980, when Smith's settler government loses political power and "Rhodesians" are transmuted into a "white tribe".[61] Whites, who had always racialized the other, now find themselves racialized in turn, and must re-articulate themselves as whites in defence of their (minority) status. Whites suddenly find their own "colour" looming large, breaking the metaphoric and literal walls of insulation erected during colonialism. This time around they try to impose an absence of whiteness by steering clear of public spaces and choosing to stay away from politics and public debate. In Zimbabwe, whites are constantly reminded that they are the wrong colour. They were and are on the wrong side of history, having benefitted wittingly and unwittingly from colonialism. All whites find themselves painted with the same brush of contempt and condemnation.

Suffice it to say, by modifying Sartre's assertion (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* 17), that the status of the white man in the postcolonial state is a "nervous condition." Vice asserts that "feeling uncomfortable is an inescapable part of white life" (326). The white subject is always conscious of his or her colour much as s/he might try to hide or escape from it. In the eyes of postcolonial black governments, whiteness is a text whose idioms include privilege, exploitation of others, unfair advantage and outright bigotry. In Zimbabwe, whites find themselves held in the gaze of the black man through nationalist film, nationalist literature and patriotic history (see Ranger), among several other cultural artefacts. If, for one reason or another, white subjects do not encounter such revisionist cultural products, there is always the official political narrative in the media, in national museums and monuments, and the frequent national holidays to jolt them into a conscious feeling of their (now conspicuous) whiteness. Self-reflection is almost unavoidable, as noted by Vice concerning the South African situation, where whites find themselves having to deal with the reality of being beneficiaries of white supremacist colonial policies that continue to keep them at a huge advantage even after the end of apartheid.

[61] For more on the transmutation of identity from Rhodesian to white tribe, see chapter three of this thesis on the discussion of Smith's *The Great Betrayal* (1997).

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By contrast, the depiction of whiteness in Zimbabwean narratives barely marks any such continuity at all. White Rhodesian settler narratives re-enforced the notion of invisible whiteness despite whiteness being a visible and dominant aspect of white Rhodesian political and cultural life. In Rhodesian literature, whiteness marks its presence, but never its visibility. We infer whiteness from the way in which settler narratives racialize the native. There is an unwillingness to acknowledge the white self in these narratives; a refusal, and at times an inability, to turn the gaze upon oneself. After 1980, especially, the white gaze becomes self-reflective. Writers increasingly draw attention to their whiteness or appropriate (African) whiteness as something they are awarded by blacks, such as occurs in Godwin's *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa*. White Zimbabwean narratives, as our analysis of Eppel's *Absent: The English Teacher* will show, demonstrate that whiteness is neither stable nor coherent. It is historically contingent. Among the options available to whites in postcolonial Zimbabwe is to Africanize or to go into the diaspora. As our analysis of Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* and Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* show, these options are not without their challenges.

5.3. Making whiteness visible in Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird*

Whiteness in *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* is not muted. The narrator, Elise, self-consciously describes herself at the beginning of the narrative as "the whitest of whites" (Eames 8). This awareness of self as "white" is a cross-reflexive gesture enabled by the narrator's ability to penetrate the black gaze, that is, the manner in which blacks perceive her. Sitting among black servants, Elise testifies: "I did not feel white" (8), but the black masculine gaze of the male workers passing the hut where the black women and Elise are gathered underlines her oddity; her whiteness. Though she does not feel white, she knows that it is her whiteness that attracts the black men to her. Describing this experience, Elise notes that "[black men] flicked me glances – who was this *white* kid sitting with the women" (8; emphasis added)? Interestingly, the women are not described as "black", but we gather through the racialization of Elise that they are "not white", the new visible colour. The term "white", characteristically, pervades the narrative, appearing in every chapter in reference to people and several other objects. Chapter two, for example, has twelve uses of the term "white", seven of which refer to people. The white Zimbabwean narrative, unlike the Rhodesian settler narrative, does not ignore the question of

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whiteness that populates the official narratives of belonging in Zimbabwe. Clearly, the notion of whiteness is one that the author deliberately foregrounds in her text. As already pointed out, in the postcolonial state, blacks racialize whites and resultantly whites cannot successfully claim invisibility. The following sections focus on how Eames articulates the black gaze, the effect of the black gaze on white individuals and the partial destabilization of this gaze.

5.3.1. The articulation of a "black" gaze

Mboti defines the gaze as "a specific way of looking at the world" (16). We gather from this definition that gazes are the property of individuals and groups from which images about the world are created. Following the era of Foucauldian studies, the term "gaze" has also become identified, particularly in postcolonial critique, with discursive frameworks of understanding under particular historical conditions (cf. the notion of a "panopticon" in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), as well as other examples in the Foucauldian oeuvre). The question of whether another's gaze is articulated, or not, is a political one. Regardless, each text gazes on the world in a certain way that communicates a particular manner of perceiving things. As a caution, Mboti further explains that "gazes are not objective – nor do they need to be. Gazes are part of communities of meaning that have no inherent validity, but must of necessity be contested, celebrated, or fought over" (69). The discussion that follows explores how the black gaze is articulated in a white Zimbabwe narrative and how this gaze structures specific forms of whiteness that are simultaneously conceded and contested by individual whites.

The articulation of another's gaze is a commitment to dialogue. It corresponds to Bakhtin's "sideways glance" where

> every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from outside itself − but it is not in any case concentrated simply on its own object. (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 32)

The sideways glance is characterized by the recognition and assimilation of an alien glance. Elise consistently keeps glancing at the black person in search of the other's perceptions of her.

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Without this outsider's gaze, Elise would not be able to see herself as complex and would thereby fail to re-invent herself according to the needs of a changing society.

Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* is unique in that it foregrounds whiteness as it is construed within a "black" gaze. Contrary to how the black gaze is construed in Rhodesian settler narratives, the black gaze in white Zimbabwean narratives is a complex one that is not reduced to an object of the author's consciousness. It is a gaze existing outside the author and the parameters of Rhodesian settler discourse. Whereas Rhodesian settler narratives articulate an objectified black gaze characterized by admiration and awe of whiteness – a mere projection of the white gaze − the black gaze of white Zimbabwean narratives is neither uniform nor predictable. Eames shows how Elise's consciousness and experience of whiteness is shaped by this outsider's gaze. Elise often sees beyond the surface of the black servants' smiles and laughter.

By tearing off her own veil, Elise is able to penetrate the veil of black servants who, according to her, gazed upon the whites with feelings of hate and anger. She begins to notice these emotions, which have always been present but hidden from the myopic gaze of the white man:

> I noticed how Saru would sometimes look at us with a cold, absent gaze, as if a mask had slipped for a moment. I noticed the way she smiled unapologetically after mum reprimanded her […] for some error. I listened to the songs that Tatenda was humming, and I was sure I could hear some pro-Mugabe tunes in there. (135)

She finds herself in an environment that forces her "to reveal and explain [herself] dialogically, to catch aspects of [herself] in others' consciousnesses" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 54). In other words, hers is not a narcissistic experience and consciousness of whiteness. The other's gaze, which Rhodesian settler narratives do not generally articulate, is given prominence in *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird*. The white Zimbabwean narrative in this instance complicates the black gaze by making it a subject in its own right. Eames humanizes blackness by exploring the nuances of the servants' gazes. She enables Elise to articulate this gaze in the context of her whiteness and how it is configured in narratives of nationhood and land reform.

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In the process of articulating a black gaze, Eames dismantles the colonial frameworks of seeing both whiteness and blackness. The author compels one to regard with suspicion white Rhodesia's all-knowing gaze, one that seems to influence the perceptions of adult characters in Elise's world. These are characters who continue, quite unselfconsciously, to perpetuate stereotypes about black people. There is indeed a conflict between what Elise sees from the viewpoint of the black gaze and what she has been conditioned to see. From the adults, Elise learns that "black people were like children, […] cunning and not to be trusted" (14). Furthermore, if whites had not come to Africa, blacks would still be living in "primitive" time with "no land for farming, […] no water, hospitals, roads, schools" (14). Whites on the other hand "were special, somehow. They did the important jobs, had nicer clothes and bigger houses. You never saw a poor white person. I thought we must have done something to earn all these nice things. It made sense" (14). Elise's childhood consciousness is thus shaped by a parochial white gaze, deeply rooted in colonial structures, which construes whiteness as civilized, privileged and deservingly superior. It is a way of seeing that engenders and justifies white treatment of blacks as inferior. However, Elise later recognizes the fault-lines of this gaze. It is a shrouded and myopic gaze that does not see beyond a self-induced form of whiteness.

The adults around Elise, still within a colonial mode of seeing, are convinced that black workers "love" and respect them. Together with Elise, for a brief moment, they believe that Mr Cooper, the easy-going white owner of Cooper Farm, will not lose the farm because the black workers at his farm consider him one of them. She ponders:

> I could not imagine anyone making Mr Cooper leave his farm. He was so fluent in Shona and so respected by his workers that he seemed almost superhuman. I could not imagine Lettuce and Jans and the other black foremen letting War Vets wander in and take over without a fight. (121)

These white characters are reluctant to penetrate the black gaze, finding comfort in recycling the myths of happy black peasants. They fail to see or intuit the actual emotions behind the façade of respectfulness because they cannot tear off the veils of their Rhodesian consciousness, or they

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choose not to. They exhibit what Pilossof has termed "affirmative parochialism", a condition in which whites strategically opt to remain within the narrow, the provincial and the insular.

The majority of white characters in the text believe that Mr Cooper has earned himself a place in Africa by endearing himself to black workers. He often jokes and laughs with them while speaking colloquial Shona. When the war veterans visit him in his office, he surprises them by his deep competence in Shona and the war veterans, who find it amusing, approve of Mr Cooper as if they have found one of their own. Mr Cooper's self-assured invincibility is a failure to eliminate the veil of white condescension that is necessary to penetrate the black gaze. Even the narrator's mother is convinced that Mr Cooper "is more Shona than the Shona" and that the blacks "love him" (Eames 226). Within two weeks after the war veterans' visit, Mr Cooper is viciously murdered by no less than a group of war veterans. Initially, Elise hopes Mr Cooper will survive, but she comes to the conclusion that the real issue is whiteness and nothing else. Steve, her stepfather, sums this up when he tells Elise's mother: "[Y]ou're the wrong bluddy [sic] colour. That's all that matters" (267).

The unfortunate fate of Mr Cooper also serves as a criticism against those in the Zimbabwean government, and Zimbabwean blacks in general, who refuse to see beyond race. When the government orders whites to surrender their foreign passports or lose their Zimbabwean citizenship, Mr Cooper is the only character who obliges, celebrating this step by adorning his house with colours of the Zimbabwean flag. Ironically, he dies, while whites who surrender Zimbabwean passports flee the country and survive. In Mr Cooper's case, the choice to become a Zimbabwean turns out to be a form of self-induced confinement.

The black gaze in *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* is multilayered. It consists of the various perspectives of the government, the media, the war veterans, random black people that Elise comes across, servants, friends and teachers. The "official" gaze, what one might otherwise describe as an officially sanctioned, predisposed outlook on things, is the deliberate result of the text's incorporation of the voices of state media and President Mugabe. Elise and her family find themselves relying heavily on television to understand how their whiteness is construed in official circles. It is on television that the steady, overt gaze of President Mugabe is revealed

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through the veiled and overt threats he makes against whites. Describing the effect this gaze has on whites, Elise says:

> The news had become a fearful, hated ritual. When we heard the familiar drumbeat, we dropped what we were doing and went into the lounge. We did not sit to watch the news; we stood with arms crossed and our feet planted firmly on the ground, facing it. What was he saying about us today? What does this mean? […] I watched him yell at the camera. The television's sound was muted, but I still felt each word landing on me like a physical blow. (Eames 184)

This particular gaze lends the text historical specificity because state media in Zimbabwe did play a significant role in reconfiguring whiteness, especially during the period of land reform. That the news had become a "ritual" shows the involuntary dependence whites suddenly have on an outsider's gaze and how this gaze renders them impotent. Elise forces herself to understand Mugabe's outlook as it appears via television. She stares at the screen, "leaning in so close that the television image disintegrated into coloured dots of light" in order "to see what was going on in his head" (Eames 185). The official gaze, in particular, determines future plans and actions. The narcissist gaze of the Rhodesian past is no longer tenable.

The official gaze is just one among several others. The black gaze in white Zimbabwean narratives is a complex kaleidoscope of perspectives. It is multiple, contradictory and unstable. It constitutes a liminal gaze, one that is never entirely accommodating or completely alienating. It is always in the process of unfolding, sometimes veiled and at other times explicit. We see variations in the way whiteness is constructed through the gaze of different black characters in the text. Although the black men consider Elise out of place, she is partially accommodated among the black female servants in Chinhoyi. In particular, her nanny Beauty makes her feel one with the blacks to the extent that Elise claims her as "my real Mum" (Eames 36). Beauty initiates Elise into black African ways by teaching her the indigenous language of Shona, telling her about the importance of totems, taking her to a traditional healer and making her part of a black circle of women. Yet Beauty does not entirely see past Elise's whiteness. Despite Elise's attempts to embrace black African spirituality and participate in Shona traditional healing,

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Beauty explicitly tells her "black people's medicine does not work on white people" (23), sentiments that are later echoed by Saru, Elise's maid at Mr Cooper's farm (147). Still, Elise finds comfort in this partial acceptance.

When the family relocates to Mr Cooper's farm in Harare, Elise finds herself in new territory where "the earth [is] a different colour from Chinhoyi – *white* and powdery" (Eames 15; emphasis added). It is not long before she hears the loerie, "the Go-Away bird" (47), singing from a tree on Mr Cooper's farm. It is as if Elise anticipates the magnification of her whiteness that is to follow. Already, the earth and the bird illuminate her whiteness. Her sense of white alienation is quickly reinforced by the black men she finds drinking beer near the farm gate when she wants to run away from Mr Cooper's farm. The men tease her and elicit an offensive "*Voertsek*"[62] from Elise, who immediately finds her whiteness becoming the target of the men's reproach as the rhetorical question, "you think you clever, white girl" (53), suggests. Her behaviour cannot escape the bane of whiteness that the men use to hem her in. Elise is suddenly conscious of herself as "a little rich white girl" (53).

If this incident does not cement Elise's sense of alienation, the hostile response she gets from the black maids at Mr Cooper's farm certainly does. After trying to blend in as she has been used to doing among Beauty's co-maids at Chinhoyi, one of the maids shouts "*Voertsek*" and chases her away. Elise testifies: "I was acutely aware of my whiteness. I backed away" (Eames 57). It is interesting to note that the two responses that emerge from the use of "*Voertsek*" in the two incidents underline the shift in racial subjectivities in the postcolonial period. The term, which belongs to a repertoire of terms that whites used to racialize black people during colonialism, fails to achieve this effect on the black men at the farm gate. They refuse to be hailed (to use an Althusserian idiom) as racially inferior. Paradoxically, when the term is deployed against Elise, she becomes acutely aware of her racialization. She is successfully hailed as an outsider.

Because of the varied and conflicting responses Elise gets from blacks, she periodically oscillates between what we might call white visibility and invisibility. Standing next to Jonah's children

[62] *Voertsek* is an Afrikaans expression of dismissal or rejection. In Zimbabwe its most accepted use is in admonishing a dog.

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(Jonah is one of Mr Cooper's black servants), Elise feels "colourless" (Eames 67). The moment Jonah finds her at his place, with his children, he makes it known that she is not welcome there. With Cephas, the farm guard who rescues her from the men at the farm gate, Elise is oblivious of her whiteness. She considers him a friend who "wouldn't leave without saying goodbye" (198) when she hears that he has suddenly disappeared from work. When, after a diligent search, she finds him in a ZANU PF camp at the outskirts of the farm, the recognition she gets from him is unmistaken: "Bluddy white kid" (201). This recognition of whiteness is accompanied by a gesture of disgust as Cephas spits at Elise's feet and tells her to "[b]ugger off" (202). It is Jonah, whose gaze she finds cold and hostile, and Cephas, whose roundabout attitude shocks her, who make Elise revise her received "knowledge" of the black gaze. She experiences the feeling of looking at one's own face with "an alien glance" or "with the eyes of the other" (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 235).

The responses of whites to the black gaze are manifold. Whites are forced to tread warily, knowing that, following the overthrow of white rule, they are visibly subject to a critical black gaze. They are forced to prove that they are "proper white Zimbabweans, not leftover Rhodies" (Eames 132). An invitation to tea is immediately sent to one of the black foremen by Steve (her stepfather) and this meeting of races as "equals" serves only to illuminate the deep-seated prejudices that prevent whites from seeing themselves as impediments to racial unity. Not only does an invitation to the white man's place reinforce the black man's inferiority, it also reveals white condescension. At a time when blacks are clamouring for land, whites are offering them tea. Other attempts to sanitize themselves prove equally unsuccessful. Not only do they find the black world alien, but the black gaze refuses to see them as anything other than white. Elise laments: "We were whites and nothing else. We did not have lives outside of our whiteness" (203). The black gaze in Eames' narrative, despite its multiplicity, continuously returns to the recognition of whiteness as a permanent condition that must now be endured – indeed suffered – by whites. In what is a clear reversal of colonial race relations, the white man finds himself "overdetermined from without" (Fanon, *Black Skin* 116). As Bhabha would add of the generality of subjects of modernity, the white man in the postcolonial state where he finds himself among the minority "is both 'overlooked' − in the double sense of social surveillance and psychic

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disavowal − and, at the same time, overdetermined – psychically projected, made stereotypical and symptomatic" (*The Location of Culture* 236).

The black gaze through which whiteness is construed and constituted is unstable, multiple and contradictory. Elise's failure to understand her place or who she is in Zimbabwe is a direct result of the ambivalence that characterizes the black gaze through which her whiteness is framed. So Elise treads the liminal places, the in-between places of white identity in Zimbabwe, never fully accommodated or fully alienated. She thus finds herself occupying the margins of social life in Zimbabwe. Having endeared herself successfully to Kurai, her black friend, Elise is unmindful of her whiteness until Kurai denies her the liberty to criticize black rulers by stating that she would rather have a black ruler failing to govern "than some White doing any kind of job" (Eames 196). Even blacks have a duality with which whites struggle to relate. The Kurai who talks about chart music, clothes and cars is within Elise's comprehension, whereas the Kurai who is immersed in African rural life makes Elise feel "whiter than snow" (87). Kurai seems to be comfortable in her duality, but the black gaze denies Elise this same double perspective. She muses:

> I thought I was one of them, almost. I was not White. Not really. Was I? I thought of Beauty, all those years ago. How could I possibly grow up with two mothers, one black and one white, and still be just a White? (218)

Apart from her dealings with Kurai, Elise is aware of a dual identity, something that she embraces. She associates with the black community and shows an acute awareness of her whiteness. When her mother warns her not to fraternize with blacks at the servants' quarters, she splits her loyalties into "the Elise who sat quietly and did her homework in the white house at the top of the hill" and "the Elise who played with the workers' children, threw stones at pigeons and helped pluck the chickens for supper" (Eames 8). Clearly, Eames questions the hypocrisy of a postcolonial state that demands whites should un-white themselves while simultaneously denying them a chance of maintaining a double identity. When it comes to ambivalence in this regard, only blacks seem to be allowed lenience.

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The black gaze has a significant consequence in the lives of whites. Its net effect is a state of double consciousness. Double consciousness is defined as "[the] sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois 2). It is a feeling of "two-ness" marked by the sensation of "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals" (Du Bois 2). Fanon explains this as an experience of operating with "two systems of reference" (*Black Skin* 90). Although both Du Bois and Fanon have blacks in mind, double consciousness is something anyone can experience. Bakhtin implicitly validates this point when he says "[c]onsciousness is in essence multiple" (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 288). Existence, like the life of language, is polyglot and thus "serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 272).

In such circumstances, whiteness finds itself subject to the same processes of unification and disunification that characterize the lives of blacks in colonial conditions. Whites find themselves construed by a centripetal outsider gaze, and they are forced to negotiate their identities through conflicting perceptions that are seen as irreconcilable. On the one side there is a Zimbabwean identity that is perceived univocally as African. This Zimbabwean identity is constructed as something attainable only by blacks. On the other hand there is whiteness, an identity that carries political and cultural baggage that is inseparable from its Rhodesian past, making whites the very antithesis of the black nationalist (or patriotic) Zimbabwean. Whites find their whiteness a bane, a stigmatizing factor that is flagged at every opportunity in the postcolonial state. Their whiteness is something that is ever-present, especially in a postcolonial state in which whites find themselves a conspicuous minority. They cannot abandon this heritage, yet it is this same whiteness that is used to destabilize their claims to be (or become) Zimbabwean.

Whites find themselves trying to forge identities that balance their whiteness and their Zimbabweanness; that is, they inhabit the liminal or third space which, according to Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*), combines elements from both worlds. In this regard whites are no longer absolutely of the black or the white world. They occupy the borderline, the interstitial spaces where the two worlds meet. In Coetzee's terms, they are "no longer European, not yet African" (11). Whites find themselves burdened with a split identity and the way they respond to this

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rupture differs from one place to the other. For Black, white double consciousness is in fact redemptive. He concludes that "when whites see themselves as white from the perspectives of people of colour, they can see their place in the world in a whole new way that they did not even realize had been closed off to them" (399).

Whites, it should be added, are not the passive objects of a black gaze. They challenge the notions of whiteness that are associated with this black gaze. For example, the official narrative of whiteness that frames whites as aliens is challenged at every turn by drawing attention to alternative idioms of belonging besides race. Among these are arguments pertaining to being born in Zimbabwe, one's affinity to the landscape, ability to blend among black Zimbabweans, surrendering one's foreign passport and commitment to one's country. The narrator exasperatedly asks: "How long did we have to be here before we were properly Zimbabwean?" (Eames 131). Eames argues that whites have a legitimate case for belonging in Zimbabwe. She remains sceptical of an identity that hinges solely on one's colour. She suggests that people can be shaped by other markers that are not entirely, or only, racial.

Further, Eames destabilizes notions of whiteness that derive from both white and black perspectives. Whiteness is posited as a psychological factor, as well as a social construct, delivering mixed fortunes. As the following passage demonstrates, Eames questions the assumptions of white superiority and the limitations of describing people as "white". The narrator argues:

> In reality no one was really white (white like blank paper, or clean washing); people were pink, sunburnt red, sallow or brown. White was a state of mind. White was being shunted hurriedly to the front of a queue, watched by a hundred resentful eyes. White was money, swimming pools, two cars. It was glow-in-the-dark, marking you once on a black street. All those poems we learned at school about skin fair as snow, fair as petals or milk or cream, did not take into account – the lack of pigment, the sickly, greenish tinge that white skin could have, the way it made us ghosts in a vivid country. (127-28)

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Whiteness, in this regard, is a question of perception. People are bound to differ on what "whiteness" is, depending on various ideological factors. The term signifies conflicting and unreconciled attributes. When Elise almost collides with a black child while riding her bicycle, the black father rejects her apology and tells her to "go back to Britain" (Eames 137). Yet, when she accompanies Kurai to get a driver's licence, they are assisted in jumping the queue by officials precisely because she is white. Based on these two incidents, Elise concludes that her skin is simultaneously an affirmative and a negative force. As Eppel's *Absent: The English Teacher* would suggest, whiteness is a paradox. Eames refuses to conflate whiteness and white people, although this refusal is something that she does not fully develop quite to the same extent as Eppel.

Moreover, Eames demonstrates that white people are not uniform. This is clearly a response to the manner in which the black gaze, the official view in particular, homogenizes whites and denies them individuality. She notes that "there were different kinds of whites: the Afrikaans, the British whites, and the Rhodies" (71). She adds "poor whites" to the list as a way of further fracturing the category "white". This suggestion of multiple forms of whiteness is important in highlighting some of the shortcomings of the Zimbabwean black (nationalist) discourse on whiteness, or its "gaze". This is a discourse that repeats colonial modes of perceiving and representing otherness as undifferentiated. In other words, it is a totalizing discourse that robs individual white subjects of their (self-evident) internal as well as social senses of differentiation. It is, in fact, no different from Steve's colonialist gaze, which concludes that all blacks "look alike". Elise is convinced that "he could not look into each face […] and say the same" (93). The tendency to homogenize is therefore a refusal to look into the other's face, a refusal to assimilate the outsider's gaze.

While whites discursively challenge the black gaze and the stereotypes that accompany it, they do not have the material means through which they can launch sustained resistance against the ways in which they are interpellated. As a result, some whites find themselves succumbing to this identity, this pigeon-hole created for them, while others flee the country. At the level of literature, white writing nevertheless writes against the grain of the self-evident myths about whiteness created within such a black gaze, such a discourse of whiteness. For example, Eames

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insists on a white Zimbabwean identity despite everything to the contrary upon which the black gaze insists: "I was a real Zimbabwean, despite my skin" (137). This assertiveness is a response that the text sustains until Elise eventually has to flee the country for Europe. She proclaims: "[A]lthough I was white and bred for cold, I was as African as the chittering mongoose that lives in a world of snakes. […] I did not think I could live anywhere else" (297). At this point, right at the end of the novel, Eames claims a transnational identity, whose basic mark is movement.

5.4. Whiteness as an ephemeral experience in Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*

In Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* − whose title's contradiction centres on the notion of movement − whiteness traverses social borders and national boundaries as seen in the movements that occur in the lives of the narrator's family, who move from one farm to the next within Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, and from one country to another. These movements destabilize any possibility of white boundedness. Instead, identities refuse to be fixed in any one place but are constantly negotiated and re-negotiated across new borders. White movement occurs at various levels in the text. It is both internal and external, and it is literal as well as metaphorical. An ephemeral experience, whiteness is always deferred, its meaning never fully manifesting itself in any coherent manner. The old and new, the familiar and the strange, are held in a kind of paradoxical equipoise at both ends of the journey. It is imperative in this regard to follow Paul Gilroy, who considers "seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation" (19) in our understanding of whiteness. To see whiteness as a process of "movement and mediation", something Fuller emphasizes, frees the concept from being essentialized and reified within its most alienating vectors.

Fuller does not claim a bounded identity. She carefully avoids the term "belong", preferring to use a more neutral term "live" and claiming a transnational identity as opposed to a national one when she confronts the questions "what are you?" and "where are you from originally?" (10):

> I say, "I'm African." But not black.
> And I say, "I was born in England," by mistake.
> But, "I have lived in Rhodesia (which is now Zimbabwe) and in Malawi (which used to be Nyasaland) and in Zambia (which used to be Northern Rhodesia)."

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> And I add, "Now I live in America," through marriage.
> And (full disclosure), "But my parents were born of Scottish and English parents."
> What does that make me? (10-11)

Fuller's narrative commences by laying a challenge at the feet of real and imagined interlocutors about the fluidity of white identities in Africa. In this challenge lies what Bakhtin terms "a loophole" that "creates a special type of fictive ultimate word about oneself with an unclosed tone to it, obtrusively peering into the other's eyes and demanding from the other a sincere refutation" (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 234). A loophole is seen as one's retention of unfinalizability, the acceptance of one's ambiguity and elusiveness. "In order to break through to his self," Bakhtin explains, "the hero must travel a very long road" (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 234). Whiteness in *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* is not self-evident. It is elusive to both characters and reader, both of whom are forced to conceive it through the motif of movement. Instead of emphasizing origins, the narrative guides us towards and through routes.

In the reading of Fuller's narrative, we are therefore compelled to return to the metaphors of Deleuze and Guattari by suggesting that whiteness is a rhizomatic experience because it has the ability "to move between things, establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings" (25). It is interesting, and quite pragmatic, that Fuller does not assume any one national identity out of the seven nations (if we count Rhodesia and Zimbabwe as two separate entities) that have shaped her subjectivity. She embraces her multiple and conflicting heritages without feeling compelled to address her sentiments or loyalties towards a single nation. Her birth is "accidentally" English because it occurs when her parents leave Rhodesia in order to grieve the death of their son Adrian, who dies during infancy. There is nothing cultural or predetermined about this. The places where she has lived are several and are all equally contingent.

The multiple identifications in Fuller's narrative suggest that her attachments and emotions are decentred and provisional. She has embraced the reality of perpetual movement. In the narrative itself, whiteness simultaneously inhabits multiple places. The narrator's characterization that Karoi, one of the places her family lives in Rhodesia, "always felt like a train station platform, a

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flat place from which we hoped to leave at any moment for somewhere more interesting and picturesque" (Fuller 48), is to some extent befitting of every place she has ever been to. Even Robandi farm, which the narrator's mother announces as "home" (51), does not fully claim the Fullers. It is exposed to nationalist attacks from Mozambique, carries with it doleful memories of loss, and is eventually taken away by the Zimbabwean government. When the Fullers leave it, they create new loyalties and commit themselves to new places. The farm in Mkushi, Zambia, where the Fullers later live, is equally referred to as "home" (287). This does not mean places lived in have no bearing on one's identity at all. What Fuller highlights is that no one place is the single and absolute determinant of one's identity. Homes are also depicted as provisional and temporary. Speaking of migrants in general, Glick-Schiller et al. concede that "while some migrants identify more with one society than the other, the majority seem to maintain several identities that link them simultaneously to more than one nation" (11).

For colonial whites, just as much as for the blacks depicted in Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, movement is a constitutive trope through which one's race-bound identity – here, whiteness – is understood as unstable and fluid. This idea is consistent with the make-up of erstwhile Rhodesian society, which was by its very nature a community of immigrants. At various stages in the life of the colony, whites were always coming in and going out again. The migratory nature of white Rhodesia is documented by Crush and Tevera, who provide statistics on the several movements in and out of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe from the 1920s to the period of land reform in the 2000s. One can cite landmark periods that governed more particular sets of movement in and out of Rhodesia, such as the early settlements by the pioneer column, the two World Wars, the great depression, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, the nationalist war, independence and the period of land reform. It is a paradox that for a country thought of as a settler colony, whites never really settled. They remained a migrant community. Fuller's text enables us to understand this side of whiteness, to read it as something not fixed to geographical place, but transcending geography, territorial loyalties and set boundaries.

White Zimbabwean narratives are replete with white characters who are on the move owing to circumstances that are both personal and national. In *Mukiwa* (1996), the narrator's sense of estrangement from Africa leads to back-and-forth movements involving England, Rhodesia,

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Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. In *The Last Resort* (2009), Douglas confesses: "I was a sojourner, a global traveler: at the age of thirty-four I had already lived in three countries – Zimbabwe, South Africa, the UK – and held two passports. I barely felt Zimbabwean" (Rogers 19). He rhetorically asks: "Where did I belong?" (19). Not all the movements are external. White characters often move from one farm to another, such as happens to Elise's family in *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* and Harry in *Jambanja* (2008). Movement is therefore a major trope in white narratives, and with it one derives an understanding of whiteness as unstable, fluid, provisional and fractured.

As whites move from one farm to another, identities are also on the move. In *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird*, Elise realizes that she must adjust to the fact that black workers elsewhere do not accommodate her as did the servants at Chinhoyi. At her new school she experiences a degree of culture shock, just as Godwin, in *Mukiwa*, does when he finds himself at the multicultural school of St Georges for the first time. In these instances, both characters are forced to re-evaluate their notions of whiteness as superior when they encounter blacks whose conduct contradicts their received and assumed knowledge about black people. Movement can therefore be an empowering experience, though Harris contends that such shuttling exacerbates and underlines one's displacement:

> The Fuller family's movement from one farm to another exacerbates [their] sense of displacement and alienation. The land that they farm is never a source of stability for them since they are constantly uprooted; moving from Karoi to the Burma Valley farm called Robandi, from Robandi to Devuli, from Devuli to a tobacco farm in Malawi, and from Malawi to Zambia. […] their relationship with the land becomes increasingly transitory. ("Writing Home" 115)

Movement does not therefore leave the concept of whiteness intact or stable, just as it does not offer any sense of stability or national belonging. Of necessity, it renders whiteness fractured and destabilized.

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In *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, personal and national traumas combine to send the story's white protagonists back on the road so that they are never settled in one place for a very long time; paradoxically, however, these traumas, and the migrations to which they lead, strengthen rather than weaken their claims to an African identity. The deaths of the three Fuller babies are entangled with the family's losses of land (Harris, "Writing Home" 115). Incidentally, each death results in a deliberate physical move in search of healing and an increased sense of attachment to the African land that has claimed the children's lives. After the death of the first child, the family leaves Rhodesia for England, where they do not stay for long owing to a sense of displacement and alienation from the site of their personal loss. It is during this period that Bobo, the narrator, experiences her "accidental" English birth. The journey back to Rhodesia is interpreted as a return to home. Following the death of the second baby, which heralds the loss of Robandi farm, the Fullers take off in their car and drive "recklessly through war-ravaged Rhodesia" without any particular destination in mind (Fuller 98). The death of the third child during childbirth is entangled with national trauma. The narrator's mother blames the complications she has with the pregnancy on "the stress of independence" (168), translated as losing the nationalist war and losing Robandi farm to the new government. The deaths of the Fuller babies and the loss of land and white privilege stimulate the Fullers' need to re-invent themselves through movement.

The transnational condition of whiteness is a recurring response to the inability of whites to find a stable residence in African nations. In Zimbabwe, this instability has both personal and, more significantly, political origins. Whites are either displaced (such as during land reform) or they flee into exile (such as during the war, at independence and again during land reform). Despite their insistence on a Zimbabwean identity, Elise's family is eventually forced to flee the country after the murder of Mr Cooper (Eames). In *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, the attainment of independence by blacks is immediately followed by a white exodus, a response Fuller finds characteristic of white Afrikaners whose children are the first to leave Bobo's white-only school. Their move has "a sense of history" that says "*we've done this before and we'll do it again*" (144; emphasis in original). For these whites, history is merely being re-enacted and in order to capture this idea, Fuller labels the new exodus back south "the little trek" (144). Before long,

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however, "English Rhodesians" also join the movement from Zimbabwe (144). Mobility is rendered as an integral aspect of white existence.

Although the Fullers do not immediately leave Zimbabwe, their fate as part of a migrant white culture is sealed when they lose their farm through the Zimbabwean government's land redistribution programme, seen as a programme of black appeasement. Before leaving for Malawi, they briefly stay at Devuli ranch, with little regard for how long they will stay. Asked about the family's future after the one-year period they have agreed upon with the owners of the ranch, Bobo's father nonchalantly says: "[W]e'll cross that river when we get to it" (Fuller 162). As if to capture the tentative and tumultuous nature of such a commitment, the narrator immediately tells us that "the Turgwe, Save, and Devure rivers [which border Devuli Ranch] flood once or twice each year, each flood within a few weeks of the last" (162). Images of "water gushing", "roaring", "hollow ground", "floating carcasses", "washed-away trees" (162-63), stillness, distension and sluggishness accompany the description of the river floods.

The river, a trope reminiscent of Bhabha's (*The Location of Culture* 4) "stairwell", is simultaneously characterized by turbulence and tranquility, movement and calmness. Crossing the river emphasizes the destabilization that arises from a to-and-fro kind of identity. Bhabha explains: "The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities" (*The Location of Culture* 4). The identities of the Fullers remain works in progress, ever-emergent and unfinished. Characteristically, every place they have stayed in has proved to be liminal. The project of rehabilitation is an ongoing exercise for the family, who are in pursuit of healing from personal and national trauma.

The narrative is an affirmation that transnational experience fosters change and reveals the mutability of (here, white) identity. The Fullers of Rhodesia are not the Fullers we encounter in Malawi and Zambia. In Malawi, a government-imposed spy, masquerading as a servant, clearly tells them "this is not Rhodesia" (Fuller 245), the insinuation being that their position as whites has diminished. They no longer have the rights and privileges that whiteness in Rhodesia used to guarantee them. Their impotence is underlined in this incident involving the "servant", whom

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they have to hire simply because "it is required", ostensibly by the government (244). The Fullers cannot afford to act as if they are still a "ruling colour".

One is no longer convinced of the mother's claims that the Fullers, descendants of European stock, are a superior breed. In Malawi they are "mostly white and alone, an isolated island in a pressing, restless, relentless sea of Malawians" (Fuller 243). In Rhodesia, and partly Zimbabwe, they are part of a community of whites who believe in their own superiority. In addition to the illnesses they succumb to and the deaths of all their three dogs, the narrator is certain that "death by lack of social contact" (242) will prevail in Malawi. On top of the isolation, foreigners are constantly under government surveillance and are susceptible to immediate and permanent expulsion from Malawi for failing to concede "the [black] Malawian's superiority over all other races in the country [including] Europeans who had been in Malawi for generations, and who held Malawian passports" (231).

Serioes Farm in Zambia, which is their next destination, "seems the most logical place for [the] family to stop. And mend" (Fuller 264). This description reminds one of Karoi, Zimbabwe, which similarly feels like a station from which one's journey is likely to continue. After the experiences of illness, death, isolation and government surveillance in Malawi, the Fullers need what Zambia can offer to recuperate and reinvent themselves. The location of the farm on which they work provides them with an opportunity to reconnect with other white and non-white foreigners, including Yugoslavs, Afrikaners, Englishmen, Indians, Greeks, Czechs and "ex-Rhodesians" such as the workshop manager Gordon; this is an experience Bhabha would call "DissemiNation":

> that moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering. Gatherings of exiles and *émigrés* and refugees; gathering on the edge of "foreign" cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centres; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of

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> underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present. (*The Location of Culture* 139)

In this instance whiteness defies locality. Whites find themselves spread across nations in several diasporic communities, places where the question of stability and homogeneity becomes muted. Whiteness cannot be seen as coherent. It finds itself hybridized, deformed and less centered than in the guise (or garb) of its earlier assumptions such as at the all-white Rhodesian schools, before the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe. It opens up to other identities, cultures and subjects.

Beside these physical movements, other forms of mobility characterize colonial and postcolonial societies. Fanon (*A Dying Colonialism* 144) observes:

> Colonial society is a mobile society, poorly structured, and the European, even when he is a technician, always assumes a certain degree of polyvalence. In the heart of every European in the colonies there slumbers a man of energy, a pioneer, an adventurer. Not even the civil servant transferred for two years to a colonial territory fails to feel himself psychologically changed in certain respects.

Following Fanon, we may add that "the colonial [and postcolonial] society is in perpetual movement" (*A Dying Colonialism* 134). The movement Fanon refers to is not just a concern with people moving from one place to another, but with how identities are continuously shaken and destabilized. Whites do not immerse themselves within structured and stable environments where their whiteness is left intact. Despite her sense of superiority in earlier contacts with blacks, Bobo finds herself compelled to see beyond the veil of Rhodesian whiteness within which she has been cocooned for so long. Having been used to an insulated white existence, she finds herself at a school where whites are a minority. She even recognizes herself as "the *wrong* color" (Fuller 10; emphasis in original).

The narrator captures this destabilization of whiteness from being "a ruling color" (Fuller 30) to a "wrong colour" (10) thus:

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> To begin with, before Independence, I am at school with white children only. "A" schools, they are called: superior schools with the best teachers and facilities. The black children go to "C" schools. In-between children who are neither black nor white (Indian or a mixture of races) go to "B" schools.
>
> The Indians and coloureds (who are neither completely this nor that) and blacks are allowed into my school the year I turn eleven, when the war is over. The blacks laugh at me when they see me stripped naked after swimming or tennis, when my shoulders and arms are angry sunburnt red.
>
> "Argh! I smell roasting pork!" they shriek.
>
> "Who fried the bacon?" (9)

Bobo's acute sense of whiteness is magnified through movement, both physical and metaphorical. It is when the majority of whites at her school leave that she finds herself standing out among the blacks, one of five white pupils among "two hundred African children who speak to one another in Shona – a language [whites] don't understand – [and] play games that exclude [whites and], who don't have to listen to a word [whites] say" (Fuller 146). The other movement, related to the first, is the transfer of power from whites to blacks and the attendant compulsion to see whiteness through the eyes of blacks, as the discussion of Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* has demonstrated.

At the all-white school, whiteness appears invisible and compact. It appears to be a monolithic, homogeneous phenomenon. Once independence is declared, we see whiteness fracturing and becoming vulnerable to dissemination. The all-white school is no longer just an all-white school, but comprises Afrikaner and European whites, people whose histories and futures of movement are different and uncoordinated. The Afrikaners go mainly south in what appears to be a reverse movement of the great trek. Other whites go to Canada, Australia, Britain, America, Malawi, Zambia and a host of other African countries. Rather than seeing whiteness as rooted or foundational, we instead witness a proliferation of routes, all of which destabilize notions of a stable (and hence authoritative) whiteness in multiple ways.

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Robandi farm has the potential to provide the Fullers with the illusion of stability. They stay on this farm longer than in any other place in Rhodesia, and they almost forget that the farm is not owned but rented. However, stability is shown to be illusory. The environment external to them is acutely mobile. The nationalist war moves the country in alternative trajectories that displace whiteness from its privileged site of seeming stability. The nationalist war culminates in independence which in Zimbabwe marks a movement from whiteness (white minority rule) to blackness (black majority rule); a new hierarchical structure in which blacks dominate whites politically. With this transition, whiteness is decisively displaced. It is like being in a moving vehicle. As Farber would observe, "anchors which previously held whiteness in place are, arguably, shifting or have been removed resulting in a sense of displacement for those 'white Africans' who staked much of their identity on their privileged whiteness" (1). The Fullers become aware of white displacement when black soldiers arrive at their farmhouse following an incident in which the narrator's mother takes action against squatters who have invaded Robandi farms, trampling their crops with her horse and insulting them in a fit of colonial invective. The soldiers categorically tell the Fullers: "This is Zimbabwe now. You can't just do as you please from now" (Fuller 159).

Movements of all kinds shift and shake up the political and cultural precepts on which whiteness is built. Rhodesian whiteness was built around notions of superiority and privilege at the centre. White is described as "a ruling color in Rhodesia" (Fuller 30) but the Fullers are poor whites and they are not so much a ruling colour when it comes to their insecurity, manifesting as it does largely through their numerous dislocations and relocations. Like the Fuller children buried in unmarked graves who "float and hover, un-pressed-down" (210), the Fullers are without fixed roots. As a family they have moved from one farm to another within Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, before relocating to other African countries. Besides the places she has been to with her family, Bobo has also been to Canada, Scotland and America for personal reasons. These movements create a new topography of white identity, one that is not necessarily a continuation of former identities linked to places left behind.

Fuller's *Don't Let's go to the Dogs Tonight* therefore shows us that whiteness is anything but bounded. On the contrary, it is in constant flux. This interstitial space of whiteness "allows for

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the emergence of excessive and differential meanings of 'belonging' […] where double consciousness is not synthetically – dialectically – 'resolved,' but rather enables an internal critique while suspending the mundane question of assimilation" (Dayal 47). It is not something confined within fixed boundaries from which individuals cannot escape. Whiteness does not have very deep roots, especially in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Its history, its origins, are scattered, diverse and multiple, enabling white individuals to boast of multiple heritages that cannot be ignored. The effect of having such a multiplicity of heritages is quite varied. On the one hand it weakens whites' claims to belonging in Zimbabwe. It is a condition that reveals whites as subjects without fixed loyalties. On the other hand, it enables an empowering transnational experience that renders the individual a "free" agent. So when Fuller declares "my soul has no home. I am neither African nor English nor am I of the sea" (36), we are immediately careful to recognize the ambiguity of her statement.

Whites in this regard emerge as people who cannot make absolute claims to particular places in southern Africa. Rather, their lives are spread across several locales, places they claim equally on various levels. In addition, the destiny of whiteness is shown as not being confined to any one nation-state. Whites are able to entertain a transnational identity, claiming an African identity while living in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe, such as occurs in Fuller's case, who insists on an African identity free of limitations imposed by any one nation-state. Consistent with our discussion of place in chapter three, Fuller inscribes her whiteness into Africa, as opposed to the nation-state, as a way of coming to terms with the ephemeral experience of whiteness. While she embraces her multiple heritages, which include European pasts, she insists on her Africanness while simultaneously remaining suspicious of such an identity in view of the vastness and varied nature of the continent. She also recognizes the ambivalence that her whiteness provokes in this regard, but nevertheless inscribes her identity in transnational space when she says: "I appreciated that we, as whites, could not own a piece of Africa, but I knew, with startling clarity, that Africa owned me" (Fuller 306). The claims that she is not an African (36) are therefore arguably reflections of the attitudes of others and not her own. She merely projects the responses of blacks towards her whiteness.

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5.5. From "whiteness" to "whiteliness" in Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher*

We have already pointed out that whiteness is neither a condition of self-containment nor one of stability, despite its pretensions in colonial and neocolonial contexts to universality. Rather, whiteness is naked to an outsider gaze and characterized by an ineluctable nomadism, both in terms of physical as well as conceptual shuttling. To these characteristics we need to add another: whiteness as absence. In this instance movement occurs at the level of the sign, where the referentiality of whiteness experiences a rupture. Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher* is simultaneously an affirmation and negation of whiteness. It explodes the concept through paradox, described by its white protagonist George as "a third force, which transcends [...] two opposites" (130). He further explains: "[P]aradoxes are notoriously unstable; they keep slipping back into their opposite components, then merging again, slipping back, and so on. So the transcendent experience is evanescent, passing ... as it comes, like twilight" (12). To the extent that existence is characterized by a minimum of two conflicting voices (Bakhtin, *Dostoevsky's Poetics* 252), it is a paradox. Identities are therefore characterized by dialectic tensions which are ever-emergent rather than sublimated. Adapting De Kock's argument to the present analysis, I therefore propose that in independent Zimbabwe, whiteness finds its moving focus in conflict with blackness without which it would not signify.

Indeed, in more cases than one, whiteness and blackness are brought to bear upon each other in nationalist Zimbabwean narratives. When it is thus considered as part of an opposition, De Kock advises, "'whiteness' as a sign should be seen as a trace and not an essence" ("The Call of the Wild" 15). He justifies this point by observing that:

> In a context of heterogeneity as marked as that in southern Africa, the signifier "whiteness" (along with all its proxy signifiers), despite equally persistent tropes of sameness and rock-solid marks of identity, must be regarded as a shuttling moniker, a hot potato variously juggled and differently handled, grasped, welcomed or rendered problematic across time and space. ("The Call of the Wild" 15)

Unlike the two texts already discussed, Eppel's narrative is more persistent in its diffusion of whiteness as a sign. Not only does the text avoid numerous references to the term white, it also

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provokes reflection on the interchangeability of "whiteness" as a space of discourse and behaviour, and it questions the necessary correspondence of whiteness and white people, a tendency observed by Keating. It is with this in mind that Frye resorts to the term "whiteliness" as a description of attributes and practices normally associated with white behaviour, suggesting the possibility that these attributes may be possessed by non-whites as much as by whites. Whiteliness is described as the distinctly negative traits that include being "insidious, superior, empty, terrible, [and] terrifying" (Keating 907). Frye explains that "the connection between whiteliness and light-colored skin is a contingent connection: This character could be manifested by persons who are not white; it can be absent in persons who are" (151-52). In Zimbabwe, the term "murungu" (the Shona equivalent for "white person"), used in reference to George (Eppel 18), denotes anyone, regardless of race, who owes money to a third party at any given time. The usage of the term is quite ubiquitous, so much so that someone buying a newspaper from a vendor becomes a *murungu*, and when the vendor boards a taxi on his way home he/she becomes a *murungu* in turn. The key aspect here is becoming, something emphasized by Roediger in his history of the "whitening" of Irish immigrants in America.

While it is true that "whiteness is not a single system of practices" (Manson 29), its associations with economic and political privilege, especially during European expansion into overseas territories, has never been in doubt. A movement from whiteness to whiteliness therefore enables a reformulation and rethinking of black and white identities such as we encounter in our reading of Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher*, in which paradox is a significant motif. Paradox blurs the line that exists between opposites so that its result can be variously read as "entanglement" (Nuttall, *Entanglement*), as "heteroglot" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*), as a "seam" (De Kock, "Global Imaginary") or a "hybrid" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*). All these concepts testify to the denial and displacement of absolute opposites. The intertextual references in *Absent: the English Teacher* reinforce this idea. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is described as both comical and tragic; and its protagonist "a lover of paradoxes" (Eppel 19). The reading of *King Lear* is seen to produce feelings "which merge into a threshold, which is neither fear nor pity, but a third feeling, a paradox" (35). In this play, "adults behave like children and the children behave like adults" (36). The textual references are quite abundant and they all point towards states of paradox.

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When considered in this light, whiteness and blackness cease to function as fixed and self-contained categories. They are involved in a play of instability and flux.

In his introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that "the white man is locked in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness" (xiii-xiv), but in the postcolonial state the walls can be seen to be crumbling, weakening the "double narcissism" that Fanon describes (xiv). Whiteness is no longer insulated. The laager that protects it has been undermined. For whites to remain locked in their whiteness is self-defeating and dangerous. The discussion of *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* has shown that the outsider's gaze can no longer be ignored except at great cost. It is a structuring gaze that interpellates whites in specific ways, ways that inform actions perpetrated against whites, and their attendant attitudes. *Absent: the English Teacher* demonstrates that blacks, now able to penetrate the echelons of power and those spaces formerly reserved for whites, can traverse the boundaries of whiteness. They can now enter places previously reserved for whites, occupy positions and roles that were once labelled white. They speak English, live in big houses, own servants and drive posh cars. Such is the depiction of black government ministers and their mistresses in Eppel's text. Indeed, Fanon tells us, at the risk of sounding defeatist, that "there is but one destiny for the black man. And it is white" (*Black Skin* xiv). Freire also provides an insight into this trajectory when he says the model of humanity for oppressed people who have internalized the image of the oppressor is to be an oppressor (22). It can be argued that Eppel shows us the extent to which the black middle class, the new rulers, have internalized whiteliness and are thus failing to exceed it in their new roles as leaders. This condition is further expressed by Freire when he says of the oppressed that "they are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized" (24).

The transfer of power from white minority rule to black majority rule ensures that whites are erased from public space, and yet their imprint maintains a presence that cannot be hidden. Whiteness is simultaneously a presence as well as an absence. Its absence is marked by the marginalization of whites in Zimbabwean society, as reflected by George's experiences from the moment he is expelled from his job as an English teacher, and then arrested for unwittingly erecting Ian Smith's portrait in place of Mugabe's. Its presence, on the other hand, is seen in

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traces of whiteness, that is, "whiteliness" manifesting in the actions, attitudes and behaviours of the new black middle class. Whiteness, in its general colonialist sense, is forced to retreat in the face of political change. George not only loses all his material possessions to Beauticious Nyamayakanuna, one of the new rulers' black mistresses, but also his independence. In what turns out to be a postcolonial role reversal, he becomes a servant of the black woman. From the public setting of the school, George is twice forced into the isolation of prison and the permanent confinement of the servant's quarters. In this new environment he discovers that he is an easy target of persecution, a condition formerly suffered by blacks. His name has been removed from the voters' roll, which means he cannot exercise political rights. For George, then, the performance of whiteness, considered here as whiteliness, becomes next to impossible. All these changes cement the white man's absence, that is, his insignificance in the postcolonial state. A white female expatriate, Wilhelmine, tells George in contempt when he fails to get an erection: "You white men [...] You are all castrated" (Eppel 97), thereby signalling the white man's symbolic impotence in the new Zimbabwe. At a later scene, George encounters Wilhelmine engaging in sexual acts with black men, who incidentally happen to be George's former incarcerators.

The transition from whiteness to whiteliness in *Absent: the English Teacher* recognizes that race, like other identities, is performed. The racialized body, like Butler's gendered body, "has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (Butler 136). Speaking on the performance of gender, Butler explains that "acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core" (136). The transition from whiteness to whiteliness enables Eppel to redefine white people as a new oppressed group. In typical colonial fashion, George is emasculated. He is referred to as "boy" by his black "mistress". To further underline George's subordination, Beauticious speaks to him in "kitchen kaffir", a mixture of foreign and indigenous languages that was used by whites in communicating to blacks. George's attempts to use Ndebele in speaking to Beauticious are met with violent rejection. She tells him in no uncertain terms not to speak to her "in the vernacular" (Eppel 116). Fanon's conclusions concerning the imposition of pidgin on the colonized still holds true in this case: "Making him speak pidgin is tying him to an image, snaring him, imprisoning him as the eternal victim of his own essence, of a visible appearance for which he is

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not responsible" (*Black Skin* 18). George assumes that speaking Ndebele will endear him towards the black community that has alienated him, only to find himself alienated further. He can neither use English nor Ndebele.

When he allows his whiteness to recede to the background, George reconstructs himself as un-white, and as part of a community of oppressed people. He begins to see, as his "significant other" in philosophical terms, the black man who has suffered injustices during colonialism and who continues to suffer injustices, as perpetrated now by a black government. After his first arrest, he identifies with the black political prisoners who recognize his whiteness but underline the shared suffering that black Ndebele people and whites experience under the new post-independent government. Referring to whites and the Ndebele, one inmate says: "[W]e both lost the war of Independence" (Eppel 22). Eventually, George pays bail money on behalf of his black inmates. His selfless love for Polly, the black child he finds abandoned in the streets, underlines his identification with the "other" race.

The deracination of George is a reminder that whiteness cannot be an essence. It is something that is contingent on political and historical factors such as the transfer of power from white minority rule to black majority rule in Zimbabwe. The author shows that other variables such as class, political affiliation, age, gender and background play a significant role in how whiteness is performed by individuals. While Memmi concedes that all whites in the colony and its aftermath benefit from colonialism despite their attitude towards colonialism, we also note that the performance of whiteness is predicated on other, non-racial factors. Elise, a white girl in *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird*, is self-consciously aware of her inferiority amidst black girls whose bodies are fully developed in comparison to her own. Gender and size conflate to stall her awareness of self as white and, therefore, superior. In *Mukiwa*, young Godwin ministers to a black person at St Georges school simply because he is the younger of the two. Characters such as Dick Turner in *The Grass is Singing* exemplify how whites who are not economically privileged find themselves underperforming their whiteness. Other whites shun them for "going native", which is understood as living and behaving like blacks. Several historical and literary figures also "un-white" themselves by consciously choosing to dissociate themselves from the dictates of racial superiority. These forms of voluntary white "absence" – constructions of "a

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white counterlife" (De Kock, "The Call of the Wild") − illustrate the limitations of associating a whole race with uniform attributes. The identities of oppressor and oppressed are also shown to be permeable. They are not racial identities.

Eppel seems to suggest that the absence of the white man from the political scene does not translate into the absence of what we are here calling "whiteliness". Black characters are shown in instances where, in concrete and identifiable ways, they perform forms of whiteness. Various institutions, eating habits, dress, and behaviours of the middle class in Zimbabwe are shown to combine, constituting a kind of "white" visibility. These behaviours and mannerisms, at once discursive and material, are at base a perpetuation of (formerly "white") colonial privileges. It can be indeed be argued that whiteness has found a new home, though now it is masked, camouflaged by a black skin. So while George is rendered irrelevant, cannot vote and is economically insignificant, having lost his house, the very attributes normally associated with whiteness are now seen to be inscribing their presence via the black ruling class. It is paradoxical that when George is forced into a state of absence, he tries to assimilate African culture by eating traditional foods, speaking Ndebele and even attaching himself to the character Polly, all at a time when blacks are moving away from their traditions in pursuit of whitely things. Such apemanship, demonstrated in many post-independent novels by writers such as Armah, Ngugi and Marechera, is a site of black identity mutation. It recalls, in addition, the "mimicry" of Caribbean subjects in search of various forms of craven enrichment as they copy-cat their former rulers' cultural habits in V.S. Naipaul's seminal novel, *Mimic Men* (1967). Indeed, critics such as Fanon (*Wretched of the Earth*) have shown how formerly oppressed blacks take up precisely the characteristics of their former oppressors. Freire flatly states that for the oppressed, to be is to be like the oppressor. In *Absent: the English Teacher*, the white man's property and body are owned by the black woman. Eppel seems to be demonstrating how whiteness as a sign can easily explode and take up new referents.

In *Absent: the English Teacher*, Eppel dissolves the boundaries of racial identities and shows that they are both movable and permeable. To recognize the permeability of racial boundaries is to concede that identities are shaped through interaction with other identities, from which they

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borrow. Bakhtin's (*Speech Genres*) characterization of speech demonstrates this notion. He explains:

> Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness", varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate. (89)

A "varying degrees of otherness" kind of whiteness, for example, is always to be found in blackness and vice versa. These acts of intermeshing gradually change the texture of identity. During his second arrest, George is mercilessly mocked by a policewoman, who finds it satisfying to observe that he "look[s] like a kaffir" (Eppel 89). The term "kaffir", used to homogenize blacks during colonialism, here functions as a form of racial entanglement, "an invocation of blackness for a white person" (Nuttall, *Entanglement* 64). In George's case, it does not imply commitment to black struggle, but the diffusion of traces of blackness beyond the boundaries of race: a simultaneous presence and absence of traces rather than essences. Through identification, not identity, we encounter the process of becoming (or, as in this case, unbecoming) white. On the other extreme, George perceives traces of whiteness in Beauticious, who ostensibly "strive[s] to out-Rhodie the Rhodies" (Eppel 116). It is interesting to note that Beauticious is seen to become a "Rhodie" at a time when George is convinced that the sub-culture known as Rhodies is "almost extinct" (10). Here, again, we see the interplay of absence and presence. Whiteliness, recognized as "Rhodie", has migrated to a black individual. Such a postcolonial role reversal shows how the attributes of whiteness and blackness are able to permeate racial boundaries. They represent a paradox that results in the instability of racial identities.

A further look at George and Beauticious demonstrates how traces of whiteness inhabit both poles of the racial matrix. While they appear as two opposites, they have much in common based on their history of colonial experience and their present postcolonial condition, not to mention the car accident that is their moment of racial entanglement. The similarity of their experiences,

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though spatially and temporally separated, expose colonial whites and postcolonial blacks as versions of one another. We are told that "both [Beauticious'] parents had been domestic workers for the same white family, her father a 'cook boy' and her mother a 'housegirl', and she had grown up in servants' quarters not dissimilar to those that George now lived in" (Eppel 30). She speaks to George through "kitchen kaffir" or "chilapalapa", ostensibly "because that's how she remembered being talked to by white people when she was a little girl" (30). She also takes possession of the white man's suburban house and all his belongings, including his labour. To Beauticious and most blacks, George should pay for the crimes committed by his race during colonialism. Indeed George defines himself as a synecdoche, "the part that represents the whole" (80), against the accusation: "You tortured an entire race of people" (80). While he might not be personally liable for the oppression of blacks, being white renders him culpable.

The accident, when George reverses his car into Beauticious' vehicle, is the event that consummates the intermeshing of black and white identities in the text. Its sexual connotation should not be ignored in a text in which sexual puns are common. George frequently sees sexual allegories in Shakespeare's texts and Beauticious' surname is Nyamayakanuna, translatable as "delicious meat". In that moment of contact, the accident, George and Beauticious are almost one person. They are two sides of the same persona, so that when they finally swap roles with each other, George moving to the extreme end, occupying the position traditionally occupied by blacks during Rhodesia, and Beauticious moving to the other extreme occupying the superior role reserved for whites, we begin to see a fluidity of identities. The two poles, black and white, are connected, constituting a third element, which arises or results from the merging of opposites.

When George finally destroys all his identity documents, he rids himself of the reification and fixity suggested by these official papers. It is also the final disavowal of his whiteness, a self-induced absence that he enunciates through the symbolic destruction of his "papers", along with the decision to leave what used to be his home but has instead become a place of servitude and confinement (another paradox). George chooses to reconnect with his otherness, or his double: the black child who is equally destitute and in need of another. The journey to Empandeni mission, paradoxically the place where Polly comes from and where George's grandmother is

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buried, underlines the interdependence of races and the need to see past the artificial boundaries of mere skin-colour. George, who is terminally ill, has to carry Polly part of the way. Yet, as the journey gathers steam, it is Polly who becomes George's guide as they both recognize the importance of co-being. Following Bakhtin, Holquist reminds us that "being" is "an event that is shared. Being is a simultaneity; it is always co-being" (24). In *Absent: the English Teacher*, simultaneity finds its most vivid expression through the journey to Empandeni mission.

This journey further highlights that whiteness and blackness pose, unconvincingly, as transcendental signifiers. Polly needs George as much as he needs her for the journey they embark on, which is a simultaneous re-invention of selves. The journey to Empandeni mission is also significant in that it symbolizes re-discovery and restoration. It takes George along paths travelled by the white pioneers in their trek from the south; he therefore relives his whiteness in reverse. The journey is an undoing of colonial whiteness. Similarly, the journey takes Polly along paths already travelled as she finally reconnects with the home from which she has been dislocated. Movement, in this instance, constitutes a form of disavowal, the creation of one's "anti-myth" where whiteness "[seeks] to divest itself of overdetermined marks of being and to break out from the sense of being cornered" (De Kock, "The Call of the Wild" 23). Such is the spirit of *Absent: the English Teacher*: it explodes the notion of whiteness and embraces the alternative notion of "whiteliness."

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that whiteness is a dominant trope in white Zimbabwean narratives. Unlike Rhodesian settler narratives, where whiteness is muted, white writing after 1980, and more so in the 2000s, makes whiteness increasingly visible. This is a literature that responds to a different socio-political terrain, one in which whites are racially overdetermined by blacks, who are now in a position of relative political dominance. White narratives nevertheless respond to the question of whiteness in several ways. Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* articulates the black gaze and how whiteness is framed within this gaze. She acknowledges the limitations, if not impossibility, of ignoring the ways in which whiteness is shaped from the outside. Whites find themselves amidst two conflicting frames of reference, one that has colonial/supremacist origins, and the other deriving from blackness, a category here understood

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as a set of discursive and material practices. Blacks and whites negotiate their almost coeval identities with an awareness of this intermeshing, or entanglement, and insist on a Zimbabwean identity.

Fuller does not inscribe a nationally bounded identity. She embraces a transnational identity that exceeds the boundaries of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe as nations. Depicting whiteness as an ephemeral experience, she notes how white identities are always in the process of becoming. Whiteness is depicted as an ever-shifting and fluid category. Finally, *Absent: the English Teacher* explodes whiteness to enable a multiplicity of referents. Eppel destabilizes the association of whiteness with white people and reveals a transition from the notion of whiteness to that of "whiteliness". In such a reading, whiteness ceases to function as a fixed or stable sign. It denotes certain attributes which can manifest in anyone regardless of race.

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Chapter Six: Towards the Literary Prokaryote

6.1. Summary and Conclusions

The critical motivation underlying this thesis is to draw theoretical attention to a complex body of Zimbabwean literature by white authors and to study dimensions of "whiteness", as well as perceptions of belonging, ambivalence or rejection, in postcolonial Zimbabwe. The thesis covers a selected corpus of literary works published by Zimbabwean whites between 1980 and 2011, and the argument takes on two related challenges. First, it seeks to examine the place of white writing as a literary system within the totality of Zimbabwean literary and cultural polysytems, in the context of Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. It would seem to be a gross oversight to begin any discussion of individual white Zimbabwean narratives without first positing their place among the systems with which they come into dialogic contact and encounter. Second, individual white Zimbabwean narratives, selected on a thematic basis, have been analysed in the light of issues surrounding white belonging in Zimbabwe.

The thesis suggests that the white Zimbabwean literary system is by no means one that operates in isolation. Rather, it establishes dialogic and contested links with several other systems within the Zimbabwean cultural polysystem. Among these systems are political and ideological ensembles that serve as contexts in which white Zimbabwean narratives find their mark. It is for this reason that chapters two to five contain sections in which official (and not-so-official) discourses on white belonging are taken under examination before any analyses of individual white narratives are launched. Chapter two, for example, opens with a discussion of several non-literary as well as literary narratives about the nationalist war in Zimbabwe in order to draw the systemic links that simultaneously enable and condition individual white narratives on this topic. Chapter three establishes a dialogue between political narratives on place and white narratives that foreground the issue of white emplacement in Zimbabwe. Chapter four draws attention to the uses of the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean past in official narratives and tries to relate these to similar and not-so-similar uses of the same past in white narratives. Finally, the discussion of whiteness in white-authored narratives is carried out in the context of whiteness studies, its Zimbabwean and Southern African inflections and the relation of these to whiteness studies in

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the global north. That individual white narratives were discussed as responses to other narratives strengthens the argument that the white Zimbabwean literary system is part of a larger literary and cultural polysystem. The recognition of this condition naturally leads one to the second major argument in this thesis: that white writing in Zimbabwe is inescapably dialogic.

In line with this argument, it has been proposed that white narratives in Zimbabwe are characterized by multiplicity, contradictions, simultaneity and instability, all of which point to Bakhtin's notion of dialogue. The upshot of such a proposition is that white narratives cannot be regarded as monolithic, and the most effective approach to the literary system is to recognize dialogue as a key feature of white narratives. In other words the true potential of white writing cannot be realized via monologic approaches that pursue false unities and uniformities. The many nuances, gaps and contradictions within the cultural polysystem cannot be understated.

In the first chapter of this thesis a review of critical approaches to Zimbabwean literature showed that white writing in and of the country has not received much recognition owing to a thoroughgoing discourse of separatism in critical reception. This separatist thrust is demonstrably based on a strong discourse of black nationalism that has dominated political and critical thinking in Zimbabwe since 1980. Prominent critics, including Zimunya, Veit-Wild (*Teachers*) and Zhuwarara (*Introduction*), were seen to endorse a monologic approach to Zimbabwean literature, one that overlooks the multiple systems comprising the Zimbabwean literary environment.

It was noted, for instance, that monologic approaches to the subjects white writing deals with confine themselves to very particular modes of critical observation and refuse to consider the possibilities of alternative or contradictory understandings. Such myopia is not confined to individual critics alone, but also emerge in narratives about whiteness in Zimbabwe authorized by the state. These narratives, largely voiced by the ruling party in Zimbabwe, seek to constrict dialogue on belonging by imposing a monolithic and hegemonic discourse upon critical areas such as the nationalist war, land reform, the Rhodesian past and the question of whiteness itself. Monologic accounts of Zimbabwean nationhood all but deny whites a place in Zimbabwe and, as a result, literature by whites also suffers from either systematic neglect or dismissive criticism.

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Attention was also drawn to more inclusive critical works, such as those by Chennells (*Settler Myths*), Javangwe (*Contesting Narratives*), and Pilossof, and essays by critics such as Harris, Muchemwa and Chennells in Primorac and Muponde, all of whose work helped to lay the foundation for this study. The thesis has explored an approach that returns white writing to "mainstream" Zimbabwean literature, that is, in its guise as a multiple, contradiction-ridden and unstable literary system. White narratives indicate the existence of polyvalent, "messy", unstable and multiply simultaneous spaces of expression. Its preoccupations are nurtured in, and reflections of, precisely this kind of discursive environment. It is noted in chapter two, for example, that white writing is a multiplicity at the level of the system and also at the level of the individual work-utterance. By focusing on the war narratives *Karima* and *White Man Black War*, the chapter suggests that white narratives do not subscribe to a uniform mode of representation. Not only are the writers of war narratives differentiated, but a multitude of voices also constitute the interior of their narratives. The subject of nationalist war was not a random choice, considering how central the war has been in the construction of Zimbabwean identities in the more than three decades since it ended.

An important point raised in chapter two is that white writing in Zimbabwe is a link in a cultural polysystem comprising several conflicting voices. *Karima* was seen to satisfy the requirements of polyphony where the voices of characters function autonomously in relation to each other and the author's voice. Such a scenario enables the complication of war discourse and a refusal to foreclose dialogue on the war via discursive monopoly. This situation that subsists in *Karima* signifies contestations that characterize all representations. It is noted, however, that a narrative such as Moore-King's *White Man Black War*, which on the surface appears less polyphonic, provides a different mode of representation, one that includes in its margins historical voices such as that of Ian Smith. By assimilating these other voices, the scope of dialogue in the narrative is inevitably expanded, therefore reinforcing the polyvalent identity of white writing. The comparison of *Karima* and *White Man Black War* demonstrates that modes of speaking in the white Zimbabwean literary system are multiple and complex. Any rigid critical pursuits of uniformity are therefore rendered inadequate and simplistic.

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The question of belonging is never far from articulation in white Zimbabwean narratives. Some of the narratives are more forthright in addressing the question while others are less explicit. When considered in the light of contestations of belonging in Zimbabwe from 1980 to the land reform era of the 2000s and beyond, it becomes evident that individual white writers inscribe white identities within various temporal and spatial sites; these include war, land, the past, the present, the nation and transnational locales. "Should I stay or should I go", it has been argued, is not a clear or straight division. A binary approach, therefore, will not suffice. The study approaches this question via three interrelated tropes: multiplicity, instability and simultaneity. In addition, the discussion of recurrent themes in selected narratives generates a sub-set of questions that speak directly to the general problematic of staying/going.

"Should I stay or should I go" invokes spatial questions of belonging in white-authored narratives in which there is a preoccupation with finding places that white individuals can inhabit with a measure of ease. Chapter three examines how this pursuit of white emplacement in Zimbabwean narratives is based on unstable and changing affinities towards the significant sites of "bush" and "farm". The chapter suggests that a section of white Zimbabwean landscape narratives inscribe white belonging in distinct places that include the bush and the farm. The manner in which these places are imagined in this literature not only point to the perennial need to belong to a particular place but also to the ambivalence characterizing white Zimbabweans in the postcolonial period. Neither farm nor bush is fully appropriated. Affinities remain in a state of flux as conditioned by various developments that characterize the postcolonial nation. The bush in Rimmer's *Cry of the Fish Eagle* is paradoxically an empty white place of belonging but also a site of black primitivism and resistance. Still, a metonymic approach to the bush as Africa enables whites to become supra-national citizens in which they claim belonging to a larger geo-political environment. On the contrary, Douglas's *The Last Resort* underlines the necessity of destroying the bush in its guise as "undeveloped" land in order to create a white place of belonging. The bush's importance in such a narrative of belonging is in its antithetical relation with the farm. Regardless, white individuals are seen to engage in a love-hate relationship with the bush that renders it at once both home and not-home, homely and unhomely.

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Questions of temporality also inform white Zimbabwean narratives. The literature seems to address itself to a question that one might formulate as follows: "Should I stay in Rhodesia or go to Zimbabwe"? In chapter four it is posited that linear notions of time see existence in terms of successive or sequential stages in which the past is considered dead, only to be succeeded by the present. However, the chapter argues that the past in certain white narratives exists side by side with the present in a relationship of simultaneity. Rather than existing in a single moment, individuals inhabit several moments all at once, albeit to varying degrees. The analysis of Smith's *The Great Betrayal* indicates that the past exists in a state of active conflict with the present in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Smith uses the Rhodesian past as a condemnation of the Zimbabwean present by reconstructing the past as glorious and successful, as opposed to a present riddled with shame and failure. A further reconstruction of white Rhodesian identity as a tribal category paves way for the retention of past values in what is considered a new Zimbabwe. The past in Godwin's *Mukiwa* is not the sanitized past one finds in Smith's book. Through a re-imagined childhood consciousness, Godwin highlights many of the imperfections of Rhodesia. To a significant degree, Godwin associates these past ills with experiences in the present. What the narratives demonstrate is that neither past nor present is a total and exclusive package. Individuals inhabit past and present moments simultaneously.

Through a multiple narrativization of the nationalist war (chapter two), the rendering of unstable places of belonging (chapter three), and the reconstructions of a Rhodesian past (chapter four), white Zimbabwean narratives can be said to create several dimensions of whiteness. These dimensions are further explored in the foregrounding of whiteness in a distinct body of white-authored texts. In chapter five, the readings of Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher*, Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird*, and Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* suggest that a certain category of white literature consciously foregrounds whiteness and calls into question many of its founding assumptions. Eppel's *Absent: the English Teacher*, for example, explodes racial categories that are founded on a binary logic, pitting whiteness against blackness, by demonstrating that whiteness as a sign has multiple referents. Eppel challenges the conventional conflation of whiteness with white people and demonstrates that attributes commonly associated with whiteness often transcend racial boundaries. *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* appropriates an alien gaze in order to destabilize the white narcissist gaze of Rhodesian whiteness that authorizes

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a monologic account of whiteness as superior and invincible. Finally, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* perceives whiteness as an ephemeral experience characterized by movement and instability.

Naturally, the scope of the thesis has been selectively limited to a number of facets based on the study's organizing research questions. Because race was used in a subsuming sense, a number of generalizations and exclusions were deliberately made. It was impractical, owing to constraints of time and space, to isolate every nuance of white writing. It would of course have been interesting to fracture the category "white writer" in order to tap the nuances of gender, profession, generation, religious conviction, political affiliation and locality, among others. Nevertheless, care was taken to raise significant questions on what appeared to be the most important issues in play. Although no explicit references to gender, profession or political affiliation are made in the thesis, most of the points raised here apply to many, if not most, white narratives in a general sense. White female literary voices on the nationalist war would obviously augment the sense of multiplicity suggested in chapter two. Such an addition would reinforce the same point, but demonstrate alternative dimensions that occur in the white literary system when a further differentiating voice is taken into consideration. For instance, it could well have been argued that female-authored narratives tend to shift the gender perspective of the war and its place to the more (or less) customary realms in which women tend to operate, just as the military voice in *Karima* exists in conflict with the civilian voice. The possibilities of encountering new insights are by no means denied. A more nuanced approach, it has been pointed out in this thesis, is a positive complication of any research project.

6.2. The literary prokaryote: An index to further research

This research project, in its guise as a revisionary "second take" on white Zimbabwean writing, opened my eyes to a certain readerly experience that has always eluded me in my encounters with other literary systems. Because I wanted to study white writing, I naturally searched for its "key" writers, its "foundations" and its "entryways". What I sought shows a certain resemblance to what Deleuze and Guattari (5) have called "the root-tree", a system's "fundamental image", or the image that is ingrained in its past, present and future reflections. I exhibited what Spivak in Derrida (*Of Grammatology* lxix) would call "[a] longing for a center, an authorizing pressure".

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My need, I am certain, reflected what most students of literature experience whenever they "enter" a new literary field. Without the "fundamental image", the system is deemed unthinkable.

Zhuwarara (*Introduction*) adopts a synchronic approach which fixes white writing in Rhodesian time while simultaneously regarding black writing as an evolving system in order to rationalize his dismissal of white writing in Zimbabwe. He appeals to the voice of Chennells ("The White"), who says "few of [the white writers in Rhodesia] can even have been aware of their predecessors, and consequently it is impossible to talk of a tradition in the settler novel" (Zhuwarara, *Introduction* 22). Zhuwarara subsequently criticizes white writers' for two things: "[F]ailure […] to evolve a distinct regional idiom" and "failure […] to provide a vigorous and authentic literary leadership" (23). His observations almost summarize my experience with white writing in Zimbabwe. Indeed I failed to identify the literary system's "literary leadership", "seminal" texts or "distinct idiom". Owing to the view that white writing in Zimbabwe does not lend itself to a perceivable foundational image, I would like to suggest, as a concluding proposal, that the white Zimbabwean literary system can be seen as a *literary prokaryote*, that is, a system without known or declared nuclei.

This study of white writing in Zimbabwe therefore argues for a research agenda that sees white writing largely as analogous to a *prokaryote*. I use white Zimbabwean writing as an example because it clearly meets the conditions of this category, although not in an exclusive sense. The term *prokaryote*, adapted from the biological sciences in reference to a cell without a nucleus, is deployed loosely to mark certain *behaviours* characteristic of literary systems owing to the relations they have with various literary and extra-literary forces. The nucleus, the command centre of an organism/cell, controls the organism's psychological and physiological activities. Destroying the nucleus therefore implies that no control is imposed on the organism. I consider the literary prokaryote a methodological lens that sees a literary system as operating without a foundational, essentialized, and singular nucleus. This, in essence, is the key contention of the thesis. White writing has multiple dimensions and it satisfies the requirements of a condition in which multiplicity rather than foundational singularity is evident.

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In the life of every literary system there emerge specific forms of nuclei that limit the behaviour of literary texts and the system itself.[63] In literary systems, nuclei appear in several forms, the most common manifesting themselves as declared and decorated writers, stylistic modes and literary origins (including an obsession with normative approaches). Nucleation is therefore predicated on the existence of elements that are seen as centres of crystallization in the literary system. This enactment is always driven from the outside by forces closely or remotely related to the literary system. Such forces can be literary, for example when literary critics and students of literature participate in the development of the system. They can also be political, such as is the case in some countries where political ideologies interfere with the development of literary systems. The need for a nationalist rallying point after colonialism in Africa, for example, provided the impetus for nucleation around literary figures such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who were considered embodiments of the decolonization agenda in Africa. The literatures of independent African countries appear to have experienced a similar need. In Zimbabwe the rallying points included writers such as Charles Mungoshi and Dambudzo Marechera. I consequently propose that in so far as Zimbabwean literature functions with a fundamental, or foundational, image, what I have already termed "a nucleus"[64], it is a *nucleated* literary system.

In my introductory chapter I argue that Zimbabwean literature is created (by certain literary critics, reviewers, educational boards, educators and students) in the image of black nationalism; in consequence, any bodies of literature that do not meet the nationalist grade are excluded from the literary system. They are seen to distort the constructed image of Zimbabwean literature associated with the works of Charles Mungoshi, Dambudzo Marechera and other writers of their

[63] The existence of literary canons has already been acknowledged in this thesis. However, less emphasis has been placed on what canons do to literary systems or, more importantly, what their absence can do to literary systems. While the conventional usage of the term "canon" suggests representation of a field, a nucleus does not refer to that which is representative, but that which shapes. The nucleus is a living entity that exists solely to nourish (under-nourish in our case) the system.

[64] I propose *nucleus* as opposed to *centre* for one fundamental reason: a centre is an entirely different thing. Even-Zohar concedes that "more than one centre must be postulated for the system" (291) and centre-periphery relations subsist in every system. The import of this assertion is that a centre is not necessarily *the life* of a system. Conversions, that is, movements from centre to periphery and vice-versa (Even-Zohar 293), are inevitable in every system and between systems. A nucleus on the other hand controls the system. It feeds into the system and cannot be easily replaced. There can only be re-incarnations.

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generation who are considered the pioneering father-figures of the system. A few illustrations with regard to Mungoshi and Marechera may help to support this assertion. From lower secondary school up to university level, literature syllabi make the reading of Mungoshi and Marechera mandatory. The majority of critical volumes on Zimbabwean literature draw attention to the works of these writers and clearly imply, if not state explicitly, that Zimbabwean literature would not exist without them. These are also most often the critical works that constitute recommended reading lists in literature syllabi. It is no exaggeration to say that Marechera enjoys cult status for many writers in Zimbabwe and for ordinary Zimbabweans who might only have heard about him through hearsay. It is also a fact that virtually all the prose works by Mungoshi have been regarded as examinable at Zimbabwean secondary schools and universities at one point or the other, with the exception of his more recent publication, *Branching Streams Flow in the Dark* (2013). I am reminded of a debate that arose during one examination session at my university when a visiting academic suggested that Zimbabwean literature could be taught without reference to either Marechera or Mungoshi. He argued that foundations or canons were made by people and that one could therefore perpetually re-create them. His argument was compelling, but the *idea* was almost unthinkable!

In a nucleated system there is only one entryway: through nucleic writers. When black Zimbabwean literature is thus conceived, the starting point to any discussion would be the lives and works of Charles Mungoshi, Dambudzo Marechera and Chenjerai Hove, for instance. In the process, several other writers are depreciated and they find themselves having to align their works to those of the "established" writers. In any case, the works of these "lesser" writers are at times evaluated against those of the "established" ones. Race is also a significant factor in the nucleation of the Zimbabwean literary system. Literary nucleation based on race is motivated by the need to find a rallying nationalist point against colonialism. This is why the most celebrated Zimbabwean writers are not only black but also those whose writings are seen to make the nationalist "grade". Marechera and Mungoshi are a source of continued fascination in the publishing and critical economy, each boasting at least one volume of critical studies and sometimes a biography too, such as is the case with Marechera.[65]

[65] Among such volumes are the following: *Charles Mungoshi: A Reader* (2006) by Vambe and Chirere, *Negotiating the Postcolonial: Emerging Perspectives on Tsitsi Dangarembga* by Willey and Treiber

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Of course, the contributions made to Zimbabwean literature by these writers cannot be denied. Neither should they be understated. Nevertheless, fixating on their works not only suggests that the system is immobile, but also reflects a poverty of literary perspective that introduces a kind of theoretical paralysis into Zimbabwean literature. It is to obsess over a single story, something that Chimamanda Adichie (*The Danger of a Single Story*) has succinctly warned against. A single story does not pose the question "what if"? For instance, what if the reading of Zimbabwean literature started accommodating the literary boom of the 2000s marked by the works of Petinah Gappah, Nhamo Mhiripiri, Memory Chirere, Robert Muponde, NoViolet Bulawayo, Brian Chikwava and David Mungoshi? What if HIV and AIDS narratives or narratives on the economic and political crises in Zimbabwe became the rallying points of Zimbabwean literature today? What if literary criticism in Zimbabwe became more explanatory than judgemental?

Literary nucleation brings with it blind spots. We may fail to see and appreciate various other movements that are occurring in the Zimbabwean literary system, movements that point to the growth of Zimbabwean literature and the diversity that it offers. The ability to see movement, not inertia, and the capacity to accept multiplicity, to acknowledge diversity, stands at the heart of a view that is able to accept the existence of a literary prokaryote. Nucleated systems are retrogressive, maintaining a fixed, backward glance at all times. There is a paranoid search for origins. There is always an emphasis on the point of origin in the literary system, who its pioneers are, and who its literary gurus are. It emphasizes that which is customary rather than that which is deviant or surprising. In this regard we find in the nucleated system pitfalls such as one finds in any autocratic political system; it is a setting in which one always idolizes the leader, and invariably it creates a relationship between leaders and mythical versions of the past, figures or heroes. There is always that desire to look back, to search for origins. Critics and students of literature are drawn towards its illusory stability, finding it easier to work with essentialized and known systems than with migrant ones. The tracings of the nucleated system are linear; they start from a progeny and proceed to newer writers.

(2002), and *Emerging Perspectives on Dambudzo Marechera* (1999) by Veit-Wild and Chennells. It is understood that plans are under way to publish a Chenjerai Hove reader.

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Because white Zimbabwean narratives have largely been ignored for one reason or another, the process of nucleation has not been as energetic as it has in the black Zimbabwean literary system. This has enabled several works to function with relative autonomy without crystallizing around a superimposed literary figure, a sanctioned stylistic mode, a predetermined literary ethos or a singular vision. Such nucleic organization remains absent in the white literary system. The choice of white narratives discussed in this thesis owes nothing to origins or foundations because such origins cannot readily be found.

Literary nuclei, it seems, attempt to limit literary life through the imposition of various margins. Literature, it seems, should operate within familiar territory. The moment a text exceeds the limit, it threatens the entire system. This is when certain writers and texts become the subject of expulsion. It is when writers fall in and out of favor, when some subjects are considered taboo and entire systems fail to penetrate the rigid boundaries of the literary system. During the time of Rhodesia, black writing suffered such a fate. The same writers who have become nucleic in a black Zimbabwean literary system were exiled or banned because their works had the potential to distort a foundational white imaginary. Today they have been canonized and the cycle repeats itself. The nucleation of any literary system is a scene of great consequence. Our approaches to literary systems determine the trajectory the system will or will not take.

Regardless, nucleation is never fully successful. Movements are always part and parcel of the greater (poly)system. The literary system and its attendant sub-systems, whether white or black, should be allowed to experience the "vegetative rhythm of life" pointed out by Fanon (*Wretched of the Earth* 33), as against a literary system made in the colonizer's image of the native, and constructed in order to justify the need for domination and control; not to forget, too, the need to align the native's existence to the expectations of the colonial regime and thus recreate him/her in the colonial image. A vegetative life form invokes the image of runner grass, which grows spontaneously in all directions. Where there is compacted soil or a rock, the runner cells usually evade that rock or compacted area and go where they can penetrate through the soil. A runner cell multiplies the lines of flight. Whether or not this study is challenged, repudiated, confirmed, embraced or rejected, the quest for an open and inclusive Zimbabwean literary "canon" will

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continue. The assumptions behind the literary prokaryote will, in my view, ultimately be confirmed: that "there is neither a first nor last word" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 170).

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