Zimbabwean Short Stories in English: An Exploration of Post-2000 Narratives

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any other university for a degree.

Signature:  Date: 10 July 2020

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores selected post-2000 Zimbabwean short stories in English from edited and individually authored anthologies dealing with what has been called the Zimbabwean crisis. An upsurge in the publication of these short stories from the year 2000 in Zimbabwe is a phenomenon that deserves critical literary attention, yet there has been very little critical work, if any, to date, that refers to the short story genre in its peculiarity. Most of the selected stories are commenting on the turbulent "crisis period" in Zimbabwe that began in 1997 and climaxed in 2008 and was subsequently followed by the so-called "Transitional Period" from 2009 onwards through a deployment of various short story stylistic techniques. Representing the crisis in fictional narratives occupies a contested and discursive space in debates about the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis and so-called Zimbabwe's "lost-decade". Based on the textual analysis approach, the eclectic theoretical framework was adopted in the thesis thereby providing the researcher with a favourable critical position to evaluate the representation of the crisis in Zimbabwe in the post-2000 period from various theoretical perspectives. Through an application of Bakhtin's chronotope theory as the overarching theory, this thesis contends that, taken at one level to mean the organisation of value-laden space-time in a literary text, and also at another level, the spatio-temporal relationship between a text and its socio-historical context, the chronotope concept is useful in analysing the selected short stories. The study uses various strands of post-colonial theory to think through the selected fictional texts. The study argues that the potential in literary works, particularly the short story, to deconstruct and transform dominant elitist narratives of the crisis and offer alternative and more representative narratives of the excluded groups' experiences is made possible through an affective appeal. In addition, the encoding of time in fiction is indissolubly linked to the writer's literary intent, for he/she exists in a particular time-space, whether in the homeland or the Diaspora. All these aspects are connected and their space-time configurations as experienced or imagined in actual life are artistically embellished and give rise to an identifiable genre, certain narrative structures, themes, chronotopes, and smaller chronotopical scenes and motifs vis-à-vis the Zimbabwe crisis.

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Acronyms

CBD	Central Business District
CCJPZ	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
CoRMSA	Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FTLRP	Fat Track Land Reform Programme
HIV and AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ID	Identification Card
IMF	International Monetray Fund
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MP	Member of Parliament
NDP	National Democratic Party
POSB	People's Own Savings Bank
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SRB	Strong Rural Background
TB1	Tuberculosis 1
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

ZDERA	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority
ZNLWVA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study focuses on the Zimbabwean short stories in English set or published after the year 2000, a period in which the country has been going through a series of unprecedented socio-economic and political crises. It also explores the role played by the short story genre in articulating Zimbabwe's post-independence issues, particularly in the first ten years of the 21st century which have been called the lost decade by some commentators. The selected short stories were sourced from both multiple and individual authored anthologies. These include stories from anthologies edited by Jane Morris entitled *Short Writings from Bulawayo I* (2003), *Short Writings from Bulawayo II* (2005) and *Short Writings from Bulawayo III* (2006); anthologies edited by Irene Staunton, namely *Writing Still: New Stories from Zimbabwe* (2003), *Laughing Now* (2007), *Women Writing Zimbabwe* (2008), and *Writing Mystery and Mayhem* (2015), as well as a collection of short stories, *Hunting in Foreign Lands and Other Stories* (2010) compiled by Muchadei A. Nyota, Barbara C. Manyarara and Rosemary Moyana. Among the individually authored collections are Christopher Mlalazi's *Dancing with Life: Tales from the Township* (2008), Petina Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009), Tendai R. Mwanaka's story in *African Violet and Other Stories* (2012) which won The Caine Prize for African Writing and Farai Mungoshi's *Behind the Wall Everywhere* (2016). Despite the proliferation of short stories during the period under examination, there has been little critical literary analysis of the post-2000 stories which engage with socio-economic and political Zimbabwean crises and other attendant issues.

The selected stories display the disillusionment mentioned by Sigauke (2009) since most of the writers of these stories were once rejected budding writers who have now matured and have become openly critical of the political status quo. Most of these writers live in the harshest of environments and are driven by words that defy control. The Zimbabwean crisis has meant that the writer does not grope for themes since the recent events in the country provide writing material that is beyond the melodramatic.[1]

[1] The debate surrounding the public characterization of the present situation in Zimbabwe as a "crisis" has been interrogated by Alden in her interviews with various Zimbabwean creative writers. The writers were unanimous about the crisis and agreed that there must be a change. Another respondent wrote: "each day you see around you people trying to eke out a living, lamenting about the rising costs of basic commodities. You are aware of a centre that simply will not hold anymore…the condition is inescapable" (Alden, 2007, p.4). Raftopoulos (2009) has described the "crisis in Zimbabwe" as an upheaval that consisted of a combination of political and economic decline that, while it had its origins in the long-term structural economic and political legacies of colonial rule as well as the political legacies of African nationalist politics, exploded onto the scene in the face of a major threat

In Zimbabwe, the short story captures both developments and turmoil in the country. Known events and incidents from the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis are used as a backdrop of the stories. Writers chronicle "the lost decade" of the political crisis, forced removals, land disputes, mass migration, joblessness, starvation, hyperinflation, HIV and AIDS pandemic, cholera, violation of human rights, short-comings of the indigenisation policy, and socio-political impasse, among other hardships. Worth noting is that not all short story writers whose works are analysed in this study are openly political. However, they are courageous and willing to take risks, making Zimbabwean literature in English very intriguing. This new literature, according to Sigauke (2009), portrays Zimbabwe to the world in its deepest sense; it is a literature of witness, illuminating what William Faulkner (1950) describes as humans' tendency of not only enduring, but also prevailing against all odds.

In Zimbabwe, the ruling party has strived to exert control over all aspects of social production of space: spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces, claiming that this is necessary in order to reclaim and finally decolonize the Zimbabwean nation (Primorac, 2006, p.177). As a result, some writers depict the Zimbabwean government's oppressive tactics in their works. This is the case, for example, in Mary Ndlovu's story "Hands". These stories that depict the Zimbabwean government's oppressive tactics can be read as attempts at counter discourses to what Ranger (2004) terms "patriotic history".

The post-2000 short stories in English have not received adequate critical attention despite the background of "fierce and unprecedented upsurge of short story writing in Zimbabwe since about 1997", virtually drowning out all other literary forms (Chirere 2013; Hammar, McGregor and Landau, 2010). The socio-economic and political Zimbabwean crises and other attendant

to the political future of the ruling party, ZANU-PF. The crisis became manifest in multiple ways: confrontations over the land and property rights; contestations over the history and meanings of nationalism and citizenship; the emergence of critical civil society groupings campaigning around trade union, human rights and constitutional questions; the restructuring of the state in more authoritarian forms; the broader pan-African and anti-imperialist meanings of the struggles in Zimbabwe; the cultural representations of the crisis in Zimbabwean literature; and the central role of Robert Mugabe (the President) (pp.201, 202). The literature on the Zimbabwe crisis is immense, and includes among others: Hammar, A., Raftopoulos, B., and Jensen, S. (eds.) (2003). *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*; Bond, P. and Manyanya, M. (2003). *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism, and the Search for Social Justice*; Alexander, J. (2006). *The Unsettled Land: State-making and the politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003*; Ranger, T. (2004). "Nationalist historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: The struggle over the past in Zimbabwe" Muponde, R. and Primorac, R. (eds.) (2005). *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*; Moyo, S. and Yeros, P. (2007). "The radicalized state: Zimbabwe's interrupted revolution".

issues fictionalised by the short story have not been critically explored in a thesis wholly focusing on the short story genre; any attempt to provide such an analysis has tended to conflate the short story as a sub-genre to other genres such as the novel. A case in point is Nyambi (2013) thesis that has focused on what he has called a nation in crisis, using both the Zimbabwean novel and short story genres within the post-2000 literary landscape. This is despite the observation made by Julien (1983) that a natural response of the reader to the proliferation of short stories and to their considerable success is to search for the source of their power and appeal. By way of definition, Anny (2011) has defined the short story as a brief work of fiction that is more pointed and more economically detailed as to character [equated to single significant event or a scene], situation, time period, [aiming at unity of effect], and plot than a novel. Embedded within the definition of a short story are matters of style that short stories may or may not follow the pattern that longer forms of fiction do. Usually short stories have an abrupt beginning and endings, in some instances ending could be inconclusive. Unlike in a novel, every part of a short story is important, and they also tend to be less complex than novels. In essence, the short story genre demands economy of settings and precise narrations. One of the important aspects of the short story, which also characterises the selected post-2000 short stories, is that it focuses on a creation of a mood rather than narration of a story, hence the importance of the aesthetic effects that constitute the focus of this study. Notable 19th Century short story writers, according to Grimes (2004), from whom the short story has been developed include: Guy du Maupassant, Anton Chekhov and Edgar Poe, labelled as 'father of the modern short story' credited as the first to develop the short story as a distinctive art form and to elaborate criteria by which it can be judged.

Over and above its proliferation, the short story genre has been best suited in describing the Zimbabwe crisis because of its characteritics and artistic qualities that have distinguished it from other genres such as novels and autobiographies that have also attempted representing the crisis in Zimbabwe. For example, Marler (1974) has lauded the short story for "its ability to suggest, to evoke, without resorting to explanations" (p.153). Marler's definition of the short story has hinted at some of the characteristic features of the short story that have been strikingly utilised by the Zimbabwe short story writers in their fictional narratives. Some of the short story attributes that have been noted by Marler in addition to those highlighted by Anny (2011) include appropriation of themes (noted in the short stories by such writers as Edgar Allan Poe 1809-1849; use of wit; wordplay; skillful characterization; surprise endings; subtle irony and humour; allusion; carefully crafted short story titles, and blending of techniques.

Edgar Allen Poe is called the "father" of the American short story and credited with setting up the first guidelines for the short story. Poe believed that a short story should be able to produce a certain unique effect, have brevity and read in “one sitting”, have unity, have intensity, begin with the first sentence, that is, not spend too long on background, setting, and introduction of characters. In line with the “unique effect” or “single effect” as characteristic of the short story, Poe proposed that a true short story author must not only make his tale short and to the point but must also fashion it with deliberate care so that it will produce a single unique effect. In this regard, the selected post-2000 short stories exhibit a certain effect about the Zimbabwe crisis. That effect has been created as done by Poe, by fixing the reader attention upon the climax of the story so that the reader feels the ‘unique effect’ of the short story and nothing else.

In terms of unity effect as important requisite of a short story, the selected short stories have exhibited unity of time, place and action. Time factor is limited, place normally takes place in a particular place or time and action is very brief and impressive. Also, the stories have exhibited a degree of the intensity of unity, particularly through captivating theme(s). This kind of intensity in a drama or a novel tire the reader. Whereas, in the short story it ties the reader’s interest towards the narrative development.

The impact of the story in the representation of the Zimbabwe crisis has also been noted in its ability to capture the imagination of the reader. The short story has direct reference to events in the form of quick narrative discourse than elaborate descriptions employing long backgrounds, settings and character sketches (Marler, 1974). The fictionalization of the short stories, particularly the crisis history of Zimbabwe, has graphically been captured through the various chronotopes that include among others, the road, land, and mineral wealth.

Short story writers have deployed plot as an artistic characteristic in representing the crisis. For example, Aristotle (385 BC-322 BC) in his seminal work *Poetics* describes that the plot as a sequence of events with a beginning, a middle and an end gave the plot its importance. A plot generally takes place over a period of time and so brief time is always governed by time. A good short story follows the sequence of brief time. The wide popularity of short stories to the advent of episodes as plots where the writer makes transitions between scenes, and the technique of flashback where the past incidents that took place in the life of the main characters, have been described in my thesis. In this light, modern short story writers adopted various tricks with time as noted in Manyonga’s short story and others. Foreshadowing has also been another technique followed by selected modern short story writers where the writers have predicted

about the forthcoming events of a story which fits appropriately to the narrative flow. This technique has been key in illuminating the unfolding of the crisis events while at the same time managing to capture the imagination of the readers.

The dramatic structure of the plot has been very well adopted in the modern short stories to epitomize the crisis in its various forms. The first technique, which is exposition has provided the reader with the essential information about who, what, when and where before continuing the reading of the story. Complication or conflict has manifested where trouble constitutes and takes form of some circumstance that disturbs the stable situation. The conflict has been weaved in with the rising action of the story, referring to the rise of action which builds to a crisis and complication. The central moment of crisis, that is, climax, has manifested as the point of greatest tension leading to falling action. The final part of the plot, denouement or resolution, the French term which means untying the knot or the emotional release of a story's ending where action winds down, has characterized most selected short stories, particularly by Manyonga and Bulawayo. In some instances, a closed denouement that answers all questions leading the readers mind free from all confusions has been noted, whilst in others an open denouement that has left the readers with a few tantalizing ends has been realized, particularly in Bulawayo and Mungoshi's stories.

Apart from the surprising plot developments, the selected short story writers have given equal attention to impressive characterization. Limitations of space, characters in short fiction, as Marler (1974) argues, were portrayed with a limited description but the great masters like Edgar Allan Poe, Maupassant and O. Henry made characters impressive and memorable through their adept technique of portrayals of human beings with which the reader is to identify and remember. In the same light, what makes the selected short stories more befitting for the study has been the remarkable characterization in the stories by adding complexity to characters, for example, portrayal of then Zimbabwe President, Robert Mugabe, as controlled by mysterious agencies. Character motivation as the rationale the reader gives for character actions has also been engaged. The writer describes the actions going on the characters mind. This type of characterization leads to psychological and theological dimensions to the story. Interior monologue is a method of narration like a soliloquy in drama or stream of consciousness technique. A case in point is the character Tinotenda in the story "Burying a Wife from Across the Oceans" by Nyota who has to follow the wife's burial proceedings over the phone; and the characters Rambanai and Lisa in Gappah's selected stories "My Cousin Sister Rambanai" and

"Something Nice from London" respectively, who have to grapple with the diaspora imposed life and new identity.

Setting, in terms of time and place, which has been noted by Bhaktin (1981) in his reference to the "spartial-temporal" is one of the key characteristics that has made the short story representation of the Zimbabwe crisis more vivid. The time, place of a story and in most cases the details of description have been given to the reader directly by the narrators in the selected short stories. Some stories have employed many locations in different scenes; while some have time frame covering only a few hours or many years. Some stories have covered certain time frame or time setting in the crisis period thereby assuming a historical setting. Regionalism has also manifested, setting the writers work in a particular area or country. For example, regional effect and representation of the crisis from the City of Bulawayo and surrounding areas of Matabeleland in *Short Writings from Bulawayo Series* and NoViolet Bulawayo's reference to Budapest and Paradise in her selected short story. Bulawayo, a city with the feel of a small town, used to be the industrial centre of Zimbabwe, but many of its industries have now closed and, like the rest of Zimbabwe, the majority of its people are unemployed. Matabeleland, five hours drive from the capital Harare and the seat of power, has long experienced lack of development and marginalization (Morris and Jones, 2009).

Coding of themes in the short stories has been a manifest technique that has also guided the selection and grouping of some selected short stories. For example, some short stories have exhibited microcosm theme, where the small world reflects the tensions of the larger world outside. Edwin (2016) has argued that "to give the short story serious consideration by delving into its themes and ideas, to critically examine the issues that this fiction thematizes, and the ways in which it does so, is a more productive way to engage with the genre" (p.361). In addition, Edwin argues that "a critical engagement with the themes of the short fiction as short stories, make important critical and theoretical interventions on global issues that have enabled an appreciation of short fiction whose critical reception remains limited to blogs, reviews and announcements" (p.370). A typical example is the theme of death and the dilemma of having to repatriate the bodies and bury relatives from the diaspora.

Notably, style is one of the short story techniques that the short story writers have deployed in their fictional narratives of the Zimbabwe crisis. Style in short fiction refers to the characterization of language in a particular story and to the same characterization in a writer's complete works (Marler, 1974). A detailed analysis of the style of individual stories has

included attention to dictum, sentence structure, punctuation, and use of figurative language. In English use of different types of words such as slangs and foreign vocabulary also constitute to style. In analysing style, literary fashions of the periods should also be considered (Astvaldsson, 2011). The particular qualities of a story are best understood in the context of fiction written in the same period and place. For example, this has been observed in chapter three focusing on the short stories about tragic humour and politics of acquisitiveness, utilising the dominating witty narratives about post-2000 suffering in the various communities. Another important element of the selected short stories is the tone of the story. It is what the reader can indirectly determine about the author's own feelings about events. Tone can be generally classified into tragic, ironic, satiric and sentimental. The tone of the story, as observed across the thesis chapters, gives the reader a clue how to read a story. Following on the tone and themes, among other characteristics, selected short stories have been categorized for analysis in my thesis.

The development of the short story in Zimbabwe as a separate, concentrated short form of literature reveals remarkable vitality, and it holds up in a natural manner as an effective mirror to the Zimbabwean crisis. The intensity of the form, as described by Mushakavanhu (2007), comes from its subjective points of view, pervasive imagery, controlled tone and ellipsis, and as a matter of fact, the Zimbabwean short story presents human experience during the crisis period in its most distilled essence. Judging by the recent publishing trends in Zimbabwe, and the need to capture the tumultuous changes in the crisis period, the short story has been the pulse of literary creativity in the country, thereby positioning itself as an unavoidable genre even in critical analysis.

The short story fictionalization of the Zimbabwe crisis has also been achieved through "fragmented narratives" that Astvaldsson (2011, p.343) has described as usually reflecting on things such as the fragmentation of memory and a socially, culturally, and politically fragmented world, and tend to demand intensive involvement from readers. According to Astvaldsson, linked short story collections have certain unifying elements which enable them to cohere as an artistic whole. However, partly because of the enigmatic human complications the various issues or themes entail, and partly because the problems examined often do not lend themselves to clear or simple answers, we can never gain more than a partial insight. In this light, Bakhtin (1981) avers that what appears as reality, is that "an individual cannot be completely incarnated into the flesh of existing socio-historical categories…there always remains an unrealised surplus of humanness; …reality as we have it in the fictional narratives

is only one of many possible realities; it is not inevitable, not arbitrary, it bears within itself other possibilities." (p.37). This theorisation by Bakhtin presents with an opportunity to theorise and imagine other possibilities and underlying meanings in the analysis of selected texts. My analysis of the selected short stories is somewhat guided by Bakhtin and Astvaldsson's observation that it is partly in the short stories that the authors find a medium which serves their purpose, and which they have used in a highly effective and imaginative way to construct an intricate text that not only draws in but demands participation from the reader.

In this study, the informing source of power and appeal bolstering the analysis is the escalating Zimbabwe crisis. Chapman (2003) observes that, in times of political crisis, people turn with determination to aesthetics. Chapman argues that during moments of crisis, the search is for temporal and spatial resolution: how to represent and how to be represented; a concept earlier theorised by Bhaktin (1981). As a result, it is difficult to discuss 'new literature' in Zimbabwe without first acknowledging the predominance of the short story form. However, studies in Zimbabwean literature in English and Africa at large have largely focused on novels and other genres like poetry and drama, thereby almost totally side-lining critique of the short story as a genre. My thesis focus on the short story is set to make an impact not just in Zimbabwe literary terrain but also in the larger African continent. Habila (2011) aptly calls short-story writers, "the third generation of African writers", a new group of writers who are yet to receive their due in literary criticism (p.vii). The short story has long enjoyed the patronage of well-known African writers regularly producing short fiction. But its reception in the form of analyses, literary essays and thematic discussions in literary criticism remains relatively poor in relation to the same attention the novel enjoys. About three decades ago, Julien (1983) noted that "literary criticism on short stories was scarce" (p.146). Even today, the African short story, to which Zimbabwe is part, remains modestly critiqued perhaps in part because of what Paul Zeleza identifies as in it as its "disdain for colonialism and distrust for nationalism", for being too "cosmopolitan", and for failing to register an ideological focus.[2] Yet, the genre has provided a greater intimacy with the questions and experiences generated by the crisis in Zimbabwe.

The short story genre is antagonistic to the traditional literary convention; it incorporates and contrasts stylistic features and linguistic methods from various literary genres instead of complying completely with a single convention (Guimaraes, 2012; Abbasi and Al-Sharqi,

[2] Cited in the introduction to the *Granta Book of the African Short Story*.

2016). In this regard, the short story conforms to the theorisation by Bhaktin (1981) regarding the chronotopes and the use of literary language and styles to mark uniqueness in genres and their ability to represent situations. Pioneering critical works such as *The Search for Zimbabwean Identity* by George Kahari (1980), *Teachers, Preachers, Non-Believers: A Social History of Zimbabwean Literature* Flora Veit-Wild (1992) and later *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* by Primorac (2006) did not focus on the short story. Kahari's study maps out the social and cultural background of creative works by Stanlake Samkange, Solomon Mutsvairo, Ndabaningi Sithole and Charles Mungoshi, while Veit-Wild outlines the sociological-cum-cultural context which informs Zimbabwean creative writing. This is despite that the short story is the genre that seems best suited to capture the deepening crisis and rapid changes in the material conditions of the people in Zimbabwe.

The focus on questions and experiences generated by the crisis observed through the proliferation of the post-2000 short story come at a time when, as Michael Holquist in the "Prologue" to Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (1984) claims, there are periods when events threaten to outstrip any capacity to interpret them. Although conceptualised around the Russian revolution, these sentiments ring true of the publication of the Zimbabwean short story during the socio-economic and political crisis whereby writers have not been able to act as spectators in the wake of the unfolding crisis. Therefore, the post-2000 focus became a homogenising metaphor. Under Zimbabwe's economic challenges at the turn of the century, it appeared convenient for any conscientious publisher to capture various voices in one multi-authored book. Each of these books carries, on average, no less than fifteen authors. Zhuwarara and Primorac have not given much attention to the understanding that short stories, particularly those published or set in post-2000 period depicting contemporary issues, provide a multifaceted perspective on the post-2000 crisis situation in Zimbabwe that does not come easily through a historical account. It is, therefore, the dearth of critical appreciation of short stories that prompted this study.

The range of issues and themes depicted in the selected short stories indicate the versatility of the genre in addressing contemporary human concerns in Zimbabwe. Consequently, an analysis of these stories provides a critical reference point for the post-2000 Zimbabwean condition as it is represented through short stories. My study is also a survey of published Zimbabwean short stories in the post-2000 period. In this regard, my analysis follows both a thematic approach and discusses the influence of publishers on the themes of the selected stories. My

approach takes its cue from Chapman's observation (2009) that "whereas literary criticism is concerned primarily with the "meaning" of the text, with its narrative, its poetic, its dramatic shape, book history explores how these meanings, these aesthetic configurations, are influenced by factors beyond the control of authors themselves: by publishing pressures, the ruling discourse of reviewing, censorship, educational institutionalisation, the literary-prize culture" (p.7). A combination of literary criticism and book history is much more likely to bring out the complex post-2000 Zimbabwean political and economic situations and the way in which people are shown confronting them.

The study is also informed by Staunton's views articulated when she was interviewed by Klother's in 2007. She lauded fiction [short story included] as being of great value and declared it to be as important as history. Staunton argues that, through the short story genre, the truth about complex situations is told through fiction in a different way. History, in this case the post-2000 period, provides us with facts and theories about how people survived in certain situations, the complexities, ambiguities, ambivalences, half-truths and passions. The selected short stories provide a multifaceted perspective of the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis that does not come easily through a historical account. To invoke Wilson-Tagoe's (2002) words, the short stories under discussion "create narratives out of history rather than narratives of history …. Their historicising effect derives from their fluid re-invention of past memories" (p.160). Therefore, my study explores the short stories as fiction providing a complex picture of right and wrong, compromise, fear and pain, which one would not get in non-fictional accounts.

Zhuwarara (2001) observes that "quite a sizeable number of overseas critics and academics have written about the Zimbabwean fiction" (p.9). This has been against the backdrop of Zimbabwean literary scholars who have not engaged with their own fiction as much as foreign academics. My study is a modest attempt at providing home grown criticism for Zimbabwean fiction. Zhuwarara also argues that "there is need for increased criticism of the fictional work from Zimbabwe because established Zimbabwean writers have been publishing more work while new voices have also been emerging" (p.9). The "new voices" are mostly the budding writers who have been prolific in the production of short stories in Zimbabwe. Notably, Zhuwarara's contribution has been biased towards the novel. There is need, therefore, for an interrogation of the short story genre as it illuminates the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis.

Of particular note is the "regionification" (Lavenghove, 2003, p.2) that characterises the short story narratives, for example, *Short Writings from Bulawayo* I, II and III series. A report by The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) titled *Breaking the Silence: Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980 to 1988* (1997) provides a significant background to some permeating issues in the short story narratives, for example, Gukurahundi[3], written about Matabeleland. The report states that the suffering endured by Zimbabweans during the Liberation War was fairly uniform and, as a result, there is mutual empathy amongst people throughout Zimbabwe regarding the agony caused during that period. However, the human right abuses documented in the report were largely confined to three provinces, namely Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and the Midlands. At the time when the people of the three stated provinces were facing tremendous hardships, people in other provinces were basking in the euphoria of independence. Also, because of the curfew and the tight control of the media within Zimbabwe, there was limited reporting on what was going on. As a result, the report documented that most people in the rest of the country did not know what was happening in the three provinces. As the selected short stories will show, in the circumstances, it is not surprising that civilians residing in provinces which were not affected cannot, today, begin to understand the true feelings of the victims who still carry the burden of that period. Until there is knowledge of what happened throughout Zimbabwe, there cannot be genuine empathy for those who suffered, and without empathy, there cannot be true reconciliation and nation building (p.210).

The *Catholic Commission Report* opens an avenue that is explored by the selected short stories. In its recommendations, the report states: "The problem that we all face as Zimbabweans is that of discerning the truth. How is it possible to convey what actually happened to Zimbabweans in affected regions?" (CCJPZ and LRF, 1997, p.210). In this regard, short story narratives attempt a fictional representation of some issues of immense hardship and suffering experienced by those in the Matabeleland and Midlands regions without necessarily taking the position of factual historical texts.

[3] Although the term *Gukurahundi*- a Shona term that refers to "the storm of the summer that sweeps away the chaff" (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997, p.133)- was initially used by Mugabe to name the praetorian Fifth Brigade, the term has now generally come to be used to describe the period in which the Fifth Brigade terrorised the provinces of Matabeleland and Midlands. Although dominant state narratives purport that Gukurahundi was instigated by the need to weed out dissidents who were threatening the stability of post-independent Zimbabwe, Alexander et al. (2000) argue that "ethnic discourses were employed by the Fifth Brigade to justify its acts of atrocious violence" (p.222). An estimated 20,000 civilians lost their lives and many more were left maimed during the tumultuous period between 1982 and 1987.

This then raises the subject of "representation" (Mack, 2012, p.12). Mack maintains that we are accustomed to thinking of literature as mimetic, as a representation of reality such as it exists, while literature is in fact, according to him, a disruptive force, breaking up our fictions about the world we live in and showing us new possibilities for the future (p.12). In the light of the post-2000 short story narratives and the regionification of Matabeleland, literature not only represents to us our world, but it also shows us ways in which we can change the world or adapt to changes which have already taken place without us realising. According to Mack, (p.11), literature's cognitive dimension helps us to cope with the current and future challenges by changing the way we think about ourselves, our society and those who are excluded from or marginalised within our society.

The logic of power, wealth and capital explored by Ngugi wa Thiong'o is useful in critiquing foreign domination under colonialism, a perspective that is fictionalized in some selected stories. With the advent of formal independence, throughout the African continent, issues of foreign domination and African authenticity gradually cede center stage to the disillusionment of independence and the critique of abusive power and corruption. This critique has always been present in African fiction. For example, it is present in Achebe's earlier novels. But the critique of post-independence regimes is accomplished, in part, by a change in literary form, which Ngugi wa Thiong'o suggests in his book, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986). He argues:

> How does a writer, a novelist, shock his readers by telling them that these [heads of state who collaborate with imperialist powers] are neo-slaves when they themselves, the neo-slaves, are openly announcing the fact on the rooftops? How do you shock your readers by pointing out that these are mass murderers, looters, robbers, thieves, when they, the perpetrators of these anti-people crimes, are not even attempting to hide the fact? When in some cases they are actually and proudly celebrating their massacre of children, and the theft and robbery of the nation? How do you satirise their utterances and claims when their own words beat all fictional exaggerations? (p.63)

In the last half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the literary landscape has been strewn with quite stunning fictions of failure, as Africans grapple with the new abuses of neocolonial regimes and seemingly inexorable global processes. In this study, this is evident in the short stories "Itekiya", "Election Day" and "The Bulldozers are Coming".

Background to Zimbabwean Literary Tradition and Context of post-2000 Zimbabwe Crisis

Chirere (2013) argues that Zimbabwe may have just been a short story country all along. This assertion is predicated on the notion that nearly all Zimbabwean writers who have become prominent today started with short stories or have a short story book in their career. One would argue that this is partly because a short story is less demanding in terms of complexity and length than a novel. It would, therefore, make sense that budding writers would start with short story writing before graduating to a novel. For example, the 2004 Cane Prize for African writing winner, Brian Chikwava, started off with a series of short stories before writing his acclaimed tragicomic novel *Harare North* (2009). Similarly, NoViolet Bulawayo's 2011 award winning short story "Hitting Budapest" is the opening chapter to her debut novel *We Need New Names* (2013). Moreover, there is a story-telling tradition (folklore) in all Zimbabwean communities. Thus, it can be argued that short story telling is, in a way that suggests a natural, almost biological attribute, inherent among Zimbabweans although the practice has been modernised by contact with Western ways of story-telling.

Other seasoned writers who have written short stories include Dambudzo Marechera [*House of Hunger* (1978)], Charles Mungoshi [*Coming of the Dry Season* (1972)], David Mungoshi [*Broken Dream and Other Stories* (1987)], Yvonne Vera [*Why Don't You Carve other Animals* (1992)] and Stanley Nyamfukudza [*Aftermaths* (1983)]. The thrust of the cited short story anthologies examined in my study is in line with Zhuwarara's (2001) observation that "Zimbabwean fiction is responsive to and reflective of historical processes which affect society as a whole" (p.10). This suggests that there is a parallel movement between history and fiction. Historical experience sheds considerable light on the tone, form and thematic preoccupations of the fiction. It is in this light that the post-2000 Zimbabwean short story narratives in English have been singled out as they reflect the Zimbabwean crisis, thus, connecting history and fiction.

The emergence of Zimbabwean literature in English, a domain within which the short story in English is situated, is best understood within the context of the tumultuous situation that Zimbabwe as a nation has gone through. The struggle against colonial rule completely changed the Zimbabwean history and literary terrain. According to Hochbruck (1994), the Second Chimurenga or war of liberation from colonial rule ended in 1979 through mediation, thus

entailing a shift in power structures such as the introduction of a black government and an officially declared policy of reconciliation.

In terms of both economic and cultural developments, the results were ambivalent. The economic system remained, for the most part intact, predominantly white; the white minority retained the ownership of key industries and the most productive land. The skewed nature of the economic and political state of post-independence period that favoured ZANU-PF party and government is what the short story writers in the post-2000 period use as historical focus and background to their stories to show, in Achebe's terms, "where the rain started to beat us" (Achebe, 1964). Like short story writers of the 1900s, the post-2000 short stories, through their deployment of the various short story techniques, largely castigate the black bourgeoisie's mentality of self-aggrandizement. The stories selected for this study express mainly betrayal and dismay at the unfulfilled hopes and perceived failures of the black leadership that took over power in 1980.

The thriving of the short story is predicated on its strategic characteristics over other genres to express the misfortunes of the country. The short story is particularly suited to the representation of liminal or problematic identities. Hunter (2007) argues that "the short story deals with submerged population groups" (p.146), and this makes it suitable for depicting the impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on ordinary people. In the ruptured condition of post-2000 Zimbabwe, the short story allows writers to speak directly to and about those whose sense of self, region, state or nation is insecure. The lack of short story production in the 1980s can partly be explained by the fact that writers, like most people, were caught up in the post-independence euphoria and that they were still finding their bearings in the context of the economic and political performance of the black government. Regional differences are manifest in short story production soon after Zimbabwe's independence. For example, while there was independence euphoria in most parts of the country, there was a civil war (Gukurahundi) in Matabeleland and some parts of the Midlands province which resulted in the death of over 20 000 people according the CCJPZ (1997). In essence, there was a dearth of short stories published from the Gukurahundi-torn regions at the time. However, the increase in the number of short stories published in the 1990s and 2000s coincides not only with a reversal in the economic and political prospects of the country, but also with an increase in the number of educated black people in Zimbabwe. Ironically, this is due to the successes of the Mugabe regime in the education sector in the first two decades of post-independent Zimbabwe.

Notably, some short story writers in the post-2000 period have attempted to reflect on the issues of the eighties in what could be read as an attempt to level out the literary gap. One typical example is the short story "The Sell-out" in an individual anthology *Stained Earth* (2004) by Derek Huggins. The story alludes to the atrocities of the post-independence era, particularly the harassment of the populace by so-called "dissidents". This focus is typical of a story published in the post-2000 period but the writer benefits from hindsight to give a regional perspective on the upheaval in Matabeleland and Midlands and not the Chimurenga[4] war which most writers from other provinces unaffected by the civil war largely focused on.

In this regard, Staunton (1997) argues that for the first five or six years after independence, Zimbabwean authors who wrote in English published little or nothing of real literary worth. She contends that any of the stories produced during that time largely sang praises of the so-called successful struggle against white minority rule. The social histories of David Martin and Phyllis Johnson's *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (1981) and Terence Ranger's *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War* (1985) exemplify Staunton's argument because they largely portray unbridled optimism about the new political dispensation characteristic of most literary attempts of the time.

This was also a period of adjustment, of quiet grief, of mourning, of pain captured by Yvonne Vera in several stories in her collection, *Why Don't you Carve Other Animals* (1992). This collection, although containing stories set during the armed struggle, in the white-ruled Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) of the seventies, is an expression of the intensely personal and peculiar disillusionment with the actuality of independence, the disparity between the huge hope and expectation in the minds of individuals, and the reality of the celebrations captured in the story, "Independence Day". This political malaise is also reflected in the few stories published during this period. Ironically, although Vera has received widespread critical acclaim as well as academic scrutiny, analyses of her work have mostly focused on her novels. As already pointed out, my study attempts to redress this scholarly imbalance by offering a close textual analysis of the post-2000 published stories that focus on the Zimbabwean crisis.

[4] Chimurenga is a Shona word which means to fight or struggle. Traditionally, chimurenga or bongozozo is a fight in which everyone at hand participates. The word's modern interpretation has been extended to describe a struggle for human rights, political dignity and social justice (www.zambuko.com). As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) argues, while the ideology of *chimurenga* situates the birth of the nation within a series of nationalist revolutions dating back to the primary resistance of the 1890s, the strategy of *gukurahundi* [in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces] entails violent and physical elimination of enemies and opponents. But this hegemonic drive has always encountered an array of problems, including lack of internal unity in ZANU-PF itself.

While the stories following immediately after Zimbabwe's independence were largely informed by the 1970s liberation struggle, or the Second Chimurenga[5], of which the First Chimurenga[6] was in 1896, the post-2000 narratives are informed by the socio-economic and political problems that gripped the country from the mid-1990s culminating in the so-called Third Chimurenga[7] in 2000. The Third Chimurenga was not an actual war, but it was "imagined" by Zimbabwe's ruling party, aptly captured by Manyonga in "A Seed of Hope". Although the war has continued to form a backdrop to some writings, even in the post-2000 era, the Zimbabwean crisis has taken precedence as the frame for most of the short stories. Due to the unprecedented economic collapse, there has been heightened levels of disillusionment with the post-independence leadership and issues of governance that defined the first two decades of the twenty-first century in Zimbabwe.

Shaw (2011) argues that new publishers and new publishing technologies have played a critical role in stimulating growth of short story production. Jane Morris, an editor with amaBooks Publishers based in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, observes that short story submissions slowed down considerably from 2009. The period since 2009, otherwise labelled by Shaw (2011) as a transition period[8], is when the national crisis continued in slow motion in contrast to the early years of the onset of the crisis in the year 2000. Shaw describes the period since 2011 as being characterised by Zimbabwean writers clearly grappling for a new sense of direction. For example, the book edited by Jane Morris titled *Directions of Fiction: Where to Now? Short Stories from Zimbabwe* (2011), captures the socio-political impasse and tells of its far-reaching

[5] Second Chimurenga was a struggle fought between the Africans and white Rhodesian government which culminated in the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. The war started in the early 1960s but took a more militant stance in 1966 at the Battle of Chinhoyi and ended in 1980 after the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement. Black Africans were driven by the collective need to get political independence, access to economic resources and land (www.pindula.co.zw/Second_Chimurenga).

[6] First Chimurenga was an uprising or war against colonialism in the 1890s (1896-1897) in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, of which one of the main leaders was Nehanda, a woman of outstanding religious and political leadership. From 1890s, when whites first entered the country, traditional religious leaders had opposed colonialism and were instrumental in organising opposition to it. It was a complex set of struggles over land, cattle, and taxes (Dawson, 2011, p.144).

[7] Third Chimurenga refers to a political philosophy and praxis involving the post-2000 anti-colonial nationalism spearheaded by ZANU-PF which mostly manifested in the promulgation of black empowerment policies such as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme and the Indeginisation and Empowerment Act of 2007.

[8] "The transitional period" is the time following the formation of the Inclusive Government in February 2009 (Kanyenze et al., 2011, p.27). During this period, the budget presented to Parliament on 29 January 2009, just before the formation of the Inclusive Government in February, saw the estimates being presented for the first time in Zimbabwe dollars, United States dollars and South African rand. The budget statement acknowledged that the economy was in deep crisis, which it blamed largely on internal policies. Even though it still apportioned some blame to external factors, such as drought and sanctions, the emphasis was clearly on internal factors. Reference can also be made to the following webpage for further treasury details: http://www.zimtreasury.org/downloads/196.pdf

effects in the literary arena. These writers grapple with Zimbabwe's fraught politics which they seem unable to transcend.

Lowell (cited in Staunton, 1997) claims that in the arts, in particular the short story, writers are free to say what they want and that in these stories, they proclaim the confusion, incoherence and sadness of the world. Thus, the short story declares and proclaims what the ruling authorities are desperate to keep concealed. Mphahlele (2002) suggests ways in which art in general and, short stories in particular, explore the painful human condition. He states:

> If you merely record that people are hungry and live a dog's life under tyranny ... you are doing nothing useful ... you could not possibly make your words a substitute for the people's real-life suffering ... [You need instead, as author,] to lead your audience to explore the meaning of their suffering, its significance. This is perspective; this is what produces resonance. It helps us to go beyond the pain of the instant. It leaves the experience vibrating in our being. (p.318)

In the light of the foregoing, my study examines how the selected stories achieve Mphahlele's "resonance" to operate at the level of art that Achebe (1975) described as being "in the service of man" (p.19). This is art that has gone beyond mere "art for art's sake" or mere reflection of society, exposing the inherent ideological underpinnings. Gagiano (2006) argues that "such art, in the subtlety of its explorations, serves no ulterior or ideological end other than developing and requiring a humane yet undeceived compassion" (p.133).

The question of violence has been a recurrent theme in most post-2000 Zimbabwean short stories. Sachikonye's (2011) study, for example, provides insights into the state of violence in Zimbabwe while also assessing the causes, patterns, dynamics, and consequences of political violence during the period of Zimbabwe's crisis between 2000 and 2008. Some of the selected short stories for my study show that violence has been institutionalised to the level of being "organised" by specific institutions. These include state-related institutions, political parties, militia, and war veteran groups as depicted by Mwanaka in "Notes from Mai Mujuru's Breast"; Brakarsh in "The General's Gun"; "The Coming" by Godfrey Sibanda, and "The Chances and Challenges of Chiadzwa" by Edward Chinhanhu. For Sachikonye, the years between 2000 and 2008 saw the deepening of Zimbabwe's political, economic, and social crisis. He described this period as a time when the Zimbabwean state turned against its own people. Indeed, most of the selected short stories, such as Lawrence Hoba's "Plenty Ways to Die in the Republic",

depict the different ways in which the Zimbabwean government unleashed violence against its own people.

Muponde (2004) observes that the land issue spans the pre- and post-independence period in Zimbabwe. Therefore, in most selected stories, the land is depicted as a political anomaly out of which more problems, of a social and economic nature, sprouted. For example, Ndlovu's story "Hands" and Manyonga's "A Seed of Hope" explore the centrality of the land issue in different ways. Muponde argues that "[l]and is the text of Zimbabwean History and literature" (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet Website, February 2004). Some texts that deal with the land question include Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1975), Shimmer Chinodya's *Dew in the Morning* (2001) and Yvonne Vera's *Without a Name* (1994). Zhuwarara's *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* offers a critical survey of creative works emerging from Zimbabwe since the early 1970s and includes background issues to the land ownership and the state of the Zimbabwean economy. It is interesting therefore to examine how the selected post-2000 writers deal with the land question.

Primorac's *The Place of Tears: Literature and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* (2006) analyses the narrative of displacement in relation to identity construction and fictional formation in selected Zimbabwean novels. Although focusing on novels, her discussion of the role of fiction in advancing social change provides useful insights for my study. Primorac asserts that "since the start of the new millennium, violent social change has dominated every aspect of life in Zimbabwe … [which has been] gripped by a deepening social crisis" (p.1). The selected stories testify to the accuracy of Primorac's observation. Regarding the abuse of nationalism, Primorac argues that "even as they claim to be continuing the struggle against Zimbabwe's colonial masters, Zimbabwe's rulers mimic many of their strategies of clinging on to power" (p.2). Primorac starts from the premise that all literature has the capacity to participate in and comment on social change, and that novels are particularly well placed to do so because of their formal malleability and the narrativity which they share with historical accounts. Similarly, the short story, as part of the genre with the capacity to participate in and comment on social change, because of its stylistic techniques of length and snapshot account of events, is equally well placed to capture the dynamic and tumultuous post-2000 Zimbabwean situation. Primorac indicates that ideologies (official and otherwise) are inseparable from constructions of space-time, and that it is precisely through (not always immediately obvious) spatio-temporal means that fiction may be said to enter into debates with other kinds of texts and

constructions. The stories, to borrow Primorac's conception, participate in social change by asking and answering questions about the material and conceptual worlds in which they are embedded. This is the key theoretical preoccupation of my thesis as informed by Bakhtin's theorisation of space-time dynamics in literary narratives.

By focusing on the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis, my thesis highlights the meanings and functions of texts, as well as the notions of space, time and agency that texts bring into being. As Primorac (2006) avers, "all narratives participate in some manner in the social production of ideas about space-time" (p.10). My study shows how selected stories interrogate and subvert the central tenets of both the post/colonial master fictions and the "small" fictions that rehearse them. Borrowing from Primorac's insights, the mode of analysis for my study assumes that socially produced meanings are transformed when they enter certain kinds of literary works.

The nation has been a site of analysis in Zimbabwean fiction and literary studies. The collection of essays in *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*, edited by Muponde and Primorac (2005) counters "patriotic history" (Ranger, 2005, p.xviii) and challenges discourses of nationalism by envisioning a broadly inclusive alternative patriotic Zimbabwean history. My study examines stories by both white and black authors to subvert the Zimbabwean literary tradition that has been racially polarised. As has been observed by Muponde and Primorac, 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" (p.xv). The "plurality, inclusiveness and the breaking of boundaries" (xviii) advocated by Muponde and Primorac inform the analysis of the selected stories.

Veit-Wild (2006) embraces *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture* as a landmark contribution in the development of critical discourses on "the black Zimbabwean novel". She writers:

> With *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*, the criticism of Zimbabwean literature has come of age. Compared to the grand output of literary works from Zimbabwe over the last 30 years, there has been a marked dearth of literary criticism. Those works that existed divided authors either by race or by language. Versions transcends such division and undertakes a critique of the different strands of Zimbabwean literature as parts of collective national discourse. (p.1)

But as already noted, an in-depth and broad analysis of short stories is absent in Muponde and Primorac's text. My thesis attempts to bridge this gap in critical thought about the Zimbabwean short story. In explaining the stunted growth of black Zimbabwean literature in English, McLoughlin (1987) observed:

> Short stories in *African Parade* magazine turn more and more to romance and melodrama as the years pass … [and] the anomaly remains … that magazines and papers with a more open political mind than government or its supporting editors- *Daily News* (1956), *Central African Examiner* (1957), *African Star* (1960) did very little to promote imaginative writing [such that] in the turbulent political climate of the times, the banning of the NDP in 1961, of ZAPU in 1962, the emergence of ZANU, the collapse of Federation, UDI, short fiction reads like a trivial distraction from what occupied readers' minds. (p.6)

In response to an increase in fiction dealing with the Zimbabwe crisis, many critics have produced insightful studies. For example, Oliver Nyambi (2013) and Cuthbeth Tagwirei (2014) focused on the novel. Yet some have focused on the historical unfolding of the crises, dwelling on historical material by various critical scholars. My thesis focuses entirely on the short story to show how this genre fictionalises the tumultuous post-2000 Zimbabwe crises.

Theoretical Framework and Analytic Points of Departure

As a literary research, my study is text-based and hence employs textual analysis in line with the domain of English studies research. In this study, reference is made to primary literary texts, made up mainly of selected Zimbabwean short stories published after the year 2000. In line with textual analysis, various research methods are also used because the fictional narratives being analysed have a base in material history that derives from the Zimbabwean crisis. Belsey

(2013) opines that drawing attention to the methodological issues, textual analysis may lead outwards into sexual politics, and then into cultural and political history, utilising such methodologies as psychoanalysis, feminism and post-coloniality, among others. My adoption of textual analysis method is premised on the theorisation that "meaning subsists in relations between people [writers], inscribed in *signifiers*, sounds or texts. It has its own materiality: meaning intervenes in the world, defining our understanding of values … But because it never appears in itself, as pure intelligibility, as idea, but is always inscribed in the signifier, in the text, meaning is never fixed, single or final" (Belsey, 2013, p.167). I contend, therefore, that whatever meaning my predecessors have ascribed to the Zimbabwe crisis is not fixed. The short story, as a genre, signifies various meanings circumscribed by context and setting. However, I also note that any specific textual analysis, as Belsey (2013) puts it, is made at a particular historical moment and from within a specific culture. In that sense, although the analysis is not exhaustive and does not embrace all possible readings, past and future, it is nevertheless not arbitrary.

The eclectic theoretical approach adopted in the thesis provided the researcher with a favourable critical position to evaluate the representation of the crisis in Zimbabwe in the post-2000 period from various theoretical perspectives. Primorac indicates that ideologies (official and otherwise) are inseparable from constructions of space-time, and that it is precisely through (not always immediately obvious) spatio-temporal means that fiction may be said to enter into debates with other kinds of texts and constructions. In this regard, Bakhtin's chronotope theory was deployed in my analysis in various chapters as the overarching theory alongside other theories herein described. The theories helped to secure a deeper understanding of the various experiences during the unfolding of the crisis. According to Flick (2002) the combination of perspectives in a single study, adds rigor, breathe and depth in an enquiry and this enhances a deeper understanding of the issues raised around the debate of short story representation of the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis. The inseparability of Bakhtin's chronotope theory in the analysis of the short story stems from the various chronotopes that have been identified as defining the post-2000 crisis over a period of time and space (or locations and destinations). In this regard, Primorac indicates that ideologies (official and otherwise) are inseparable from constructions of space-time, and that it is precisely through (not always immediately obvious) spatio-temporal means that fiction may be said to enter into debates with other kinds of texts and constructions. As Primorac (2006) avers, "all narratives participate in some manner in the social production of ideas about space-time" (p.10).

To analyse the selected stories, Bakhtin's (1981) concept of the *chronotope* (literally, "time space") which refers to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature is utilised. Chronotope expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). Although Bakhtin applied his chronotope theory in the analysis of the novel as a genre, I adopt the theory because time and space are intertwined in the selected short stories and the chronotope is a unit of analysis for studying language according to characteristics of the temporal and spatial categories represented in language (Morson and Emerson, 1990, p.366). Bakhtin's crucial point is that "time and space vary in qualities; different social activities and representations of those activities presume different kinds of time and space" (Morson, and Emerson, 1990, p.367). Bakhtin argues that chronotope, as concept in literature, "has an intrinsic generic significance, and that it defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.85). Time and space bound narratives of the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis period make the use of Bakhtin's theorization very compelling. However, one needs to be mindful of the setting of the theory within the Russian scholarship and Revolution. For my thesis, the chronotope is appropriated primarily because it is understood as a formally constitutive category of literature and, therefore, it determines, to a significant degree, the image of humans in literature; and the post-2000 short story as a genre, in Bakhtinian terms, has been chronotopically defined as the writers have shown how space and time are represented as part of Zimbabwean history. As Bakhtin insists, the image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic. In this regard, chronotopicity as "literary time" is also used to refer to the temporal dimension of strategy narratives in their textual form. Emphasis is therefore on the linkage of the chronotope to literary forms of representation and their enabling and constraining features, thus enabling us to elaborate on the role of time and temporality in different types of narratives and genres such as the short story.

Borrowing from Bakhtin's conceptualization of "dialogicality", in which he argues that specific types of narratives tend to co-exist in particular ways (Bakhtin, 1981), the short stories are conceived as offering "antenarratives" (fragments of discourse that may or may not become widely shared or institutionalised narratives, Boje, 2008) to the "official strategy narratives" (Vaara and Pedersen, 2013, p.599). The competing versions are expressed in the form of other, often unconventional, genres and chronotopes such as the comic, satiric, cynical or even the carnivalesque. In this view, Bakhtin emphasizes that no matter how efficiently a narrative has smoothed a sequence of events by a means of a plot that seems to fit neatly the sequence of

events and actions, there is always an opportunity for alternative interpretations (Bakhtin, 1993). Moreover, time, being alive, is always open to the contingencies of the unpredictable and ever-changing world evident in post-2000 Zimbabwe short story, particularly in keeping pace with the rapid changes in the crisis period.

Not only do I adopt Bakhtin's chronotope theory for its focus on time-space connectedness but for the nuanced way in which, as a literary scholar, he has used the concept as a central element in his theory of meaning in language and literature. Embedded in theory of chronotope is the discourse which is entrenched in language and discourse in general. The short story, therefore, allows us to expand on the definition of Bakhtinian chronotope that makes it suitable for adoption and adaptation in the thesis. Modeling the chronotope theory on "the writing of crisis period in Russia" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.xv), Bakhtin's configuration of time and space as represented in language and discourse are evident and resonate with my focus on the writing in crisis period within Zimbabwe as represented in the selected short stories. Bakhtin comments that "languages are perculiar to generations" and adds that "language and context" (p.xix) are inseparable. Linking the subjects of language, discourse and history, he further argues that there is specific dialogue in history conveyed through specialized language, hence there is no such thing as "general language" (p.xxi). In this instance, Bakhtin proposes the context-based discourse that I have adopted as forming the backdrop of my analysis as particular overtones and stylistic techniques such as jokes, grotesque images and satire are adopted by the short story writers.

Extended space is created for other genres such as the short story to use the chronotopic theorization when Bakhtin refers to "languages as assimilated to form" (p.xxix), showing that the short story genre has specific language adapted to it, hence the tendency towards being suggestive, dramatic encounter, irony and sardonic humour representation of the post-2000 perceived in the stories. The short story is clearly caught up in what Bakhtin describes as "the new cultural and creative consciousness…polyglot world" wherein language and discourse are celebrated. My adoption of Bakhtin's chronotope theory is also informed by what Blommaert (2015) asserts is the nuanced approach to timescale contextualisation which offers new directions for complexity-oriented research.

In Bakhtin's conceptualization, chronotopes of the author and the reader as material in a text, are signifiers in that they involve signs. Through the short stories, we are presented with texts occupying a certain specific place in space, the post-2000 crisis. These texts have been

localized, showing that the creation of texts and the acquaintance with them occurs through time. In real time where the work resonates, there are real people, namely the authors and readers. These people, as Bakhtin argues, may be (and often are) located in different time-spaces, sometimes separated from each other by centuries and by great spatial distances. Nevertheless, they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete historical world set off by a sharp and categorical boundary from the *represented* world in the text. Therefore, in the light of what Bakhtin says, the actual chronotopes of the world, in this study Zimbabwe, (which serves as the source of representation) emerge as the reflected and *created* chronotopes of the world represented in the work (in the text). The major chronotopes can include an unlimited number of minor chronotpes. Chronotopes are mutually inclusive; they co-exist, and they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships (p.252). This implies the selection only of those details that bear a direct relationship to one's subject of inquiry.

Bakhtin describes chronotopes as interlinked with narrative. He posits that "chronotopes are the organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel" (p.250). Although Bhakhtin at this stage refers to the novel in particular, his reference to literature as a narrative and various genres, including the centrality of language and discourse over time and space make the chronotope theory adaptable to the analysis of the short story as manifest in my thesis. The chronotope is "the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. To them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative" (p.250). To this end, Bakhtin refers to the representational importance of the chronotope. He adds that time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins. An event can be communicated, and when this happens, it becomes information, and one can give precise data on the place and time of its occurrence. But the event does not become a figure. It is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events. This is so, precisely because of the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers, such as the time of human life, or historical time, that occurs within well-delineated spatial areas. It is this that makes it possible to structure a representation of events in the chronotope. Bakhtin adds that "all the novel's abstract elements – philosophical and social generalisations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect – gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work, such is the representational significance of the chronotope." (p.250).

The chronotope theory is also based on the understanding that the process of assimilating real historical time and space in literature has a complicated and erratic history, as does the articulation of actual historical persons in such a time and space. Isolated aspects of time and space, those available in a given historical stage of human development, have been assimilated, and corresponding generic techniques have been devised for reflecting and artistically processing such appropriated aspects of reality (Bakhtin, 1981). My thesis insists that the historical nature of the crisis since the year 2000 has been marked by the capacity of literature, particularly the short story, to represent and capture the unfolding reality. However, the various stylistic techniques, such as satire in its various forms and focalization, are used, among others, to process signifcant aspects of the post-2000 situation. Bakhtin further argues that "in the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope" (p.84). This means that we get mutual interaction between the world represented in the work and the world outside the work, which stands to represent the fictionalized world and the real world. This interaction, as Bakhtin further argues, is pinpointed very precisely in certain elementary features of composition. In his words, "every work has a beginning and an end, the event represented in it likewise has a beginning and an end, but these beginnings and ends lie in different worlds, in different chronotopes that can never fuse with each other or be identical to each other but that are, at the same time, interrelated and indissolubly tied up with each other" (p.85).

Bhaktin's theorisation of the spartio-temporal as informing the fictional narratives has been adopted as the overarching theory that weaves through chapter one. The pervasive nature of the Zimbabwe crisis, from the socio-economic and political landscape meant that no singular theory would be adequate in explaining the various manifestations of the crisis, and the way it has been represented, that is, through the stylistic techniques of the short story. In this regard, analysis in the respective chapters was framed through Bhaktin's theorisation of chronotopes and related theories such as the "co-mingling" of ideological and theoretical positions in chapter one due to what Astvaldsson (2011) has termed "fragmented narratives" (p.343), a quality of short story collections, reflecting the fragmentation of memory and a socially, culturally, and politically fragmented world. However, the Short Writings from Bulawayo series have been analysed as linked short story collections that have unifying elements which

enable them to cohere as an artistic whole, which in this case has been the regional setting of Matabeleland, Bulawayo in particular, implied in the series titles. It is in this pretext that Lavenghove's theorization of "Regionification" has been appropriated to analyse the extent to which the short stories capture the regional representation of the crisis through the selected short stories. The hindsight offered by Lavenghove's theory has enabled the exploration of lack of development and marginalization of Bulawayo, admittedly appropriated by Morris and Jones (2009) through their amaBooks, a small independent publisher in Matabeleland, as partially forming the basis of the Zimbabwe crisis. Consequently, the hegemonic tendencies illustrated through some characters in the short stories, as representing the authorial ideology have been explored through Gramsci's theory on hegemony and Foucault's "regimes of truth" and "the image of the Panopticon", as the issue of political power and control has reigned supreme during the crisis period with various generations also claiming legitimacy of the chronotope of liberation and independence.

It is also in this light of Gramsci and Foucault's philosophies that Ranger (2004) theorization of "patriotic history" as forming part of the post-colonial narrative has been used to understand how the issue of nationalism has also been used/abused to gain control over the masses during the crisis period, alongside Mbembe's (2001) critique of the postcolonial autocrat and despotism exhibited by the ruling party ZANU-PF's leadership. The narrative of the third *Chimurenga* or the "patriotic" version of Zimbabwe's history (Primorac, 2006, p.9) is in fact a version of what Achille Mbembe, writing about the African postcolony calls a "master code" or "master fiction" (2001, p.103). Mbembe observes that in certain African national environments affected by the experience of colonial violence, such as Zimbabwe, political situations develop where state power inscribes itself as a world order, and rulers claim to be deities of a sort. Master fictions may be described as discursive blueprints which aspire to generate and underlie all socially produced meanings. They seek to govern all those who are exposed to them and to become a new form of "common sense". Master fictions, as noted in Manyonga's "A Seed of Hope" and Ndlovu's "Hands", generate their own jargons and fulfil their own needs; and although they are fantastical, they are also whole, coherent and self-perpetuating. With its war-time rhetoric and neatly outlined contrasts, the Zimbabwean narrative of the third Chimurenga is one such fiction, and it is (just like "small" or literary fictional narratives) predicated on a certain understanding of space, time and human agency.

In the "patriotic history" of the Chimurenga, time is conceived of as linear (the three phases of the liberation war representing a neat teleological succession), and space as sharply divided.

Rural spaces are perceived as more "authentic" than urban spaces, and the same is held to be true of the spaces inside Zimbabwe as opposed to those outside. Mugabe's statements reiterating that "Zimbabwe is not England" function as acts of sharp ideological evaluation (Primorac, 2006, p.9). Through the selected short stories, my thesis examines the "spatio-temporal" (Bakhtin, 1981) structure of the colonial master fiction, and shows how the narrative of the third Chimurenga reinforces it and extends its life. As the crisis escalated, it is apparent that the race issue that has a socio-historical and political outlook dating back to the liberation struggle also took its toll over time-space. This has, in turn, seen the engagement of Erasmus's conceptualisation of race coded as "Race Otherwise", that has attempted to explore the centrality of race as the white community felt shortchanged by the crisis and the post-independence black leadership. It appears that the whites were still hooked to their white supremacy narrative that had otherwise been subverted during the crisis period as seen in the way that the writers have represented the chronotopes of the land and queues.

The postcolonial reading and theorisation of the selected stories necessitates multiple argumentation surrounding the post-2000 crisis and fictionalisation of history. This "post-national" stage, Murphy (2007, p.67) argues, saw satire, ambiguity and hybridity become the dominant motifs of much African fiction from the 1970s onwards. There was also a pronounced move away from realist narratives to more fragmented and experimental styles. The previous generation of writers had sought to develop narratives of resistance against empire and to imagine a national consciousness for emerging African nations. However, ethnic tensions, widespread poverty and oppressive regimes in many emerging African nations, as well as the continuing dependence on Europe, led many writers to question the whole nationalist project in their writing. These authors relate fragmented stories, often employing a range of narrative voices, resulting in them being classified by some critics as "postmodern" because they reject the linear, realist narrative styles of the nationalist generation. These styles are deemed to have employed simplistic binary oppositions between Africa and Europe in order to create a unified picture of the new African nations. Instead, these authors represent the ambiguities at the heart of the postcolonial nation state.

Bhaktin's theorisation of chronotopes is weaved into chapter three where laughter and jokes have been used as techniques to gain an insight of the crisis over a period of time in different places within Zimbabwe. In this conception, the deployed short stories and the techniques that exhibit the humour have a spatial outlook as the readers best identify with the wittiness in various places and workspaces as a coping mechanism perceived by Bakhtin (1981) that

"laughter demolishes fear" (p.23); and also to lampoon the leadership of ZANU-PF presumed to be behind the Zimbabwe crisis. In this light, the Rabelaisian notion of laughter theorised Bhaktin (1984) in the spatial-temporal landscape, and its link to satire and representation has been deployed in the chapter to think through the selected short stories exhibiting the chronotopes of tragic humour, dark satire and politics of acquisitiveness; and understand how laughter has been perceived in the Rabelaisian notion as having a philosophical meaning and stylistic technique in fictional narratives. Bakhtin argues that "reference to the human body and its life, helps to uncover a new meaning, a new place for human corporeality in the real spatial-temporal world" (p.170). The incorporation and representation of the human body in the short story has aided in illuminating the impact of the post-2000 crisis on the citizenry. Indeed, various short story techniques have been deployed by the writers in their short stories to represent the crisis through humour. Apparently, humour is perceived to have been central to the understanding of the crisis as the masses, with the escalation of the crisis, got to a stage whereby they could only laugh at the crisis indicators such as hyperinflation and helplessly watched the unfolding events. This laughter is different from the serious tone that has characterised the stories in chapter two, focusing mainly on the setting in of the crisis and its unpredictability in terms of the time that it was envisaged to end.

Characteristically, women were not spared by the crisis as they became victims. However, postcolonial feminist literary theory makes it possible to analyse complex social relations, including gender relations intersecting with race, sexuality and class in women's represented lives, and to examine the varied experiences of both women and men in the postcolonial patriarchal state of Zimbabwe. In this light, women writers also took a position to tell their own stories from a female perspective, though not in a radical feministic standpoint. The chronotope of the family unit vis-à-vis family disintegration and the crisis necessitated the adoption of feministic stance by Butler in her theorization of the notion of "precarity". Butler (2009) states that precarity designates politically induced conditions in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death.

However, the irony of the stories is that they show that, in the case of post-2000 Zimbabwe, social and political institutions have plunged vulnerable populations, such as women and children, into unimaginable precarious economic and psychological conditions. In the Bhaktinian theorisation, the dialogic relationships between the various chronotopes of culture, "small houses", abandonment, hunger and education are semantically interwoven in the short

stories to represent women and children precarity and vulnerability due to the post-2000 crisis. Among other issues, my study examines ways in which colonial and postcolonial femininities and masculinities are informed by and inform the "complex process of construction of national subjectivity" (Lewis and Mills, 2003, p.3). Zimbabwean women writers, particularly in *Women Writing Zimbabwe*, critique the post-2000 postcolonial patriarchy for failing the nation and its citizens in different ways. Through feminist postcolonial theory, the study interrogates how Zimbabwean female writers critique the historical legacy of gender inequality, injustice and exclusionary citizenship by colonial and postcolonial nationalists through the examination of the literary strategies they use to articulate the persistent failure to construct homely spaces and inclusive hospitable postcolonial nation-state.

Moreover, I analyse how female characters and their creators reclaim national belonging, as well as recreate and re-inscribe rebellious and liberating gender images in the nation. Therefore, gendered historical perspective, using the transnational moments as a tool to understand what is going on in the texts and what has been going on in the Zimbabwean society, are important for this study. This will be beneficial in understanding how gender has been reconstituted in the post-2000 period and the extent to which social, political and cultural transformations have resulted in various shifts in gender relations.

As the crisis escalated, it became apparent for most families that some members of the family had to migrate to the other countries such as South Africa, Botswana and to Europe and America. It is noteworthy that, in chapter one of my thesis, the stories have not dwelt much on migration to the extent of the exodus that has been described in chapter five. This is because selected writers who captured the migration pattern in 2007 to 2010 seemingly had an imagination that was overwhelmed by the massive exodus. Therefore, the shifting of individuals across the borders over time is a critical concept in understanding the time-space within the framework of the chronotopicity. As intimated by Bakhtin (1981) chronotopes of the author and the reader, in real time where the texts resonate, there are real people, and these may be (and often are) located in different time-spaces, sometimes separated from each other by centuries and by great spatial distances. Nevertheless, they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete historical world set off by a sharp and categorical boundary from the *represented* world in the text. This conception illuminates an appreciation of fictionalised narratives by writers such as Gappah (2009) and selected stories by Mupondi, Magosvongwe and Chiruka in the anthology *Hunting in Foreign Lands and Other Stories* (2010).

Theorisation of the stories through transnationalism and cosmopolitanism has been central. For example, the 21st century notion of cosmopolitanism has reached beyond the state and addresses the potentiality of difference and dynamism, contagion and connectivity. This has aided in the understanding of the lives of characters as they move from and across the nations assuming a new home that has been explored by Bhabha (2017) in the postcolonial context, interpreting the home in its two aspects, the "thereness" and "hereness" of one's existence, as characters seem to have grappled with the concept of "homeliness"; and his discussion of diaspora and cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism, according to Bhabha, looks for a cosmopolitan community which imagines a community beyond the territorial borders of nation-state, a community which is open to others, and is aware that the sense of culture, identity, thoughts and views are subject to changes when one meets the others. This cosmopolitan proposition, also conceived by Bhabha as "vernacular cosmopolitanism" is key in theorising the way that those that remained at home and those in the disapora perceived the chronotope of death and burial, among other chronotopes represented through the short story narrative, what has been described in Bakhtinian terms as a kind of "vernacular chronotope".

Closely linked to the issue of cosmopolitan notion has been the transnational notion that Aschcroft (2009) has appropriated in the conceptualisation of the fluidity and migration outside the state and its borders, thereby turning the individual into a cosmopolitan individual. Both the borders and identity of the migrants are therefore perceived as permeable as opposed to being static. The material and historical contexts of Zimbabwean emigration into neighbouring African countries and Europe needs to be read in the context of the tradition in which the person is often represented as an ambivalent creature torn between different cultures and loyalties instigated by the post-2000 crisis. As such, historical periods make it possible for one to analyse the transmutation of the crisis over the years, and in this study, from 2000 onwards. It is in this scope, therefore, that the identity and lives of the characters has been explored in the short stories vis-à-vis their homes and those that they left behind. Chronotopes of survival are appropriated in the short stories about the diaspora. However, Nkealah (2018) feminist theorisation about rape has been integrated in the dominant theories of chronotopicity, transnational and cosmopolitanism in order to understand the extent to which rape is not just characteristic of the animalistic nature of male rapists but *a constellation of moments linked in time and space* to a system of male dominance. The writers such as Gappah have been perceived as Afropolitan, hence the integration of the theory in an attempt to understand the

extent to which such writers exhibit African transnationalism in their self-representation and black agency.

An escalation of the post-2000 crisis has seen the Zimbabwean society being divided into stratified levels of social affluence. The poor have become poorer whilst the rich have become richer. It is in this light that Agamben's (1995) theorisation about the "the *People* versus *people*", with the poor, representing *people*, or what Spivak (1988) has termed "the subaltern." The escalation of the chronotope of violence and despotism seem to have been extensively deployed, as shown through the short stories, as a way of fictionalising how those that control the repressive state apparatus in the postcolonial state have used their powers to muffle the voice of the *people*. The right to live is seemingly no longer an option and the characters suffer psychological breakdown as they have to now fight their way through in order to survive. In this light, Bakhtin comments that "languages are perculiar to generations" and adds that "language and context" (p.xix) are inseparable. Linking the subjects of language, discourse and history, he further argues that there is specific dialogue in history conveyed through specialized language, hence there is no such thing as "general language" (p.xxi). In this regard, the ability of the short story to deal with "submerged population groups" (Hunter, 2007, p.146) and voicing of their exclusion, has made it suitable for depicting the impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on ordinary people.

The short story writers have utilised the various short story writing techniques, for example, skillful characterization, wordplay and satire, including other specialized linguistic techniques described in the chapter. All this has evoked an appeal to the reader's compassion towards the vulnerable *people,* representing the poor classes or excluded classes (Agamben, 1995) abused by the brutal regime and the biting crisis. The tone in the short stories epitomizes what one could describe as the climax of the post-2000 represented through various short story stylistic techniques. Although Agamben recognizes Karl Marx's reference to class struggle as defining the relations of the rich and the poor in society, he admits that the struggle between two peoples, that is, *People* and *people* has always been in process and "this internecine war that divides every people shall only come to an end when there shall no longer be, properly speaking, any people." (p.32). The short stories in chapter six exhibit the chronotopes of poverty that has been juxtaposed with politics in the post-2000 Zimbabwe selected stories, exhibiting what Agamben (2000) has, therefore, asserted that "in the modern age, poverty and exclusion are not only economic and social concepts nut also eminently political categories." (p.32).

The Interregnum Period in Zimbabwe

The conceptualization of "the interregnum" within the context of the post-2000 crisis in Zimbabwe takes its cue from Antonio Gramsci's theorization. Gramsci writes concerning the crisis of representation in literature: "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear" (Gramsci, 1971, p.276). This notion regarding the birth of the new and the death of the old has also been expounded on by Bakhtin (1984) in the context of the carnivalesque humour. The interregnum is interpreted by Jansen and King (2016, p.256) as Gramsci's notion of a liminal space that exists between the collapsing of an old order and the formation of a new.

The term "interregnum" has an interesting linguistic history. It used to refer to the moment between the death of one sovereign and the enthronement of another. But in the 1920s, Gramsci, writing from prison, subversively used the word to refer to the space between dominant ideologies or the moment between political discontent and political change. He was referring to all the big transformations happening outside his prison walls in Italy, that is the rise of fascism and communism in the country and the pushback against that. This is the context in which I use the term – that ambiguous moment between political protest, political discontent, and the actual change. This scenario is, for example, observable in selected stories such as "Hands" by Mary Ndlovu which depicts a generational tussle between father and son. The younger generation is fed up with the unfulfilled promises of the older generation. Godfery (2016) argues that the interregnum interrogates the future from the perspective of the generation who will shape it.

Lastly, some of the selected stories capture the dramatic changes in Zimbabwe's post-2000 era, which signalled that the nation was entering that space between dominant ideology and political protest, discontent and actual change. Gramsci (1971) refers to this period covered by the short stories as "the storm in-between of something" (p.276). Interregnum, Nyambi (2016) also argues, is an uncertain space where there is a lot of political energy and movement, but no one is actually certain where it will go. Most of the selected stories depict a Zimbabwe caught up in between the present economic and political crisis and an uncertain future. This uncertainty leads to writers largely depicting characters who are disillusioned about their present situation and are cynical about their government's attempt to bring about positive changes in the country. Thus, Chapman (1996) argues that "in the history of African literature, … disillusionment [is] frequently viewed along with independence and war" (p.302).

As much as the selected stories are grouped or paired in the various chapters to the thesis development and spatial-temporal delineation, a clear delineation of a singular story in a particular time-space in Zimbabwe is problematic. This is because stories tend to capture multiple narrative concerns in a single narrative, of which some of the historical issues attempt to relate early 2000 incidences all the way to the end of the first decade of the 21st Century. This narrative approach has been necessitated by the elusive nature of the post-2000 crisis indicators that makes it difficult to narrate one episode without relating it to the preceding period. For example, one would hardly comprehend the continued degeneration of the health system and the economy in general without first understanding the land invasions that took place in 2000 and the ensuing tense racial relations in Zimbabwe, among other issues. In the anthology *Hunting in Foreign Lands and Other Stories* Muchadei Alex Nyotaobserves that they followed set down thematic concerns in arranging the short stories into a collection but notes that some of the short stories defy neat categorisation. He writes: "In fact, there are some stories that cut across all the divisions" (p.viii). In the Bakhtinian sense of time-space, although these stories focus on a particular historical period, their concerns transcend a specific time and space. The stories selected for my study were identified according to the thematic concerns that fit the spatial-temporal terrain of Zimbabwe in the post-2000 crisis period.

Chapter Outline

The organisation of chapters, particularly the analytical chapters, has been guided by the various chronotopes that have formed the thematic core of the selected short stories in the thesis. The foregrounding of the chapters is thus entrenched in what Bakhtin (1981) posits that the chronotope is "the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. To them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative" (p.250). Notably, the aesthetically pleasing and historically accurate literary production of the selected writers have not merely addressed the Zimbabwean crises, but perhaps more importantly, emphasized, in Bakhtinian conceptualisation "the intrinsic interconnectedness of temporal and spatial relationships defining issues of that moment". The chronotopes are described in different stories and thesis chapters but they are, in Bakhtinian terms, interconnected as the organising center with language and discourse being contextualised to represent various spatial-temporal landscapes. It is in this light that, in terms of the chapter organisation, the interconnectedness of the chronotopes presents some overlaps across chapters that are not necessarily mere repetitons but elaborations of the related

chronotope. The need to analyse the representation of the Zimbabwe crisis in its multifaceted outlook has necessitated the chapter organisation as the crisis had varying impact on the larger Zimbabwean population in its disaggregated form. Historical chronotopes or "reality" across the chapters have been constituted through elaborate short story narratives techniques, including among others satire, setting, wordplay and wit, that have facilitated fictionalization of history. It is at this level that the short story as a genre of literature, has deployed "fragmented narratives" (Astvaldsson, 2011) that hint at issues without actually intending to be historical, but "integrating the reader in the construction of a fuller picture" of the crisis in this particular case. The selected short stories have bridged the history and fiction divide through the use of highly effective and imaginative techniques to construct an intricate text.

Chapter one thus, discusses various views relating to a historical foregrounding of the post-2000 crisis, leading to the fiction coming out of that era. The chapter observes that the post-2000 short stories have not received a lot of critical attention despite the background of unprecedented upsurge of this genre since 1997. This chapter also previews the broader theoretical grounding adopted in the successive chapters, for example, Bakhtin's (1981) chronotope theory which provides the overarching theoretical framework for the study, has been deployed alongside Lavenghove's regionification theory. Various strands of post-colonial theory have also been contextualised. Reference is made to Mbembe's notion of the "master code" or "master fiction" in relation to the African postcolony. Furthermore, Antonio Gramsci's theorisation of hegemony and Faucoult's regimes of truth have also been utilised alongside Ranger's philosophy of patriotic history. The chapter also explores Bakhtin's Rabelaisian theory; Butler's theorisation of the notion of precarity; Bhabha's philosophy of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. The chapter ends with a focus on Agamben's theory of *People* versus *people*.

The second chapter utilises the concept of co-mingling in which history is the raw material for the fictionalised stories that my thesis examines. Moreover, Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope again frames the chapter's argument. Chronotopes of the road, the queue, the farm and home, are some of the organising centers around which the chapter has been organised. In addition to exploring connections between history and fiction, this chapter examines how the *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series capture what Lavenghove (2003) describes as "regionification". Reference to specific landmarks and toponyms in the narratives give undoubted reference to the city of Bulawayo, in Matabeleland, and how the political and economic marginalisation of this city by the Zimbabwean government magnified the crisis faced by its citizens. In this light,

various theoretical propositions by Gramsci, Foucault, Mbembe, Ranger, and Erasmus have been deployed. The anthology series presents a linear understanding of the Zimbabwe crisis from 2003 (though some episodes referred to cover the period before 2003 up to 2006. Of particular interest in this chapter is what is termed "the queues scourge", the political crisis, the racialised approach to the land issue and public infrastructure deterioration, HIV/AIDS, and the corruption and plummeting service delivery in public institutions. However, these stories do not simply capture a regional perspective to the crisis; they also offer a microcosm of the Zimbabwe of the post-2000 crisis. What happens in Bulawayo reflects what happens in the cities and bigger towns of the country.

Chapter Three, extends the theorization of the post-2000 crisis to discuss the politics of acquisitiveness through a narrative, particularly using humour and satire. Chonotopes of the land and mineral wealth, alongside other sub-chronotopes, have formed the core upon which the fictional narratives have utilised the short story techniques of representation. Engaging with stories from *Laughing now* (2007), *Writing Mystery and Mayhem* (2015) both edited by Staunton, and *African Violet and Other Stories* (2012) by The Caine Prize for African Writing, the chapter contends that humour and political satire allow the reader to imagine an alternative discourse on democracy in contemporary Zimbabwe. Bakhtin's (1984) notion of the carnivalesque, as a social and political force that allows the lower classes to censure the politically powerful within the relatively safe confines of carnivalesque humour, is utilised to read these stories. The Rabelaisian notion of laughter has also been theorised in the chapter.

Chapter Four examines Staunton's *Women Writing Zimbabwe* anthology and observes that female representations of the Zimbabwean politically induced post-2000 socio-economic crisis infringed upon the domestic sphere. Through the chronotopes of poverty and "small houses", this chapter has singled out women writing in order to fictionalise female victimhood and agency. Also, as the crisis escalated, women and girl children in particular, were plunged into vulnerable positions that, over and above being historically informed, ushered women into new survival strategies. The selected stories demonstrate this through their preoccupation with what Woods (2013, p.318) calls "gendered vulnerability". Woods's formulation is akin to Butler's (2009) definition of precarity where it designates a politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. The chapter observes that, faced with such calamities as poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, among other social ills, the question of

female suffering should be understood both at the level of their gender and their positionality and how these result in intensified precarity.

Chapter Five explores stories are organised around the chronotope of the border that represent transnational migration experiences during the post-2000 crisis period, particularly the impact on family, the material benefits accrued through remittances, and some chronotopes of unquantifiable costs of migration. Stories are selected from *Hunting in Foreign Lands and Other Stories* (2010) and *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009). Among other issues, the chapter examines the dilemma of transnational parenting that compromised most marriages and the upbringing of children. Most of the selected stories show that desperate Zimbabweans sought "greener pastures" in foreign countries only to discover that these pastures were not wholly green. Utilising Homi Bhabha's (2017) notions of transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, "Diaspora and Home", alongside Afropolitanism, the chapter explores, among other issues, how immigrants are plunged into a dilemma when they fail to return home to bury their loved ones. The sense of "home" and what Bhabha refers to as being "homely" vis-à-vis the question of identity are analysed in relation to the selected stories. Challenges associated with dying in the diaspora are part of what this chapter explores. At the centre of the immigration challenges is the issue of travel documents that the characters corruptly access in an attempt to get out of the country. However, despite the negative aspects of immigration, some of the selected stories show that it is not all gloom and doom as there are some positives such as diaspora remittances that help some families to cope with the difficult situation.

Chapter Six examines the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis through stories that focus on differential classification of people in the context of the township and class chronotopes. The selected stories in this chapter suggest that the crisis induced suffering did not affect Zimbabweans in the same way. The political elite and the rich fared much better than the poor and desperate. Giorgio Agamben's (2000) concept of "the *People* versus *people*" is used to think through the different ways in which the selected stories depict the impact of the economic crisis on the elite and the ordinary people. Agamben uses the term *people* to refer to the poor, the underprivileged, and the excluded, the de-jure as opposed to the constitutive political subject, the de-facto. Furthermore, utilising Spivak's idea of "the subaltern" which she borrows from Gramsci, the chapter observes that the selected stories depict ordinary people as suffering not just because there is a crisis, but also because of their low economic status. Stories from Mlalazi's anthology *Dancing with Life: Tales from the Township*; "Hitting Budapest" in *2011 Caine Prize for African Writing* and "The Tower Light, Weed and becoming…" from

Mungoshi's *Behind the Wall Everywhere* are drawn upon in the development of the chapter's argument.

Chapter Seven concludes the study and briefly states the main issues arising from the thesis' central argument and suggests areas for further research, as well as predict the ways in which creative literature and its criticism are likely to relate to the changing Zimbabwean public sphere, especially considering that the crisis continues unabated.

Chapter 2

"Co-mingling": Post-2000 Zimbabwean Politically induced Economic Crisis in Short Writings from Bulawayo *I, II* and *III*[9]

Introduction

This chapter examines selected stories from three anthologies edited by Jane Morris, namely *Short Writings from Bulawayo I* (2003); *Short Writings from Bulawayo II* (2005) and *Short Writings from Bulawayo III* (2006). This series came at a time when Zimbabwe was gripped by unprecedented political, economic and social crises. As a result, they allow the reader to see, through "co-mingling" of issues, how the narratives engage with what some commentators have called the Zimbabwe crisis (Alden, 2007; Mamdani, 2008; Eppel, 2009; Mlambo & Raftopoulos, 2010). The chronotopes of the road, the queue, the farm and home have been contextualised in the series. I use the concept of co-mingling to refer to the varying ideological positions which cast challenges in the conceptualisation of the Zimbabwe crisis from historical and fictional perspectives. What the selected stories depict, illustrate Wilson-Tagoe's (2002, p.160) observation that some creative writers are able to "create narratives out of history rather than narratives of history". In this regard, historical fact deriving from the post-2000 crisis is remodelled into fiction in the selected narratives.

Moreover, the series exhibit a co-mingling of horror and humour, the *inbetweeness* as Zimbabweans did not know whether to laugh or mourn over their predicament. The very idea of a Zimbabwe crisis depicted as time-bound between the years 2000 and 2009 is in fact another manifestation of the crisis of naming the period. For example, Moore (2008, p.28) suggests that "a crisis can have unexpected results; it can make people take on new options and think harder than before about ways to survive". Moore questions the whole idea of describing Zimbabwe's

[9] My focus on the Short Writings from Bulawayo series is informed by Alden (2007) theorisation that other communities are developing in other ways [through creative writing]. As an accomplished scholar on Zimbabwean literature, Alden observes that some Bulawayo writers have a sense of regional identity deriving from the different history of Matabeleland since 1980. Among those most effective in capturing the sense of a community with its own history is the poet and fiction writer John Eppel whose story has been analysed in this chapter. AmaBooks, a private publishing house from Bulawayo has fostered a sense of writers' communities. All of these micro-communities have been instrumental in supporting individuals who have felt disaffected from the state during the crisis period.

problems as crisis, and asks: "what if 'crisis' cannot quite explain the constant recurrence of viciousness?" (p.29).

Moore is, of course, expressing Gramsci's notion of hegemony which distinguishes the root causes of a crisis and the symptoms of that crisis. Gramsci suggests that "a crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born [and that] in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear" (Gramsci, 1971, p.276). This is a concept also explored by Bakhtin (1981) within the Renaissance context where he saw revolutionary consequences and its acute sense of one world's death and the birth of another world (p.xv). These views inform the exploration of how the selected writers represent the Zimbabwe crisis in their fictional accounts. The chapter examines how the "budding writers" (Alden, 2007) understand their unique situation and the possibilities offered by fiction in a society crippled by political and economic strife.

The *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series present a linear understanding of the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis. Through his notion of chronotope, Bakhtin (1981) refers to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. The first anthology was published in 2003, the second in 2005 and the third in 2006. The editor of these series places the writings in a continuum evident in the coding of the series using Roman numerals "I", "II" and "III". This is also reflective of the incremental manifestation of the post-2000 socio-economic and political conditions in Zimbabwe. Regarding the sequential escalation of the Zimbabwean crisis, Mlambo and Raftopoulos (2010) assert that what has been occurring since the turn of the new millennium is "a complex and inter-related multi-layered and pervasive catastrophe that can, perhaps, best be described as a *series* [own emphasis] of 'Zimbabwean crises', for no aspect of Zimbabwean existence escaped the deleterious effects of this phenomenon." As much as there are variations in terms of the style used in *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series, there are elements of commonality within the anthologies and across the series that show writers' attitudes towards the socio-economic and political state of Zimbabwe.

The series title, "Short Writings from Bulawayo", is indicative of the stories that focus on what Jane Morris (2003), the editor, describes as the homes, streets and bars of present-day Bulawayo, or the surrounding rural areas. Morris adds that "the stories reflect and celebrate the diversity of life in and around the City of Bulawayo ... [and] bring together the different communities that make up Bulawayo" (Preface to *Short Writings from Bulawayo*, 2003). In

Bakhtian's (1981) terms, what Morris presents are chronotopes, that is, the temporal and spatial relationships that have been artistically expressed in literature, giving us the dominant organising principles in the stories. This suggests that, in analysing these stories, one must examine how they describe Bulawayo as Zimbabwe's second largest city in the wake of the crisis.

The stories' focus on Bulawayo and the Matabeleland region in general, informs my study's use of Langenhove's (2003) notion of "regionification" to try and understand the stories' preoccupations and how the issue of "region" has been constructed, represented and interweaved in the fictional narratives. The *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series fulfil the aspect of understanding spatial connectedness of regionification from "the geographical literature that focuses on territorial characteristics of geographical areas" (Langenhove, 2003, p. 6) already etched in the mention of "Bulawayo" in the series titles as the homogenising metaphor. The series' stories are analysed in the same chapter, in order to theorise the extent to which regionalising the crisis has given it a sense of focus and intensity in representation. However, in applying Langenhove's regionification theory, I take cognizance of his warning that "the number of definitions of regions is great and according to the field of research, definitions will differ and even contradict" (p.7). The isolation of the series' titles is most likely to be taken and interpreted at a political level due to the already existing documented history of marginalisation of Matabeleland region (CCJPZ, 1997) to which Bulawayo belonged before it was accorded the Metropolitan Province status. This political view, envisioning regionification, might overshadow the socio-economic interpretation of the region in general and the crisis in particular.

The stories in *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series reflect the writers' attempt to fictionalise the history surrounding the crisis period. Ranger's (2004) concept of "patriotic history" is useful in thinking through the different historiographies represented in the selected narratives. The thematic concerns of most of the stories revolve around the socio-economic and political happenings of the post-2000 period. The stories also exemplify Ngugi wa Thiongo's (1972, p.47) argument that "a writer responds, with his total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle, he registers, with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society ... for the writer himself lives in, and is shaped by, history". Most of the selected stories depict Bulawayo's unique character at a time of rapid changes in the socio-economic and political landscape, thereby giving the short stories their regional chronotopic spatial and temporal characteristics.

The three anthologies intricately weave the real and fictional worlds of Bulawayo, demonstrating that in the realms of time and space, especially with regards to the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis, chronology cannot be separated from the events and vice versa. The selected stories exemplify what Bakhtin describes as "responses to the movements of time, plot and history" (p.84). Schalkwyk (2001, p.1-2) expands Bakhtin's definition, describing chronotopes as "the distinctive moulding together of space and time into representational form and substance [which] are informed by historical and ideological pressures". The selected stories reflect historical, ideological and literary connected temporalities and spatialities in their representation of the post-2000 socio-economic and political history of Bulawayo and Matabeleland.

Using Astvaldsson (2011) insights on the technique of "fragmented narratives" (p.343), the short stories in Short Writings from Bulawayo series complement each other and, gradually, build up a credible, although fragmented picture of life in Bulawayo in particular and Zimbabwe in general, in the twenty-first century. The listing of the series does not appear accidental but can be read as an artistic strategy of creating individual stories. Some short stories across the series have been related to each other thematically in order to, gradually, shape the broader story, but one that is open and apparently inconclusive, because the acts of abuse, larceny, corruption and violence with which they deal continue in the present and sometimes no solution seems possible.

Earlier publications in the *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series present the socio-economic and political challenges that include hyper-inflation, land invasions, the coming in of formidable opposition political parties such as Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)[10], constitutional reforms, elections and Operation Murambatsvina, among other watershed moments in the recent history of Zimbabwe. However, the entrenched way the stated chronotopes impinge on the general labour force in both the private and public sectors, vis-á-vis service delivery are not fully explored in the first two anthologies. It is in the third anthology

[10] The MDC was born out of opposition to the proposed new constitution. In 2000, government had appointed a 400-strong constitutional commission to canvas opinion and had then drawn up a new 100-page constitution, copied largely from the recently developed South African constitution. Such was the confidence of the ZANU-PF government in the content and processes followed that they believed they would win an overwhelming vote of confidence through a referendum. However, MDC lobbied for support on the grounds that the new constitution could allow the 76-year-old president to enjoy a further two terms in office, since it did not clearly state that two terms of office included office held before 2000. Mugabe had already enjoyed two terms before that date. Such was the unpopularity of Mugabe in 2000, as a result of urban joblessness, that this single issue led to a large majority voting against the constitution (Chung, 2006, p.309).

published in 2006 that the multidimensional nature of the post-2000 crisis is given serious attention when the writers focus on the issue of corruption that pervades all sectors of the Zimbabwean economy. The interrogation of the representation of corruption is partly informed by Davies' (2004, p.19) observation that "details of corruption or abuse are inherently difficult to provide … we should acknowledge that the anecdotes and personal information that shape our individual interpretations might not be representative". The fictional representation of corruption in the Zimbabwean society, as presented in the selected stories, is read in the light of Davies's comments.

Socio-economic and political landmarks provide form to the regionification outlook of the *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series dating back to the late 1990s just before the publication of the first anthology in 2003, and 2006, when the last anthology in the series was published. The 1980s, the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence, witnessed considerable economic growth in some parts of the country that were not affected by the civil war, code-named 'Gukurahundi' (CCJPZ, 1997). The 1990s, however, saw the whole of Zimbabwe suffering from economic recession exacerbated by perennial droughts and the implementation of what Mlambo and Pangeti (2001) described as harmful World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) inspired Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). This led to rapid de-industrialisation, growing unemployment and severe erosion of living standards of the majority. Other politically induced economic crises soon ensued in the country and this led to the emergence of a strong opposition party which threatened ZANU-PF's political hegemony. The stories in *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series are set in the backdrop of this tumultuous political and economic environment. The anthology, *Short Writings from Bulawayo* (2003) explores the genesis of the Zimbabwean crisis in the 1990s and the early years of the crisis in the post-2000 period. The stories analysed in the next section engage with this phenomenon.

Demagoguery, Oppressive Nationalism and "Regimes of Truth"

"A Seed of Hope" and "Hands" by Masimba and Ndlovu respectively raise troubling issues about the extent to which fiction can historicise the socio-economic and political history of Zimbabwe, particularly the major chronotopes of generational conflict vis-à-vis Zimbabwe's liberation and post-independence political party movements. Irele (2001) suggests that, in modern Africa, history effortlessly blends into fiction and, in turn, fiction merges into history so that in literature, daily life and textuality almost become indistinguishable. Irele further

writes: "History ... represents the substance upon which the African imagination is called upon to work" (2001, p.112). The conflict represented in the stories is centred on the "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1975, p.30) borne by each generation and the failure coupled with fear by the old and the new generation to comprehend how the old dies as the new is born (Gramsci, 1971). However, it should be noted that each major chronotope that is stated also includes within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes. These chronotopes present complex interactions among them, thereby enhancing the representational aspect which I compare and contrast in the two stories.

"A Seed of Hope" and "Hands" foreground the gullibility of the protagonists. The stories depict political, economic and social challenges up to 2003 through the limited perspectives of ex-liberation fighters, Nigger X and Ndlovu who are blinded by the ruling party's patriotic history. Manyonga depicts Nigger X as a gullible and naïve second Chimurenga war veteran who, despite his many years of suffering and poverty in the post-independent period, still believes in the demagoguery of the ruling party about land[11] and what he calls enemies of the state. The story is an indictment of the emotions and the politics that have long surrounded Bulawayo and the province of Matabeleland described by Moyo (2007, p.11) as a place of "obliterated histories". Nigger X is used by the writer to critique the post-2000 period and to provide insights into the different Chimurenga wars that he has lived through. His naivety is evident in his having a lot of unanswered questions about the various wars that have been fought to liberate Zimbabwe from colonial rule, the land question and the drastic downturn in the state of the economy. Nigger X is also used to comment on the demagoguery and oppressive nationalisms that have tended to benefit the political elite at the expense of the ordinary people. Nigger X's depiction suggests that the foot soldiers of the liberation war are expendable as the ruling elite focus on enriching themselves. In a related stylistic approach, though not similar, in "Hands", the protagonist Ndlovu, another former liberation war veteran who is married to Rachel, known in the narrative as MaNgwenya, naively celebrates the work of his hands over the years, in the same style of Nigger X without taking cognisance of the crisis. Significantly, the story begins with Ndlovu's son Bongani, attending an evening political meeting organised

[11] By making land the only issue in both 2000 and 2002 elections, Robert Mugabe showed his well-known political astuteness. The majority of the people in Zimbabwe want land, and they voted for land. Land was the trump card. The MDC was not able to trump this trump card because of its close alliance with white farmers, resulting in its mixed and confused messages on the land issue (Chung, 2006, p.322).

by the opposition party that his father disapproves of. It is this generational conflict that sustains the story.

Manyonga and Ndlovu predicate their narratives on Foucault's regimes of truth. Notably, Foucault links the notion of truth to the explicitly political notion of regime. This highlights the types of discourse that society harbours and causes to function as true and which also entails the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. Although published at different times, Manyonga's story in 2003 and Ndlovu's story in 2006, the narratives are connected in terms of their temporal and spatial focus based on what Ndlovu (2018, p.83) refers to as the "Chimurenga chronotope", that largely frames the epitomised regimes of truth. Foucault argues that "each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true" (p.34). A better conceptualisation of the perceived "truth" in the stories vis-à-vis history of Zimbabwe is akin to Bakhtin's concept of "the zone of contact with incomplete events of a particular present" (1981, p.33) which suggests the prominence of space-time in textual reconstructions of reality and consequently, the importance of an intertextual approach to their interpretation. About intertextuality, Graham (2000, p.1) argues that texts lack "any kind of independent meaning". Intertextuality assumes that literary works are congeneric in relation to other non-literary texts and therefore their meanings can be adequately inferred when the literary text is analysed in relation to these "other texts" (for instance, the "state narrative" in the Zimbabwean context): Graham further observes: "Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext" (p.1). The notion of "other texts" is akin to Bakhtin's notion of "the unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.7).

The dominant organising chronotope in Manyonga's story is based on Nigger X's utterance of what he believes to be the truth and this is evident in his musings, "Why does the land have so many enemies, local and foreign? Why are they seeking to destroy the land through their sanctions and lies?" (p.69). Similarly, in Ndlovu's story, Ndlovu, the protagonist states, about his son Bongani exhibiting the truth that he subscribes to: "We brought you independence … selling out to the British … you wanted to live forever under Smith and the British! We liberated you, don't forget that" (pp.39-40). Both Nigger X and Ndlovu derive their legitimacy from their liberation credentials against the white settlers, imperialists and capitalists. This, as Bakhtin (1981) notes, shows the temporal and spatial point of view from which the authors

look upon the events that they describe. Although Manyonga and Ndlovu are located tangential to the reality they describe, the contemporaneity from which they observe the current Zimbabwe crisis includes, first and foremost, what Bakhtin calls the realm of literature, and not only contemporary literature in the strict sense of the word, but also the literature of the past that continues to live and renew itself in the present. As former liberation war fighters, the utterances by Nigger X and Ndlovu attest to what Ranger (2004) calls patriotic history employed and deployed by the ZANU-PF government. All the other chronotopes that arise from the stories are because of the cited regimes of truth and patriotic history that form the characters' worldviews.

Foucault's notion of the regimes of truth alongside postcolonial African political and economic governance helps to put Nigger X and Ndlovu's comments, regarding "enemies" and "sanctions"[12] in relation to the prevalence of poverty and dictatorships, into perspective and helps us understand the amazing intensity and striking historical accuracy of their words about Zimbabwe's poverty and oppressive nationalism driven by propaganda. Foucault (1975, p.145) elucidates the distortive potentialities of hegemonic knowledge, asserting that "knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of "the truth", but has the power to make itself true knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practices". Nigger X and Ndlovu are used to expose the power of rhetoric

[12] Sanctions have been viewed as one of the bases for the competing interpretations of the nature and cause of Zimbabwe's contemporary crisis. Freeman (2014) argues that "rather than the economic crisis having been caused by land redistribution, Zimbabwe has been punished by Western powers and institutions for stepping out of line." (p.351). In the view of the Mugabe Government, Britain and to a lesser extent the USA had reneged on promises made at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979 to fund a major land redistribution programme as part of the negotiation process that brought Zimbabwe to independence. When the Zimbabwean Government proceeded with its programme of fast-track land reform, Western countries imposed what are regarded as illegal sanctions on Zimbabwe and actively plotted ways to unseat the Mugabe Government. Until recently, these sanctions prohibited Mugabe and more than 200 senior members of his regime from travelling to Europe, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada and froze their financial assets. The European Union (EU) ceased military cooperation with Zimbabwe, banning arms sales, and would not allow 40 companies linked to the Mugabe regime to conduct business in EU countries. In 2001, the USA passed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA) which limited economic relations between US citizens and any person or entity considered responsible for undermining democratic institutions and processes in Zimbabwe. ZDERA also instructed US delegates to multilateral financial institutions to vote against financial aid to Zimbabwe and excluded Zimbabwe from the African Growth and Opportunity Act facility. Beyond these measures, a regime of informal sanctions has been in effect since the beginning of the current crisis, with official aid frozen and lines of offshore credit cut by bilateral as well as multilateral donors. However, ZANU-PF leaders claim that sanctions are illegal and can be blamed, in large part, for the Zimbabwean crisis and the poverty of Zimbabwean people. The basis for this assertion, as perceived by Freeman, rests on propaganda and hyperbole. The targeted nature of the sanctions meant that, barring one, they lacked the potential to affect the general population or the larger economy. The targeted sanctions focused on parastatal bodies and senior members of ZANU-PF, the military, the civil service and allied individuals in the private sector. For more information on sanctions refer to Freeman (2014) article "A parallel universe- competing interpretations of Zimbabwe's crisis".

and propaganda in constructing regimes of truth about the land issue, governance issues, the crumbling state of the economy and sanctions on Zimbabwe in general and Bulawayo in particular. Manyonga and Ndlovu represent the ambiguities at the heart of the postcolonial state.

Readers familiar with the recent history of Zimbabwe and the sanctions related discourse will readily realise that Nigger X and Ndlovu's utterances and characterisation are based on the repetition of patriotic history first mentioned by Ranger (2004). This rhetoric has been repeated ad nauseum in state media which has convinced many that all their suffering is caused by Western nations' sanctions against Zimbabwe. Freeman (2014, p.357) points out that "ZANU-PF leaders claim that sanctions are illegal and can be blamed, in large part, for the Zimbabwean crisis and the poverty of Zimbabwean people". This view is expressed by Nigger X when he rhetorically asks: "Why are they seeking to destroy the land through their sanctions and lies?" (p.69). The faceless "they" in Nigger X's words represent all the so-called neo-colonial forces which, in Mugabe's words, are responsible for Zimbabwe's economic and political woes.

Manyonga and Ndlovu bring to the fore the controversy surrounding the land issue in Zimbabwe, particularly the distortive potentialities of hegemonic knowledge fostered by those in power. For example, Nigger X says, "Rain or no rain, nothing can change that. Politics or no politics, the land belongs to the people!" (pp.70-71). The author uses Nigger X to explore the divisive discourses that have developed around the Second Chimurenga and the so-called Third Chimurenga. He observes that the Second Chimurenga was meant to "liberate the land" (p.68) from the British, whilst the Third Chimurenga focused on land redistribution and fighting against sanctions and economic downturn.[13] Regarding the land in Zimbabwe, Raftopoulos (2005, p.7) insightfully observes: "[T]he land, a continuously unresolved problem in the post-colonial period, became the sole central signifier of national redress, constructed through a series of discursive exclusions". Niger X's blindness to any other possible causes for his suffering indicates how successfully ZANU-PF's propaganda has been around the land issue.

However, whilst Manyonga is elaborate about the land discourse, Ndlovu is rather modest as most of her focus is on challenging the incursion of the new political dispensation in the form

[13] For the landless and for the peasantry, the revival of the liberation struggle gave them hope that they would receive land to mitigate their increasing poverty. Many of those who had participated in the liberation struggle of the 1070s felt that their revolution had been betrayed, and the land redistribution policy championed by ZANU-PF was an opportunity for them to regain some of the lost ground (Chung, 2006, p.295).

of the MDC opposition party. Ndlovu, the protagonist, sees everything, the success of the new nation as dependant on hard labour and full utilisation of the land: "We worked hard, suffered in the bush month after month, year after year. Now you think you must just enjoy it without working yourselves. We've even given you the land, and you can't produce anything on it." (p.36). Muponde (2005, p.123) affirms that "the liberation war is central to an understanding of how the Zimbabwe nation is forged and imagined". The Second Chimurenga was an armed struggle and is significant for its legacy of violent war rhetoric and practice, both assimilated into the Third Chimurenga or crisis period (Ndlovu, 2018). According to *Chimurenga-time* (Ndlovu, 2018), as articulated by its chief spokesperson, Robert Mugabe, the country's economic collapse during the "crisis" was yet another form of aggression by the West, geared towards recolonisation of the country with the help of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Zimbabwean whites, designated as Britain's "kith and kin". In this logic, time had come "full circle"[14], necessitating another war with the usual enemies, for total emancipation. As Ndlovu (2018) further argues, "the *Chimurenga* chronotope also suggests that the 'characters' in this debacle have fixed identities: whites were their usual racist, supremacist and stubborn selves, while Robert Mugabe was still the same principled, battle-hardened freedom fighter with all black people's interests at heart". This discourse enabled him to perpetuate the regimes of truth closely tied to the crisis.

Using Nigger X and Ndlovu as the focalisers, Manyonga and Ndlovu respectively show how the Zimbabwe ruling party has convinced everyone, young and old, that they needed the land, and that these characters naively exonerate the government and blame everyone else for underutilising the land, yet the same government has not done much to capacitate the black farmers. Both Manyonga and Ndlovu use their protagonists for burlesque purposes as they insinuate that it is one thing to have the land and another to get it to be productive; it is not just a question of rhetoric but a question resources and relevant skills too. The fact that Nigger X in the earlier quoted statement does not question the ruling party's rhetoric about land illustrates the truthfulness of Foucault's argument that "discourse is about the production of knowledge through language" (Foucault, 1972, p.27). The narrator's elaborate views about "the land" shows how the hegemonic knowledge has managed to control the thinking of most former liberation war fighters even in the wake of the chaos surrounding the land redistribution

[14] This is an appropriation of Cathrine Buckle's story title "Full Circle" in *Short Writings from Bulawayo II*, 2005, p.42).

process. Manyonga invokes the nationalist discourse of the ruling party through Nigger X. He muses:

> The issue of the land was the medicine which gave them new strength each time they felt like giving up. How they suffered in the bush, fighting tooth and nail against the enemy. And now, how can anyone say the land should not be allocated to the masses suffering all over the country? Insanity! X curses through his teeth. A bomb had claimed his leg, forcing him to leave the battlefront. (p.70)

Nigger X's views about the land illustrate the power and the pervasiveness of the Zimbabwean patriotic history. Manyonga scores maximum satirical points against his protagonist when he shows that Nigger X no longer distinguishes his own views and those of the ruling party's propaganda machine. There is no doubt, as Mogashoa (2013, p.265) observes, that, in Zimbabwe, the "restoration of land remains one of the priority national questions that are strongly connected to the demand of uprooting the institutions and traces of colonialism as part of the process of decolonisation". However, what Manyonga and Ndlovu's stories seem to be highlighting is the hegemonic control of the ruling elite over their subjects, which pervert people's genuine needs into a political tool for perpetuating its rule. This comes through when the writers poke fun at Nigger X and Ndlovu's credulity and gullibility in so far as the patriotic discourse about land is concerned. Nigger X and Ndlovu come across as completely brainwashed and this evokes Fanon's lament regarding how the postcolonial leader "pacifies the people" after independence by churning out the history of independence and the liberation struggle, and "asking the people to plunge back into the past and drink in the epic that led to independence" (Fanon, 1973, p.114). In the stories, Manyonga and Ndlovu satirise Nigger X and Ndlovu's naïve belief that the land redistribution will solve all causes of people's poverty and suffering. The loss of Nigger X's leg during the colonial struggle and Ndlovu's helpless withering hand, coupled with the fact that they still live in poverty despite their sacrifices, should alert these characters to the possibility that the Third Chimurenga might also lead to the same disappointment.

Manyonga's narrative suggests that Nigger X's mind is narcotised by the regimes of truth concerning the land constructed by those in power. For example, Niger X believes that there is a human force behind the lack of rains and subsequent droughts in Matabeleland. His gullibility makes him question why droughts are a recurring phenomenon in Matabeleland. The trending belief was that when the white farmers were dispossessed of their land, they somehow

interfered with the rain pattern to get back at the Zimbabwean government. Gramsci's (1992) notion that hegemony is rooted in the distinction between coercion and consent as alternative mechanisms of social power is at work in the case of Nigger X. The hegemonic power of the ruling party has worked, through ideological coercion, to convince Nigger X and those of his social class to subscribe to the social values and norms of an exploitative system. It is evident in Nigger X's case that hegemony is a form of social power that relies on voluntarism and participation, paralleled to Foucault's (1975) idea of the "panopticon" and "self-surveillance" (p.49), rather than the threat of punishment for disobedience. Nigger X's unquestioning stance on the land issue which has been used to manipulate ordinary people by the ruling party shows that hegemony appears as the "common sense" that guides people's every day, mundane understanding of the world. It is a view of the world that is "inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed" and which tends to reproduce a sort of social homeostasis, or "moral and political passivity" (Gramsci, 1971, p.333) in Nigger X, Ndlovu and all the nameless ordinary black people represented by these characters.

Nigger X's lack of understanding of the way in which the Zimbabwe ruling party used the need for land by ordinary people as a political survival instrument is illustrated by his series of unanswered questions in the quotation below. The narrator says:

> X is baffled. Why is it not raining? Why does the land have so many enemies, local and foreign? Why are they seeking to destroy the land through their sanctions and lies? Is it a crime to reclaim what belongs to you, what rightfully belongs to you and your people? … The land belongs to the people! X bellows it out. (pp. 69-70)

The power of the foregoing words lies in that, although Nigger X is not the narrator here, he is the focaliser. His views are a direct reference to and reflection of ZANU-PF, specifically Mugabe's strident rhetoric in explaining Zimbabwe's problems and the land question in particular. The reader sees things through Nigger X's perspective. His unreasonable views about land seizures are, in fact, a satire on Mugabe's disastrous land policy and empty speechifying. Manyonga's fiction mirrors Raftopoulos (2004, p.173) observation that "Zanu-PF has set itself that task of establishing a hegemonic project in which the party's narrow definition of the nation is deployed against all other forms of identification and affiliation". Repetitive ideological messages, for example, about the land, as articulated by Manyonga through Nigger X, are conducive to the consolidation of the ruling party. The warped mental condition of Nigger X highlights the powerful grip that Mugabe's rhetoric had on the average

Zimbabwean. It would seem that, whenever the state suffered from a "crisis of legitimacy", arising from doubts about its capacity to govern, or from a series of economic crises, land emerged as an expedient by which these doubts could be dispelled (Chavunduka and Bromley, 2010, p.366).

Fictionalisation of Chimurenga wars and the land issue in the stories by Manyonga and Ndlovu, as also witnessed in later subsections, is indicative of the comingling strategy engaged by the writers to historicise the crisis and show the transience of the regionification concept and what Campbell (1958) calls "entitativity". Campbell coined this term to analyse what turns a mere aggregate of individuals into a social group. He suggested four factors as antecedents of entitativity, namely common fate, similarity, proximity and boundedness. The more people in a group perceive themselves to share a common fate, to be similar, to be closer and to form a bounded unit, the more likely they will be perceived as one or a group. Using Campbell's characterisation of a social group, one is convinced to think of entitativity as a characteristic of regions as well, to which Manyonga and Ndlovu have been bound together. Regarding this, Langenhove (2003, p.25) argues that "much more important than boundaries are the sense of unity and the related identity for grasping what constitutes a region". The unity created by the Chimurenga wars and land themes, irrespective of the regions in which such wars were experienced, among others, has created a sense of entitativity among the writers.

Manyonga and Ndlovu's stories use the chronotope of generational and familial conflict to depict the national conflict in the post-2000 period. This can be read as an allegory of the nation. The generational and familial conflict, therefore, mirrors the political state of affairs in Zimbabwe. It should be understood that the "regimes of truth" informing the worldview of the characters, coupled with their conceptions of the land and what they think it represents, plunges the characters and their families into a conflict situation as their belief systems clash. The familial conflict threatening to destabilise and destroy Ndlovu's family in "Hands" alludes to, and even symbolises the political friction of Zimbabwe's recent past, where the so-called revolutionary fathers of the ZANU-PF party are enraged against the "rest of the family", that is, opposition parties, mainly the MDC[15]. Viewed in this light, Ndlovu's constant threats to his

[15] In his introduction "Memoirs of a Dutiful Revolutionary: Fay Chung and the Legacies of the Zimbabwean Liberation War" in Chung's book (2006) *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*, Preben Kaarsholm argues that the legacy of the Zimbabwean liberation war is far from undisputed, and it is also not easily agreed which forces- within contemporary Zimbabwean politics- have the right to represent this legacy. In her memoirs, Fay Chung seems to support Robert Mugabe's and ZANU-PF's attempt- through the 'Third Chimurenga'- to monopolise the history of the liberation struggle, pose themselves as its only rightful heir, and dismiss the challenge of

son's obstinacy should be understood as acts in the construction of what Mbembe (2001, p.103) calls the "commandement"- a postcolonial authoritarianism analogous to settler authoritarianism. Mbembe argues that the postcolonial establishment sustains its rule through an authoritarian reign over the public sphere. He argues: "State power creates, through administrative and bureaucratic practices, its own world of meanings- a master code that while becoming the society's primary code, ends by governing, perhaps paradoxically, the logics that underlie all other meanings within that society" (p.103). Ndlovu's family becomes a microcosm of the state where the hegemonic power that Ndlovu attempts to impose over his son mirrors that of the ruling party over ordinary people whom it views as wayward children who need discipline.

Ndlovu reveals how, though subjected to the same debilitating socio-economic and political circumstances, the old man and Bongani exhibit antagonistic interpretations of their overarching problems informed by their equally polarised grasp of history and its relationship to the contemporary post-2000 realities. Guided by a memory of colonial oppression and the heroic revolutionary war that brought independence, the old man, just like many other war veterans, is conservative and reluctant to accept explanations of the ills afflicting society in terms of his failure to consolidate that revolution into a just socio-political dispensation. It is because of the familial-generational antagonism vis-á-vis their survival that the subject of the oppressor and the oppressed is dramatised under a national hegemony. For Bongani and his generation, the *old* which is dying, that is, Mugabe and his ZANU-PF government represented by the old man, is thwarting the *new* (ideas and political ideology) from being born. Ndlovu's story represents the divergent political worldviews that reflect the author's creative imagination, and the capacity to capture the "morbid symptoms" (Gramsci, 1971, p.276) of a crisis. The story shows that tendencies to valorise a monolithic and fixed interpretation of history create citadels of hegemonic power skewed in favour of the authors of that history.

To place Foucault's notion of the regime of truth within the context of the generational conflict in "Hands", truth is "a system of ordered procedures for the production, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements"; it is linked "by a circular relation to systems of power which produce it and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which redirect it" (Foucault, 1976, p.113). This is the web in which Ndlovu is caught up. Foucault further adds

democratic opposition as something alien and hostile to this historical mission. This helps us to gain insights into and to understand various statements and arguments within contemporary Zimbabwean politics (Kaarsholm in Chung, 2006, p.24).

that "the essential political problem for us, today, is trying to change our "political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth" (where truth is modelled on the form of scientific discourse), to constitute a new "politics of truth" (p.114). The problem in "Hands" arises as the impasse ensues between Ndlovu and Bongani as they attempt to constitute a new politics of truth predicated on the socio-economic and political crisis.

The old man, Ndlovu, uses his patriarchal power to bully his son as much as the ruling party ZANU-PF uses its liberation credentials to cling on to state power almost indefinitely. Ndlovu is very patronising to his son by virtue of having fought in the liberation war that supposedly brought freedom and independence. To Bongani's claim that the young generation is trying to solve its problems, he says:

> What problems? We brought you independence. We worked hard, suffered in the bush month after month, year after year ... We've even given you the land, and you can't produce anything on it. All you talk about are problems, problems, as if you want a life without struggle. (p.36)

Ndlovu's reasoning is used to satirise ZANU-PF's stance on its presumed legitimacy in perpetually holding on to the country's political reins. His response is typical of the follies of patriotic history where a biased history of the country is peddled in the state media as the history of the nation. "Patriotic history", Ranger argues, "is different from and narrower than the old nationalist historiography, which celebrated aspirations and modernisation as well as resistance. It resents the 'disloyal' questions raised by historians of nationalism. It regards as irrelevant any history which is not political" (Ranger, 2004, p.218). The myths of "creating", "owning" and "overseeing" the family, claimed by Ndlovu, are similar to the creation of a hegemony of the ruling party ZANU-PF as the patriarch mystifies his authoritarianism under the guise of putting the interest of his family first.

Ndlovu is intolerant to any challenge to the ruling party and wants to use coercive force because he has failed to convince his son Bongani about his own version of the truth. This is seen in his angry outburst at his son's participation in opposition politics: "So we messed things up, and you are going to fix it? Who do you think you are? Ungrateful bastard! Are you really my son? MaNgwenya, how did this intruder get into my home?" (p.40). However, Bongani is unperturbed. He responds: "I'm doing what I think is right, what I have to do. We have to get

rid of this government if we are to get out of this misery"[16] (p.39). Failure by Ndlovu to represent the truth that he stands for can be understood in the context of Foucault's assertion: "Truth, if it is really true, does not need a supplement of force, an enforcement, a supplement of vigor and constraint to be accepted. It is the truth, and that's all: truth is sufficient unto itself for making its own law – its coercive force resides within truth itself. Truth itself determines its regimes, makes the law, and obliges me. It is true, and I submit to it" (Foucault, 1976, p.114). Provide a short comment to Foucault's words which indicate the point you are trying to make.

In the light of what Ndlovu says, Bakhtin's (1984, p.256) proposition that there is need to carnivalise the present because it is a hope for the future, seems reasonable. Bakhtin says carnival forms "present the victory of this future over the past … The birth of the new … is as indispensable and as inevitable as the death of the old … In the whole of the world and of the people there is no room for fear. For fear can only enter a part that has been separated from the whole, the dying link torn from the link that is being born" [sic]. Bongani stands for the daring new generation that has broken away with fear and wants to break with the past that has been built on despotism.

Manyonga and Ndlovu represent and critique the ambiguities of the postcolonial state that are represented through the juxtaposition of the nationalist mind-set and the new generation. The same lack of foresight that afflicts Ndlovu in "Hands" is evident in Nigger X in Manyonga's story who, although is alert to the fact that "so much is going wrong [and that] young people are fleeing the country and the land is plunging into recession by the day" (p.69), still believes in the perpetuation of the status quo which he blindly defends. Although Ndlovu is disillusioned by the economic problems besetting the country, the ruling party's patriotic history seems to have numbed his mind. What is ironic is that Ndlovu makes an accurate assessment of the country's ruling party's null achievements. Alluding to divisive politics of the ruling party that led to the country's regional civil war of the 1980s in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces, Ndlovu talks of "years of confusion, drifting, avoiding arrest in the sweeps by the Fifth

[16] The argument between Ndlovu and Bongani must be understood within the perspective of a symbolic fight between the political parties, ZANU-PF the ruling party and MDC the opposition party respectively. As argued by Chung (2006, p.307) "MDC was composed of everybody who was against Mugabe and ZANU-PF. It instantly became a powerful, well-financed (particularly by the former colonial power Britain), but seemingly directionless opposition, with various components having different goals and strategies. Built on the foundation of the labour movement, unemployed youths, and the black intelligentsia, MDC soon also attracted the support of the white farmers whose farms were being invaded by peasants led by war veterans".

Brigade[17]. Then, finally, a mediocre job in the security company, a family two bed-roomed house in Nkulumane, a sputtering *skorokoro*[18], and a small herd at the family homestead that he could not even afford to visit any more" (p.37). Reference to "the Fifth Brigade" and "Nkulumane" a high-density suburb in Bulawayo, are not inadvertent, but are a conscious effort by the writer to fictionalise the regionification of Bulawayo, as Langenhove (2003, p.10) argues that regionhood is both "a part of physical reality and the result of a process of social [and political] construction".

Ndlovu then asks himself a rhetoric question: "Was this what he fought for?" (p.37). The story's extensive use of rhetoric questions points to the vexing nature of the Zimbabwean crisis that cannot be explained or defined in a coherent and predictable way. One can detect in Ndlovu, as the focaliser, the discourse underlined by the regional history of "Gukurahundi civil war" (CCJPZ, 1997) that has always hovered as a dark cloud over Matabeleland thereby also filtering into the literary narratives of the crisis period. Somehow, Ndlovu's questions evoke Lavenghove's (2003, p.22) characteristics of regionhood where "the region is a generator and communicator of meaning and identity". Ngugi wa Thiongo (1981, p.94) argues that "asking questions is a dangerous exercise in a post-colonial society". Ndlovu's words also allude to the tribal politics of the ruling party, which led to it being perceived as belonging to the Shona people and not to other language groups such as the Ndebele people who reside mainly in the southern part of the country.

Although Ndlovu apparently sees the ZANU-PF's short-comings, he fails to come to a full realisation of the cause of his suffering and how this suffering can be resolved. While Bongani is still in Bulawayo, his other children are struggling in Johannesburg, "denying their pedigree, paying any money to be seen as a South African not a Zimbabwean" (p.37). However, Bongani shows that life has not been rosy for those who have gone to South Africa as they have to live by false documents and fraudulent permits or as asylum seekers' permits. He asks his father:

[17] The first indication of the intention to form a specifically anti-dissident force was on 12 August 1980. Then Prime Minister Mugabe stated on this day, in his Heroes' Day Speech, that former guerrillas would form a militia to be trained to combat "malcontents", who were "unleashing a reign of terror." Subsequently, in October of 1980, an agreement was signed between Prime Minister Mugabe and President Kim Il Sung, in which North Korea offered to train and arm a brigade for the newly independent Zimbabwe. In August 1981, 106 Korean instructors arrived to begin training the brigade. Prime Minister Mugabe announced that the Korean-trained brigade was to be known as 5 Brigade. Mugabe had said the brigade would be used solely "to deal with dissidents and any other trouble in the country." A day later, at a rally in Nyanga, he warned dissidents that the new force would crush them. ZAPU opposition party leader Joshua Nkomo had questioned the need for the formation of 5 Brigade citing Zimbabwe as "having efficient forces of law", little did he know that Mugabe had ulterior motives for Matabeleland and Midlands provinces (CCJPZ, 1997, p.45).

[18] An old model car, whose engine does not operate perfectly.

"Do you want all of us to run away to South Africa to live on the streets there?" (p.39). Ndlovu is so out of touch with reality that he interprets people's exodus to South Africa as a rebellion against the ZANU-PF regime and tantamount to undermining the sacrifices made by liberation war fighters.

Ndlovu's shocking naivety in terms of the changing political regimes destabilises his family. MaNgwenya, Ndlovu's wife, functions as an arbiter between the warring ideological impulses of her husband and son. MaNgwenya says of her husband to her son: "He knows things are not right, but he can never admit it to you" (p.40). She tells her husband: "Have you stopped to watch your son these past few months? Haven't you noticed how frustrated he is with good 'O' levels and no job? You can't manage to pay for a course for him, so he tried to raise money for fees by selling on the street but was constantly harassed by the police" (p.38). Bongani himself says to his father: "Look at us, your children that you were supposed to be sacrificing for- half educated, unemployed, wandering the streets" (p.40). Ndlovu, therefore, exposes the destruction of good life opportunities of the poor war veterans and their families by the same government that they support. For example, in a bid to survive the economic crisis, Bongani takes on employment in street vending where he engages in running battles with municipal police who confiscate his wares because they say he needs a licence to operate.

Both Ndlovu and Nigger X suffer from a seemingly incurable mental indolence in the wake of economic challenges. This supports Foucault's theorisation that power transcends politics and becomes an everyday, socialised and embodied phenomenon. Although criticised by some for having little scope for practical action, Foucault's concept of power is useful in understanding Nigger X's plight, particularly his idea of the panopticon where monitored individuals get so used to being watched that they end up watching themselves or engaging in self surveillance (p.198). In the case of Nigger X, the populist ruling party's norms have deeply embedded themselves in his psyche that they are beyond his perception – causing him to discipline himself without any physical coercion from others. The narrative presents a transition where Nigger X comes face-to-face with total economic collapse but fails to transcend the simplistic "patriotic jingoism" (Ranger, 2004) that controls his thinking. The narrator says "as soon as X hits the city of Bulawayo, he is flabbergasted. Everywhere he looks; his eyes meet with long winding queues snaking through the sanitary lanes. He had never thought the situation could be this bad" (p.71). Nigger X soon discovers that the long queues are for basic commodities such as sugar, salt and fuel. Manyonga depicts Nigger X as a buffoon since he thinks that the first queue that he sees is for free money. Nigger X subsequently assumes that some unscrupulous

businessmen are withholding the basic commodities. Through this satiric strategy, Nigger X is presented as a victim of the ZANU-PF government's regime of truth that has blamed Zimbabwe's economic woes on enemies of the state. The power of the ruling party's hegemonic ideology is demonstrated by the fact that it never occurs to Nigger X that the Zimbabwe ruling elite are largely responsible for the country's sad state of affairs.

Within the scope of Foucault's panopticon, Nigger X fails to challenge his predicament during the crisis. As has already been alluded to, in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), in a chapter entitled "Panopticism", Foucault utilizes the Benthamite concept of the panopticon to explain what he thinks is the way power operates in modern societies, especially in totalist institutions (p.61). Bauman (1998) summarizes Foucault's concept of the panopticon as follows: "In its, ideal type, Panopticon would allow for no private space; at least for no opaque private space, no private space unsurveilled or worse still unsurveillable" (p.49). Foucault insisted that the panopticon should not be understood as a dream building but rather as "a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use" (p.205). In "A Seed of Hope" and "Hands", a myriad of power forms may be disentangled through a critical and interpretive use of the Benthamite-Foucauldian panoptic mechanism. This is vital because, as Bauman points out, "[b]eing a near-perfect metaphor for the crucial facets of modernization of power and control, the image of the Panopticon may … dwell too heavily on the sociological imagination, thus preventing rather than facilitating, the perception of the nature of present change" (p.49). Foucault's theorisation of power has been appropriated alongside Bakhtin's (1981) theory and how power is narrativised in literature, pariticulalry where Bakhtin argues that narrative works of literature are often regarded as monologues emanating from a position of power. Notably, despite presenting a sophisticated analysis of the plurality, transformations and operations of power, in the chapter "Panopticism", Foucault comes very close to viewing power as unmediated domination. Commenting on the use and effect of the Benthamite Panopticon on power relations, Foucault writes:

> Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power … The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen. (p. 202)

This presupposes hegemonic, pre-existing and unequal power relations and becomes clear when Foucault further argues that, although the inmates of the Panopticon are "caught up in a situation of which they are themselves the bearers [of self-regulating power]" (p. 202), the power that they bear is oppressive, undesirable and imposed upon them by the Panopticon mechanism. In Foucault's formulation, it is significant that while the panopticon automatises and de-individualises power, this power to observe is unidimensional, and is only exercised by those who have been co-opted into the dominant power system. Foucault writes:

> Consequently, it does not matter who exercises power. Any individual, taken at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants. (p. 203)

Bauman (1998) argues that the Foucauldian panoptical techniques "called for the asymmetrical of surveillance, for professional watchers, and for such organization of space as would enable the watchers to do their job and would make the watched aware that the job was being done, and could be done, at any moment" (p.49). Viewed from this perspective, the panopticon metaphor leaves no room for resistance. Manyonga and Ndlovu's short stories reveal a more complex operation of power in the scope of Foucault's panopticon model.

In *Discipline*, Foucault argues that, in Europe, by the end of the 18th century, there was a sudden transformation in the exercise of power. He says that there was a movement "from a schema of exceptional power to one of generalized surveillance" and claims that this change was a result of historical transformation (p. 209). In Mathiesen's (1997) words, the introduction of panoptical power led from a situation where the many watch the few to a situation where the few watch the many (p. 215). According to Foucault, then, there was a sudden shift from the theatricality of pre-modern operation of power to the implicit, internalised, capillary kinds of discipline in modern societies.

Nigger X's limited understanding of the actual causes of the country's problems represents how the Zimbabwean population in general has been physically and ideologically coerced to continue supporting a regime that has authored the country's collapse. Fanon (1963, p. 114) observes that the postcolonial leadership is "incapable of offering the people anything of substance and is incapable of actually opening up their future". Mpofu (2013, p. 104) also argues that "chief among the many foibles of nationalism has been its failure to discharge its professed duty and vaunted mandate to building nations in Africa". Despite the land that he has received, Nigger X is faced with starvation. Even if the rains that he seems to pin all his hopes

on were to come, Nigger X does not seem to have adequate means of making a success of his farming venture. Instead, his life, like that of most former liberation war fighters, hinges on some futuristic optimism as demonstrated by extensive use of the future tense: "All these things *will* soon come to an end ... Things *will* get better ... The currency *will* gain ... Soon other nations *will* envy this country like before" (p. 70; my emphasis). The reality depicted in the story and the story's overall tone suggests that Nigger X's optimism is illusory.

Similarly, Ndlovu in "Hands" fails to see beyond the liberation struggle. Just like his ZANU-PF party, Ndlovu builds his authority and legitimacy around patriotic history. Bongani aptly summarises his father's worldview: "He would never understand. He couldn't seem to get out from behind his gun and look around to see what was happening. As if he was just emerging from the bush twenty-five years ago" (p. 37). Levi (1988, p. 35) talks of the instrumental use of the past by the powerful for selfish political ends. He argues that "the further events fade into the past, the more the construction of convenient truth grows and is perfected". In "Hands", the past is reduced to Ndlovu's nationalist achievements, the work of his "hands", which must be seen as an indispensable contribution to the "freedom" that Bongani and his generation are supposedly "enjoying". This is seen in his angry response to what he sees as Bongani's lack of gratitude to his contribution to the independence of the country. He says: "I can't have my own son denying my life's work" (p.40). Ndlovu's being stuck in thinking in unproductive ways of the past is captured in Brink's (2007) assertion that "it is not the past as such that has produced the present or poses the conditions for the future ... but the way we think about it" (p.33). MaNgwenya aptly summarises her husband's view of the past: "His belief in himself depends on his being a fighter- following his leader, even when his leader has led him into ruin. Can't you see that he lives for his past?" (p.40). Ndlovu's sterile conception of the past informs his mantra of "political roots" (p.38) framed by the paternal act of the war in which he participated. Ndlovu thinks that Bongani and his friends "don't understand that the revolution takes time, and needs to be supported, not challenged" (p.38). Bongani challenges his father: "Things are all wrong. Your generation messed things up, no food, no jobs, no rights to anything. We have to fix it" (p.39). Bongani seems to be the author's voice because he believes that change must come through collective and inclusive efforts that appraise the past honestly in order to use its lessons to chart a better future.

Where Ndlovu radically depicts the generational conflict in the post-2000 period between father and son, mediated by the mother, Manyonga adopts a different approach that is rather modest. For example, Nigger X is confronted with nameless young people who seem stunned

by his behaviour in the face of the economic suffering that everyone is facing and attempting to navigate. Naivety in the questions that Nigger X asks about the queues that he observes everywhere when he gets into town is a stylistic technique that ridicules the old generation of war veterans who have been narcotised by ZANU-PF demagoguery. Nigger X is flabbergasted by the queues that he sees snaking through the sanitary lanes, and he admits that he had never thought the situation could be that bad. He then asks a young man in one of the queues, "What is this for, my son? Is money being given out here?" (p.71). Manyonga intensifies the ridicule by expressing how the young man turns and thoroughly examines Nigger X before laughing contemptuously: "Money, old man, you have to be out of your dim wits. Who do you think would dish out money to anyone in this corrupt economy, huh?" (p.71). The technique of "dialogic imagination" (Bakhtin, 1981) fully exposes the generational conflict as his naivety turns Nigger X into a laughingstock among the young people around him; even the one selling roasted cobs declines to save him from hunger that afflicts him by giving him a cob, yet he fails to see where the whole problem rests. Bakhtin (1981, p.243) argues that "art and literature are shot through with chronotopic values of varying degree and scope. Each motif, each separate aspect of artistic work bears value" as observed in Nigger X's representation, thereby giving us the state of affairs in Zimbabwe. What also emerges is that these interactions are dialogical. This dialogue, as Bakhtin further puts it, enters the world of the author, and the world of the readers. All these worlds are chronotopic as well. Thus, Monyonga's world gives us a literary depiction of the post-2000 crisis-ridden life through fictional representation.

The motif of the road, as witnessed in Nigger X whose worldview is opened while he is on the road travelling, is associated with a broader scope of emotional and evaluative intensity about the crisis, that is veiled to the character but somehow overt to the reader. For example, Nigger X "enters Jason Moyo Street and heads down the Gallery, He switches roads and enters Main Street. There are queues everywhere … he feels tired and sits by the Tredgold Building … and gets to the terminus to get a lift to Northend but fails and he has to walk following the road past Highlanders Sports Club" (pp.71-72). The extent to which Manyonga has integrated the chronotope of setting by referring to the real places in present-day Bulawayo depicts the extent to which literature can historicise. Also, the short story fictional narrative at this stage represents how literary chronotopes are related to "history" and "reality". History and literature have been "co-mingled" by way of integration of the historical landscape features about Bulawayo thereby making the literary representation "truthful" and depicting the social functioning of literature. This is inline with the earlier observation made in the thesis that

several volumes of short stories examined here were published in Bulawayo, and writing from/about Matabeleland emerges as an important unit of cultural/textual analysis, justifying (in a manner an analysis of other genres could not) the thesis' claims related to the "regionification" of Zimbabwean literature in English.

Bakhtin's (1981) theorisation of the road as a place of encounters is quite relevant in understanding what Manyonga is doing with Nigger X's consciousness with respect to the Zimbabwe crisis and the regimes of truth that seem to mediate his worldview. Bakhtin posits that "the road is a particularly good place for random encounters. On the road ("the high road"), the spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people – representatives of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages – intersect at one spatial and temporal point" (p.243). It is, therefore, no coincidence that, as he travels on the road to his nephew's place, Nigger X meets with all kinds of people and the Vapostori[19] churchgoers. The road has become a place of encounters regarding the reality of the crisis. On the road, people who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance accidentally meet; contrasts may manifest themselves, and different fates may collide and interweave with one another. On the road, the spatial and temporal series defining human fates and lives combine with one another in distinctive ways, even as they become more complex and more concrete because of the collapse of *social distances* (Bakhtin, 1981). The road motif, as used by Manyonga, is both a point of new departures and a place for events to find their denouement, as we witness Nigger X's journey and thinking about the crisis getting to their terminal point. Therefore, in Manyonga's narrative, time fuses together with space and flows in it (forming the road), and this is the source of the rich metaphorical expansion on the image of the road as a course of life during the crisis period.

Closely tied to the chronotope of the road is the onomastic approach used by Manyonga and Ndlovu to represent the regionification of Bulawayo in the stories. For example, the naming of the places that Nigger X passes through, for example, the Main Post Office, Bakers Inn opposite the Unity Village Flea Market, BSS, Highlanders Sports Club, Coronation Cottages, and then North End suburb, captures the "regional space" of Bulawayo. Langenghove (2003, p.12) characterises this as "a territory in which people have developed a kind of translocal relationship with the physical boundaries of the space". The author recasts the physical space,

[19] A religious group/sect in Zimbabwe that wears white gowns. This group of believers are found in most streets of Bulawayo in the CBD and they have been associated with great controversy as they are also engaged in illicit deals aligned to money laundering and illegal forex exchange. They have been viewed as accomplices in the post-2000 economic crisis related to cash shortage. They constitute part of the essential chronotope in the spatial-temporal narration of the regionified crisis interpretation.

although we are told that Nigger X is trying to find his way to his nephew's place in North End. The topological referents for Bulawayo and Nigger X's journey from the Main Post Office are stylistic techniques that give insight into the crisis from the city centre to the periphery. This is because, geographically, most of the distances in and around the city of Bulawayo are measured from the Main Post Office, hence making reference to this landmark is not coincidental but strategic in the temporal-spatial representation.

Manyonga engages the hunger motif to mock Nigger X who, although he languishes in hunger, continues to precariously cling to the nationalist ideology. Describing hunger that Nigger X goes through, the narrator says that "a loud sound escapes from his bowels as his intestines contort once again in a desperate clamour for food" (p.68) and that "X tries to fight [hunger] off, but, in the end, he faints, the hunger and the pain overwhelming him" (p.70). Manyonga's story derives its power from showing that "'*what is*' in Africa is that African leaders have taken political control from their erstwhile colonisers, but '*what might be*' that is freedom from hunger, poverty, economic underdevelopment and the people's genuine democratic rights to hold their leaders accountable, remain a receding point for the majority of the continent's citizens" (Ndlovu, 2012, p.62).

The repetitive motif of "hunger" permeates the story as the author uses it to mock Nigger X's credulity and his wholesale imbibing of ZANU-PF's patriotic history. Nigger X is in a pitiable situation and his unbearable hunger is used to critique the power of discourse that perpetuates dictatorships. The reader's attention is drawn to the survival tactics that inform the methods that most postcolonial African leaders have used to continue hanging on to power even in the face of crises in their nations. Through Nigger X, the author mocks the naivety of most liberation war fighters who are always looking to the past and their liberation exploits as legitimising their post-2000 existence and economic well-being. Signifcntly, it seems Manyonga simultaneously satirises and pities Nigger X's failure to see beyond the limiting ZANU-PF's political rhetoric.

As much as Nigger X and old man Ndlovu are victims of the ZANU-PF government's hegemonic power, the authors have unmasked the pretence in the lives of their characters by showing their introspective capacities. At the close of the story "Hands", the narrator shows that Ndlovu is contemplative, "Where had it all gone wrong? ... He was too tired to work it out. It was too complicated. All he knew was that his wife spoke the truth." (p.41). He finally concedes to the need to chart a better future for another generation, "I did what I had to do and

so will [Bongani]. Let him go. He will learn, as we did; and just maybe he will do better" (p.41). This reveals disillusionment and an admission that there is need for regime change and opening up space for opposition politics, as well as opening democratic space at family level. The later would symbolise the desired democratisation of the national space. Nigger X in "A Seed of Hope", however, continues to desperately clutch on to his liberation war credentials. Naivety continues to afflict him as he thinks that "now that the rains are over hunger will be over, and no more fuel problems, no more shortages … no more queues … no more mayhem. It is all over!" (p.74). Nigger X remains recalcitrantly naïve right up to the end. The author intensifies his mockery by lambasting Nigger X's irrational thinking. Despite the coming of the rains, Nigger X does not consider the issue of agricultural inputs in a country atrophied by a shortage of basic commodities and cash.

The fictionalisation of what might be condemned by other critics as "postmodernist" bleakness in the above two stories must be understood in the context of an observation made by Brian Chikwava in an interview with Primorac (2010). Chikwava observed: "In Zimbabwean politics at the moment, there is that refusal to acknowledge that maybe we've got it wrong, maybe things have gone too far. [The ruling elite] can't afford to do that anymore, so they will just have to plough all the way through, until things come to a standstill. Which is what has happened in Zimbabwe – almost like a dead end, a refusal to reflect genuinely about what has gone on in the past" (p.259). The reflection proposed by Chikwava is also echoed in Murisa and Chikweche (2015, p. xvi) who observe that "the failure on the government's part to come up with an effective framework for equitable development based on significant redistributive land reforms ensured that the majority of the population remained very vulnerable to poverty". Nigger X and old man Ndlovu are caught up in this dilemma.

The stories "A Seed of Hope" and "Hands" show how regimes of truth and patriotic history as major chronotopes are backdrops of successive discourses such as the liberation war, land issue, ZANU-PF versus MDC party politics, generational and familial conflict, hunger and naivety. The interactions between these chronotopes is enhanced by the dialogical aspect that brings authors and readers into a conversation in a bid to understand the complexities surrounding the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis. The representational importance of the chronotope concretised the narrative events linked to Nigger X and old man Ndlovu and allowed them "to take on flesh" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.84). This was possible through the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers, the time of human life, of historical time, that occurred within well-delineated spatial areas, both rural and urban. The commingling of style and themes

points towards the isolation of the motif of queues in the selected stories. The following section analyses selected stories from *Short Writings from Bulawayo III* (2006) to demonstrate how the scourge of shortages of basic commodities that led to ubiquitous queues in post-2000 Zimbabwe exacerbated the suffering of Zimbabweans. The next section will not only extend Bakhtin's chronotope notion and Erasmus's theory of "the look" which focuses on "racialization" versus race, but it will also compare and contrast how black and white Zimbabwean writers depict the country's economic crisis.

'Living on the edge in Zimbabwe': The 'Queues' Scourge and the Zimbabwe Crisis

This section focuses on the representation of the escalating suffering of Zimbabweans that has resulted in them "living on the edge", and precariously in the once beautiful country. The representation of queues is one of the major signifiers of the crisis in Bryony Rheam's story "The Queue"[20] and Pentecost Mate's story "Pay Day". Rheam is a white writer, whilst Mate is black. The fictional exploration of the crisis would be incomplete without focus on queues that have persisted to date, resulting in Zimbabwe earning the name "a queues nation" (Mungoshi, 2003). From Bakhtin's chronotopic insight, the stories are seen as attempting to assimilate real historical time and space in literature, particularly with respect to the scourge of queues in the post-2000 era. In the literary artistic chronotope, as Bakhtin further argues, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, and, likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history (p.84). In this light, Rheam and Mate's stories utilise temporal and spatial representations to make their narratives visible and representative of history.

Similarly, Erasmus's conceptualisation of race sheds light to the reading of Rheam's story, particularly the contradictions that surround race. Commenting on how race works, in Erasmus's *Race Otherwise* (2017, p. xv), Crain Soudien states: "It operates at both the visceral and the cerebral levels and tunes into registers both personal and social. It draws on sociology, history, psychoanalysis and genetics. It is not without indignation, and not, thereby, insensitive to emotion". This is evident in Rheam's main character Mrs Rose Atkinson. These are the

[20] For an elaborate understanding on the centrality of queues scourge in the context of humour in the post-2000 crisis period refer to Chapter 3 of the Thesis, page 89, footnote referring to Alden (2007).

complexities of race that are explored alongside Bakhtin's chronotope theory, seeing that the chronotopes of race and queues are also major issues around which the two stories are built. The questions raised by the selected stories are: What makes these stories fiction when they seem to replicate the exact situations during the height of the Zimbabwean crisis? Does this suggest that some events are so tragic that they elude fictionalisation and can only be replicated in stories that purportedly fictionalise them?

In an interview with *Out of Africa Lifestyle Magazine*, Bryony Rheam provides the following summary of her short story: "'The Queue' is about an elderly white woman [Mrs Rose Atkinson] who cannot cope with the circumstances in which she is living. She has to deal with petrol queues, rapid inflation and just the general difficulty of living in Zimbabwe if you have little money. She thinks back on her life and tries to come to terms with her loneliness - her son lives in Australia and her husband is in a home as he has Alzheimer's. The story ends with the woman's death". This summary gives insight into the authorial intentions. The story, which is set in Bulawayo, conforming to Langenghove's regionification theory (2003), focuses on the post-2000 Zimbabwean economic and political crisis as it impacted on the previously materially comfortable white Zimbabweans. In her professed connection to Bulawayo and love for the city, Rheam, in an interview, highlighted that she spent most of her childhood in and around Bulawayo. Despite the economic situation in Zimbabwe, she has identified Bulawayo as a great place to live in. She admits that life in Bulawayo is often harsh, dominated by droughts and years of political isolation, but that there is also a savage beauty to it (*Out of Africa Lifestyle Magazine*, Interview, 2015). It is on this basis that most of Rheam's writings have been set in Bulawayo, as she describes the poverty, AIDS and farm invasions as part of the problems facing the country.

The story "Pay day" presents the pitiable life of civil servants, particularly teachers from the rural areas, on pay day. The narrative shows how queues characterised by stress-filled faces are everywhere. Service delivery in the banks is appalling as electricity blackouts also exacerbate the problem. An old woman is also one of the people in the bank queue. A twist to the narrative occurs when three-armed security guards rush into the bank carrying a metal trunk and people in the queue start stampeding. The old woman is pushed and shoved in the skirmishes much to the disapproval of the others in the queue. Service delivery in the bank is appalling. Meanwhile, the bank has been robbed but all that the queuing public thinks of is coming back to queue the following day.

The queues that baffled Nigger X in the previous section are a discourse marker and a homogenising chronotope of the Zimbabwean crisis which is extended in the story "The Queue" by Rheam and "Pay Day" by Mate. It is for this reason that the stories, though written by authors of different races, are analysed together. Rheam allows the reader to view the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis through racialized and gendered perspectives. She is a female white Zimbabwean and the focaliser of the narrative is Mrs Rose Atkinson who lives a lonely and miserable life when her husband, Jack, is put in an old people's home after developing Alzheimer's disease. Her only son, Barry, after getting married, moves to Cape Town and, eventually, to Australia and never writes to her mother. The story suggests that the crisis put even white people, who had formally been an economically privileged group, under a common denominator of suffering; they are scrounging for sustenance just like the blackmajority.

Mate, however, presents the pitiable state of the civil servants in the post-2000 temporal space through the focalisation of an old woman. Mate gives a critical insight into the life of queues in Bulawayo, particularly the innumerable challenges that continue to beleaguer the post-2000 period. The story depicts the calamitous life of civil servants, particularly the teachers who became a laughingstock during the peak of the crisis as they could hardly fend for their families. Similarly, Rheam depicts the problem of queues for basic commodities that subsequently claim Rose's life. The stories are set during the early stages of the crisis when joking about a single sector's salary, that of teachers, meant that the other professions were still better off than them. However, the latter narratives reveal that salaries, at some stage, cease to be a laughing matter as the inflation-induced crisis eventually eroded everyone's salary, including the massive savings of the rich.

The motifs of a drought and the scorching sun that are developed in Manyonga's story are also taken up in "The Queue". The "fierce heat of summer" that kept Rose indoors for the greater part of the day intensifies the sense of gloom and doom which pervades the story. Everything succumbs to the heat, which figuratively represents the sapping of life and the pervasive economic disaster. The narrator describes the deathly atmosphere that Rose encounters as she wanders out into the garden:

> The earth was hard and dry. It had begun to crack in places, and looked as though it would fall apart if she walked on it and she would disappear into a great cavernous hole beneath. Even the rough, dry grass seemed to cling precariously to it; much of it was dead already. (p.42)

Although historically, the drought besieged Zimbabwe during the crisis era, in the story it is used metaphorically. Ironically, from the onset of economic and political problems in the late 1990s and throughout the first decade of the 21st century, Zimbabwe also experienced a series of physical droughts. Some senior ranking officials in the government were even heard suggesting that the drought was the work of Britain and her allies who did not want the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP)[21] to be a success. This reasoning was also noted in Nigger X's rhetorical questions (quoted earlier) where he seems to connect the lack of rain with the many enemies of the land both local and foreign who supposedly are seeking to destroy Zimbabwe through sanctions and lies. Although alluding to the ways in which white people seemed to enjoy a luxurious life style through the exploitation and oppression of the black people during and even after colonial rule, the main thrust of "The Queues" is its successful fictionalisation of the physical drought conditions by juxtaposing them with the crisis which reduced the previously economically secure white people into poverty.

Rheam's story describes a historical epoch in which black Zimbabweans seemed to be claiming back from their white employers what they considered to be rightfully theirs. Within the context of Baktinian's chronotope, the narrative reveals Rheam as racially blinded by the ensuing racial shifts between blacks and whites. Rose is not only tormented by the absence of a sick husband, an uncaring son who has relocated to Australia and the drought conditions, but she is also harassed by her black gardener who is always borrowing money that he does not return. Under the sub-chronotope of loss, Rheam focalises old whites, in particular those left behind in Zimbabwe with no family around them owing to migration of younger family members to other countries with thriving economies as being in distress. She also portrays the decimating effects of pensions lost to hyperinflation. The phenomenon of old people left behind by younger members of the family eventually becomes normative and widespread for both white and black people. In this story, Robinson asks for some money purporting that there is a crisis with one of his relatives who had visited him and who now wants some money to go back to his rural home. Rose gives him $Z200, but Robinson demands $Z800, saying that, because

[21] The Fast-Track Land-Reform Programme was indeed fast, and clearly it was about taking the land and giving it to black farmers as the custodians of the land. Most rules, processes, administrative mechanisms, and issues of resource mobilization were put aside because they were seen as a hinderance to achieving the objectives of the programme. Some constitutional and legal imperatives were also suspended and, if challenged by white farmers, were amended to meet this one objective. In a short space of time, white farmers had lost hope, confidence and a sense of place in the Zimbabwean body politic and started trooping out of the farms. The fast-track land-reform programme became an instrument to redress political injustices of the past, while the political elites took advantage of the situation for their own political ends, as well as benefiting from the reforms, as has been illustrated in the outstanding issue of multiple farm ownership (Kanyenze et al., 2011, p.93).

of inflation, bus fares had gone up. Although Rose desperately needs the money herself, she gives in to Robinson's demands. Robinson seems to enjoy torturing her employer this way. This is how the narrator describes his actions after extorting this money from Rose: "He put the money she had just given him in the inside pocket of his jacket. Rose sighed and shook her head as she watched him cycle out of the gate. He started to whistle" (p.42). Regarding racial relations, Erasmus (2017) argues that "racial markers, racial naming and their meanings change with time, context and political struggles" (p.50). Rheam's depiction of Robinson's cruelty towards Rose suggests that racial tensions remain entrenched in Zimbabwe. There is a sense in which Robinson seems to want to dispossess his employer of everything. Earlier, the narrator indicated that even the bicycle that Robinson is riding once belonged to Barry, Rose's son. Robinson's actions seem to be influenced by the prevailing political climate which saw white farmers being violently dispossessed of their farms. Rose and Robinson's toxic racial relations emerge out of difficult colonial relations that gave birth to the nation which subsequently became Zimbabwe. Erasmus argues that "changes in meanings of race emerge from a specific constellation of socio-political circumstances that make up a particular historical moment in a specific place- known in the social sciences as a historical conjuncture" (p.50). Despite her many problems in post-independent Zimbabwe, Rose, by virtue of her race, is made to carry the historical burden of colonialism by Robinson.

Rheam also represents how the Zimbabwean government condoned and sponsored violence against white people and, therefore, engendered a sense of entitlement among black employees, which has infected the likes of Robinson. Thus, the pernicious effects of the Chimurenga discourse on everyday Zimbabwean life are illustrated by Rheam in her story. Robinson represents one possible reaction of poor black people on whom ZANU-PF successfully used the Chimurenga discourse to mobilise them against white people. The garden is in a terrible state. The narrator observes that "the front garden looked unkempt and … weeds grew prolifically in the flowerbeds" (p.43). Rose had attributed this to the late rains and to the poor soil. But when she went behind the house, something that she had not done for a long time, she was shocked to see that Robinson had deliberately neglected his duties in order to care for his own personal interests. Despite water shortages, Robinson had his own patch of healthy mealies thriving in the backyard. This is what Rose witnesses in a state of shock: "The sturdy [mealie] plants had pushed themselves triumphantly out of the earth and stood, as though ready for inspection, before her. The earth around them was dark and solid. It was not parched or cracked; it was warm, healthy earth that had been tilled and fed and looked after" (p.42). Robinson's are

clearly actions of rebellious insolence against his employer. Rose feels betrayed by Robinson to whom she believes she has been very kind over the years.

Robinson, on his part, is unhappy about his wage, which, due to hyperinflation, cannot cover the basics. He seems to derive his courage not only from what Ndlovu (2018) calls Chimurenga-time which is the time when blacks are now aware of their power to challenge whiteness as this is no longer the colonial era, and from the fact that Rose is virtually a lonely single woman now, but also from the prevailing country's political climate where white people are being dispossessed of their farms in most parts of the country. Unable to deal with what she perceives as Robinson's audacity and the shortage of basic commodities; Rose suffers a heat stroke in the queue and later dies. In her story, Rheam contrasts the colonial-time of the 1950s with the Chimurenga-time of the 2000s where blacks are no longer scared of whites.

White people's superiority stalks them even during the crisis period as they expect better treatment ahead of others as was the case during the colonial era. Through the technique of "dialogic imagination" (Bakhtin, 1981), the chronotopes of race and the queues interact to fictionalise the dilemma faced by Rose, the protagonist. This interaction makes Rheam's representation of Rose to symbolically speak and signify. The story makes one perceive the material of the text and the reader hears "voices, even while reading silently" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.252). For example, the last part of the story captures the crisis through the queues that Rose is subjected to. The narrator reveals that when Rose starts her car, she discovers that it is nearly empty and that "she would have to join a petrol queue on the way home" (p.49). Rose says, "this was called living on the edge in Zimbabwe" (p.49). In the Bakhtinian interpretation, we are presented, through Rose's life encounters, with a text occupying a certain specific place in space; a space that is localised. Our creation of it, our acquaintance with it occurs through time. The story's title derives its name from the queues which had become synonymous with life in Zimbabwe as people queued for all basic commodities. Unfortunately for Rose, as Seshadri-Crooks (2000) contends in her Lacanian analysis of race, although meanings of race and its markers change, "the look" as a technology of racial differentiation and identification remains constant as white people still expect better treatment. Therefore, the changed conditions frustrate Rose to her death. Thus, Ndlovu (2018, p.85) contends: "Undeniably, no white person can be freely decoupled from the system of white power and privilege". In "A Seed of Hope" how Nigger X was confronted with queues even for salt when he arrived in Bulawayo. For Rose, fuel for automobiles was also in serious shortage. As she is driving to town on a day that

proves to be the last for her since she subsequently collapses and dies at another queue for money at the POSB, the narrator describes the long car queues for fuel thus:

> All the way to town, she saw lines and lines of cars parked alongside the road. Many were left empty while their owners went to work. Some were parked at crooked angles, having obviously pushed their way into the queues. In places there were two or three lines of cars and, at one garage, a queue formed from both ends of the forecourt, causing chaos. (p.49)

These queues foreshadow Rose's own death at yet another queue at the bank that day in town. The queues are also a symptom of an economy that has grounded to a halt due to political mismanagement by the ruling elite.

However, Rose's, and by extension Rheam's failure to read through the racial markers defining the crisis, lead to her demise. Although it is acknowledged that some black leaders fail in their administrative endeavour, stereotypically, Rheam plays to the white racial pitfall of viewing blacks as failures in administration, graphically presented through the successive failures and state of dilapidation thereby legitimating the idea that a black person needs to be constantly guided by a white person. In Erasmus (2017) conceptualisation, Rheam fails to transcend the stronghold of race. Rose's experiences point to the deterioration of standards in Bulawayo business entities. When Rose gets to the cafe intending to give herself a treat, she notices disturbing changes. From Tom Gregory, an Italian, the cafe has gradually declined and become more of a take-away than anything else; the name has even changed to Mr Tasty's. At the Café, Rose orders a cup of tea and she is given a teacup and saucer and a jug of milk, when in the past "they gave a pot not a cup". As much as this description speaks to the deplorable service delivery due to a deepening economic crisis in the country, which has led to several changes in management at this café, there is a simmering tone of bitterness that is linked to the loss of past glory, control and authority by the white people in Zimbabwe, which Rheam consciously or unconsciously addresses.

Moreover, the prices are astronomically high, being pushed up by the country's hyper-inflation. Rose's husband's pension has been eroded and she realises with dismay that she can no longer afford a decent cup of tea. In the Bakhtinian sense, we meet Rheam as the creator of "Queues" and, although she is located outside the chronotopes represented in her work, she is, as it were, tangential to them. We meet her (that is, we sense her activity as the author) most of all in the composition of the work. As much as we do not condone the decline in the standard of business

practices, one questions, from what temporal and spatial point of view Rheam, as the author, looks at the events that she describes. It is evident that, in the first place, she does her observing from her own resolved and still evolving contemporaneity, in all its complexity and fullness, and insofar as she herself is located as it were tangentially to the reality she describes about the queues and race.

Rheam and Mate also faithfully depict the suffering induced by the cash shortages in Zimbabwe. They represent how people had to endure long bank queues during the crisis to access largely worthless cash. The homogenising chronotope, in this instance, is the spatial feature that is the bank. The climax of the stories is realised through some dramatic actions that take place at the banks. Mate and Rheam situate their short stories within the banking sector, in order to capture the cash shortage dimension of the Zimbabwe economic crisis. The narrator in Mate's "Pay Day" says the queues in and outside building societies and banks, characterised by "stress-filled faces", are long and winding. The narrator describes the queue at the bank as moving "like a pregnant snail" (p.91). Outside, at the bread shop next-door, the queue is described as stagnant with those in the queue exhibiting "long and sad faces … as if they are waiting for body viewing at a funeral" (p.92). The narrator further states that "the queues look dead, as if the people in them were planted and not watered the previous night" (p.92). Similarly, Rheam describes the exhausting characteristic of the queue at the POSB, saying: "The queue was moving slowly; people were withdrawing a lot of money and it wasn't even Christmas" (p52). The clustering of funereal imagery in Mate's story represents the suffering that the public had to endure during the height of the Zimbabwean crisis, and the author's ability to use historical material as fictional material. Although the temporal characteristic is different from Rheam's story which was published in the 2003 anthology when the queues scourge had just set in, Mate's story published in the third anthology of 2006, successfully highlights the authors' ability to capture the temporal history of the chronotope of queues that seem to have been mentioned by most of the writers in in *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series. In 2020, the issue of queues has remained a defining historical reality in the degenerating Zimbabwe.

There is a story-within-a-story in "Pay Day". Mate introduces an old woman who seems to be the focus of the story within the story. This technique shows the multiplicity of happenings within the crisis epoch, as smaller tragic events were occurring within the larger Zimbabwean crisis. This demonstrates the short story's ability to capture simultaneity of events during a crisis or what Chidavaenzi (2006) calls realities of society captured in motion. The frailty of

the old woman and the scrounging for cash that she is subjected to, draws the reader's sympathy as the crisis has not spared even the elderly who have to compete with the young and able-bodied. However, there is an underlying message in the dramatic unfolding of the story, which implies that the old woman could be an accomplice in the bank robbery that ensues. This further highlights the desperation of people during the peak of Zimbabwe's crisis. In a related tragic episode, in Rheam's story, Rose dies while trying to reprimand a man who is jumping the queue at the Post Office. Sadly, her angry reaction to the man's actions does not win support from those who are also in the queue as they seem resigned to their sad situation.

While Rheam story ends on a tragic note, Mate uses what Bakhtin describes as carnivalesque humour to ridicule the deteriorating service delivery by the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA). Situating his story within the spatial characteristic of the banks, he shows how, in a dialogic characteristic of chronotopic interactions suggested by Bakhtin, the challenge of electricity shortage further complicates the cash crisis. The narrator says that there is an electricity blackout in the banks because "the rural electrification programme means that electricity sometimes goes to visit the rural folk" (p.92). The statement is an indictment of the time when, during the peak of the crisis, electricity blackouts would suddenly strike leaving the queuing public to wait for what seemed like a lifetime for electricity reconnection. Meanwhile, it is ironic to observe how, as soon as there is an electricity outage, the tellers place what the narrator describes as, "their much-adored sign 'CLOSED' in front of them" (p.92). This inherent contradiction in action is seen by the author as a way of mocking service delivery, as if to say that, even if the crisis and its stinging effects are manifest, human incompetence and laziness have also contributed to the worsening plight of Zimbabweans during the crisis period. The writer implies that the crisis seriously affected the work ethic of those who serve the public and that they had become heartless. As the story concludes, the narrator indicates that most Zimbabweans are resigned to their fate when he says: "We will return and queue again tomorrow" (p.93).

The queues, as a major symptom of Zimbabwe's economic malaise, are the focus of Rheam and Mate's stories. Through graphic representations of the effects of the crisis, the stories show that the work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and that the real world enters the work and its world as part of the process of its creation, as well as part of its subsequent life, in a continual renewing of the work through the creative perception of readers. This process of exchange is, itself, chronotopic; it occurs first and foremost in the historically developing social world, but without ever losing contact with the changing historical space.

Multiple chronotopes based on "queues" as the homogenising chronotope have been juxtaposed in a dialogical and contrasting manner to lend credence to the fictionalisation of the historical reality that is the crisis. The following section focuses on the political crisis in Bulawayo, particularly in the light of the emergence of the new opposition party, the MDC, and the threat of ZANU-PF losing hegemonic control.

Short Writings from Bulawayo II (2005): Political Crisis and Violence in Bulawayo and the Escalation of the Crisis

The publication of *Short Writings from Bulawayo II* (2005) coincides with the period near the climax of the Zimbabwe crisis which occurred in 2008. Consequently, some of the themes that were central in the first anthology, *Short Writings from Bulawayo I* (2003), such as the shortage of basic commodities and the inherent queues, are amplified in the second anthology. A common theme in the stories is the singular fortitude of Zimbabweans in the face of adversity. Drawing from Bakhtin's (1981) chronotope theory, Morson and Emerson (1990) argue that changes in the spatial and temporal realms result in new "chronotopic motifs" (p.374). In this regard, new chronotopes are evident as the crisis unfolds, symptomatic of the political crisis and violence.

Godfrey M. Sibanda's story "The Coming" shows a complex interaction between the extra-literary and the literary and the importance of imaginative fiction in decrypting space-time by making it discernible. The story depicts the ordeal of an unnamed m'dala (old man) who is verbally and emotionally harassed by five youths for not attending a political rally addressed by the leader of the government or the Great leader as he is reffered to in "The Coming". M'dala is harassed because he is a member of the opposition party. As the story unfolds, all activities, such as funeral wakes, church services, weddings and all sporting activities, are put on hold, as people are instructed to go to the stadium to listen to the Great leader. M'dala does not attend the rally claiming that he is suffering from diarrhoea. Meanwhile, the radio extols the Great leader's virtues, his victories over colonialists and counter-revolutionaries that seek to reverse the gains of independence. Sibanda demonstrates how some political truths that often resist articulation or cannot be freely expressed in everyday language find indirect expression through the medium of fiction. The story is a derision of the tyrannical political system in Zimbabwe. Far from simply providing an interplay between fact and fiction, showing that

fiction is sometimes less fictitious than the so-called factual, “The Coming” is more socially significant because of its subtle illumination of the anatomy of oppressive political systems, their instruments of hegemonic control and the psychology of their victims. The story starts at midday when the streets belong to the military wings serving the interests of the ruling party.

“The Coming” articulates historical events in post-2000 Zimbabwe, particularly focusing on Bulawayo, thereby enforcing the regionification of the province as a chronotopic motif. Sibanda’s story raises troubling issues about the extent to which fiction can historicise events. The story exhibits what Hutcheon (1988) sees as “the paradoxical postmodern tendency of reinstalling historical contexts as significant and determining by problematising the entire notion of historical knowledge” (p.89). Hutcheon argues that the valuable lesson learnt from postmodern writing is that “both history and fiction are discourses ... systems of signification by which we make sense of the past” (p.89). Sibanda’s story demonstrates the discursive affinity of history and fiction through its almost biographical renditions of the reprehensible conduct of some of Africa’s most infamous post-independence leaders. The story goes on to undercut the historicity of the biography through a searing ironic tragicomic representation. For example, readers familiar with the recent history of Zimbabwe will readily realise that Sibanda’s dictator is based on the epithets given to President Mugabe. “The Coming” also called “The Great Leader”, typifies all the dictators by satirising their excesses aimed at suppressing any opposition.

The title “The Coming” evokes Messianic second coming when, in fact, it is about the coming of a ruthless political dictator. The title satirically subverts exegetical interpretations of the awaited coming of Jesus Christ mentioned at Matthew 3:11 (The Bible). The irony is that the coming of Jesus anticipated the liberation of the Jewish nation from Roman tyranny. The narrator says: “Behind the procession of school children and women who are seen marching into the stadium to listen to the Great Leader are the povo, hungry but expectant, surging forward in sweat-drenched queues to be body-searched and directed to a patch of grass on which to sit” (p.29). Ironically, the coming described in Sibanda’s story is of a despotic leader who does not forebode any joy for the masses. The title “the Great Leader” which is repeated throughout the story apparently reinforces the dictator’s legitimacy to power. The story uses satire to lambast the abuses of the so-called “Great Leader” who has built a personality cult around himself at the expense of the suffering majority.

The full strength of Sibanda's scathing comic story, derives from multiple sources such as the historical information that the text supplies, the historical knowledge that the reader brings into the reading of the text and its provocative use of language. For example, the narrator refers to "the government trucks that disgorge people from surrounding villages, dust clinging to their Vaselined faces" (p.29). Those accustomed with the recent history of Zimbabwe would realise that this is a description of a practice associated with the ruling party's rallies where people are transported from all the ten provinces in order to give the leadership an impressive crowd to address. This is more apparent also in regionification of the political history of Bulawayo where people have been chastised for being opposition MDC party supporters. Since the year 2000, the majority of people in Bulawayo have been voting for MDC, thus snubbing ZANU-PF. Because of this historical occurrence, people in Bulawayo have become deemed "enemies of the state". Regional voting is closely associated with the disgruntlement that the region has had with ZANU-PF, the Gukurahundi civil war killings and the perceived persistent marginalisation of the region.

Sibanda shows how, during elections in Zimbabwe, there is a steady drift towards the exploitation of state institutions, or what Sachikonye (2011, p.48) calls "securocrats", for partisan purposes. By 2000, the scale of partisanship had become even more pronounced. The story opens with an ominous sight: "The streets belong to green-clad youth militia, policemen, soldiers, and silent men in dark glasses. If you act, look, or talk funny, they pounce on you and give you the hiding of your life" (p.29). The mere presence of these party agents instils fear among citizens. Sibanda's narrative shows that all personal authoritarian regimes are violent and result in the suffering of innocent people. For example, five youths are plotting to beat up m'dala for refusing to attend The Coming one's rally, and they are all part of a government sponsored militia group. The author suggests that the legitimacy of despotic leaderships is far more problematic and their methods of maintaining personal power are brutal and bloody.

Sibanda's political satire, read within the postcolonial conceptualisations, pokes fun at the apparatus of domination used to sponsor the existence and longevity of the brutal personal hegemony. The narrator points out that "huge posters announcing The Coming one are everywhere. Radio stations play jingles extolling the Great Leader's virtues, his unblemished history, his victories over colonialists and counter-revolutionaries that seek to reverse the gains of Independence" (p.29). In addition, "school children marching to the stadium are forced to sing revolutionary songs, followed by women in colourful kitenges that bear portraits of the Great Leader as he was, ten years ago" (p.29). This display of despotism marks the violent turn

of the "commandement" (p.103) and its attendant paraphernalia described by Mbembe. Mbembe (2001) writes:

> It [fetishistic power] turns the postcolonial autocrat into an object that feeds on applause, flattery, lies: it becomes unaccountable- or in the words of Hegel, arbitrary to the extent that it reflects only upon itself. In this situation, one cannot underestimate the violence that can be set in motion to protect the vocabulary used to denote or speak of the commandement, and to safeguard the official fictions that underwrite the apparatus of domination since these are essential to keep the people under the commandement's spell. (p.111)

Mbembe's observation also helps the reader understand the Great Leader's bombastic speeches that the narrator says the radio blares:

> *"We shall not reTREAT, we shall not surRENDER! We are AFRICANS! This is OUR home, OUR land- we have NO OTHER! Who has the RIGHT to tell us about deMOCRACY when it is US who brought DEMOCRACY to this land? Who has the RIGHT to tell us about FREEDOM when we FOUGHT and DIED for that freedom? WHO, I ask you, WHO ...?"* (p.31; italics and emphasis in the original)

The speech is reminiscent of the rabble-rousing speeches by Mugabe in his so-called defence of the sovereignty of Zimbabwe against imperialism. The use of collective pronouns "we" and "us" is an attempt at legitimising his oneness with the ordinary people who are suffering from his misrule. The speech is typical of the patriotic history narrative that is variously propagated through collections of Mugabe's speeches on state-controlled radio, television and press (Ranger, 2004, p.228). The use of the upper-case mixed with lower case, is semantically "a dimension of analysis regarded as a 'background' against which features which are prominent because of their abnormality are placed in focus" (Leech, 2008, p.30). The art of foregrounding is the writer's attempt to aesthetically show the emphasised words in the speech that gives it the resonance that is evocative of the unflinching stance of the Great Leader. However, Sibanda's intention is to expose the Great Leader's speech as hollow, self-serving and lacking in sincerity. The propaganda machine has worked in making the militia view opposition party members as enemies or "the imperialists [who] will stoop to the lowest levels so as to derail the revolution" (p.31). Sachikonye (2011) points out that "the state media, particularly the radio, was used to perpetuate state-related violence, and state authoritarianism in countries such as Zimbabwe" (p.74). Some decades earlier, Fanon (1963) had also observed that "from time

to time … the leader rallies his forces, speaks over the radio and tours the country, in order to reassure, pacify, and mystify" (p.114). Reference to the "jingles" played by the state-controlled radio shows Sibanda's creative use of historical material to create fiction. His story evokes times of political upheavals in the post-2000 elections in Zimbabwe where independent media was largely viewed as a threat to the hegemony of the state.

Sibanda's fixation is on the more salient complexity of the instruments of hegemonic control, as well as a desire to demonstrate the ways in which victims react and relate to their physical and psychological abuse. In the face of coerced attendance of the Great Leader's rally, members of the opposition had to devise ways not to attend without offending the militia. The militia harass members of the opposition to consolidate the one-party state ideology. For example, M'dala[22] claims that he has diarrhoea and hence cannot attend the address by the Great Leader. One of the militia members who threatens to beat up the old man chastises a colleague and calls him a traitor for calling the old man an honourable man. He says: "An honourable man? Since when have members of the opposition been honourable?" (p.30). The physical violence, rendered in ironic humour, is clearly condemned by the author. The language and sloganeering are taken from ZANU-PF's fixed Chimurenga-time discourse and the mock indignation in the narrator's voice underlines the ridiculous nature of this attack. The brutality unleashed against an unarmed old man shows the ruling party's levels of desperation in wanting to cling on to power. The naivety of the ruling ZANU-PF is seen when its supporters question why the epidemic only affects members of the opposition party. Sibanda mocks ZANU-PF's brutality while also showing the survival tactic employed by opposition party members in the face of political violence and brutality.

Through the despondent narrator, presumably an opposition party member, Sibanda's "The Coming" displays discomfort with the simple view that African traditional forms of governance were better than colonial administration, or the belief that black leaders who took over power from the departing European colonisers are better by mere virtue of their masquerading as nationalist liberators. Sibanda's political satire refuses to naively endorse the democratic movements that sprang up all over Africa in the run-up to their independence as a panacea for postcolonial Africa's problems. He distances himself from the popular view that democratic sloganeering, for example, "Viva la revolution! Aluta continua, comrades" (p.31), will bring better times to the African political landscape. As a generation of authors writing within the

[22] A Ndebele word used as a proper noun to refer to an elderly male person but with connotations of slang.

postcolonial milieu described by Murphy (2007), Sibanda shows how the ethnic tensions, widespread poverty and oppressive regimes in many emerging African nations, led many writers to question the whole nationalist project in their writing. Freire (1970) argues that "manipulation and sloganising ... and prescription cannot be components of revolutionary praxis, precisely because they are components of the praxis of domination" (p.107). Sibanda's political satire on the authoritarian nationalist, the Great Leader, described in the short story, emerges as a moral injunction aimed at persuading the reader into carefully analysing the basis of his or her thinking about politics in postcolonial Africa.

Through literary reportage, political humour and irony, Sibanda shows that all political authoritarian regimes are not as secure as they appear, hence the use of a multiplicity of legitimating tricks that inevitably end in violence, repression, fear and economic underdevelopment, as seen through the Great Leader who employs the services of the securocrats. The predilection to silencing dissent shown by the Great Leader in the story "The Coming" demonstrates how essential the domination of mind-sets through propaganda and censorship worldviews are in the grand project of hegemonic containment. Ngugi wa Thiongo (1981) declares that, "in order for the post-colonial regimes to maintain themselves in power they have had to repress democracy. They ensure that the people do not have much leeway in criticising, in organising, and even in simply expressing a different viewpoint. There can only be one viewpoint- that of the ruling regime" (p.91). In the following section, I analyse Catherine Buckle's story "Full Circle" to demonstrate how continued land invasions founded on violence further destabilised food security; and how John Eppel and Cornelus Sanders through their stories "Home Sweet Home" and "The Road" respectively, attempt a representation of the public infrastructure deterioration as a chronotope in post-2000 Zimbabwe.

"Racialised Approach to the Crisis": Land Issue Dispossession and Public Infrastructure Deterioration

Erasmus's (2017) asks a thought-provoking question: "Can you know whether someone is black, white or "mixed race" by *looking at* them?" (p.50). Erasmus argues that "race matters because of the meanings we give to it". How and why race has come to matter, and how and why we continue to make race matter, as we observe in stories explored in this section has to do with what Erasmus calls "the ways in which history, power and politics shape the frames

within which meaning is made, contested and renegotiated" (p.xxii). This way of knowing persists despite anti-colonial and anti-racist arguments that Black is a political identification which cannot be read off one's skin, and despite more recent scientific knowledge that race is not visible. She further argues that racial markers, racial naming and their meanings change with time, context and political struggles. Changes in meanings of race emerge from a specific constellation of socio-political circumstances that make up a particular historical moment in a specific place known in the social sciences as a historical conjecture. Erasmus argues that racialization refers to everyday thought, action and institutional processes that (re-) make the idea of race and imbue it with cultural and political meaning (p.53). This process is key to power relations between people assigned to race groups and categories by the more powerful in these very relations (Murji and Solomos, 2005).

The concept of racialization shows that when race is used, it is not merely a descriptive term, an explanatory term or a fixed category. Race is better understood as a web of socio-political, cultural and historical relations (woven by humans) that demarcates humanity in terms of the categories fully human, not quite human yet and not human. This web projects these demarcations onto human bodies which are assumed can be visibly differentiated from the outside and, in so doing, pins these differentiations on the body. These differentiations have social, legal and political consequences because they are used to include and exclude people from enjoying their rights and from accessing resources and opportunities.

Unlike the concept racism, which tends towards the foreclosure of a specific act, racialization is analytically valuable because it captures the dynamics involved in (re)-making race enabling one to locate these dynamics in the realm of the politics of knowledge and culture; ways of seeing the world that shapes what people do in everyday life (Murji and Solomos, 2005). Wynter (1994) maintains that "racialised conceptions of the human are interpretive frames that help to arrange and reproduce societies and assist humans to know where they are within these arrangements" (p.52). Significantly, Catherine Buckle, John Eppel and Cornelus Sanders perceive the post-2000 crisis within a racialised perspective. Bakhtin (1981) argues that "the represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary work is to be found" (p.254). The preoccupations of the authors are also reflected in their narratives; Buckle was a farmer in Marondera, Eppel an English teacher at Christian Brothers College in Bulawayo, while Sanders a dermatologist by profession, worked for the City Health Services in Bulawayo from 1994 until 1997 where he was involved in HIV prevention programmes.

"Full Circle" by Catherine Buckle, "Home Sweet Home" by John Eppel and "The Road" by Cornelus Sanders deploy a racialised approach to the land invasions and violence in the farms, as well as the deteriorating public infrastructure in the schools and hospitals in post-2000 Zimbabwe. It is interesting to note that these three white writers seem drawn to the effect of the economic crisis on the infrastructure and the land. The approach in the analysis is not just predicated on the reality of being white, a descriptive and fixed category, which to some extent has a bearing on their interpretation of the crisis vis-à-vis their historical colonial placement in Zimbabwe, but it goes beyond to adopt racialization as a method, in order to create room for analysis of the dynamics involved in the (re-)making of race in the land issue, education system and the health sector. These writers create for the readers "ways of seeing the world" and also strengthen the ways in which the narratives draw attention to what Erasmus calls "the myriad of relations to which we link ideas of race in efforts to reproduce its meanings" (p.53).

Buckle's "Full Circle" can be theorised in the context of what Hughes presents regarding white people's relationship with the land in Zimbabwe. For Hughes (2010), white people in Zimbabwe "gained a sense of belonging, negotiated with the land and circumventing the people" (p.xviii). The story tackles the land invasion issue. It narrates how it also subsequently contributed to the escalation of the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis. The narrative, though presented in third person narrative, is focalised through two female characters of different racial origin and orientation, namely Shirley, a white farm owner who is forced out of her home, Barrymore Farm in the first week of October 2000 and Blessing, a black woman who invaded Shirley's farm and home but is herself subsequently forced out of her new home by a fellow black man, The Big Man, in the first week of October 2004. The black woman and other land invaders had been promised land, water, electricity, boreholes, irrigation and tractors after helping to evict white farmers. The narrator describes the lack of care that the fruit trees were exposed to because the veterans lacked expertise in farming. Buckle employs the style of juxtaposition to narrate the horrors of farm invasions. For example, Shirley loses her farm in the first week of October 2000 to Blessing and other poor black land invaders who themselves subsequently lose the same land to the Big Man in the first week of October 2004. Through this juxtaposition, Buckle shows bitterness due to her loss of the farm as a white farmer and she shows not only the violence and futility that were part and parcel of the Zimbabwean land invasions, but also that this was not a land reform programme. She projects the farm invasions as a strategy used by the ruling elite to enrich themselves at the expense of both white farmers and the desperate black people who were used in the initial land invasions.

Eppel's ironically titled story "Home Sweet Home", explores the penury, destitution and death of Foxie Terrier. The story's title is satiric since there is nothing sweet about Zimbabwe that Grant finds upon his return. Grant 'Staffie' Terrier visits Zimbabwe to attend his father's funeral, James Foxie who dies at an old people's home. The difficult economic conditions of pensioners in Zimbabwe is revealed as the main cause of this death. Such are the devastating effects of occupying a certain time-space, which suggests that those who left were escaping to a different time-space. Using flashback, Eppel shows how, upon retirement in 1995, Foxie's pension is eroded by hyper-inflation as his monthly income only buys him one third of an English cucumber. Grant discovers that his former school, Kitchener High in Lobengula, Bulawayo, is now dilapidated and is in a great state of disrepair. The new school head, Comrade "Minister" Mr O'Magate, blames everything on shortages of cash and the imposition of targeted sanctions by the United States of America and the European Union. Eppel uses satire to interrogate the state of infrastructure dilapidation and corruption that become synonymous with the Zimbabwean crisis. Eppel has always been critical of ZANU-PF, particularly over Gukurahundi and endemic corruption in government (Ndlovu, 2018).

"The Road" by Sanders explores the dilapidated nature of a TB hospital where drugs are out of stock and the few nurses that still work there are underpaid. The story is narrated through the perspective of a white doctor who is the focaliser. The protagonist is an old man who has visited the hospital to collect the body of his son. The story provides the perspective of white people who worked in the medical field before the onset of the crisis. However, the story also represents the effects of the Zimbabwean crisis on health institutions. Ironically, the old man holds the white doctor accountable for the prevalence of AIDS which has claimed his eldest son. The desperate nature of the situation is shown in the way that the TB1 diagnosis given to patients is simply meant to give them false comfort.

As already noted, the racialised perspective of these three stories make analysing them in one section compelling. The narratives reveal a racial contestation between black and white people in Zimbabwe guided by what Erasmus (2017) describes as "*[h]umaning* as a different activity from *humanising*." (p.xxii). As Ingold puts it: "To *human* is a lifelong process of life-in-the-making with others. To *humanise* is to impose upon the world a preconceived meaning of the human" (Ingold, 2015, p.115-20). Humaning as praxis is therefore, as Ingold further argues, historically and contextually specific. In Western imagination, European Man came to personify the human. European modes of *humanising* – by way of its civilising mission – came

to dominate the world. Thus, the relationship between processes of racialization and the emergence of dominant conceptions of what it means to be human are constitutive. The white writers in the selected stories seem to have failed to outgrow the humanising way of the civilising mission as they see black Zimbabweans as incapable of surviving without them, and this leads to undertones of frustration evident in their narratives. Their tone is one of mourning their failed project to *humanise* the Zimbabweans.

Buckle's story expresses the mixed feelings that characterised the land invasions. It turns out that Blessing was forced to participate in taking over farms from the "murungu" (white person in Shona). The narrator says:

> At first Blessing did not believe the talk she heard at the meetings. She did not understand how she could just go and take over someone's farm, house and business. Surely it was stealing? Blessing did nothing. She watched as some went to the farms and took plots. No one stopped them. (p.44)

In all these sentiments presented through the focaliser, Buckle painstakingly attempts to express that not all blacks supported the idea of taking over farms from white farmers. Buckle is bent on showing how, later on, Blessing joins due to pressure from other invaders for fear of victimisation. She attempts to present a community of black people who sympathised with the white people to legitimate the continued stay of whites on the farms, and the veiled harmony between black farm workers and white farm owners. The regime represented by "The Big Men" is intolerant to dissent, and individuals like Blessing are labelled "sell-outs" or members of the opposition party. Hughes' (2010) disapproval of the land invasions is apparent in one of his books where he argues that, after 2000, the new settlers violated nearly all pre-existing codes. They killed wild animals, felled trees, or, as Cathy Buckle wrote after her farm was occupied, "rape[d] the land" (Buckle, 2001, p.10). Much of what is observed by Buckle and characterised through Blessing, is further buttressed by white critical scholars such as Hughes and what emerges prominently is the racialised interpretation of the land imbalance. The white farmers, who also include the author, are caught up in the complexity of interpretation of their racial superiority as defined by historical relations dating back to the eviction of the black majority from their fertile land during the colonial era.

Invoking Erasmus' (2017) sentiments, these "[racial] differentiations have social, legal and political consequences because they are used to include and exclude people from enjoyment of rights and from access to resources and opportunities" (p.53). Regrettably for Buckle, she seems to have ignored these differentiations and the black people whom they, as white farmers, have deprived of enjoying their rights and access to land as a resource. Instead, she laments the plight of white farmers who were dispossessed of "their" land. It is, therefore, not surprising that she uses the kind of stereotypical terms evident in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950), in which Moses, an epitome of black people, is described as a rapist. Buckle uses the same trope to describe black people as "rapists" who "raped" the land.

Background information which details Buckle's relationship to the land invasions[23], (see Primorac, 2010), is essential in comprehending the historical basis and representativeness of her fictional narrative. Primorac states that Buckle was one of the first white farmers to be violently displaced by the "war veterans" in the early stages of Zimbabwe's land occupations in 2000. She relates her experience in minute detail in a memoir entitled *African Tears, the Zimbabwe land Invasions* (2001), and its sequel, *Beyond Tears, Zimbabwe's Tragedy* (2002). Despite her title, which, according to Primorac, summons echoes of easy colonial essentialism, Buckle refrains from insisting that there is anything peculiarly "African" in her misfortune. Instead, she presents a complex and specific account of the struggles over space, agency and future identities that were involved in the farm takeovers. She speaks of those who occupied her farm as individuals with names and agencies of their own and shows that the process of land occupations was disorderly and violent, but far from chaotic. It was, instead, spurred on by a careful inversion of the key characteristics of the Rhodesian master fiction. She cites government pronouncements which declare that white Zimbabweans are, in fact, foreigners and, therefore, the enemy, that outside spaces were essentially different from, and hostile to, the national one, and that in the future, Zimbabwe must be saved from regressing to colonial status. Buckle's memoirs show that it is in this form, transmuted into the Mugabeist versions of "patriotic history", that the neo-Rhodesian master fiction is currently most malignantly alive (Primorac, 2010, p.222). A reading of Buckle's story against this background invokes what Bakhtin (1981) says: "We find in the author outside the work as a human being living his own biographical life. But we also meet him as the creator of the work itself, although he is located outside the chronotopes represented in his work, he is as it were tangential to them" (p.254).

[23] See Primorac (2010).

Just as Bakhtin argues about authorial intrusion, when we read Buckle's story, we meet her (that is, we sense her activity) most of all in the composition of the work. In fact, it is her who segments the work, in this case almost directly reflecting the represented chronotopes.

Buckle's account shows that farm invasions were characterised by an intensity of emotions and traumatic experiences that included pain, grief, despair, anger, frustration and rage (p.43). In the first section of the story, where Shirley is the focaliser, the narrator says that terror of the farm invasions was marked by "the incessant shouting and whistling; the clattering and thumps of sticks and stones being thrown out the roof; the banging of rocks against the burglar bars and the drunken laughter and repetitive drumming of the men who had camped out on her [Shirley's] lawn" (p.42). This graphic description conjures the terror that was experienced by white farm owners as they were evicted from the farms. Shirley conveys what Hughes (2010) calls "the moral drama of being a white Zimbabwean carrying identities and attitudes involving "race"' (p.xvii). Hughes, by alluding to "white Zimbabwean", "identities" and "attitudes involving race" captures the "racialised" conception in terminology used by Erasmus (2017) which refers to racialization as '"a multidimensional process premised on a method or a way of knowing that involves (among other practices) "the look" (p.53). Shirley expresses the sense of despondency that gripped the white farmers and therefore attempts to draw sympathy for the whites not only from black Zimbabweans, but from the extended international readership also.

Buckle's tone and attitude towards the land invasions and black people's capabilities to take over in maintaining the farms is unmistakably tainted with disapproval. The promises that The Big Men made to the people are shown to be empty. The narrator says: "The Big Men addressing the meetings made grand promises. They talked of everyone having their own land. They talked of dams so big that you needed a boat to cross from one side to the other" (p.43). The story captures the horrors of the farm invasions and how the consciences of the ordinary citizens were hardened as they were forced into insensitive, destructive automatons. For example, the narrator mocks the rhetoric of the leaders of the farm invasions. He says: "They [The Big Men] talked of great prosperity and said all the people had to do was go and take the farms. The Big Men said no one would stop them, the police would not interfere" (p. 44). The political elite capitalised on ordinary land-hungry citizens' expectations for a better life. The story is a fictional representation of a historic event. In a 2005 pre-election advertisement, Robert Mugabe's party listed "getting back your land," "empowerment through takeovers," "an end to racist withholding of commodities," "no to political interference" and "keeping our

Zimbabwe"[24] among its recent achievements (Primorac, 2006, p. 2). Although Mugabe's sentiments could be argued to be rather racist, they also speak to the exclusionary racialised theorisation that deals with the race dichotomies that denied the black majority "full humanity" (Erasmus, 2017, p.53), enjoyment of rights and access to resources and opportunities.

In a bid to escalate her disapproval of the farm invasions, Buckle's story highlights the predicament surrounding farm invasions by highlighting how people are disillusioned when they discover that they have been used and dumped. The narrator says: "Blessing never got a chance to sleep for even one night in the big old farmhouse- the rough boys and men who called themselves the "Veterans" [as the war veterans were known] took the main house on Barrymore right at the beginning after the murungu had left" (p.44). Some government officials were cognisant of the race issue that distorted the intended land reform. Citing irregularities of racialised land grabbing, the International Crisis Group covered a remarkable 12 September speech in Parliament by Edison Zvobgo where he distanced himself from Mugabe saying among other things: "We have tainted what was a glorious revolution, reducing it to some agrarian racist enterprise"; "We have blamed other people for each and every ill that befell us" (International Crisis Group, 2000, p.3). Whilst the brutality of the hegemonic force of the ruling party is exposed in terms of its insensitivity to the plight of those that the regime uses and abuses, such as Blessing and other ordinary people betrayed by the "Veterans" since everything they were promised by The Big Men, "tractors, dams, irrigation, title deeds" never materialised, the underlining tone of loss is apparent in Buckle as she exposes the failures of the black government.

The abuse experienced by Blessing represents what thousands of ordinary people who were duped into participating in the land invasions went through. Through Blessing's predicament, Buckle represents the cyclic nature of the farm invasion related abuses. Regarding the personal

[24] The Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, hijacked Monday 2 September 2002 proceedings at the Johannesburg earth summit to denounce Tony Blair, telling the British leader: "Let me keep my Zimbabwe." Ignoring the themes of environmental sustainability and aid, Mr Mugabe instead defended the seizures of white-owned farms. To a round of applause from the conference hall, the Zimbabwean leader declared: "So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe." He told delegates: "We have fought for our land, we have fought for our sovereignty, small as we are we have won our independence." He vowed to press ahead with the eviction of 2900 of the 4500 remaining white commercial farmers despite legal challenges at home and criticism in the west, particularly from the country's former colonial ruler, Britain. Mr Mugabe said that white commercial farmers often owned several farms and would be allowed to keep at least one. "No farmer is being left without land," he said (*The Guardian*, 2002).

losses suffered by Blessing when she herself, like Shirley the white farm owner, is subsequently evicted, the narrator says:

> They [the men] set Blessing's hut alight and told her it was no longer her house or her plot. They told her she must go back where she came from and not return to Barrymore. They told her she had settled herself there illegally. When Blessing said she had a letter, which had her name and the location of the plot, the men would not listen. They said the letter was forged; it was not really from the people who allocated land. (p.45)

Blessing tries to fight back in vain because "the men were rough ... The people on all the plots around her were also being evicted and Blessing was alone" (p.45). As Blessing set on the side of the main road, "she watched The Big Men as they arrived on Barrymore. They had not come to help her, but to take over everything for themselves; Blessing had no one to turn to" (p.45). Commenting on the racial aspects of farm invasions, Freeman (2014) says that "while the beneficiaries of the land reform are black, most victims of the land reform have also been black. These include the 30,000-35,000 small black settlers pushed off farms by well-connected elites" (p.359). This is a case where the "state turns on its citizens" through institutionalised violence and political culture (Sachikonye, 2011). In a statement that helps us understand the ease with which violence erupts in post-colonial Zimbabwe, Kaulem (2004) observes: "[A]t independence, our society did little to rehabilitate itself from the habits of violence prevalent during the liberation war. We have assumed that violence is a tool that we can take up, use and drop at any Zimbabwean time" (p.81). Buckle shows that the full circle of violence which attended the post-2000 period is symptomatic of a society with an entrenched culture of violence. Buckle uses Blessing to remove the fog from the readers' minds and attempts to transcend the reality of "race" as well as appeal for sympathy for the white community and their loss of the land.

Buckle's story also highlights that white farmers in Zimbabwe tried to claim belonging ecologically rather than socially. The narrator says:

> The 'Veterans'[25] also grabbed the land with the plum trees and every year Blessing watched as they got smaller and smaller harvests from the trees,

[25] Reference to ex-combatants. From the mid-1990s, the Mugabe-led government also turned to the war veterans to deal with growing opposition from inside and outside the party. Since the 1970s war of liberation, the party-military nexus had always been strong in both PF-ZAPU and ZANU-PF, and the military had always had

> because they did not give them fertiliser or enough water. At Christmas time, when the trees were covered in plums, the beetles came too- thousands of yellow and orange spotted beetles. The 'Veterans' did not spray the trees and so the beetles ate the plums faster than the men could pick them. (pp.44, 45)

These descriptions, as much as they could be true of the post-land invasion state of the farms and why Zimbabwe has suffered food shortages ever since the fateful land invasions, they reveal the writer's disgruntlement with farm dispossession. It is not that there is no political will to make the invaded farms productive, but Buckle does not want to transcend the fact that the new farmers are incapacitated in terms of resources and inputs that would make them effective and productive on the land. The focaliser's voice which seems to mirror's Buckle's, is infused with anger and bitterness that white farmers experienced due to the violent loss of their land. Buckle's story is one of self-vindication which shows that commercial farming will not succeed in Zimbabwe without the presence of the evicted white farmers. There is an underlying attempt to find legitimacy in holding on to the land. This is observable in the narrator's emotional and physical attachment to the land as captured by Hughes earlier on.

Similarly, in Eppel's story, undertones of white racial bitterness underlie the author's narrative voice, this time, regarding educational infrastructure. For example, Mr Grant does not buy into the principal's Chimurenga chronotope about the land redistribution process having led to the dilapidation of the school infrastructure. He says: "The farm invasions took place only a few years ago. Kitchener High School looks as if it hasn't had any maintenance since independence" (p.105). Eppel foregrounds the farm invasions to satirise the third Chimurenga, and also to intrinsically connect it, in terms of Bakhtin's temporal-spatial proposition, to the crisis era. The head of the school tries in vain to refute this statement. Reference to the presence of the school's maintenance engineer who stays at the former squash court converted into a

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a significant say in party politics. Norma Kriger has argued that war veterans and ZANU-PF not only relied heavily on violence and appeals to a liberation-war discourse to establish their power and legitimacy but also colluded with and manipulated each other to build power and privilege in the army, the police, the bureaucracy and among other workers (Kriger, 2003, p.103). After 1980, veterans' interest often conflicted with those of the politicians, and Fay Chung (2006, p.302) has argued that many in government feared the power of a united and organised veterans' group. Government thus only grudgingly allowed them to form a representative organisation, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), in April 1989 (Muzondidya, 2009, p.197). This was "a reactive initiative taken by ex-combatants when it had become clear that government had failed to assist them" (Musemwa, 1995, 40). Despite the tension between a radical war veterans' agenda and the ZANU-PF agenda regarding land redistribution and other resources to the poor, from the mid-1990s the state was under increasing pressure that it decided to turn to the war veterans to help consolidate its power (Muzondidya, 2009), hence the observed patronage system that the selected post-2000 short story writers grapple with through their narratives.

cottage, is a mockery to the whole effort of the government to maintain institutions they inherited from the erstwhile colonial master. Significantly, the head, referred to as Comrade "Mister" O'Magate, also refers to the engineer Mr Fitz Ncube as "Comrade" (p.105). Eppel's reference to the use of the word comrade is an indictment of the address popularly used by the ruling party to show one's allegiance to the party ideology. In the story, the word is used pejoratively to refer to inept ZANU-PF party's henchmen.

Eppel's story shows how institutions have been entrusted into the hands of incompetent and self-serving ZANU-PF government loyalists. As much as this proves true Fanon's (1963) observation: "The national middle class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class, characterised by selfish ineptitude" (p.98), a racialised construct by Ali Rattansi presents an unavoidable contrast. Rattansi (2005) avers that "racialization is about analysing a panoply of related issues and processes. The value of the concept lies precisely in pointing not just to race and racism, but beyond them in their manifold imbrications" (p.273). In Eppel's story, it is manifest that racialization exists in imbrication with nation, class and ethnicity, of which class inequalities and other social features in which racisms are reproduced in particular sites, such as the schools and education sector, are observable during the crisis period. The narrative reveals that the school administration squandered, on a workshop, a thousand Australian dollars sent by Mr Grant years back for the express purpose of maintaining the squash court. The likes of Mr O'Magate are presented as simply corrupt and are an embodiment of the corrupt regime that just promotes its hench persons.

Eppel's story also reflects on hyperinflation and the dilemma that faced the elderly in the post-2000 period. Grant Terrier discovers that all Zimbabweans who relied on pensions to support them had become destitute and most people now depended on remittances from relatives which came through the Western Union that disbursed foreign currency. A mournful tone of loss, also witnessed in Buckle's narrative, is apparent in Eppel's graphic description of the hyper-inflation shown when the narrator uses contrast as a style to describe deterioration in James 'Foxie' Terrier's life when he retired in 1995, presumably a time when inflation had not yet set in: "his monthly pension amounted to the princely sum of $10 000. He was rich [but] Ten years later that same monthly pension bought him one third of an English cucumber" (p.103)". This helps the reader to understand the gravity of hyperinflation that decimated people's earnings and turned pensioners into paupers. In highlighting white suffering that is shared with fellow black Zimbabweans whose pensions were whittled away by record inflation, Eppel contests the

assumption of fixed white privilege across time. The atmosphere of gloom in the story underlines the narrator's foregoing point. In this case, Ndlovu (2018) claims that Eppel uses two counter chronotopes, that of ageing and reversal. Eppel portrays ageing as heavily punctuated by loss of socio-economic power for whites, in the form of farm seizures, loss of family due to the migration of the young for economic reasons, and loss of pensions to hyper-inflation. This, according to Ndlovu (2018), is called the chronotope of reversal because the resulting penury, in some instances, such as that of James 'Foxie' Terrier, leads to white vassalage.

Eppel's story, read within what Grossberg (1986) calls "articulation", the concept under which the changing process of constituting the human as racialised are best understood, is awash with imagery that depicts the state of degeneracy and mismanagement. The infrastructural dilapidation of Grant Terrier's former school is used as a microcosm of the dilapidation that characterises the whole country. For example, the narrator refers to the sign at the main gate that is barely legible on a surface of rust and dents and peeling paint (p.103) and that "only one of the eight tennis courts was still operational, and that, barely. The all-weather surface was cracked and potholed, and the white markings had virtually disappeared" (p.104). As if that this is not enough, the "Olympic size swimming pool looked as if it had been empty for many years. There were certainly many generations of frogs, rats, chameleons, lizards and beetles, decayed, dead, and alive, on its cracked and peeling floor" (p.104). The once magnificent school hall was now in a sad state of disrepair. The elaborate graphic description of the rot at the school, are befitting of the gravity of the crisis that Eppel is capturing as the techniques vividly appeal to the reader's shock at mismanagement in the schools and other government administered institutions in the post-2000 Zimbabwe era.

Eppel alludes to the propaganda and hegemonic control that has led to individuals like Mr O'Magate, used as a satiric butt, to be undeterred by the state of dilapidation around him. He says to Grant, "You see, things are far much better now" (p.104), yet there is nothing to show for it. Through the concept of articulation understood as dynamic theorising (ongoing processes that create and recreate a way of thinking about a social formation) … which develops "in relation to changing epistemological positions and political conditions" (Slack, 1996), Eppel's deep-seated authorial voice regarding his condemnation of and bitterness towards the ZANU-PF government and policies in the way schools are run, is apparent. The undertones in the narrative are meant to expose the incapacity of black headmasters to lead the schools whose former administrators were white persons. The statement by Mr O'Magate bears Eppel's

authorial intrusion to discredit black administrators and reduce them to individuals who merely lead through party politics.

The chronotope of race as a web of socio-political, cultural and historical relations is further articulated by the principal. This web projects the black/white demarcations onto human bodies which Erasmus (2017) believes "can be visibly differentiated from the outside and in so doing, pins these differentiations on the body" (p.53). The principal says to Mr Grant: "Money, you know, is in short supply. There have been successive droughts. Your people- Blair ... Bush- have imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe. They are punishing us for giving the land back to its rightful people. We are struggling against an imperialist conspiracy to keep us subjugated" (p.105). The issue of subjugation that the principal articulates links with the racial differentiations that have social, legal and political consequences which have been used to exclude blacks through sanctions. The principal's words can best be understood in Primorac's words (2006) that "Zimbabwe's master fiction mimics exactly (in the manner described by Mbembe) the master fiction generated by the country's colonial rulers during the 1970s liberation war, in that it assigns sole agency in initiating historical movement and counter-movement to the holders of political power on the one hand, and to externally-located enemies able to breathe life into internal puppets, on the other" (p.10). Therefore, all the actors within the nation's political sphere may be described as either "patriots" or "sellouts". The principal's speech is part of the post-2000 discourse that is used by the ZANU-PF government to exonerate itself from institutional mismanagement.

Furthermore, Eppel uses the technique of a story-within-a-story to show that in post-2000 Zimbabwe, values of accountability, coupled with commitment to duty have disappeared. Mr Grant's account of the beating he received from the hostel master after being caught carving his name on the table top, sums up the philosophy of corruption and mismanagement that Eppel is exposing in his story. As the hostel master beats the young Grant, he asks what lesson he was learning. Grant responded: "That I must not vandalise government property sir". Strangely, the hostel master had responded "No. That you must not get caught!" (p.106). Eppel uses the hostel master's response to expose the corrupt attitude of government employees who believe that as long as one is not caught, it is alright to be corrupt. Somehow, Grant's episode shows that corruption is not only a black thing, contrary to the stereotype peddled in the story that largely present blacks as exclusively corrupt.

Extending the lament for the deterioration of infrastructure in the post-2000 era is the racialised twist in Sanders' story "The Road" that uses the healthcare trope. Just like Buckle and Eppel whose narratives adopt a racialised perspective to discuss the farm invasions and the deterioration in education respectively, Sanders laments the deteriorating health system during the crisis era. This is at a time when most white medical practitioners who had been at the helm of the medical institutions fled the country since "the look" their "racial marker" (Erasmus, 2017, p.50) had made them targets for victimisation by the black population in particular the war veterans. The gloomy description of the deplorable health delivery system during the crisis period demonstrates the incapacity of the social services to help HIV and AIDS infected patients. For example, the narrator paints an image of dilapidation, and inability of the blacks to preside over health institutions when he says: "The green lawns, that once surrounded the TB hospital, had turned into desert and the flower beds, that had ameliorated the suffering of the in-patients, looked like rubbish heaps" (p.116). The first-person narrative voice of the focaliser states: "I had been employed in this place for seven years and had seen it all deteriorating" (p.116). The prioritisation of the physical state of the health infrastructure by the author, which in this case is now in a state of dilapidation, reflects the extent of the impact of the crisis.

The racial overtones of the white doctor whose voice is legitimating his superiority complex in having led the institution successfully and insinuating the black race's ineptitude is evident throughout the story. The complexity brought about through the encounter between the white doctor and the old man illuminates the debate surrounding the origins of the pandemic that some have seen as a racial project by the whites to exterminate the black population in Africa. As much as he believes the spiritual side to HIV and AIDS, the old man believes that white people have a hand in it, "We never heard about AIDS before you came along" (p.117). He further says to the doctor, "I have lost my eldest son and, before you brought us AIDS, we would say that 'evil spirits' had caught up with him, or that maybe he had done something to upset the good spirits. We would ask the medicine man and he knew what to do, sometimes" (p.117). What makes the subject of the origin of the pandemic worth pondering upon is that even the white doctor is drawn back to thinking and having visions about the link between the pandemic and the competing CIA and KGB labs, developing horrid microbes for their warfare, superpowers who would have used the microbes for their biological warfare on the African continent, while keeping its people ignorant and in perpetual poverty. The chronotope of HIV and AIDS cuts across the temporal and spatial characteristics and representation, more so in

the light of the fact that to-date there is no cure for AIDS. The subject of HIV and AIDS has, since the time before the year 2000, been interwoven and fictionalised into textualities capturing the crisis period. It has become impossible for fiction practitioners to write without bringing the subject of HIV and AIDS from various perspectives, as we witness Sanders doing in his story.

Moreover, Sanders's description glosses over human resources and staff shortages that emanated from the flight of skilled manpower due to the escalation of the crisis. He does not interrogate the underlying factors to the issues. In a gory description, the narrator says: "The suffering of the patients oozed from the walls ... Nurses were underpaid and scarce. Drugs were increasingly in short supply. 'Out of stock' was not a call to arms or protest but the standard morning call of resignation that reverberated through the wards" (p.116). This points to the gloom and doom of the post-2000 period, a desperate and deathly atmosphere for patients during the crisis period. However, undertones of bitterness lamenting the incapacity of the black government to take care of its health infrastructure are evident in the description. Meanwhile, Sanders's authorial intent is obvious, and one can only wonder why he does not question other factors such as the economic sanctions that have resulted in the Zimbabwean economy going through unprecedented hyperinflation and shortages of foreign currency that impinged on government's ability to purchase drugs and pay health workers.

It is befitting that the narrative presents the old man and the white doctor engaged in an intense discussion. For example, we get to understand that it is not about the availability of medicine that the dialogue ensues, but an attempt to expose black-white relations in respect to understanding health related issues around HIV and AIDS. In this regard, the old man says to the white doctor: "I don't need your pills. I need your attention ... with that you took some load off my shoulders and carried me a little further down the road. Although you cannot bring me my children back, I will be less tired when I arrive at the end" (p.120). The philosophical resolution to the HIV and AIDS predicament that is given by the old man is puzzling in view of the fact that a real remedy to the disease still eludes the best medical minds.

The racial insinuations in the stories selected for this section, "Full Circle" by Buckle, "Home Sweet Home" by Eppel and "The Road" by Sanders are reminiscent of the historical relations that have existed since the colonial era between black and white people in Zimbabwe. Without necessarily minimising the disastrous consequences of the political elite's mismanagement of the economy, my analysis of the stories has emphasised the racialized focus of the authors.

What seems to be at stake, is how these white writers seem to claim belonging to Zimbabwe by depicting white people as better managers without referring to the exploitative relationships that characterised the white and black relationships. Thus, the sentiment by Erasmus that pre-modern European ways of seeing and "the look" continue to shape conceptions of human difference in the West and in countries such as Zimbabwe is evident in these stories. Dating back to the colonial occupation, white people have always harboured negative perceptions about black people's capacity to utilise the land. Negative discourses full of vitriol and ridicule observed in the focalisers such as Grant Terrier in "Home Sweet Home", the white narrator doctor in "The Road" and Shirley in "Full Circle", show the entrenched white mentality of control.

The Rhodesian Herald (now *The Herald*) justified the reasons for the occupation and land dispossession of the indigenous people. In 1895, the newspaper justified the occupation of the land claiming that the indigenous people did not have the skills to utilise the land productively (*The Herald*, April 1895 as paraphrased in Gale, 1962). The racialised overtones in the stories denigrate people black, particularly black farmers and administrators, and celebrates the work of white people in the same occupations. Moreover, the sentiments are an outcry for the protection of the white legacy once enjoyed. There is also an attempt to characterise farm invasions and the fast track land redistribution programme as being chaotic. On a different note, the minor chronotopes illustrate that, unlike many coeval white Zimbabweans who responded to the crisis or Third Chimurenga through memoir writing to claim their Zimbabweanness and rights to property (Manase, 2016), Eppel continued to use satirical fiction such as the short story to reveal a more complex idea of whiteness and belonging in Zimbabwe; he went beyond the reduction of this identity to a few odious characteristics some of which were shared by some European researchers.

Of interest is the regionification and sense of attachment to Bulawayo graphically described by the white writers, Eppel and Sanders, in their fictional historicisation of the city. As stated earlier, they have both lived, worked and experienced life in the city, hence the underlining tone of exposing the impact of the crisis to the region. These writers, as evident in their stories, have appropriated the "polysemous concept" of the region (Lavenghove, 2003, p.5), that is, Bulawayo as a geographical space, reference to economic interactions, institutional and government jurisdiction, as well as to social and cultural characteristics, for example, the cultural dialogue between the white doctor and the old man in Sanders' story. In essence, the

"marking of territory" (p.5) as a marker of "region" is evident in the stories. These white writers, though writing with undertones of racialised discontent due to their dethroned white superiority, give an insight into the deindustrialisation and deterioration of Bulawayo infrastructure. They use history to structure their narratives, particularly around Bulawayo as a spatial entity to help us understand how the concept of 'region' plays an important role in appreciating how the nation is geographically, politically and economically organised" (p.5).

The narrative techniques employed by Buckle, Eppel and Sanders pose some challenges on the author-creator positioning within the fictional narrative, particularly in respect to the objective articulation of the crisis. Illuminating this idea, Bakhtin (1981) says:

> The author-creator, finding himself outside the chronotopes of the world he represents in his work, is nevertheless not simply outside but as it were tangential to these chronotopes. He represents the world either from the point of view of the hero participating in the represented event, or from the point of view of a narrator, or from that of an assumed author or, finally, without utilising any intermediary at all he can deliver the story directly from himself as the author pure and simple (in direct authorial discourse). (p.256)

No matter how the author represents the temporal-spatial world in all truthfulness, Bakhtin argues "all the same he, as its creator, remains outside the world he has represented in his work" (p.256). Unfortunately, for Buckle, Eppel and Sanders, they relate events that have happened to them and that brings about a conflict of interest in the authority of the narrative voice and representation. Buckle enmeshes herself as someone who has suffered the loss of a property as a white farmer during the land invasions; Eppel was a teacher at Christian Brothers College in Bulawayo, one of the elite all white group 'A' schools that were well resourced during colonial times; and Sanders was a medical doctor in one of the hospitals in Bulawayo. Their compromised narrative position is read in the context of what Bakhtin says: "if I relate (or write about) an event that has just happened to me, then I as the teller (or writer) of this event am already outside the time and space in which the event occurred. It is just as impossible to forge an identity between myself, my own "I," and that "I" that is the subject of my stories as it is to lift myself up by my own hair. The represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary work is to be found". The selected stories interrogate what Tagwirei and De Cock

(2015) call '"the fate of white Zimbabweans, particularly the middle-aged and elderly [which] is linked to colonial experiences of white dominance and supremacy, resulting in constructions of phenotypical whiteness and ideas of whiteness 'amounting to much the same thing' as colonialism" (p.184). In the following section, I explore the writers' interrogation and representation of the ethical dimension of the crisis as public servants became accomplices to the escalation of the crisis.

Debunking Corruption and Plummeting Service Delivery in Public Institutions

The previous sections have demonstrated that Zimbabwe's recent history provides a case of various dramatic issues about the contemporary state of postcolonial Africa, succinctly deployed through the various short story style. This section examines the country's crisis and the extent to which it has provoked writers in *Short Writings from Bulawayo III* to engage in new ways with debates relating to state corruption. Whilst the previous sections have interrogated the crisis from the perspective of the regimes of truth, farm invasions and the refusal by the white community to let go of their luxurious life upon being dispossessed of their farms, this section is more inward looking as it interrogates the crisis from the perspective of the corrupt tendencies of the same black people who have taken over the administration of public institutions. In this light, the escalation of the crisis has partly been fuelled by public servants who have taken advantage of the collapsed economy.

Short Writings from Bulawayo III (2006), while set as an anthology of short stories and poems, largely focuses on the short story in the representation of the post-2000 Zimbabwean situation characterised by the crisis, with the writers using their different styles and subjects to portray a society in flux. Published in 2006, a year after the publication of *Short Writings from Bulawayo II* in 2005, the anthology makes a significant contribution to the series, particularly in terms of the understanding of the escalation of the crisis in the socio-economic and political dimensions. Notably, the intensity of the crisis is also manifest in that there is increased incorporation of fictional narratives dealing with the post-2000 challenges unlike in the first and second anthologies where most of the writings are of the reportage style. This is because most of the events of the crisis have superseded the expectations of the authors such that fictionalising them has been a challenge hence their appearance to be simple records of certain aspects of the crisis. The increase in the fictional narratives is due to the pressure on the editor to capture the whole spectrum of the crisis. The narratives show how the social ills are a direct

result of the economic collapse that has characterised Zimbabwe leading to the civil servants adopting unorthodox survival strategies.

While the crisis is rooted in long-standing tendencies, Zimbabwe's powerful state bureaucracies, its liberation struggle history, its substantial formal sector and its strong post-independence history of service provision had all seemed to mark it out as different from, if not an exception to, the experience of those countries in West and Central Africa. These countries had often provided the empirical basis for theories of state failure and social and political disorder (Alexander and McGregor, 2013). Corruption, for example, although present in Zimbabwe as everywhere else, had not been a defining feature of governance up to the late 1990s, and where it had come to light, it had caused scandal and outrage. During the crisis period, it became a common and unpunishable phenomenon. This development seems to have prompted the fictionalisation found in the selected stories. The decade of change that culminated in the political violence of 2008, hyperinflation, deindustrialisation, collapsing services and mass impoverishment prompted scholars to engage in new ways with wider debates in African studies over what Alexander and McGregor (2013) describe as the transformation of state institutions, the consequences of patronage, informality and elite accumulation, and the political and social effects of truncated horizons.

The two stories "Another Day" and "Itekiya" by Gumbo and Sibanda respectively, depict how the post-2000 Zimbabwean political and economic crises have cascaded down to every public institution leading to an unbearable life for the ordinary citizens. The themes of the stories are illuminated by Fanon's (1963) observation that "inside the new regime … there are varying degrees of enrichment and acquisitiveness. Some are able to cash in on all sides and prove to be brilliant opportunists. Favours abound, corruption triumphs, and morals decline" (p.117). The two stories depict how the seemingly callous behaviour of the civil servants is a direct result of the hyper-inflationary environment caused by the Zimbabwean economic collapse. It is evident that the narrative style is not that of resistance against empire or erstwhile colonial masters in Zimbabwe, but the authors represent the ambiguities at the heart of the postcolonial nation state in as far as leadership in public institutions is concerned. Corruption by public service officials is scoffed at by the writers as it becomes the new, inward looking chronotope that ushers in fresh argumentation regarding crisis escalation. Commenting on corruption, Davies (2004) seems to caution the writers and points to the futility that befalls writers in

attempting to use anecdotes to represent corruption as such attempts are fraught with subjectivity.[26]

Gumbo emphasises the temporal in "Another Day" as observed in the way the omniscient narrator refers to times of the day and days of the week and epochs of Zimbabwe's history in telling his story and manifestations of the crisis. For example, the story sets off with the theft of the gate motor at Trevor's house on a Sunday evening. The theft was discovered on a Monday morning. The story twists the focus and dwells on how the police who are less than five minutes away from Trevor's house feebly handle the case. Gumbo employs irony to show the insensitivity of the police as they fail to protect the public and their property as they occupy themselves with the political situation and elections "that were coming up later that month" (p.86). The narrator says: "Trevor thought to himself, how the cops always have resources to prevent political trouble, but limited ones in stopping crime" (p.86). The notice "Let's fight crime together!" (p.86) which clings to a wall at the police office is a mockery to a police force that has abdicated its mandate. Interestingly, at the roadblock, the police ask Trevor for his licence and he requests to be given a ticket since he does not have one. The narrator shows how policeman let him go before receiving the licence after failing to solicit for a bribe. The narrative is predicated on Gumbo's ability to fictionalise the issue of bribes that had become a common phenomenon between police and motorists during the crisis period.

Though it is now a different day, Tuesday, Trevor's predicament, which represents the predicament of Zimbabweans in general, seems to be deepening. Even after dialling a ZESA faults line, Trevor does not get a prompt response. Only later is he given a reference number and told someone would work on it, but nothing is done. Ironically, Trevor had spoken to "a Mr Chokwadi (a Shona word which means truth)" from ZESA. Mr Chokwadi is supposed to tell the truth but he does not. In essence, what Gumbo is mocking here is the way the ZESA officials, just like the police in the previous paragraph, seem to be insensitive to rendering due service to the public. Drawing from the overarching chronotope of crisis and economic downturn, it is apparent that during the crisis, the inflation was so high that people's salaries did not motivate them to do their jobs; hence they looked for every slight opportunity that would permit them to solicit for a bribe and thus enable them to supplement their eroded incomes.

[26] For more details on Davies (2004) sentiments on corruption and abuse, refer to the earlier citation on page 30.

Gumbo's story comments on how the crisis incapacitated the government leading to its failure to adequately resource the public institutions so that they could function properly to deliver service. As already noted, the ZESA people are not forthcoming in assisting the public. Trevor is told by one man from ZESA that they do not have fuel to attend to the fault. When he proposes to pick up the technician, he is told that they are not allowed to get into private vehicles and that the technicians had already gone home. Surprisingly, the person that Trevor has been talking to has just come in for the new shift. Trevor is later told by a ZESA official named Tendai to bring ten litres of diesel in a container on Wednesday so that the team of technicians is sent straight to his house. It is only on Wednesday that Trevor is finally attended to. Such inept service delivery is ridiculed by Gumbo as typical institutional corruption characterised by illicit services and unwarranted payment for public services as demonstrated by ZESA officials who strategically position themselves to receive "incentives" or inducements for corruption. Tendai's response to Trevor: "You know the situation in the country and, unfortunately, we are asking all our customers to do the same" (p.89), shows how desperate the situation in Zimbabwe had become in the post-2000 period such that corruption became normalised. Both the parastatal and its employees had abrogated their primary duty of commitment to prompt service delivery to the public.

The references to time and temporalities in Gumbo's narrative put the events in their appropriate contexts and help the reader, as Nkealah (2018) puts it, "to follow the logic – not necessarily the chronology – of the events as they intersect with one another at various points in the *time* of the story" (p.68). Moreover, since time is a marker of a relationship, time, space, being and movement are necessarily intertwined (Milojevic, 2007), and we see in the short story how different events happening at different times involving different people become interconnected in leading up to the manifestation of corruption by civil servants during the peak of the crisis.

In a related denunciation of corruption by public servants, Sibanda uses the mystery surrounding the discovery of a child, as narrated in the story "Itekiya" as the framework of his authorial intention. The story reaches its climax when the father of Mzi and his wife, both medical doctors by profession, quarrel about saving the child and finally agree to report the incidence to game rangers and the police. Instead of rising to the occasion to investigate the case with the intent of saving the mysterious child, game rangers look at everything with disbelief, while the police do not seem to show interest in promptly investigating the issue. The game ranger nonchalantly asks: "Where do I get the fuel for that? Who pays me the overtime?"

(p.109). The rot exposed by Sibanda, like the one demonstrated by the ZESA officials in Gumbo's story, is typical of the economic collapse whereby public servants were desperate to augment their inflation eroded salaries by making an extra income from equally desperate people they were meant to serve.

Sibanda exposes how the public has also become complicit in the perpetration of the pervasive corruption. Father of Mzi offers some *monetary incentive*[27] so that an armed game ranger could accompany him the next day to look for the child. The justification that father of Mzi proffers for his actions is that "they are just lowly paid civil servants" (p.109). This indicates the pitiable state of the civil servants whose income had been eroded by the hyper-inflation. Father of Mzi's actions further exposes the complicated nature of corruption as he says in response to his fuming wife, "Unfortunately, that's the only way business can be done in this country, and you are a hypocrite to pretend you don't know it" (p.109). Opportunism and corruption, as described by Fanon (1963), are the social ills exposed by Sibanda as exacerbating the crisis in Zimbabwe. In addition, in order to survive in a tumbling economy, through the dialogue between father of Mzi and his wife, doctors, just like other civil servants are shown to have fallen prey to corruption. For example, father of Mzi says to his wife: "Take yourself, for instance. When you get a call from the public hospital at midnight, you don't run as fast as when you are called to your private surgery where you get paid twenty times more than at the hospital. Money talks and you know it, mother of Mzi" (p.109). According to Sibanda, financial incentives are what everyone seems to be chasing after as they strive to make the most out of any situation, even in matters where lives are at risk.

Through father of Mzi's wife, the author further exposes how the seemingly callous behaviour of the civil servants is a direct result of the hyper-inflationary environment caused by the Zimbabwean economic collapse. For example, Sibanda paints a picture of how any civil servant asked to perform a duty would respond:

> What's in it for me? ... If you don't bribe me and I sit on my hands and do nothing for you, what consequences will I face? If the top civil servants themselves who earn billions of dollars a month- if they let the people starve and do nothing but incarcerate those whose stomachs grumble too loudly, why should I act any different? ... silence and inaction are the only virtues that rule in this land. (p.110)

[27] A disguised phrase for a bribe.

The author reveals that the attitude: "since everyone is doing it why can't I", usually used in respect to corruption, is what is destroying Zimbabwe; everyone is seeking personal gain in an already collapsed economy.

Conclusion

The *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series show the linear escalation of the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis. The incremental nature of the crisis from the year 2000 through to the year 2006 is clear. Despite the regionification that has been demonstrated in the narratives, the Bulawayo society that the stories focus on is a microcosm of the general suffering in the larger Zimbabwean society. Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope provided insights in the exploration of the interconnectedness of time and space that play a central role in explaining the dynamism of the crisis over time that all the selected stories portray. The capacity of the short story to chronotopically capture the realities of society in motion was also demonstrated through the idea of co-mingling. This suggests the amalgamation of somewhat distinguishable elements of history and fiction.

It is apparent from the stories that the onset of the crisis from the 1990s at the inception of ESAP to the period just before the year 2000, resulted in serious challenges of socio-economic and political nature. The socially oriented themes are not limited to one anthology but cut across the series showing the evolution of the crisis and its social embeddedness. The regimes of truth manifest in the Chimurenga-chronotope complicate any attempts to find solutions to the crisis as most characters' lives are anchored in the past and, as a result, refuse to logically deal with the actual causes of the crisis. An antagonistic situation characterises the political terrain in which the older generation, mainly aligned to the ZANU-PF party, perceives the young to be deficient when it comes to the history of the nation that is linked to colonialism and the fight for independence. Yet, the younger generation, mainly aligned to the opposition MDC, blames the older generation for using its liberation credentials to perpetually hold on to power, resulting in what Gramsci (1971) describes as a morbid situation. The stories suggest that a convergence of minds of the old and the young is necessary in order to steer the country out of the crisis.

As noted from the examination of stories from *Short Writings from Bulawayo III* in the series, corruption is within the control of Zimbabweans to deal with through deliberate action and

policy. The next chapter examines what I call the tragic humour and politics of acquisitiveness that have characterised the style of Zimbabwean leadership. Humour which is used as a stylistic technique to satirise the amassing of wealth by the rich and politically connected, is also explored. Furthermore, the chapter examines stories that depict the critical issue surrounding the discovery of diamonds in Zimbabwe in 2006.

Chapter 3

Tragic Humour and Politics of Acquisitiveness

Introduction

This chapter discusses the way humour[28] and satire became strategies that ordinary Zimbabweans used to cope with various challenges brought about by the crisis as shown in the selected stories. My analysis of the function of humour focuses on its corrective or reformist potential, that is, on the literary works' imagining of alternative political dispensations coded through the chronotopes of the land and minerals. Satire, ambiguity and hybridity, as postcolonial narrative styles (Murphy, 2007) are the dominant motifs of most of the authors selected for this chapter. This generation of authors moves away from the realist narratives of the previous generation to more fragmented and experimental styles. In varying degrees, these stories suggest that the "state-sanctioned violence was a major feature of the post-2000 Zimbabwean life. The violence served a dual purpose of seeking to decapitate opposition support and to bring material advantage to new landowners who included state functionaries such as bureaucrats, police, army and intelligence officers, as well as ruling party politicians" (Sachikonye, 2011, p. 37).

The first section examines Erasmus Chinyani's "A Land of Starving Millionaires". This story poignantly depicts Zimbabwe's tragic hyperinflation environment which reached its zenith in 2008. Julius Chingono's "Minister Without Portfolio" satirises the chaotic land appropriation which began in 2000, while Shimmer Chinodya's "Last Laugh" meditates on Zimbabwe's economic crisis by humorously portraying some people's reasons for attending funerals. The second section focuses on stories that depict an alternative literary representation of the post-2000 Zimbabwean political system and focuses on how the selected literary texts foreground language in a humorous way to engage with the markedly waning political legitimacy of ZANU-PF and Mugabe. Jonathan Brakarsh's "The General's Gun" and "Plenty Ways to Die in the Republic" by Lawrence Hoba satirise President Mugabe's misrule and longevity and the Zimbabwean indigenisation policy respectively. The third section discusses two stories "Notes

[28] Humour is one way of creating and maintaining those alternative communities that young writers are seeking. By publishing most of the stories analysed in this chapter, the two private publishing houses, Weaver and 'amaBooks, have fostered a sense of writers' communities. For further detail on this insight refer to Alden (2007).

from Mai Mujuru's Breast" by Tendai Rinos Mwanaka and "The Chances and Challenges of Chiadzwa" by Edward Chinhanhu, which deal with the government orchestrated tragedy that unfolded in Chiadzwa village, Marange District in the Manicaland Province when diamonds were discovered there in 2006. Through these stories, this chapter examines the depiction of Zimbabwean farm invasions, violence in the diamond mining sector, and the implementation of the indigenisation policy in Zimbabwe.

Staunton in an interview with Chenni Xu stated: "For me, literature is an incredibly important way of telling the truth ... In fact, I believe it is more important than history in terms of being able to help us understand the complexities and nuances of any period, any situation." (Xu, 2011, p.1). My analysis of the subversive potential of especially satirical humour in anthologies such as *Laughing Now* (2007) and *Writing Mystery and Mayhem* (2015) edited by Irene Staunton and *African Violet and Other Stories* (2012) edited by The Caine Prize for African Writing, follows on and reacts to theorisations and critical perspectives on the use of satirical humour. The aim is to examine the contribution of the works to the creation of an alternative discourse on democracy in contemporary Zimbabwe.

The selected stories are indeed a testimony to Niels Bohr's observation that "[t]here are some things so serious you have to laugh at them"[29] (*Laughing Now*, p.xi). Similarly, Bakhtin argues: "In world literature there are certain works in which the two aspects, seriousness and laughter, coexist and reflect each other, and are indeed whole aspects, not separate serious and comic images" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.122). In the light of Bakhtin's argument, this chapter explores the use of laughter and jokes by writers, in a carnivalesque sense, to ridicule the tragic Zimbabwean situation[30]. As aptly demonstrated by these stories, postcolonial laughter is not only directed at those in power, but it also targets those who are subject to power. Willems (2011) observes: "Laughter frequently adopts a self-reflexive mode through which those subject to power mock their own powerlessness and lack of agency in the face of a system that they perceive as immutable" (p.126). Boje's (2008) storytelling approach, greatly influenced by Bakhtin's

[29] Niels Bohr, a Danish physicist and Nobel prizewinner, statement cited in Staunton (2007) *Laughing Now*, (p.xi).
[30] In my thesis I refer to laughter in the context of what short stories are doing in the post-2000 crisis context as argued by Alden (2007, p.5) that "laughter has become a vital way of coping with the daily news. As soon as a new policy is announced, you will see a joke about it on the internet in an hour or two. When I mentioned once that forming queues has become a regular occupation in Harare, my respondent told me an ironically self-deprecating joke that was circulating: 'We Zimbabweans have a high 'I queue.'"

ideas, provides an interesting conceptual basis to clarify the use of various episodes in the short stories in this chapter as "antenarratives"[31] used in "sensemaking and sensegiving".

Urge to Laugh and Dark Satire

This section focuses on the three stories from *Laughing Now* edited by Irene Staunton (2007) that use light-hearted laughter, sardonic humour and dark satire to depict the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis. Laughter is the basic organising principle in all the selected stories in this section, providing writers' vision and understanding of the world. The selected stories are Erasmus Chinyani's "A Land of Starving Millionaires", Julius Chingono's "Minister Without Portfolio" and Shimmer Chinodya's "Last Laugh". These stories use humour to reveal what Chritchley (2002) describes as "the depth of what we share" (p.18), in this case, the experiences most Zimbawean share about the post-2000 crisis.

The Rabelaisian notion of laughter and its link to satire within the Renaissance period as described by Bakhtin (1984) is adopted to think through the depictions found in the selected stories. The Renaissance conception of laughter, according to Bakhtin (1984), can be roughly described as follows: "Laughter has a deep philosophical meaning, it is one of the essential forms of the truth concerning the world as a whole, concerning history and man; it is a peculiar point of view relative to the world; the world is seen anew, no less (and perhaps more) profoundly than when seen from the serious standpoint" (p.66). Therefore, as Bakhtin further argues, "laughter is just as admissible in great literature, posing universal problems, as seriousness. Certain essential aspects of the world are accessible only through laughter. The Renaissance expressed its attitude toward laughter in the very practice of literary creation and appreciation" (p.67). Chinyani's story follows the life of Mr Usury Chimbadzo, a moneylender who has three wives and twenty-nine children. As both his English name and Shona surname imply, he makes a living through lending money to people. The story is useful in examining how the writer, through the focaliser-narrator, perceives the extent to which Mr Chimbadzo's life is, in fact, complicated by the Zimbabwe crisis.

[31] Antenarratives are fragments of discourse that are articulated to make sense of things or to give sense to them in chaotic 'national' reality. This means that rather than focusing on traditional narrative analysis of relatively salient structures, plots and actants, one should zoom in on the fragmented pieces of discourse-antenarratives- that create specific kinds of meanings. Thus, antenarrative analysis allows one to focus on ongoing prospective sensemaking and sensegiving (Boje, 2008, p.13-14).

Chingono's entire story is set in the official Mercedes Benz of a Zimbabwean political minister without portfolio driving along the Harare-Masvingo road after the violent land appropriation of the early years of the first decade of the 21st century. In a satirical manner, the story uses the journey motif and the road chronotope in which the Minister without portfolio, Mr Kambeu, his official driver, Mhofu and Agnes his mistress, are used to expose the staggering extent of corruption and the lack of land utilisation that attended the so-called fast track land redestribution in Zimbabwe. The story caricatures the Minister without Portfolio and exposes as absurd the post-2000 Zimbabwean government land policies. In the light of Bakhtin's (1981) theorisation, chronology cannot be separated from events and events naturally unfold in time. Hence, time is inseparable from events, their order, the manner of their understanding and narration. Following this logic, Chinodya's story is also set in the early years of Zimbabwe's post-2000 farm repossessions and inflation showing how these chronotopes operate with different arrangements of time and space that are intricately interwoven within the narrative. This further gives the genre its specific narrative character, themes, structures and characters such as Mr Kambeu. The selected stories confirm Staunton's (2007) observation that the paradoxical truth is that troubled societies somehow produce some of the most interesting writing available.

Chinyani's story suggests that, through humour, the intensity of the crisis is ameliorated as the ordinary people's elasticity is measured, and their enduring capacity celebrated. The oxymoronic titling of "A Land of Starving Millionaires" comments on the actual experiences of many Zimbabweans between 2003 and 2008 where every citizen became a millionaire due to hyperinflation but could not afford the necessities. Generally, millionaires are meant to be well-to-do people that have enviable lifestyles; hence it is awkward and incongruous if they are starving. Chinyani uses the title to indict the Zimbabwean government for presiding over one of the most inflationary economies in recent world history. According to Bardon (2005), amusement derives from the intellectual recognition of an incongruity: "the cause of laughter is the bringing together of images which have contrary additional ideas, as well as some resemblance in the principal idea" (p.6). Hutcheson adds that an incongruity is some sort of unusual or unexpected juxtaposition of events, objects, or ideas.

The names given to the characters in the story also compound the sardonic humour that pervades the story. For example, *chimbadzo* is a Shona word for money that is illegally loaned out to individuals and is then paid back with phenomenal interest that is determined by the lender. In most instances, individuals who have borrowed such money end up in great debt that

sometimes results in them losing their property. The name Kudamburahuda[32] is condemnatory and delivers judgement on him for his pleasure-loving and womanising ways, suggesting that he brought HIV and AIDS upon himself. The names are underlined by the author's deliberate effort to absolve the government from its responsibility to provide good governance and a robust social welfare system. Meanwhile, all the blame is unjustifiably passed on to the characters whose predicament is as a result of a crisis that is largely beyond their control. Mr Chimbadzo's two debtors owe a combined total of 5 million. He manages to recover Z$1, 3 million but sadly discovers that due to hyperinflation, this cannot even buy a loaf of bread. Vasudevan (2008) points out that "every Zimbabwean was a millionaire but had to pay more than a million dollars to buy a loaf of bread" (p.27). Chagonda (2010) states that in Zimbabwe "inflationary pressures had built up from 1997, when inflation rose from 19 percent in that year to 56 percent by 2000, to over 1000 percent by 2006 and shooting to an astronomical 231 million percent by July 2008" (p.4).

Chinyani exploits the technique of word play and imagery to generate humour that exposes the post-2000 crisis formulations. For example, the *n'anga* that Mr Chimbadzo refers Kutamburahuda's family to, Dr Target Super Actelic Chirindamadura Dust, who is said to be able to cure even "a coffin and cause it to cough out its corpse" (p.41), adds to the humour in the story as it exposes not only the gullibility but also the desperation of the debtor's family. The elements of wordplay and imagery that characterise Chinyani's story fall within the technique of incongruity that is used for humourous purposes. Referring to one of Rabelais' type of laughter, Pinsky, one of the critics of Rabelaisian philosophy of laughter, states that laughter in "Pantagruel" (one of the characters in Rabelais' novel) is at the same time a theme and an argumentation. The reader must regain the gift that sorrow has deprived him of, the gift of laughter. He must return to the normal condition of human nature, so that truth may be disclosed to him[33]. In Zimbabwe, the name of the imaginary healer is synonymous with the chemical for preserving maize stored in a granary against weevils. Utilising aspects of incongruity, Chinyani represents Zimbabwe's hyperinflationary environment through incongruous juxtapositions, wordplay and creative imagery drawn from the ordinary symbols familiar to most Zimbabweans.

[32] A Shona word used as a proper noun meaning suffering is a choice.
[33] Pinsky's criticism of "the Rabelaisian philosophy of laughter" is cited in Bakhtin (1984, p.141).

The description of Mr Usury Chimbadzo's body posture as he carries his worthless millions provides a telling insight about the challenges faced by most Zimbabweans during this time of the country's hyperinflation and the author's use of humour to depict "surprisingly serious contexts" (Alison, 2005, p.2). The narrator says: "Hunched under the weight of a huge plastic sack, the millionaire had the look of a man who carried the world on his back. He stopped staggering when he reached the first shop in the row and heaved the sack onto the counter" (p.38). When asked by the shopkeeper how much is in his bag, Mr Chimbadzo responds in a hopeful dramatic fashion hoping to get the food products he desperately needs: "One million three hundred thousand dollars in single notes. And I want a loaf of bread and a packet of sugar" (p.38). The shopkeeper's response reveals the surreal nature of Zimbabwean inflation at the time: "Old man, don't you read the papers? Or haven't you got a radio? The prices of food stuffs quadrupled this morning. *Half* a loaf of bread now costs one million five hundred thousand. Forget about the sugar. It's just not for your class anymore. Don't even ask how much. It will give you a heart attack. Sugar is now strictly for the super-class" (p.38). What makes all this shockingly humorous is the fact that the situation like the one described above was the experience of millions of Zimbabweans during the period of hyperinflation between 2003 and 2008. The artistic skill demonstrated by Chinyani shows the versatility of fiction to render this painful historical event in a humorous manner.

As the crisis escalated, Chinyani shows how most Zimbabweans found themselves with hordes of useless bank notes. The reality that what he has cannot even buy a loaf of bread deals Mr Chimbadzo a heavy physical and psychological blow. The narrator captures this negative effect when he observes: "Mr Usury Chimbadzo, doubled back as if he had been dealt a swift upper-cut" (p.38). Lynch (1988) and Alison (2005) talk of humour that ceases to be funny or to be a laughing matter and this seems to be Mr Chimbadzo's situation. Reference is made to the governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe who, during the years of hyperinflation, provides a poignant commentary on how the situation developed. He says speculators were armed "with instant Zimbabwe dollars and millions of US dollars generated from absolutely nothing" and then "other sellers of goods and services in the market respond[ed] by hiking their prices by the hour in ways and levels that [were] not only unprecedented but [were] also simply mad" (Gono, 2008, p.72).

The hyperinflation situation deeply affected the family as is dramatized through Mr Chimbadzo. However, the author does not seem to acknowledge this. Instead, he merely

satirises what he presents as Mr Chimbadzo's inept decision of marrying too many wives. What exacerbates Mr Chimbadzo's situation is that he has three wives and 29 children and the author pokes fun at him because he depicts him as having made ridiculous choices, which, now coupled with the hard-economic times, make his circumstances dire. Mr Chimbadzo's predicament can be understood in the context of the hyperinflationary crisis. Bakhtin (1981) argues that all meanings, even abstract ones, become comprehensible only in a given context, which is invariably situated in time-space. Chinyani's humour does not seem to be an expression of "resistance" or hostility towards authority (Mbembe, 2001) since it appears to be aimed primarily at Mr Chimbadzo's bad choices. Capturing Mr Chimbadzo's grim family situation, the narrator states: "The youngest of his three wives had just given birth to- believe it or not- triplets, and his other two wives were explosively pregnant. He hadn't finished paying *roora* for the third wife and his in-laws were baying for his blood. All his school-going children had been sent home for non-payment of fees. The cumulative amount ran into *billions*" (p.39). The narrator also says: "Back at home, his children were collectively wailing like some multiple-sounding siren. All twenty-nine of them." (p.39). He had even been nicknamed "Baba vaAlphabet"[34] in view of his many children.

Multiple similes are used to describe the noise that the children made, "At first their hungry cries were directed at the mothers: "*Mommy, Tadha-a! Mai, chaja-a, AMAI TIRIKUDA SADZA-A!!!*" The three mothers would, in frustration, either scream back at the children, or worse still, they would direct their counter-attack at the man-of-the-house, Baba vaAlphabet. But, lately "the children seemed to have taken a cue from their mothers and directed their shrill demands at the man himself- Baba vaAlphabet, the millionaire with his stash of useless dollars. And now even these had run out" (p.39). Chinyani's laughter although meant to mock Baba vaAlphabet, also enables us to see what Critchley (2002) describes as the folly of the world, in order to imagine a better world in its place, and to change the situation in which we find ourselves. In this case, the reader imagines a better world for Baba vaAlphabet, a world where he is able to take care of his large family. Almost capturing Mr Chimbadzo's situation and that of millions of other Zimbabweans at the height of inflation, Robinson (2007:3) observes: "Hyperinflation is ... notorious for concentrating incomes in the hands of the rich while impoverishing the poor, often making already highly unequal societies even more divided".

[34] A Shona expression meaning "Father of Alphabet", a euphemistic expression depicting multitude of children paralleled to the letters of the alphabet.

Although the economic situation of Mr Chimbadzo's family is grim, the author largely fails to realise that Mr Chimbadzo is a victim of the larger unstable politically triggered economic situation.

The authorial voice and undertone of disapproval of Mr Chimbadzo's predicament is rather misplaced as the author does not provide adequate background to Mr Chimbadzo's lifestyle before the onset of the crisis-induced hyperinflation. It could be inferred that Mr Chimbadzo's life before hyperinflation permitted him to marry many wives has and that he had taken good care of the three of them including his multiple children before the economic collapse. What Chinyani fails to appreciate is how the economic crisis destroyed families. It is possible that cash dealers, such as Chimbadzo, had been living luxurious lives and that this could be the reason why Chinyani turns him into a satiric butt. It does not appear that Mr Chimbadzo has been struggling to survive and therefore whatever suffering that has befallen him is mainly a result of the debilitating economic crisis.

Admittedly, the author tries to express his hostility towards authorities through the way Mr Chimbadzo is killed. This is evident in the narrator's description of the MP's car which knocks down and kills Mr Chimbadzo as he absent-mindedly carries his useless money back home. While Mr Chimbadzo cannot afford a loaf of bread, the MP and other political elites continue to live in luxury and comfort. Relating the tragic way in which Mr Chimbadzo meets his end, the narrator says:

> Like a fiery bat straight out of hell, the legislator's blood-red luxury Mercedes turned the corner in the typical fashion of a well-fed politician with inexhaustible amounts of fuel to burn. Baba vaAlphabet flew into the air on impact, his sack of money with him, dying long before he hit the ground. His bag burst and the dollars flew into the air, scattered like colonial propaganda pamphlets dropped from a plane. And when they did flap down to join their owner, who lay prostrate on the ground, no one rushed to pick them up. (p.42)

Although the author clearly condemns the MP's carelessness and his arrogance through flaunting his high economic status whilst the masses are suffering, he does not invite the reader to sympathise and empathise with Mr Chimbadzo and his now bereaved family. Mr Chimbadzo's death is tantamount to murder and it is a metaphor of how the selfish decisions

of "well-fed" politicians "with inexhaustible fuel" have led to the tragic economic problems of millions of ordinary people often resulting in the physical deaths of thousands. However, it is disheartening that Chinyani's overall tone does not, to a large extent, hold the political elite responsible for the country's economic crisis. In the final analysis, although Chinyanyi condemns the government and its corrupt political elites, his satiric humour is largely directed at the suffering and struggling father and husband who dies while trying to fend for his family.

Sadly, the acts of the MP are not fully explored by the writer. Judging from the tone of the writer and the narrator's prioritisation of events in the crisis, Mr Chimbadzo's suffering is seemingly self-inflicted. For example, less than a page has been devoted to the heinous acts of the MP. Moreover, the author seems to revel in the graphic description of Mr Chimbadzo's death. There is no serious condemnation of the MP for his careless actions. Instead, the writer seems to exonerate the MP and blames it all on Mr Chimbadzo. This is rather unfortunate because the suffering of the masses in the post-2000 era is mainly because of the MPs and political leaders and their ineptitude.

The oxymoronic titling of the story "The Land of Starving Millionaires" shows the absurdity of the whole crisis period described by Chinyani. Under normal circumstances, one would expect a millionaire to fund all his or her needs with ease. Chinyani uses word-play to capture the crisis that resulted in the so-called millionaires, such as Mr Chimbadzo, failing to enjoy having such money. The tragic contrast arises when Chinyani brings an MP into the narrative because the subject of MPs as leaders is a contentious one as noted in the story "Minister without Portfolio" that will be analysed next. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Chinyani's ultimate position regarding the suffering individuals who are victims of the post-2000 crisis is rather ambivalent and lacking in empathy.

Unlike Chinyani, Chingono's "Minister without Portfolio" directs most of its satiric humour at the corrupt political elite. The story condemns the greedy appropriation of formerly white farms by the black political elites and their flamboyant lifestyles while the ordinary citizens are suffering economic difficulties.[35] Leaders, such as the minister in the story, show a propensity for acquisitiveness while they feed the poor masses with a staple diet of patriotic history, which legitimises their political claim to power (Ranger, 2004). Kambeu, the Minister without Portfolio, boasts about the many farms he owns that were violently grabbed from white

[35] Also refer to Chapter 2, page 54 (Footnote) regarding the role of the political elite within the conceptualization of the fast-track land-reform programme in Zimbabwe.

farmers. The satire of the story derives from the fact that most of those farms lie derelict and void as implied in the title of the Minister without portfolio. However, Chingono's penchant to satirise the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) through a government minister can be read from a different angle as Scoones et al. (2010) argue that "for sure, 'cronies' did get some farms. But any statement that beneficiaries of FTLRP are confined to 'cronies' in the sense of those in the immediate power circles at the core of the ZANU-PF regime, who received farms on a scale of the previous owners, is indeed a 'myth' on both counts". There is a consensus among Scoones and fellow critics that smallholder farms now dominate in numbers and overall acreage, and, thus, it could be argued that a major agrarian restructuring has occurred (Scoones et al. 2010; Cliffe, Alexander, Cousins and Gaidzanwa, 2011, p.909).

Moreover, the title of the story, mocks Mugabe's penchant for appointing to Cabinet his cronies even when there was no constituency or ministry to run. When asked by his mistress what his job description and his responsibilities are, the Minister proudly declares: "I am a non-constituency member of parliament appointed by His Excellency because of my war credentials. I am Minister without Portfolio because I can handle any ministry" (p.12). In the Bakhtinian formulation, Chingono's presentation of the Minister in this light, destroys the official picture of events. He summons all the resources of sober popular imagery, in order to break up official lies, and the narrow seriousness dictated by the ruling classes. Commenting on cronyism in Africa, Melber (2003) refers to a process through which the political elite, such as the Minister without Portfolio, employ "selective narratives and memories relating to their liberation wars, have constructed or invented a new set of traditions to establish an exclusive post-colonial legitimacy under the sole authority of one particular agency of forces" (pp.xiv-xv). Kambeu's words indicate that he was appointed minister solely because he was involved in the liberation struggle. The writer scores the most satirical points by showing that Mr Kambeu is quite unaware of his untenable position of wasting taxpayers' money while doing absolutely nothing.

As his title suggests, Kambeu has absolutely nothing to do except to entertain his numerous mistresses and drink expensive imported wine while being chauffeured around in his government issued vehicle. Aiming his dark humour directly at the Minister, the narrator observes: "They were drinking an expensive imported whisky that the Minister without Portfolio ordered in bulk from Europe. The local liquor made him suffer stomach cramps" (p.9). What is being satirised here is the fact that, while the country has a serious shortage of foreign currency and is experiencing serious shortages of basic commodities, the Minister has

the foreign currency to import expensive whisky in bulk from Europe. Furthermore, the Minister abuses his position by amassing foreign currency from the black market and then spending it on numerous mistresses. The narrator says: "He [the Minister] ripped open the zip of the briefcase that lay beside him and withdrew two thick wads of greenbacks ... The briefcase was tightly packed with stacks of US dollars" (p.11). The minister also promotes "the people's market", that is, the black market where people get higher exchange rates for their US dollars. After giving Agnes the money, the Minister says: "If you change it at the bank you won't get what it is worth ... I can refer you to some reliable people at the people's market. Be careful ... I do not want you to get into trouble" (p.11). Interestingly, he is determined to impress Agnes by giving the impression that he can fix any problem that afflicts the country. Bakhtin (1984) observes that laughter can refer only to individuals and individually typical phenomena of social life. In this case, the sphere of the comic is described as narrow and specific as being private and involving individual social vices. Laughter, because of overindulgence by the Minister, becomes what Bakhtin further describes as a light amusement or a form of salutary social punishment of corrupt and persons (p.67). This high level of engagement of humour in criticising corruption by top government officials is reminiscent of Gerald Lynch's claim in his book *Humour and Humanity* which states that "humorous literature does not occupy a position at the lower level of literature but lies around the summits of its highest range" (Lynch, 1988, p.24). By focusing on the Minister, Chingono provides a scathing satiric attack on the high-ranking government officials who have contributed to the crisis.

Through Mr Kambeu, Chingono also attacks what Maathai (2009) calls the "exhibition of the illusion of importance" (p.123) prevalent among Zimbabwean politicians. While the Minister is clearly aware of the country's dilapidated roads and other infrastructure, he pretends to be seeing these things for the first time. The narrator says: "The *chef* watched his chauffeur negotiate the many potholes on the narrow Harare-Masvingo highway and burst out angrily, "I'm certainly going to make sure that this road is resurfaced without delay ... Next month ... Mhofu, record that in my memory machine ... Don't forget to enter the time and date" (p.7). He also pledges to repave the road from Nyabadza to Osborne Dam where Agnes comes from, so that he does not damage his Benz when visiting her. He says: "I promise you that I'll certainly repave the road ... I will do it, that's my job. I was appointed Minister just to do such things ... Mhofu, record, tar the Nyabadza-Osborne Dam road. Do not forget date and time" (p.8). The satirical tone of the narrator indicates that these grandiose promises are empty. Bakhtin (1981) argues that there is a special link between the motif of meeting and the

chronotope of the road, and of various types of meetings on the road. In the chronotope of the road, the unity of time and space markers is exhibited with exceptional precision and clarity. As the Minister, Agnes and Mhofu travel, many words are directly constructed on the road chronotope and adventures, reinforcing Chingono's satire. The state of farms and posturing by the Minister are part of what Bakhtin (1981) calls scales for measuring items and events, a clear background of the usual, of one's own world, against which to perceive unusual things. One deciphers in Chingono a sense of what Rabelais conceived in the scope of his carnivalesque humour, wherein he did not implicitly believe in what his time "said and imagined about itself"; but he strove to disclose its meaning for the people (Bakhtin, 1984, p.439). Chingono exposes the unfulfilled promises of politicians who have been appointed to government to serve people.

Through his satirical humour, Chingono attacks the well-known habit of high-ranking Zimbabwean politicians of using their money and influence to gain sexual favours from numerous women. The narrator laughs at the minister's triviality and foolishness when he says to Agnes, "I love you as much as I love my country. The country I fought for. The country I died for" (p.8). The idea of one dying for one's country while one is still alive is popular with some war veterans keen on showing that they made the ultimate sacrifice for the country and that they therefore deserve the good life derived from corrupt activities that they now enjoy. In this case, Chingono appropriates the Chimurenga-time chronotope discussed at length in the first chapter of this thesis, as represented through the regimes of truth that the Minister tries to inflict on Agnes. Humour helps to pull down all the mystic hierarchical structures erected by those in leadership, in line with Douglas' (1975) assertion that laughter and jokes, since they attack classification and hierarchy, are obviously apt symbols for expressing community in unhierarchised, undifferentiated social relations. Mr Kambeu also adds: "Darling Agnes that is why I fought the war, to win you" (p.11). Critchley (2002) states that "by laughing at power, we expose its contingency, what appeared to be fixed and oppressive … just the sort of thing that should be mocked and ridiculed" (p.11). The author mocks Mr Kambeu for trivialising the liberation struggle against colonial rule. His equating his womanising habits to the reasons why he fought in the war exposes the shallowness of his patriotism. Mr Kambeu admits that he wrestled Agnes from yet another minister whom he derides as an old man who abused her. He seems oblivious to the fact that he is participating in the same kind of exploitation of women. He foolishly comments: "You are young … it's these old men who take advantage of you flowers of the country, our great Zimbabwe. You girls who were liberated by the blood of the gallant fighters like us" (p.9). Thus, Chingono's satire suggests that Zimbabwe will never get

off its economic and political problems as long as it is led by selfish and comical individuals such as Kambeu.

Chingono's satire is primarily aimed at the much touted but dismally failed fast track land reform programme. As they pass the farms, Mr Kambeu proudly declares: "The fields are red like the blood of our freedom fighters" (p.10). This shows that the land is very fertile and, therefore, it is surprising that it is not productive. Exposing his greed and foolishness, Mr Kambeu shows Agnes one of the farms that now lies untilled and says: "This is prime land with the best soil ... the white man did not want to leave ... We had to invade the farm with truckloads of youths and remove him forcefully". The violence that attended the so-called fast track Zimbabwean land redistribution programme is well documented. For example, Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2002) revealed that war veterans and ZANU-PF militia occupying commercial farms intimidated, assaulted, and in some cases killed white farm owners as President Mugabe repeatedly singled out white Zimbabweans as enemies of the state. The first two farmers were killed in April 2000. David Stevens was shot dead at point blank range by invaders who had occupied his farm at Macheke, south of Harare. A few days later, the farm of Martin Olds, in Nyamandlovu, near Bulawayo, Matabeleland, was invaded by more than one hundred ZANU-PF militia led by war veterans. When the house was set alight, Olds was forced outside, and was shot twice in the head at close range. The intruders then left the farm, not seeking to occupy it. In July 2000, Olds' widow fled Zimbabwe and applied for asylum in the UK. In March 2001, Olds' mother, Gloria Olds, was shot dead on the same farm, which she had refused to leave (Meldrum, 2001). Sachikonye (2011) points out that violence was a means for an accumulation process that involved forceful removal of white farmers from their land.

Similarly, many scholars have shown how the land that was violently taken from white farmers has continued to lie fallow (Kanyenze et al., 2011). Capturing the behaviour, such as the one exhibited by Mr Kambeu, Fanon (1963) foretold that those "who on the eve of independence rallied to the party, now make it clear by their attitude that they gave their support with no other end in view than to secure their slices of the cake of independence. The party is becoming a means of private advancement" (p.138). Through his satirical depiction of Mr Kambeu, Chingono confirms Fanon's words in the case of postcolonial Zimbabwe.

In "Last Laugh", Chinodya also satirises the violent farm invasion programme by exposing its ridiculousness. One of the characters who gathers around Mai George's stall to buy lunch

jokingly says to his friend: "Now that you've finished taking over white farms, whose bedroom are you invading tonight, comrade" (p.29). Such profanity used by Mai George can be described in the Rabelaisian philosophy as part of the familiar speech of the marketplace. In the carnivalesque atmosphere, it acquires the nature of laughter and becomes ambivalent, as the farm invasion process is satirised. Chinodya's story also satirises the lack of productive activity on the farms and ridicules the land redistribution exercise. Similarly, as observed in Chingono's story, instead of engaging in farming activities, "women are busy plaiting each other's hair, the fields are still forests covered with grass and bushes, dilapidated farm dwellings that clearly needed thorough refurbishment", "boys of school-going age are seen digging for mice ... hunting mice", "at the next farm settlement, men and women were dancing and drinking beer", "away from the compound another group of men squatted in a ring, playing cards", "they passed another compound that looked deserted and the land lay fallow" (p.13). What is depicted in Chingono's story is confirmed by Sachikonye (2011, p.40) who states that most of the farms expropriated in 2000-2003 were not fully productive.

What Chingono also satirises is the multiple ownership of farms by government officials such as Ministers. For example, Mr Kambeu brags to Agnes: "Do you know how many farms I have? Five! And I'm in the process of acquiring others. I can get you one ... your size ... You don't do the dirty work ... you get a farm manager" (p.13). Murisa and Chikweche (2015) concur with Chingono's representation when they point out that "the process of land redistribution has also been marred by allegations of multiple farm ownership amongst ZANU-PF elites" (p.xvii). Mr Kambeu has so many farms that he fails to recognise one of his own and lambasts the farm owner for non-productivity, only to be told that it is his own farm. This is what he says about his own derelict farm:

> Now our people are wasting [the land] like this. Some people do not realise that many cadres died for the country ... for the land … I think we have to repossess this farm and give it to someone willing to use it profitably. We cannot allow such disrespect for policy to ruin our national agenda. The revolution we are going through is the green revolution ... Mhofu, book this farm for repossession ... we are in the Beatrice area. (pp.13-14)

Indicting himself further, Mr Kambeu says: "In such circumstances we are excused to think otherwise ... I mean we suspect sabotage ... sabotaging the revolution. How can a son of the soil leave the land to lie fallow" (p.14). Mhofu drops the bombshell in a vengeful urge when

he tells the Minister in front of his mistress: "It is your farm, sir" (p.15). The narrator adds: "[Mhofu] knew that the farm was not the only one that supposedly now belonged to the chef, which lay fallow'' (p.15). Chingono achieves the maximum satirisation of the minister by showing that, after all the glorification of the revolution as he calls it, he is guilty of the highest sabotage.

Chinodya is one of the well-known Zimbabwean writers. His novel *Harvest of Thorns* brilliantly depicts the transition from the old white dominated Southern Rhodesia, through the bush War, to the new black regime. In this seminal novel, Chinodya emerges as a candid critic of government programmes in the post-independence era, the unfulfilled promises to both the liberation war fighters and ordinary Zimbabweans as all that came of the sacrifice was nothing but "a harvest of thorns". This suggests the futility of the outcome of the liberation war. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that Chinodya features as a prankster weaving jokes about the post-2000 crisis period as everything about Zimbabwe during this era seems to have turned into a tragic joke. "Last Laugh" is a collection of jokes that derive from the suffering Zimbabweans during the crisis years. The story explores, the way in which ordinary Zimbabweans negotiated the socio-economic impact of the crisis. Chinodya's philosophy about laughter is enunciated through one of the characters, Mai George, an enterprising woman around whom the jokes are told. The narrator says this about her "Joking, like breathing, made people's lives easier. She knew this, even when she herself was not often amused. She secretly felt that humour never really worked unless the jokes were attached to specific personalities and situations" (p.27). According to Mai George, jokes revolve around specific personalities who have been selected during the crisis as satiric butts and specific situations that had an indelible mark on the post-2000 Zimbabwean society.

Chinodya's jokes can be interpreted within the methodology of psychoanalysis and its value to cultural critics, particularly considering psychoanalysis as a way of reading. Freud listened attentively, and not only to the surface meaning. As Belsey (2013) argues:

> Freud worked on the assumption that a deeper or more subtle meaning was to be found in unlikely places: in incidental observations, denials, jokes, slips of the tongue. He concentrated on the detail that did not fit, that pulled against the coherence of the official, intentional story. And he treated these unexpected components of what was said as intellectual problems, which analysis would set out to solve. (p.174)

Chinodya demands that jokes should be taken seriously as they provide an insight into how ordinary Zimbabweans viewed the crisis and how it affected them. Douglas (1975) asserts that "laughter and jokes, since they attack classification and hierarchy, are obviously expressing community in [the] sense of unhierarchised, undifferentiated social relations" (p.301). This is typical of the carnivalesque humour whereby the suspension of all hierarchical precedence during a carnival was of significance. All were considered equal during the carnival. People were, so to speak, reborn for new, and purely human relations. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this carnival experience, unique of its kind (Bakhtin, 1984). Chinodya's story suggests that one of the strategies adopted by people to cope with the economic crisis was humour. All ranks and hierarchical positions are demolished by the authors' satiric humour. For example, in Chingono's story, the Minister without Portfolio's pretensions are exposed through uncompromising humour.

Significantly, Chinodya's story shows that Zimbabweans saw humour in tragic situations. In this regard, Alison observes that humour "occurs in surprisingly serious contexts" (Alison, 2005, p.2). For example, in Chinodya's story the narrator refers to:

> a chicken-run as yet un-touched by the demolition crews; at the Home Industries Centre, or what remained of it, among gaping walls, smashed windows, mangled door-frames and torn roofs, a few surviving signs brazenly announced: MAI IVY, ENTER-NATIONAL 'MAZONDO' WITH FULL (MUTI) FOR TYRED BACKS/ FRESH EGGS LAID HERE WHILE YOU WATCH./ KWALIFIED HARE-DRESSER, FRY YOUR HEAD QUICK! (p.24)

The ungrammatical English is typical of what Bakhtin (1984) refers to as "familiar speech of the marketplace" that uses grammar and syntax as a special genre of billingsgate, to provoke humour amid the narration of a tragic situation. Mary Douglas (1975) argues that a joke is a means of subverting control, of disorganising and disordering formalised systems of thought, a style that is observable in the foregoing disorienting English jokes advertising the various trades plied by the disenfranchised.

Chinodya's characters recycle popular jokes as a way of coping with the devastating impact of Operation Murambatsvina. For example, Bonfree, one of the characters says: "At the rate Murambatsvina is smashing down shacks you will lodge in dogs' kennels, with Kutu, Racer, Shumba or Boxer" (p.31). Mbuya MaSibanda, in her conversation with Mai George, her tenant, humorously explains what Murambatsvina has done to Zimbabweans: "And with

Murambatsvina, every other man in the street is now a thief. Even the good Lord, pardon me, Jesus, would become a thief in this country" (p.35). The sacrilegious description of the effects of Murambatsvina coheres with the grotesque that explains the peculiarities of Rabelais' images and verbal style observed through exaggeration of the inappropriate to incredible dimensions and the tendency to transgress all limits, in order to satirise (Bakhtin, 1984). Although hyperbolised, this joke reveals the extent to which Zimbabwe's politically induced economic crisis makes it impossible for citizens to be morally upright. This familiar language of the marketplace used by one of the narrators is what Bakhtin calls a reservoir in which various speech patterns excluded from official intercourse could freely accumulate. Despite their differences, all these speech patterns were filled with the carnival spirit, and they transformed their primitive verbal functions, acquired a general tone of laughter, and became, as it were, so many sparks of the carnival bonfire which renews the world.

Through the humorous representation of the suffering of the characters through Murambatsvina experiences, Chinodya attests Lynch's (1988) argument that, in its most effective form, humour ceases to be funny- it becomes "no longer necessarily funny; no longer a laughing matter" (p.25). Bakhtin also argues that true ambivalent and universal laughter does not deny seriousness but purifies and completes it. He says, "Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified; it liberates from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naïveté and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality. Laughter does not permit seriousness to atrophy" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.123). Operation Murambatsvina has been called one of the most tragic human catastrophes that befell Zimbabweans in post-2000. Raftopoulos (2005) argues that Operation Restore Order was the ruling party's attack on the opposition party MDC; the destruction of informal settlements in urban areas was its major focus. Raftopoulos further argues that it was "a state assault on the urban "surplus" in the informal sector". (p.12). Chinodya's collection of jokes, therefore, reveals the extent of the ordinary people's powerlessness in the face of a violent and rapacious government and the way they tried to deal with their situation.

Chinodya's jokes also refer to the tragedy of hyperinflation already discussed in Chinyani's "A Land of Starving Millionaires". Humour is one way of creating and maintaining those alternative communities that younger writers, such as those in the selected stories, seem to be seeking (Alden, 2007). At the supermarket where Mai George buys the meat which she cooks for resale to workers during lunch breaks, the butcher says: "Meat has gone up again. Before the year is out, we'll be stewing each other" (p.25). The effect generated by the joke is in line

with what Bakhtin (1984, p.68) describes as "the therapeutic power of laughter". As much as one cannot help laughing at the imagery of stewing used by Mai George, one cannot miss the representation of the underlying sarcastic attack on the deteriorating economic situation. Mai George ends up ordering low grade items, "cow and pig trotters, offal, ration beef, fish, *madora* and a medium-sized bag of mealie-meal" (p.25). These items show the gravity of suffering that has beset ordinary people like Mai George. One of Mai George's customers, Bornfree, weighs in on the issue of the hyperinflation-induced suffering saying: "By this time next year you will be munching air-pies, sipping toilet-flavoured Mukuvisi River H_20 and soaking up vitamin-rich sunshine for lunch. And you will all be stepfathers and stepmothers" (p.31). Painfully, through his characters' jokes, Chinodya shows that there was no immediate solution to the crisis. Bornfree is stressing that there will be absolutely nothing to eat as the years go by.

Critchley (2002) refers to "jokes as everyday anamnesis" (p.86) that remind us what we already know in a new way. As such, if we understand jokes as clarificatory remarks, then they are not simply occasioning for solipsistic rumination, rather they bring us back to a social world that is common and shared. This is what Cioffi (1998, pp. 6-7) means when he speaks of "an experiential sense of *thereness* for everyone" (Emphasis in the original). As seen in Bornfree's humour, jokes have a sense of *thereness*; they illuminate a social world that is held in common with others. If we are to clarify this *thereness*, then it must be in terms of the 'we' of a specific community, with a common language and shared cultural assumptions and life-world practices. In this sense, jokes are reminders of who 'we' are, who 'we' have been, and who 'we' might come to be. Discussing linguistic innovation during the crisis, Kadenge and Mavunga (2009:169) argue that metaphors could be seen as "one of the basic human strategies for dealing with our environment" and, in this process, people tend to "utilise existing physical and natural concepts in [the] environment to conceptualise more abstract concepts such as the pain and confusion that characterise difficult situations". Explaining his joke, Bornfree says people will be stepfathers and stepmothers when they walk to work due to lack of bus fare. In this instance, Chinodya uses a joke as a literary technique to make explicit the enormous commonality of the crisis in the social life of most Zimbabweans.

Mai George, as the focaliser, explains why people laugh at their own misery: "People loved to laugh and hold the world at bay" (p.26). Similarly, Chenjerai Hove observed that Zimbabweans during the crisis decade "laugh[ed] in order not to cry" (Hove, 2005, p.35). The other jokes in Chinodya's story focus on the suffering of workers, particularly civil servants. Bornfree says to Mai George: "And did you hear about the evil-sorry-civil servant who tried to organise a

demonstration against the Governor of the Reserve Bank? The reason being that, He was so broke he wanted the governor to reinstate the three zeros on the new currency" (p.26). This joke refers to the staggering 25 zeros which were "slashed from the Zimbabwean currency within a space of only three years (Chagonda, 2010, p.7). Chagonda further points out that "when the Zimbabwean dollar was officially shelved in March 2009, the highest single denomination was a 100 trillion-dollar note. When the 100 trillion-dollar note was introduced on 16 January 2009, it was worth the equivalent of US$30 on the parallel market" (p.7). Amid this tragic situation, one would have thought that Zimbabweans had nothing to laugh about. The reader is, thus, drawn through humour to become what Critchley (2002) calls "philosophical spectators upon our lives" (p.18). Notably, Lynch (1988) links humour to the human instinct to escape problematic situations, arguing that humour "provides temporary, illusory respite from a life that is fundamentally disillusioning" (p.25). During the height of the Zimbabwean economic crisis, civil servants were jokingly referred to as "evil" servants as they were thought to be conniving with the government by failing to protest the escalating inflation.

Chinodya's jokes focus on the tragic effect of the hyperinflation on civil servants' salaries and the extent to which the lifestyle of civil servants has turned into a laughing matter. For example, One of Mai George's customers tells the following joke aimed at the pitiful salaries of teachers: "A prostitute says to a prospective client, "All right, Uncle. I usually work on commission. You say you're not rich. I'll make it easy for you. I'll give you a discount. Why don't you start me off with the equivalent of a teacher's monthly salary for tonight? Half of that for short time'" (p.34). This joke highlights the unbelievable levels to which civil servants' salaries had been eroded by hyperinflation. As already noted, Douglas (1975, p.297) points out that jokes can be used to attack sense and hierarchies. Douglas further argues that, "whatever the joke, however remote its subject, the telling of it is potentially subversive. Since its form consists of a victorious tilting of uncontrol against control, it is an image of the levelling of hierarchy, the triumph of intimacy over formality, of unofficial values over official ones" (p.297). On the matter of the teaching profession being used as a yardstick of poverty during Zimbabwe's period of hyperinflation, Chagonda (2010) points out:

> The teaching sector suffered immensely during the period of hyperinflation between 2007 and 2008 and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) monthly lists of incomes for the unions that are affiliated to it consistently showed the teachers to be amongst the least paid workers. From October to December 2008, the teachers' average incomes were Z$ 729,000, Z$ 3 million

> and Z$ 12 million respectively (*The Worker*, October 2008, November 2008, December 2008). (p.9)

These incomes translated to less than US$10 for each of the three months. Chagonda further states: "The October 2008 income was the worst, because when the teachers earned Z$ 729,000, it was equivalent to US$ 0.72 on the widely used parallel money market" (p.9). Chinodya's story, therefore, suggests that the only way to comprehend this head-spinning inflationary environment was to joke about it. This would, in turn, as noted by Bakhtin (1984, p.11) provoke the mind of readers to greater potentialities in contemplating the depth of the Zimbabwean crisis.

Notably, Chinodya's jokes are informed by the earlier period and stages of the crisis. The main indicators at this stage were, among other issues, hyperinflation, erosion of income and salaries, farm invasions, Operation Murambatsvina, and a shortage of basic commodities. At this stage of the crisis, most people thought that the crisis was just a passing phase, hence they could joke about virtually everything. Moreover, the most affected civil service sector were teachers, and these were the focal point around which most jokes were centred. Little did the masses know that the deep-seated nature of the crisis was such that it would end up affecting everyone in every profession. In comparison, humour of the late post-2000 period, as observed in most stories of that period, became sober as the masses began to realise the debilitating extent of the crisis. Since almost everyone was now affected, there was nothing to laugh about or laugh at. As people were dying due to lack of proper health facilities and calamities that resulted from the carelessness and recklessness of the political leadership of president Robert Mugabe, people found themselves having very little to laugh about. Despite the usefulness of humour in dealing with distressing situations, this suggests that there are limits to what people can laugh about.

A Satirical Exposé of a Cruel Dictatorship

This section and the next focus on the painful paradoxes of the discovery of diamonds in Zimbabwe at the height of the country's economic crisis. In the selected stories in this section, the interpretation of the grotesque image as purely satirical, that is, negative, as Bakhtin further argues, is widespread. Bakhtin considers exaggeration, hyperbolism and excessiveness generally as fundamental attributes of the grotesque (1984, p.303). In interpreting the Rabelaisian world, Schneegans (1894) identifies three different types of the comic: the

clownery, burlesque, and the grotesque. The burlesque and the grotesque are dominant forms of laughter in the selected stories. In the African postcolonial context, Mbembe (2001) ponders on whether "humour in the post-colony is an expression of 'resistance' or not, whether it is, a priori, oppositional or simply a manifestation of hostility towards authority" (p.103). In the stories by Hoba and Brakarsh, humour does not simply express hostility or mere opposition against the ZANU-PF leader. It is rather predicated on the suffering masses due to the socio-economic and political crisis caused by the same leadership.

"Plenty Ways to Die in the Republic" by Lawrence Hoba and "The General's Gun" by Jonathan Brakarsh, from *Writing Mystery & Mayhem* (2015) edited by Staunton, illustrate how political dictatorships rule by inspiring fear in the people and how ordinary people's lives are devalued through violence that often leads to deaths. Tragic humour and satire are some of the prominent features in these two stories. Both stories are set in the thinly fictionalised post-2009 Zimbabwe which is riddled with economic collapse, political oppression and violence, social instabilities and religious fraud. While Hoba's story focuses on how dictatorships always breed suffering and death among their subjects, Brakarsh's story emphasises the same themes, but also shows that dictatorships are characterised by the violent economic self-aggrandisement of the political elite who enact laws that benefit only themselves. These stories illustrate Foucault's (1972, p.22) claims that power operates through the manipulation of "discourse systems" that control how ideologies are disseminated. Foucault also argues that "literature and politics are always themselves reflexive categories, principles of classification, institutionalised types: they, in turn, are facts of discourse that deserve to be analysed beside others; of course, they also have complex relations with each other, but they are not intrinsic, autochthonous, and universally recognisable characteristics" (p.22).

Hoba's story is set in a country named "the republic" which, however, can clearly be identified with the post-2009 period when Zimbabwe adopted the US dollar as its currency to try and stabilise its skyrocketing inflation. However, times are still hard for ordinary people as seen by the protagonist's crumpling of "two one-dollar notes meant for the family's breakfast and supper items that day" (p.31). Moreover, the political climate is still very much polarised. The story is focalised through Maki, a gullible former youth militia of the ruling party who when he compares himself to the seeming immortality of the Old Man[36], calls himself "a mere

[36] A thin disguise for President Mugabe. This emanated from the fact that many people from within and outside Zimbabwe viewed him as rather too old to lead. At the time of the publication of Hoba's story in 2015 Mugabe was 91 years old.

mortal-prone youth riddled by diabetes, hunger and confusion" (p.30). The exposition by Maki is reminiscent of what Scheneegans in the Rabelaisian laughter refers to as burlesque, in which irony is added to laughter, arising from the degradation of high literature (Bakhtin, 1984). Moreover, the laughter about the Old Man is indirect. Maki has left the youth militia of the ruling party and joined a charismatic spiritual church led by "the Prophet" in the hope of getting miraculously cured of his diabetic condition. On the morning of the story's setting, Maki is confronted by a tense political situation which can easily lead to one's death in the republic. While going about his business of trying "to fetch water from the sewer-fed vlei a short distance from his home" (p.27), he finds himself caught up in a crowd of an "over-zealous mob of party youths" (p.26) who are forcing everyone to join them to the airport to welcome back the Old Man from one of his numerous international trips. The central chronotope in this story is enshrined in the age of the main character who happens to be the Old Man. Hoba has appropriated the timely discourse of the Old Man's age to show how at this time of the crisis many Zimbabweans began to imagine many ways out of their suffering and they equated their problems to the unyielding character of the Old Man in handing over power to the young leader.

Because of its focus on the Old Man, a disguise of Mugabe's antics, "Plenty ways to Die in the Republic", bears out Coullie et al.'s (2006) observation that the relationship between fact and fiction, truth and metaphor, is debatable. Bakhtin (1981) gives the name chronotope to this challenge of representation. He suggests that all narratives are by their very nature artistic expressions which attempt to capture an intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships of one kind or another. Commenting on the challenges that attend to any process of representation, Bakhtin observes that "the articulation of actual historical persons in … time … has a complicated and erratic history" (p.84). Since "Plenty ways to Die in the Republic" is an attempt to articulate the experiences of actual historical persons narratologically, it creates an interesting convergence of genres which leads to a text "whose importance resides in the fact that it flirts with the relationship between fact and fiction" (Coullie, 2006, p.52).

The story is built around the ironic events where the economic victims of the oppressive antics of the Old Man are also the zealots who would not hesitate to kill on his behalf. The tragic humour of the story derives from the fact that the narrator points out that Maki knows from experience that refusing to join the crowd "is one of the easiest ways to die in the republic" (p.26). To avoid a violent confrontation, Maki decides to join the mob reasoning that "it's too early in the morning to die stupidly and dishonourably … One can always wait for the moment when all that can be done in a day is done" (p.26). Regarding this, Gagiano observes, that "a

comic vision occurring within the ambit of, or recognisably in response to, what can be considered tragic, is not unprecedented" (Gagiano, 2005, p.258) and this aids our understanding of the interplay of tragedy and humour in Hoba's exposé of Mugabe's despotic tendencies. Invoking Leo Salingar's study of Shakespeare and comic traditions, Gagiano highlights a major characteristic of comedy that is on the political function of humour. Gagiano cites "Salinger's distinction between tragedy- as having mythos, 'plot' or 'history'- and comedy- as having *logos*, *hypothesis* or 'argument'" (Gagiano, 2005, p.258, emphasis in original). From its classical origins through to its post-modern theorisation, the socio-political function of humour, especially in its satirical form, has been connected, not only to its potential to radically challenge existing social, cultural and political codes governing social and political processes, but also to the potential for the creation of better human relations. This kind of humour is further developed when Maki starts thinking about the longevity and the seeming immortality of the Old Man in contrast with all the death and dying people around him. It is from contemplating these pitifully humorous events that the author aptly titles his story "Plenty Ways to Die in the Republic".

Through Maki, the narrator meditates on the tragic irony of the Zimbabwean economic and political situation. On the one hand, it is easy for the ruling party's opponents to die a premature violent death at the hands of the over-zealous but hungry mob of party youths. On the other hand, there is the seeming immortality of the Old Man, who is supposed to have died due to old age; many want him dead because of his violent dictatorship and his mismanagement of the country's economy. Ayittey (2005) observes that, "as the economic and political crises escalated, most Zimbabweans actually wished the Old Man to die so that a young and energetic leader could take over and hopefully turnaround the fortunes of the country" (p.389). In the story, through tongue-in-cheek reasoning, the protagonist reveals how in the Republic the life of political opponents is cheapened through the licensing of mobs with life and death powers. Throughout the story, the protagonist shows that in the Republic, one must be astute by carefully picking one's battles since it would be plain stupid to stand up against a state that surreptitiously legalises lawlessness and violence.

As already mentioned, most of the tragic humour in Hoba's story derives from the fact that, due to the long misrule of the Old Man, most citizens suppose that his death will bring some relief to their suffering. Humour is also evident when the narrator states that the Old Man is the "only one person [with] the power to kill [his] enemies [in the] whole country" (p.29). Furthermore, the fact that Maki collects water from a sewer polluted stream shows that the Old

Man has created desperate economic and social conditions that expose his subjects to avoidable deaths. Expressing the wish of many of his fellow citizens about the Old Man, the protagonist humorously reasons that "the most principled thing to do in life- [is to] die when one is expected to die. When the time comes, one should just leave: allowing your spirit to linger, to hang around wanting to stay, well, that's plain inconvenient" (p.26).

In the framework of the burlesque proposed in the Rabelaisian comic character of laughter, Hoba presents a narrative wherein pleasure is caused by degrading high ideals. In this case, all that is high, such as the Old Man and his despotic tendencies, tires in the long run. The more powerful and prolonged the domination of the high, such as the Old Man, the greater the pleasure caused by its uncrowning. Although the Old Man does not fall immediately from power, the Rabelaisian reading of his acts is prophetic of his imminent fall. The Old Man is seen as the major cause of the country's predicament. The narrator observes: "The Old Man doesn't care about what is or what is not convenient. He has refused to die, and it doesn't bother him that everything around him is collapsing and that everyone wants him dead" (p.26). What makes this observation tragi-comic is that the narrator seems to believe that the Old Man is so powerful that, in addition to causing the death of his citizens, he also has power to stay his own death. Because of the Old Man's alleged ability to avoid death, citizens have been coming with stories of his death whenever he is not seen in public for a considerable period. For example, when he is not seen in public for forty days, people assume that he is finally dead, a clear indication that they are fed up with him and are now looking up to supernatural forces to extricate them from the man-made crisis.

However, the story's satiric humour also derives from the fact that the narrator exposes people's conflicted desires about the Old Man. The Old Man has created a powerful personality cult that, while people wish for his death, they cannot imagine life without him. Capturing this paradoxically humorous scenario, the narrator says: "That's pretty scary because … the truth is that no one really wants the Old Man dead; everyone is scared that the republic will just sink into the grave with him, the moment he's buried. Each time the Old Man has died, a part of the republic has died with him; but it's unlike him not to resurrect himself" (p.26). These words suggest that oppressive dictatorships have a way of creating an unhealthy dependency syndrome on the oppressed. The lengthy oppressive dictatorship creates a warped view and a mental laziness in the populace that prevents it from imagining an alternative future without the dictator.

Moreover, Hoba's narrative shows, through satire with a religious stricture, that oppressive dictatorships result in the emergence of charismatic and opportunistic spiritual leaders who compete with the political dictator for popularity by claiming to possess all kinds of power to solve people's problems. For example, the protagonist abandons politics for religion to try and get a miraculous cure for his diabetic condition. A one-time ardent supporter of the political dictator, the Old Man, the protagonist transforms into a religious zealot who believes that the Prophet is infallible. What is ironic is that both the Old Man and the Prophet compete for deity statuses, which require complete obedience and reverence among their followers and supporters. The narrator observes: "The Old Man's followers liken him to the Messiah, much to the exasperation of the Prophet who prefers to see himself as the sixth or seventh in the order of heaven, due to his miracle-making abilities" (p.27). The humour of these words derives from the protagonist's tongue in cheek comment. While he seems to have once been duped by the demagoguery of the Old Man and now seems to be under the spell of the Prophet, the satirical slippages in the protagonist's words show that he may have been exercising some agency all along, albeit within certain confines. The protagonist seems aware of the hypocrisy of both the political and religious leaders and therefore exposes his own actions as calculated opportunism. The fact that the narrator is not completely ignorant of the self-serving strategies of both the Old Man and the Prophet is evident when the he states that the Prophet "multiplies Maki's confusion" (p.29) when he admonishes his flock not to turn to politics because he claims that "it was the way of the evil one, the devil incarnate troubling the country" (p.29).

The seeming ability of the Old Man to resurrect every time he is rumoured to have died provides the main source of humour in the story. The author's satire also derives its edge from the preposterous allusions where the Old Man is compared to Biblical Moses and Jesus Christ. Just like Moses who is said to have disappeared into Mount Sinai for forty days resulting in the Israelites assuming that he was dead, the Old Man is assumed to be dead when he is not seen for the same number of days. But then, like Moses, the Old Man reappears "walking triumphantly down the airplane stairs, unaided" (p.30). Maki, and likely millions of other citizens, are filled "with a new respect, feelings not dissimilar to those of the disciples on the day of the ascension: awe, fear and deity-like reverence" (p.30). Here the humour of the account comes from the blasphemous comparison of the Old Man's stunt to what the disciples witnessed when Jesus ascended to heaven. The Old Man uses his moments of weakness, such as absence due to sickness, to mesmerise people when he reappears in public apparently stronger.

The story also creates humour by showing the extent to which the Old Man is willing to go to project an image of strength and invincibility when everyone knows that old age and sickness have caught up with him. For example, after his arrival at the airport, the Old Man speaks for three hours "standing, sometimes breaking into song and dance, but never fading" (p.31). After being mesmerised by the winsome eloquence of the Old Man's airport speech, as the focaliser, Maki thinks: "No one can match the Old Man. Everyone falls short of the glory of his power and abilities, like sinners at the feet of Christ … he [Maki] can be forgiven for thinking that God may have incarnated into the Old Man" (p.30). However, by employing the Christian spiritual terminology derived from the Book of Romans chapter 3 verse 23 in *The Bible*, the author satirises Maki's gullibility because, before he was compelled to join the crowd to the airport, he was fetching drinking water from a sewer polluted stream. Moreover, the narrative closes with him collapsing and becoming unconscious from his diabetic condition because he is too afraid to stand up and get something to eat in the middle of the Old Man's winding speech. Capturing this pitiful and yet humorous situation, the narrator states: "Maki knows that the thought of walking away to get something to eat while the Old Man is speaking, especially from where he is seated, is not only stupid, but indistinguishable from treason" (p.30).

The narrator makes it clear that the Old Man's apparent popularity depends largely on rented and coerced crowds. The coerced individuals, such as Maki, are forced to show fake support for the Old Man even at the expense of their own health. The narrator's description of the people's reaction when Maki passes out reveals the Old Man's egocentricism. When Maki passes out and falls, "heads briefly turn to look at him sprawled precariously close to the red carpet set out on the pavement and then turn back to the Old Man, who is again talking about his death. Nothing can be done for Maki until the Old Man has finished speaking and left the airport" (p.31). People are too terrified to help, and the Old Man does not care about the welfare of his apparent supporters. The grim circumstances surrounding Maki's fainting and the fear that grips everyone and stops them from assisting him whilst the Old Man is speaking is an astute technique of religious based satire used by Hoba to lash out at the Old Man's extreme egocentricism.

The story is sustained by the author's ability to maintain satirical humour aimed at the gullibility of ordinary people. For example, later, after listening to the Old Man's three-hour speech, Maki feels "euphoric, thinking that this is the most spiritual feeling he's ever had" (p.30). Hoba shows how it is tragically humorous that Maki conflates politics and spirituality which leads to politicians attaining a deity status such as seen happening with the Old Man.

Through Maki, the narrator emphasises how both political dictators and charismatic religious leaders can cast spell like powers on economic desperate people and unemployed youths who then blindly follow or support leaders despite overwhelming evidence of their oppression and exploitation. Sachikonye (2011) observes that the unemployed youths "are easily 'rented' for promises of jobs and adventure, cash and alcohol, amongst other inducements, particularly during election campaigns" (p.98). This is true in the story, for the motley crowd that prepares to welcome the Old Man at the airport "consists of mainly adolescent youth reeking of sorrow-drowning illicit brews ranging from cane spirits to cough mixtures, children too young to understand politics and a few older looking men and women" (p.27). This crowd of economic desperate individuals "are singing, dancing and clapping to a cocktail of revolutionary songs booming from a new Party-colour-branded Hilux truck, travelling at human pace" (p.27). The description of these abused and manipulated individuals evokes not only feelings of pity, but it also creates tragic humour, or the ability to laugh about serious situations. Mbembe (1992) aptly summarises this scenario that has played itself again and again in many post-colonial African countries thus:

> In the world of self-adoration that is the postcolony, the troupes summoned to perform their dances bear witness to the central place accorded the body in the process of *commandement* and submission [emphasis in the original]. In the postcolony bodies have been used to entertain the powerful in ceremonies and official parades ... [they] break into laughter or peals of joy when the presidential limousines approached ... wearing the party uniform with the picture of the head of state printed upon it, women followed the rhythm of the music and swung their torsos first forward, then back ... yelling and ululating ... everyone cheers the cavalcade of cars as it passes by. (p.20)

The ability of the Old Man to create desperate conditions, in order to exploit people for political gain is foregrounded with searing satire throughout the story. For example, the narrator observes how "sometimes Maki watches youths gather in small groups, chasing the unending call of duty that the Party demands of them; their T-shirts becoming thin and tatty as the months pass after an election, only to be replaced by new ones as another election approaches" (p.29). The objects of the author's satire are both the callously manipulative politicians and their desperately malleable crowds who simply focus on the short-term gains that accrue from their participation in elections, such as getting T-shirts. In a way, as Mbembe's earlier quoted words

suggest, the desperate citizens participate in their own dehumanisation by hero-worshipping those responsible for their economic desperation.

Both politics and religion turn Maki into a gullible zombie to his physical and psychological detriment. The narrative indicates that Maki has not been healed from his diabetes despite the Prophet's claims to healing powers. The narrator observes that Maki had "nearly died three weeks ago when the Prophet told him to throw away his meds because he'd said that Maki was healed' (p.29). Similarly, despite being largely responsible for his economic woes, Maki calls the Old Man "the undying, resolute and visionary … who has resurrected many times and continues to defy death, and age as if they are things he can rig and cheat like elections?" (p.30). The above words derive their strength from Hoba's ability to simultaneously make Maki the butt of his satire and a victim deserving of the reader's sympathy. There is some sense of assertiveness from Maki's statement wherein he seems to be questioning the Old Man's invincibility. This assertiveness can be interpreted in the Rabelaisian philosophy as the acute awareness of victory over fear, which is an essential element of medieval laughter. We find this feeling expressed in the comic images in which the defeat of fear is presented in a droll and monstrous form, the symbols of power and violence turned inside out, and the comic images of death and bodies gaily rent asunder. Through this grotesque image, the people play with terror and laugh at it; the awesome becomes a "comic monster" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.91) as seen through Maki's critique of the Old Man. The laughing truth expressed in curses and abusive words used by Maki against the Old Man indicate degraded power. These words also allow the reader to see the extent to which ordinary people are prone to idolising the very political leaders who are responsible for their precarious economic and political situation.

Lynch (1988) argues that "satiric humour is incomplete if its impact does not profoundly alert us to serious human foibles or weaknesses in ways that compel us to imagine corrective measures" (p.25). As the discussion above has shown, this is what Hoba's satire does. The satirical power of the above words arises from Maki's absurd conflation of the humanly impossible acts such as defying age and death on the one hand, and on the other hand, the political reality of rigging elections which has allowed the Old Man to rule with some semblance of legality despite serious political opposition and the catastrophic collapse of the country's economy. Borrowing from Schneegans's interpretation of the satire that the grotesque is first a caricature but a caricature that has reached fantastic dimensions, it is apparent that the story's satire is directed against the Old Man's despotism.

While Hoba's story is set in an unnamed dictatorial republic, Brakarsh, in "The General's Gun", openly locates his narrative in Zimbabwe by naming Gweru, a town in the Midlands Province of the country, as the setting for the violent events related to Zimbabwe's infamous indigenisation economic policy, which was passed into law in 2008.[37] The tragic humour in Brakarsh's story emanates from his showing that this act is open to abuse and manipulation by different interested groups such as youth brigades and the political elite. As in Hoba's story, the economically desperate Youth Brigade takes centre stage in Brakarsh's narrative. Taking advantage of the government promulgated indigenisation policy, the Youth Brigade, evidently sent by politically connected individuals, invade the white man managed Dynamo Motors Company which specialises in selling Mercedes Benz vehicles and claim it as theirs.

The story develops to tragi-comedy when it becomes apparent that the Zimbabwean elite, that is, an army general and a governor, are each determined to snatch the company for themselves. In a very comic manner, the youth leader pronounces to the manager: "By order of the Governor, this *bhizimisi* is now ours. We want *mari* and your cars. Now!'" (p.2).[38] Through the pronouncement by the youth leader, Brakarsh provides a satiric attack of the gullibility of the ZANU-PF party youth, particularly regarding enacted economic policies. Primorac (2006) posits how "during the 2005 pre-election Robert Mugabe led ZANU-PF party listed 'empowerment through takeovers' as one of its achievements" (p.2). This shows that Brakarsh's tragi-comic depictions are based on typical events that took place during the crisis decade in Zimbabwe. The depiction of the Indigenous Policy shows the possibility of doing the chronotopic reading of the government business policies and how they inform or are informed by the crisis. This indicates, in the Bakhtinian sense, that the encoding of time in fiction is indissolubly linked to the writer's literary intent, for he/she exists in a particular time-space. The humour of the story arises from the fact that, unknown to the youths and the governor, is that a powerful army general has had a head start. The manager calls for help from the General, setting in motion the tragic events that lead to the maiming and deaths of the invading youths as the general unleashes armed soldiers on them to protect his interests. Brakarsh satirises the Indigenisation Act by showing that, rather than benefitting ordinary

[37] *Indigenisation Act*, Part II, Section 3 (1) (a) states that "The Government shall, through this Act or regulations or other measures under this Act or any other law, endeavour to secure that- at least fifty-one per centum of the shares of every public company and any other business shall be owned by indigenous Zimbabweans" (Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, 2007:3).
[38] *Bhizimisi* means company enterprise and *mari* means money.

Zimbabweans, the Act became a means through which the political elite amassed wealth for themselves.

In a tragically humorous way, Brakarsh's story highlights how the Zimbabwean regime exploited victims of its misrule for the economic benefit of the elite. The unemployed young people are a case in point. Concerning post-2000 Zimbabwe, Sachikonye (2011) observes that "tens of thousands of youth were recruited for indoctrination and paramilitary training in camps ... Graduates from these camps were trained largely to serve in programmes and campaigns to support ZANU-PF interests especially during elections" (p.98). Brakarsh's story shows the tragic outcome of such militarisation of these unemployed youth brigades. With satirical accurate intent, the narrator in Brakarsh's story gives what he calls "a recipe that makes a youth brigade":

> *Take one unemployed, poorly educated youth*
> *Throw in generous amounts of chibuku*[39] *or mbanje*[40]
> *Add some cash*. (p.1; emphasis in the original)

Sentiments by Sachikonye (2011) seem to concur with this satirical recipe when he argues that "the factors behind the youth's prominence in violence relate to high level of structural employment. Most youth who are recruited or hired into political parties and militia consent primarily for economic reasons" (p.98). Sachikonye also avers that '"in the last analysis, the "bottom line" for most of them [youth] is not ideological but a secure livelihood in a society with more than 80 per cent unemployment"' (p.98). In Brakarsh's story, the seventeen youths who "rush into Dynamo Motors" "singing revolutionary songs and waving pangas", "attracted like dogs to a steak supper" (p.1), fit Sachikonye's description of the situation of the Zimbabwean recruitment and formation of youth militias. These youths are further described as "red-eyed, panga-waving, ragged-looking youth with nothing to lose" (p.2). As in the case of the youths in Hoba's story, there is a sense in which these youths are both victims because their government has not availed any meaningful economic opportunities for them; they have become perpetrators of violent acts because they clearly derive some pleasure from the temporary sense of power that they possess. For example, they each take turns kicking and slapping the manager as they sing. However, as the turn of events shows, the power of these

[39] A Shona word for the traditionally brewed opaque beer.
[40] A Shona word for marijuana.

youths is precarious and ephemeral as the soldiers, taking orders from the general, maim a lot of them and kill some.

The story uses satiric humour to show that some white business owners entered some strategic partnerships with powerful army generals, in order to keep some part of their businesses. This is what the owner of Dynamo Motors had done. Thus, when the manager is confronted by the Governor's militia, he calls on the General for help. The General arrives promptly and indicates that he is a law unto himself when he orders his soldiers to beat up and shoot the invading youths. Most of the story's satiric humour arises from the reader's realisation that the General is not interested in the rule of law and that he is not an altruist. After clearing the invading youths, the General tells the manager:

> In the beginning you whites fought against this Indigenisation Act that requires a fifty-one percent partnership with Zimbabweans. Now you can see that it's a good thing. Sir, tell your boss that I work hard for my fifty-one percent. Kindly send the profit check [sic] by the end of the month. (p.7)

Brakarsh's story suggests that, while the invasion of white people's farms in the early years of the 21st century was out-rightly violent and illegal, the government tried to give the company appropriation some veneer of legality by enacting a law that only benefits the elite. The General's conversation with the manager invokes racial "look" pointed out by Erasmus (2017) when he argues that "all of us live in amongst racialised structures of social meaning. We cannot be outside, above, or beyond race. Because we are embedded in a racialised world, its ways of seeing and its injustices can be apparent to us, and we can be inspired to change it." (p.xxiii). Murisa and Chikweche (2015) also observe that "the current indigenisation programme in its entirety does not question the broader tenets of neoliberal capitalism but seeks to narrowly change the face of the capitalist class from being mostly white and multi-national to being black and national" (p.xxi).

By the end of the story, it is apparent that the title of Brakarsh's "The General's gun" is satire aimed at the General's potential for violence and at revealing his corrupt ways. The gun is described as "a beautiful weapon catching the sunlight on its golden flanks, the top adorned with diamonds stretching down the length of the barrel" (p.4). Clearly, the gun is a symbol of power, corruption and wealth for those who control the levers of the state like the General. The painful irony of the situation is captured when the narrator reveals that the soldiers that have been used to perform the General's violent acts live in abject poverty. As the General flaunts

the gun, one of his soldiers thinks how much he could sell that gun for. With the soldier as the focaliser, the narrator says "The Marange diamonds on the barrel are still worth a fortune. He could finally afford to feed his family, rather than live on bread and tea, while he waits for the monthly paycheck (sic) which always comes late" (p.6). While the general can afford to live in opulence, as evidenced by his diamond studded gun, the foot soldiers who are used to beat up and kill people live in poverty.

Painful Paradoxes of the Discovery of Diamonds

This section examines two short stories that use tragic humour to depict the painful paradoxical discovery of diamonds in Chiadzwa village in the Manicaland district of Marange. As alluded to earlier, the Rabelaisian interpretation of the grotesque as a character of laughter provoked by the comic is useful in understanding what Mwanaka and Chinhanhu are doing with the grotesque as a form of satire (Bakhtin, 1984). The discovery of diamonds at the height of Zimbabwe's economic crisis was interpreted as God's answer to the country's woes; it was seen as an opportunity to get out of poverty by many ordinary people who descended in huge numbers upon the alluvial diamond fields. The narrator states: "Then, suddenly, just like the proverbial bolt from the blue, the heavens smiled upon them. From nowhere, like manna from heaven, diamonds were discovered in an area of the district called Chiadzwa. Diamonds! Just like that!" (p.17). This results in a diamond rush as villagers, school teachers and their pupils, nurses and government workers all exchanged "the tools of their trade for picks, hoes and shovels" and "it was rumoured that even the so-called political heavyweights, from members of parliament to government ministers, were involved" (pp.17-18). For a while, it seemed as if this bounty for all was going to continue. However, the whole situation turned out to be a nightmarish tragedy for most villagers who had hoped to reap huge economic benefits from the mining of these diamonds.

The selected stories "Notes from Mai[41] Mujuru's Breast" (2012) by Tendai Rinos Mwanaka and "The Chances and Challenges of Chiadzwa" (2007) by Edward Chinhanhu, satirise how influential politicians and high-ranking army officers quickly secured the diamond fields for their personal benefit. This is in line with the focus of the grotesque in Rabelanian grotesque whereby special social phenomena, such as the gluttony of the politicians regarding the

[41] A Shona word for mother, in this case this name is usually appropriated to connote great respect for the woman.

resources that are meant to benefit the people, are berated. In these stories, the satire is indirect, for it is necessary to know the social phenomena that are being berated. Mwanaka's story shows that the ruling elite is ready to grab and plunder from all and sundry with no respect for whether the victims are of European descent or black indigenous people. The story demonstrates the truthfulness of Fanon's (1963) observation that leaders who rushed into positions after independence were bent on securing their slices of the cake of independence, and "the party was a means of private advancement" (p.138). Mwanaka's story is about "ordinary" young Zimbabweans, Chris and Daniel's struggle against economic and political changes that see them venturing into diamond panning. Through his story, Mwanaka scoffs at corruption and nepotism by the political leadership through his portrayal of the violence that characterised government's attempt to stop what it characterised as illegal mining activities at Chiadzwa diamond fields.

Chinhanhu exposes the hypocrisy of the government when it came to the mining of diamond after its discovery. In the guise of bringing order to the mining area, the government declared the whole area government property, and only the Ministry of Mines had the authority and right to carry out mining operations. The narrator shows people's futile attempts to resist government efforts:

> There was heavy resistance, but more and more armed policemen and soldiers were brought in. They set up roadblocks on all roads into the district, and carried out patrols on horseback. Vicious dogs accompanied them. Many people were beaten to a pulp, others were shot, and their diamonds seized, the luckier ones were thrown into jail for five years. (p.18)

The narrator shows that all this was meant to facilitate the plunder of the diamonds by the political elite. He says that "it was rumoured, however, that two or three ministers still continued to mine unabated" (p.18). At the peak of looting in Chiadzwa, the then Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) said Zimbabwe was losing millions of dollars monthly to mineral leakages (Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development, 2016).

Both Mwanaka and Chinhanhu show that for ordinary people, the discovery of diamonds in Marange promised a change in the socio-political and economic terrain of Zimbabwe in the post-2000 period characterised by drought, hyperinflation, and political opportunism. For example, the narrator in Mwanaka's story indicates that Marange is a place of perennial droughts: "But Marange is a wilderness. In fact, Marange is a bloody pit. The hot air blows like

a stoked blast furnace year-round. You can't grow crops other than *rapoko*[42] and *mhunga*[43], which sometimes don't get beyond germination" (p.195). So, "when diamonds were discovered, the whole community thought it was a spiritual gift for the people of Marange as absolution for the recurring droughts in this place" (p.195). Similarly, in Chinhanhu's story, the narrator captures the misery of Chiadzwa villagers when he says they "knew nothing but strife, struggle and starvation" (p.16). This is because villagers "heard government ministers talking year after year, of bumper harvests, and the promise that nobody would die of hunger in Zimbabwe" (p.17), yet they continued to starve. Capturing the extent of betrayal of the poor villagers by the government, the narrator further states: "During the endless rallies and meetings at election time, promise upon promise was made, about how the people's government would introduce irrigation schemes, and how convoys of trucks would roll into the district, filled to the top with food to give the people, for free" (p.17). After the villagers realised that they were being exploited and "voted for the opposition", the government then perpetrated violence against its own people. Suggesting that there was serious vote rigging, the narrator indicates that the ruling party continued to win all the elections although the people had stopped voting for them altogether. The narrator states: "Surprisingly, however, the ruling party candidates continued to win, with a "heavier" and "heavier" majority each time" (p.17). This then shows the power of fiction in representing how the ruling party has been governing illegitimately, hence its cruelty in dealing with the people after the discovery of diamonds.

Mwanaka's use of toponymy to (re)trace the history of Marange diamond fields creates satiric humour which pervades the story. Mufakose, which literally means, the one who is killed everywhere, is where *ngodas*[44] are found. While it is the easiest part of the diamonds field to invade by poor villagers, risking one's life for these stones is not very rewarding financially. As a result, one suffers double loss as the name mufakose aptly explains. The section named Zamu raMai Mujuru (Mrs Mujuru's Breast) have the most expensive diamonds and are the highly protected parts of the fields. Bloody violence characterises the Zamu raMai Mujuru area as security forces shoot down fortune seekers who, in their desperation, invade this cordoned off area.

Those familiar with Zimbabwe's recent past would not miss the humour in the name Zamu raMai Mujuru. This is a satirical reference to Joyce Mujuru, Zimbabwe's former vice president

[42] A Shona word for finger millet.
[43] A Shona word for sorghum.
[44] Diamonds of a lower grade.

during Mugabe's presidency and throughout the country's crisis period. As a woman and a mother, people expected her to use her feminine qualities to ensure that ordinary people were provided for, hence the humorous reference to her breast. Therefore, rather than binding the "breast" symbol to a particular or discursive meaning and limiting literary imagination, Mwanaka creates what Langer (1979) calls "ambivalence of meaning, which allows greater freedom for literary imagination" (p.238) concerning the quality of diamonds and lack of accessibility at Chiadzwa. As the vice president of the country, Mrs Mujuru was expected to lead a government that gives life to the people and ensure good living characterised by maternal love, but that was not the case. The description here befits the Rabelais grotesque style whose comic aspects are based upon the contrast between the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. The violence at the diamond fields suggests that the breast, that is, discovered diamonds that were meant to invoke pleasure, bring forth displeasure instead as Mrs Mujuru's maternal qualities have been compromised by power and greed. In the Rabelaisian chronotope proffered by Bakhtin (1981), reference to the human body and its life, in this case Mai Mujuru's breast, helps to uncover a new meaning, a new place for human corporeality in the real spatial-temporal world. This contrast strengthens the satire. However, the bloody violence that characterises the area named after her breast is a satirical indictment of her failure to act as she was expected. Her failure also represents the failure of the government to provide for and protect its desperate citizens.

Joyce Mujuru was also the wife of the former army general, Solomon Mujuru, who was a king maker in post-independent Zimbabwe. The Mujuru family was rumoured to have used their political influence to amass a lot of wealth from the Marange diamond fields. Saunders (2008) explains how, "after 2000, black business groups' empowerment deals were increasingly tied in with and dependent upon, powerful political factions in the party- especially those with military and security connections who were in the ascendant in this period" (p.76). The title "Mai Mujuru's Breast" evokes a satirical sensual image suggestive of the richness of the diamond area and the high quality of diamonds that were mined by the Mujuru family.

The narrator's description of the piles of sand further adds to the humour that characterises the story: "Inside the fence, Zamu raMai Mujuru was made up of heaped-up mounds of the coveted glass diamond and soil. If you were to lick a bit of that breast, you would go home smiling and vault yourself out the Mufakose Township into the lush, leafy northern suburbs of Harare" (p.198). The use of the word "lick" evokes a sexual act which intensifies the satirical humour of this story because the narrator connects the mounds of earth which contain the precious

diamonds to Joyce Mujuru's actual breasts. The urge to grab the tempting diamonds from this area is what made the people "forage beyond the pig-fence wire that surrounded Mai Mujuru's Breast" (p.198). The urge to access the diamond is equated to making love to Mai Mujuru as the boys talk of their desire "to taste Mai Mujuru's huge mounds? [breasts]" (p.198). Chris explains that "an hour should be plenty time to make love to Mai Mujuru!" (198). Interpreted within the context of the grotesque and its use as a satiric characteristic form, reference to Mai Mujuru's breasts and making love to Mai Mujuru allows Mwanaka to exploit the effectiveness of what Bakhtin (1984) refers to as the grotesque image of the body. In this case, body parts, such as the genital organs, to which the author refers, transcend their original meaning and acquire symbolic meaning.

While this explicit sexual imagery makes the story humorous, it also shows how dangerous it was to trespass into this part of the diamond fields; as dangerous as an ordinary person's attempt to sexually touch Joyce Mujuru's breast. In the example of the grotesque, displeasure is caused by the impossible and improbable nature of the image: it is unimaginable that Mai Mujuru's breasts would be tempered with in the manner of the description given in the foregoing narrative and such an absurdity creates a strong feeling of vexation. But this feeling is overcome by two forms of pleasure: first, we see the truly existing monastic corruption and depravity as symbolised in the hyperbolic image; in other words, as Bakhtin (1984) attests, "we find some place for this exaggeration within reality" (p.306). Secondly, we feel a moral satisfaction, since sharp criticism and mockery have dealt a blow to these vices of corruption and misappropriation.

Highlighting the callousness of the government, the narrator says, "a lot of people were killed; in fact, while Chris was there, he witnessed at least five deaths every day" (p.197). This fictional account is supported by Sachikonye (2011) who estimates that "up to 200 miners were killed in 2008 as the state sought to exert control over diamond mining and smuggling activities" (p.39). The militarisation of the Marange diamond fields by the Zimbabwean regime proves true the observation and prediction by Fanon (1963) that "in these poor, under-developed countries [such as Zimbabwe] where the rule is that the greatest wealth is surrounded by the greatest poverty, the army and the police constitute the pillars of the regime" (p.138). Numerous reports indicate that "soldiers bullied, threatened, maimed and killed miners and civilians. The ruling elite selfishly use state institutions such as those in the security sector to enforce expropriation. The deployment of the military in Marange also ensures access to mining revenue by senior members of ZANU-PF and the army" (HRW, 2009, p.3).

However, what intensifies the tragic humour of the story is that even when people can get into the diamond fields, there is no guarantee that they would find the coveted stones. For example, the narrator says it was only "on the morning of the fourth day Chris found his first ngoda", that is, an "industrial" diamond (Mwanaka, p.196). Due to hyperinflation, Chris sells the diamond for Z$600 billion dollars which only pays for a loaf of bread and a packet of milk. The bread and milk were Chris and Daniel's first real meal in over three days (p.199). Chris and Daniel's situations are like that of Mr Chimbadzo which was discussed in the previous section.

Out of desperation, people are forced to hatch innovative ways of beating the state's surveillance system. In Chinhanhu's story, ordinary people plan and successfully execute a tragi-comic plan to smuggle diamonds right under the noses of security forces. Under the guidance of old Magwegwe, the people hatch a fool proof plan. Magwegwe disguises himself and is proclaimed dead so that his "corpse" can be used to smuggle out diamonds from a heavily guarded diamond area. The humour surrounding the plan is at the expense of the oppressive regime. Chenjerai Hove makes an interesting comment along the lines of what we witness unfolding in Chinhanhu's story, that in Africa, we laugh in order not to cry, and he also believed that the best way to get rid of dictators is to laugh at them (Hove, 2005). The humorous drama is that, when they have put the old man in the coffin, they come to a roadblock with "thirty soldiers who came upon them and began to carry out a thorough search. The two women with them were also searched by each of the eight women constables who wore gloves and groped their private parts" (p.21). After being ordered to drive off they got to a place where everybody jumped out, and two men unscrewed the coffin, then flipped open the lid. The narrator relates the climax of the plan in terms of the Bakhtinian liberating humour. He says:

> The old man remained still, his arms smartly crossed on his chest. His sudden wink was accompanied by a twist of the mouth, and sent everybody into stitches of laughter. He rose up, and diamonds fell from all over him- from inside his smart funeral jacket, the new shirt, and the cloths in which they had wrapped him. When he got out of the coffin, more diamonds covered the base of the coffin, mostly the 'glass' kind, but with some *ngodas* as well. (p.22)

The successful execution of the smuggling plan draws laughter and the villagers, together with the obscure diamond-buyer emerge as victors against a wicked system. The nature of the humour in the story is culturally inclined through contrasts to how death is respectfully

regarded in society. As Henk Driessen (1997, p.222) argues, "humour often mirrors deeper cultural perceptions and offers us a powerful device to understand culturally shaped ways of thinking and feeling". In addition, Aschkenasy argues, reflecting on Bakhtin's study of Rabelais and forbidden laughter, and the liberating power of humour against hegemonic practices that humour "offered the oppressed lower classes relief from the rigidity [of the oppressive system] ... The carnivalesque spirit, therefore, is a form of popular, 'low' humour which celebrates the anarchic and grotesque elements of authority and of humanity in general and encourages the temporary 'crossing of boundaries' where the town fool is crowned, the higher classes are mocked, and the differences between people are flattened as their shared humanity, the body, becomes subject of crude humour" (Aschkenasy, 2013, p.440). The old man, initially despised, emerges as a hero as the villagers walk away with an amount of US$500,000 plus Z$44,000,000 as price money for their smuggled diamond, "But first, they had to bury the empty coffin, which they did with a pomp and glee rarely seen at a 'funeral'" (p.22). Both Mwanaka and Chinhanhu's stories demonstrate the truthfulness of Fanon's (1963) observation that, finally, the exploited "people come to understand that wealth is not the fruit of labour but the result of organised, protected robbery. Rich people [particularly the government authorities] are no longer respectable people; they are nothing more than flesh-eating animals, jackals and vultures which wallow in the people's blood" (p.154). As a result, we see people in both stories taking their fate into their own hands. Therefore, Mwanaka and Chinhanhu succeed, through the narrative style of carnivalesque humour, to represent a social and political force that allows the lower classes to censure the politically powerful.

Clearly, through tragi-comic depictions, Mwanaka and Chinhanhu's stories satirise the discovery of diamonds in Zimbabwe at the height of the country's politically induced economic problems, in order to expose the inherent government corruption, the opportunism of the ruling elite and the widening gap between the rich and the poor during the crisis. What both stories depict can be summarised in Fanon's (1963) words about post-colonial regimes:

> There exists inside the new regime, however, an inequality in the acquisition of wealth and in monopolisation. Some have a double source of income and demonstrate that they are specialised in opportunism. Privileges multiply and corruption triumphs, while morality declines. Today the vultures are too numerous and too voracious in proportion to the lean spoils of the national wealth. The party, a true instrument of power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, reinforces the machine, and ensures that the people are hemmed in and

> immobilised. The party helps the government to hold the people down. It becomes more and more clearly anti-democratic, an implement of coercion. (p.138)

Both stories show that the ruling party is at the centre of denying people better livelihoods through an unjust and an unequitable distribution of the potential wealth of the discovered diamonds. Violence against poor villagers and government facilitated corruption all exacerbate people's suffering and poverty. Mwanaka and Chinhanhu's narratives mostly employ Rabelais' grotesque style. The exaggeration of the inappropriate to incredible and monstrous dimensions is, according to Schneegans, the basic nature of the grotesque. Therefore, the grotesque is always satire (Bakhtin, 1984). Where there is no satirical orientation, there is no grotesque. From this definition, Schneegans deduces all the peculiarities of Rabelais' images and verbal style, namely excessiveness, superabundance, the tendency to transgress all limits, endless enumerations, and accumulations of synonyms.

Conclusion

The stories examined above engaged tragic humour and satire to represent the post-2000 Zimbabwean politics of acquisitiveness which favoured the political elite at the expense of the ordinary majority. While the humour in the stories is partly conditioned by the title of the anthology, *Laughing Now*, it is also largely reflective of the ways in which Zimbabweans confronted the overwhelming economic crisis which was often accompanied by state brutality against any dissenting voices. The insatiable greed of political leaders is satirised through the Minister Without Portfolio, Mr Kambeu's ridiculous acquisition of farms, which he fails to make productive. Mr Usury Chimbadzo represents the laughable but often tragic survival tactics that were employed by Zimbabweans during the period of hyper-inflation. Through the selected stories in the chapter, we discern a homogenising singular voice that is still there to remind others, and the reader, how necessary to the pursuit of liberty is the courage to laugh.

In the "Last Laugh", Chinodya suggests that the urban and the still employed Zimbabwean population tried to cope with the economic crisis by finding humour in their tragic circumstances. Notably, laughter used by Chinodya and its various forms represent the least scrutinised sphere of the Zimbabwean people's creativity in the face of adversity. Exaggeration as part of the grotesque is used to enhance the satiric tone in the Bakhtian conceptualisation.

"Plenty Ways to Die in the Republic" by Hoba satirises Robert Mugabe's long tragic rule by showing the terrible misery that afflicted ordinary people during the reign of this dictator. Similarly, "The General's Gun" by Brakarsh uses tragi-comedy to expose the rapacious greed behind economic policies, such as the indigenisation policy, that were touted as being enacted to empower the ordinary people by the Mugabe regime. The last two stories examined in this section use humour to lampoon influential government officials, such as Joyce Mujuru, who violently looted the country's diamond resources in the name of nationalising the alluvial diamond fields in the eastern part of the country. It emerged from the narratives surrounding parodies of the Indigenisation Act and discovery of the diamonds at Chiadzwa, in the context of the Rabelaisian carnivalesque, that the essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity. The next chapter examines female representations of Zimbabwe's post-2000 socio-economic crisis and how the crisis also infringed on the domestic sphere. The chapter foregrounds the "women standpoint" vis-á-vis the crisis in selected short stories from *Women Writing Zimbabwe,* an anthology edited by Irene Staunton (2008).

Chapter 4

Female Victimhood and Agency in *Women Writing Zimbabwe* (2008)

Introduction

This chapter analyses six short stories from the anthology *Women Writing Zimbabwe* (2008) edited by Irene Staunton, whose entire stories are female authored as indicated in the title. In addition to all contributors being female, the thematic concerns of all the selected stories largely focus on problems encountered by women during Zimbabwe's catastrophic economic collapse in the first decade of the 21st Century, through the deployed chronotopes of poverty, "small houses" and survival. The selected short stories are Valerie Tagwira's "Mainini Grace's Promise" and Diana Charsley's "Death Wish" which depict womanhood and HIV/AIDS in the context of the post-2000 crisis[45]; Wadzanai Mhute's "Dream Over. Dream Again" and Sabina Mutangadura's "Chemusana" which deal with husbands' infidelity, a phenomenon known as "small house" in Zimbabwe and how it negatively impacts on the family unit; Petina Gappah's "In the Heart of the Golden Triangle" and Sarah Landipo Manyika's "Mr Wonder" which portray and ridicule women of new-found wealth amidst the Zimbabwe economic crisis. This sequel to or revision of the representations of the crisis in the short story writing by women gained popularity during the crisis period. The selected stories seem to attest to the observation that what was missing, of course, in the early chorus of voices denouncing the arrogance and violence of the various forms of the post-2000 crisis, were female voices. As recent writing by women anthologies reveals, gender gives writing a particular cast (Julien, 1983).

The anthology deliberately depicts issues that affect women during the crisis because there is an assumption that women suffer the most during moments of crisis but that their suffering is often ignored, and their voices silenced even in artistic productions. The selected stories indicate that the Zimbabwean politically induced socio-economic crisis caused family disintegration resulting in great physical and emotional pain to all, especially to women. By focusing on the private or domestic rather that the public sphere, these stories depict that Zimbabwean women were affected in unique and often uncelebrated ways by the post-2000

[45] The HIV pandemic resulted in a dramatic increase in orphans and vulnerable children who needed assistance, which resulted in increased school absenteeism as some children were ill while others had to become care-givers (Zimbabwe, 2007).

political and economic crisis (Nyambi, 2014). These stories show that male hegemony on the political plane has been reproduced at all levels, and with it, the exclusionary tendencies resulting from androcentric biases. This has led to many male authors "privileging manifestly open political themes related to nationalism in their works" (Chitando, 2012, p.29). By focusing on the domestic dimension of the crisis, the selected stories provide a corrective measure to this pernicious male hegemony.

Since the early 1990s, Zimbabwe has been entangled in a serious economic crisis (Muzondidya, 2009) that has negatively affected the status of women. In addition to the harsh realities that the economic and political challenges have inflicted on the general populace, women and girl children have also witnessed increased vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, HIV and AIDS is a gendered phenomenon. Biological, cultural and socio-economic conditions contribute to women's greater vulnerability to HIV (Lamptey, Johnson and Khan, 2006, p.5). Against this gendered background of HIV and AIDS compounded by the escalating post-2000 crisis, women in Zimbabwe have begun to speak out. Chitando (2012) observes that "HIV and AIDS are marginalised in male writings" (p.29). This subsection demonstrates that there is a strong shift towards correcting this anomaly in Zimbabwe's women's writing. Cultural anomie is no longer the major theme. HIV and AIDS are themes deliberately pushed into the public creative arena as worthy of investigation in the works by women writers (Chitando, 2012). Some of the stories examined in this chapter deliberately project women's perspective to the public about the epidemic in the context of the general post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis.

Most of the selected stories are better understood through Butler's notion of "precarity". Butler (2009) states that precarity designates politically induced conditions in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. She further argues that social and political institutions are designed in part to minimise conditions of precarity, especially within the nation-state. However, the irony of the stories is that they epitomise that, in the case of post-2000 Zimbabwe, social and political institutions have plunged vulnerable populations, such as women and children, into unimaginable precarious economic and psychological conditions. Most of the depicted female characters are in situations which Butler refers to as "heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection" (Butler, 2009, p.ii). In its examination of these issues that affect women, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides plot outlines of the selected

stories. The remaining three sections each discuss two stories by comparing and contrasting their major preoccupations.

Womanhood and HIV/ AIDS during the Post-2000 Crisis

"Death Wish" by Diana Charsley depicts the ordeal of a widowed grandmother, MaSibanda, and the problems that she encounters in taking care of her seven grandchildren. In the context of the economic crisis, MaSibanda struggles to keep all her grandchildren fed resulting in many problems for her. "Mainini Grace's Promise" by Valerie Tagwira focuses on a character called Sarai's mother, who suffers from discrimination and stigmatisation after she discloses that she is HIV positive. The story depicts how the extended family support system buckles under pressure exerted by successive AIDS related deaths leading to the abandonment of Sarai who drops out of school to become her mother's carer as the mother is now under home-based care. Because of the general economic collapse in the country, the health care system has also deteriorated to the extent that it can no longer cope with the large volumes of sick individuals, especially those suffering from chronic and potentially fatal illnesses such as AIDS. As a result, the only medical supplies that Sarai's mother gets are from her young sister, the Mainini Grace of the title of the story, who is based in Botswana. Sarai pins all her hopes of economic help and getting back to school on her aunt Mainini Grace.

The post-2000 Zimbabwean politically induced economic crisis is an ever-present undercurrent in Tagwira's story. Sarai is not only stressed by caring for a mother who is suffering from AIDS, but also by having to do so without resources and with little help from the state health officials. Compounding her problems, unbeknown to Sarai, is that her only relative who sends her some money, Mainini Grace[46], has been having hard economic challenges in Botswana. As a result, she has been engaging in prostitution to try and augment her income to meet the financial demands at home which are related to taking care of her sick sister. The narrative indicates that, what makes Mainini Grace's money more inadequate is the fact that Zimbabwe is under the grip of an economic meltdown which has led to serious commodity shortages, leading to a thriving black market. The narrator states: "Because of the shortages, grocery prices on the thriving black market were always exaggerated" (p.123). This shows the kind of

[46] Mainini is a Shona word meaning mother's young sister, and in this case, Grace was the young sister to Sarai's mother.

economic pressure exerted on those in the so-called diaspora by those left in Zimbabwe during the height of the country's economic collapse. The twist in the story is that Mainini Grace turns up a "skeleton" due to advanced HIV when Sarai had placed all her hopes on her. In a daze of anger and confusion Sarai rushes towards Mainini Grace and strangles her to death crying out: "Why you too? Why you too, Mainini Grace?" (p.131). In these graphic terms, the story captures the devastating effect of HIV and AIDS on vulnerable individuals such as the girl children whose circumstances forced them to be carers when state institutions failed due to the economic collapse.

Both stories explore the impact of HIV and AIDS on women in relation to the Zimbabwean politically induced socio-economic precarity of the post-2000 period. The two stories are set in Zimbabwe, which has become a "crumbling welfare state" where "social safety nets have been torn asunder or denied the chance to emerge" (Butler, 2009, p.32). These stories allow us to explore AIDS as a "discursive formation" which consists of literary responses to AIDS. Notably, the stories participate in a wider discourse on AIDS and sexual morality. These stories must be read against their discursive background of the social crisis of HIV and the dominant national narrative in which the patriarchal family is the metaphor of the nation. The stories are didactic spaces for negotiation of social norms. This places these stories uneasily between challenging patriarchal notions of African marriage and, at the same time, upholding certain moral norms associated with marriage.

The state of desperation described in "Death Wish" is synonymous with what Butler (2009) refers to as the social safety nets that have been torn asunder, thereby leaving the family vulnerable. MaSibanda is in a precarious economic situation and in the economically collapsed Zimbabwe there are no social grants to help the elderly and orphans. Her daughters have died leaving her with half a dozen grandchildren to feed and to care for. In addition, one of her teenage granddaughters, Siphiwe has had a baby, adding to MaSibanda's already heavy burden. This creates serious tension between Siphiwe and her already stressed and economically desperate grandmother. The lack of a state welfare system for economically vulnerable individuals, such as MaSibanda, is highlighted by her wish: "It wouldn't be so bad if she had help" (p.10). But help does not come; instead, her great granddaughter's "crying like baby cat" (10) after being neglected by its mother who is already frolicking searching for boyfriends intensifies her misery. Siphiwe's wailing baby can only be given water or thin porridge as there is nothing else to feed her (p.12).

"Death Wish" engages with the burden of HIV/AIDS on grandmothers who must take care of their orphaned grandchildren. MaSibanda is financially desperate and emotionally and physically exhausted. As the focaliser, MaSibanda laments her situation: "If she'd known that she would have to raise her daughters' children, she would never have married. Now she had six of them, and no help" (p.10). Because of her unbearable financial burden as a widow without any financial support from government, she has a death wish, captured in the title of the story, to escape all her problems. Siphiwe is not only deviant and disobedient, but she seems to have also contracted HIV and has infected her baby. Regarding this great grandchild, MaSibanda despairingly thinks: "She knew the child was dying, and its mother, Siphiwe, looked just like one of those models in the magazines she never stopped reading- eyes huge in her face and bones cling-wrapped with skin" (p.12). MaSibanda candidly assesses her situation when she questions why everyone seems to be dying "leaving her to pick up the pieces?" (p.12). MaSibanda's situation seems to confirm Kanyenze et al.,'s (2011) and Matibenga's (2007) observation that the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe increased the challenges faced by women.

MaSibanda resorts to violence when she fails to persuade the recalcitrant Siphiwe to help with household chores. On the occasion related in the story, MaSibanda slaps Siphiwe across the face with a "sodden dishcloth" (p.11) that was in her hand when she walks away after being rebuked. This violence elicits a "I hate you!" (p.11) from Siphiwe as she "fled down the street" (p.11). This suggests that the dire economic situation and deaths due to AIDS leave grandmothers with not only financial challenges, but also the difficulties of caring for children and even rebellious teenagers when they no longer have the emotional and mental stamina to bear such a heavy duty of parenthood. The magnitude of violence that erupts in the home attests to what Diedrich (2007) says; "HIV/AIDS is an infectious disease that also has the temporal structure of a trauma." (p.54). MaSibanda is traumatised by the HIV/AIDS induced precarity and fails to control her temper. Deep poverty due to economic collapse in the post-2000 era compromises the dignity of the elderly. Since MaSibanda's situation makes it impossible to materially provide for the children under her care, the older ones start fending for themselves in morally questionable ways and in a manner that can lead to death from AIDS. For example, after the altercation with her grandmother, Siphiwe flees down the street only to come back with some meat which the narrator makes clear was earned through ways which MaSibanda finds morally unacceptable.

In “Death Wish”, difficult social problems exacerbated by politically induced economic challenges caused even individuals who previously had pleasant personalities to become bad tempered and to even wish to die. For example, before the death of her daughters, leaving her with the burden of caring for their children, MaSibanda “had always been the fun grandmother, the one the children wanted to visit, the one they would tell their secrets to” (p.12). However, the unrelenting AIDS disease turns relationships upside down as she is forced to assume a motherly role for her grandchildren. As a result, “[e]very night [MaSibanda] went to bed hoping she wouldn’t wake up” (p.10). This highlights the level of the old woman’s economic and psychological desperation worsened by the devastating effects of the AIDS pandemic. The deaths from the pandemic were made worse by the unavailability of a robust healthcare system during the years of economic collapse.

Due to lack of parental guidance, MaSibanda’s other grandchild, Themba is expelled from school for stealing another child’s lunch. This highlights the abject poverty which afflicts MaSibanda and her grandchildren. However, the lack of food is just but one of the problems that the family faces. About Themba’s expulsion due to stealing food, MaSibanda, as the focaliser, sardonically observes: “There was no money for next term anyway and since she could only feed the family once a day, there was certainly no lunch box” (p.10). Charsley’s story emphasises the point that, when post-colonial African states fail, as is the case in Zimbabwe, it is mainly the vulnerable populations such as widowed grandmothers and their orphaned grandchildren who suffer the most. However, “Death Wish” derives its power from not simply being “women’s experience but the view from women’s lives” (Harding, 1993, p.141). Similarly, Tagwira’s “Mainini Grace’s Promise” depicts AIDS from the woman’s point of view as a social crisis that holds women back. Tagwira points out that her writing about Zimbabwe’s economic collapse has a feminist thrust. She states:

> I’m something of a ‘mild feminist’ at heart, I always knew that I would write something featuring strong female characters. Writing about contemporary Zimbabwe was a natural choice because I’m very much attached to ‘home’ and I travel back quite frequently. At each visit, it strikes me how the living standards are deteriorating, and at each visit, I never imagine that things can get any worse, but they do, and people still survive. I was particularly concerned about how women deal with the challenges that are thrust upon them. (Tagwira, 2009)

"Mainini Grace's Promise" shows how women have suffered because of the prevalence of obnoxious societal gender views since it is implied that Sarai's mother was infected with HIV by her now dead promiscuous husband. However, the writer does not just condemn the husband for his reckless behaviour, but she also ridicules Sarai's mother's family for being judgemental and for their lack of empathy. After Sarai's mother discloses her positive HIV/AIDS status to the family, she is shunned by her relatives and the extended family and "they … become erratic … [in visiting her] before ceasing altogether" (p.123). The background about the intersection between literature, culture and the author's intent would help in understanding what Tagwira is doing through her narrative. For example, Bakhtin (1981) posits that "the realm of literature and more broadly of culture (from which literature cannot be separated) constitutes the indispensable context of a literary work and of the author's position within it, outside of which it is impossible to understand either the work or the author's intentions reflected in it" (p.256). It is apparent, therefore, in the context of what Bakhtin argues that Tagwira is proposing that, in the absence of a functioning state healthcare and welfare system, the extended family is expected to take care of its sick and poor. The fact that Sarai's mother is abandoned by both the dysfunctional state and by her family compounds her vulnerability as a woman.

Sarai and her mother's levels of desperation are extreme. Sarai is hungry and her mother is hungry and sick. Clearly, her sickness is exacerbated by hunger and malnutrition. The narrator observes that Sarai had fed her mother "who needed no encouragement to eat up her maize meal porridge that was tasteless from lack of sugar or peanut butter" (p.124). This shows that Sarai's mother's condition is worsened by lack of nutritious food and by the lack of food itself. Other vital resources are lacking too: "Just as they had used up the last of the firewood, they were also using the last precious candle whose lone flame looked as feeble as its source" (p.126). Sarai's last hope of getting another supply of candles is on Mainini Grace who has promised to come back from Botswana in person.

Furthermore, as already noted, the narrator highlights that Sarai's mother suffers as a woman due to her husband's promiscuity, callous and over righteous relatives who abandon her and an insensitive state that is characterised by corruption leading to its failure to take care of its most vulnerable citizens. About the devastating effects of AIDS, Christiansen (2013) observes:

> The social crisis of AIDS reconfigures the social power dynamics, as norms of legitimacy and power become renegotiated under the shifting circumstances. Norms of gender and sexuality are particularly called into question, because

> AIDS puts pressure on the heart of the social structure: the marriage institution. Challenges to social norms are a discursive battle over the definition of new norms in new and changing social circumstances. (p.514)

In the case of Sarai's mother, it seems that the extended family blames her for her husband's death and her own illness. The patriarchal nature of Sarai's society allows for men's misdemeanours and always views women as trouble causers and never as true victims of men's recklessness. Kanyenze et al., (2011) avers that "the scourge of HIV and AIDS also has a woman's face" (p.225). This means that most of the pandemic's burden has been borne by women. Tagwira's story shows that the vulnerability of married women to HIV is a consequence of norms of sexual morality, which are dictated by "culture and tradition" (Christiansen, 2013, p.516) or "gendered vulnerability" (Woods, 2013, p.318). What Chitando (2012) calls "Social stigma" (p.57), is a result of the subordinate roles that women are forced to play in society. Therefore, Sarai's mother is stigmatised and discriminated against because she is viewed as carrier of the disease. She is not given a chance to express herself and, yet, as Bakhtin (1981) argues, "reality as we have it in the text is only one of many possible realities; it is not inevitable, not arbitrary, it bears within itself other possibilities." (p.37). It is based on this that we are able as readers to participate in the critique of the attempted representation of Sarai's mother's unfortunate treatment by imagining other possible realities to what the extended family has said, particularly based on how women are treated when their husbands die. In most instances, they are the first to be blamed for the death, yet this is not true.

Tagwira's story indicates that girl children are the most affected in cases where a relative suffers from AIDS. For example, Sarai drops out of school to assume the adult role of taking care of her sick mother. The narrator states:

> For Sarai, dropping out of school to become her mother's carer was inevitable. She felt as if the family had washed their hands clean of all responsibility, before dumping it carelessly into her fifteen-year-old lap. (p.123)

This invokes an observation by Kanyenze et al. (2011) that when most families are forced to make hard choices about who should drop out from school to look after the other family members, it is often the girl child who suffers. In the case of Sarai, she is the only child who can take care of her mother. Therefore, there was no deliberation on who should drop out of school. To fully understand what Tagwira is doing through her story, it is important to consider what Bakhtin (1981) says about the author and his or her work: that "the author's relationship

to the various phenomena of literature and culture has a dialogic character which is analogous to the interrelationships between chronotopes within the literary work. But these dialogic relationships enter into a special *semantic* sphere that is purely chronotopic." (p.256). Tagwira demonstrates a dialogic relationship between the various chronotopes of culture, abandonment, hunger and education that are semantically interwoven in her work to present the gendered position of suffering women and children during the post-2000 period that represents the spatial space.

"Death Wish" and "Mainini Grace's Promise" also depict the challenges brought about by sickness and death because of HIV and AIDS and how these are a result of the lack of basic services such as accommodation for the sick, the orphans and those who care for them. In Tagwira's story, the financial difficulties resulting from the death of Sarai's father and the sickness of her mother means that she and her mother can no longer afford to pay for proper accommodation. Sarai and her sick mother stay in a "cramped, airless shack" (p.125) at the backyard of Mai Simba, a landlady who is not entirely sympathetic to Sarai and her mother's plight as evident from her reluctance to provide them with an electricity connection from the main house.

In Charsley's story, MaSibanda faces similar challenges even though she has her own house. The financial pressure of fending for six orphaned grandchildren without a proper income leads her to renting all the rooms except one, in order to put food on the table and take care of other necessary expenses. The narrator observes: "She only managed to keep the family house in Mpopoma by having tenants; she and the grandchildren squeezed into one room where they slept and cooked" (p.13). The prevalence of sickness and death due to HIV and AIDS, which are worsened by economic collapse, lead to unimaginable misery to the female protagonists of these narratives.

Tagwira's "Mainini Grace's Promise" also fictionalises the way that the collapsed economy led to poverty and, subsequently, to the plummeting of health standards. Sarai says that "there were no pads or cotton wool in the shops" (p.123). This depicts that more than men, women were seriously affected by the country's crumbled economy. Moreover, Sarai does not have access to gloves. As a result, she improvises with plastics so that she does not get exposed to her sick mother's raw bed-sores. The high cost of drugs and medical services, coupled with a lack of foreign currency, resulted in more families being unable to access health services (Kanyenze et al., 2011).

Tagwira's story critiques the deterioration in health care services compromised women's capability to take care of the sick. For example, she suggests that Sarai's mother's condition is worsened by the lack of proper and well-resourced basic health care services. Highlighting the gravity of the shortages of medication, the narrator says:

> Sarai's mother was generally more unwell than she had ever been. Nothing seemed to help relieve her cough. Not the bitter juice from boiled gum-tree leaves that had given her husband temporary relief. Not even the lemon tea and the Vick's chest rub. She needed proper medication to ease the cough, but there was none. It was three months since the last bottle of cough mixture had run out. (p.125)

Resorting to traditional means of dealing with Sarai's mother's cough is indicative of the non-existence state healthcare services. Sarai's mother cannot access even a simple cough mixture to relieve her relentless cough. Hearn (2012) argues that what exacerbates women's challenges is their social position. Kanyenze et al., (2011) concur saying that "All this [collapse in health system] meant that the burden on women increased as they had to spend more time dealing with health issues at the household level as the public system had failed" (p.224).

The collapsed health care services are highlighted throughout the story. Sarai's mother is discharged from hospital, although still very sick and requiring urgent medical attention. As a focaliser, Sarai observes: "Clearly, her mother was no better than when she had been admitted into hospital a week before, if not a little worse" (p.128). The narrator also states:

> It was only two days since they had discharged her mother from hospital. Only two days, but the bleak medical ward and its horribly caustic smells were already a distant memory. As if too embarrassed to show itself, a prescription lay concealed among numerous hospital cards in a tattered paper bag behind the door. There had been no medicines in the hospital pharmacy. It was the same last time, Sarai thought bitterly, making an effort to hold imminent tears of anger at bay. (p.127)

Being castigated here are the lack of medication and the unhealthy conditions that characterise state medical facilities. Sarai's mother is discharged into the hands of her fifteen-year old daughter who has no one to assist her with the overwhelming task of caring for a terminally ill mother. About the Zimbabwean health care system during this period, Moyo (2007) observes: "Today, instead of finding solutions to the collapse of the health care system, and public health, those who are suffering from the pandemic and the poor are seen as a public health hazard,

likely to contaminate those with means by their promiscuity" (p.50). Sarai struggles emotionally and psychologically because of her burdensome situation. In the end, she breaks down completely and strangles Mainini Grace when she herself comes back suffering from advanced stages of AIDS. Her actions register her inability to care for two AIDS patients and they are also an indictment on the state's failure to care for its most vulnerable citizens.

Even the home-based care nurse who pays Sarai a visit has nothing to give. Commenting on a situation similar to that of Sarai and her mother, Moyo (2007) observes: "These poor are to be pushed back to invisibility through home care" (p.50). For example, the nurse tells Sarai that she is now on her own since the hospital will no longer be able to do anything for her mother. The narrator says:

> [T]he nurse had explained that there would be no need to call an ambulance; if she should be so lucky to have one coming out at all. The hospital no longer had anything to offer.
> Nothing.
> Nothing. (p.128)

The repetition of the word nothing emphasises the state of vulnerability, nothingness, and desperation that beleaguered Sarai and her mother. The nurse's words reveal how "intervention programmes" (Asiedu, Asiedu and Owusu, 2012, p.323) relating to HIV/AIDS were seriously compromised by the collapsed economy.

The stories "Mainini Grace's Promise" and "Death Wish" deploy female figures of pathos that guide the reader into an empathetic solidarity with the victimised and marginalised women. Tagwira's story examines the positioning of the subaltern woman who is most often silenced because of the prioritisation of men in the representations of subaltern agency. Charsely and Tagwira's stories suggest that women are made invisible through the displaced figuration of the "third world woman" who is caught between tradition and modernity (Spivak, 1988, p.308).

Female agency: Desperate people and desperate survival strategies

While "Mainini Grace's Promise" and "Death Wish" largely depict female victims of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown who suffer with very little help from relatives and no help at all from government, "Dream Over. Dream Again" by Wadzanai Mhute and "Chemusana" by

Sabina Mutangadura, which are examined in this subsection, portray women characters who use migration to escape their economic woes. In "Mainini Grace's Promise" we already saw how Sarai's aunt Grace became an economic migrant in the neighbouring Botswana and how her meagre earnings, likely supplemented by prostitution, had kept her sick sister and niece afloat for a while. However, she herself contracted HIV and came back home with advanced symptoms of AIDS. This depicts some of the challenges faced by Zimbabwe's economic migrants in the neighbouring countries. Economically desperate women are especially prone to sexual exploitation resulting in a high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. Mhute and Mutangadura's stories depict this strategy of migration adopted by some desperate Zimbabweans and the kind of challenges that this presented to them and their loved ones. Bakhtin (1981) proposes that there is a sharp and categorical boundary between the actual world as a source of representation and the world represented in the work. In this regard, the stories are interpreted as using actual experiences from the HIV and AIDS pandemic, but these chronotopes have been fictionalised.

Both stories highlight how the difficult economic conditions in Zimbabwe led to some women making desperate choices which resulted in great pain to their loved ones, especially their children. "Dream Over. Dream Again" is set at a time when everything is disintegrating in Zimbabwe. With Muni as the focaliser, the story presents gloomy economic prospects of the country. The story follows the life of Muni, a 22-year-old woman and a graduate of the University of Cape Town in South Africa, who returns home to bury her father at the height of Zimbabwe's crisis. After her father's burial, despite her friends' advice to the contrary, she decides to stay on in Zimbabwe claiming that she wants to participate in rebuilding the country. Muni soon discovers that she had underestimated Zimbabwe's economic woes. As a way of dealing with her situation, she dates a Mr Maseke, a rich married older man, with whom she subsequently has a daughter called Netsai. When her relationship with Mr Kaseke becomes untenable because of the intensification of Zimbabwe's economic collapse, she goes back to South Africa leaving her daughter with Thandi her sister, who is married to a Zimbabwean "highly ranked government official" (p. 52). The entire story is set on the day that Muni is set to leave for South Africa and the reader learns about the past events through a series of flashbacks.

Commenting on the Zimbabweans in South Africa, Kriger (2010) states that the legal options available to refugees fleeing persecution or economic migrants seeking to better their lives,

leave most as “illegal foreigners”. The Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA) (2008) reported increasing numbers of women and unaccompanied children arriving in the Limpopo border area. As Zimbabweans continued to go in large numbers to South Africa, a public debate ensued as to whether Zimbabweans were economic migrants or refugees. Even in the late 2007, the period within which the material forming the historical background to the female stories had been written, Lefko-Everett (2007) argues that the UN emphasised that Zimbabweans were fleeing for economic reasons and saw them as economic migrants. Muni’s challenges in securing a job and a decent living as a graduate, and her subsequent migration to South Africa makes her a desperate economic migrant.

“Dream Over. Dream Again” presents a series of situations, where economic pressures create what Ndlovu (2016:4) refers to as “desperation and insecurity” that emerge with the post-2000 Zimbabwean economic crisis. Although Muni finds an office job upon her return to Zimbabwe, the deepening country’s inflationary environment prevents her from having “a social life” (p. 55) that befits her status as a university graduate. The narrator observes: “The dollar sank yet again, four months into her new job, she moved into her sister’s home” (p.55). Her failure to pay her own rent despite being employed and other economic problems result in Muni compromising her moral values and settling for co-habitation with a married man.

However, this can be seen by some as Muni exercising agency in difficult economic conditions to negotiate her way through her problems to secure the resources that she desperately needs. This exercise of agency is suggested through what Muni thinks to herself as the focaliser: “convent-educated and lighter than most [girls] could win the heart of Mister Chef himself” (p.53). In addition, the narrator says that, Muni “knew there were other women in his life, but they were O-level and secretarial-trained, just like his wife. They could not compete with her degree and private-school background. She was the one his government friends knew; she was the one he took to out-of-town parties” (p.53). This suggests deliberate planning and strategizing on the part of Muni to outclass other women in a scramble for survival by attracting the attention of rich older men. After winning Maseke over, Muni gets a flat near Westgate as a present. Regarding the different reasons women and men have for engaging in extramarital affairs, Christiansen (2013) argues that, “while men are perceived to regard extramarital sex as a luxury, women are perceived as acting out of necessity” (p.519). Therefore, although Muni may be revelling in her beauty and enjoying the economic benefits that come with having an affair with Mr Maseke, the narrative shows that she is not engaging in sex for pleasure, but as

a means of dealing with her economic challenges. Christiansen concludes that "women's infidelity can largely be ascribed to economic hardships" (p.520). This seems to be the case with Muni.

Muni becomes a "small house" to Mr Maseke. In Zimbabwe, the term "small house" refers to a single woman who has a sexual relationship with a married man. As Christiansen (2013) points out, "the term implies that the relation between the 'small house' and the married man is relatively fixed- a modern version of a junior wife." (p.515). While there is a semantic difference between the term "prostitute" and the term "small house", thereby posing a threat to classification of Muni's actions, the two terms often overlap in the AIDS debates and, at times, are used interchangeably. Both prostitutes and small houses are subjected to economic precariousness that inform their social vulnerability leading to the choices that they make.

As has already been pointed out, both stories also focus on the psychological and emotional challenges experienced by children when their parents are compelled to make decisions that seem to prioritise money over their progeny. For example, as the story unfolds, Muni is planning to leave Zimbabwe and her child for South Africa due to the worsening economic crisis in Zimbabwe. To her UCT friends she confesses: "You know Zim is hard man! It's just not working out" (p.54). The narrative shows that trying to get a passport to leave the country had become a priority for most Zimbabweans who could afford it. As the focaliser, Muni observes:

> She senses that it's a day when people feel motivated to get a passport. Only yesterday, the information minister had spoken at a party rally urging tougher measures on 'subversive elements'. Petrol, scarce for a week, had made its return today at twice the price, the inevitable domino effect making people anxious. It was a day when the South African and British embassies would be overflowing with supplicants. But Muni had already been granted a visa to South Africa. (p.52)

Through Muni, Mhute indicates that the Zimbabwean economic crisis was closely linked to the political posturing of high-ranking government officials. The threatening and careless words of the Minister of Information are directly linked to the country's economic instability. The automobile fuel shortages result in other economic difficulties which lead to desperate migration by many Zimbabweans (p. 55).

The story suggests that Muni's actions of wanting to leave the economically collapsed state are to be understood within the broader precarity and desperation that is induced in educated and ambitious females like herself, by the exigencies imposed by a failed state. Hooks (2000) argues that "economic self-sufficiency is needed if ... women are to be free to choose against male domination" (p.52). It is precisely Muni's lack of economic self-sufficiency that results in her desperate sexual liaison not only with a married man who occasionally beats her up because he was "stressed with his businesses" (p. 56) which were not doing so well because of the country's collapsed economy. Muni is overwhelmed by the country's economic woes and her complete dependency on a man who is not even her official husband. She is distraught and desperate and tells her sister: "I just don't want to be here anymore, Thandi" (p.55). The economic hardships have compromised Muni's natural motherly caring instinct. For example, as she stepped into the South African bound train, the narrator says: "Muni looked away. Free again. She would not even miss Natsai" (p.56). These words are indicative of the damage that the harsh economic environment caused even to educated people, such as Muni, who could not sustain themselves despite having university degrees.

While Mhute's story draws the readers' sympathy by portraying the way a young educated woman's hopes are dashed by the bleak economic prospects of Zimbabwe, Mutangadura uses a child protagonist who is affected by his parents' economically desperate decision to highlight the tragic consequences of Zimbabwe's economic collapse on the family fabric. "Chemusana" is an eponymously named story about the ordeal of a young boy who is left to be raised up by a housemaid called Estelle after her mother Mpho migrates to England due to the desperate Zimbabwean economic situation. Chemu, as the boy is affectionately called, is distressed to hear that his mother who left him for England has decided to live and work in the UK. Chemu regards her mother's actions as a personal betrayal. When he is told of her mother's decision, he says "But what about me?" (p.80). This innocent and heartrending plea reflects the anguish that befell families, particularly children, due to the economic crisis. By using the child as the focaliser, Mutangadura shows how, when things go wrong in a family, children notice, and they begin to blame themselves for what seems to be family breakdowns. The narrator states: "[Chemu] wondered if he'd done anything wrong. Why would his father not want to see him?" (p.80). After his wife leaves for the UK, Chemu's father spends a lot of time away from home, a situation which further confuses Chemu. What worsens Chemu's situation is that neither his father nor grandmother tell him what is happening. The narrator states: "He had no idea what

was going on- no one told him much" (p. 82). The narrator indicates that this apparent family breakdown negatively affects Chemu's school performance. Sadly, the story indicates that Chemu is not the only one affected by the scourge of mothers who have migrated for economic reasons leaving their young children behind. For example, the narrator indicates how, "at break-time, Chemu tried to play with Dennis, who told him that his mum had sent him rands, (South African currency) so that he could give some to the teacher, then she would make him pass" (p.80). Through these strategies, the narrative exposes some of the negative outcomes of absent mothers who are apparently forced out of their children's lives by the country's difficult economic conditions.

Unbeknown to Chemu is that his father is struggling with his own feelings of loss. To his sister Mary, who seems to impute wrong motives to Chemu's mother's reasons for staying on in the UK, Chemu's further confesses: "I still love my wife and I will not stand to hear you talk like that about her. If I'd been able to provide better, maybe she wouldn't have stayed in the UK to try and raise money for us all" (p.82). His wife's actions have an emasculating effect on him. He blames himself for not playing his traditional manly role of adequately providing for his wife and child. In reality, it is not his fault but the crippling Zimbabwean economy which has led to his failure to provide his family's material needs.

Mutangadura also demonstrates how the levels of frustration emanating from the crisis create a chasm between family members and that women are often blamed for family breakdowns. For example, when Chemu's mother leaves him and his father for the UK, and subsequently Estelle, Chemu's father vents out his frustration at his mother in law. He says to Chemu: "Since her daughter left you, the old queen might as well make it up to us, while I go about finding a new maid" (p.82). While at *gogo's*[47] house, Chemu "heard heated voices and then the sound of a door banging and a car driving away. When he came out of his room, he saw *gogo* crying because of him" (p.84). Chemu's further seems to partly blame his mother in law for his wife's decision to move to the UK. Chemu's father is obviously not happy with his wife's decision to go to the UK to fend for the family, as this is interpreted as a rebellious act against the cultural system that domesticates the woman.

[47] A word used in Ndebele, Shona and other indigenous languages in Zimbabwe to refer to grandmother.

The sad tone characterising the story guides the readers in comprehending how other women actively participate in the oppression of fellow women. For example, Chemu's father and Tete Mary exchange unkind words about Chemu's mother because of what Tete Mary perceives as a sign of lack of love for one's husband and family, claiming that she might "give him AIDS" [sic] (p. 83). This gender biased statement by Tete is steeped in a traditional belief system that upholds that women are the ones that bring diseases to the home. In the advent of HIV/AIDS, women are blamed for spreading the disease. Chemu's father's sexuality is naturalised while that of his wife is seen as lacking self-control and self-worth to the point of being "a trash can" for a man's sexual desires (Christiansen, 2013, p.522). This suggests that women suffer and fight gendered inequalities induced by a patriarchal, political, and cultural system that favours men and limits women to fewer of life's opportunities.

What has emerged from the foregoing discussion of the short stories by Mhute and Mutangadura is the gendered perspective in which the post-2000 crisis impacted the family unit especially when women exercised their agency in dealing with the difficult economic conditions. Moyo (2007) argues that "because of high unemployment, food shortages, high prices for all commodities, and precarious money earning avenues, desperate people are resorting to desperate survival strategies" (p.51). Interestingly, economically desperate women employed desperate survival strategies such as migrating leaving their children and sometimes husbands behind, in order to find jobs elsewhere. While this had a negative impact on the family unit, it subverted the patriarchal family power relations by giving women an upper hand as a result of their new-found freedom through economic empowerment. Whilst acknowledging the categorical boundary line between the actual world and its representation in fiction as unique entities, it is noteworthy to consider Bakhtin's (1981) argument that "it is also impermissible to take this categorical boundary line as something absolute and impermeable." The issues raised by Mhute and Mutangadura reflect what Bakhtin's (1981) argument that "however forcefully the real and the represented world resist fusion, between them, they are nevertheless indissolubly tied up with each other and find themselves in continual mutual interaction … the work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it" (p.254). The two stories discussed above demonstrate the psychological frustration and tension that split families apart in the wake of dispersion into the diaspora due to economic difficulties.

Two Faces of the Zimbabwean Economic Crises and Satirising Female Agency

Female agency amid the economic crisis, although constrained in some respects in the stories examined in the preceding sections, becomes even more evident in Petina Gappah and Sarah Ladipo Manyika's stories titled "In the Heart of the Golden Triangle" and "Mr Wonder" respectively. The stories also highlight the irony that, while the majority were suffering abject poverty during Zimbabwe's economic crisis, the opulence of the elite few continued to increase, and some women were economic beneficiaries of their elite husbands or partners. They capture what Moyo (2007) describes as the "politics of corporatocracy" (p.51), that is, "the entrenchment of the oppression of many by the few who enjoy privileges of the current political economy". The nameless female protagonist in Gappah's story and the Mutasa family in Manyika's story, suggest that the fortunes of an elite few were enhanced rather than diminished by the Zimbabwean economic collapse. The husband of the nameless protagonist who is a director of an international bank and Mr Mutasa, who engages in selling fuel and other speculative business, thrive because of and not despite the economic crisis.

These stories also fictionalise women manipulating the crisis that seems to favour men, and turning it to their advantage, not as victims of the crisis and male chauvinism in some instance, but as masters of their own destiny. Since they observe that "sex and sexuality as gendered constructs are highly tilted against them" (Chitando, 2012, p.33), women in these stories have learnt to beat men at their own game. In the words of Chitando (2012), the women characters in these stories have learnt to outwit patriarchy. Most post-2000 female authored literary texts interrogate women's disadvantaged status, demonstrating Kwinjeh's (2005) notion of a "struggle within a struggle" (p.i). However, Zimbabwean women in general and as represented in contemporary Zimbabwean literature, demonstrate multiple, intersectionally-constructed identities (Nyambi, 2013).

Gappah and Manyika's stories evoke powerful and often politically connected, feisty women shrugging off the 'crisis' amid great suffering. Gappah's story is about an unnamed woman who finds herself staying in an affluent section of a Harare suburb called "the golden triangle". She is married to a very rich but unfaithful man who is a "director in the treasury department of a big merchant bank [with] branches all over Africa" (p. 15). The protagonist lives a stone's throw from the Governor of the Reserve Bank's house and her other neighbours are the French and British ambassadors. The general description of the location of the protagonist's home and

the vicinity spells out the affluence of their life. Set at the height of Zimbabwe's economic crisis, the story indicates that the elite few continued to live in material opulence even as millions of people were suffering. The story derives its power from showing the gap between material comfort and emotional insecurity that characterises the protagonist's life.

While the poorer Zimbabweans are undergoing an economic crisis, the protagonist also experiences her own emotional pain due to her husband's brazen promiscuity and, as a result, suffers from marital insecurity. She lives in constant fear of being divorced and the likelihood of losing her material comforts. She suffers emotional pain because she is forced to share her husband with another woman, described as *imbadiki* (Shona) or "small house".

In an almost closely related account, "Mr Wonder" is an eponymously titled story about a man who works for Mr and Mrs Mutasa as a family driver. The family, with two sons, stays in Avondale, Harare, listed among the places with a history of being trendy and where people generally show off their wealth. Mr Mutasa is a businessman. Over and above his riches, he is a philandering husband, with "small houses" scattered about the city. Mrs Mutasa takes advantage of her husband's guilty conscience and goes for an expensive trip with her two sons and the family driver, Wonder, to San Francisco, in the United States of America. Ironically, Mrs Mutasa also starts flirting while in America. All this is happening during the post-2000 Zimbabwean economic crisis, demonstrating that while these women are victims of emotional abuse by their unfaithful husbands, they nevertheless enjoy their husbands' ill-gotten wealth and have little regard for the suffering of the millions of other Zimbabweans.

Both stories show that the predatory business practices of the elite add fuel to the politically induced economic collapse as these individuals selfishly focus on personal accumulation and self-gratification. Moyo (2007) aptly captures the lifestyle of Gappah and Manyika's characters: "[The] Mugabe's administration is part of the troubling politics of a global economy where the few are enjoying quality life while the many are shackled to precarious living" (p.52). The opulent lifestyle of the nameless female protagonist in Gappah's story, who has four workers, a maid, a gardener, two security guards, two personal luxury vehicles and a child who goes to "a school that was too expensive for the president" (p. 16) to the extent that the president "withdrew his son to be home-schooled", highlights Moyo's critique of the troubling politics where a few enjoy a high quality of life in the face of grinding poverty for the majority. Similarly, Mrs Mutasa in "Mr Wonder", extorts an extremely expensive American holiday

from her adulterous husband and spends money in complete disregard of the suffering around her including that of their underpaid driver, Mr Wonder.

The narrative voices in both Gappah and Manyika's stories are satirical as they are used to lampoon the vanity of the affluent female characters. The emotional and psychological suffering that they experience due to their husbands' infidelity does not shape them into individuals who are sympathetic and empathetic to others who are suffering due to economic difficulties. The narrator makes it clear that the protagonist in Gappah's novel is overbearing and unkind to her workers. For example, she makes a big issue out of "a small streak of mud on [her] BMW" and Timothy, the gardener, is sent scurrying to get a bucket of water to clean the car. While for her workers she buys "perfection soap and coarse maize meal, cooking oil and dry beans, corned beef ground from the unmentionable parts of the cow, dried *matemba*[48] fish that taste of nothing but fish bones and brains" (p. 17), for herself and family she buys from the affluent shopping malls of Rosebank and Sandton in South Africa.

The protagonist's condescending attitude towards Zimbabweans of lesser means is also brought out by her comment to her friend that Eastgate, one of t Johannesburg's shopping malls "has become just too tacky" because of too many Zimbabweans (p.17). During such trips, the protagonist boasts that she travels "on discounted Air Zim flights … with wives of cabinet ministers" (p. 17). It is this endearment to South African products by Zimbabwe's elite which made some observers conclude that the worsening political-economic crisis after 2000 has disproportionately benefited South African business, and they saw the South African government's 'quiet diplomacy' towards Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF as an important component of a coordinated strategy aimed at enabling South Africa's political hegemony and economic occupation (Hattingh, 2007). Gappah's narrative subtly condemns the complete lack of acknowledgement of the economic challenges of the less fortunate fellow citizens in the attitude and conduct of the female protagonists and other members of Zimbabwe's elite such as the wives of political cabinet ministers.

The Mutasas' extravagancy is maintained even in San Francisco, America. As the focaliser, the housekeeper reveals: "Usually her apartments rent for a week or two to Asian businessmen, but this time it's a mother, her two sons and someone else ... from Africa of all places. It's a

[48] A Shona word for small fish, sardines.

curious situation" (p.47). The racist stereotype about Africa, notwithstanding the housekeeper's thoughts, expose Mrs Mutasa's shallow personality considering the extremely difficult economic conditions that afflict her country when she chooses to completely spoil herself. What makes the whole affair scandalous is that when they get to America, the two Mutasa boys have absolutely nothing to do except watch television. However, their mother spends most of her time at the gym. The moral emptiness of the economic elite is shocking. Even victimised wives whom one would expect to avoid wasteful and conspicuous spending whilst their fellow citizens are wallowing in abject poverty also participate in the selfish orgy.

The stories also suggest that, after amassing ill-gained wealth, men lose all sense of morality and unreasonably want to prove their virility by accumulating mistresses for themselves. For example, the protagonist's husband in Gappah's story is extremely promiscuous and even brags about it. The protagonist herself is the second wife because her husband divorced his first wife. The husband seems obsessed with younger women. While his first wife was five years his junior, his second wife is fifteen years younger than him and he has yet another mistress who is twenty-five years his junior. Similarly, in Manyika's story, Mr Mutasa acquires more mistresses or small houses who are "scattered about the city" (p. 45) and the situation "really provokes poor Mrs Mutasa to chew her nails and contemplate divorce" (p.45). Mr Mutasa has become so brazen in his conduct that his latest misdeed involves him having relations with Mrs Mutasa's best friend. But, as Dodgson (1992) observes, "there were also setbacks which showed how a double standard operated. Men could be sexually promiscuous; women were condemned at the mere hint of any impropriety" (p.254). Not only are women vilified as uncaring, immoral and incapable of leading independent fulfilled lives in the local press, but they also suffer stereotyping in literature.

Manyika and Gappah's narratives suggest that the politically induced economic decay, conspicuous consumption and sexual immorality by the rich few, feed on each other like insatiable monsters. The unnamed woman character in Gappah's story is economically comfortable but she must bear with the antics of a promiscuous husband. In Manyika's story, Mrs Mutasa is similarly married to a well-to-do husband who has "small houses" all over town. The situation of the protagonists illustrates the notion of positionality which "refers to the place that a person occupies within a set of social relationships" (Hearn, 2012, p.42). One's position is the result of combining various social factors or identifiers including, but not limited to, race,

sex, class, gender, ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, physical stature, education, occupation, relational status, and language. Due to their sex and the fact that they live in a patriarchal society, the protagonists are abused by their husbands. However, by virtue of being married to the economically privileged elite men, these women occupy a high economic status which ambiguously places them in positions of power which they also subsequently abuse.

Conclusion

The six short stories selected from *Women Writing Zimbabwe* are clearly framed through the lens of the politically induced collapse of the Zimbabwean economy in the post-2000 period. Not only are they written by women, but they also foreground female characters exposing the various challenges that some women faced during the crisis period. Most of the stories examined in this chapter indicate that the post-2000 Zimbabwean economic crisis did not affect females and males in the same way. However, in most of the stories, women's challenges are exacerbated by the long standing patriarchal social relations. The stories may be seen as a response to Berndt's (2005) call in Zimbabwean fiction for female perspectives "to enter the public discourse and leave their inscriptions in it" (p.9). Through female characters, female writers interrogate and sometimes even challenged the patriarchal discourse by recounting the impact of the Zimbabwean crisis from a private and domestic point of view focusing on the family and its marginalised members, women and children.

While some women are economically more vulnerable than others, most of the female characters depicted in the selected stories experience challenges due to their gender. The debilitating effect of the crisis exaggerated the vulnerability of women, particularly in the face of AIDS related deaths. Efforts by women to take care of one another through some remittances are noted, but they do not go a long way in alleviating their suffering as the patriarchal burden that manifests through families of the deceased husbands continue to haunt them. Parenting itself becomes a burden for women, as they must become breadwinners due to the escalation of the crisis. Under these circumstances, some turn to social ills, such as prostitution, to augment their incomes.

Meanwhile, it can also be concluded that migration was a result of the crisis. The selected stories suggest that, in most instances, this decision had a negative impact on marriages. However, spouses felt that they had no better choice, and when women began to move, it became an issue as, traditionally, they are home keepers, while men do most of the transnational movement. The crisis also frustrated relationships between parents and their children. Some decisions made by parents or spouses were spontaneous as the crisis did not accord anyone any chance to plan adequately, hence there were some gains and losses at the end of the day. In the light of this, it also appears that resorting to being "small-houses" was a crisis induced survival strategy for women. This is not to say that this practice was new, but writers have recast it to represent the social fabric that has been grossly compromised by the crisis. When discussing female agency and the vulnerability of women, it should be noted that not all women played victimhood to the crisis situation. A few, such as those by Gappah and Manyika, enjoyed the economic affluence because they had husbands or partners who amassed wealth as a result of the crisis. In terms of their personal torments, it could be that these women are behaving the way they are doing because of the promiscuous husbands they have. Whereas the preceding chapter focused intently on women representation within the scope of the crisis, the next chapter focuses on the holistic impact of the crisis within the scope of diaspora migration of which some of the incurred costs due to the crisis have remained unquantifiable. The next chapter focuses on the chronotope of migration, particularly how families were impacted, whether negatively or positively, by the issue of migration particularly to the diaspora, towards a cosmopolitan lifestyle which in Bakhtin's terms marked some spatial definition of individual and collective identities within the temporal space of the post-2000 period. This was also the time when the crisis was escalating uncontrollably, and family incomes were eroded beyond measure, and unlike in the previous chapter that spells out victimhood and vulnerability of women in the next chapter where women are represented, they largely transcend their victimhood to be breadwinners and redefine their position.

Chapter 5

Family, Material Benefits and the Unquantifiable Costs of Migration

Introduction

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, the Zimbabwean crisis resulted in a lot of suffering. People tried different ways to make their situation tolerable. One of these ways was moving to neighbouring countries, such as Botswana and South Africa, as economic migrants as already seen in the story "Mainini Grace's Promise". However, as this story indicated, migration had its own challenges as Manyika's story vividly illustrates how Mainini Grace contracted HIV as she tried to augment her income in order to deal with the demands of relatives back home. The way migration, explored through the chronotope of the border, affected the migrants and those left at home is what the selected stories in this chapter explore. As Primorac argues in her introduction to Brian Chikwava's story "One Dandelion Seed-head" that "the very existence of today's Zimbabwean literary canon in English is predicated on displacement" (McGregor and Primorac, 2010, p.246). Therefore, the shifting of individuals across the borders over time is a critical concept in understanding the time-space within the framework of the chronotopicity. In this regard, stories selected for this section are through Bakhtin's notion of chronotope which has already been utilised as a frame to the main argument of this thesis. particularly from and or about displacement and the diaspora. The chapter examines the ordeals of Zimbabwean cross border traders, the experiences of economic migrants who found themselves in distant lands such as America and the United Kingdom and how, despite the economic gains, their decisions often impacted negatively on themselves and their families back home[49]. Death is depicted as one of the unquantifiable costs of migration to both the migrants and those in the homeland. The theorisation of the stories is based on transnationalism

[49] Since the advent of independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has experienced three major waves of migration. The first, in the early 1980s, was associated with the out-migration of disgruntled whites following majority rule. The second wave was linked to the violence that followed the referendum of February 2000, when Zimbabweans rejected the government-sponsored new constitution, the fast-track land-reform programme that came immediately afterwards, the violent and disputed parliamentary elections of August 2000 and presidential elections of March 2002. This wave continued after the 2005 parliamentary and senatorial elections. The third wave is linked to the wrenching changes that took place after 2007 as the economy receded into paralysis in the context of hyperinflation (Kanyenze et al., 2011, p.327). However, this chapter is maily focuses on the representation of second and third waves.

as it refers to today's migrations and transnational engagements (Koopmans and Statham, 2001) and cosmopolitanism as closely linked to transnationalism. Two stories discussed in this chapter are from Petina Gappah's anthology, *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009), while the other five are selected from the anthology *Hunting in Foreign Lands and Other Stories* (2010).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the notion of cosmopolitanism reaches beyond the state and addresses the potentiality of difference and dynamism, contagion and connectivity without taking refuge in universalism. The world witnesses the mobility of people across borders, migration and displacement, signifying, as Baban (2006) argues, that leaving one's house for meeting others is itself a cosmopolitan trait, and an indirect acceptance of the fact that one could be someone else in the process." (p.105). "People live in nations and when they move, move within and beyond nations" (p.105); national borders do not necessarily constitute or fix their identity. Ashcroft (2009) proposes the term "transnational" which is "the fluid, migrating outside of the state and begins within the nation" (p.98). Therefore, not only are the borders of nations permeable but also the identity of people; the global can be experienced in the local and, thereby, the local is transformed into 'glocal' (or even cosmopolitan)[50]. From the understanding of transnation, it seems we are living in an era of new enclosures and inclusion of differences rather than a world without borders, where borders are no longer marginalising but rather doors that connect to different social, cultural and political processes. The essence of cosmopolitanism lies in its openness to otherness, acceptance, the negotiating of differences and living with plurality.

Most of the stories selected for this chapter seem to advance moral lessons or are cautionary tales about the need to curb the enthusiasm that accompanied going to foreign lands as a panacea to the problems ushered in by the post-2000 Zimbabwean economic crisis. Moreover, these stories show that, not all who migrated were able to get good jobs to significantly improve their lives and that of their expectant relatives left behind in the homeland. The few who did had to contend with other challenges such as psychological problems, inability to regularise their resident status and the challenge of not being able to freely travel home in cases of

[50] The term 'global', which means universal, is problematic, because now every local carries the trace of the global; modernity has been localised and globalised through interaction, appropriation, and transformation; in other words, the local has been globalised. Roland Robertson, who introduced the term 'glocalisation', suggests that "it makes no good sense to define the global as if the global excludes the local" (Glocalisation, p.34). He therefore proposes glocalisation which means that the local is infused with the global, or they are interrelated. It is glocalisation rather than globalisation which can capture the true global political and cultural scenario in the context of alternative modernities.

emergency such as attending the funeral of a close relative. The selected stories portray that "representations of *movement* are one of the key textual components that characterises the field of Zimbabwean short fiction within the larger field of political power" (Primorac, 2006, p.6). In the context of the "Zimbabwe's New Diaspora" proposed by McGregor and Primorac (2010, p.4), the stories discussed depict and shed light on how, to what ends and under what circumstances diasporic identities have been taken up.[51] In the Bakhtinian theorisation, these texts have been localized, showing that the creation of texts and the acquaintance with them occurs through time. In real time where the work resonates, there are real people, namely the authors and readers, including the represented characters. These people, as Bakhtin (1981) argues, may be (and often are) located in different time-spaces, sometimes separated from each other by centuries and by great spatial distances. Nevertheless, they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete historical world set off by a sharp and categorical boundary from the *represented* world in the text. Therefore, in the light of what Bakhtin says, the actual chronotopes of the world, in this study Zimbabwe, (which serves as the source of representation) emerge as the reflected and *created* chronotopes of the world represented in the work about the diaspora and the implied cosmopolitan sensibility exhibited in the characters.

By focusing on the diaspora from the year 2000, my argument fits into the proposal by McGregor and Primorac, particularly the use of the prefix "new" that emphasises the unprecedented dispersal of Zimbabweans over the past decade and differentiates recent movements from the previous displacements that have so profoundly shaped Zimbabwean history. Bhabha (2017) also discusses a sense of belonging about the diasporic dispersion that has made some characters or individuals to feel that they have a cosmopolitan existence. Bhabha argues that the term "home" has two aspects to it. It is there – the "thereness" of your existence, even more than the "hereness" of your existence. He says:

> It is always there; this is my home. I understand this landscape. I know these people. I know the language, and so on. So that's one important concept. And the other, is the kind of Conradian idea that home is what you return to. So, there are these two moments of temporality, these two narrative moments – coming out of the home and somehow

[51] The word 'diaspora' was originally used to refer to the Jews who were displaced from their homeland. It is now widely used to define a homogeneous group of people with a common sense of displacement, both voluntary and involuntary, with a hope to return home once the factors that led to their leaving have been addressed (Makina, 2007).

> allowing yourself to imagine, whether you can or you can't, that you can go back: so emergence and return are complicit with the concept of home. (p.15)

Bhabha's insights allow us to see that issues about returning and staying in the diaspora are observably interwoven in the selected short stories.

Bhabha further contends that those people who move homes often, though not always, follow a certain kind of narrative pattern. However, Bhabha is quick to point out that he does not mean that everyone who moves on follows a certain narrative structure, but in an individual's movement, there is a narrative. It is this kind of narrative pattern envisaged by Bhabha that the exploration of stories in this chapter attempt to represent in the light of the post-2000 diaspora movement.

Impact of Migration, Transnational Motherhood and Family Discontinuities

The emergence of diasporic identities and claims from the year 2000 are intimately connected to changes in the Zimbabwean homeland and cannot be understood separately from Zimbabwe's trajectory of economic and political crisis (McGregor and Primorac, 2010). This section examines the effects that diaspora transnational migration has had on the family unit and parenting from the vantage point of selected stories such as "Mountains of Ambition" and "Mother Come Back Home" by Mupondi; "Name Any Price" by Magosvongwe, and "Gone with the Whirlwind" by Chiruka from the anthology *Hunting in Foreign Lands and Other Stories* (2010). These stories suggest that the escalating economic and political crisis that was ameliorated by the benefits of diaspora remittances in improving family livelihoods in the wake of the crisis made migration attractive to many. However, authors see women as delicate, and they play into the galary of stereotypes about women as migration gathers momentum. This is because of the bond established between mothers and their children as they grow up. The section begins by presenting a brief synopsis of the stories in terms of their context vis-à-vis the diaspora organising principle.

The section further examines how migration resulted in disjointedness herein referred to as family discontinuities. Transnational family relationships also embody tensions, and "transnational motherhood takes a toll because care-giving at a distance is emotionally stressful for parents and children" (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2001). This is notwithstanding the importance of new and cheaper forms of communication- telephone, SMS and email- that can act as the

"social glue" of transnational families (Vertovec, 2004), allowing mothers to be much more involved in the lives of the families left behind, not only economically, but also as nurturing figures (Parrenas, 2005). Parrenas reminds us that "transnational mothering is not a one-way process" (Parrenas, 2005, p.319), but that children and other kin left behind also contribute to the relationships, shaping their form, the emotional support they can provide, as well as the worries and conflicts that are an inevitable part of "long distance intimacy" (Parrenas, 2005). The section also interrogates the extent to which the authors represent migration as having played a pivotal role in sexual immorality and violence.

"Gone with the Whirlwind" by Chiruka provides background information regarding the economic and political crisis, including the centrality of the diaspora remittances that increased the yearning for migration evident in the characters found in the selected stories. The story is about the protagonist Nhamo who, although managing to fulfil his dream of going to the UK, is afflicted by feelings of loss and nostalgia when he thinks of his mother and his country of origin. In Zimbabwe, Nhamo worked as a bank teller but due to the economic crisis, he cannot fulfil his obligations of taking care of his mother and his siblings since he is the first-born and his father is deceased. Although working, the economic situation forces him to live in his uncle and aunt's house otherwise known as Babamukuru and Maiguru Mai Tendai. Nhamo envies the lives of his cousins who have migrated to the UK. Eventually his cousin, Mukoma William assists him to go to the UK so that he would pull up the only remaining poverty-stricken branch of the Mufambe family. Nhamo's mother is happy for her son and the family economic livelihood greatly improves as soon as Nhamo starts sending remittances. In some way, the narrative shows a cosmopolitan sensibility embedded in what Robertson (1995) terms "glocalisation", whereby the local, represented by Nhamo's family, is infused with the global and become entangled. In this regard, "glocal" offers space for interconnectedness in the spatio-temporal context perceived by Bhakhtin. By extension, both cosmopolitanism and glocalisation look for a cosmopolitan community or a "glocal" one which imagines a community beyond the territorial borders of Zimbabwe as a nation-state, to serve them from the crisis-induced economic challenges.

Charuka fictionalises how the issue of elitism was a contributory factor to ambivalent views regarding what Turner (2008) terms "the Diaspora" in its noun form (as if it were an ethno-national group or a country itself) and as an adjective suggestive of what Van Hear (1998) calls diasporic identities made or unmade in particular contexts. Although employed in Zimbabwe, the narrative shows that Nhamo is compelled to go to the UK by the hyper-inflationary

environment of the country. Nhamo says that, "the rest of the extended family had taken turns one by one bringing out their brothers and sisters from their economically collapsing homeland. The first one had been Tendai, now a full citizen in the United Kingdom, earning much more than a managing director back home, working as an English teacher and conducting private classes in his spare time" (p.55). As a local bank teller, working for a "cash drought-stricken bank" (p.58), Nhamo's dream of leaving his homeland is bolstered. He further says that "they [Nhamo's family] could no longer live on their mother's primary school teacher's salary or on their departed father's pension" (p.56). Mugari (2008) states that in the post-2000 period, inflation in Zimbabwe was probably in excess of 150,000 per cent a year. The narrator describes Zimbabwe as "a hard-time stricken one", "the stay-aways, riots, teargas, looting, food shortages and long queues had soon taken [Nhamo] over the edge. Transport soon became a big problem with the fuel shortages and worse still; they could no longer get bread everyday" (p.57). It is during these trying times that Nhamo felt the surging urge to leave the country just like his cousin William. His whole-year-attempt to save for the ticket to London fell short. The narrator says his savings could not suffice because the school fees for the "the younger ones" had increased three times over. Inflation had taken a turn for the worse and prices were rising every minute.

The narrative highlights that those who remained in Zimbabwe were only exposed to the positive side of economic migrancy which added to the elite connotations of being a migrant. Those with relatives abroad seemed to ride the deepening crisis with ease as they took advantage of the collapsed Zimbabwean dollar to exchange very little foreign currency at high rates that allowed them to achieve economic progress that seemed impossible to the rest of the suffering Zimbabweans. However, this conception runs contrary to the cosmopolitan sensibility that does not centralise elitism and privilege for those who travel to different countries. Instead, scholars such as Pollock (2002) argue that there is no centre for diffusion of cosmopolitanism, rather centres are everywhere and circumferences nowhere, hence there are no limits regarding the status of who transforms the family well-being. The narrator observes: "It had become an accepted fact of life that the best cars and the most expensive houses could only be afforded by London girls and boys" (p.57). It is for these reasons that the UK is viewed as 'salvation land' by Nhamo and others as their own homeland became increasingly an uninhabitable space. As McGregor and Primorac (2010) describe, those left behind may combine gratitude and resentment towards those who have sought greener pastures, who may have prospered while those at home have suffered, whose investments have inflated property

prices, whose money-making sheds doubt on the commitment to return, and whose view of Zimbabwean politics is detached from the complexities of lived reality.

Remittances from abroad "helped keep the Zimbabwean economy viable" (Kanyenze et al., 2011, p.330). Bracking and Sachikonye (2006) indicate that "half of the 300 urban households surveyed in Harare and Bulawayo were dependent on migrant remittances for everyday consumption" (p.4). The gratitude expressed by Nhamo's mother spells out the joy of having a son abroad: "the pound has surely changed our lives son. We hardly are in need anymore. Your young brothers and sisters are doing well in boarding schools and the builders are just finishing our seven-roomed house. Why, I also now have friends and by the way, tomorrow I will be buying that long-needed Cellphone and then we can talk" (p.59). The mentioning of improved life by Nhamo's mother is not a cosmetic catalogue but enhances the writer's and narrator's glorification of the migrant benefits in eradicating poverty.

However, in the story, remittances are depicted within the paradigm of the ambiguity of moral judgments of emigration and émigrés, and what Kufakurinani et al. (2014) refer to as the "crisis of expectation" (p.10) that assumptions about diaspora wealth fostered within families and among those remaining behind. Considering the challenges and the benefits arising from migrant narratives, here embodied through Nhamo, it is imperative to consider what Bhabha (2017) calls the "narrative" associated with most movements. Bhabha's idea of resonance of narrative allows the reader to see that there are reasons why characters like Nhamo move from their homeland; there are losses of where they moved from, and the gains of where they moved to. So, it is part of a process of choice and judgment and that sense of choice and judgment is lost very often with generalized terms like cosmopolitan. Nhamo and others who migrated, weighed the situation in the homeland, and, in that regard, their movement to England and other places was a choice based on their judgment as they envisaged better livelihoods.

However, the crux of the story is the negative psychological impact of migration on the "economic migrant" as discussed by Manase (2014, p.59). This is viewed through a globalised cosmopolitan mentality, typical of those writers who were narrating life in the homeland, in the comfort of their migrants' worldview. When he is in the UK, Nhamo gets a book from the library and it opens his mind, in a nostalgic sense, about the Chimurenga struggle and subsequent independence, thereby giving him an insight into his own circumstances as a struggling economic migrant in a country that had been Zimbabwe's coloniser. The book enlightens him about the land redistribution process which triggered the economic crisis

leading to the exodus of Zimbabweans to foreign lands. Although he misses his mother and his motherland terribly, he indicates that he had no choice but to leave for the UK. The story is punctuated with satire as Nhamo starts to view himself as a liberation fighter of some sort by comparing his actions to those who fought for the political independence of Zimbabwe. Nhamo expresses the irony that came with following what, in Zimbabwean state propaganda is viewed as the enemy to his land: "I now even know why I am this far from you Mama … I had to go as the others were doing because I was caught up in a crisis and leaving was the only thing to do" (p.54). Nhamo's words expose the emptiness of the Zimbabwean government's rhetoric about the empowerment of Zimbabweans through the fast track land redistribution programme.

At the same time, within the postcolonial theorisation of the diaspora, Nhamo's realistic speech, though nostalgic, expresses what Bhabha (2000) refers to as the shift, contrast, and relation between the centre and the periphery, in this case, UK the former coloniser as the centre and Zimbabwe the former colony as the periphery. In his critic of the post-colonial state and predicament faced by characters like Nhamo who see exit as the sole option, Fanon (1967) predicted that "the masses [would] begin to sulk; they turn away from this nation in which they have been given no place and begin to lose interest in it" (p.136). Nhamo's situation makes it clear that the economic benefits enabled by his remittances come at a great psychological and emotional cost to those who live in distant foreign countries. Clearly, the money in the diaspora came at a cost as the narrator alludes to the circulating rumours in the community that those in the UK were leading difficult lives. Manase (2014) alleges that the metropolitan experiences of the migrants were riddled with the tragedy of expectations from those at home. To Nhamo, "whatever the stories of bathing old women and old men or about the sons and daughters in the diaspora working like animals in 2004, he did not care about them. The situation in his family compelled him to dream of the distant land of the white men" (p.56). Clearly, not all was good for Zimbabweans living abroad.

The total economic collapse led to desperate cross-border trading especially by women, as well as compulsive migrations by many Zimbabweans. In "Mountains of Ambition" Mupondi depicts a situation where Tariro, the unemployed wife of Vengai, a school teacher, feels compelled to engage in cross-border trading to Botswana in order to agument her husband's salary which has been seriously eroded by the country's hyper-inflationary environment. To cut travelling costs, Tariro tries to get a lift from a Mr Nduku who is a long-distance truck driver. The story expresses how challenges to the patriarchal traditions of the homeland in the host land, especially regarding women's primary migrant status and financial autonomy, the

different labour market experiences of men and women, and the egalitarian laws, have caused tensions and conflict within diaspora households.

As the discussion between Tariro and Vengai unfolds, we gain insight into the salient crisis indicators that have weakened their relationship. Tariro states simply that she wants high quality clothes like other women, a car and a house of her own. She laments the deplorable life of a teacher that has been exacerbated by the crisis as she says:

> I can't continue with this lousy life ... What my husband gets from his teaching can't take us anywhere. You can't buy groceries that last a month with his meagre salary. You can't even buy clothes ... Prices for everything are very high. They rise every day (p.65).

The high rate of inflation that beset Zimbabwe resulted in the country's currency drastically losing value against other currencies such as the pound, thereby eroding peoples' incomes. At the same time, the story fictionalises the way the crisis and migration by extension, compromised marital relationships as seen in Tariro's speech and the implied questioning of her husband's masculinity. The situation is beyond Vengai's control because the authorial voice, through the narrator pushes the crisis to the fore as the cause of all the suffering.

However, as the title of the story, "Mountains of Ambition", suggests, the author unsympathetically sees Tariro's actions as simply unbridled ambition that will lead to trouble. Instead of portraying her as a victim of the country's economic instead depicts her as headstrong and defiant against the apparently reasonable advice of her friend Muchaneta and of her own husband who both advise her against engaging in her business for fear that she will destroy her marriage. Vengai's fears are that cross-border trading is not just about money or the foreign currency that most people chase after. He says to his wife: "Out there you will be exposed to tough situations that will force you to commit sin and destroy our marriage" (p.67). To this end, Pasura (2011) argues that "dispersal from a place of origin may create new identities and opportunities for women while simultaneously threatening both men's self-esteem and the traditional power relations within households" (p.58). Already, Vengai indicates the threat that most men felt as they viewed the economic crisis as emasculated.

Vengai continues to express his fear of losing patriarchal power over his wife when she becomes financially independent. The narrative expresses bizarre juxtapositions in terms of

what globalisation and cosmopolitanism within the postcolonial theorisation of the diaspora have done to marriages in terms of infidelity. Vengai says:

> But so many things happen to women out there on their own. I don't like the idea of desperate women in a foreign country. It's as if the woman is on her own in a forest teeming with wild beasts. Our women are raped out there. We are in trouble. (p.67)

Vengai assumes that he is simply expressing the vulnerability of women. In reality, he is articulating a deeply oppressive patriarchal sentiment. His fears are confirmed when Tariro, in pursuit of money, falls in love and is caught red-handed being intimate with Mr Nduku, who has been helping her in selling her potatoes in Botswana. In terms of representation and empowering of women characters, Mupondi can be criticised for placing women in positions of victimhood where they are unable to withstand the so-called 'jungle life' in other countries. This view echoes the author's reduction of Tariro's urge to save the family as illusory, a mere mountain of ambition. This is also to say that women are generally weak on their own and cannot make informed decisions.

Notably, Muchaneta a female friend, warns Tariro against long-distance truck drivers, and her engaging in Botswana trips. She tells her how unpleasant her decision is for the family. She says:

> We hear a lot of strange things about people who go outside the country. Some go forever. Some men come back married and end up dumping the wives they would have left at home. Some women forget about their husbands once they are out of the country. They come back with AIDS and pass it on to their unsuspecting husbands. So many stories are told about cross-border traders Tari (p.66).

Mucha shows how diasporic experiences have affected both men and women alike as they are gripped by fears of losing each other. However, the urge to survive pushes married individuals to make drastic decisions in order to provide for their families.

Tariro's engaging in cross border trade receives all round condemnation when her actions are represented as tantamount to abandonment of her husband and children. The author clearly takes a high moral ground by depicting Tariro largely in a negative light. As already pointed out, the author's condemnatory tone is captured in the title of the story which implies that

Tariro's ambition is unachievable and can, therefore, only lead to disaster. In fact, Tariro comes back from Botswana "with a considerable amount of Pulas[52] (Botswana currency), clothes for her family and groceries that would last a whole month" (p.68). Disapprovingly, the author fails to sympathetically highlight that Tariro's actions and the ultimate disaster that befalls her marriage are primarily authored by the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy. Rather, the author's lack of empathy for Tariro's ambition makes him portray her as a villain who had evil intent right from the time, she suggested her cross-border trade. This represents what one may call male anxiety when men suddenly lose control over their women due to their failure to adequately provide for their material needs. Nnaemeka (1994) provides an insight into Vengai and his fears as a man as she argues that migration heightens what she calls the "nervous conditions" (p.138) in the light of the position of African women. She uses the expression "nervous conditions" with respect to authors, that is, the result of their "awareness of the powerful gaze of the reader/ critic (usually male)". The migrant women, represented here by Tariro, are thus "suspect and highly scrutinised figures who must carefully negotiate the question of home and belonging" (Nnaemeka, 1994, p.142).

"Name Any Price" by Magosvongwe is comparable to "Mountains of Ambition" in that Blessing's migration to the UK is depicted in a negative light and as an unnecessary abandonment of her wifely duties. In this context, Bhabha (1996) proposition of "a cosmopolitan community envisaged in marginality" (p.195) is useful in thinking through what Magosvongwe and Mupondi are envisaging through their stories. This concept attempts to capture the growing global gulf between political citizenship, related to nation and state and cultural citizenship, which is often community centred, transnational, diasporic and hybrid. "Vernacular" has an etymological connection with 'domesticity', but vernacular cosmopolitanism does not refer to simple domestication of the global or universal by the local; rather "it is to be on the border, in between, introducing the global cosmopolitan 'action at a distance' into the very grounds-now displaced-of the domestic" (pp.195,196). Through the conception of subaltern secularism, Bhabha argues that we should not look for innate goodness in human beings in the question of freedom or rights; rather such questions of freedom or rights, regarding what is good or bad, gives the opportunity to test the "boundaries and limits as part of a communal collective process, so that choice is less an individualistic internal desire than

[52] Botswana currency. This currency became one of the major transactional currencies, alongside other currencies such as the South African Rand and United States Dollar in the post-2000 multi-currency regime declared by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

it is a public demand and duty". The decisions made by individual characters in the stories must be read in the context of Bhabha's insinuations. "Name Any Price" and "Mother Come Back Home" explore the impact of the collapsed economy that leads to vulnerability of the children and compromised spousal relations. For example, in "Name Any Price", there seems to be no lack of material provisions in the wife's household as her husband is a high-ranking official in the civil service. The story seems to blame her for her husband's rape of the house maid. As in Vengai's case who fears being abandoned by his wife, we also witness Tomuonga in "Name Any Price" also being anxious of being abandoned by his wife Blessing who migrates to the UK in search of the pound due to the economic collapse in Zimbabwe.

Tomuonga is a senior civil servant, a deputy permanent secretary and his wife Blessing departs for the UK in search of a better salary. He is left in the company of Runyararo, their ten-year-old daughter and Danai, the maid with a strong rural background (SRB). Magosvongwe shows how commuter relationships that emanate from migrations, within the transnational sphere, compromise relations between husband and wife thereby exposing children to various levels of abuse. The fond expressions of missing each other expressed in the letter sent to Tomuonga by Blessing who is in the UK, to which Tomuonga responds with the same affection, show their deep love for one another. It is then apparent that the two have been separated by circumstances beyond their control; their salaries can no longer sustain the standard of their life. The narrator says that "Danai was the maid Blessing had engaged six months before her departure on the hunt for the pound" (p.103), a clear indication that the collapsed economic situation led to a compromised decision by Tomuonga and Blessing. The pressure of missing his wife pushes Tomuonga "to relieve himself" (p.105) on his maid, Danai. The vulnerability of Danai and Runyararo is all blamed on the fractured family relations due to the dysfunctional economy as they fail to get motherly protection.

The story depicts how, as a teenager, Danai's victimisation and molestation can be interpreted as two pronged, that is, as a result of her vulnerability of working in a home where the wife has migrated and within the patriarchal status quo where women's bodies are brutally violated, violently dehumanised and viciously objectified. Spousal separation receives condemnation from the author. The effect of separation of spouses due to migrations is associated with the Zimbabwean economic crisis. The crisis forced couples to make decisions that seemed irrational. Whilst the story seems to condemn Blessing's decision to migrate to the diaspora, it is lamentable that the author demonstrates lack of insight into issues, particularly the impinging

economic meltdown. Despite being a senior civil servant, Tomuonga's income had been eroded by the economic crisis, hence the decision to allow his wife to become a migrant in the UK.

However, a feminist narrative point of view would present something to the contrary. The story's foregrounding of temporal space constructs the rape as a deliberately orchestrated act emanating from a mind-set that is socially conditioned to be masculinist. As Nkealah (2018) proclaims, "we need to see rape as *a constellation of moments linked in time and space* to maintain a system of male dominance and women's service to patriarchy" (p.77; emphasis in the original]. In this regard, rape that is described by Magosvongwe is not just bent on describing the mere animalistic nature of male rapists, but it is informed by time and space in the context of the diaspora movement and the observable crisis indicators. It is as if Tomuonga expected Blessing, as a woman, to stay put and just look after him, all in the name of being of service to him, even in the face of a raging crisis. Tomuonga, therefore, feels dejected, disappointed, but most of all infuriated that Blessing left him behind. Murray (2017) notes that "feminist engagements with gender, time and temporality … shed light on the extent to which women's experiences continue to be shaped by temporally and spatially located constructions of gender" (p.2). Gender and diaspora movement then collude to create fertile ground for male violence, which in this case, manifests through Danai's rape.

Moreover, Runyararo, at a tender age of ten years, is left in the care of a single parent. As a result, the television becomes the prime socialising agent for Runyararo in the absence of a mother. Tomuonga is lost in his own desires to quench his sexual desire to the extent that he ignores Runyararo's plea for the homework signature. Also, the way that Runyararo is left to sleep in the living room spells abandonment. She is "curled up on the couch like a little kitten on a cold winter night" (p.105), and her companion, "a huge teddy bear" is an effort to cover up for loneliness. Parental safety nets around Runyararo are compromised. Heberle (1994) demonstrates how children in literature offer means of engagement with deeper social phenomena. He argues that "the significance of child characters derives from the audience's sense of the special nature of children: their innocence- which demands protection by and insulation from the harsher aspects of adult society" (p.31). Instead, Runyararo is left vulnerable.

Through Tomuonga, the author derides migration that, in some instances, saw some husbands remaining with housemaids and children while their wives went hunting for foreign currency. The emotional and physical gap is shown when he says to Danai, as she follows her to the

master bedroom: "Danai, you are the mistress of this home. Do you know what that means? You have taken very good care of the home, but there is one missing element, *baba hausi kuchengeta*[53]. Can I have a little kiss?" (p.104). Tomuonga seems to hold a grudge against Blessing for staying away for too long, hence he justifies his engagement of Danai as a mistress of the house. Repetitive reference to 'one missing element' that is, being a sexual partner, shows the main element of onslaught over Danai's life. Danai reports the case to the police although Tomuonga tries to conceal it as their little secret and an attempt to make her "name any price" in return. Most housemaids revel on supplanting their mistresses but Danai is different as she refuses to be silenced from reporting the rape case. She does not consent to Tomuonga's advances right from the onset and therefore he ends up raping her. Through Tomuonga's act of rape, Magosvongwe shows that the economic crisis that make spouses undertake decisions that seem irrational expose individuals to certain vulnerabilities. However, Tomuonga's actions are not mere immorality, but a violent and serious sexual crime. He had a choice of getting into an extramarital consensual sexual relationship, but he chose rape instead.

Significantly, Danai's elders try to capitalise on her rape case by making Tomuonga pay an exorbitant amount of money. In addition to exposing exploitative and opportunistic patriarchal tendencies, Magosvongwe is preoccupied with showing the intricate philosophy surrounding spouses in the homeland who found it difficult to cope with their abandonment. Tomuonga feels abandoned by Blessing as he is deprived of his conjugal rights. The level of romantic and erotic engagement with one of Blessing's photographs from the UK prior to the rape episode shows how much he misses her. The narrator observes:

> In this picture Blessing's rotund figure was genuinely pronounced ... A tremor ran down his spine and his right hand shook a little as he lifted that particular photograph. He carefully placed it on the desk and with trembling fingers traced and retraced those shapely curves in Bee's photograph ... His already drooling fat lips finally touched the photograph somewhere in the centre. For a while, Tomuonga's mind was a whirlwind. (p.102)

[53] A Shona expression meaning "you are not taking care of the man of the house" used mainly to solicit for sexual favour.

The erotic engagement with the picture shows how Tomuonga's anger builds up with time, and by the time he gets home his pent-up emotions have accumulated into a destructive force that is unleashed on Danai.

Tomuonga pleads with his younger brother Charles who is discontented with the rape case. He says: "Put yourself in my shoes and tell me what you would have done? ... what would you have done? Do you have a better solution to my plight?" (p.109). The way that Tomuonga addresses his brother regarding his situation can also be paralleled to what he says to Blessing in a monologue:

> Be-e-e dear, for how long will I have to wait? Yes, I promised to cleave to only you, but, but, you have been far away for too long. It's close to 12 good months now. I can't bear the pain any longer. (p.100)

The authorial intent is visibly to make the reader empathise with Tomuonga's plight. Magosvongwe poses a moral question regarding what spouses must bear when they are separated. Separation of spouses due to the crisis and search for better life exposes individuals to many temptations. Tomuonga's "plight", it could be argued, refers to his predicament of wanting conjugal rights from a wife who is not readily available and his having to pounce on the young unsuspecting Danai.

"Mother Come Back Home" by Mupondi, just like "Name any Price" is permeated with incidences of abuse that expose the vulnerability that children who are left behind in the care of relatives for extended periods of time by economic migrant parents often experience.The story depicts the ordeal of the 12-year-old girl child protagonist, Rosemary, otherwise known as "Lolo", and her 7-year-old young brother, Takawira, popularly known as "Taka" who suffer physical and psychological harm as a result of the migration of their parents to the UK. They are left in the care of their Babamunini and Mainini[54] who both ill-treat and abuse them whilst taking good care of their own children of similar ages, Tendai and Colletta.

Lolo and Taka suffer harrowing physical and emotional abuse at the hands of Babamunini and Mainini. They are deprived of food yet Tendai and Colletta are given food in the bedroom. Lolo complains that, sometimes, uncle and aunt beat them for nothing. They also complain that they are not given pocket money although mother wrote that she always gives Mainini their pocket money. Commenting on the embodiment of tensions associated with transnational

[54] Shona expressions referring to uncle and aunt.

motherhood, Chimonya (2010) affirms that there can be tensions within families produced by the difficulties of honest communication with home, and mutual misunderstandings. McGregor (2010) also observes that stress is caused to the remitters by their inability to fully control the use of remittances. Lolo's mother is in a dilemma of not being able to control whatever she remits to her children, hence that causes tension with her children who believe that she is not helping them at all. The bad conditions and the abuse at home further affects children's performance at school as witnessed in the conversation that Lolo has with Mrs Rufaro who is worried that, despite her being a bright child, her work is going down. Due to the disproportionate domestic chores assigned to Lolo by her Mainini, she cannot do her homework and is overwhelmed by her school work in general.

The two stories depict the trauma of diaspora migration that exposed children to adult sexual abuse. Whilst Magosvongwe's story is based on the raping of a young girl who is a maid, Mupondi centralises her rape narrative on a girl child raped by her closest relative who is supposed to act in *loco parentis* [own emphasis]. The climax of the story is when Lolo is raped by Babamunini. In a harrowing graphic description, Lolo describes how she was raped:

> He locked the door and I felt as if I were in prison. I was afraid. I could sense danger ... Babamunini becomes violent. He rudely lifts me up and throws me onto the bed. He pins me down with bestial force and stuffs his shirt into my mouth to muffle my scream for help. He holds my hands in a vice-like grip and tears away my underwear ... He thrusts his stiff, sausage-like thing into me. I close my eyes to meet my death like a sheep ... Something in me breaks because I feel a cool liquid between my thighs. It must be my blood. Hot tears flow down the sides, down to my ears. (p.114)

This narrative vacillates between past and present tense and this enables it to capture the shocking immediacy of the experience. The passage opens with the use of the past tense but as soon as Babamunini becomes violent, the tense shifts to the present tense. This reporting of a past traumatic experience through the present tense suggests that Lolo continues to live the dreadful rape experience. The narrative also captures Mupondi's ambivalences regarding children left in relatives' care as the salient features of the homeland are exposed and critiqued through the short story narrative.

Using a first-person child's eye narrative viewpoint given by Lolo, the author has appropriated the short story to deal with the moral question of whether it is right for parents to leave their

children in the care of relatives while they go in pursuit of material gain in other countries. Lolo says:

> I don't think what mother and father did was right. It is not good to leave young children like us in the care of cruel relatives like Babamunini and Mainini ... Taka and I are living as if we are orphans. It is not good to feel you are living as if your parents died when you know they are alive. (p.110)

Lolo's condemnation of her parents' decision is all the more poignant because it comes from a child since one expects such wisdom from adults. Lolo and Taka fit Barker's (2011) observation of child characters as "exceptional children" (p.1) whose unfortunate circumstances inform their exceptionality- their ability to experience and interpret reality differently. A combination of the narrative's first-person viewpoint and child focalisation produces a deep sense of intimacy which powerfully persuades readers to align their perceptions with those of the narrator (Nyambi, 2016, p.8). Mupondi's story, therefore, explores the moral gaps that affect children when their parents apparently make life changing decisions. The story indicates that some parents did not fully consider the plight and susceptibility of their children to various forms of abuse by their so-called close relatives when they opted to become economic migrants in distant lands. Boesen (2010) argues that the problem of "transnational motherhood" (p.27) that we observe in Muponde's story is not completely unknown to the Zimbabweans in so far as children suffer because of being separated from their mothers for several months.

Remarkably, the blame for Lolo's rape and the mistreatment that she and her brother suffer is placed on their mother who decides to migrate with her husband leaving the children behind. The title of the story which pleads with the mother to come back home suggests that the author blames the mother more than the father for what befalls her children. Lolo's sentiments match the author's point of view when she says: "Mother should have remained to look after us. Only father should have gone to look for money in London" (p.111). Lolo's ideas are an embodiment of the author's narrativisation of the homeland-diaspora parenting driven by overtones of patriarchal ideology that is traditionally anchored, and they match thoughts expressed by Vengai in the story "Mountains of Ambition". This expresses the traditional belief that men are the only ones that should be employed while women remain at home taking care of the children. It is the mother who is Mupondi's target in the story and not the father. Coly (2010) argues that in the narrator's description, "the maternal lap becomes a nurturing refuge for

children. Home and place are mediated through the body of the mother here, and the gendered access to the maternal body informs gendered relations to place and home" (p.5). In this case, the nurturing maternal lap is a missing link for Lolo and Taka. This suggests that migration during the height of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown was largely a gendered process skewed in favour of men.

"Mother Come Back Home" suggests that the damage caused by the post-2000 economic crisis is not easily quantifiable or reversible. The physical and psychological damage that Lolo suffers is permanent. Lolo's words in her undelivered letter to her mother sums up the author's moral lesson to parents who leave their children in the care of relatives in pursuit of a better life as economic migrants: "You and father are busy looking for money there but you may end up losing Taka and me here" (p.116). The sympathy for Lolo is first called upon by the striking incongruity between her age and her familial responsibilities. It is intensified by the awareness of a tragic absence of family safety nets for children. Lolo and Taka's experience is aptly captured by Kufakurinani et al., (2014) who point out the contradictions and tensions of transnational family practices that result in the emergence of "diaspora orphans" (pp.9-10) over the crisis. The stories that depict the abuse and rape of children are evocative representations which foreground a discourse of moral justice. Children often become victims when they are left in the care of people who are not their parents. However, there are many other challenges that Zimbabwean economic migrants experienced during the crisis period. The next section explores the traumatic experience of how some Zimbabwean economic migrants dealt with the death of a close relative such as a father, a wife or a first cousin, an experience that was closely tied to their compromised or lack of travel documents back home.

Economic Migrants and the Death Experience

"Burying a Wife from Across the Oceans" by Muchadei Alex Nyota and Petina Gappah's "My Cousin Sister Rambanai" and "Something Nice from London", depict migration challenges during the crisis period, particularly the dilemma associated with death and attending a funeral of a close relative back home or the repatriation of a body of a deceased Zimbabwean from abroad. Nyota and Gappah are both sensitive to social justice and are aware how difficult it is to publicly denounce what McGregor (2010) calls "the cultural politics of vulnerability" (p.5), without simultaneously participating in it in some way (in the case of writers and intellectuals, by converting it into textual commodities). As McGregor and Primorac (2010) argue, in the

2000s, following the onset of the crisis and as freedom of expression inside Zimbabwe became increasingly curtailed, several aspiring writers joined the swelling wave of Zimbabwean migrants, and found themselves thinking and writing about their home country from a position outside its borders. This is the group of writers to which Gappah belongs.

Writing from outside Zimbabwe, as much as it can be interpreted in Said (2012) terms as a form of exile for Gappah that has become a manifestation and an opportunity for articulation of the political problems at home, it is more of the need to represent through literature, how cosmopolitanism celebrates openness and generosity for everyone as citizens of the world. She also uses her writing to interrogate the extent to which Zimbabweans, in the midst of the post-2000 crisis, have come out of the narrow nationalised identity and "accommodated the whole world, which is quite different from assimilating or containing it" (Schoene, 2009, p.21), particularly when faced with death as one of the realities during the crisis period. In Gappah's case, being outside of her home (exile), is not just a form of spatial disconnection in Bhakhtin's theorisation, but more importantly, a form of reconnection with a previously stifled 'temporal' space for the creative imagination. In terms of stylistic presentation, Primorac argues that Gappah, as a young writer, models herself, in part, on her internationally-acclaimed Zimbabwean predecessor, Dangarembga's gift for social analysis, and she eschews the somewhat stilted idealism that marked the UK-set fiction of someone like Wilson Katiyo (1979), though there are also significant divergences. The author seeks to represent her fellow immigrants and those in the homeland both politically and in literary terms but is forced to accept that any such move will necessarily be flawed due to her social and cultural distance from them.

Gappah could be viewed as an Afropolitan[55] by virtue of her African descent, education, and positionality in the metropolitan city; and in Selasi's formulations paralleled in her novel *Ghana Must Go* (2013), the appeal of Afropolitanism seems obvious. Afropolitanism is represented as a form of African transnationalism, as "a concept of self-representation and

[55] The term "Afropolitan, a combination of the words 'Africa' and 'cosmopolitan', coined by Taiye Selasi (2005) describes African cosmopolitans, or 'Africans of the World', a generation of young Africans who inhabit the metropolitan cities, speak several languages, are versed in multiple cultures, and constantly travel around the world. The term also connotes a class of intellectuals and production, politics, and venture capital." (Feldner, 2019, p.129). Selasi, an exemplary Afropolitan and thus an apt spokesperson for Afropolitanism, was born in London. A transnational intellectual of Nigerian and Ghanaian descent, educated in Britain and the United States, sees herself as part of a young diasporic generation of writers that possess "a willingness to complicate Africa-namely, to engage with, critique, and celebrate the parts of Africa that mean most to them" (Selasi, 2009, p.37). The term has since prompted a rich discussion on diaspora, identity politics and the production of postcolonial knowledge.

black agency" (Ede, 2016, p.89) seeking to define "what it means to be African" in the twenty-first century (Selasi, 2005). However, despite a generally positive reception, Afropolitanism has also been taken to task by several critics. First, the need to qualify African cosmopolitanism implied in the term has been questioned: "The very necessity of qualifying Africans' being in the world only makes sense when we assume that, ordinarily, Africans are not of the world. I am yet to hear of Europeans terming themselves Europolitans, or Americans as Ameropolitans" (Musila, 2016, p.112; see also Eze, 2014, p.239-240). Probably the most problematic aspect of Afropolitanism is that it is closely associated with privilege, elitism, and exclusivity (Feldner, 2019, p.130; see also Eze, 2014, p.240). This is not surprising considering that Selasi's formulations of the concept focus on young and gifted Afropolitans, with their academic successes, international connections, and the freedom to pursue fancy lifestyles and professions[56]. Musila (2016, p.111) notes that "Afropolitanism seems to come with a certain glow of access, affluence and mobility in the global north, as opposed to all global mobility". Afropolitanism thus extends only to members of metropolitan societies who have acquired symbolic capital and enjoy financial freedom, while excluding a whole host of African migrant populations who lack means and agency. This exclusion is problematic because ignoring everybody not fitting the description of Afropolitanism effectively means further hiding the "powerless, underprivileged social configuration", a "minority public" whose members are "mostly black, mixed-race, migrant, exilic and often working class or lower-middle class" (Ede, 2016, p.93). Afropolitans may enjoy their international lifestyles, but most Africans do not have that privilege, hence the perspective of positionality and privileges enjoyed by Gappah may not be totally dissociated from her representation in her selected stories.

Exclusion that seems to permeate Afropolitanism, evident in the confining of focus to African transnationalism as opposed to global mobility and academic successes, tends to create limitations that have made focus on cosmopolitanism a rather preferred approach, though without totally dismissing some positive aspects of Afropolitanism. Cosmopolitanism does not involve building a physical or structural cosmopolis, it is for the people who comprise the community or multitude to come out of narrow nationalized identity and "accommodate the whole world, which is quite different from assimilating or containing it" (Schoene, 2009, p.21).

[56] As much as Gappah's profile fits her in this category, my analysis has limited the analysis of her short stories to cosmopolitanism that seems to afford more avenues of critiquing her representation of the post-2000 crisis beyond mere elitism proffered by Afropolitanism. Gappah is a Zimbabwean writer with a Law degree from Cambridge, Graz University and the University of Zimbabwe. Her debut collection, *An Elegy for Easterly*, won the *Guardian* First Book Award in 2009.

The cosmopolitan is a denizen of the world who is not merely confined by boundaries of local attachment; rather, one can see him as a member of the universe and connected to others. Cosmopolitanism celebrates openness and generosity for everyone as citizens of this world. However, Gilroy (1993, p.4) rejects it as "simply one more imperialistic particularism dressed up in seductive universal gab". One more aspect deserves our attention, which is that of the association of the cosmopolitan outlook with the elite and the urban privileged class who can travel to different countries, as proffered by Afropolitanism. This is incorrect, because, statistics indicate that only about one fourth of the total population of a state achieve that. Being cosmopolitan is not a status, it is one of the, what Pollock et al. (2002) call "infinite ways of being". They argue that there is no centre for diffusion of cosmopolitanism, rather "centers are everywhere and circumferences nowhere" (p.12). They suggest that people have always been cosmopolitan without knowing it, what Shodhganga (2012) calls alternative cosmopolitanism, a cosmopolitan consciousness rooted in the vernacular[57].

Bhabha (2017) argues that we tend to talk theoretically about diaspora and cosmopolitanism. He further claims that we tend to use these terms to refer to the ceaseless notion of movement or nomadism. Bhabha claims that, in reality that is not the way life works. He says there are very distinct forms of narrativity, choices, judgments, which evaluate certain locations creating home around certain locations. Bhabha believes that there is a continual transvaluation, or a changing which depends on decisions that one makes. In the light of Bhabha's comments, Nyota and Gappah are grappling with the exploration of the transcultural and transnational nature of the contemporary world which is at the heart of most African fiction. Murphy (2007, p.71) advises that when approaching African texts, we need to balance considerations of the global and the local and the extent to which a text is embedded in the cultural context of its production and the way it engages with globally relevant issues of culture and identity.

Nyota's story relates the painful experience of a husband who now works in the UK and fails to attend his wife's funeral when she tragically dies in a car crash. Although having a clear satirical intent, which sometimes reveals the author's lack of empathy for her unfortunate characters, Gappah's stories provide an insight into the hypocritical lives that migrants were forced into by unreasonable expectations of relatives left behind at home by those who became economic migrants in America or in the UK. The three stories suggest that, due to the harshness

[57] Appadurai, A. (1991) also takes vernacular cosmopolitanism to refer to a multi-centred world beyond Eurocentrism.

of the economic crisis at home, some individuals had not really thought through the various challenges that accompany being undocumented economic migrants or asylum seekers who could not easily travel in cases of emergency. As McGregor and Primorac (2010) argue, use of the term "asylum seeker carries labels, which are at best alienating and dehumanising" (p.12). Similarly, The Independent Asylum Commission in the UK states that the term "asylum" has been contaminated with overtones of criminality that it has chosen to reactivate the older term "sanctuary" instead.

Conversely, Bhabha (2017) proposes the use of the term "refugee" because, as he argues, if you take the concept of the refugee and see that as the central political practice, then, you really begin to understand that we need to generate these terms of global subjectivity and transnational citizen. Bhabha points out that it is not the permanence, but the impermanence of the status of the refugee that is most helpful to us. This is because the refugee condition makes the most stringent and severe demands on the national community or the "world community" to recognize the global right of hospitality which is at the heart of human survival itself. Bhabha argues that it is "survival" rather than "sovereignty" that should frame the ethical and political values that provide us with a workable concept of the good life lived with others, side by side solidarity with conditions of alterity. Bhabha sees the refugee as the model and the basis on which we should think about belonging in the diaspora. This empathy would be applicable to characters like Tinotenda in "Burying a Wife from Across the Oceans" who cannot get back home from the United Kingdom to bury his wife, or Thomas in "My Cousin-Sister Rambanai" who has lived in England for five whole years without coming home and also fails to go to Zimbabwe to bury his father.

Similarly, "Something Nice from London" while capturing the pain that the Chikwiro family experiences while waiting for the repatriation of Peter's body from London, it also satirises Lisa's failure to raise enough funds to send her cousin's body home. The story also exposes *Mai* Lisa, the family's aunt, Lisa's mother, as a fraud when she preached her daughter's economic success in England when in fact, she was just a suffering economic migrant who was now unable to raise adequate money to repatriate Peter's body to Zimbabwe. The story also highlights the strained relations between Britain and Zimbabwe during the economic crisis period by showing how the Chikwiro family unsuccessfully tries to secure a visa from the British Embassy to go and collect Peter's body. The climax of the story is when, instead of Peter's body, the family receives "an urn of dark wood" (p.99) with ashes of a cremated body, through a woman in faded green and beige livery of Air Zimbabwe.

"My Cousin-Sister Rambanai" also relates the ordeals of Rambanai who comes back home from America for the burial of her father. The story is less about the pain of losing a loved one and more about satirising Rambanani as a "been to" who is, in reality, mourning the death of her American dream (p.212) as she can no longer return to America because she overstayed her visitor's visa and got barred from ever going back to America again. The narrator mocks Rambanai because, to friends and relatives at home, she had portrayed herself as an economically affluent migrant who lacked nothing. The reality is that she lived in desperate poverty and fear of deportation as an undocumented economic migrant.

"Burying a Wife from Across the Ocean" depicts challenges associated with not having travel documents which confronted most Zimbabwean economic migrants. The protagonist, Tinotenda, decides to "follow the Great Trek" (p.139) to Britain so as "to improve his family's fortunes back home" (McGregor and Pasura, 2014, p.7) and leaves his wife behind. When he decided to follow the Great Trek to Britain, he concocted a story, in order to be granted political asylum. The narrator reveals that "the consequences of seeking political asylum status were pointed out to him; as a political refugee, he would not be allowed to come back to his home and country until there was a change of government" (p.139). For asylum seekers and other irregular migrants, "return is impossible" while the identity of "exile" is emotionally charged and can be difficult to lose (Mortensen in McGregor and Pasura, 2014, p.8). The tone of the story reflects authorial intrusion that emphasises that Tinotenda leaves for Britain despite the family members' opposition to his migration. His father's warning that he should stay at home as "money is not everything" (p.139) comes back to haunt him. When he has been in Britain for one and half years, his wife is involved in a fatal car crash and he fails to go home and and can only send money through Home Link so that they can buy the casket and the tombstone. Ironically, this happens when she had gone to sign the Deed of Transfer forms for their second house in Westgate which was bought through Tinotenda's remittances. Tragic as this death is, the real tragedy of the story lies in Tinotenda's failure to personally attend his wife's funeral and burial due to his irregular immigration status. Tinotenda only gets the funeral proceedings on the phone.

Nyota's lack of sympathy for Tinotenda drives home the moral lesson that, although the economic situation in Zimbabwe was harsh, individuals still had a choice and should have made sensible decisions. He mocks Tinotenda by elaborating his failure to come and mourn his wife. There is an observable attempt by Nyota to represent the fictionality of diaspora narrative without throwing away the realistic manifestations of crisis related diaspora deaths.

For example, authorial intrusion is seen when Nyota immerses himself in the narrative commenting in the conclusion of the story that "from that day, I vowed that I would not leave my family and country, not for all the gold in the world. My family is trying but without succeeding. We're barely surviving … I dedicate this true story to all the hungry patriots who have boldly and loudly declared that, in spite of our poverty and all the vicissitudes of life, leaving family and country, in order to earn a pound, a "USA$," or a rand is not an option" (p.140). The realistic confession and commentary by Nyota expose his lack of sympathy for his characters which permeate his narrative.

Putting migrants in a simplistic definition that brands those who left the country as unpatriotic exposes the author's unconsidered conceptualisation of the crisis vis-à-vis the diaspora and the immediate needs at the time. Commenting on the shortcomings of this kind of narrativisation to expose how readers naturalise texts using what he calls narrative schemata, Fludernik (1992) argues that "human protagonists who act and think are essential to narrative, but action sequences leading to a clear endpoint are not. The frame provided by our embodiedness makes acting and thinking crucial activities, while the frame of narrativisation allows us to impose narrative schemata even on representations of consciousness that do not lead to any change in that consciousness or to any other traditional marker of narrativity" (p.118). In this way, Fludernik moves away from a view of narrative as adequately grounded in the story/discourse distinction toward one that emphasises the importance of "experientiality and the active role of the audience in framing a text as narrative" (Phelan, 2006, p.6).

Most Zimbabweans sought asylum exits to foreign lands due to the dire economic situation in the country and the author should have had an insight into individual characters' decisions. It is apparent that, even the ganging up of the family and relatives against Tinotenda's decision to leave the country, is a well-calculated move by the author to deny him his independent decision as a professional who worked for the Phillips Company that had subsequently closed.

The use of mixed narrative style, dialogical voices through a phone call are meant to add to his satire towards all those who have left the homeland for the diaspora. The telephone conversation between Tinotenda and his young brother Simbarashe in Zimbabwe indicates the magnitude of the pain of having to bury one's beloved one in absentia. The phone conversation cannot help the situation much, but the step by step narration given by Simbarashe is an attempt to bridge the state of desperation faced by most economic migrants. Tinotenda says to Simba at the graveside:

> Tell your Maiguru kuti, "*Fambayi zvakanaka vaChirumhanzu! Tichazosangana kana Mwari vachida*![58] You know ... understand ... appreciate better than anyone else why I had to leave home and country in the way I did. I am truly sorry, dearest mother of my children. All I wanted was to work for a future that is secure for us and our children. I know you will understand me. I had no choice, had I? (p.136)

The traumatic experience surrounding the death incident is that most economic migrants had to go through the painful process of only imagining the burial of their loved ones, instead of witnessing it for themselves, which usual helps those who are grieving to get emotional and psychological closure.

For those who were asylum seekers or irregular migrants, constraints on movement and finances were severe, a scenario also observed by Mbiba (2010). However, as already pointed out, the narrator harshly condemns Tino's failure to attend his wife's funeral. He says: "But this madness of paying one's last respects to one's loved ones on the phone must stop: kuchema mukadzi pafoni? It's unheard of ... totally unacceptable" (p.140). This condemnation does not fully interrogate the crisis that led to these strange events. The authorial tone reprimands Tinotenda as if he deliberately did not want to come home and witness his wife's burial. The author seems to lack appreciation of the desperation of those who had to seek asylum status in Britain and other distant countries. Tino's life and decision to move to the diaspora can be interpreted within the perspective of Bhabha's (2017) theorisation of a movement as signifying a narrative. Bhabha observes:

> I think what is lost is the fact that there are certain times in which you make a decision, you make it for certain purposes; there are pluses and minuses. So, there is a narrative plotting, and it is not just an endless back-and-forth. Once you have got that narrative, and I think most people do, then you can move back into the nodal points. And you know why you're doing that. (Interview between Bhabha and Klaus Stierstorfer, 2017).

It is apparent that in his decision to move, Tino did not anticipate any tragedy like death that would further complicate his lack of proper travel documents. His decision was made for a certain purpose; these choices are difficult to make, and these reasons have been deliberated

[58] Shona expression meaning "Go well daughter of Chirumhanzu, we shall meet if God wills", a valediction.

upon and seen as unselfish. In this case, Tino's purpose was to give his family a comfortable economic life despite the crisis in Zimbabwe.

"Something Nice from London" also maintains an unsympathetic tone as it highlights the consequences of the death of an immigrant and its effects on relatives back in Zimbabwe. Gappah uses the narrative to mock the extended family's hold to elite connotations and view of those in the Diaspora. The delayed repatriation of the remains of Peter is a clear indication that it is difficult for Zimbabweans in Britain to repatriate bodies of loved ones. The narrator points out that, as the family waited for weeks on end, Peter's "remains congealed in the drawer of a mortuary in a foreign land" (p.80). Lisa struggles singlehandedly to raise funds and put together a plan for the repatriation of the body. Meanwhile, the family kept on making demands. Brian Chikwava, the writer of the novel *Harare North* (2009), in an interview with Primorac (2010) states that "people [in the diaspora] get tired and angry because the demands from relatives back home can be almost endless – completely ridiculous and out of proportion sometimes" (p.258).

The long wait by the family for Lisa's assistance in repatriating Peter's body is elaborately depicted as the family fails to comprehend the fundamentals of the crisis that Lisa is in a difficult situation both economically and emotionally. Lisa ends up giving them what they want to hear. The family's elitist misconceptions are based on the understanding that once one is in the UK or any of the developed nations, then one has the resources to do anything. The writer shows no empathy and her intention is not to talk of death but "a comedy of manners". Chipere (2015) explains that, in some sad cases, there were pauper burials due to unavailability of repatriation funds. Dying in a foreign land is a serious challenge faced by Zimbabweans living in various countries like Britain, America, South Africa and many others. Relatives who experience death in the family are expected to pay about 2,500 pounds in Britain, about $20,000 in USA and R25,000 in South Africa to repatriate the remains of their loved ones (Dube, 2015; Mbiba, 2010). In most cases, families fail to raise such huge sums of money resulting in them seeking for donations from friends and relatives.

The story also highlights how the argument about death and repatriation of Peter's body from Britain is predicated on African traditional customs and belief systems that inform family values. For example, the narrator speaks about the kinship bond that binds the family and informs the resolute stance that makes it a necessity for Peter's body to be brought back home

for burial. With a clear satirical intent, the narrator observes that, previously, the death of Peter's own father had taught them the following:

> Death does not sever the ties; it binds them even tighter, for it is in death and its attendant processes that kinship asserts its triumphant claims. He had been loaned to us as husband and father, but in death the clan reclaimed him. They buried him in Shurugwi, where we had to travel for hours on uncertain roads if we wanted to visit his grave. Kinship asserted itself through the funeral rites. (p.83)

The narrator does not seem to subscribe to these beliefs and funeral rites anymore and hence she mocks them. In the cosmopolitan thinking, it is glocalisation rather than globalisation which can capture the true global political and cultural scenario in the context of alternative modernites witnessed even in the way that the narrator's family handles Peter's death. Peter's family, including that of Tinotenda in "Burying the Wife from Across the Oceans" fail to transcend the local by accepting that traditions regarding death have been globalised. Gappah and Nyota show how 'glocalisation' could be one important characteristic of cosmopolitanism because 'glocal' offers the space for interconnectedness of opposite binaries, in this case regarding tradition and handling of death. The communities of the deceased fail to imagine other communities beyond their territorial borders of nation-state and open up to them. Gappah shows how families as part of the communities represented in the stories are unaware that the sense of culture, identity, thoughts and views are subject to changes when one meets others (Shodhganga, 2012).

Similarly, the narrator highlights that the relatives' expectations that Peter's body would be flown from Britain and then be driven all the way in a remote area in Shurugwi, are disconnected from Zimbabwe's extremely difficult economic realities and traditions regarding death instigated by the economic crisis and a cosmopolitan sensibility. Mbiba (2010) contends that the answer to the question of the relative desirability of rural or urban burial has not remained constant over time for different social groups, nor does there appear to be simple linear trends. The multiple crises that have affected Zimbabweans in the last decade mean that Zimbabweans still living at home as well as those abroad have also been forced to rethink this issue in new ways. Gappah attempts, therefore, to historicise the transcultural journeys between foreign countries and Zimbabwe. However, Chipere (2015) states that the emotional and cultural umbilical cord has been difficult to cut off among Africans even at death and this has

caused unprecedented traumatic experiences among families at home and away in foreign lands. He argues that Africans have a belief that a truly dignified burial is when you get buried at your rural home. For this reason, being buried in the UK is viewed as a pauper burial no matter how dignified the burial procession is.

The narrator derides the extended family's demands for Peter's body to be brought home and be buried in the rural area when they do not have the means to assist with the requisite expenses. Chipere (2015) observes that the extended family may not have the means or the money to sponsor the repatriation of the body, but their word is final, and someone somewhere has to do the action. As Lisa struggles to raise funds, she tells her relatives in Zimbabwe that "it seemed there would be at least one week, possibly two, before he [Peter's body] can come home" (p.79). In the meantime, relatives continue to arrive at the Chikwiro's Harare home in preparation for burial. What the family fails to comprehend, which becomes a subject of ridicule by Gappah, is that tradition is insensitive to the perceived financial struggle by the same migrants as Lisa. Moreover, the matter of food and feeding all the relatives who gather in anticipation of the burial becomes the family's nightmare. The narrator says:

> We cannot feed them all if they continue to pour out like this, and if we must host them for an unknown number of days. We cannot be sure how long it will take to bring Peter home. The small pile of *chema*[59] funeral donations in a bowl on the kitchen table, grubby notes laced with the sweat of many hands, is barely enough to pay for three days' supply of black-market milk and bread and sugar. (p.81)

The crisis induced hyperinflation complicates the situation even further. Lisa's impassioned speech can also be interpreted as Gappah's view regarding the bigoted perceptions of her relatives. Similarly, Nyota in "Burying a Wife from Across the Oceans" shows how the extended family expectations creep into migrants' psychology as Tinotenda feels embarrassed and guilty for not being able to attend his wife's funeral yet it is because of circumstances beyond his control. He asks, "what are the people saying about me? How are the relatives taking it? And another thing, who of her relatives are there?" (p.135). Simbarashe's response to Tinotenda's worries, "even if you were here, what could you have done to change fate?" (p.135), is refreshing as it shows that not everyone who remained at home had the same

[59] A Shona word for a token, usually money that is given to the bereaved family to assist them with the funeral expenses. The word has insinuated conotations of mourning.

mentality of wanting to punish migrants in the name of tradition even when the situation was not permitting. As McGregor and Primorac (2010) declare, "there is further evidence of the elite connotations of 'diasporan' in the tensions between those 'in the Diaspora' (particularly but not only those who are in the West) and those who stayed behind" (p.11) - what Magaisa (2006) describes as a "love/hate" relationship. These tensions build on the fantasy of the colonial motherland and other relatively wealthy diasporic destinations as sites of easy riches. Such perceptions can be reinforced despite the acute exclusion many in the diaspora have faced, through the difficulties of conveying realities of insecurity and hardship to those at home, and the shame of failing to live up to expectations.

Through "Something Nice from London", Gappah satirises the African traditional belief that the death of transnational migrants must culminate in the final physical burial despite the challenges that beset the repatriation of the body. The narrator shows how this belief is subverted by the economic crisis that triggered these migrations in the first place. At the British embassy, where they try to apply for a British visa, Jonathan says to the attendant; "one of us must go to England to bring my dead brother home" (p.94). Chipere (2015) avers that there is the communal nature of African social life where there is interconnectedness in the extended family relations which is practised from the womb to the tomb, hence African life is composed of a series of rituals from birth to death. Therefore, it is anathema for them to do this last ritual without the body. Mary highlights this point saying: "How can we have a funeral without a body to view, without people filing by to pay respects as he lies in his coffin in our living room, all the while the daughters-in-law singing him away?" (p.95). In mechanically following tradition, relatives are not concerned about the complications involved in repatriating the body. The narrator observes: "They cannot mourn him fully without seeing his body. He came from the dust and to dust he must return to be interred whole, intact" (p.80). As already pointed out, the climatic irony of the story derives from the fact that Peter's remains arrive as a "special delivery/package" (p.99) in an urn of dark wood brought by the woman from the national airline as ashes after Lisa ordered the cremation of the body.

An already discussed, failure to access requisite travel documents posed a big challenge to illegal migrants who wanted to come back home to attend funerals of their loved ones. Gappah and Nyota's characters are caught up in this dilemma. Rambanai and her older brother Thomas in "My Cousin-Sister Rambanai" are also illegal migrants. Due to lack of travel documents, only Rambani risks going to bury their father knowing very well that she would no longer be

welcome back in America. To compensate for his inability to attend his father's funeral in person, Thomas pays for a very expensive ceremony. He also buys an extremely expensive coffin. The narrator satirises this by showing that there was a distinction between "coffins" and "caskets" through a conversation between the narrator's aunt and *Vatete Mai Mazvita*, who boasts saying: "It is a *casket* Vatete[60], not a coffin. A *casket*" (p.208). The narrator says that Thomas' money enabled his father's body to be laid "in the splendour of the Paradise Peace Casket, a gleaming white coffin with golden handles and a gold frame on the surface" (p.208). The author satirises this character for being more concerned about the glamorous nature of the casket instead of people focusing on mourning and burying their dead. The narrator states: "Instead of coming, Thomas wired seven hundred and fifty pounds through Western Union from Manchester, England where he lived" (p.208).

Nyota also reflects on the funding of funeral expenses from the diaspora by Tinotenda as Simbarashe updates him over the phone that he has collected the money from Home Link[61]. He adds that, "from the scouting around that has been done … the money should be enough to buy the casket and the tombstone" (p.135). It seems in all the stories; the casket is the glamorous thing that distinguishes a migrant funded funeral from an ordinary one during the time of crisis as families show off the power of their foreign currencies. The author also highlights the irony that, while people like Thomas could not travel to Zimbabwe to bury their parents, they nevertheless made their presence felt by taking advantage of the skewed exchange rate of the Zimbabwean dollar against stronger currencies at the time to put up elaborate funeral ceremonies.

Mbiba's (2010) research in Harare revealed that while funerals and death had become a financial nightmare for many poor people, both at home and in the diaspora, there was a class that contributed to the sharp rise in flamboyant funerals that were used as a means of displaying wealth and were markers of status. Driven by "foreign currency laden diasporans" (p.146), the practice included buying elegant custom-designed coffins in shapes of cars, planes or anything fancy, elegant hearses, horse drawn hearses and expensive cars in the funeral processions that snake through city centres and growth points enroute to the cemetery, costly tombstones, lots of food and elegant funeral attire. Funerals and burials are also recorded on film with the recordings sent to members in the diaspora.

[60]A Shona expression referring to an aunt.
[61] A diaspora fund-receiving-agent enacted by the government through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

The challenge of obtaining travel documents both in the homeland and in the diaspora is closely linked with the issue of identity formation. Contradictions and bizarre juxtapositions of modern life are used to illuminate the identity crisis among migrants. The difficult choices that most migrant characters make are forced upon them by the difficult economic situation at home and their precarious migrant status in the countries of their refuge. In the story "My Cousin-Sister Rambanai", Gappah uses the protagonist as a typical character to invoke the challenge of travel documents that surrounds migrant life and identity formation. For example, upon disembarking from the aeroplane, "Rambanai broke into a loud keening that startled the cluster of white visitors waiting in line immediately in front of her to get their passports stamped" (p.210). It emerges later that "she had been in mourning not only for her father, but also for the death of her American dream" (p.212). *Sisi*[62] Dessy a housemaid, says Rambanai sounded just like someone on television as she pronounced "route" as *rout* instead of *root* [emphasis in the original] (p.207). Gappah is representing through the characterisation of Rambanai that people living in various diasporas are heterogeneous, but in spite of their cultural hybridity, all of them cannot be equally cosmopolitan. It does not depend on their being privileged or urban or even educated, but it is cosmopolitan consciousness, a consciousness of openness to difference which keeps mankind alive, as is evident in Rambanai's case. She is characterised by an exhibitionist character as she wants everyone, even in the public transport, to hear that she has been to America as she says: "The public transport is very different in the States, where I live" (p.214) and this prompts an answer from the driver who says "Ava sister lives in the States" (p.215).

Cosmopolitanism, a diasporic identity characteristic, overwhelms Rambanai, and Gappah presents her in a satiric manner, as the victim of the hybridising process of contemporary society. Gappah incorporates a critical comparison between homeland and foreign lands. Rambanai has a new identity that makes her a misfit in her own homeland, and she "no longer feels at ease" like the character Obi Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer At Ease* (1960). Rambanai's character and the way she is venerated by society, exemplifies McGregor's (2010) argument that as the formation of a diaspora implies a protracted separation from home, it can also convey ambivalence about the reality of return. In this context, Gappah, using Rambanai as the archetype, depicts the ambivalences of "the return" and its postcolonial hybridisation so that Rambanai fits into the earlier category of the "been to" migrants who had gone to Europe

[62] A word usually used in Ndebele, Shona and other indigenous languages in Zimbabwe meaning sister.

for their studies and come back changed through exhibiting elitist behaviour. Yet, she is a migrant who is a victim of the economic crisis.

In an ironic twist in the story, Rambanai ultimately confesses that she can no longer go back to the United States because she was there illegally, and they would not let her in because she overstayed her visitor's visa. To fool people about her life in Dallas, she had misrepresented information to her cousin Matilda, the narrator, by telling her that she was at university and that she had a job with an insurance broker, yet the truth is that she worked at a restaurant. Migrant life is, thus, represented as a life of putting up appearances. Rambanai is caught up in an identity crisis that makes her live a lie. Her conception of the new identity she pursues confirms Jenkins' (2004, p.19) claims that, essentially, the process of identity construction is constituted by "the internal-external dialectic, what people think about us is no less important than what we think about ourselves". Rambanai says to her cousin Matilda:

> I can't be myself here. I want a bigger world. I need to go back. But I cannot use my passport. I'll show you, it has been endorsed with the words *May not be granted leave to enter* stamped like angry welts on a face. (p.224)

This is the dilemma that generally faced many migrants as they were punished for overstaying their visits in various countries. Rambanai's sense of what Bhabha (2017) calls "homeyness" is confused, probably because of the author's pursuit of representing her as pretentious individual. Her productive work and connections in the US are just illusory; there is no concise narrative in which her existential sense of belonging has made America her home. Her being back home is what gives her the sense of what Bhabha calls the "thereness" of one's existence in the naturalised sense, a home that is always there, even more than the "hereness" of one's existence.

Rambanai eventually goes to England where she hopes to get office work, but she is aware of the limitations that come with her endorsed passport. "Leave to enter" was denied most Zimbabweans due to the crisis ridden nation that they were coming from, particularly since most European nations were not happy with the land repossession of post-2000 by the government of Zimbabwe. Most Zimbabweans had to come up with fraudulent plans of accessing identity documents. Rambanai says to her cousin-sister:

> Exactly, I can't go as me; they have records, you know. I need another passport in another name. That's what lots of people do when they have been deported, they just get new passports. (p.225)

Pasura (2011) describes such individuals without proper identity documents as "living on the margins of the law: making themselves invisible" (p.59). One of the undocumented migrants met by Pasura in Coventry confessed that she uses the identity of someone else. She said: "It means sometimes you end up using three names at a time. Otherwise, it would be hard to find work" (59).

Jimmy, Matilda's husband, works tirelessly in getting Rambanai a new birth certificate, a new ID card, and then finally a new passport. Accessing fraudulent documents is part of what Chitando et al., (2015) terms "the art of survival"[63]. Jimmy and Matilda pay a bribe that is concealed in the name of 'a parcel' in an envelope and the narrator says afterwards, "a young man came with an envelope which contained the birth certificate of Langelihle Chantal Ndhlukula, born on the date Rambanai had decided, which was two years after the year of her real birthday" (p.229). Later they had to bribe passport office officials at Mukwati Building and the police for a police clearance, and "a week later, the passport arrived, green and pristine and smelling of new opportunities" (p.231), a confirmation of the prophetic new name Langelihle which means "beautiful day".

Gappah depicts how corruption and a search for a new identity became part of diasporic pursuits through repetitive references to the "stuffed envelope" or bribes which those who got their documents in record time had to pay; Matilda and Jimmy later got their visas the same way. Rambanai got her passport as the narrator says, "we used the Harare way- someone in the

[63] In his "Foreword" to the book *The Art of Survival: Depictions of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean Crisis* (2015) Vambe says that the book is being published at a critical moment in the history of the country. The question that the book immediately foregrounds is: Are we talking of the Zimbabwean crisis or the crisis in Zimbabwe, or both? This question suggests that there is no one way to satisfactorily pinpoint the meaning of the term *crisis*. Other ancillary questions that the book provokes have to do with when it can safely be said that the crisis began. If one takes a longitudinal view to responding to this question, it is easy to think of 1890 as the genesis of the crisis, whose morbid symptoms had been felt for more than three decades when the country gained its independence in 1980. Other historians and social critics are of the opinion that the crisis that Zimbabwe intensely underwent in the early part of the 21st century was, in fact signified not only in the grudging way in which the country was forced to negotiate a political settlement in 1979, but also in the reformulations of the concept of sovereignty after the war, in which, to use Agamben's (1995) words, "confronted with excess, the system interiorizes what exceeds it through interdiction and in this way designates itself as exterior to itself" (p.18). Part I is titled "Narrating the Crisis: Fiction of Survival." It discusses fictional texts that grapple with the multiple survival strategies that Zimbabweans inside and outside the country adopted to see out the difficulties that they encountered.

British embassy with whom we exchanged envelopes stuffed with cash" (p.234). In essence, the suffering shows that Zimbabweans were victimised at home and in the hostland leading them to a precarious existence. The fate of a new identity is summed up by Matilda as she fails to locate Rambanai who is now unreachable to assist. After searching and failing she says:

> I remembered that she had changed her name and looked for her in her new identity. But there was nothing, only to be expected, I told myself, because Langelihle Chantal Ndhlukula had no history. There would be no one looking for her because she was nowhere, she was nothing. (p.232)

Gappah, through the struggles that Rambanai goes through in assuming her role of "a citizen of the world", mocks cosmopolitanism and its dictates of fractured borders and boundaries. In the postcolonial literature, to which Gappah's stories attest, transnational borders that are fluid play an important role in the lives of members of the generation represented by Gappah and other exile writers. However, throughout the story, Rambanai and other characters search for an identity that remains "unresolved, destabilising and constantly protean" (Ashcroft, 2009, p.19). Leaving one country and going to others, to be with others and in that process being others, is itself cosmopolitan, that is, to go beyond any rigid and stable identity (Shodhganga, 2012). But Rambanai and the other characters who try to find home in Europe are denied this privilege. This could be one reason why Gilroy (1993) has expressed hostility towards cosmopolitanism because of its lack of consistency and it being a source of ambiguity. He further rejects cosmopolitanism arguing that it is "simply one more imperialistic particularism dressed up in seductive universal gab" (p.4). Nassbaum (1996) observes that "becoming a citizen of the world is a lonely business. It is, in effect, a kind of exile from the comfort of local truths, from the warm nestling feelings of patriotism, from the absorbing pride in oneself and one's own… [Being a] cosmopolitan offers no such refuge" (p.15). It could be out of such concerns that Afropolitanism has been proffered as a form of African transnationalism seeking the use of black agency to define in Selasi (2005) terms, what it means to be African in the 21st century.

Gappah and Nyota, through the depiction of Peter and Maiguru's death respectively, critique the outlook of those who remained at home, particularly their myopia in conceptualising the meaning of home within the postcolonial era characterised by forced migration beyond national borders. This has resulted in theoretical debates about

transnational engagements, the making and unmaking of diasporic identities, displacement, migration and asylum in the world today. Bhabha (2017) perceives home within the concept of a narrative of relocations; a sheer iteration in that narrative could cause a breakdown that entirely changes the quality of what one feels home is. But it remains, as Bhabha describes it, a dynamic process all along. What is being articulated around the concept of home are certain needs, certain interests, certain passions and effects, which then create that life-world, that existential comfort that one associates with home. But it seems to Bhabha that we have, to use a word he very rarely uses, "essentialized" iteration, in terms like diaspora, or movement, or migration. Bhabha reads the notion where everyone seems to be migrating, as an exaggeration. Instead, to use the theoretical terms that he borrows from Bakhtin (1981), there are life worlds that are made for specific reasons, and they have many geographical and temporal locations which Bhabha believes, are both the trajectory of home, and the continual tension of home. The families in "Something Nice from London" and "Burying a Wife from Across the Oceans" failed to decipher the iterations around the concept of home brought about by the geographical and temporal locations in the light of the diaspora formulations. They think of home in terms of the geographical location only, thereby laying blame on anyone who fails to retrace their steps to the homeland, particularly in times of death, and this is what causes tensions between individuals and families in the stories discussed in this section.

The kind of English Gappah and Nyota use in their stories is also an example of Zimbabwe's vernacular culture, particularly of the Shona people. English being an imperial language, might sound 'alien', but it has been adapted alongside Shona cultural expressions to capture the essence or the spirit of the story, as well as the indigenous hybridised culture of the nation within a cosmopolitan context. The extracts of culture and beliefs by Gappah and Nyota's stories suggest alternative cosmopolitanism by emphasising the vernaculars and the dominating discourse in the crisis period. For example, "mhiri kwemakungwa" (overseas); "Hatina musha panyika" (our home is not here on earth); "vachadzokera riiniko vekuStates" (when are those from States going back?); "kuti vachadzokera vekuStates" (will those from States ever go back?); "Tambirayi mwana wenyu" (receive your child- an appeal to the ancestors to receive the one who has died); "yuwi, kani, uhuu, woye, nhai" (mournful sounds particularly when someone has died). The vernacular culture of Zimbabwe creates a kind of

"vernacular chronotope" (Mikhail Bakhtin's idiom, referred to by Pollock, 2002, p.31) which has been captured through the text, a culture of the polyglot that resembles the nation.

Conclusion

The stories in this chapter demonstrate that the notion of diaspora and the advent of transnational approaches regarding families and death can be used productively to study what Faist (2010) calls central questions of social and political change, transformation, reciprocity and solidarity within kinship networks. Transnationalism and postcolonial concepts mainly based on Bhabha's (2013) ideas were used to theorise the Zimbabwean Diaspora. The analysis provided a nuanced picture of how transnational exchanges between diaspora and home during the Zimbabwean crisis are implicated in everything, from keeping the hyperinflationary economy afloat to reshaping moral economic debates over marriage, death, gender, care, and obligation within the family. The concepts of diaspora and transnationalism served as research lenses through which one should view the aftermath of international migration and the shifting of state borders across populations (Faist, 2010, p.9).

The emerging concerns from the selected stories reveal that the impact of the post-2000 crisis on the transnational migration experiences and (re)presentations is a cause for concern. The discussion set off by showing that, as much as there are inherent challenges that were realised due to the economic collapse that induced immigration, there were some positive outcomes out of the whole situation. For example, the authors portrayed the availability of diaspora remittances that helped many families out of poverty. Livelihoods of most families who had relatives, parents or children overseas greatly improved as seen through the character Nhamo in the story "Gone with the Whirlwind" and Tariro in "Mountains of Ambition".

Observably, the challenges relating to family disintegration due to the complexities of immigration have been given a gendered outlook within the context of transnational motherhood whereby the mothers are perceived as the ideal to remain behind and look after the children while men leave in search of better economic opportunities. However, my argument revealed reservations about the withholding of women participation in diaspora exodus as driven largely by patriarchal stereotypes that fail to transcend the deleterious nature of the post-2000 crisis and the diasporic culture. The representation of women, like Tariro and

Blessing, who tackle the economic challenges head-on through migration, can be read as an assertion of a different brand of women who have refused the confining definition of womanhood. These women are represented as breadwinners, a role that historically has been a preserve of men in the patriarchal societies. Through the representation of these women, authors question the conceptualisation of gender roles within the temporal and spatial moves depicted in the selected stories.

It is evident from the discussion that, in most instances, the migration process is ridiculed by the authors as having exposed children to vulnerable conditions that lead to their emotional and physical abuse. The narratives show, through the incorporation of the child-narrators or focalisation, that sexual immorality was a consequence of spousal separation resulting in children becoming victims. Perpetrators of the abuse are not just ordinary people with whom children of migrants are left, but, at times, it is the closest relatives, such as the remaining spouse or uncle and aunt, as demonstrated in one of the stories. This literary exposition feeds into the historical discourse of what has happened to the children of migrants over the years, thereby showing the ability of fiction to historicise. There seems to be less gains than losses in so far as the lives and moral upbringing of children have been narrated.

The second section explored stories that depict the dilemma of the death of a relative in the diaspora or the challenges of failing to get back home to mourn the death of a loved one. The stories demonstrate that all the challenges and failures to travel back home due to irregular travel documents are because of the collapsed economy and political situation in Zimbabwe. Authors present, within the postcolonial theorisation by Bhabha (2013), an ambivalent picture, contradictions and bizarre juxtapositions of modern life in the wake of diaspora death which reflects the good and the bad regarding the life of migrants and those left at home. In terms of stylistic representations, death has not been given prominence. Rather, limelight is placed on prestigious diaspora gains and how they feed into glamorous funerals characterised by *caskets* not *coffins* [own emphasis], and abundant food. These stories show how the meaning of death and funerals has changed because of the diaspora. As Peter's body is cremated, hybridities and contradictions about death are put into perspective as new ways of thinking about death, and traditions surrounding mourning are proffered.

However, the authors' lack of empathy regarding the major role played by the collapsed Zimbabwean economy in the characters' seemingly irrational decisions is worrying. The attribute of what Bhabha refers to as a privileged cosmopolitan, to which Gappah fits, informs

her conceptualisation of death and the crisis compared to writers such as Nyota, Mupondi, Magosvongwe and Chiruka who write from the thick of the crisis and happenings in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Moreover, the authors are seemingly not privy to an understanding of what Bhabha (2013) calls cultural "misfits". He points out that culture is often, in its most interesting manifestations, in a state of the "misfit"; to fit the different bits or parts of a particular cultural apparatus or experience together always creates a problem because the parts do not necessarily form a whole. Therefore, the most interesting and most important ethical and political problems have emerged precisely because cultures are not a seamless whole. There are discordant elements; there are divisive elements; and there are divergent elements. For example, the Chikwiro family fails to accept the discordant elements of culture and, instead, they want Peter's body in its physical state, not cremated, so that they can perform all their cultural rituals that befit burial "at the land of his ancestors" (p.82). Gappah critiques the Chikwiro family for its lack of understanding of what Bhabha (2013) calls "cultural translation". That culture is a translational reality and, to that extent, depends upon its moving parts, its often contradictory, asymmetrical moving parts, and its tensile strength.

The chapter explored how the diaspora effect shaped families in the homeland and the host lands. However, for those that remained in the homeland, the physical and psychological challenges cause a lot of problems. Using mainly Giorgio Agamben's (1995) concept of "*the People* versus *people*", the next chapter examines stories in which writers show more empathy to the victims of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown while also satirising its effects. The selected stories mainly show Zimbabweans who remained in the country during the crisis and how they adopted various methods to deal with their economic challenges. Suffice to say that the stage of the crisis described in the next chapter is explored in terms of its psychological impact on respective characters and their families.

Chapter 6

The *People* versus *people* in the post-2000 Zimbabwean Short Stories

Introduction

The previous chapter explored how selected Zimbabwean writers are mainly preoccupied with showing the effects of the Zimbabwean economic crisis, often in a manner that lacks empathy, for those who decided to migrate. On the one hand, authors selected for this chapter empathetically depict the devastating physical and psychological effects of the crisis on ordinary people who could not become economic migrants. On the other hand, these writers also portray the political elite not only as the primary authors and drivers of the crisis, but also as generally insensitive to the people's plight since they were economically benefiting from the resultant chaos. Some episodes in the narratives discussed in this chapter are absurd, almost depicting what those not familiar with the chronotope of the township and related chronotopes of poverty and class fictionalised through the Zimbabwean short story may think are exaggerations. This invokes a certain level of interpretation as pointed out by Brian Chikwava in an interview with Primorac (2010). He says that "the best way [for a writer] is not to go head to head with [what one is critiquing] but make [one's work] a little bit absurd, and suddenly you have a much more interesting thing- a lot more effective [story]" (p.258). The satire evident in the selected stories is therefore read in the context of the Rabelaisian laughter described by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1984) as the use of language by the authors is explored through Bakhtin's argument that "language is perculiar to generations" and therefore "cannot be separated from context" (1981, p.xix).

Christopher Mlalazi in "Eeish!", "Election Day" and "The Bulldozers are Coming" from the anthology *Dancing with Life: Tales from the Township* (2008), NoViolet Bulawayo in "Hitting Budapest" (2010) published in the *2011 Caine Prize for African Writing* and Farayi Mungoshi in "The Tower light, weed and becoming..." from *Behind the Wall Everywhere* (2016), among others, represent how township dwellers suffered the debilitating consequences of the crisis. The stories show underprivileged families that are victims of a politically induced Zimbabwean crisis that compromises every aspect of their lives. Some of the selected stories lend themselves to being analysed through the notion of subaltern popularised by Spivak (1988) in her seminal

essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”. In Spivak’s use of this term, which she borrows from Antonio Gramsci, it refers to the unrepresented group of people in society, the oppressed subjects or more generally those “of inferior rank” or the “lowest strata of the impoverished as belonging, *ideally speaking*, to the category of “people” or “subaltern classes” (p.26). These stories also demonstrate the relevance of Giorgio Agamben’s (1995) concept of “the *People* versus *people*” in understanding how postcolonial governments, such as that of Zimbabwe, consciously orchestrated a system that perpetuated sharp economic divisions between the elite and ordinary people. These divisions became even more pronounced because of the total economic collapse that affected the country in the first decade of the 21st Century. More recently, Butler (2009) has coined the concept of precarity, which has already been mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4, as designating a politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support more than others. The populations depicted in the stories are examined through this concept of precarity. The selected short story writers have also deployed themes as stylistic technique of the short story to deal with the problems and day to day happenings of the ordinary people. This technique has also been used in the exploration of the tensions of class and wealth in the turn of the century and crisis escalation.

(Re)imagining Survival: Marginality and Compassion in the Crisis Era

Bulawayo’s “Hitting Buddapest”, “Eeish!” by Mlalazi and “The Tower light, weed & becoming...” by Mungoshi, depict the young and the old, who are poor, hungry and are suffering other difficulties because of the economic crisis. They reflect more desperation among these categories of people than they did those who were affluent. The unpredictability of the post-2000 Zimbabwe lifestyle created precarious conditions for poor communities in the country. As a result, most people lead dangerous and precarious lives. The selected stories indicate that the precarious nature of life in subaltern communities leads to exposure to physical, psychological and economic dangers.

The selected authors largely demonstrate a deep sense of compassion towards their characters who represent the excluded ordinary people of Zimbabwe. Hannah Arendt (1963) notes that “the very definition of the word [people] was born out of compassion and the term became the equivalent for misfortune and unhappiness” (p.70). I contend, in the light of what Bakhtin

(1981) argues, that understanding of context is essential in interpreting the author's intentions. It is, therefore, apparent that it would be strenuous for one to comprehend the compassionate voice of the author without some level of appreciation of the context of the work under review.

Bulawayo's "Hitting Budapest" portrays what Agamben (2000) calls "the poor, the underprivileged, and the excluded *people*" (p.28), in other terms, these are the people who live on the margins of society. Bulawayo has deployed setting as a short story technique in her story which resonates with a plethora of spaces in Zimbabwe, Europe and America along with international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank. The families of the 'troop' of children who live in Paradise, what Ndlovu (2015, p.4) calls "an ironically named imaginary squatter settlement" are contrasted with the affluent dwellers of Budapest whose houses the starving children raid for guavas since their owners seem not to eat them at all. To the impoverished children, Budapest is the Biblical paradise characterised by serenity and abundance of food and fruit. About Budapest, the narrator says:

> This place is not like Paradise, it's like being in a different country altogether. A nice country where people who are not like us live. But then you don't see anything to show there are real people living here; even the air itself is empty: no delicious food cooking, no odors, no sounds. Just nothing. (p.4)

The child narrator experiences Budapest in ambivalent terms of attraction and revulsion. Evoking Agamben's notion of the People, the young narrator says Budapest is like a nice country where a different breed of people live. The narrator alludes to Budapest as a different country. Indeed, it is different and has different people because people in "Budapest" are not starving. This suggests that although this affluent life is desirable to these children who live in a squatter camp which is literally a walking distance from Budapest, the latter is also unreachable to them except if they access it as unwelcome and unnoticed intruders who steal guavas. The narrator notes:

> Budapest is big, big houses with satellite dishes on the roofs and neat gravelled yards or trimmed lawns, and the tall fences and the Durawalls and the flowers and the big trees heavy with fruit that's waiting for us since nobody around here seems to know what to do with it. It's the fruit that gives us courage, otherwise we wouldn't dare be here. I keep expecting the clean streets to speak and tell us to go back where we came from. (p.4)

While the narrator desires the seeming abundance of material things that characterise life in Budapest, she is also repelled by its lack of chaotic vibrancy which marks life in poor communities such as Paradise. The orderliness and cleanness of Budapest is impressive but uninviting to the impressionable narrator and her friends. Bulawayo alludes directly to the IMF in her story on financial exploitation. Through allusion as a short story technique, Bulawayo participates in a landscape in which few People actually access that which others only dream of (Majid, 2001, p. 12). But the story does not explain economic inequality as much as it enumerates the ways in which this inequality is maintained through refusals to solve global challenges that have otherwise also exercebated the Zimbabwe crisis. Thus, Edwin (2016) has described such a narrative approach as arresting the fluid flow of capital, labour, ideas and images to instantiate directly the failure of international agencies.

These children living in Paradise are, in Agamben's (2000) terms, the "inferior class" (*people*) who view themselves as not worthy to live among "the rich and the aristocracy" (*People*), living in Budapest (p.29). The use of the child narrators in "Hitting Budapest" intensifies the critical examination of post-2000 life challenges and draws a powerful response from the readers. The story addresses and satirises concerns relating to failure to put safety nets or measures to protect children from an adult corrupted Zimbabwe. For example, the age groups of the children, ranging from 9 years to 11 years, reveal their vulnerability. Seraphinoff (2007) argues that child-narrated stories achieve seriousness, saying:

> Discerning readers will understand that [the child narrator] is a figure of literary intervention; that his [or her] narration is the literary product of the adult researcher, organiser and arranger of the story. (p.3)

Bulawayo's story suggests that during periods of crisis, children are more vulnerable to abuse. Chipo, at 11 years of age, is impregnated by her grandfather, the very person who is supposed to protect her, while her mother is engaged in some cross-border trading to try and raise money for the family's essential needs. Chipo's grandfather, although reeling from material poverty, occupies the position of the *People* in relation to protection from harm that he should be providing to his granddaughter. Unfortunately, because of the dysfunctional nature of the country's justice system, Chipo's grandfather is never prosecuted for his crime.

In addition, the names of the children in the story: Darling, Bastard, Chipo, Godknows, Sbho, Stina and Fraction, represent the dialogical imagination between what Bakhtin (1981) calls

subjectivity of characters as he argues that "the subjectivity of the individual becomes an object of experimentation and representation, and first of all on the humorous familiarising plane" (p.37). Bulawayo's story is sustained by the subjectivity of the individual child characters objectified in order to experiment with and represent the different lifestyles in the neighbourhood during the Zimbabwean crisis. This subjectivity is also encapsulated in the names of the characters all of which are predicated on satire and humour.

Bulawayo juxtaposes the desperation that leads to the tempering with the body of a woman who has hanged herself by using Darling the narrator and her friends to intensify their despair. Both the state of the dead woman and that of the children emphasise the country's devastating economic and social problems. The thinness of the woman's body indicates not only malnourishment that results from hunger, but also HIV and AIDS which is one of the diseases which Bulawayo's story shows is a direct consequence of families being separated because of economic hardships. Malnutrition increased the speed with which HIV developed into AIDS and Bulawayo's description of the dire Zimbabwean situation is consistent with the post-2000 crisis. The climax of the encounter with the dead body is when these children steal its shoes to buy a loaf of bread. The de facto leader of this gang, Bastard, says: "Look, did you notice that woman's shoes were almost new? If we get them, then we can sell them and buy a loaf, or maybe even one and a half" (p.18). Darling describes the chilling event of robbing the dead body, through a memorable repetition of the continuous present tense which imbues the incident with nerve-wrecking effect where poverty and its attendant problems assault the physical and psychological well-being of many of Africa's children (Ndlovu, 2015: 4). Bulawayo graphically presents the dire post-2000 Zimbabwean situation and vulnerability of the *people* so that readers can judge for themselves the morality of the children's actions in the context of the economic crisis.

The death depiction in Bulawayo's story can be understood through the the notion of the grotesque which intersects with the eating series, the defecation series, and the anatomical series. The entire situation is a wicked parody on the conception of life and death in the crisis period. It is also a form of escapism inflicted on the lowly placed in society. In this death, there is a tight matrix of death with laughter, with food, as the urchins do not know whether to celebrate the liberating discovery of the shoes to be sold, or respect the dead, and mourn the departed whom they do not know. This ambivalence adds to the parody of the crisis. Coming at the end of the story and coupled with suspense, Bulawayo's story, then, more pointedly

reiterates, through the episode of the woman found hanging from a tree, the children's need for satisfying their hunger.

"Hitting Budapest" is characterised by a purely Rabelaisian logic, which is constructed to expose the predicament of the poor. In the stories, the grotesque fantasy is combined with the precision of anatomical and physiological analysis. The process of digestion, vomit and squatter camp life in "Paradise", and the hunt for guavas are united in one dynamic of the grotesque image in the narrative. A new and unexpected matrix of objects and phenomena is created in the logic of what Bakhtin (1981) describes as the realistic folklore fantasy typical of grotesque Rabelaisian logic. In the story, the bodily images seen through the constant reference to Chipo's stomach (in describing her pregnancy) and Godknows's buttocks "exposed like strange eyes through the dirty fabric" (p.13), among other images, as is usual with Rabelais, intersect with the reference to difficulties when it comes to defecating after the children have stuffed themselves with guavas.

References to defecation occupy sizeable space in "Bulawayo's story. For example, the narrator refers to Zimbabwe as "kaka country", "kaka school", "kaka place"[64] and when the children's stomachs are full of guavas they stop and defecate in the bush as these children struggle with constipation with guava seeds hurting their anuses. Sadly, there is also an indication that there are no toilets in Paradise and residents have to relive themselves in the bushes even at night exposing themselves to snake bites. Bakhtin (1981) presents that, within Rabelaisian-Pentagrualian chronotope, the defecation series creates the most unexpected matrices of objects, phenomena and ideas, which are destructive of hierarchy and materialise the picture of the world and of life. Bulawayo's unique style of representing the crisis, satirising it in the Rabelaisian ideology, to reduce or bring down the lofty that has resulted in the suffering of the ordinary vulnerable people, is evident in the depiction of the children.

At the same time, the profanities that characterise the whole story are, in Rabelaisian philosophy, a way in which Bulawayo creates a community of the marginalised people who have lost respect for the system that is meant to take care of them. Bakhtin (1984) argues: "Abuses, curses, profanities, and improprieties are the unofficial elements of speech. They were and are still conceived as a breach of the established norms of verbal address; they refuse

[64] *Kaka* is a Ndebele word for *faeces.*

to conform to conventions, to etiquette, civility, respectability" (p.187). These elements of freedom, if present in adequate numbers and with a precise intention, as we witness in the speech of the child characters, exercise a strong influence on the entire contents of speech, transferring it to another sphere beyond the limits of conventional language. As Bakhtin further adds, "such speech forms, liberated from norms, hierarchies, and prohibitions of established idiom, become themselves a peculiar argot and create a special collective, a group of people initiated in familiar intercourse, who are frank and free in expressing themselves verbally. They form what Bakhtin calls "a carnivalesque crowd"' (p.188).

These classifications of society on poverty strata and continuum were widened by the post-2000 Zimbabwean economic and political crisis. Mungoshi's "The Tower-light, Weed and Becoming..." also depicts poverty in Chitungwiza's township of Zengeza. Notably, even within the seemingly poor township dwellers, the story shows that there are subclasses as suggested by the fact that "the C.A section of Zengeza has smaller houses than those in the nearby Rufaro township" (p.97). Similarly, Mlalazi in, "Eeish!" describes "crowded rows of matchbox size houses" (p.31). By depicting these townships, Mungoshi and Mlalazi are operating within what Bakhtin (1981) describes as the changing boundaries between fiction and nonfiction. He argues: "[A]fter all the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, between literature and nonliterature and so forth are not laid up in heaven. Every specific situation is historical" (p.33). These stories, therefore, indicate that the already compromised lifestyles of the mentioned townships, as microcosms of the macrocosm characterising most townships during the crisis, are worsened by the economic meltdown that gripped Zimbabwe after the year 2000.

Moreover, "The Tower-light, Weed and Becoming..." explores the marginal lifestyle of the poor against the backdrop of dysfunctional state enterprises or parastatals. For example, critical service providers such as the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) and Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), no longer deliver services to the people. Using the narrative technique of contrast, for example, to refer to ZESA, Muda explains that in Chitungwiza, tower lights used to be switched off at six in the morning and switched on again at the same time in the evening, but "these days the lights burn throughout the day and night" (p.89). This is a clear indicator of wastage of scarce resources and a sign of municipal inefficiency. About the provision of water and sewer services, the narrator observes: "Muda prefers not to think about the bursting sewer pipes down the street from his house- *his parents' house*. He'd once suggested that they dig a borehole for fresh water at the back of the house"

(p.90). The narrative indicates that the township can go for a week without water and families have been forced to buy water tanks. Sewer bursts are no longer attended to leading to frequent outbreaks of cholera cases.

From the foregoing allusion to ZESA and ZINWA, Mungoshi uses his story, through exploitation of the technique of the focaliser, to show how lack of proper public services, such as a proper sewer system and water reticulation, affects the health delivery system during the crisis period, resulting in cholera outbreaks. According to Nyandoro (2011), "the outbreak of cholera epidemic, of pandemic proportions, has revealed enormous health problems, deep-seated historical roots in the country's economic meltdown, hardly divorced from a government in a state of economic flux" (p.154). Nyandoro further argues that "due to extraordinarily high inflation levels (hovering above 150 000 per cent in January 2008 and estimated at 231 million per cent in the same month – the highest in the world, and a near-total breakdown of the governance infrastructure, the state, through its major water supply utility (ZINWA), could no longer afford to import essential water treatment chemicals" (p.164). Deaths from cholera in the capital, Harare, notes Nyandoro, steadily increased throughout November and December 2008, and caused international alarm. In Budiriro alone, as of 28 February 2008, 196 cholera deaths and 8 154 cases – nearly one-tenth of all cholera cases in Zimbabwe – had been reported. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2018) as of 3 October 2018, 8 535 cumulative cases, including 163 laboratory-confirmed cases, and 50 deaths were reported (p.161). Judging by the statistics provided by the WHO, Nyandoro reveals that Zimbabwe's cholera epidemic escalated until April 2009. More than 35 000 people were believed to be infected and the recorded cholera death toll topped 1700 as new cases reached 1080 by early January 2009. Sadly, cases of cholera outbreak have persisted into 2019 due to continued sewer-pipe bursts (Ndlovu and Matenda, 2019).

"The Tower-light, Weed and Becoming..." also indicates how extreme hunger and poverty clashes with the Christian moral values of honesty and trustworthiness. Ras Van, the son of a pastor, stops attending church after his father is caught stealing a chicken from a supermarket. This had earned Ras Van the name Pastor Chicken. After his father's death, Ras Van leaves the church altogether saying: "I didn't understand how God could let such a thing happen to one of his own" (p.126). Ras Van adds: "Father was wrong in stealing that chicken, but we'd gone two nights without food. What was he supposed to do? He died for trying to feed me. Who was to blame him for that?" (p.126). Ramey (2007) argues that "[r]eligion should not be isolated from other aspects of human experience, such as social forces, economic concerns,

and legal impositions that impact the formation of particular definitions" (p.7). Ras Van raises the question on whether it is a crime for the poor to have access to basic needs, such as food, during moments of economic crisis. Mungoshi does not seem to have fully developed or proffered answers to Ras Van's pleadings, rather choosing to leave them as rhetoric questions. The seriousness of the suffering at material bodily level referred to by Bakhtin and represented by Ras Van's father who can hardly feed or fend for his family. Mungoshi largely presents Ras Van's father in pitiable terms, deprived of tangible plans to transform his fate and that of his family in the wake of an overwhelming crisis.

Hunger and starvation permeate the township life. For example, "Hitting Budapest" highlights the precarious survival tactics of the famished children using the recurrent imagery of guavas which become the children's staple food leading to painful constipation. The narrator says, "there are guavas to steal in Budapest, and right now I'd rather die for guavas. We didn't eat this morning and my stomach feels like somebody just took a shovel and dug everything out" (p.1). The graphic imagery of one's innards being dug out with a shovel captures the dire state of these children. The "thick guava", "sweet guava", "bull guava", "brand-new guava" is all that makes up their meal. The narrator says:

> We just eat a lot of guavas because it's the only way to kill our hunger, and when it comes to defecating, we get in so much pain it becomes an almost impossible task, like you are trying to give birth to a country. (p.16)

This use of hyperbolic but traumatic imagery foregrounds the extreme difficulties of life in post-2000 Zimbabwe and the hardships faced by the *people*, that is, the socio-economically and politically excluded township dwellers. Clearly, as per Butler's (2009) articulation "the social conditions of persistence and flourishing" (p.20) of life were not possible during the Zimbabwean crisis period. Marvelling at a young woman whom they see throwing away cookies that she has barely eaten, the narrator states: "We have never ever seen anyone throw food away, even if it's a thing" (p.7). The innocent child narrator candidly admits that their stealing is simply meant to satisfy their basic need for food. She says:

> We have stolen from so many houses I cannot even count. It was Bastard who decided that we pick a street and stay on it until we have gone through all the houses. Then we go to the next street. This is so we don't confuse where we have been with where we are going. It's like a pattern, and Bastard says this way we can be better thieves. (p.5)

The children's petty criminality is implicitly compared to the real criminality of the political elite who have plunged the whole country into a state of economic and political malaise. Bulawayo's story highlights that the already precarious life of the poor was worsened by Zimbabwe's economic crisis.

Children's apparently organised petty theft, as they scrounge for food, is a direct attack on the government of Zimbabwe that has abdicated its social responsibility in taking care of the *people*, the underprivileged or subaltern. Later in the narrative, Bastard says: "when we grow up, we'll stop stealing guavas and move on to bigger things inside the houses" (p.10). The narrator is not worried about waiting for that period as she looks forward to joining her Aunt Fostalina in America where she will be eating real food and doing better things than stealing guavas (p.10). It emerges from the stories that these children become thieves because the *People*, that is, the ruling elite, have relinquished their leadership roles and are simply focused on personal accumulation of material things.

Still about theft as a survival strategy to beat hunger, the youthful narrator in the story "Eeish!" indicates how adults also engage in thievery to address hunger. Ndla graphically describes how his father's trousers was so shredded as he tucked *amacimbi*[65] into his crotch because all the pockets of his trousers were torn. His father does this in order "to economise on the food budget" (p.24). This shows the extent of people's desperation during the height of the country's crisis. Reference to thievery in Bulawayo and Mlalazi's stories can be understood in the context of Bakhtin's (1981) argument that the realm of literature and context enable us to interpret the author's intent. Hunger is the context that is exploited by these authors, and there is a dialogical relationship between hunger, poverty and the crisis, within the semantic sphere that is purely chronotopic.

The psychological impact of the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis led to some people adopting various coping strategies. For example, the Old Man in "The Tower light, weed and becoming..." made the stoic decision:

> to empty himself of himself. He often spoke of it. Somehow, he must have managed to find a way around it and into it- to empty self of self, to enter that zone of nothingness- to think nothing and now he was somehow lost in the maze of nothingness trying to look for a way out but being unable to find it. (p.91)

[65] A Ndebele word for Mopani worms.

The Old Man is forced by his economic desperation to enter what Agamben (2000) calls the zone of non-being. This zone of non-being forebodes a state of madness. Commenting on this form of madness in the Rabelian context, Bakhtin (1984) argues that the "theme of madness is inherent to all grotesque forms, because madness makes men look at the world with different eyes, not dimmed by 'normal,' that is by commonplace ideas and judgments" (p.39). In folk grotesque, madness is a gay parody of official reason, of the narrow seriousness of official "truth." It is a "festive" madness. The overwhelming magnitude of the crisis means that people no longer refer to it directly. This mystification of the crisis is seen in the use of "it" in the above quotation. The state of helplessness that Mungoshi describes as having befallen the Old Man is typical of the dilemma that most Zimbabweans experienced.

While the Old Man is forced to enter a state of non-being to escape his unavoidable challenges, the young generation resorts to smoking "the weed", also called "The Mozambican plant" or "the herb". Muda, Ras Van and Nugget are friends who spend most of their time smoking marijuana to forget the cataclysmic crisis that is characterised by poor service delivery, lack of jobs and uncertainty of existence. Nugget falls into serious hopelessness that he climbs up the tower light and threatens to jump from it in a suicidal act. Nugget's desperation is like that which leads the young woman in Bulawayo's story to commit suicide. The narrator says Nugget had once told Muda that he did not blame his mother for migrating to the UK:

> I don't blame her for not coming back either. Look around you, okay let us say she comes back or let's take your wife for example, she comes back today and the first thing she does is make love to you, tomorrow she does the same and then after a while when the buzz fizzles out, she goes to look for a job instead of being enrolled they tell her we have just retrenched sorry. Then what? Sit down and pray to God for Manna? (p.119)

Nugget's exposition shows that the futility of life drives people into suicidal thoughts as they fail to make ends meet. The compassionate approach adopted by Mungoshi towards his characters provides an insight into how the underprivileged communities are psychologically affected by the socio-economic downturn.

Similarly, the narrator in "Eeish!" is tormented by hunger. He says: "I was lying on my blankets on the floor, studying the ceiling in the empty stomach that was threatening to lunge and devour the roof beams" (p.23). In addition, he says to MaNyoni regarding the stove that was not functioning, "Even if it was working, what would you have done about it- cook air?" (p.22). This is a Zimbabwe, to appropriate Butler's words, which has become a "crumbling welfare

state" where "social safety nets have been torn asunder or denied the chance to emerge" (Butler, 2009, p.32). In a pathetic description, Ndla explains how he scrounges for food because his stepmother has hidden it under the bed. He says:

> The smell had led me under the bed. I had been very hungry; I had only eaten sugarless morning porridge for the past two days. I had discovered his [narrator's father] plate under the bed. I had taken it and gobbled down all the food on it. (p.34)

Jostling for scarce food lands the narrator in trouble as his father, in a fit of rage, curses and calls him a dog, a reference that invokes a debased character, for having eaten his father's food. Notably, the narrator's full name is Ndlala, which means hunger in Ndebele and he says that he is "always so hungry" (p.29). Mlalazi's story shows the regrettable situation where family members turned against each other due to food scarcity.

Poverty and Exclusion as Political Categories

Christopher Mlalazi's "The Bulldozers are Coming" and "Election Day" and Mungoshi's "Behind the Wall, Everywhere" show that "poverty and exclusion are not only economic and social concepts, but also eminently political categories" (Agamben, 2000, p.32). The exclusion of the people in the spectacularly economically collapsed Zimbabwe is not simply an economic outcome but it is an inherently political process and the stories selected for examination in this section demonstrate this. These stories further exemplify Agamben's argument that "the concept of people always already contains within itself the fundamental biopolitical fracture" (p.32).

Mlalazi's "The Bulldozers Are Coming" critiques Zimbabwe's political crisis and economic collapse, certain spaces and citizens, particularly those in the margins, how they were systematically criminalised and impoverished. The story recasts the economically and socially devastating event code-named "Operation Murambatsvina/ Restore Order"[66]. This operation

[66] In May 2005 the Government of Zombabwe launched a clean-up operation of its cities known as "Murambatsvina." It was described as a programme to enforce bylaws to stop all forms of alleged "illegal activities in areas such as vending, illegal structures, illegal cultivation" among others in its cities. Concerned by the adverse impact of the Operation on the lives of the urban poor, the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed a Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues to assess the situation and present recommendations on how the conditions of those affected may be addressed. This report provides the findings and recommendations of the Special Envoy for her mission undertaken between 26 June and 8 July 2005, in

which largely targeted the "underprivileged and excluded" (Agamben, 2000, p. 28) was purportedly meant to "clean up" the cities of illegal structures and "illicit" activities in the townships (Sachikonye, 2011, p.26). However, if one can appropriate Holzmann and Jorgensen's (2001) observation, it can be argued that the state abdicated its social protection when it unleashed terror on the already vulnerable population. In this regard, Mlalazi depicts an initiative that "induced unprecedented scales of poverty, homelessness and extreme vulnerability, particularly in terms of food security and health" (Hammar, 2007, p.212) to already vulnerable populations by a state that was meant protect them.

Mlalazi's story can be read as interrogating the failure by the Zimbabwe government to protect the vulnerable and poor *people* in disadvantaged communities. The underlying fact is that the trail of destruction left by the bulldozers increased the vulnerability of the communities which were already weighed down by the deteriorating economy, thereby exposing them to more suffering and compromised social protection. The connection that the story makes between poverty, womanhood and political manipulation makes it a complex and powerful critique of social, economic and political processes in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Commenting on social protection within the framework of social risk management, Holzmann and Jorgensen (2001) argue that social protection is a means to better manage risks and to provide support to the critically poor. Basically, three institutions are used to take care of risks: the market, the family and the state. This seems to match Agamben's theorisation about the fractured nature of the notion of people in that it already contains the polarisation of society inherent in the dichotomy of the *People* and *people.*

The two female characters in "The Bulldozers are Coming", the old woman and the nameless woman, represent the urban poor construed as the *people* of the excluded communities, with limited opportunities to space and opportunities in the urban area. In the eyes of the authorities, these women are the embodiment of the outsider, one of the "less desirable forms of life", needing to be removed (Hammar, 2007, p.215). The narrator says that the old woman was pecking on the wall of her shack with a little hammer, to save some material from being destroyed by the bulldozers. Madsen (2004) argues that the threat of eviction for urban dwellers is not only a question of shelter or a question of rights or violation of rights, but it is also a

Zimbabwe. This was a "crash" operation known as "Operation Murambatsvina", referred to in the report as Operation Restore Order (p.7). It started in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, and rapidly evolved into a nationwide demolition and eviction campaign carried out by the police and the army. Popularly referred to as "Operation Tsunami" because of its speed and ferocity, it resulted in the destruction of homes, business premises and vending sites (UN Report, 2005, p.7).

question of economic and social survival. One can also add that it was also a deeply political strategy which the government adopted for its political survival. This is reflective of Agamben's argument of a biopolitical fracture in what appears to be simply a social or economic imperative.

The seeming callousness of the authorities against the poor, as symbolised by the old woman and her tenant who flees her lodgings on the day, she hears that the demolishers are coming to their area, suggests a political imperative masked behind a medico-hygienic narrative of the urban clean-up operation. The political imperative of the operation, which unleashed a humanitarian crisis by destroying homes, assets and means of livelihood of hundreds of thousands of already vulnerable women, men and children at a time when the economy was already struggling, explains why it was seemingly unstoppable. According to the report of the UN special envoy, Anna Tibaijuka, an estimated 700,000 people across the country lost either their homes, their sources of livelihood, or both; and a further 2,4 million people were indirectly affected (UN, 2005).

Clearly then, Mlalazi's story indicts the government by appealing for compassion for the *people* through its emotional representation of the brutality unleashed by government officials on the underprivileged citizens. The narrative shows that the demolitions were heartlessly rolled out to destroy the little survival means of the poor people. Mlalazi's vivid descriptions foreground the intensity of the people's problems, so that when the bulldozers finally come, the reader's compassion for the residents rises in direct proportion to the intensity of their crisis. This is further shown in the first-person narrative voice of the nameless woman as she contemplates the destructive nature of the demolitions:

> If I pull the bed outside, the thought came to her, we will be able to sleep on it tonight behind the main house. If it then came when they were fast asleep, it would not run over them, as it would if they stayed in the room. (p.69)

This act of naming of "objects on which violence leaves its mark" (Mehta and Chatterji, 2001, p.210) is a way "to apprehend in the present that which might otherwise remain invisible, but which *must* be witnessed and remembered" (Hammar, 2007; emphasis in the original). The old woman and the nameless woman's experiences reveal "painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's undeserved misfortune", thereby drawing the reader's compassion (Nussbaum, 2001, p.301). Commenting on the Zimbabwean government's brutality, the UN (2005) reported that the operation was conducted indiscriminately, with

indifference to human suffering such that its impact would require substantial investment and assistance over many years to reverse the suffering. Indeed, as Mlalazi's story shows, when the demolitions came, no questions were asked and the safety of the vulnerable and poor in the townships was not guaranteed.

The depiction of the nameless character and the other underprivileged characters in Mlalazi's narrative evokes Dunn's (1984) argument when he says:

> Good governance is to be interpreted not in terms of the intentions of the rulers, which tend (at least professedly) to be excellent in most societies at most times, but rather in terms of the consequences of their rule for those whom they rule. (p.161)

Mlalazi depicts characters who are violated by the callousness and carelessness of their rulers. The condition of the *people* as "excluded citizenry" (Agamben, 2000, p.28) indicates that, when economic freedom is destroyed, political freedom also disappears. The failure to achieve economic development and the lack of respect for basic human rights and the sacredness of life in the dictatorship that Mlalazi depicts through the demolitions of people's homes and their means of livelihood, are at the heart of the crisis of lack of political accountability, and they are the subject of the author's "political rallying cry" (Shapard, 2012, p.49).

In terms of the civilian nationalist regime that is in power at the time of the demolitions, Mlalazi shows that when everything has been analysed, as far as their outcomes are concerned, the governments "can readily be assessed in terms of their substantive achievements in office, and the precise nature of their constraints on goal-attainment" (Decalo, 1990, p.15). Mlalazi's narrative illustrates that legitimacy of most African governments, whatever their ideological complexion, is undermined by their economic failings and their heavily tainted human rights record (Chabal, 1986, p.12). Read this way, Mlalazi's story implies that, in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, the wait for democracy that leads to freedom from poverty and political oppression is going to be a long one.

Mlalazi's representations of the lifestyle of characters also testify to Agamben's notion of "a polar concept that indicates a double movement and a complex relation between two extremes- the *people* and the *People*" (Agamben, 2000, p.30). The writer uses contrast to show how the poor (*people* who are excluded from the mainstream of life) also wished for a better life in the

wake of a crisis instigated by the *People* (well-to-do individuals) whom they hoped would offer them protection. Concerning the nameless woman, the narrator says:

> How she wished they were like the families of the ones who had given the order for the demolitions- sitting in their big luxurious houses, eating warm suppers, and watching television, no fear in their hearts. And laughing as the news showed the poor furniture that the operation was flushing out. (p.70)

The angry tone of the quotation exposes the heartlessness of those with power and the bitterness of the victims of the government's violence. It is sad that it is the government that violates people's rights although it has the responsibility of protecting all its citizens despite their class or other social distinctions.

Mlalazi's story portrays the retributive nature of the demolitions by showing that they were carried out with a political agenda of disenfranchising the urban poor whom the government accused of supporting the main opposition party, thereby showing a close link between fiction and history. Several political commentators have argued that the ruling ZANU-PF sought to weaken the MDC and punish its urban supporters through these demolitions. According to the UN Report (2005, p.20), one of the motivations behind the Operation Restore Order, held forty-eight days after the general election in March 2005, "was an act of retribution against areas known by the Government to have voted for the opposition during the last few presidential and parliamentary elections". Bratton and Masunungure (2006) quote an urban office worker who complained that, "first Mugabe took the land, then our jobs, now our food. He wants to kill us. People say Mugabe is punishing us because we voted for MDC" (p.3). Elaborating on this sentiment, MDC spokesman accused the government of trying to provoke violent reactions from city residents [purported to be MDC supporters], in order to justify rule by decree under a state of emergency. Bratton and Masunungure, however, state in conclusion that, while they cannot verify that the MDC supporters were the only targets for Operation Murambatsvina, they have demonstrated that the crackdown's main political consequences were to embolden the victims of repression and to deepen the polarisation between political parties. Also, "while the opposition received a boost in popularity from the crackdown, the MDC split apart over electoral strategy almost immediately thereafter" (2006, p.16).

Mlalazi's "Election Day" is a depiction of thinly fictionalised events that characterised Zimbabwean politics from the year 2000 until the overthrow of Mugabe in a bloodless coup on 21 November 2017. The story is a satire of how the rigging of elections enabled the political

elite to maintain their grip on power and it openly accuses and attacks the ruling party for rigging the elections. This election rigging further violates the ordinary people by making a mockery of the democratic processes. The story clearly shows that, as a way of expressing their anger against the government's mismanagement of the economy and its physical and psychological violence against the citizens, people have overwhelmingly voted against the ruling party. Despite it being fictitious, the story is an open satirical attack of the unethical methods adopted by Robert Mugabe to continue ruling through the subversion of the will of the people. The narrator describes Mugabe as he who is simply called His Excellency in the story as "a Nine decades and four months old, shrivelled old man with a stooped back and teary bloodshot eyes" (p.9) who is at loggerheads with the *people,* the electorate. The story evokes Agamben's (2000) argument that there are "contradictions and aporias that such a concept [people] creates every time that it is invoked and brought into play on the political stage" (p.31).

The story scores the most satirical points by showing that His Excellency has no intention of playing according to the rules of democracy by respecting the will of the people. When provisional election results clearly show that his party has been voted out by the people, he proudly and defiantly declares: "I am the new *Incredible Hulk* of this continent ... Never worry-nobody can defeat the *Incredible Hulk*, not even with the assistance of the devil himself, or their fucking atomic bomb" (pp.10-11). The arrogance and sense of entitlement in His Excellency's speech naturalises his tyranny and despotism in a matter of fact way. He believes that he is irreplaceable.

Commenting on election violence where Mugabe declared that as ZANU-PF party they have "degrees in violence", Eddie Cross, then a member of the opposition party MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai, said Mugabe boasted that his ZANU-PF party was made up of violent people. He also once said he admired Hitler for his ruthless establishment of a dictatorship in Europe that nearly dominated the world. In March 2007, ZANU-PF embarked on a mission to crush the MDC and its structures. There was widespread use of beatings and torture and the mantra used in almost all the cases was that "we have come to teach you how to vote". Many people suffered from amputed hands and Cross says ZANU-PF thugs said to the people "you used your hands to vote wrongly – we will teach you how to vote or stop you voting" (Cross, 2008).

There is a striking similarity in Mlalazi's fiction and Mugabe's actual character. His Excellency compared himself to the domineering Hulk, whilst Mugabe referred to degrees in violence and revered Hitler. For example, in a ceremony in December 30, 1987, Mugabe declared his

intention for ZANU-PF to rule forever; this was accompanied by the refrain *You Are the Only One*, where he was declared executive president by parliament, combining the roles of head of state, head of government, and commander-in-chief of the defence forces (Meredith, 2008, p.79). In the process, this gave him a virtual monopoly on government machinery and unlimited opportunities to exercise patronage. The full strength of Mlalazi's election day description "derives from multiple sources: the historiographic metafiction information that the text supplies, the historical knowledge that the reader brings into reading of the short story and from his provocative use of language" (Ndlovu, 2012, p.66), through dialogue between His Excellency, his personal advisor, Twenty and Modi, His Excellency's wife.[67]

The narrator represent how the alignment of *people* to the opposition pressed scared those in power. It is apparent that the leadership is aware of their failed attempts to rectify the economy and address the country's political crisis in general. Twenty, a potbellied personal advisor to His Excellency tries to give him counsel. He says:

> The election results are not so good so far, Your Excellency. The ballot counting is almost finished, there is only one constituency left, and the opposition is leading us by a very wide margin. We have lost. Everything is crashing down on us! (p.10)

Twenty goes on to explain that once they are out of power, the *people* or electorate would turn on them and kill them. Meanwhile, since His Excellency is a master in rigging elections, he remains unperturbed. His use of the analogy of a soccer team leading six nil being beaten at the very last minute without any match fixing is a satirical exposé on how it has been reported several times that former President Mugabe's regime survived for over 37 years through brazen election rigging. Furthermore, the way His Excellency talks about the people shows his total disregard of their potential to challenge him. He says to Twenty: "I don't want to hear the final results. Tell Amon to announce them to the people" (p.17). It is apparent, just like what

[67] Ranger shows how between 1998 and 2008 Zimbabwean politics witnessed a range of political and economic convulsions in which new social relations emerged, the state was reconfigured in more authoritarian nationalist terms. A key element of this state restructuring was a revived nationalist discourse located around a number of themes, namely the centrality of the land, a selective rendition of the history of liberation, and the collective branding of whites, the West, the Movement for Democratic Change, and the civic movement and their supporters as "enemies of the state" and outsiders to the nation. Ranger dubbed this exclusive interpretation "patriotic history" because it reduced a complex history of nationalism to a sequence of revolutionary resistance. Nevertheless, as Ranger made clear, there are serious limitations with what he characterizes as a "dangerously onesided, narrow and divisive" "patriotic history". For example, in the Third Chimurenga the internal "enemy" was not armed at all: nevertheless, public rhetoric sometimes defined almost half the nation as "traitors" (Ranger, 2004).

Agamben theorises about the various meanings of the people, that His Excellency is not referring to the political elite but the excluded ordinary people who constitute the larger electorate. The intertextual nature of the plot is responsible for the satirical humour of "Election Day" making this story a potential site for encountering an open social and political critique of the event that exposed the ZANU-PF government's undemocratic tendencies in the 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. As a literary satire, "Election Day" participates in such discussion by humorously re-enacting the events leading to ZANU-PF's eventual "victory" in the elections which were clearly won by the opposition party. This "culture of intolerance" badly affected Zanu-PF's practice of the democratic ideals it espoused (Muzondidya, 2009, p.176).

Mlalazi's story shows that the ruling elite are aware of their destructive greed which has led to the economic meltdown of their country. The humorous exchange between His Excellency and his personal advisor is revealing in this regard. Twenty says: "Your Excellency, I beg you to listen to me. Poverty is rife in the streets, the people are hungry, and very angry" (p.12). His Excellency responds:

> How can they not be disillusioned when you [Twenty] have US$500 million in your private Swiss account, and I have one billion pounds? How can they not be angry when I have a sprawling coffee plantation in South America, limousines in every capital city in Europe, a castle in Belgium, a pleasure boat on the Indian Ocean, a private jet and a diamond mine in South Africa, amongst my many international assets, and inflation here is at the ceiling? (p.13)

One is reminded of what Edgar Tekere, a former Cabinet Minister in Mugabe's government once said accusing his fellow ministers, senior bureaucrats, and security chiefs of stashing away money in Swiss bank accounts "just like the mafia". Four days after making this accusation, Tekere was expelled from ZANU-PF for being part of the "political dissidents and malcontents" (Meredith, 2008, p.86).

The power of Mlalazi's satire derives from the fact that he shows that the political elite are aware that they are deliberately plundering the country's resources at the expense of the *people*. According to Hyden, this personalisation of state resources by the ruling elite resulted in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa "with a few exceptions, like Botswana, Mauritius, and South Africa ... [sharing] the common fate of being the poorest in the world" (Hayden, 2006, p.1). Mlalazi's story indicates that the Zimbabwe crisis was largely manufactured by the greed and

insensitivity of political leaders. This evokes Agamben's (2000) allusion to Marx who refers to the divisions between the elite and the ordinary people as "internecine war" "that shall come to an end only when *People* and *people* coincide, in the classless society or in the messianic kingdom, and only when there shall no longer be, properly speaking, any people" (p.31). Mlalazi's story shows that in Zimbabwe, as is the case in many postcolonial African societies, it will be difficult to solve ordinary people's problems since their rulers who masqueraded as social saviours have installed themselves as exploitative and abusive kings.

Commenting on President Mugabe's "New Elite Class", Meredith argues that, from the start of his administration, even when dealing with an issue as sacred as the liberation struggle, Mugabe developed a caste system, making a clear distinction between the "chefs" - a name given to ZANU leaders who went to exile in Mozambique- who ran the government and the "povos" or masses they ruled (Meredith, 2008). Despite endless pronouncements about his commitment to transforming Zimbabwe into a socialist society, he never made any moves in that direction, and the gap between the chefs and the povos widened with each passing year. The rewards of independence went predominantly to members of the elite who displayed loyalty to Mugabe and to ZANU's leadership. The new elite, according to Meredith, "were-ministers, members of parliament, party officials, senior civil servants, and defence and police chiefs- adapted readily to the lifestyle once reserved for privileged whites" (Meredith, 2008, p.81). Mlalazi's story shows how the ruling elite have entrenched themselves over the poor people, the excluded majority or voters whom they regard as a gullible lot.

Mlalazi's story also shows how the term *people* is manipulated by those in leadership to gain political advantage. His Excellency chastises Twenty regarding the latter's assessment of the povo, that they are angry with the leadership, which the former regards as wrong. He spews his acrimony:

> My people will never desert me. Do you hear me, T.S.L. [Twenty Sweet Lemons, nickname by His Excellency]? I am their life leader if you didn't know, chosen by the ancestral spirits themselves. That is why you always hear me refer to the povo as my people, the country as my country. Simple as that. (p.12)

His Excellency's statement is reminiscent of Mugabe's fiery rhetoric, as he depicted himself as an indispensable leader who could do as he pleased with the Zimbabwean people. This is emblematic of Mugabe's rule over the Zimbabweans as he claimed that all the ordinary citizens were "his people" and that Zimbabwe was "his country".

Mlalazi's story further expresses that the national television station was usurped by the political elite to broadcast propaganda. The bias in the voice of the National Vote Director, Amon, in announcing the elections results is unmistaken. He says: "Ladies and gentlemen, the impossible has happened tonight. I am sure the opposition has been celebrating already and their leader preparing to go to State House" (p.17).[68] He speaks as the agent of His Excellency's political party. Mlalazi's fiction captures what has been happening in Zimbabwean elections since 2000. For example, MacGregor (2002) asserts that the 2002 election was won before it began. In the story, Amon refers to massive turn-out in the last remaining constituency resulting in His Excellency winning. The prompt endorsement of results by selected international observers, declaring them free and fair, draws the reader to the question of credibility of the election. In 2003, Sithole argued that Zimbabwe's presidential elections since 2002 have demonstrated a clash between human rights and sovereignty (*The Financial Gazette*, 2003). Mugabe asserted that he had been fairly elected as president in accordance with the country's constitution as a sovereign state. Yet, Tsvangirai (the MDC party opposition candidate) and the international community claimed that the 2002 election had not been conducted in accordance with global human rights standards and thus Mugabe's presidency was illegitimate (Tendi, 2008, p.388). Mlalazi, therefore, satirises the legitimacy of the Zimbabwean government by showing that it has been ruling through election rigging since it lost people's support long ago due to its mismanagement of the economy.

The two stories by Mlalazi capture what Muzondidya (2009) has described as the "continuities and discontinuities from the past" (p.175). Mlalazi's tstories trace the increasingly repressive nature of Zanu-PF after independence, whether it was dealing with the official opposition, striking workers and students, or civil society.[69] The stories reveal how the Zanu-PF government also relied heavily on the coercive tactics developed during the liberation struggle to elicit civilian compliance. Sithole (1988) argues:

> The liberation struggle also left a significant mark on Zimbabwe's political culture. The commandist nature of mobilisation and politicisation under clandestine circumstances gave rise to the politics of intimidation and fear. Opponents were viewed in warlike

[68] Besides deploying its violent youth and women's wings to commandeer support during elections, the party (ZANU PF) marshalled state resources and institutions, such as the army, police, intelligence service, and public radio and television to ensure its electoral hegemony (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997, pp.122-139)

[69] Also see Raftopoulos, B. (2003). The state in crisis: Authoritarianism, selective citizenship and distortions of democracy in Zimbabwe. In A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*. Harare: Weaver Press.

> terms, as enemies, and therefore illegitimate. The culture from the liberation struggle was intolerant and violent (p.245)

Mlalazi shows how the conduct of elections and governance exposed the government's lack of tolerance of political diversity and commitment to democratic politics. ZANU--PF approached elections as 'battles" and viewed its political opponents as enemies to be annihilated rather than as political competitors.

Through the "The Bulldozers are Coming" and "Election Day", Mlalazi shows the destructive nature of dictatorships. Through these stories, the reader is able consider the tragic nature of postcolonial African governance, epitomised by Mugabe's regime. Thinking of the Zimbabwean situation as presented in the two stories leads to despair as the reader quickly realises that alternative ways in which people may be governed in a manner that leads to genuine freedom and self-empowerment are curtailed by a greedy and violent leadership. On a positive note, Mlalazi's stories may be interpreted as encouraging Zimbabweans to seek what Ndlovu (2012) calls "innovative ways of governance that will liberate the majority of people from poverty and other lack of freedoms" (p.68).

Conclusion

The short stories discussed in this chapter highlight the relevance of Agamben's notion of the *People* and *people* in the context of the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis which was triggered by political mismanagement. The narratives suggest that the desperate and the poor are victims of the country's larger political forces. Toivanen (2015) argues that "the abject essence of the postcolonial nation … imprints the national subjects" (p.3). The poor people simply clamour for basics, such as food, shelter and social protection, nothing more or extravagant, in the face of a debilitating economic crisis. The stories build a captivating interplay between history and fiction, a characteristic observable in most of the selected stories from Zimbabwe. These stories compassionately and empathetically depict the life of marginal families, Agamben's people. As a result, the reader also responds with compassion to these heartrending depictions of ordinary people's suffering at the hands of the elite.

The stylistic technique of using the grotesque bodily image in the Rabelaisian language, befits the deterioration of the lifestyles of ordinary people in Zimbabwe. Bulawayo expansively uses the defecatory discourse to lambast the crisis induced suffering and this is effectively done

through her engagement with the innocence of the child narrator and characters. In this regard, the satire succeeds in being an appealing invocation to be recognised and protected by those *People* who are in authority or the so-called elite hibernating in the comfort of the symbolic and luxurious Budapest.

Through what Bakhtin calls a "polyphony of literary narratives", this chapter examined the language of the literary texts as first and foremost a social phenomenon whose social texture and temporal currency is appropriated by the writer to signify certain social issues. As Bakhtin (1981) says: "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adopting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (p.293). From this quotation, it can be deduced that in interpreting (literary) utterances in relation to their social and historical embeddedness, or as constituent of what Shevtsova (2012, p.749) termed "popular speech", one is able to decipher not only the social and historical underpinnings of the utterance, but also the coalescing circumstances around the speaking subject. Utterances from the selected writers and their characters can, therefore, be interpreted as archives of an imaginable (and possible) past and present from where conclusions about some of the most significant events and ideas of the time can be inferred.

The stories also show how the poor were targeted by the despotic regime of Zimbabwe. The demolitions that were carried out through Operation Murambatsvina and the post-2000 successive elections are historical material that construct the fictional narratives which show the vulnerability of the *people*. What emerges from the narratives is the unfortunate state of the government that seems to rule largely by coercion and brutality. Eventually, as the crisis continues, the poor (*people*) are at the mercy of the affluent (*People*).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The stories examined in this thesis show that the Zimbabwean politically-induced economic crisis manifested itself in a variety of ways over the years since its onset in about the year 2000. Although the stories provide a detailed chronological canvas of the genesis and climax of the crisis, they should, nevertheless, not be read as a historical record of this phenomenon and its negative consequences. Rather, the stories are fiction that tap onto this tragic period of post-independent Zimbabwe. As fiction, these stories enable the writers to do what no historian can do. Fiction allows these writers to work with the often-mind-boggling facts of this period, and to rework these facts in order to provide a specific literary vision and, at times, to satirise events and individuals to provide corrective measures. It is apparent from the analysis made in the thesis that, in the space of their short fiction, once the short stories are seriously analysed, also considering closely the various stylistic techniques deployed by the writers, it is easy to see that they make key interventions in critical and literay debates.

Moreover, these writers are not bound by facts, but their creative imagination is stimulated by facts to provide a wide spectrum of literary production which is both aesthetically pleasing and historically accurate. To speak of the crisis, in the Bakhtinian chronotopic sense, is to acknowledge the intrinsic interconnectedness of temporal and spatial relationships defining issues of that moment such as land and farm dispossessions, political violence, emergence of strong opposition politics, the strong role played by war veterans, the development of the diaspora movement, the role of Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU-PF party in all these matters, and also the emotive racial issues in Zimbabwe.

Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the chronotope was fundamental in the analysis of the relationship between space and time depicted in the selected stories from *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series. The three anthologies illustrate the notion of regionification by intricately weaving the physical and fictional worlds of Bulawayo in particular and Zimbabwe in general, demonstrating that in the realms of time and space, chronology, in terms of the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis, cannot be separated from the events and vice versa. In this regard, the stories aptly capture what Bakhtin refers to as the "responses to the movement of time, plot and history" (p.84).

Showing a close link between fact and fiction, the unfolding of historical events and accuracy in the stories is remarkable. However, this is not to say that fiction can be a substitute to historical narratives. More than historical accounts, fictional narratives allow the writer greater freedom of imagination since the writer is not bound by facts. The fiction writer has the liberty to remould known facts to critique society and persuade the reader to consider other more enabling alternative social visions. However, most stories selected for this thesis evoke Abiola Irele's (2001) observation that "history represents the substance upon which the African imagination is called upon to work" (p.112). Indeed, Zimbabwe's chaotic and disastrous fasttracked land redistribution programme, which is closely linked to the liberation struggles against colonial rule, the devastation caused by HIV/AIDS during the first decade of the 21st century which increased the suffering and vulnerability of women and children, political mismanagement which led to the catastrophic economic meltdown leading to mass migrations among other phenomena, all provided the substance upon which the selected Zimbabwean short story practitioners exercised their creative imagination. Unlike the elaborate descriptions employing long backgrounds, settings and character sketches characteristic of the novels and autobiographies, the short story characteristic of direct narrative discourse and reference to events in the form of quick narrative discourse, coupled with economy of settings and aesthetic effects employed to create mood, has been strategic in the representation of the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis.

Chapter one focused on the fictionalisation of the chronotopes of the road, the queue, the farm and the home. Through the appropriation of Bakhtin's chronotopicity theory, the short story writers have demonstrated that crisis reality indicators, herein described as chronotopes, can be fictionalised and reimagined in post-2000 Zimbabwe literary terrain. In this regard, co-mingling concept, through its reference to the varying ideological positions which cast challenges in the conceptualisation of the Zimbabwe crisis from historical and fictional perspectives, has demonstrated how various short story narrative styles and methods of representation can be deployed in narrativisation of history. By applying Lavenghove's regionification theory, I argued that unity, identity and delimitation of a region are not fixed once and for all. They are achieved through the successive constructions and reconstructions imposed by the fact that, in any situation at any time, it is never the whole region which is involved, although a region's perceived unity and identity, as well as its boundaries, constitute basic characteristics pertaining to it. It is then true that what is represented regionally about Bulawayo, through the short stories, are variations that can also be said to be true of Bulawayo

itself as a region, since the crisis affected people differently in different townships and other spatial delimitations of the region and, consequently, situational requirements have varied accordingly. Focusing on the comingling as a stylistic technique enables the various story writers in *Short Writings from Bulawayo* series, both black and white, to depict various defining spatial-temporal manifestations of the crisis. However, the conceptual vagueness associated with regionification, with some stories published in the series set in regions other than Bulawayo, "has consequences for the theoretical and empirical quality of the research" (Langenhove, 2003, p.7). Reference to the unifying concept of entitativity enabled the stories to be analysed together despite their locations since they demonstrate unity in their reference to the crisis as a referent. The unifying theme of setting has created "linked short story collections" (Astvaldsson, 2011, p.13) that has enabled Short Writings from Bulawayo series to be perceived as having certain unifying elements which have enabled them to cohere as an artistic whole in crisis representation and narrativisation.

Some of the stories portray what this thesis called "Demagoguery, Oppressive Nationalism and Regimes of Truth" that characterised ZANU-PF leadership in the years leading to the post-2000 economic crisis. This included the rapid militarisation of the ruling party, state and the broader terrain of national politics, a trend reflected in the rising prominence of so-called "war veterans", state security personnel and, later, party-affiliated militias who protected the interests of the minority elite. These securocrats, who were themselves a manifestation of corruption and economic mismanagement, impacted negatively on the political and economic stability of the country, thereby deepening the crisis. In this light, the theoretical insights gleaned from Gramsci's notion of "hegemony", Foucault's "regimes of truth" and Ranger's "patriotic history" have been appropriated in debunking the follies of Zimbabwe leadership in the crisis period, graphically presented through the short story narratives. Through the short story stylistic techniques such as … the writers have demonstrated the extent to which history can be appropriated in and through literature. Among others, the stories "Hands" and "Pay Day" discussed in Chapter 2 capture these events in the unfolding of the Zimbabwean crisis. Similarly, a "A Seed of Hope" shows how industrial and agricultural production plummeted after the 2000-2002 "fast-track" land redistribution exercise leading to severely curtailed foreign currency earnings for the country. In a bid to hoodwink ordinary people suffering from difficulties related to the post-2000 crisis, the Zimbabwean regime developed and propagated what Ranger (2004) calls "patriotic history" as demonstrated in Manyonga's "A Seed of Hope". Furthermore, "The General's Gun" exposes the highly flawed approach to empowerment, or

"indigenisation", in the Zimbabwean political lexicon by showing that it was an elite-driven partisan process meant to benefit a few ZANU-PF aligned individuals.

The stories examined in Chapter 3 focused on the tragic humour and politics of acquisitiveness. By focusing majorly on the chronotopes of the land and mineral wealth, the writers have depicted the post-2000 crisis through satiric humour, particularly using jokes and the grotesque imagery as short story narrative style. Theorisation of Bakhtin's study of laughter in *Rabelais and His World* (1984) helped in situating the representativeness of laughter in the context of what Bakhtin refers to as the carnivalesque humour that allows the lowly placed members of society to satirise their predicament without being held accountable by those in authority. I argued that, to discuss sensitive contemporary socio-economic and political issues, the selected stories use humour in its various forms to satirise individuals responsible for the absurdities and oddities of the crisis. This stylistic approach gives writers the freedom, through focalisation, in some instances, to raise questions about serious matters such as access to, among other issues, diamonds and despotic leadership that people may find difficult to discuss because of their serious nature. Discussing issues using humour and irony can take the sharpest sting out of the issue and make it easier to figure out and find solutions to problems. Satire, as Ritgero (2009, p.4) argues, "can also be effective in catching people's attention since it often shocks and stirs things up". Therefore, the use of satire can be helpful even in the context of the fictionalisation of the crisis when serious socio-economic and political matters and taboos are discussed.

The reality regarding the diamonds issue, as part of the minerals chronotope, is the irregular state intervention, astronomical levels of corruption which led to the collapse of the mining sector thereby making economic recovery impossible. Instead of alleviating people's economic difficulties, the stories in this chapter highlight through the short story technique of irony that people's suffering, in fact, increased despite the discovery of diamonds. Ordinary people who tried to lay their hands on this piece of the country's wealth were either maimed for life or killed by government sponsored security agents. The selected writers show that the diamond rush of 2006 was from the outset extremely chaotic and characterised by high levels of corruption as were the land invasions which began in earnest in the year 2000. It is apparent, therefore, that the short story writers have deployed wit and surprise endings, incorporating how characters have subverted death as part of the sacred domain, to evade the system and smuggle the minerals. Direct reference to realistic setting of the diamond places and skilful

characterisation of prominent political figures has lended the short stories their vivid representation of the post-2000 crisis.

Chapter 4 demonstrated that problems facing contemporary Zimbabwe cannot be fully dissected without unearthing the voice of women regarding the crisis and, consequently, their precarity and vulnerability. The chapter, therefore, was framed around the chronotopes of poverty and "small houses", fictionalising how women found themselves having to grapple with the crisis, a position that the chapter discussion represented as a reconstitution of gender. In this regard, Butler's (2009) theorisation of precarity that explores how the crisis designated a politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death provided insights in comprehending how women ultimately behave the way they do, for example, as some become "small houses" of affluent business people. Women, as mothers, have had to face the HIV/AIDS scourge that has been worsened by the collapsed health infrastructure and food scarcity for both the affected and the infected. Woods argues that "significant literary representations of HIV/AIDS raise semiotic and political complexities, the ways in which literary discourse can cause a transformative intervention within a terrain of struggle, refocus, and develop social relationships and conventional gender power structures and identities" (Woods, 2013, p.306). The stories show that the economic meltdown has meant that the health care system cannot deal with individuals suffering from chronic infections such as HIV. This led to a lot of deaths and unnecessary suffering to the victims and their relatives, particularly women and children who are at the centre of this predicament. Moreover, as Baylies (cited in Mushongah, 2012) points out, the "impact of AIDS is profoundly gendered in a manner which serves to deepen its consequences" (p.572). Women invariably take on an additional burden as care-givers to the sick, as the stories clearly illustrated.

These HIV/AIDS narratives provide an important symbolic reorganisation of subjectivity, especially gendered subjectivity (Susser, 2009). Many of these narratives also reorganise the gendered nature of that subjectivity, re-orientating our understanding of the hitherto predominantly masculinist mechanics of the machinery of representing HIV/AIDS, inserting the female voice into the public sphere. Women's vulnerability and precarity during the crisis has been because of a multiplicity of problems that include the patriarchal stranglehold. It has not been easy for women to break space and migrate to the diaspora to fend for their families.

Before one can lay blame on women for engaging in various perceived social ills, there is need to closely assess their positionality with respect to the crisis.

The stories examined in Chapter 5 are organised around the chronotope of the border and migration. Through the appropriation of short story stylistic techniques such as setting skilful and characterisation, the writers have shown that at the height of the crisis, desperation forced people to seek asylum and to become economic migrants in Botswana, South Africa and further afield in countries such as the UK, USA and Australia. However, as the stories demonstrated, migration, although bringing economic relief to migrants and their families at home in the form of remittances, it also brought its own set of problems both for migrants and their families that remained in the homeland. As Bhabha (2013) argues, the sense of "home" and being "homely" has remained elusive for most migrants. Death, of a close relative, whether in the homeland or foreign land, emerged from the stories as a major challenge for the families, particularly in the light of cultural practices that some family members still insist on. Bhabha's proposition of "a cosmopolitan community envisaged in marginality" has been useful in the understanding of what he has called "the growing global gulf between political citizenship, related to nation and state and cultural citizenship.

The selected short stories have somehow shown through the technique of characterisation and setting, both at home and in the various diaspora communities, that, in Bhabha's terms, "we must in fact live in an open space which must be shared with others, because solidarity does not propose to erase differences but rather to recognise and live with difference." By emphasising on the vernaculars, the selected writers have provided alternative cosmopolitanism. The vernacular culture of Zimbabwe creates a kind of "vernacular chronotope" ("Mikhail Bakhtin's idiom", referred to by Pollock, p.31) which has been captured through the text, a culture of the polyglot that resembles a nation. For example, Gappah's story "Something Nice from London" depicts cremation as an alternative to burying the dead from the diaspora, something which is still viewed as taboo in most traditional families in Zimbabwe. In addition, some marriages have suffered due to migration and this has increased cases of rape and abuse of children by close relatives, as well as abuse of house maids by their male employers. As long as the crisis persists, "homeliness" will have to be reimagined.

In addition, the factor of the journey itself, the *itinerary,* as Bakhtin (1981) describes it, is an actual one: it imparts to the temporal sequence of the stories a real and essential organising centre. Most stories incorporate travel and dispersion in their characters and the authors, and

this serves as an organising centre for the point of view, the scales of comparison, the approaches and evaluations, determining how alien countries and cultures are seen and understood during the crisis era.

Focusing on Agamben's (2000) theorisation of "The *People* versus *people"* the discussion in chapter six explored the chronotopes of class and poverty, demonstrating that it is apparent that the onset of the crisis socially stratified people. This in turn meant that those who have been poor, the *people*, have suffered the most as illustrated by Bulawayo through her satiric representation of Paradise and Budapest, the places for the poor and the affluent respectively. It emerges that at this stage of the stories, particularly demonstrated by Mungoshi, the crisis is now deeply etched in the minds of the people and it has turned out to be a psychological phenomenon. Suicide, depicted by Bulawayo and Mungoshi, is not mentioned by other writers in the previous chapters, probably showing that, despite their suffering, only a few Zimbabweans decided to escape their suffering by taking their own lives. However, these two stories point to the issue of the psychological impact of the crisis that has not been fully explored in Zimbabwean short stories. The selected short stories have exhibited a post-modern stricture that is characteristic of the post-2000 Zimbabwe short story. In this light, the short stories have been endowed with the ability to also encourage, and can accommodate in particular ways, a reflexive self-consciousness about literary form, and a propensity to build into the story a commentary on itself. The closeness of the typical length of the short stories, by Bulawayo and Mungoshi, among others, to that of the essay, and the relationship of story to essay through the sketch, which shares features of both, also influences the short story's tendency towards self-reflection and a mingling of genres and registers.

The crisis has reshaped political alliances, both formal and informal, and stimulated uneasy cross-regional debates over settler histories, national liberation, anti-imperialism and sovereignty, which in turn has provoked new controversial policies and practices of belonging and exclusion. The ending of the crisis remains elusive and this has continued to feed into the literary narratives of the post-2000 era. This scenario means that more research still needs to be carried out, particularly research which will focus on the metamorphosed nature of the crisis ushered in by the yet to be captured "new dispensation" inaugurated after the ouster of the long serving Zimbabwean leader, Robert Mugabe, on the 14th of November 2017, and the coming in of Emmerson Mnangagwa, inaugurated on the 24th of November 2017. The country is still beleaguered by the indicators of the post-2000 crisis, such as, on the one hand, unavailability of cash, under-resourced health infrastructure, phenomenal unemployment levels, increasing

inflation levels and the rising cost of living. On the other hand, positive developments, such as extensive use of "plastic money" to counter cash shortages, increase in diaspora remittances, reduction in skills flight to other countries, and availability of basic commodities have been noted. It remains to be seen how the fictional narratives in the form of the short stories would best capture these dynamics.

Jokes and other forms of wit, wordplay, humour and laughter have been used as stylistic techniques in most of the selected stories, whether overtly or covertly, to satirise the crisis period. This stylistic technique, elaborately discussed in Chapter 3, also permeates many other chapters in various forms. The style is used by most writers to make explicit the enormous commonality that is implicit in most Zimbabweans' socio-economic and political life during the crisis. Therefore, the extraordinary thing about humour, as witnessed in the stories, is that "it returns us to common sense; by distancing us from it, humour familiarises us with a common world through its miniature strategies of defamiliarisation. If humour recalls us to sensus communis, then it does this by momentarily pulling us out of common sense, where jokes function as moments of dissensus communis" (Critchley, 2002, p.18).

An end to the Zimbabwe crisis has remained elusive as acts of political and economic violence continue with impunity. Many of the changes in previous years, dating back to the year 2000, are potentially irreversible, for example, land distribution, the exodus of citizens, the highly militarised state, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and new patterns of economic control. These will have legacies that shape the region for generations to come although the outcomes are still emergent and unclear. While only time will allow us to understand fully these trends and their effects, this thesis has, hopefully, started that process by documenting and exploring what the crisis has already rendered visible through analysis of selected Zimbabwean short stories and their inherent stylistic techniques. It is precisely in the short story genre that the selected authors have found a medium which serves their purpose of representing the post-2000 Zimbabwe crisis, and which they have used in a highly effective and imaginative way to construct an intricate text that not only draws in but demands participation from the reader, thereby giving many possibilities of the varied interpretations of the stories over the spartial-temporal landscape.

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