

The Depiction of Migration and Identity in Zimbabwean Literature from 1980 to 2010

By

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## Abstract

This thesis analyses the relationship between migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature from 1980 to 2010. It employs an eclectic/interdisciplinary theoretical approach in its exploration of the relationship between migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature. However, prominence is given to certain strands of postcolonial theory that privilege issues of migration, identity and globalisation. The study offers a historical trajectory of the patterns and shifts of the Zimbabweans' migratory experiences within and across the borders of Zimbabwe, as mirrored in the selected literature. The nexus between migration and identity in Zimbabwe is closely related to the history and fate of the Zimbabwean nation state. This history is marked by instability and fracture and has key defining moments that are critical in determining the nature of the generated ontological insecurities and the subsequent nature, shifts and patterns of the migratory experiences of Zimbabweans. In addition, the migratory patterns and shifts can be very instructive in illustrating how Zimbabweans mediate, negotiate and construct their identities and at the same highlight the ambivalent nature of their relationship to the Zimbabwean nation state. Focus within the borders of Zimbabwe is on the patterns and shifts of the migratory experiences that are aligned to the colonising structure that witnessed a dichotomised urban/ rural space which continue to exist in post-independent Zimbabwe. This inherited colonial dichotomised rural/urban space is problematised in an attempt to decipher the more subtle migratory patterns and shifts, such as rural to rural, urban to urban and urban to rural migrations, and their impact on identities. Furthermore, the study seeks to expand our understanding of migration from the conventional physical and linear narrative to include migrations of a discursive, dialogical and spiritual nature. The study will also explore and problematise the impact of transnational migration that got accentuated in 2000 because of the heightened Zimbabwe crisis and globalisation on the construction of diasporic identities in Zimbabwean literature. Selected texts from both black and white Zimbabwean writers will be used to explore the various issues raised above.

**Key Terms:** Migration; identity, space, post – independent Zimbabwe; Zimbabwean literature.