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

By

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At

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Declaration

I, Terrence Musanga, hereby declare that this thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in English degree at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other institution, and that this is my work in design and execution, and all reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family to whom I am deeply indebted for their inspiration, patience and love.

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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.

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Chapter 1: Theoretical Introduction

1. 1 Contextualising migration and identity in Zimbabwe

Migration and its relation to identity in Zimbabwe is closely related to the history and fate of the Zimbabwean nation. 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. Zimbabwe's birth in 1980, as an independent nation, came after a protracted military struggle and intense round-table negotiations. This independence ushered in a period of hope for the majority of blacks who assumed that political independence would promptly translate into concrete and tangible economic and social benefits that prior to independence had been, largely, the preserve of the white colonial settlers. This early euphoric period in the history of the country, characteristic of most African independent states, soon gave way to disillusionment and despair. This was because the early gains of independence were swiftly outpaced by egocentric minority considerations and the betrayal of the ideals and goals of the liberation struggle. This betrayal has its generic roots in the African elite who spearheaded the nationalist struggle against colonialism and assumed power at independence. Fanon (1961) observes that this clique is usually bereft of real power to transform Africa's economic and political terrain and is content with playing an intermediary role between Africa and Europe. The above view is supported by Amin (2006) who argues that the complicity of the ruling African classes with the global strategies of imperialism is the ultimate cause of failure. It is also crucial to note that this elite class was a product of colonial education and this clouded their nationalist vision. Olaniyan (2000: 272) asserts that the nationalists' claim to legitimacy was based more on mastery of European languages and civilization than on their representativeness of the indigenous society. Olaniyan (2000: 272) further notes that the nationalists' vision rarely went beyond the capture or, more expressively, the deracialization of the colonial state and its apparatuses. Sadly, as noted by Olaniyan (2000: 272), the deracialisation of the colonial state in the aftermath of African independence is not synonymous with democratisation of the African post-colony.

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The betrayal of the goals, aspirations and the early gains of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe's independence is graphically captured in most post independent literary texts that satirise the black elite who assumed power during that period. These texts include; Gonzo Msengezi's *The Honourable MP* (1984); Dambudzo Marechera's *Mindblast* (1984); Cont Mhlanga's *Workshop Negative* (1986); Freedom Nyamubaya's *On the Road Again* (1986); Chenjerai Hove's *Bones* (1988) and Shimmer Chinodya's *Harvest of Thorns* (1989). The production of such literature has generated, what might be termed 'a narrative of victimisation' as majoritarian interests were ignored at the behest of the few self-aggrandising elite. The Zimbabwean nation state is thus depicted, from its infancy, as premised on a fractured and unstable identity with propensities towards postcolonial excesses of ultra and sometimes retrogressive nationalism (Ndlovu 2009; Tendi 2010).

The formative years of the Zimbabwean nation state are predicated on unevenness hence access to the country's resources is class, gender, ethnic and racially determined. In addition, the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) being the dominant political formation and ruling party, has dominated the nation's body-politic to the extent of controlling the granting of access to national belonging and recognition. The ZANU-PF, as the definers and gate keepers of 'national cultural capital' (Skey 2011: 236), largely hinged on the liberation struggle and the propagation and cultivation of patriotic history (Ranger 2004), determines who belongs and who does not. The ZANU-PF, therefore, is able to position itself and be recognised as the arbiter of national culture and space. This implies that ZANU-PF is not only able to access the material benefits of group membership but also defines the conditions of belonging. The category 'Zimbabwean', irrespective of it being a socially constructed phenomenon and hence contestable (Ndlovu 2009), is principally the preserve and prerogative of ZANU-PF to bestow and take. This has largely resulted in the forced migration of people harbouring dissenting views beyond the borders of Zimbabwe to escape political violence. This is exemplified by Annie Holmes and Peter Orner's *Hope Deferred: Narratives of Zimbabwean Lives* (2010) which will be examined in chapter 3 of this thesis that mainly explores the migrant narratives of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters who have escaped torture and imprisonment and found refuge in neighbouring countries.

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The instability of the Zimbabwean nation is largely a result of the nationalism that was used to dislodge colonialism which was configured along ethnic and gender lines (Sithole 1979; Chung 2006). Ndlovu (2009: 2) commenting on the discourse of nationalism notes that:

> Nationalism and the national project are phenomena that are always imagined, constituted, suffered, and celebrated. What they produce are equally constructed social and political artefacts we call nations, national identities, national symbols and states. As products of human imagination and social construction, nations and national identities are inherently prone to contestations, fragilities, acceptance, rejections, and reconstructions. Their historical productions never follow singular, univocal, stable, and peaceful trajectories.

Olaniyan (2000: 271), commenting on the instability of the African nation states notes that the condition has its genetic roots in colonialism. Olaniyan (2000: 271) further states that colonialism created African countries as states first, then nations if ever possible whose function was to serve the primary economic interests of the colonisers and not to serve, advance or protect the interests of the African. Furthermore, Olaniyan (2000: 271) remarks that the unusual backward mode of nation state formation, witnessed in Africa needed force, coercion, and arbitrariness as norm and this colonial history did not change with the inception of African independence.

The instability of the Zimbabwean nation state is evidenced by various turbulences. These include the *Gukurahundi* (Shona: the early rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains) where between 1981 and 1986 the government sent the Fifth Brigade Army into parts of Matebeleleland and Midlands Provinces to pacify those perceived to have been sympathising with a group of anti- Zimbabwean military fighters labelled dissidents and as many as twenty thousand lost their lives, as Vambe (2008) notes. Furthermore, Vambe (2008) argues that the impact of Gukurahundi was largely felt in the debunking of the myth of the Zimbabwe of the early 1980s being a successful developmental state. However, what is ignored about Gukurahundi is that it forced thousands of people to migrate to other parts of Zimbabwe, especially urban areas, which were considered safer when compared to the rural areas and beyond the borders of Zimbabwe into Botswana and South Africa. This forced migration definitely had an impact on the identities of the people involved. Gukurahundi was

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later halted after the signing of the unity accord between ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in 1987 and thus an uneasy truce was consummated even though the cracks of the nation state were not permanently healed as shown by the resurgence of the Gukurahundi discourse in post-2000 Zimbabwean politics (Dabengwa 2011; Langa 2011).

The political economy of the country was also transformed significantly by the Zimbabwean government's introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in the 1990s. ESAP was introduced with the endorsement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and resulted in thousands of workers being retrenched and the government retreating from its stance as a welfarist state (Bond and Manyanya 2003). The implementation of ESAP later proved to be economically and politically disastrous for the ZANU-PF government. Potts (2010), commenting on the impact of ESAP, notes that there was an increase in urban and rural poverty, socio-economic indices declined, massive formal job losses occurred in towns and the informal business sectors expanded further. Potts (2010: 85) further states that:

> The negative impact was felt across the country but it was worst in the urban areas. Incorporation into the global ideology of market liberalization thus began to change the relative economic advantages of towns versus rural areas- although both suffered.

Similarly, Lazarus (2004) commenting on the significance and impact of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) on the postcolonial world, of which Zimbabwe is one, notes that SAPs have become a favoured means of disciplining postcolonial states, domesticating them, and rendering them subservient to the needs of the global market. Lazarus (2004: 20-1) further argues that SAPs have also become a means of ensuring that postcolonial states retain their peripheral status and making sure that they fail to de-link themselves from the world system nor ever imagine themselves capable of participating in it from any position of parity, let alone power. Lazarus (2004) thus observes that economically speaking, the poverty, ever deepening immiseration and indebtedness of so many postcolonial nations, in which the SAPS played a critical role, have made it simply impossible for states to 'de-link' or disconnect themselves. Amin (2006) however, cautions that an explanation for Africa's failure must also take into account all the complex interactions between its particular internal conditions and the logic of global capitalist expansion. Nevertheless, many Zimbabwean

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people were compelled by SAPS to migrate back to the rural areas as they had been rendered jobless in the cities.

The government also carried out a land redistribution exercise from 2000 that forced thousands of black farm workers and white farmers to leave their farms. This land redistribution exercise radically altered the country's political and economic landscape and one of its consequences has been the production and proliferation of white Zimbabwean literature (Buckle 2001; Godwin 2006; Rogers 2009) that challenges and seeks to subvert the ZANU-PF hegemonic narrative about land. This hegemonic narrative perceives black Zimbabweans as entitled to the land 'while whiteness becomes synonymous with Europe, foreignness and an absence of rights to own land in Zimbabwe' (Manase 2011: 6). The hegemonic narrative about land is central to the construction of ZANU-PF's patriotic history that precludes any alternative ways of conceptualising land and its ownership in Zimbabwe (Tendi 2010). At a social and cultural level the land redistribution exercise resulted in the physical and psychological displacement and fragmentation of families and people. It thus problematises issues of citizenship, belonging, identity and national cultural capital where some social groups are more privileged than others and determine who belongs and who does not. The land redistribution exercise is important to this research because it triggered a wave of migrations by black farm workers and white farmers, which, whether local or global, were complexly configured on the basis of race, class and gender as portrayed by Graham Lang (2006), Douglas Rogers (2009) and Lawrence Hoba (2009) examined in this thesis. Manase (2011: 8) thus notes:

> The farm invasions thus bring in a twist of forced local and international migration into Zimbabwe's early twentieth-first century post-colonial condition. This complicated post-colonial condition has subsequently led to the creation of restless, dislocated and fugitive identities in a number of displaced white commercial farmers, their workers and some ordinary black Zimbabweans.

In May 2005 the Zimbabwean government embarked on Operation Murambatsvina which it presented as 'cleansing' the country of 'vendors, flea- market traders and foreign- currency dealers, and to destroy illegally built structures' (Vambe 2008: 2). Potts (2010) also notes that about 650 000 to 700 000 people lost either the basis of their livelihoods or their homes or

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both because of Operation Murambatsvina. Operation Murambatsvina led to pronounced individual and family displacements and dislocations. The trauma of this operation is vividly captured in Valerie Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), which is also examined later in this thesis. The people most affected by the operation were the disabled, children, women and those living with AIDS (Tibaijuka 2005). What, however, is conspicuously absent in the literature about Operation Murambatsvina is its relation to the *classed* nature of the subsequent 'internal' urban migration and how it impacted on the negotiation, constitution and formation of identities. All this is coupled with an intractable political crisis engendered by the harmonised elections of 2008 that gave birth to an uneasy coalition, Government of National Unity between ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations.

The above and other moments, especially after 2000 when the Zimbabwean nation could be said to have imploded, point to what might be described metaphorically as a 'diseased' nation that has ultimately 'failed'. This 'failure' should be conceptualised at a metaphoric level as an incapacity by the Zimbabwean government to provide for and protect its citizens from the clutches of poverty and as a result happens to be the source of the ensuing migrations, be it at a local or global level. This 'failure' became acute and reached what might be termed 'abnormal' proportions post-2000 as the Zimbabwean nation state imploded. The symptoms of the implosion were testified by hyper-inflation, empty supermarket shelves and lack of drugs in hospitals; conditions which are depicted in the short story collection, *Long Time Coming* (2008), edited by Jane Morris.

In as much as the 'crisis' of the nation state is central to the migratory experiences of Zimbabweans, great caution needs to be exercised as the conceptualisation of the nation state to be employed transcends viewing the nation state as a unit of analysis. This largely seems to be the bane of Crush and Tevera (2010) and Bond and Manyanya (2003) who, respectively, consider the nation state as the unit of analysis, in their analysis of migration and the crisis in Zimbabwe. The dominant assumption associated with this kind of analysis, as Grosfoguel (2008) notes, is that nation states are perceived as independent units which can only account for crises within the context of internal dynamics of each nation state. This perspective, however, is problematic as it fails to situate the 'crisis' of a nation state within a global context, largely skewed in favour of Euro- American hegemony. This understanding creates a

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situation where migration is perceived as a symptom of African leaderships' failure to initiate and implement development policies that are people friendly. This position is championed by Crush and Tevera (2010) who impute blame on the political actions of the Zimbabwean government that have resulted in the country's decline and forced Zimbabweans to leave the country to survive the political and economic crises. What however is problematic about this position is that it is a simplistic understanding of Africa and fails to situate the challenges and dynamics of the African nation states in the context of globalisation and the unilateralist project of US hegemonism (Amin 2006).

It is, however, critical to observe at this juncture that migration in Zimbabwe is not a recent and unprecedented phenomenon as seems to be suggested by the timeframe (1980-2010) of the research. Mlambo (2010: 52) observes that population migration into and out of Zimbabwe long predates colonialism and the imposition of colonial borders and boundaries. Mlambo (2010: 52) further highlights that people moved from one area to another as the need arose, for ethnic boundaries were fluid enough to allow individuals or groups to move in and out of population clusters and ethnic groupings with relative ease. This migration did not cease with the establishment of colonial boundaries as these arbitrary borders divided families, clan groups and ethnic communities between different colonies. Similarly, Olaniyan (2000: 270) notes that these colonial borders and boundaries were determined solely by the exigencies of colonial conquest and had little to do with the demands or logic of respecting the cultural and linguistic connections that bound people together. At a metaphoric level this crossing of colonial arbitrary borders by the indigenous population is clear testimony of the existence of resistance to colonial intrusion. Such movements were also an attempt by the Africans to assert their own way of life which was being threatened by these colonial impositions and divisiveness.

The British colonial conquest of what was later to be known as Zimbabwe in 1890 also led to the influx of white migrants from Europe and South Africa who went on to establish farms, plantations and mines. The plantations, farms and mines were made productive through the employment and engagement of the cheap black migrant labour from neighbouring countries, such as Malawi and Mozambique (Mlambo 2010: 53). The black migrant workers from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique would further problematise the definition of the category

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'Zimbabwean'. This was accentuated during the land redistribution exercise when these migrant workers were denied access to land ownership as they were considered foreigners and therefore not true Zimbabweans (Chirere 2006; Hoba 2009). This immigration of whites from South Africa and Europe and the subsequent futile attempts to tame both the African and his/her environment are lucidly captured in Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950) and Ndhlala's *Jikinya* (1979). Lessing's (1950) text depicts white migration from urban spaces to the rural ones and demonstrates significantly the gendered dimensions of this migration and the extreme psychological and emotional effects it had on the white woman. White (im) migration is also explored in Lang's *The Place of Birth* (2006) and Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009) examined later in this thesis.

1:2 The Urban/ Rural dichotomy and migration in Zimbabwe

Colonialism is notoriously responsible for the creation of the rural/urban dichotomy (Gaidzanwa 1985; Mamdani 1996; Schmidt 1996) that continues to compel the development policies and projects of the post-colonial nation state to be skewed in favour of urban areas (Potts 2010). It is also instructive to think of colonialism as the invasion and occupation of physical space and territory that is subsequently divided up into what Fanon (1961:31) calls the Manichaean world of the coloniser and colonised, a world that is maintained and reinforced by the racial ideology of white supremacy. These borders and divisions however ought not to be interpreted as permanent since people could 'trespass' into territories deemed not rightfully accessible to them. It is also crucial to note that this migration was not just physical but also involved 'migrations' of a sexual nature as blacks and whites crossed the racial divides and established clandestine sexual relations. These sexual relations can be read as migrations into 'forbidden territories' as they were not sanctioned and thus seen as sexual transgressions in the racially divided colonial order.

The rural/urban partition was not just physical and geographical but infiltrated and permeated every aspect of the African's existence. However, the urban space was developed more at the expense of the rural space. The urban space was imagined and marketed as the space where one witnessed and bore testimony to 'modernity' and hence space that is 'civilised'. In juxtaposition to the urban space is the rural space that was envisioned as the embodiment of 'tradition' and therefore still 'backward' and 'primitive'. This resulted in the marginalisation

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of rural areas and the migration of people from rural areas to urban spaces in search of employment and better opportunities. This movement was further heightened by globalisation which has deepened the discrepancy between the advantaged and privileged urban areas and the traditionally deprived rural communities.

Migration to the urban spaces, largely influenced by the ways in which the urban space was imagined by the people in the rural areas, did not cease with the attainment of political independence in 1980. In fact, the post 1980 migration to the urban spaces was no longer restricted as was the case during colonialism when the urban space was largely conceptualised as the preserve of the colonisers. Potts (2010) remarks that migration from rural to urban areas increased after 1980 because of the differences in economic opportunities and incomes between the towns and the rural areas. This, as Potts (2010) further observes, was a result of the new government's development plans which mirrored the "modernisation" programs that most newly independent African countries embarked on in the 1960s. These development programmers encouraged urban-based economic development and a surge in public-sector employment to deliver a range of new services, such as health and education, to the African population.

The urban space is still perceived as a land of promises, better opportunities and thus offering many strategic ways for survival when compared to the narrow and limited opportunities available in the rural areas and their largely subsistence agriculture and roles as reservoirs of cheap labour to rural commercial farms. However, caution ought to be exercised in terms of how, at a theoretical level, one approaches the concept of a city, for it is largely a paradoxical space of opportunities and failures and at the same time a space where one witnesses cultural mixing (Manase 2005). Migration to the urban spaces was largely necessitated by the need to survive economically in a hostile economic environment engendered by colonial intrusion. What is crucial, however, is the realisation that migrants do not passively accept the given spatial forms but instead actively and creatively engage with the city (urban space) through their own strategies to live, work and socialise. Manase (2005: 102) thus observes that urban dwellers appropriate 'the city's space and restructure it to suit their own intentions and desires'. The agency of the urban dwellers highlighted by Manase (2005) gives credence to Primorac's (2006) perception that space is a social construct. Furthermore, this creative

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engagement with the city, also reflective of attempts to reconfigure identities, is an area that is under-researched in Zimbabwean literature.

In our approach to migration there is need to shift our attention from physical movement to class-based readings of migration. Class migrations are largely discernible in urban environments. These class migrations are testimony to the fact that the city or urban environment should not be approached or conceptualised as a monolithic homogeneous landscape but as an uneven heterogeneous terrain whose mapping is largely marked by class positions and positioning. Manase (2005: 90) also notes that the urban spatial paradigm is characterised by the symbolic existence of two worlds in one city and this marks the 'fragmented nature of the city'. These class migrations however should not be read as being one directional and linear and hence an indicator of success and progression.

Colonialism, as has already been intimated in the preceding paragraphs, led to the dichotomisation of the African space into the rural and urban spaces. However, migration to the urban space was largely gendered as it was dominated by young able-bodied men (Schmidt 1996). This is not surprising given the patriarchal nature of colonial capitalism, labour demands and the sometimes complex nature of the collusive relationships between colonial patriarchy and indigenous patriarchy (McClintock 1995). Schmidt (1996) also asserts that when the old ways of acquiring social status and social recognition had been rendered dysfunctional by colonialism, women had to break the bonds of rural patriarchal authority by escaping to the emerging towns, mining centres, mission stations and European farms. The involvement of women in migration from rural to urban environments in postcolonial Zimbabwe is depicted in, for example, *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) by Petina Gappah in the short story 'The Maid from Lalapanzi'. The central character in the story, Sisi Blandina, migrates from rural Lalapanzi to the capital city, Harare, and is employed as a domestic worker. She later ends up jobless and pregnant, and commits suicide when confronted with the reality of returning to the rural areas. The suicide is a metaphor explicating Sisi Blandina's failure to successfully manage and tame a seemingly hostile urban environment. The story thus mocks the celebratory tendencies in postcolonial theory and sociological thinking associated with perceiving migration as related to the creation of hybrid identities and as necessarily emancipatory (Appiah 1992; Gilroy 1993; Bhabha 1994; Elliot and Urry 2010).

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The migration to the urban spaces is interesting in that if properly analysed, it makes us understand how Africans sought to mediate, negotiate and contest their identities in the urban environs. Migration from the rural to the urban spaces therefore becomes the foundation for understanding future patterns and shifts of other migrations such as the diasporic migrations that got accentuated in early 2000 as a result of the heightened Zimbabwe crisis, whose representations by Brian Chikwava (2009) and Gappah (2009) is examined in chapter 7. This migration from the rural to the urban environment is also important in the sense that it demonstrates, to the migrant, the delicate relationship that exists between identity and place and how the idea of identity is always grounded in the sense of belonging to a place (Woodward 2002).

However, it is interesting to note that currently the boundaries between the rural and urban spaces are no longer as clear-cut as they used to be in the past. This is largely attributable to technology, especially in the realm of communications, which have significantly eroded these rural-urban boundaries and consequently has problematised the traditional or conventional rural-urban divide. Peasants today, through technology, for example, have various confirmations of an urban way of life through their contacts with former rural compatriots and their exposure to the mass media. The use of electronic gadgets like cell phones, television and satellite dishes has rendered it unclear *who* inhabits *what* space. Advances in technology therefore imply that we need to rethink what it means to be in a rural or urban space and what we mean by space. It might be important to ask ourselves, in the contemporary world, whether by space we refer to physical geography or mental, psychological, emotive landscapes. Furthermore, geographies should figure prominently in our definitions.

Having established that migration is not an unprecedented phenomenon in Zimbabwe, it is therefore imperative to mention that what is critical about the period under study is the intensity of the migration and how it is closely related to the crisis of the nation state. Crush and Tevera (2010) suggest that when modern states go into terminal decline or fail altogether, the ordinary people's predictable response is to get out, as soon as they can, to wherever they can go. This corroborates Kobena (Attree 2007) who is of the view that identity is always an issue in a time of crisis, be it political, economic or cultural. This understanding however raises practical and theoretical challenges. These challenges involve the deracination,

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dislocation and the concomitant psychic, social, cultural, emotional and spiritual ramifications and the subsequent reconstitution of identities, which are issues discussed by postcolonial critics such as Hall (1990) and Bhabha (1994).

Skey's (2010) concept of ontological security is also vital in understanding the impact of migration on people's sense of self. Skey (2010) notes that the individual must be more or less able to rely on things - people, objects, places, meanings - remaining tomorrow, by and large, as they were today and the day before for their ontological security. Skey (2010) also contends that without a degree of managed certainty in their relations with other people and the material environment, each encounter would have to be dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis, placing individuals in a permanent state of anxiety and uncertainty. It is therefore my submission that migration, especially transnational migration, creates a 'state of anxiety' and there are broadly two ways to deal with this situation. Firstly, one can outlive this 'state of anxiety' and therefore realise the need to reconstruct and reconstitute his/her identity to adapt and survive in the host country. Secondly, one can also be overwhelmed by the new environment and as I argue in this thesis, failure to transcend one's initial 'state of anxiety' results in the production of what I term 'marginal diasporic identities'. These are identities predicated on failure to manage exile as reflected, for example, in *Harare North* (2009) and *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009), examined in chapter 7. These identities are premised on more or less a permanent state of restlessness, anxiety, insecurity, paranoia and persecution. These identities challenge in a significant way the celebratory theorisations of Hall (1990), Gilroy (1993) and Bhabha (1994)) who seem convinced that transnational migration generates hybrid identities largely perceived as challenging essentialised organic conceptualisations of self.

It should be underscored that migration and identity in literary and cultural studies have gained importance because of the heightened movement of people and individuals within and across borders that has been facilitated by transnationalism and globalisation (Gupta 1992; Behdad 2000; Brennan 2004; Adeyanju and Oriola 2011). These two forces have significantly eroded the relevance and power of the nation state in terms of policing and controlling the movement of people within and across borders. This argument is reinforced by Elliott and Urry (2010) who note that migration generates massive problems for the sovereignty of modern states which seek to 'govern' or police their populations:

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> The security of states increasingly involves complex control systems of recording, measuring and assessing populations that are intermittently moving, beginning with the system of the humble passport but now involving many elements of a 'digital order' and of temporary camps. Imposing systems of reason on the rapidly moving, the restless and the furtive is especially problematic, as discourses of movement carry much weight in the contemporary historical moment. (p. 17-18)

The nuances and complexities that govern this movement of individuals and people within and across borders and how these movements impact on and relate to identity makes this area fertile ground for intellectual exploration. It is fertile ground given the fact that migration is not just about physical displacement and relocation, as pronounced in the journalistic, sociological and historical narratives on migration (Paton 1995; Mlambo 2010; Crush and Tevera 2010). Instead, migration entails the movement or displacement of the whole being whose dislocation and relocation impacts on his/her psyche, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Given this understanding it is therefore imperative to focus on the often neglected or ignored areas of existence, such as the psychic and emotive well-being of the individual, as a necessary constitutive element of the migratory experience. Migration, especially transnational migration, is ultimately about the collision of cosmological and ontological world views and what obtains as a result of this collision. It is this encounter and collision that has an important bearing on how individuals and people ought to think about their identities. It is also interesting to explore the relationship between migration and identity given that identity is not a given, static and essentialised phenomenon. People's identities change and get reconfigured as they move, relocate and interact with different phenomena. This understanding of identity as not being a given is in line with the idea that identities are constructed historically, culturally and politically and this largely implies agency on the part of individuals engaged in migratory acts (Hall 1990; Woodward 2002). Identities are therefore heavily influenced and impacted upon by the context into which they are put into play and circulation. Woodward (2002) also argues that crisis occurs when an identity position is challenged or becomes insecure, whether at the level of the individual or state and, as will be advanced in this thesis, identity crisis occurs when an individual migrates from one place to

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another. With the onslaught of this identity crisis the individual reacts or acts by rethinking and reconstituting his or her identity. Hall (1990) also argues that at a theoretical level this means grappling with issues of the production of hybrid identities, cosmopolitan citizenship and multiculturalism.

Migration at a more nuanced level becomes heavily implicated in the formation or reformation of identities. It is closely associated with agency as it is predicated on choice and selection as one chooses and selects his or her destination. Viewing identities as primarily premised on roots or origins is deterministic and emphasises perceiving identities as essences and thus the individual is robbed of agency in the formation of his or her new identity. Shohat (1996: 331) however, warns that great caution ought to be exercised in the usage of terms such as hybridity because, as a descriptive 'catch all' term, it fails to discriminate between the diverse modalities of hybridity, such as forced assimilation, internalised self-rejection, political co-option, social conformism and creative transcendence.

Woodward (2002: 52), advancing largely a materialist perspective, argues that migration takes place because of 'pull' or 'push' factors. These factors compel people to leave their homes and the place they leave behind retain symbolic importance in the construction of their new identities. 'Home', as a physical and symbolic space, plays a fundamental role in the construction of identity and, hence, shifts in the way 'home' and 'nation' are conceptualised become critical in the formation of individual, collective and diasporic identities. Woodward (2002: 51) further states that 'home' connotes different things to different people who might have migrated and how they are supposed to relate to this 'home'. 'Home' can connote security and safety or danger and violence and in this respect influences and shapes how individuals relate to home and configure their identities when they migrate. If, for instance, 'home' connotes security and safety, then the longing to return would shape the present and the ways in which people negotiate their identities in relation to what they might become and what they are (Woodward 2002). 'Home', therefore, is central to the desire to stabilise identity and the expression of longing for home can also be interpreted as a need to secure the sense of who we are when our spatial location can be seen as compromising that security. 'Home', however, is not just about the desire or lack of it to return; it is also an important site for the management, transmission and deployment of 'faces' and 'stories' of what people

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back 'home' expect to see and hear. Similarly, Skey (2011: 234), citing Saunders, notes the degree to which being at home makes people 'feel in control of the environment, free from surveillance, free to be themselves and at ease, in the deepest psychological sense'. This apparently quintessential harmony is disrupted, as will be argued in this thesis, in the case of migration, as one encounters and negotiates the lay-out of unfamiliar dwellings, street plans or landscapes, and grapples with the surprises provided by different smells, sounds and sights. It is also equally intriguing to note that the psycho-social benefits of home as a locus of autonomy, constancy, privacy and identity construction can be best evidenced or keenly felt when one is absent or threatened as is the case with migration, especially transnational migration, as evidenced in texts such as *Harare North* (2009) by Chikwava and *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) by Gappah.

I also intend to explore the complexities that govern the relationship between migration and identity. The assumption here is that the Zimbabwean migratory landscape is not an even terrain traversed by a homogenous bloc of people called 'Zimbabweans' as if being 'Zimbabwean' is a unitary, static and essentialised identity (Sithole 1979; Chimedza 2008; Ndlovu 2009; Raftopoulos and Mlambo 2009). Perceiving identities as unitary, static and essences is premised on viewing the nation state as ethnically homogenous. Gilroy (1993) observes that this is tantamount to stipulating that cultures are hermetically sealed off from each other. Gilroy (1993: 3) further notes that this sealing off of cultures from each other creates what he terms as 'cultural insiderism' based on an absolute sense of cultural and ethnic difference. This 'cultural insiderism' in the context of migration, however, becomes a difficult posture to articulate and defend as migration impacts cultures and how they are formulated and constituted.

Behdad (2000) also notes that immigrants occupy a plurality of economic and social positions and these positions are critical variables in the production and formation of plural identities. Behdad (2000: 400) thus observes that movements of postcolonial travellers are over-determined by a broad range of cultural, economic, and political conditions; conditions that can empower some, while oppressing others. Furthermore, Behdad (2000), remarks that the mutable and wavering nature of postcolonial spaces allows for unequal modes of travel and uneven destinies, depending on the travellers' access to power and its discourses. Caution

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however needs to be exercised in understanding these plural identities. Hence, Behdad (2000) draws attention to the discrepancy between salutary explorations of diasporic consciousness by academics, writers and artists and the dead-end itineraries of many immigrants caught in the tailspin of a globalisation that has taken them away from their hopes for upward mobility into the state of economic and political disenfranchisement:

> […] [P]ostcolonial discussions of diaspora have problematically privileged literary and artistic expressions of displacement. Thus, they have constructed salutary models of exile that conflate the experience of the cultural elite with the everyday struggles of the ordinary immigrants-models that fail to address the historical specificities of immigrant lives. (p. 407)

The above view is corroborated by Brennan (2004), who in his discussion of cosmopolitanism fuelled by transmigration, argues that cosmopolitanism sprouts from an already existing culture of intellectuals and middle class travellers, researchers and businessman. Immigrants therefore are not just aged, sexed and raced people but class also plays a pivotal role in privileging or disadvantaging travellers' access to resources of the host country. The tendency, therefore, to view the Zimbabweans' migratory experiences and their subsequent impact on how identities are mediated, contested, negotiated and constituted, whether within or across the borders and boundaries of the country, in unitary, static and essentialised terms will be examined in this thesis.

The nature and characteristics of migration are indeed complex. Loomba (1998: 157) and Woodward (2002: 52) note that migration has different meanings at different historical moments and that the migratory experience, as already highlighted above, is marked by class, gender and racial divides. These divisions are critical variables in the mediation, negotiation, contestation and formation of identities. What is also critical is the understanding that the world is now witnessing the proliferation of transnational circuits that move people, capital, ideas, and information in the context of transnational migration. Furthermore, as noted by Behdad (2000), we are moving to a new kind of social space where the comforting imagery of nation states and national languages, of coherent communities and consistent subjectivities, of dominant centres and distant margins no longer seem adequate. Elliot and Urry's (2010) views also resonate with Behdad (2000) when they state that we now live in an 'intensively

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mobile society' (p. 3) which has significantly transformed the nature of occupations, personal identity and life-strategies. This 'intensively mobile society', which is a product of globalisation, exerts new demands upon the self and its capacities for psychic reorganisation. This understanding of mobility definitely has a heavy bearing on how we conceptualise and understand identities. It thus problematises monolithic, static and homogenous notions of national identity and community as well as the binary opposition of centre and periphery. It is also equally important to note that this 'intensively mobile society' is largely accessible to the few and economically privileged.

There, however, exists no full length study on migration and identity in Zimbabwean imaginative literature. The few available texts largely concentrate on the 'push/pull' factors of migration, which are largely perceived as economic and political factors relating to transnational migration from a historical and sociological perspective (Crush and Tevera 2010). These texts exploit traditional and conventional models and theories of migration, such as the neoclassical economic theory that regards migration as a result of geographic differences in the supply and demand of labour which result in difference in wage rates. Crush and Tevera (2010) relate this migration to the crisis of the nation state and do not link or make a connection between migration and identity in their text. Mawadza and Crush (2010) consider the migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa in the context of how the South African media choose to represent Zimbabweans. Mawadza and Crush (2010: 364) also note that Zimbabwean migration to South Africa is a highly complex and variable phenomenon, but none of this complexity and variability is allowed into the homogenising media discourse targeted at Zimbabweans in the new country. Mawadza and Crush (2010) again fail to clearly establish the link between migration and identity which this thesis intends to do.

Schmidt (1996) looks at the challenges women in colonial Zimbabwe faced at the household level and the strategies that they employed as a means of circumventing and countervailing the challenges posed by colonialism and indigenous patriarchy. One such strategy that was employed successfully by women was migrating to and occupying the urban areas and spaces. Again Schmidt (1996) fails to extend her analysis of this migration to the urban areas to cover impacts on the identities of women involved in the migration. Gaidzanwa (1985) also considers the issue of migration but again the thrust is on how female characters are

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represented in Zimbabwean literature, of which the urban space is one such important area of interest. The urban space is not theorised adequately and so is the way the analysed female characters recreate this space to meet their survival needs and how this ultimately impacts on their identities. What is clearly and surprisingly absent in the literature discussed above is the relationship of migration to identity or how migration impacts on identity. Gaidzanwa (1985) also treats migration in a 'conventional' sense as a largely linear movement of people from the rural to the urban spaces. While this 'conventional' analysis of migration is instructive, it is also obvious, however, fails to adequately capture the nuances of the Zimbabwean migratory experiences, be it that of Zimbabwean women. Migration, thus, can also be read as institutional/class movement and this can take place in the same space. Instead of thinking about migration in terms of the rural/urban and the national/transnational divides, migration can also be conceptualised as rural/rural, urban/rural, urban/urban, transnational/transnational migration and at other metaphoric levels such as psycho-discursive and spiritualised migration. No analysis is available that treats, in a comprehensive manner, these patterns and shifts of the migratory experience and how these movements are related to identity or what they *say* about identity. This study therefore attempts to map out the various nuanced trajectories of migration in Zimbabwean literature occluded in much of the journalistic, sociological and historical narratives of migration. Salazar (2010), in his analysis of how Tanzanians view and imagine migration, argues that migration is much more than mere movement between places. He argues that migration is embedded in deeply engrained but dynamic processes of cultural meaning – making:

> Migration, in the broadest sense, is much more than mere movement between places; it is always embedded in wider processes of meaning –making. In other words, migration in particular and mobility in general are socio – cultural constructs involving important imaginary and discursive dimensions. (Salazar 2010: 6)

1:3 Conceptualising Identity

Critical views postulated by analysts of identity will also be considered in the study. Prominence will be given to the ideas of Hall (1990; 1996), Appiah (1992) and McAdams (2008). Hall (1990) advances the view that identities are not created in a vacuum but are reflective of political, economic and social contexts and considerations. Identities therefore

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are not natural but subjects of social construction and always in the making. Hall (1996: 3) also argues that identity should not be conceptualised as a 'essentialist, but a strategic and positional one'. Hall (1996: 4) further argues that identities are never unified and are:

> Increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

Hall's (1990; 1996) position is augmented by Appiah (1992) who observes that identities are a product of history and that identities are complex, multiple and grow out of a history of changing responses to economic, political, and cultural forces, almost always in opposition to other identities. Dirlik (1998: 226) warns that we need also to take cognisance of the fact that power relations are implicated in identity formation. This conceptualisation is important in determining the strategic and positional nature of identity and is therefore critical to my understanding and conceptualisation of identities especially diasporic ones. The strategic and positional nature of identity, especially in a transnational context gives credence to the fact that identities are largely adaptive, reflexive and flexible ways of survival and in the 'age of advanced globalisation' a creative way of social networking (Elliot and Urry 2010:3).

Perceiving identities on the premise of adaptability, reflexivity and flexibility demonstrates the strategic and positional nature of identity (re)formation, and is also highly suggestive of Goffman's (1959) idea of dramaturgy. Goffman (1959) subscribes to the view that identities are about how one manages his/her impression and chooses to represent himself/ herself to his/her peers and social groups in home and host societies. What is interesting about Goffman's (1959) concept of dramaturgy is that identity is largely perceived as selective *acting* as one tells stories about self that she/he wants people to hear about herself/himself. This concept of dramaturgy is further complicated in the world of advanced globalisation and technology, as attested by the social media platforms such as Facebook, and high communication technologies such as Skype and Google audio and video talk where one can deliberately construct a certain image of self that is marketed and displayed for the consumption of peers and social groups. Therefore, the identities that emerge from such forums do not just bear witness to the fact that identities are strategic and positional but that

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identities are also creations that serve a primordial function of satisfying the exhibitionistic tendencies of human beings and their insatiable need to be appreciated and valorised. It might therefore be instructive to also consider identities as not just socially and historically constructed, strategic and positional but as premised to some extent on (self) deception. Reading identity as premised on (self) deception implies that human beings have a bifurcated sense of self which is dialogic and this should not be interpreted as a sign of mental ill health but as the pre-condition of human existence. The idea of a bifurcated sense of self is not new to identity studies as evidenced by Dubois' (1903) concept of double consciousness and Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism and simultaneity. Understanding identities as grounded to some extent on (self) deception might open new avenues of conceptualising transnational migration and the subsequent identities generated. For example, apart from highlighting the obvious that identities are social and historical constructs, it might be more engaging to consider how migrants produce and manage this bifurcated sense of self. In a text like *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) it might be more rewarding to consider how a character like Lisa or Rambanai in the short story "Something nice from London" and "My cousin sister Rambanai" respectively, live out and manage this bifurcated sense of self.

Castells and Ince (2003) also define identity as the cultural construction of meaning by a social actor. Such a definition of identity is crucial in demonstrating the incompleteness of the process of identity formation since the creation and production of meaning is an ongoing process. Castells and Ince's (2003) definition, if amalgamated with McAdams' (2008) concept of narrative identity yields very interesting conceptualisations of diasporic identities that transcend notions on diasporic identities postulated by critics such as Hall (1990) and Gilroy (1993). Marrying Castells and Ince's (2003) and McAdams (2008) conceptualisations of identity imply that failure in terms of identity construction occurs at the level when an individual ceases to continuously (re) create meaning and tell stories about self. Furthermore, it is precisely at this failure when disjuncture is witnessed and that marginal identities begin to appear. Such disjuncture nevertheless happens not just when an individual ceases to (re) create meaning and tell stories about self but when one is completely overwhelmed by his/her environment and therefore lacks the coherence to author and speak stories about self.

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Identity, especially diasporic ones for Hall (1990), Appiah (1992), Gilroy (1993) and Bhabha (1994), are based on hybridity, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and liminality. We are, in fact, made to think that these diasporic identities are privileged and emancipatory ways of thinking about identities and being in the world. That these hybrid, cosmopolitan, multicultural and liminal identities are positional and strategic is self-evident but I want to propose a more nuanced reading of these diasporic identities whose conclusions slightly depart from the conceptualisations proffered above.

Hybridity, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and liminality in postcolonial theory are valorised conceptual terms whose privileged status is not supposed to be questioned. These terms are usually deployed to counter the menace posed by a supposedly resurfacing or re-emergence of fixed, ahistorical, essentialised and nativist conceptions of self projected in postcolonial theory as principally atavistic and therefore to be shunned at all costs. Hybridity, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and liminality, as terms and concepts that describe and define lived reality, however, are conspicuously discussed and deployed in a context that is apolitical and largely silent about global capitalism (Ahmad 1996; Dirlik 1998). It is also critical to note that these terms are *classed* and a marker of privilege as they usually articulate the situation of 'third world intellectuals' who would have arrived in the first world academe (Dirlik 1998). The transnational migrants, in texts such as *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) and *Harare North* (2009) are largely drawn from underprivileged classes. Therefore, terms and concepts such as hybridity, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and liminality are narrow and limiting ways of perceiving and conceptualising the underprivileged migrants lived experiences.

Dirlik (1998:220), however, notes that in academic circles, engrossed with postmodernity/ postcoloniality as conditions of the present, it is almost a matter of faith these days that nations are 'imagined', traditions are 'invented', subjectivities are slippery and cultural identities are myths. Furthermore, Dirlik (1998:221) argues that the repudiation by postcolonial/ postmodern intellectuals of essentialised identities and authentic pasts seems to culminate in a libertarianism which asserts the possibility of constructing identities and histories almost at will in those 'in-between' spaces that are immune to the burden of the past

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and the present in its attempts at repudiation of 'foundational' structures. To navigate my way between the conflicting positions of, at one end of the spectrum Ahmad (1996) and Dirlik (1998) and on the other end of the spectrum of Hall (1990), Appiah (1992), Gilroy (1993) and Bhabha (1994), I propose reading diasporic identities as also largely premised on essentialised and strategically hybridised identity positioning. It is important to observe that Zimbabweans in foreign spaces, as considered in some of the texts examined here, sometimes for strategic purposes, essentialise their identities and engage in certain rituals, gestures, postures and symbols that reinforce their Zimbabweanness. In some contexts, however, they strategically and purposefully *hybridise* their identities and present themselves as cosmopolitans to gain access to certain resources, such as jobs, that are available in the host country.

1:4 Conceptualising the relationship between migration and identity in Zimbabwe 1980 to 2010

The study is based on a literary survey of the selected Zimbabwean literature that explores the issues of migration (voluntary and involuntary, local and global) and identity (individual and collective). The texts will be subjected to a critical textual analysis that draws on theoretical perspectives by critics such as Goffman (1959), De Certeau (1984), Hall (1990), Lefebvre (1991), McAdams (2008) and Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) that are mostly located in sociological thinking and postcolonial theory. This analysis' major objective is to challenge the conventional reading and understanding of migration as largely linear and a marker of progress, social as well as economic success and extend the reading to include intra-urban mobilities, psycho-discursive migration and spiritualised migration. In doing so the thesis considers a number of questions such as: What are the shifts and patterns of the Zimbabweans' migratory experiences that are represented in Zimbabwean literature from 1980 - 2010? How does globalisation impact on the nation state, migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature? What is the relationship between gender and migration in Zimbabwean literature and how does it impact on identity formation? What are the different spaces that migrants enter into and how do they relate to these spaces? What new forms of agency and identities are constituted from the migratory encounters? Therefore, the thesis examines literature that explores Zimbabweans' migration from 1980 to 2010 in an attempt to map the various patterns and shifts of this migration and how it has impacted on their identities.

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In Chapter 2, I examine Tendayi Westerhof's *Unlucky in Love* (2005) and Valerie Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). The chapter endeavours to problematise the linear narrative of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwean literature. These linear narratives exemplified by Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996) largely ignore the influence of space in the negotiation and mediation of migrant identities. The two texts, *Unlucky in Love* (2005) and *Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), offer an experiential dimension lacking in sociological, journalistic and historical narratives of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe. This linear narrative largely conceptualises migration as physical movement and fails to highlight the more subtle complexities of migration in Zimbabwe. However, a more nuanced approach to migration in Zimbabwe encompasses intra-urban mobility which is omitted in the linear narratives of rural–urban migration. The chapter advances the view that rural–urban migration is mainly a consequence of colonialism that mapped out and divided space into rural and urban areas. Furthermore, this division did not cease with the attainment of independence.

In Chapter 3, I examine Daniel Mandishona's *Black Demons White Gods* (2009) and Orner and Holmes's (Eds.) *Hope Deferred* (2010). In my analysis of both texts I consider the idea that crisis in the nation- state is a critical catalyst for migration and the subsequent de/reconstruction of identities. I also consider and critically engage with the 'common sense' obvious assumption that the nation-state's internal factors account for migration, be it at a local or global level. I also endeavour to transcend views that conceptualise the nation-state as a unit of analysis and consider the 'crises' that propelled Zimbabweans to migrate either into the towns or foreign countries, from an awareness of the current geopolitical world that is dominated by global capitalism.

Chapter 4 offers a gendered analysis of the relationship between migration and identity. I attempt to provide critical knowledge that is often ignored in most studies on migration which tend to gloss over issues of gender and in the process giving prominence only to class and race. In this chapter I examine Chinodya's *Chairman of Fools* (2005) and Hoba's *The Trek and other stories* (2009).

In Chapter 5, I advance, in my discussions, the view that migration and identity are topical issues in a time of 'crisis' such as the one generated by HIV and AIDS. The impact of HIV and AIDS, as a crisis, offers unique insights on how migration and identity are

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conceptualised. I argue that HIV and AIDS present a unique case of spiritualised, dialogic and discursive migration where infected individuals to survive HIV and AIDS recreate survivalist identities and start to live positively. These ideas will be applied to Shaba's *The secrets of a woman's soul* (2005).

Chapter 6 examines Lang's *Place of Birth* (2006) and Rogers's *The Last Resort: A Memoir of Zimbabwe* (2009). It is also critical at this point to note that Zimbabwean literature has largely been read and interpreted from a polarised perspective with prominence being given to black writing in English (Primorac 2006). This tendency, as Primorac (2006) observes, has resulted in the peripherisation of other narratives of the Zimbabwean story. Zimbabwean literature has been defined and understood from an Afrocentric and Marxist position and as Primorac (2006) notes this can be a form of censorship as other narratives that do not subscribe to the hegemonic discourses of Afrocentricism and Marxism are marginalised in the academic practice of interpretation of the Zimbabwean story. White writers in Zimbabwean literature have been marginalised in conventional scholarly activities and their stories of migration and identity have also suffered the same fate. I therefore intend to incorporate such literature in my study and in the process endeavour to have a holistic portrayal of the migratory experiences and subsequent identity politics in Zimbabwe.

In Chapter 7, I focus on Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) and Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009). These texts largely concentrate on transnational migration which was accentuated by the deepening crisis of the Zimbabwean nation state. I therefore seek to explore the global dimensions of Zimbabwean migration and how it has impacted and, in a way, transformed the way we think about identities. It is also in this chapter where I analyse strategic 'hybridised' identities predicated on the management and deployment of performed identities. I mainly focus on the ideas postulated by Goffman (1959), McAdams (2008) and Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) in my conceptualisation of these identities. These identities are largely based on restlessness, anxiety, paranoia and a sense of persecution and the production as well as circulation of these identities, which challenge, in a significant way, the valorisation of migrancy in postcolonial theory.

Chapter 8 concludes the study.

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Chapter 2: Rural-urban migration and unstable identities in Tendayi Westerhof's *Unlucky in Love* and Valerie Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope*

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter examines Tendayi Westerhof's *Unlucky in Love* and Valerie Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope*. The chapter endeavours to problematise the linear narrative of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwean literature. This linear narrative exemplified by Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996) largely ignores the influence of space in the negotiation and mediation of migrant identities. Both *Unlucky in Love* and *Uncertainty of Hope*, thus offer an experiential one dimension concept lacking in sociological, journalistic and historical narratives of rural-urban Zimbabwe's migration. This rural-urban migration narrative largely conceptualises migration as physical movement and fails to highlight the less overt complexities of migration in Zimbabwe. A more nuanced approach to migration in Zimbabwe encompasses intra-urban mobility which is omitted in the linear narratives of rural–urban migration. The chapter advances the view that rural–urban migration is mainly a consequence of colonialism that curved out and divided space into rural and urban areas and this division did not cease with the attainment of independence. Significant to observe is the fact that space is not just physical but also ideological and discursive and is prone to negotiation and contestation. Viewing space as subject to negotiation and contestation is thus highly instructive in conceptualising intra-urban mobilities.

I also argue that the transgression of spatial boundaries is reflective of either upward or downward economic and social mobility. It is also imperative to note that this transgression is not just physical but metaphorically represents ideological and discursive mobilities. Consequently, critical to our understanding of rural-urban migration is the way one imagines and conceptualises space. I will also contend that space is central in influencing and defining one's aspirations, dreams, ambitions and hopes as depicted in *Unlucky in Love* and *Uncertainty of Hope*. In my conceptualisation of space I rely on the ideas of De Certeau (1984), Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1996). Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1996) advance the view that space is a social construct that contains social relations of production and reproduction. It is equally important to note that migrants do not approach space as passive people but actively engage in reconfiguring space to meet their needs and aspirations. De

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Certeau's (1984) ideas on tactics assist in my analysis of how urban dwellers reconfigure their spaces to reflect and meet their interests. I also deploy Urry (2000) and Elliot and Urry's (2010) concept of mobilities in my understanding of intra-urban mobilities.

2.1 Urbanisation, space and rural-urban migration

Urbanisation, which prompted rural-urban migration, is a direct consequence of colonialism and as Mitchell (Harvey 1996:224) argues, colonialism refers not simply to the establishment of a European presence 'but also the spread of a political order that inscribes in the social world a new conception of space'. Mamdani (1996) observes that colonialism led to the creation of the rural-urban dichotomy on the African geopolitical landscape. This division was a deliberate ploy of the European colonisers to entrench further their economic and political interests. Noyes (Primorac 2006: 58) notes that a key aspect of colonialism is the establishment of spatial boundaries and the rules of their crossing. The created spatial boundaries were accorded differential treatment in terms of development. As a result, the urban space was more developed at the expense of the rural one. This is one example among others that testifies to the unevenness of colonial development. This differential treatment meant that the urban space was culturally and imaginatively projected as the locale where one witnesses 'modernity' and hence space that is 'civilised'. In juxtaposition to the urban space is the rural environment chiefly envisioned as the embodiment of 'tradition' and therefore 'backward' and 'primitive'. This marginalisation of rural areas precipitated the migration of people from rural spaces to urban ones in search of employment and better opportunities.

I also want to draw attention to the fact that colonialism is fundamentally predicated on Manichaeism. This Manichaeism is also manifest in the colonial spatial configurations. Fanon (1961) observes thus:

> The 'native' sector is not complementary to the European sector […] The colonist's sector is a sector built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed- of leftovers […] The colonised sector, or at least the 'native' quarters, the

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> shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people. (p. 4)

This Manichaeism is not just spatial as reflected in the rural-urban divide but also manifests itself in the mapping out of territories into settler and native lands. The natives had their fertile lands violently and forcefully expropriated and were driven into arid and barren lands as aptly depicted in Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1975) and Hove's *Bones* (1988). This spatial division was not just physical but entailed divisions and differences of an ideological, moral and discursive nature.

Furthermore, Hanna and Hanna (1981) note that imperial actions influenced or determined the early growth of many African cities. This influence included the geographic location and architectural layout of the African cities. Murray and Myers (2006: 12) argue that the mapping of empire involved more than cartographic exercises in charting empty spaces, and constructing topographical surveys as it also:

> entailed the implementation of urban planning schemes where ideas of racial segregation functioned as the principal mechanism for the physical separation and division of urban space. The cartographic imagination of European colonial rule was responsible not only for the original physical layout and division of urban space of many cities in Africa, but also helped to create much of the sense of city-ness on the continent.

This resonates with Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni's (1999:3) view that urban settlements were developed as part of the process of establishing an administrative and political structure for colonial rule. The early forms of urban structures in Zimbabwe such as Fort Tuli, Fort Victoria, Fort Charter and Fort Salisbury, were indeed built as camps, military settlements and forts, and were best suited for surveillance and economic exploitation. In addition, Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999) argue that as the structures of urban settlements developed, the guiding principles of town planning in the built environment emphasised differentiation, domination and accumulation. Yoshikuni (1999) states that in its origin, functions, form and power structure, the southern African town was thoroughly European. Yoshikuni (1999)

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argues further that the urban environment did have interactions with African societies from the very beginning as these societies came under colonial rule and provided labour for the colonial economy. Moreover, the colonial urban space was supposed to be the 'the temporary place of work to be occupied so long as the labour functions were performed' (p. 4) by the African. As a result, transgressions of the colonial borders were witnessed even though the guiding principles of town planning, during colonialism emphasised segregation.

As an environment that emphasised 'differentiation, domination and accumulation' the urban space should be perceived as premised on heterogeneity (Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni 1999:3). This heterogeneity, however, does not imply evenness or sameness in difference or diversity since some spatial configurations and locations are more privileged than others within the same urban space. Moreover, space is hierarchical as some spaces are conceptualised as better and superior to others. This ranking of space is not just physical but also has moral overtones as some spaces are considered more respectable than others. The colonially mapped urban space thus segregates, compartmentalises and divides people along racial, gender and class lines. Nevertheless, Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999) note that the colonised African workers engaged in decisive economic, political and cultural interventions which challenged colonial surveillance and established spaces of creative intervention thus marking the beginning of processes seeking to claim the city as home. These processes of claiming the city as home are reflective of De Certeau's (1984: xxi-xxii) concept of tactics where people fill the streets:

> with the forests of their desires and goals [...] and on the many ways of establishing a kind of reliability within the situations imposed on an individual, that is of making it possible to live in them by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires-an art of manipulating and enjoying.

This entails contestation and negotiation for space within the city and implies the non-existence of a uniform, single and homogenous urban space and is thus suggestive of Lefebvre's (1991) understanding of space as a social product that is not absolute. The concept, therefore, of plural and overlapping urban spaces is thus more appropriate as it accommodates intra-urban migration not captured in the linear narrative of rural-urban migration as exemplified by Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996).

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Bourdillon (1993: 3) observes that most Africans associated the urban space with ambivalence during colonialism. This ambivalence is captured in literary texts such as *House of Hunger* (1978) and *Without a Name* (1994) where the city is largely depicted as a symbol of 'the wickedness of the new age which had been inflicted on African society' (Zhuwarara 2001:14) but at the same time offering opportunities, although limited, of upward economic and social mobility to the African. Thus, the urban space is conceived as offering a temporary respite from the ravages of poverty while 'home' is conceptualised as the rural areas. Nonetheless, some Africans considered their movement to urban areas as permanent and therefore perceived the urban space as 'home'. This ambivalence still exists but is no longer pronounced as it was during colonialism as many people now regard both towns and cities as home although with different levels of attachment. Bourdillon (1993) asserts further that the cities provide new patterns of social mixing and new ways of behaviour. Therefore, these new patterns and ways of social mixing and behaviour are largely a product of the various strategies put in place by urban dwellers to survive in an urban setting. He also notes that the city can offer a variety of opportunities and new ways of life provided that people have the courage to adapt and change. Importantly, the rural-urban dichotomy resulting from the colonial project is an exploitative one that continues to bedevil the African postcolony. Hanna and Hanna (1981) argue that the spatial concentration of colonialists, as well as the socio-economic correlates, distorted the African national political economy in ways that contributed to a perpetuation of dependent underdevelopment after national independence.

Urbanisation in Zimbabwe was not just racialised but was also much gendered. Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996) note that urbanisation in Zimbabwe was characterised by the migration of young adult males into towns, farms and mines. Scarnecchia (1999) observes that during colonialism male migrant population dominated the urban space. While Gaidzanwa (1985) takes a sociological comparative approach to the images of Zimbabwean women in literature in the urban and rural areas, she, however, fails to establish how women in urban areas utilised the urban environment to socialise and live. However, rural-urban migration should not be interpreted to imply that the linkages between the rural and urban areas are broken. Rather, as argued by Potts (2008), rural-urban linkages, just as both cultural and economic factors in Zimbabwe and sub Saharan Africa in general, are still of great importance. Furthermore, Potts (2008: 54) notes that the links between rural and urban areas

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have been revitalised by the increasing poverty and vulnerable livelihoods that have become typical of the poor who dominate city populations.

This chapter also attempts to highlight that rural-urban migration ought to be approached as place-making, focusing on ways of adapting and approaching urban spaces according to the migrants' own values and uses as they 'privilege, transform and abandon spatial elements' (De Certeau 1984: 98). This seeks to restore the migrant's agency, noticeable in their ability to negotiate their identity and employ various strategies to make sense of their presence in a 'foreign' space. Given the centrality of space to the migrant experience it is important to consider the management of space in the mediation, contestation and negotiation of identities. This kind of analysis is lacking in Zimbabwean literature. Moreover, it is important to note that 'migrations' across institutional/class borders is an area that has not received critical attention. I also intend to approach urban spaces in Zimbabwe as social constructs. Lefebvre (1991) argues that space as a social product serves as a tool of thought and of action and that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, domination and power. There is, therefore, need to transcend viewing space as merely an 'objective physical surface with fixed characteristics upon which social categories are mapped out' (Primorac 2006:59) to perceiving space as both a social product and a shaping force in social life. Primorac (2006) notes further that empty space, pre-existing the social relations of production and reproduction does not exist as space embodies and enacts social relationships. Harvey (1996) therefore argues that space is not an independent reality but is a product of relations derived from historical and social processes and events. Space as shaped by 'processes and events' (Harvey 1996:256) imply that using De Certeau's (1984) concept of tactics it can be reconfigured and is malleable.

2. 2 Tendayi Westerhof - *Unlucky in Love*

2. 2. 1 Exiting constricting spaces: paradoxes of mobilities in *Unlucky in Love*

As argued above, the phenomenon of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe did not originate with the independence of Zimbabwe. It was a well-established phenomenon that only got accentuated with the independence of the country. During colonialism Africans would migrate from rural areas into urban environments in search of better working and living conditions. This movement, therefore, needs to be read as transgressions of spatial boundaries

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at a physical, ideological or discursive level. Rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe is symptomatic of the unevenness of development as depicted in Zimbabwean literature such as *Bones* (1988) and *Without a Name* (1994). Mazvita, the protagonist in *Without a Name*, migrates from her home to the colonial farm and ultimately the Rhodesian city. Marita, in *Bones* also moves from a colonial farm to the city in independent Zimbabwe where she finally dies. Zimbabwe, therefore, is supposed to be perceived as made up of many spaces which are not uniform. Migration in this context is not just physical movement but is in itself a political statement of the unevenness of development in Zimbabwe.

Unlucky in Love by Tendayi Kateketa Westerhof explores the experiences of Rumbidzai, a single mother of four who has had several failed relationships with men as she confesses, 'Looking back, I think it's fair to say that I've been unlucky in love, but lucky in life, oh yes, very lucky' (p. 1). The text is in the autobiographical mode and attempts to narrate Rumbidzai's experiences from childhood to adulthood. However, central to the narration is mobility and how it impacts on Rumbidzai's experiences and identity. The text offers a classic example of rural-urban migration in post-independence Zimbabwe and the challenges associated with the negotiation and contestation for and of space and identity in Zimbabwe.

The rural space and Rumbidzai's experiences of and within this space are perceived as having been largely astringent in retrospect. Nonetheless, this space is seen as offering the narrator an innocent and happy childhood:

> I had an innocent and happy rural childhood at my grandparents homestead in the small scale farming areas of Nyahunda in Bikita, a dry place where the rains were never certain [...] I lived a typical village life, spending my days out with my two brothers herding the goats and the cattle and sometimes catching rabbits or mice in the bush for super. We hunted for wild fruits like matamba and matohwe and my brothers showed me how to harvest honey. (p. 34)

The 'innocent' and 'happy' childhood the author reminiscences about is mainly a product of how most people view rural life. Rural life is conceptualised as symbolising Plato's cavemen blissfully 'happy' and 'innocent' in their ignorance of the outside world. Nevertheless,

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Rumbidzai's childhood is characterised by poverty and her brothers 'slept on the floor and went bare foot all the time' (p. 34) and would huddle 'together under a single blanket and we were always cold' (p. 34) in winter. This village life is also depicted as tough as Rumbidzai and her brothers walked ten kilometres to school, 'Looking back, school was a bit like hard labour' (p. 35). Her schooling in the rural areas is sharply contrasted with the experiences of her children who had a 'relaxed atmosphere' (p. 35) in the urban schools they attended and the hardest task they had to do 'is play hockey or attend a swimming gala' (p. 35). Consequently, life in the city is perceived as much easier when contrasted to that in the rural areas. However, playing 'hockey' or attending a 'swimming gala' (p. 35) are games and activities largely associated with the elite in society. Therefore, the children's life she describes is a privileged one enjoyed by a few in this and a real Zimbabwe. The fact that her children play 'hockey' and attend a 'swimming gala' also underscores her upward economic and social mobility and status.

Rural life is also portrayed as having clear cut gender boundaries. The narrator notes that 'girls must learn to polish floors with cow dung, to sweep the yard and pound dried mealies and rapoko and even to make home-brewed African beer' (p. 35). In contra-distinction, boys are expected to herd cattle and plough the fields with oxen. This implies that the rural areas are still very much under the control of traditional patriarchal beliefs. It is also instructive that space is not just physical here as it is also demarcated in an ideological and discursive sense along gender and sexuality lines. The domestic space is thus the preserve of women while the public space is the province of men and this corroborates well Harvey's (1996: 228) understanding that the 'production of space is the production of sexuality and of gender roles'. Fascinatingly, this gender division in the city is destabilised as women are principally economically independent and enterprising as exemplified by Rumbidzai who engages in various economic activities such as fashion modelling and opening a beauty salon to better herself. The rural life premised on 'innocence', 'happiness' and clear-cut gender boundaries that Rumbidzai depicts is largely a product of colonial discourses that sought to situate and confine the African within the boundaries of rural spaces. These discourses perceive rural areas as offering an idyllic life to the African that is ruptured by the city and its attendant evils. According to this paradigm the city is perceived as being inherently disruptive of the African way of life. Rural life, as described by Rumbidzai, is mostly insulated from the

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influences of the city and thus a clear divide between rural and urban spaces is witnessed. However, this divide has been disrupted by developments in the transport, information and communication sectors as rural dwellers today are exposed to an urban life through appropriations of the media.

2. 2.2 Rural-peri-urban migration

The first step out of this cocoon offered by the rural life presents itself in the form of migration. In this case migration is presented as offering new avenues of life. Rumbidzai's family moves from Nyahunda to Ndarama Mine to reunite with their father, a worker at Ndarama. In the conventional narration of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe, movement from a rural area to a peri-urban setting is largely ignored (Gaidzanwa 1985; Schmidt 1996). Ndarama is a mining community along the Kwekwe-Harare road. This implies that space, in the study of Zimbabwean migration, plays a crucial role in determining identities and the upward or downward economic and social mobility of individuals. Rumbidzai observes that the accommodation at Ndarama Mine was:

> made up of blocks of flats where each family was allocated one room. My father had already strung up a curtain across one end of the room which contained a single bed and this was where our parents would sleep. We children would sleep on our blankets on the other side and the kitchen and washing facilities were in a communal block in separate building. (p. 37)

The general mine workers' life is shown to be harsh and constricting as symbolised by the one room allocated to the family. Space, therefore, plays a critical role in determining the freedom of an individual. Rumbidzai conceives of life at the mine as limiting and this is metaphorically represented through the asphyxiating 'one room' (p. 37) allowed to the family. I therefore argue that this 'one room' (p. 37) is reflective of the economic and social status of the family on the mining compound.

Migration, I postulate, is not just physical movement from one place to another but can be read also as downward or upward economic and social mobility. This is testified when Rumbidzai's father is promoted. As a consequence of the promotion the family moves from their humble abode to a better accommodation with some respect for privacy. As Rumbidzai narrates, the family moves into one of the 'management houses' that has 'four rooms all to

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ourselves' with a 'tiny kitchenette and a built in wood stove, as well as our own shower and toilet' (p. 38). Consequently, Rumbidzai conceptualises the family's upward economic and social mobility in spatial terms. The widening of space from 'one room' (p. 37) to 'four rooms' (p. 38) is illustrative of the latitude afforded the family as a result of the father's promotion. This sudden freedom and signs of respect are best captured in the sense of pride and joy that the narrator feels and is exemplified by the fact that the family now had 'four rooms all to ourselves' (p. 38). I also argue that the spatial reconfiguration from 'one room' to 'four rooms' has a direct impact on the identity of Rumbidzai and the family as they now belong to the elite of the mining community who stay in the 'management houses'. Thus, Harvey (1996:248) argues that the conception of the human body, of self, subjectivity, value, identity, and social being depends upon definitions of space and time. The spatial implications for the family, as a consequence of the father's promotion, also results in the family's enjoyment of certain privileges associated with the elite of this mining community. In highlighting that the family had now its own 'shower and toilet' (p. 38) Rumbidzai draws our attention to the fact that space does not just reflect position and privilege but also represents value. This is a value through which we ascribe certain spaces with respectability or disrespectability and thus imbue spaces with ethical considerations and implications. Life at Ndarama Mine is therefore depicted as dissimilar and this is largely accounted for in terms of class and spatial positioning. The father's promotion at Ndarama Mine results in the production of an elite identity for the family.

The status of Rumbidzai's mother after the promotion is instructive. She uses the wooden stove that comes with the upward economic and social mobility of the family and the constituted and conferred elite identity to bake and sell homemade cakes. This further enhances and accentuates the family's upward mobility and status. The end result is an improvement in their lives as Rumbidzai notes:

> So with all our efforts our lives were slowly improving. We now had proper furniture in our house even if most of it was second hand and then when I was twelve, our father gave us the best surprise by bringing home a black and white TV. The evening we sat and watched our first programmes on that TV I knew I was going places and

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began to dream of one day being the glamorous woman who introduced the programmes. (p. 38)

The tone of the language used by Rumbidzai is suggestive of the importance of upward economic and social mobility. Mobility is largely perceived as linear and upward and is metonymic of progress. Rumbidzai observes that because of the family's efforts they now had 'proper furniture' (p. 38) in the house. However, the 'best surprise' (p. 38) for the family was when Rumbidzai's father brought home a black and white television. Thus, the family's upward mobility is testified by the family having property epitomised by the black and white television which symbolises prestige and status.

I now want to draw attention to the collapse of boundaries in the rural and urban divide provoked by technology. Television is not just emblematic of economic and social upward mobility but is also a powerful metaphor of the invasion and transgression of spaces by information, technology, communication and other worlds. The rural-urban divide is thus collapsed as a result of technology. Moreover, this collapse is largely skewed in favour of urbanity as it is the urban space that encroaches into rural spaces. Television allows Rumbidzai the opportunity to engage in imaginative travel. Urry (2000: 70) notes that television brings into the home images of other places which provide 'a kind of imaginative travel which is complexly intertwined with many processes of corporeal travel'. Subsequently, expectations, hopes and identities are reconfigured as testified by Rumbidzai. She dreams of one day becoming the 'glamorous woman who introduced the programmes' (p. 38) on the television. The desire to become a 'glamorous woman' might have motivated Rumbidzai later in life to become a successful fashion model. Paradoxically her desire might also partly explain her unsuccessful relationships with men and ultimately her infection with HIV as explained later.

The tone of the language used by Rumbidzai is also significant in highlighting the transgression of spaces and boundaries. The female presenter on television is not only a woman but a 'glamorous' (p. 38) one. Television is thus depicted as the site for the (re) presentation of 'glamorous' people and if she is to be on television, Rumbidzai must be glamorous too. In addition, television also plays a crucial role in reconfiguring our gender roles, expectations and identities. Interestingly, despite its capacity to collapse or conflate

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boundaries between urban and rural spaces, television can also widen the gap between urban and rural areas through exposing the limitations of rural life. In fact, Urry (2000) asserts that television helps in facilitating imaginative mobilities and argues further that as a result of television:

> distant events, personalities and happenings are mundanely brought into the living room and transform everyday life. As a consequence we imagine ourselves sharing events, experiences and personalities with many others, with whom we constitute certain kinds of community (p. 68).

This resonates with the way Rumbidzai reinforces the attitudes and perceptions of a rural or peri-urban character who subscribes to the view that urban life offers better opportunities in life compared to the rural or peri-urban spaces.

The family's upward economic and social mobility and constitution of an elite identity is linked to the transgressing of spaces. Space at the mining compound ought to be approached as heterogeneous as the workers are differently located. These spaces are accorded different value as some spaces are considered to be more privileged than others. The father's promotion at Ndarama Mine thus acts as the motive for the family's upward economic and social mobility. Thus, with this mobility, augmented by the efforts of the enterprising mother, the family enjoys a better life compared to their earlier life where they shared 'one room' (p. 37). This mobility has ramifications in the way the family now perceives itself and others.

The crossings over of the rural and urban borders however are not always beneficial. It is at Ndarama Mine that the narrator is introduced to a seamy life characterised by drunkenness and debauchery:

> But when a music group from Harare came to play, somehow my mother convinced father that I should be allowed to go so to sell hard-boiled eggs and other snacks to make extra money. I always made sure I sold all my goods so that he would have no excuse to stop me from going. How I enjoyed those evenings, listening to some of Zimbabwe's most famous musicians and watching people have fun and occasionally make fools of themselves. It was always embarrassing to see men my father's age

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> chasing after young girls and staggering around the dance floor when they had several too many beers or too much chibuku. (p. 38)

More so, boys her age were allowed to venture into such spaces as they 'were allowed to do what they liked' (p. 38). Therefore, space might be demarcated on the basis of gender and age as evidenced in the way the girl child was not expected to attend the various musical shows at the mine. In this sense space ceases to be just physical but discursive also. At certain discursive levels women are not permitted access as such spaces are deemed improper for them. I also argue that space is not just a physical location but metaphorically embraces familial relations. Within this space, the girl child is depicted as a constricted person. Given the patriarchal nature of most African societies it is not surprising that Rumbidzai is not permitted to attend such events. Familial relations in a patriarchal society are hierarchical with the father at the apex and the girl child at the lowest rung of the ladder. However, this familial space has no rigid boundaries as migrations in terms of gender roles and expectations are possible. This is largely depicted in an urban environment and mainly perceived as an ambivalent space that offers exhilarating possibilities of freedom, as exemplified by the 'glamorous woman' (p. 38), and at the same time a site of moral corruption as emblematised by the debauchery associated with the musical shows at Ndarama Mine. The fact that Rumbidzai admires and envies the 'glamorous woman' on television demonstrates that she is aware of the possibilities available to women in an urban environment. Importantly, space should be conceptualised also as constituted of private and public spheres. These facets of space have borders that demarcate them. However, these borders are not permanent as migrations between the personal and the public are possible, as indicated by Rumbidzai's public disclosure of her HIV positive status.

I also contend that the family at Ndarama mine has better survival strategies as compared to life in Nyahunda in Bikita. Life at Nyahunda is projected as bleak. Conversely, Rumbidzai's mother engages in various activities to assist in the upward economic and social mobility of the family and the maintenance of their elite identity at Ndarama mine. Consequently, the family becomes the best dressed in the compound:

> Ever thinking of better ways to make money my mother was now travelling to Botswana to buy clothes there for resale in the compound. This was much more

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> profitable than selling vegetables or even baking cakes and we were now among the best dressed children in the compound. (p. 39)

The Ndarama mining community is therefore depicted as offering better opportunities of upward economic and social mobility in contrast to life in the rural areas of Nyahunda which are largely perceived as constricting. Further migration for the family ensues. The family moves from Ndarama Mine to Rujeko Mine in Kadoma but it is here at Rujeko Mine that Rumbidzai's father is diagnosed with cancer. The fortunes of the family take a downhill turn owing to the father's illness and the attendant reduction in salary. Accordingly, Rumbidzai's mother is again forced to bake and sell cakes to augment the family's income. I therefore argue that selling of cakes by Rumbidzai's mother to supplement the family's income is here metaphoric of the downward economic and social mobility of the family induced by the father's illness. This downward economic and social mobility attests to the fact that the family's economic and social mobility in the text is not even or stable. The elite identity that had been assumed at Ndarama Mine is threatened. The illness and eventual death of Rumbidzai's father generates unstable and restless identity for the family as depicted in the displacement of Rumbidzai to Harare where she stays with relatives.

2.2.3 Peri-urban to urban migration

Rumbidzai heads for Harare from Rujeko Mine in Kadoma to pursue Secretarial Studies. In a sense Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city, is the ultimate and final destination of the narrator. However, it is critical to note that Harare is not an even space as the different locations that make up Harare are largely economically determined and reflect one's status in society. In Harare she initially stays with her relatives and is quickly disabused of the idea that city life is 'glamorous'. She observes that the city is a place where traditional values largely no longer have a hold on urban dwellers. The hospitality that used to define and characterise African traditional life and crystallised in the concept of the extended family is no longer tenable in an urban environment. This is depicted in Rumbidzai's statement that:

> There was no way I could burden her further by telling her the problems I was facing living with my uncle's family. People often talk of the extended family in idealistic terms- and I know that in the past when everyone lived in the villages it was an

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> important survival tool but in the towns it doesn't work so well. People often exploit their relatives or are in turn exploited by them, especially today when a family's entire resources can be swallowed up by the need to support the children of a deceased brother, leaving your children with that much less. (p. 41-42)

Bourdillon (1993), commenting on the concept of the extended family in an urban setting, notes that urban dwellers are less 'hospitable towards each other, and less supportive' (p. 27). This lack of hospitality is chiefly a result of the precariousness of most urban dwellers' life and that the dwellers are in most cases not economically secure. Bourdillon (1993) thus observes that the move from an economy based on agriculture to a cash economy has put restraints on hospitality. The life of the urban dwellers is economically and ontologically insecure and this insecurity has been worsened by the political and economic crisis that has bedevilled Zimbabwe since 2000 as depicted in stories such as 'My cousin sister Rambanai', 'Something nice from London' and 'An elegy for easterly' in Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly*, and Tshuma's 'Arrested Development', Eppel's 'The awards ceremony' and Chingono's 'Bus fare' in Morris' *Long Time Coming* and Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope*, discussed below. The reluctance to be hospitable to Rumbidzai is worsened by the suspicions her uncle's wife harbours as she thinks that Rumbidzai was being too familiar with her husband:

> My uncle's wife was jealous of me. She saw the way her husband looked at me and she didn't like the way we joked together. In truth there was nothing untoward in it, but she felt I was too familiar with her husband. (p. 42)

Therefore, migration results in the collision of cultural values as the traditional values valorised in a rural area are not largely compatible with an urban setting. Rumbidzai engages in an innocuous flirtatious behaviour with her uncle which in a rural place would have been in order but in an urban environment, this behaviour is frowned upon. Subsequently, Rumbidzai is forced to move out and reside in Highfield, another working class suburb, with her mother's sister. The intra-urban mobility she engages in thus becomes constitutive of the desperate and restless identity she assumes in Harare. This desperate and restless identity is worsened as Rumbidzai's mother is no longer able to pay her school fees as her father's salary had been reduced again. Her desperation and restlessness is magnified when she is subjected and rejects the sexual advances of her uncle. The uncle demands sexual favours from Rumbidzai as

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compensation for her free lodging. Again this is testimony to the fact that the concept of the extended family in urban areas has been heavily compromised as the very people, as exemplified by the narrator's uncle, who are supposed to exercise hospitality are largely depicted as preying on the vulnerability of defenceless young female individuals like Rumbidzai:

> And now I had real problems... my aunt's husband- a man I didn't like even the first time I met him, had taken to sitting close to me at every opportunity. Then one evening as I was coming home along the dark lane on my way back from college, I found him waiting for me. 'What are you doing here? I asked aggressively. 'Oh come on now, don't be like that.' He said, moving closer to me. 'You know I like you. How about a kiss. Just a little kiss?'[...] 'Don't forget I'm paying for your lodging. I should get something in return! (p. 42)

The above cited desperation and restlessness reflected in Rumbidzai's heightened intra-urban mobilities are critical in the formation and reformation of unstable and dislocated identities. Elliot and Urry (2010: 7) note that the paradigm of mobilities is becoming increasingly central to contemporary identity formation and reformation in their statement: 'We argue that the most consequential feature of accelerated mobilities for people's lives is the recasting of identity in terms of flexibility, adaptability and instant transformation'. However, this proves to be a sanitary view of the impact of mobilities on identity for, as evidenced by Rumbidzai's experiences, some mobilities lack the likely positive transformation but result in the generation of unstable and dislocated identities. Her heightened intra-urban mobilities do not bring stability but complicates further her life until she finally becomes HIV positive. In addition, contrary to the postulation by Bauman (Elliot and Urry 2010: 9) that mobility is one of the most 'coveted values', Rumbidzai's intra-urban mobilities, the movement from one relative to another and from Nyahunda to Ndarama to Kadoma to Harare to Maputo to South Africa and Dubai do not induce stability and a sense of rootedness to a place and are largely not a consequence of her own volition. Rumbidzai's life and her intra-urban mobilities challenge also Elliot and Urry's (2010: 10) theorisation of mobilities as 'a fundamental indicator of achieving 'the good life'. Indeed, we might say that multiple mobilities have become the drivers of symbolic power, bodily habituses and pleasure seeking lifestyles'.

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Unfortunately, this theorisation of mobilities is largely utopic as attested by the experiences of individuals like Rumbidzai who do not derive pleasure or a sense of comfort or security from their mobilities.

I also intend to read the narrator's mobilities drawing on Elliot and Urry's (2010) concept of 'network capital'. Elliot and Urry (2010) define network capital as a fundamental aspect of current social processes that lies at the core of generating novel experiences in distant places and with others at- a- distance. Elliot and Urry (2010:10-11) argue that there are eight core elements to the constitution and reproduction of network capital, which are firstly an array of appropriate documents, visas, money, qualifications that enable safe movement of one's body from one place, city, country to another; secondly there is need for others (workmates, friends and family members) at-a-distance who offer invitations, hospitality and meetings, so that places and networks are maintained through intermittent visits and communications. Thirdly, there is need for movement capacities in relationship to the environment: to walk distances within different environments and to be able to see and board different means of mobility and to be able to carry or move baggage and have readable timetabled information. Fourthly, it is also important to have location-free information and contact points, fixed or moving sites where information and communications can arrive, be stored and retrieved. Fifthly, it is crucial to have communication devices so as to make and remake arrangements, especially on the move and in conjunction with others who may also be on the move. As a sixth core element, it is vital to have an appropriate, safe and secure place both en route and at the destination which ensure that the body is not exposed to physical or emotional violence. Crucial to the seventh core element is access to transportation and the last core element is to have time and other resources to manage and coordinate the other seven core elements, especially when there is a system failure. However, the element that elicits interest and is related to Rumbidzai and her experiences is the second element 'others'. Elliot and Urry (2010: 10) note that 'others' refers to 'workmates, friends and family members' who at-a-distance offer invitations, hospitality and meetings 'so that places and networks are maintained through intermittent visits and communications' (p. 10).

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This second core element 'others' is generated by Rumbidzai's father. The father is portrayed as a close friend of Baba Chenai who was his boss at Ndarama Mine and it is Baba Chenai who comes to the aid of Rumbidzai and offers her free accommodation when she was stranded in Harare:

> There have been many occasions in my life when I have found that some quite unanticipated good comes out of the bad. My father's old boss came to the funeral- they had grown close over the years and it was he who had recommended my father's transfer to Rujeko. As soon as he heard about my plight he kindly offered to let me stay with his family in Harare while I sorted myself out and found a place of my own. In the end, I stayed with them until my course was finished. (p. 43)

Subsequently, Rumbidzai is able to complete her studies as a result of the intervention of Baba Chenai and again it is him that offers the narrator her first job. Therefore, contrary to Bourdillon (1993) the concept of the extended family is confirmed as still existing in Westerhof's Zimbabwean urban areas, albeit in a modified way as it has metamorphosed into 'network capital'. It is evident from the text that today people rely more on friends and workmates rather than relatives in the extended family system to access the urban environment.

I argue that Harare's spatial configuration should not be approached as monolithic. This is manifest in Rumbidzai's intra-urban mobilities as she moves from one location to another. These intra-urban mobilities are not only the result of the wavering economic and social status of the narrator but also reflect a restless and dislocated identity. The job Rumbidzai finally secures as an Executive Secretary for a clothing company triggers her economic and social mobility. Critical to note is the fact that she is also invited to model the Miss Africa new clothing lines for the company. The modelling entails her travelling internationally to Maputo and Johannesburg and greatly enhances her social status and standing in society and in a way accentuates her 'success' identity. However, the attendant fame she gains has its dark side as it results in Rumbidzai falling in love with men who seemed besotted by her looks and popularity as exemplified by Joe who just wanted a 'beautiful' (p. 54) child but was not prepared for a lasting relationship with Rumbidzai.

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2.2.4 Unlucky in Love, but lucky in life: Heightened intra-urban mobilities, vulnerability and HIV and AIDS

The heightened intra-urban mobilities and Rumbidzai's subsequent unstable and dislocated identity are best captured in her relationships with men and her final exposure to HIV. It is in Harare that she falls prey to sexually irresponsible men. Rumbidzai falls in love with men who all exploit her vulnerability and worsens further her unstable and dislocated identity. The instability of Rumbidzai's stay in Harare is witnessed when she goes to reside in Marlborough with her boyfriend Emmanuel:

> I couldn't face the long search for another place to stay and I believed what he said, though we hadn't formalised anything even from the traditional point of view. I gave in and moved into his house in Marlborough. (p. 45)

The tone of the language used by Rumbidzai aptly summarises her desperation and restlessness. She moves into Emmanuel's house in Marlborough as she 'couldn't face the long search for another place to stay' (p. 45) even though Emmanuel 'had not formalised anything from the traditional point of view' (p. 45). I therefore contend that the intra-urban mobilities she engages in make her vulnerable to abuse. In addition, she perceives her moving into Emmanuel's house in Marlborough as capitulation ('gave in'). The phrase 'gave in' (p. 45) best summarises, not her love for Emmanuel, but her desperation and restlessness in Harare. At a metaphoric level the phrase also captures Rumbidzai's sexual and economic dependence on Emmanuel and their asymmetrical power relationship largely typifies the precarious existence of most women urban dwellers. In this sense, migration largely accentuates the oppression and dependence of women on men. This is also typified by Linga and her mother in Shaba's *Secrets of a Woman's Soul* (2005) who are sexually abused and infected with HIV because of their desperation and poverty.

Also worth noting about this mobility is that it is not reflective of Rumbidzai's economic and social status but is a direct consequence of the intervention of her boyfriend. This constitutes the major challenge facing Rumbidzai and might be the reason for the instability characterising her life in Harare. I contend that her instability generates an unstable identity that temporarily finds anchorage and refuge in Emmanuel and the accommodation he provides. However, her stay in Marlborough is not permanent as Emmanuel proves to be a

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womaniser and Rumbidzai is chased out of the Marlborough house by a woman who claims to be Emmanuel's wife. Emmanuel's womanising tendencies and irresponsibility is further demonstrated when he refuses to take care of his two children conceived by Rumbidzai. To show the instability of her economic and social mobility Rumbidzai temporarily sends her children to Kadoma to be with her mother as she struggles to survive and find accommodation in Harare.

Following her botched affair with Emmanuel, Rumbidzai ventures into another relationship with Joe. This relationship seemingly is not allowed the latitude it deserves as Rumbidzai, after her humiliating eviction from Marlborough, now stays with her relatives in Glenview. Glenview is a lower working class suburb and Rumbidzai's movement to stay there is testimony of her unstable economic and social position. Rumbidzai feels that her private space is constricted because of her stay in Glenview. Again, through Joe's intervention, she gets a rented flat that is located in town among an 'expensive block of flats' (p. 53). The ownership of a flat in town is a great achievement and an expression of an upper social and economic status. However, the flat and the spaciousness it offers is an illusion as it is not Rumbidzai's and therefore not reflective of her economic and social mobility. Critical to note is that her readiness in accepting the flat and this type of loving arrangement again is illustrative of her desperation. This desperation is not only economic but at a discursive level is constitutive of an unstable identity positioning. Furthermore, she is prompted by the fact that the flat would offer her the opportunity to reunite with her children currently staying with her mother in Kadoma. Nevertheless, the flat is Joe's, and I therefore argue that Rumbidzai's acceptance of the flat largely demonstrates her desperate dependence on men. This is also illustrative of the fact that the city is largely the province of men. It is this dependence that later proves catastrophic as attested by her HIV positive status. However, after Joe loses interest in her she is evicted from the flat. Once more she sends her children back to her mother in Kadoma.

Rumbidzai is forced to rent a room in Kuwadzana, another lower working class suburb in Harare, after her eviction from the flat. Given that space is indicative of the economic and social status of an individual, then the one room Rumbidzai rents in Kuwadzana is reflective of a status decline. She thus comments:

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> Life in Kuwadzana was very different from the several lives I had led over the last few years and in some ways it took me back to the Mine compound at Ndarama, for people were friendly and everyone knew everyone else. There was little privacy in renting a room in a house there and the yards were so small, it was almost like living in a different country. (p. 58)

Therefore, people might inhabit the same urban space but are differently located on a socio-spatial level. This is highlighted by Rumbidzai when she notes that life in Kuwadzana differs from life in the affluent Avenues or in Marlborough residences. This difference is not just physical but also has discursive, ideological and moral implications. She is perceptive enough to note that life in the Avenues or Marlborough offers more privacy and is constitutive of people of higher economic status compared to people who reside in urban spaces such as Kuwadzana. Rumbidzai, therefore, observes that in the Avenues or Marlborough 'no-one ever even greeted anyone else, much less stood and chatted with them' (p. 58-59). In contrast life in the low class suburbs of Harare is characterised by lack of privacy and everyone seems to know each other. This, at one level, is suggestive of the poverty and lack of spaciousness that characterise these areas. At another level it might be interpreted as demonstrating the humanness of the people as they are communally in sync with each other in contradistinction to life in the low density suburbs largely predicated on individualism and not on the extended family like the atmosphere of Kuwadzana.

It is also crucial to note that life in the lower class areas of Harare is characterised by many inconveniences and deprivations. The narrator notes that she hated:

> being subjected to the misery of the commuter omnibuses- long queues, rude men shouting comments about the way I dressed and the inevitable scrum to get on both morning and evening. (p. 59)

I argue that these inconveniences and deprivations are a product of the life of the poor in an urban environment largely demarcated on the basis of class. Dissimulation in such an environment becomes an important survival strategy and a means of maintaining and guarding the borders of one's privacy from being transgressed. Thus, Rumbidzai lies to the Kuwadzana community that she is 'Mrs Chiwora' (p. 59) and that her husband works in

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Kadoma. She therefore presents herself as a person who performs and manages her identity as a strategy of being accepted within Kuwadzana. Thus, her identity is not just unstable and restless but is also premised on performance and management. The idea of conceiving her identity as predicated on performance and management testifies to the fact that identities are largely reflexive and adaptive. What might be significant to note is that in the Avenues or Marlborough where life is highly individualised the need to perform and manage identities as a survival strategy and a means of guarding one's privacy would have been largely irrelevant. I also argue that Rumbidzai lies about her marital status because Zimbabwe is largely patriarchal and a single mother is frowned upon, worse still in city space constructed historically as one open to men who would have migrated from the rural areas to work in the city's male dominated industries. Rumbidzai's lies can be construed as emblematic of her complicit to patriarchy as she endeavours to fulfil the dictates and expectations of patriarchy. A woman in a patriarchal society is expected to be married and has value only with reference to her husband and family.

While in Kuwadzana, Rumbidzai lands a job that promises a secure future. She starts working as a personal assistant to the CEO of a 'large parastatal, earning a reasonable salary' (p. 58). For the first time in her life she is offered a chance for real upward economic and social mobility. As a result, she buys a car and manages to save money to buy a house in Kuwadzana. The house is metaphoric of her attempt to break loose from the control and authority of men who have been exploiting her vulnerability and desperation. In terms of space and identity she now has a space she could call her own and within its precincts can be herself and not resort to pretence. With the buying of the house and a car, Rumbidzai's confidence and self-esteem is restored:

> Looking back, that time in Kuwadzana was perhaps the happiest the children and I have ever been-then or now, because there was never any fighting or arguing to mar our time together and we all felt safe and secure together. (p. 61)

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2.2. 5 Reading the autobiographical narrative as mobility

The text *Unlucky in Love* is autobiographical and I intend to read the narrative as premised on mobility. The term autobiography etymologically comes from Greek and is a product of the merger of three words. The 'auto' in the term refers to 'self', 'bio' means 'life' and 'graphe' refers to 'writing'. Therefore, as Smith and Watson (2001) observe, autobiography refers to self life writing. Thus, autobiography is about the stories people construct to make sense of their lives. McAdams (2008) notes that the stories people fashion to make meaning out of their lives:

> are fundamentally about our struggle to reconcile who we imagine we were, are, and might be in our heads and bodies with who we were, are, and might be in the social contexts of family, community, the workplace, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and culture writ large. (p. 242)

Autobiography itself as a genre implies transition and mobility in two ways. Firstly, autobiography endeavours to explain the journey of physical growth of the author from childhood to adulthood. This mobility is not just physical but metaphoric of psychological, emotional and spiritual development. Thus, autobiography maps out the development of the narrator's consciousness. At a discursive level mobility is also manifest as the author moves from one discursive plane to another and the discursive 'self' or 'I' of autobiography is always shifting. Secondly, autobiography maps out the physical mobility of the author and is crucial in the telling of the story.

As a socially constructed story, autobiography functions to make lives make 'sense by helping to organise the many different roles and features of the individual life into a synthetic whole and by offering casual explanations for how people believe they have come to be who they are' (McAdams 2008: 243). I therefore argue that the autobiographical priority of Rumbidzai is to explain and rationalise how she came to be infected with HIV and assume an identity positioning, inflected with the consciousness of her being HIV positive. The text is also political in the sense that it attempts to resist the dominant cultural narratives of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe that associate women with sources of the disease. Therefore, Rumbidzai gives voice to suppressed female discourses of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe.

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As an autobiographical text, *Unlucky in Love* relies on memory to recount the narrator's experiences. McAdams (2008) notes that rather than representing a veridical recording of life as lived, 'autobiographical memories are highly selective and strategic' (p. 244) and 'notoriously unstable' (p. 246). McAdams (2008) notes further that although they may convey certain objective facts about a life, storied recollections of the past are more noteworthy for their expression of personal meaning. I therefore argue that through memory, Rumbidzai strategically constructs an image of 'self' that is vulnerable and is manipulated and exploited by men. Consequently, men and not her decisions and choices are responsible for heightening her intra-urban mobilities, generating unstable and restless identities and finally for her infection.

Rumbidzai's vulnerability is constructed through the trope of mobility. Life in rural Nyahunda is projected as 'innocent' and 'happy' though it had its challenges. However, her migration to the city and urban experiences thereof are represented as a transition into chaos and instability punctuated by Rumbidzai's intra-urban mobilities. It is out of this chaos that Rumbidzai emerges a single mother and HIV positive. The various spaces she occupies in Harare become important sites that reveal her vulnerability. Prior to her encounters with Emmanuel, Joel and Horst, Rumbidzai constructs an image of self, premised on persecution and victimhood. She claims to have been persecuted by her uncle's wife who is 'jealous' of her as she did not like the way her husband 'looked at me' and 'joked together' (p. 42). Assumedly because of this jealousy Rumbidzai leaves her uncle's family and goes to stay in Highfield with her aunt's family. Again this family is an important site for the construction of a persecuted and vulnerable self as she is harassed by her aunt's husband who seeks sexual favours from her. This marks the beginning of her fractured and restless identity that is only magnified by the men in her life who prey on her 'naivety' and desire to be married and be a 'normal' woman in a patriarchal society. It is also important to note that Rumbidzai adopts particular emotional and social positions vis-a-vis her audience (readers) and as a protagonist in her own personal narrative she positions herself against other characters. The intra-urban mobilities, desperation and instability in her life are blamed on men who failed to act responsibly in their relations with her. Consequently, all the men who had established love affairs with her are depicted in the negative as they were presumably committed to cheating on her and ultimately infect her with the virus. Rumbidzai seems to insinuate that Horst is the one who infected her with the

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virus and the name 'Horst' itself is suggestive of someone who deliberately infects people with the virus. 'Horst' and 'Host' are strangely related terms and as I argue here Horst seems to be blamed for infecting Rumbidzai with the virus.

I have been considering mobilities as largely physical. I have also attempted to map out the various destinations of Rumbidzai in Harare and consider them metaphorically as signposts of her economic and social mobility and status. However, I now want to shift focus to the HIV and AIDS narrative in the text and read it in the context of mobilities. Being HIV positive is suggestive, at a metaphoric level of transition and mobility. This transition and mobility should be conceptualised in a three dimensional way. One witnesses transition and mobility at the physical, corporeal level and this largely involves the reaction and response of the body to the virus. Moreover, the transition and mobility at a corporeal level is marked by the linguistic act of naming the body as the body moves from being perceived as 'negative' to one conceptualised as 'positive'. A body perceived as 'negative' from a medical perspective is seen as 'healthy' and conversely a body that is 'positive' is perceived as 'sick'. This transition and mobility has psycho-social implications on the individual infected with the virus. However, this transition and mobility given the advent of Anti-Retroviral Drugs (ARVs) implies that the body can now be (re) managed and (re) imagined as the physical effects of the virus on the body have diminished. The (re) managing and (re) imagining of the body suggests that it's possible to (re) configure and (re) constitute identities. Transition and mobility is also manifest at the psychic and emotional level as one contends with the psychological and emotional implications of being HIV positive. This is the level when the individual vacillates between extreme feelings of anger, bitterness, anxiety, blame and self-pity. At a discursive level, transition and mobility is also evident in the individual would shift from one discursive plane to another, a discursive plane that accommodates the individual's definition of self the existence of HIV. These three levels of transition and mobility are evident in Rumbidzai's constructions of self.

I argue that HIV and AIDS continues to plague humanity largely because people have constructed boundaries between what is considered as private and public. Discourses about HIV and AIDS are assumed to fall within the realm of the private. This is the period when the infected individual is supposed to wallow in self-pity and self-blame in the darkest recesses of

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his/her mind. This is largely an attitude of self-preservation as infected individuals are discriminated against. However, this attitude is not productive as the virus proliferates in an environment of shame, blame and segregation. Nevertheless, I argue that migrations and transgressions of the borders between the private and public spaces are witnessed by Rumbidzai's disclosure of her positive HIV status. Rumbidzai relies largely on the network capital she has established in Harare to facilitate this collapse between the private and the public. Rumbidzai's disclosure of her positive HIV status undoubtedly breaks down the walls of the closet to enable her to live out in the open, thus transforming the way society thinks about sexuality, HIV and AIDS, personality and identity as a whole. Her narration conflates the boundaries between the private and public spaces as the public is private and vice versa. I therefore argue that the identity of the narrator is constructed on being able to author and narrate her experiences and in the process move the private narrative into the public domain. I also argue that Rumbidzai's ability to navigate adroitly her transition and mobility from the private into the public is testimony of her courage and strength. Through this mobility she seeks to explain her side of the story and thus rewrites not just her personal story but of the men in her life. Her commendable behaviour is sharply contrasted to that of Horst depicted as not having accepted his HIV status.

2. 3 Unstable mobilities: intra-urban migration in *Uncertainty of Hope* by Valerie Tagwira

In *Uncertainty of Hope,* Tagwira explores with poignant clarity the challenges Zimbabwean urban dwellers encounter in their day to day struggles for survival in a harsh and unrelenting economic and political climate. This political and economic environment has resulted in most Zimbabweans being ontologically insecure. The insecurity is exemplified by the fear, anxiety and restlessness that characterise their lives. The political and economic crisis has also resulted in transnational migration but little has been said about the intra-urban mobilities generated by the crisis. These mobilities are reflective of the unstable political and economic climate and consequently of the identities generated.

The novel is based on the experiences of Onai Moyo, Garikai's wife. Garikai is depicted as an irresponsible and physically abusive husband:

> Gari was not an easy man to leave with. Over the years, she had worn herself out trying to conceal proof of his violence [...] her episodic facial bruising and blackened

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> eyes had ceased to be material for speculation because they all knew precisely what was happening. However, the cocoon of pretence that she had woven around herself had become her armour. It was the only thing which held the frail vestiges of her dignity securely in place. There was nothing else she thought she could do. She was, after all, only a woman. How could she fight against fate? (p. 5)

Furthermore, his irresponsibility is testified by the extra marital affairs he engages in an environment largely dominated by HIV and AIDS. His negligent behaviour is also epitomised by the fact that he and his family still live in a house in Mbare, the oldest lower working class township in Harare, that 'had belonged to his parents' (p. 33) and the 'reasonably good salary' (p. 33) he earns is reserved for his bingeing and extra marital affairs. However, Garikai is employed by Coca Cola Company as a section manager and the author seems to insinuate that his stay in Mbare is not in sync with his job. This is concretised by the fact that his colleague in a similar position owns a house in Belvedere, an upper middleclass suburb in Harare.

Garikai and his family's stay in Mbare heighten his irresponsibility and is expressive of masculine traits that are toxic to the welfare of a family and society in general. However, Garikai's recklessness needs to be conceptualised in relation to the economic and political crisis bedevilling Zimbabwe. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) argue that the current Zimbabwean economic meltdown and political mayhem is dispersing and reconfiguring masculinities and femininities. Traditionally masculinity is associated with, among other characteristics, provision for ones' family but in the context of the Zimbabwean crisis most men are failing to meet this standard. Subsequently, Garikai's sense of masculinity is threatened and therefore seeks affirmation outside his family in extra marital affairs:

> Once again he was reminded of how being with Gloria had changed his life. She listened to him and made him feel important. Onai did none of those things. She was only good at complaining about money, groceries, and clothes for the children. She made him feel like a failure, and starved him in the bedroom. But not his Gloria. She was a girl who could satisfy practically all his needs. When he was with Gloria he felt like a real man. Almost like a king. Maybe taking her as a second wife was not such a bad idea after all. (p. 41)

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I therefore argue that masculinity is largely an issue in a time of crisis, especially the one posed by Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis. Regrettably, Garikai fails to adapt to the changing environment and ultimately is infected with HIV and dies of AIDS.

It is also important to note that Garikai's carelessness renders him economically and socially static. This stasis is paralleled and contrasted with his colleague who lives in Belvedere. The colleague is depicted as having managed to be economically and socially mobile. Consequently, the colleague stays in Belvedere, a coveted and 'respectable' low density suburb unlike Mbare. Onai demonstrates this as she wishes to reside in a place like Belvedere:

> How she wanted to live in a place like that...what she would give to have a spacious home with a garden of flowers. But, of course, it would never be. Belvedere was way out of her reach. It was a suburb where luckier people lived. She was destined to live in Mbare, and it could not be more different. (p. 33-34)

Onai and Garikai's stay in Mbare is testimony of their class position in society as they constitute the urban poor of Harare. Mbare is actually described as a location where the poor stay and die:

> Mbare was a high density township that *had absolutely no redeeming features to speak of*. The degree of overcrowding was spectacular. As the tasteless joke went, one could not reach out an arm without touching one's next-door neighbours - and in their beds, too. A multitude of tiny houses were stacked against one another making an intricate maze of carelessly planned streets. This housing itself was a colonial inheritance; then it had been considered suitable accommodation for the township dwellers. Overcrowding during the war and since independence had only made matters worse. Contrary to people's expectations the services had deteriorated. Matapi flats were a perfect example. The dilapidated tower-blocks dominated the flawed Mbare skyline. They stood defiantly, almost regally, overlooking the squalor of the surrounding shanty town. (p. 52)

The above description of Mbare fits very well with Ndjio's (2006: 104) definition of a necropolis with its 'spectacular infrastructure of lack and incompleteness' and a peculiar

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revolting aesthetics of ugliness. Ndjio (2006: 103) argues further that a necropolis is a thespian city where insecurity, violence and terror have become daily experience of the vast majority of the city dwellers. It is also instructive to approach Mbare as a ghettopolis. Ndjio (2006: 104) observes that the term refers not only to the city of destitution and misery, or to the spatial concentration of millions of destitute urban dwellers in squatters and fringe settlements, and other disenfranchised areas but also accounts for the 'disabling city' whose physical infrastructure is falling or has crumbled. I am equally interested in viewing Mbare as a ghettopolis for the confinement and imprisonment implied by the term. However, as attested by characters such as Onai, transgressions of borders into territories deemed safer are possible.

Mbare, as a necropolis is depicted as unsafe as testified by the crime and prostitution rampant in the area as well as the existence of the dying and dead because of HIV and AIDS. Therefore, being in Mbare is a statement about one's economic and social status. However, this status is not permanent as it changes, provided one is prepared to work hard to improve her/his economic and social situation. People therefore might inhabit the same urban space but would be differently located within that space. Nonetheless, the boundaries between Mbare and Belvedere are not static as upward or downward economic and social mobilities occur. Consequently, one way of leaving Mbare is to engage in upward economic and social mobility. Having Mbare and Belvedere within the same city space is illustrative of the socio-economic division of the urban space into what Westwood and Williams (1997) cited in Manase (2005: 89) define as 'two cities in one'. Westwood and Williams argue that this is an urban spatial paradigm characterised by the symbolic existence of two worlds in one city. Furthermore, Manase (2005: 90) asserts that on the one hand there 'exist affluent and glamorous low density and up-market suburbs, while on the other; there are an impoverished, neglected and often over crowded high density suburbs and slums'. This, as Manase (2005) observes, constitutes the fragmented nature of the city. However, the fragmentation is attributable to the uneven development inaugurated by colonialism and still not resolved in independent Zimbabwe.

It is equally important to note that education is one way of escaping the confinement implied in ghettoised areas like Mbare. Faith, the only daughter of Katy and John, family friends to

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Onai, is a law student at the University of Zimbabwe. Her status is emblematic of the importance of education as an effective strategy to leave Mbare. The name 'Faith' is suggestive of the desire, courage, commitment and tenacity that one needs to leave Mbare. Her courage and tenacity is envied by Onai:

> She thought with envy of Katy' only child who had managed to leave Mbare and was now at university. Indeed the future looked bright for Katy. But it seemed that for Onai and her children, there would be nothing beyond a life in the slums. The idea of leaving Mbare was the substance of impossible dreams. (p. 52)

Thus, education is depicted as a powerful weapon that can be used to move out of Mbare. It is equally important to note that Katy and John have bought a stand in Marlbereign which is a low density area:

> 'Correct. Let's be careful with the money because it has taken me two whole years to save it up. We must pay the balance on Faith's fees and the remainder should go down as further payment for the Mabelreign stand. Hopefully, that will leave us with a modest balance. Once the stand is paid up, we should start building. You and I will leave Mbare yet', he declared with firm resolve. (p. 30)

The tone of the language used by Katy's husband is reflective both of the despairing nature of life in Mbare and the determination to leave Mbare. However, in order to leave Mbare and finance the education of Faith, Katy and John like the majority of urban dwellers engage in illegal foreign currency dealings.

It is also significant to map out Onai's economic and social mobility. Initially, Onai is depicted as a victim of Garikai's abuse and irresponsible behaviour. Her situation is largely pessimistic. This feeling of pessimism is eloquently summarised by John in his conversation with Katy:

> 'Be serious, Katy. This is Zimbabwe. A poor woman will always be a poor woman. *Hazvichinje!*' After a moment of contemplative silence he continued, 'Onai will never own a house. She is an unemployed dressmaker who works as a vegetable vendor.

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> How can you imagine that she could buy a house? Where would she get the money from?' (p. 7-18)

However, Onai's progression from being a victim to an independent woman who escapes the drudgery and misery of life in Mbare is significant. Her escape can also be conceptualised in relation to space. Space is conceptualised in a three dimensional way as the enlargement of individual space, the widening of familial space and lastly the physical mobility from one space to another. Given the negative impact of the economic and political crisis on Zimbabwe's industries, Onai, despite her being a professional dressmaker, is not employed. Her upward economic and social mobility is therefore heavily curtailed by the crisis. To compound matters she and her children are thrown out of their house in Mbare by Garikai's young brother after the death of her husband. Her attempts to register for a house in the state sponsored Operation Garikai (Operation Restore Order) for the victims of Operation Murambatsvina are foiled mainly because of the corruption, nepotism and patronage that characterised the operation. Finally, she is employed and offered accommodation in Borrowdale by Tapiwa Jongwe and thus engages in intra-urban mobility as she moves from Mbare to Borrowdale. This facilitates her reunion with the children as she had temporarily left them in the rural areas with her mother. The job and accommodation therefore assure her of upward economic and social mobility:

> 'Going back to the job [...] the starting salary would be fifteen million dollars a month plus accommodation. Of course your pay will be adjusted depending on how everything goes. There is a two bedroomed house on my premises in Borrowdale. The workshop is right next to the house. You will, of course, have two assistants working with you but they won't live on site. (p. 356)

Consequently, her economic and social mobility that had spiralled downward as attested by her ejection from her home in Mbare and the sending of her children to her mother in the rural areas, suddenly surges upward. I argue that the accommodation, even though it is temporary and dependent upon her being the dressmaker of Tapiwa Jongwe is better when compared to her former house in Mbare. This is testified through the description of the workshop:

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> The workshop was a large airy room partitioned into three working areas. Its windows opened out into a garden [...] When she'd moved in the previous evening, she hadn't been aware of being surrounded by such loveliness. (p. 360)

The tone of the language used is significant in determining the freedom and independence of Onai. The workshop is described as a 'large airy room' (p. 360) and is suggestive of the expansion of her professional space where she is allowed greater latitude to do what she wants. The windows of the workshop also open out into a 'garden' which is evocative of the contentment and comfort Onai feels and enjoys as a result of her upward economic and social mobility.

This mobility at a metaphoric level is suggestive of physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual freedom as she is no longer encumbered by the drudgery of life in Mbare. Onai is now ontologically secure as her new situation in Borrowdale marks the 'dawn of her new existence' (p. 360) and this new existence is 'beautiful' (p. 360). Onai's 'new existence' (p. 360) premised on upward economic and social mobility is predicated on her being independent and free from all the constraints that had been haunting her life as characterised by her stay in Mbare. Consequently, her mobility ensures her of economic and social stability:

> Onai felt more keenly than ever before that her destiny was now in her own hands and that at last her children stood a chance of being able to fulfil themselves. She would do her best for them. They would not be oppressed by a system beyond their control. She looked out of the window and smiled to herself (p. 363).

Thus, the enlargement of her professional, personal and social space, facilitated by this crossing over from the overcrowded and miserable spaces of Mbare to that of 'beautiful' Borrowdale allows her to reunite with her children.

2.3.1: Operation Murambatsvina and unstable intra- urban mobilities

Uncertainty of Hope explores also the consequences of Operation Murambatsvina, which can be interpreted as the actions of a post-colonial government characterised by 'loss of limits or sense of proportion' (Mbembe 2001:119), on the urban poor, the main victims. The operation has been considered largely from a sociological, historical and political science perspective as testified by Tibaijuka (2005), Potts (2008), Mlambo (2008) and Moore (2008). The operation,

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according to Tibaijuka (2005), involved the destruction of 'flea markets and housing used for many years by informal traders and vendors. It also involved bulldozing, smashing and burning of structures housing many thousands of poor urban dwellers' (p. 12). Tibaijuka (2005:13) notes further that the most devastating and immediate effect of this operation was the fact that hundreds of thousands of people were rendered homeless and left without any viable form of livelihood. Moreover, the operation, as noted by Tibaijuka (2005:31), has had a major economic, social, political and institutional impact on the Zimbabwean society:

> In social terms, the Operation has rendered people homeless and destitute, and created humanitarian and developmental needs that will require significant investment and assistance over several years. Economically, substantial housing stock has been destroyed, and the informal sector has virtually been wiped out, rendering individuals and households destitute... in political terms, the operation has exacerbated an already tense and polarised climate characterised by mistrust and fear... Institutionally, the operation was conducted by central Government authorities, including the military, in an area that legally falls under the purview of local government.

Vambe (2008) considers the operation in the context of our need to rethink citizenship and subjectivities. Vambe (2008:3) notes further that the concept of citizenship as enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution, 'is limited to privileges attached to natality. Murambatsvina showed that citizenship is a social construct; that it is brittle and can be subject to revision, especially in contexts of political contestations'. Mlambo (2008) regards the operation from a historical perspective and places it in the context of the government's incapacity to fulfil some of its promises pertaining to urban housing in a Zimbabwean economy in shambles. Moreover, Mlambo (2008) argues that the operation can be perceived in part as an attempt by the government to punish the urban poor for turning their backs on ZANU-PF and thus sought to dilute MDC support in the cities by forcing large numbers of people into the rural areas where they could be better controlled and monitored. In addition, Moore (2008) contends that the operation was a crude political attempt by ZANU-PF to regain its lost grip on the populace of Zimbabwe, especially the urban dwellers. Moore (2008) observes further that the operation should be conceptualised in the context of a long history of ZANU-PF's failed efforts to establish its rule as hegemonic. Potts (2008) considers the negative impact the

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operation had on people's livelihoods and how it accentuated the circular urban-rural migration. However, none of this literature considers the intra-urban mobilities that were generated and its impact on identities of the urban dwellers.

As depicted in *Uncertainty of Hope* Murambatsvina caused untold suffering for the urban poor already struggling to survive the harsh economic and political situation prevailing in the country as exemplified by the long queues for basic foodstuffs suffered by the Onais' of this novel. The operation thus is symptomatic of the pessimistic nature of life in Harare, especially in poor neighbourhoods like Mbare. The ontological insecurity of the urban poor is thus heightened by the operation and further generated restless, dislocated and unstable identities. This is indicated in the way the operation worsened the condition of vulnerable people such as the HIV positive in society. Sheila is a young HIV-positive single mother whose condition is worsened by the operation and ultimately succumbs to death:

> Just a week of sleeping out in the open had already ravaged Sheila's health; her cough was worse, her eyes lifeless pools in a face worn with fatigue. She now had the familiar, skeletal appearance of a victim of full-blown AIDS. (p. 156)

Some individuals committed suicide as a consequence of the operation. Their deaths further heighten the necropolistic nature of life in Mbare. Ndjio (2006: 104) observes that the necropolis is the city space of 'crime and death [...] In this city, routinised violence and terror have created an intimacy between life and death, the living and the dead'. The necropolis thus fits well the description of the post colony offered by Mbembe (2001: 102) as being characterised by a 'distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinctive ways identities are multiplied, transformed, and put into circulation'. Furthermore, Mbembe (2001) observes that the post colony is also defined by two essential characteristics that is the 'grotesque and the obscene' (p.103). Thus, the operation confirmed the necropolistic nature of life in Mbare. Bourdillon's (1993) observation that the concept of the extended family no longer functions in the urban environment is also challenged. I argue that, as exemplified by the operation, urban dwellers have modified the concept of the extended family and still assist each other. The narrator thus observes:

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> people whose homes were still standing opened their doors and squeezed in displaced families. Overcrowding, and sleeping on kitchen floors, was not an issue. That day, human compassion was manifested at its best among those who knew the meaning of poverty. (p. 148)

I also argue that the operation worsened the condition of the urban poor who were mainly lodgers. To survive in this fictional Harare, especially in poor locations such as Mbare, landlords resort to renting out their houses. Importantly, dwellers including Onai and Katy augmented the family income by constructing shacks to accommodate lodgers in their yards:

> Innovative homeowners had haphazardly added extra rooms to the 'main house': a variety of shacks, resourcefully constructed from wood, asbestos, metal sheets, and in a few cases, colourful plastic sheeting. These were rented out to families of desperate job seekers who'd drifted to the irresistible lure of the big city's lights, or the elusive promise of work. Both Katy and Onai were proud owners of such shacks. (p. 52-53)

Nevertheless, these homeowners lost a very important source of income as their lodgers were forcibly evicted through the demolitions. This worsened the economic situation of Tagwira's Onai and furthered the production of restless and unstable identities. Furthermore, the operation impacted negatively on lodgers who were reduced to peripatetic citizens as they had to look for accommodation elsewhere. However, the operation not only resulted in urban rural migration as Potts (2008) observes but also heightened forced intra-urban mobilities.

The forced intra-urban mobilities resulted in the further production of restless and dislocated identities based on fear and anxiety. The urban poor who had been dispersed by the operation regrouped in open spaces such as Tsiga grounds. This regrouping, a metaphoric gesture of the urban poor's attempts at recreating and finding space within the city landscape is depicted here:

> Families continue to map out new territory in open spaces as more and more people had their homes destroyed. There were occasional aggressive incidents about encroachments over vague boundaries. Theft was rampant and the loss of property continued. (p. 155)

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The urban poor of this Harare, as depicted by Tagwira, continued to try and recreate the city in their own way thus reflecting their resilience and tenacity in the face of operation Murambatsvina. This recreation of the city is analogous to De Certeau's (1984) concept of tactics where an individual reconfigures space to reflect his/her desires and goals. This testifies that space is malleable and through the art of walking urban dwellers recreate the city as a place to live and work in. De Certeau (1984: 97-98) argues further that walking should be conceptualised as a space of enunciation:

> The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered. At the most elementary level, it has a triple "enunciative" function: it is a process of appropriation of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and takes on the language); it is a spatial acting-out of the place (just as the speech act is an acoustic acting out of language); and it implies relations among differentiated positions, that is, among pragmatic "contracts" in the form of movements (just as verbal enunciation is an "allocution," "posits another opposite" the speaker and puts contracts between interlocutors into action).

However, these dislocated dwellers' stay at Tsiga grounds is ended when the state Riot Police Unit descends on the grounds and rounds up all the occupiers of the grounds and bundle them into army trucks for a 'holding camp on a farm just outside Harare' (p. 156). Interestingly, the forced removal from Tsiga grounds only intensified the intra-urban mobilities as after a few days 'more families had started to re-group at Tsiga grounds' (p. 156). These forced intra-urban mobilities, a concept that complicates the way migration manifest in Zimbabwean literature, reinforced the restless and dislocated identities of the urban poor.

2. 3. 2 Narrating 'madness' as mobility

The text also describes the experiences of Tapiwa Jongwe (Mawaya), whose mobility, I contend, offers a more nuanced reading of intra-urban mobility. This nuanced reading is based on the Zimbabwean Shona concept of 'Kutanda Botso' (penance). The concept is premised on mobility as the individual moves from place to place wearing sacks. This mobility is not just physical but also entails migrations of a psychological nature. In 'Kutanda Botso' one temporarily loses his sanity and engages in mobilities as a therapeutic measure and depends

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for food and survival on the charity of the community. In addition, a ritual of appeasement to the dead mother's spirit is conducted for one to regain his sanity. The concept of 'Kutanda Botso' is akin to 'Ngozi' which also involves the need to appease the angry spirit of a dead person. However, the concept of 'Kutanda Botso' in the text is modified as Tapiwa Jongwe did not wrong his mother but blames himself for the death of his pregnant wife Edith, who perished in a car accident. Thus, Tapiwa Jongwe temporarily migrates from Borrowdale to Mbare to appease himself of the guilt he shoulders.

Mobilities have been largely read as physical movement from one place to another and 'madness' has not been considered as part of this mobility. I therefore argue that moving from one psychological state to another constitutes mobility and hence some form of migration. Consequently, Tapiwa's temporary regression is not just physical, as in the physical movement from Borrowdale to Mbare, but entails, temporary, psychological mobility from sanity to insanity. His temporary regression can be read as a transient downward economic and social mobility as he moves from the 'respectable' and 'privileged' comfort zone of Borrowdale to 'despicable' Mbare. I therefore propose that privileged economic and social city spaces such as Borrowdale should be approached as 'dalepolis'. Ndjio (2006) in his description of urban poor environments came up with the term 'necropolis' to refer to urban areas characterised by poverty, violence and crime. However, he exclusively focuses on the negative about the African city and ignores Westwood and Williams' (1997) cited in Manase's (2005: 89) concept of 'two cities in one'. The city is also constituted by spaces of luxury, privilege and comfort as exemplified by Borrowdale. These spaces are characterised also by peace and spaciousness unlike high density areas where crowdedness is the order of the day. At a more nuanced psychological level the movement from Borrowdale to Mbare is also a metaphoric psychological journey from sanity to insanity.

After the death of his wife, Tapiwa chooses for self-therapeutic reasons, to temporarily become a vagrant in Mbare:

> None of his family or friends knew where he was, and he liked it that way. He had walked away from home with nothing but a few million dollars in his pocket, which even now were strapped to his waist in a small money-bag. He had managed to hold on to it because all he'd needed were old newspapers and scraps of food, and he could

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> get both from bins or from Mai Ruva. In any case, using the money would have amounted to cheating. It would have defeated the whole purpose of his mission. (p. 43)

Finally, after his regressive move, he regains his sanity and returns to Borrowdale. His return can be interpreted as the regaining of his earlier economic and social status that had been provisionally lost through his 'kutanda botso'. It is also important to note that he lives a privileged life as he owns a car import company. Borrowdale is considered by many in Zimbabwe as the most coveted place to be in Harare as it is the residential place of the elite. His transition from Mawaya as he was called in Mbare to Tapiwa Jongwe is reflective of how identities change and are associated with place. In Mbare because of his 'madness' he is called Mawaya and it becomes an identity position associated with his madness and the depravity that constitutes his life in the streets of Mbare.

In understanding Mawayas' identity it is critical to note that this draws our attention to the performative nature of identity and involves elements of deception as well as self-deception. Mawayas' social bifurcated identity can be read using Goffman's (1959) popular idea of the 'presentation of self in everyday life'. Goffman (1959) considers the social world as constructed by social actors who convey certain impressions of themselves to others. Furthermore, Goffman (1959) argues that everyday interaction, especially face to face interaction is analogous to a theatrical performance which has front and back stages. The Goffmanian front stage, Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 954) argue is 'that part of the individuals' performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance' and is performed to manage and manipulate the impressions of people.

Therefore, in a Goffmanian sense Mawaya acts out his 'madness' to the people of Mbare. To the unsuspecting people of Mbare, Mawaya is 'mad' but his performance is done so as to expunge feelings of guilt and self-blame he has as a consequence of the death of his wife. He therefore engages in 'Kutanda Botso' as a way of appeasing the spirit of his dead wife. I also argue that the front stage Mawaya erects for the consumption of the people of Mbare has a back stage. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) note that it is in the back stage where rehearsals are conducted far away from the scrutinising gaze of the audience and unlike the front stage the

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back stage is hidden and actors can relax. I argue that the back stage of Mawaya's identity as a 'mad' person is two dimensional. Firstly, the back stage of Mawaya's performative identity is physical and refers to a secretive concrete place he becomes his 'other self' (p. 194) far removed from the meddling Mbare public. In this back stage Mawaya buys toothpaste and soap:

> It seemed a reassuring symbol of his other self. He had only used small amounts to buy toothpaste and soap, after discovering that it was easy to get a quick wash-down at the communal terminus toilets, and had become addicted to this early morning routine. (p. 194)

The 'toothpaste and soap' are symbols of cleanliness and hygiene in an environment filled with dirt and ugliness. I contend that the discourse of cleanliness and hygiene symbolises 'purity' and thus serves to continuously remind Mawaya of his earlier life. This discourse of 'purity' diligently executed by Mawaya is juxtaposed to another discourse predicated on 'impurity' as exemplified by operation Murambatsvina. It is also important to observe that the 'toothpaste and soap' serve to reinforce the spatial division of city space. Borrowdale is implicative of cleanliness in contradistinction to Mbare which is the location of dirtiness and ugliness. Such discourses of 'cleanliness' and 'dirt' underscoring the performative identity of Mawaya can be accused of perpetrating and perpetuating negative social practices such as Operation Murambatsvina premised on the cleanliness-dirtiness nexus. I also argue that Mawaya's performative identity as a 'mad' man is reflective of a privileged life. The inverse of Mawayas' performative identity, that is as a 'mad' man who pretends to be rich will be very difficult to sustain. Secondly, the back stage is psychological as Mawaya retreats for refuge and peace and fortitude, into the castle of his mind. It is in this domain where Mawaya is tormented by self-doubts about the relevance and purpose of his mission and even questions his own madness:

> He wondered if the time had come for him to return home. Doubts about the purpose and logic of his stay on the streets of Mbare surfaced. Nothing could ever bring his wife back. Nothing. What was he doing amongst this madness, when he could be in the safety of his home, or his office? For the first time, he questioned his own sanity. Were they not right in calling him Mawaya? (p. 134)

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I therefore propose that in order to maintain this bifurcated identity Mawaya must convince the people of Mbare of his madness. However, there are incidents when the back and front stages of his performative identity seem to collapse and become one. This is testified when Onai notices something amiss with Mawaya's madness when he approaches her for food:

> Onai looked at him. He pulled at her heartstrings. No human being deserved to live a life begging for food on the streets, competing with stray dogs. It was such acute debasement of a man's dignity, of anyone's dignity [...] His were no the teeth of a homeless beggar. I must be going mad, she thought at once, wondering to what levels of indecency she was sinking. (p. 88)

It is moments such as the above incident when the front and back stages of Mawaya's performed identity seem to collapse and reveal his 'real' identity. 'Madness' is usually associated with dirtiness and the fact that Mawaya possessed 'white teeth' challenges conventional wisdom on madness. Thus, the boundary between the front and back stages of one's identity is not fixed and permanent as movements to and fro are manifest.

I also want to draw attention to Freud's (1969) concept of the conscious and sub-conscious mind. In this case the conscious mind is the front stage largely governed by the social conventions in the production of appropriate thoughts, attitudes and behaviour. This conscious self suppresses and represses the sub-conscious mind. This sub-conscious exists independently of the social conventions and represents the back stage. However, there are moments when the sub-conscious makes its presence known and such moments are usually associated with the collapse of the boundary between the two mental states. Such moments are crucial as they act as the gateway to the nature and operations of the sub-conscious mind. I therefore argue that had Onai been perceptive enough and questioned Mawaya's madness she could have unmasked him. Her failure is testimony of the effectiveness of Mawaya's performance as a mad man. Mawaya presents Onai with another opportunity to unmask him when he visits her to give her a present for the goodness she had done him. This is uncharacteristic of someone considered mad but again she fails to interrogate further the implications of Mawaya's behaviour:

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> Mawaya said, 'Mai Ruva, I've come to say goodbye. I have a small present for you and your family.' A present from Mawaya, the beggar? Onai was intrigued. She threw a suspicious glance at the Spar Stores bag in his hands and wondered which bin he had picked it from. She didn't want to hurt him with an absolute refusal of the gift. So she played for time, while racking her brains. 'Goodbye? Where are you going?' she asked. 'I'm going back home, back to face my life. Please take this.' He held out the package. (201)

The above conversation between Mawaya and Onai should have made Onai think differently about his madness. Conventional wisdom on madness states that people thought of as mad are not supposed to logically articulate their dreams, hopes and aspirations and Mawaya as attested by the above conversation challenges this understanding. Thus, madness constitutes mobility and is another form of migration explored by the text.

2.3.3 *Flanuering* in the streets of Mbare in a time of crisis

It is also instructive to interpret Tapiwa Jongwe's experiences in the streets of Mbare as a 'beggar' and a 'madman' in the context of the *flanuer*. I have considered Tapiwa Jongwe's transitory downward economic and social mobility in the context of the modified African concept of 'Kutanda Botso' and his provisional spell of 'madness' and how this generated his performed and managed identity of a 'mad man'. I now want to shift focus slightly from the above perspective and read his experiences and wanderings in Mbare as constituting *flanuering*. I will also argue that his flanuering is a strategic way of exposing the horrors of Operation Murambatsvina as they coincide with the operation. However, it is through the flanuering of Tapiwa Jongwe that Tagwira (2006) can be accused of being complicit with the bourgeoisie and liberal version of the operation. This bourgeoisie and liberal attitude is manifest in Tapiwa Jongwe as he is a detached observer who is part of Mbare through his 'madness' and syncretically existing outside it as evidenced by his Borrowdale linkages.

Lauster (2007: 139) argues that the notion of the flanuer was developed by Walter Benjamin at the height of the 1920s and 1930s modernism when the 'surreal' potential of the previous century's industrial urban space was explored. Thus, the flanuer can be described as a viewer who takes pleasure in abandoning himself to the artificial world of high capitalist civilization. Bairner (2006) observes that the idea of the flanerie originates in Paris in the first half of the

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nineteenth century and the key iconic figures in its history include Walter Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire and Walt Whitman. Bairner (2006) notes further that Baudelaire enjoyed taking a bath in the crowd, plunging into the multitude of Parisian pleasure-seekers and strollers or identifying vicariously with anonymous passer-by and the often downtrodden figures haunting the boulevards and public gardens. In addition, Bairner (2006) asserts that Whitman was widely known and liked in the streets as he would gland-hand street car conductors, porters and labourers of all kinds.

The concept of the flanuer is fundamental to my analysis of Tapiwa Jongwe's experiences in Mbare during the time of the operation in two ways. Firstly, it is constitutive of physical mobility and through this movement the flanuer gathers data as he trusts:

> His own powers of observation are at least as much and perhaps more than the words of interviewees or the information provided in official documents. Because of his willingness and ability to move easily from one social setting to another, he is able to accumulate a massive amount of subjective, but nonetheless insightful, data. (Bairner 2006: 132)

At an ideological and metaphoric level the flanuer can be described as an embryonic 'urban sociologist' (Bairner 2006: 126). Tester (Bairner 2006: 125) notes that the flanerie an activity of strolling and looking carried out by the flanuer is a recurring motif in the literature, sociology and art of urban and most importantly of the metropolitan existence. White (Bairner 2006: 139) observes that a flanuer is by definition someone endowed with enormous leisure, someone who can take off a morning or afternoon for undirected ambling since having a specific goal or a close rationing of time is antithetical to the true spirit of the flanuer. I therefore argue that Tapiwa Jongwe's mobility from Borrowdale, his place of privilege and luxury, to Mbare, characterised by crime and death, ugliness and violence, is not just about fulfilling his self-imposed mission of 'kutanda botso'. Instead, Tagwira (2006) uses this movement to present us with a bourgeoisie's version of operation Murambatsvina. Tagwira (2006) therefore confirms the government of Zimbabwe's position that Mbare is 'dirt' and therefore needed cleansing (Harris 2008). Furthermore, Tagwira (2006) can be accused of being complicit to the government of Zimbabwe's rationalisation of operation Murambatsvina. Operation Murambatsvina was mainly conducted to restore what the

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government perceived as sanity by cleaning up 'the country of vendors, flea-market traders and foreign-currency dealers, and to destroy illegally built structures' (Vambe 2008:5).

Tapiwa Jongwe as a privileged 'observer' of life in Mbare provides us with a bourgeoisie liberal version of the operation. This version should be contrasted with the experiences of dwellers such as Onai, Katy, Sheila and Hondo who had nowhere to escape to unlike Tapiwa Jongwe who can retreat into his dalepolis. It is equally interesting to note that Tapiwa Jongwe 'regains' his sanity the very time the operation commences. I also argue that his assistance of Onai with work and accommodation fits very well with the condescending liberal approach he has towards the less privileged. What seems to be suggested by this liberal gesture is that Mbare cannot be redeemed and the only way to save people inhabiting this space is to remove them from the corrupting environment. Thus, the purported upward economic and social mobility of Onai from Mbare to Borrowdale can be read also as the culmination and fulfilment of the liberal ideological thrust of the text, especially in the context of operation Murambatsvina. It is equally important to note that Tapiwa Jongwe is a male benefactor who comes to the aid of Onai. Interestingly, it is always men who inhabit sites of privilege and are in positions of power and influence that assist women portrayed largely as dependent on men. In this respect, the intra-urban mobility of most women is facilitated by men. The intervention and presence of Tapiwa Jongwe in Mbare cannot halt the operation but something positive and good, as exemplified by Onai and her family's migration, can be plucked out of Mbare. However, Onai moves to Borrowdale as a worker and not the proud owner of a house. This is illustrative of the way she is incorporated into Borrowdale. She is not part of the elite but provides services that the elite need to maintain and consolidate their status. Her marginality is thus reinforced through her incorporation and is manifest also in the location of the accommodation she is given. She stays in the servants' quarter that is detached from the main house:

> When she'd moved in the previous evening, she hadn't been aware of being surrounded by such loveliness. This was the dawn of her new existence; and it seemed beautiful. Across the garden stood Tapiwa Jongwe's house. Never had Onai been anywhere near such an impressive home. (p. 360)

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Thus, the spatial configuration of Borrowdale is not homogeneous, divisions within this 'dalepolis' are manifested. Onai's house is separated from the main house by a 'garden' (p. 360) and this creates the illusion that the spatial configuration of Borrowdale is the same and even. Consequently, Onai deludes herself in believing that her stay in Borrowdale is a result of Tapiwa Jongwe's humility.

Moreover, the difference between Borrowdale and Mbare is attributed to ethical and not economic considerations:

> It still surprised her that her employer was so humble. What had her grandmother said? Something about real manners being those where no one felt any discomfort. But it was more than manners that she was thinking about, it was a question of equality [...] we're all born equal until someone gives us a dirty look [...] that was true. Many people did try to raise themselves on the backs of others. But it didn't have to happen that way. (p. 360)

The 'garden' symbolises the chasm that blurs the differences between Onai and Tapiwa Jongwe and creates the illusion that they were all 'born equal' (p. 360). It is also important to note that Tapiwa Jongwe employs Onai primarily to safeguard the memory of his dead wife. Finally, Tapiwa Jongwe can be said to be in Mbare not only to appease his guilty conscience in relation to the death of his wife but to redeem Onai and her family and appease his bourgeois liberal conscience in the context of operation Murambatsvina.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I endeavoured to offer a nuanced reading of rural-urban migration. Scholars such as Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996) largely posit rural–urban migration as linear and do not capture or give voice to the experiences of individuals within peri-urban areas and how this crucial link in the linear narrative of migration impacts identities. It was also established that migration at a metaphoric level can be interpreted as either upward or downward economic mobility. This mobility especially in an intra-urban environment is testimony of the permeability of urban spaces as attested by Rumbidzai in *Unlucky in Love* and Onai in *Uncertainty of Hope*.

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The next chapter focuses on the idea that crisis in the nation- state is the critical catalyst for migration and the subsequent de/reconstruction of identities. It considers the 'common sense' assumption that the nation-state's internal factors account for migration. The chapter refers to the views about the nation-state as a unit of analysis (Grosfoguel 2008) but will analyse the 'crisis' that propelled Zimbabweans to migrate either into the towns or foreign countries borders, from an awareness of the current geopolitical world that is dominated by global capitalism. The texts that will be analysed include Peter Orner and Annie Holmes's (eds.) *Hope deferred* (2010) and Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons* (2009).

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Chapter 3: The Zimbabwean crisis, migration and identity

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the Zimbabwean crisis that imploded in post-2000 and how it relates to the Zimbabweans' migratory experiences, be they local or transnational. This chapter, therefore, examines the interaction between this crisis and migration and identity. It draws on Foucault's concept of the panopticon gaze and the carceral state to complement postcolonial theory in my conceptualisation of the Zimbabwean crisis and its relationship to migration and identity. I also utilise McAdams (2008) concept of narrative identity which I employed in my analysis of *Unlucky in Love*. This concept is helpful in my analysis of *Hope Deferred: Narratives of Zimbabwean Lives* as the text is a collection of life narratives.

3.2 Daniel Mandishona- *White Gods Black Demons*

Migration in Zimbabwe, as already highlighted in the previous chapters, did not commence as a direct consequence of the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis, as the history of the country is largely one of (im) migration (Mlambo 2009). Sachikonye (2012) notes that economic and political migration occurred in the 1980s and 1990s at a modest scale and was confined to sections of highly-skilled professionals. However, this migration got accentuated as a result of the Zimbabwean crisis that imploded in post-2000 and the 'migration option' becoming compelling to the working and middle classes, traders, unskilled workers, the poor and the politically persecuted. Sachikonye (2012) notes further that the post-2000 Zimbabwean out-migration is outstanding in its confluence of economic and political grievances and insecurity, as well as its size and its multi-class composition. Similarly, Raftopoulos (2009:222) argues that after 2000, large numbers of people left Zimbabwe as a result of political violence, forced removals and the general economic meltdown. In Foucauldian terms, Zimbabwe can be defined as a carceral state, as a result of the economic and political crisis and the deepening iron-clad authoritarianism of the ZANU – PF, and the closure and shrinking of democratic space. In such circumstances, migration (local and transnational) becomes, as Sachikonye (2012:163) argues, an act of despair as the economic and political crises combine to make decent livelihoods impossible and make hope for reform and change a distant possibility. More importantly, however, migration is one avenue among many for escaping from the

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clutches of this draconian state and an act of 'defiance and protest' (Sachikonye 2012: 163) against national mismanagement and misgovernance.

White Gods Black Demons is a collection of short stories by Daniel Mandishona that largely explores the difficulties and challenges Zimbabweans encounter in their day to day experiences in post-independent Zimbabwe. The themes and issues covered range from transnational migration, political violence, and the land reform programme to operation Murambatsvina and corruption. I will, however, focus on four stories namely 'Smoke and Ashes', 'Cities of Dust', 'Kaffir Corn' and 'Blunt Force Trauma' that focus largely on the post-2000 crisis and how it complicates our understanding of migration and identity in Zimbabwe.

3.2.1 Mapping out Zimbabwe's political and economic degeneration in 'Smoke and Ashes'

The story, in a reflective way, captures the experiences of two friends who meet in Zimbabwe for a short spell of time in 2008 after ten years of separation. The friends attended the same primary, secondary and university together and are only separated by the fact that Venus now stays in America while the other friend, the anonymous narrator, is still in Zimbabwe. The two friends have managed to keep in contact through the internet. The setting of the story is important in two ways. Firstly, it is set in Harare, which is the capital city of Zimbabwe and thus offers one the opportunity to experience closely the degenerative effects of the economic and political crisis of Zimbabwe. This degeneration is not only directly related to people but also architectural as buildings have deteriorated and are crumbling. Additionally, the degeneration is evident in the physical well-being of the people as they have been reduced to beggars and skeletal beings as a consequence of the crisis and ravages of HIV and AIDS. Secondly, the setting of the story in 2008 is significant as it coincides with the much anticipated harmonised elections that were supposed to be decisive in a number of ways. To ZANU-PF, the March 2008 harmonised elections were perceived as the 'mother' of all elections that were supposed to launch a fatal blow on Western and American imperialism and its protégées in the name of the MDC. Conversely, the MDC perceived the elections as the final and last hurdle to 'real' change that was supposed to be inaugurated with the defeat of a corrupt ZANU-PF. Furthermore, the period 2008 is important as Zimbabwe witnessed

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one of its worst violent elections in its history and also an intensification of the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe as the country metaphorically became virtually 'dry' and this 'dryness' translated into 'lack' as people lacked adequate supply of basic commodities. Therefore, the period 2008 can be conceptualised as the apex of the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis. As a result, Mandishona (2009) explores, through these two friends, the ambivalences, contradictions and challenges that characterised this period in the history of Zimbabwe. Significantly, the title of the story, 'Smoke and Ashes', at one level is suggestive of the lacklustre friendship between Venus and the narrator which has been destroyed largely by the distance between them. However, at another level the title is evocative of Zimbabwe in general and its auto destructive economic policies and politics, both a legacy of colonialism and the post independent state, which have reduced the country, literally to 'smoke and ashes'. The title, to borrow a phrase from Sachikonye (2012) might also be indicative of Zimbabwe's 'lost decades' when the opportunity and path to meaningful and sustainable development was betrayed and lost.

Venus went to America in 1998 after winning a green card in the lottery conducted by the American government. The period 1998 is significant as the Zimbabwean economic and political crisis was about to explode. Sachikonye (2012) notes that the period 1997 and 1998 witnessed a radical shift in Zimbabwe's economy and politics as war veterans demanded a pay-off for their service during the liberation struggle. Sachikonye (2012:98) notes further that this was perhaps the 'most expensive and disastrous of any pay-off sought by any social group' and the gratuities of ZWD50,000 and pensions wrestled from the government under duress forced the largest devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar, triggering a crisis that would become full blown in 2000. Sachikonye (2012) also observes that the above scenario was exacerbated by an expensive military intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1998 which gobbled about USD30 million a month. Consequently, food riots broke out in 1998, as prices went up; this was coupled with demands for land redistribution from sections of the peasantry in districts such as Svosve. Interestingly this is the same period that Venus leaves for America. Thus, 1998 as the year of Venus' departure is important in the sense that Venus carries with her to America an image of Zimbabwe largely unsoiled by the political and economic crisis that dramatically shifted its trajectory in 1999. In a Blakean (Erdman

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1965) sense her Zimbabwe of pre-1998 is one of 'innocence' which would be sharply contrasted with the Zimbabwe she finds in 2008 after her return.

Venus' return in 2008 witnesses her mental collision of her pre-crisis image of Zimbabwe and the reality of the magnitude of the suffering of a people steeped in a crisis. Critically, the choice of America is important; it is a Zimbabwean migrant's ultimate destination of choice as it symbolises freedom, opportunity and industriousness. This is encapsulated in the link between Venus's departure and the American dream. Venus is said to have left the 'country [...] to start a new and exciting life in a strange land' (p. 5). Therefore, America is projected as a 'strange land' offering a 'new and exciting life' (p. 5) to the migrant. This, however, is largely illusory as it is shorn of racial, class, age, ethnic and gender variables in accessing the opportunities offered by America. This importance of America is also reflected by the character Rambanai who perceives America as a land of plenty in Gappah's (2009) story 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai' examined later in chapter 7. Consequently, Venus' transnational migration assures her of upward economic and social mobility. This is noted by the narrator who observes that Venus had 'gone up in the world; I have gone down. You work for an international financial institution and I am a bank manager, dishing out worthless billions everyday' (p. 17). Importantly, Venus' stay in America insulates her from the ravages of the Zimbabwean 'economic meltdown' (p. 7) that imploded after 2000. Venus' identity has also been altered significantly:

> You laugh and shake your luxuriantly artificial dreadlocks. But I can see you have changed. You are not the Venus of 1998. In 2008, you have become more streetwise, more sophisticated - a spruced-up vintage model. The crooked bridge of the nose is now straight, your lips narrower, meaner - plastic surgery, perhaps? In America, where there is everything - your words, not mine, Venus - anything is possible. But I want to close my eyes; to see you as the picture of innocence I remember from our youth. I want to imagine, to fantasise, to dream, of the old you. But somehow, I know it will never be. You are a different you; you are a new you I don't really know. (p. 8)

Consequently, Venus' change of identity attests to the fact that identities are in constant flux and not fixed and absolute entities as Hall (1996) notes. However, this change of identity comes at a great price as Venus seems to have modelled her new identity according to the

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dictates of the American society. This is testified by the 'crooked bridge' (p. 8) of the nose that is now straight and the lips that are now narrower presumably as a consequence of plastic surgery. It is, therefore, probable that Venus' new identity is a product of a successful assimilation into the American society and not a result of creative admixture of cultures that generates hybrid identities. Interestingly, her plastic surgery is also indicative of Venus' compliance to the American conception of beauty where the 'flat' nose and 'thick' lips of the African constitute 'ugliness'. Significantly, America is portrayed as a country that does not tolerate difference as symbolised by the 'flat' nose and 'thick' lips of the African as it bludgeons difference into sameness through surgery. Again, the perceptive narrator notes that Venus' comment about the level of inflation in the country highlights her altered identity. Venus states that 'your largest note is fifty billion dollars [...] it cannot even buy a soda' (p. 6). To the narrator, Venus's views are reflective of a subtle distancing of self from a country in the throes of a desperate economic meltdown. This distancing is metaphoric of the failure of a meaningful relationship between Venus and Zimbabwe. Thus, the narrator attributes this subtle change to the fact that Venus is now in America; her discourse has also changed, as she no longer drinks soft beverages and biscuits but now enjoys sodas and cookies (p. 7).

Nonetheless, Venus temporarily returns to Zimbabwe as a gesture of connectedness with the people of Zimbabwe. She assumes her Zimbabwean identity, upon return, to vote in the March 2008 harmonised elections:

> You recently sent me an e-mail - you wanted me to pick you up from the airport on Sunday afternoon. You were coming back home for one purpose, and for one specific purpose only: I want to vote. I want my voice to count. I want change. But it's ten years. You are not sure whether your name is still on the voters' roll. The only way to find out is on the day itself. But your mother said things are now bad here, it's a risk you are willing to take. (p. 6)

Venus, through this temporary 'reverse migration' is exposed to the Zimbabwean life that is characterised by inflation and the existence of 'poor millionaires and destitute billionaires' (p. 7). That the Zimbabwean identity after 2000 is constituted by lack is depicted in the narrator who has:

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> No water, no electricity. No power for two full days now; water has been gone for twenty- six hours. When it comes back it will be an unsightly trickle barely able to fill a pot. There is an unwritten rule that the toilet is flushed once a day, late in the evening when everybody's ablution requirements have been completed. We all live in fear of a cholera outbreak. Last night we couldn't cook and had to make do with Chinese takeaways for the second night in a row. There is no official explanation for the blackout. Nobody says anything about the water. (p. 9)

The economic and political crisis compels the people of Zimbabwe to live in perpetual fear of the outbreak of diseases. This is epitomised by the fear of a cholera outbreak that the narrator and most inhabitants of Harare have and has largely resulted in the creation of hypochondriac identities. These are identities predicated on fear of illness and results in citizens being extra cautious about their interaction with the environment. The main characteristics of these identities are anxiety and fear of illness. These are typified by the narrator who observes that 'We all live in fear of a cholera outbreak' (p. 9). Hypochondriac identities therefore are also premised on obsessive vigilance and surveillance of one's body and environment for early detection of disease. Sachikonye (2012: 157) notes that the 2008 cholera outbreak, a direct result of the economic and political crisis, 'claimed about 4,300 lives and saw around 98,000 people being treated for the disease'. Furthermore, Sachikonye (2012: 157) argues that the principal cause of cholera is 'lack of access to safe water supply, sanitation and garbage collection systems'.

The ubiquity of lack made the March 2008 harmonised elections much anticipated and perceived as the most important elections in the history of the country after the 1980 elections. This 'lack' made most people in Zimbabwe disenchanted with ZANU-PF and the March 2008 harmonised elections were supposed to inaugurate a new political dispensation spearheaded by the MDC. Unfortunately, the elections did not yield the much anticipated results:

> The election result is finally announced. The parliamentary contest is announced constituency by constituency over a number of days in a manner stage-managed to give the impression of parity, of tight neck-and-neck race. But the news is received with little enthusiasm, like the result of a soccer match where everybody knows the

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> referee's impartiality has been compromised. The opposition has a small majority but the presidential poll was indecisive. There will be a run-off between the two leading contenders on the 27th of June. (p. 19)

However, Venus returns to America before participating in the 27th of June presidential run-off which witnessed an intensification of political violence and intolerance. The short story therefore highlights issues closely related to the crisis bedevilling Zimbabwe notably hyper-inflation, critical shortages of basic commodities and fuel, political polarisation and violence, and migration. The next story I will focus on is titled 'Cities of Dust'.

3.2.2 Misgovernance, auto-destructive policies and migration in 'Cities of Dust'

This story is centred on the experiences of the anonymous male narrator and a woman named Yolanda. It explores the impact of operation Murambatsvina on the urban poor, the effects of the shortages of basic commodities and fuel and ultimately transnational migration as Yolanda finally and presumably leaves for London. Both the anonymous male narrator and Yolanda work at the same company but on different floors and rarely meet except at the bus stop while waiting to board the company bus. Most of their conversation takes place aboard the bus en-route to work. The setting of the story is between 2005 and 2006 when operation Murambatsvina was at its height. Yolanda and some characters in the story are victims of the operation and it is also worth noting that the operation was one of the key indices of the economic and political crisis bedevilling Zimbabwe. Yolanda finally leaves Zimbabwe for England to join her husband. The title of the story is suggestive of the predilection, within human beings, especially those in high offices, to engage in auto destructive behaviour that endangers the nation, lending credence to Mbembe's (2001: 102) thesis that the postcolony is 'characterised by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion'.

Zimbabwe, as portrayed in the story, is suffering from fuel shortages and as a consequence most working citizens are forced to park their vehicles and use company buses:

> More than half the company's employees now use the staff bus, having been forced to park their cars because of a crippling fuel shortage [...] The bus is full today because

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> more people have parked their cars at home. The country is completely dry; the only fuel available is on the black market and selling at ten times the pump price. (p. 27-28)

In such a miserable atmosphere the bus becomes not only a means of transportation but a 'barometer of public opinion because most of its passengers live in the high-density townships and other poorer parts of town' (p. 27). The crisis therefore has created a restless, desperate and vocal citizenry and identities. The out spoken-ness of the people is suggestive of the fact that, as a consequence of the crisis, the people of Zimbabwe have been strengthened and are prepared 'at the next election [...] to change things'. (p. 27)

Equally important is our introduction to the way the crisis led to the constitution of fractured families. Yolanda is married but her husband is in Britain. Transnational migration is, therefore, portrayed as having a negative effect on Zimbabwean families. Crucially, operation Murambatsvina has exacerbated her problems and accentuated her intra-urban mobilities. She narrates that:

> 'I used to live in Park Meadowlands,' she says. 'Then the municipality bulldozers destroyed the cottage I was renting.' She tells you how the bulldozers destroyed the flea markets and the townships near her house, how they made thousands homeless. You heard it on the radio; saw it on television. They called the bulldozers the tsunami – a destructive force that razed down everything in its path. There were harrowing pictures in the newspapers; little children standing in the swirling dust amidst the rubble of ruined homes. (p. 28)

Operation Murambatsvina is therefore depicted as having heightened intra-urban mobilities as exemplified by Yolanda's forced relocation and search for an alternative rented accommodation. The operation is also a metaphoric indicator of the resultant destruction of livelihoods. This is epitomised by the experiences suffered by a messenger at Yolanda's workplace who had his tuck-shop destroyed:

> 'Sometimes man's inhumanity to his own kind knows no bounds. They destroyed my tuck-shop and yet all I was doing was selling bread, sugar, salt and cooking oil. I was providing an invaluable service to the public (p. 28).

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Consequently, the operation resulted in the downward economic and social mobility of the messenger and the larger society. This is corroborated by Sachikonye (2012: 161) who notes that the loss of jobs and livelihoods by those affected by the operation meant that demands for goods and services plummeted and the capacity of the poor to purchase goods, including basic commodities, also diminished. This is also reflected in Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope* where the female protagonist Onai, who relies for the survival of her family on informal trading and renting out her house to tenants, is rendered vulnerable and further impoverished after all her economic activities, had been destroyed by operation Murambatsvina as described in chapter 2. However, it is interesting to note that operation Murambatsvina was a classed phenomenon as it mainly targeted the urban poor and those who resided in high density areas such as Mbare which were the worst affected places in Zimbabwe. The classed nature of the operation is embodied by the 'wealthy white man' (p. 31) who lived in the low density suburbs:

> In the low density suburbs the tsunami finally runs out of steam. A wealthy white man is known to have built a complex of shops and offices without the necessary statutory approvals. There are suggestions that palms were greased of the powers that be to turn a blind eye to the massive developments. (p. 31)

It is also interesting to note that Yolanda, already dealing with a fractured family, as her husband is in the diaspora is forced by the crisis to migrate to England. Yolanda migrates to London in search of a better life. However, the abruptness of the migration and the associated desperation is noted in the way the narrator only comes to know of Yolanda's relocation from one of her workmates. Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis therefore resulted in the creation of desperate and restless identities and the only way to bring a semblance of stability in one's life was to engage in transnational migration. However, migration as exemplified by Yolanda also symbolised an act of defiance and protest against misrule and mismanagement. The story therefore centred on the experiences of the narrator and Yolanda in a Harare, slowly, crumbling due to the devastating effects of the economic and political crisis bedevilling the country. This crisis has generated restless and desperate identities as exemplified by the messenger in the story who has his tuck-shop destroyed during operation Murambatsvina. Additionally, the operation generated and heightened intra-urban mobilities as typified by Yolanda's move from one residential area to another as a consequence of the

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operation. Finally, the crisis compelled some characters to engage in transnational migration in search of a better life.

The next story that I consider is titled 'Kaffir Corn' and is premised on the challenges, ambivalences and contradictions characterising the land reform program and how it generated restless and desperate identities amongst the black farm workers and white farm owners. Importantly, the land reform programme also resulted in physical and psychological displacement and dislocation and this had a crucial bearing in generating restless and desperate identities.

3.2.4 Land reform, psycho historical migrations and anticipated mobilities in "Kaffir Corn"

The story centres on the experiences of the Gwanhure family and the farm they were recently allocated by the government as part of the fast track land reform programme. It explores the corruption, confusion and ambivalences characterising the fast track land reform programme which Sachikonye (2012: 159) describes as largely 'chaotic'. In addition, the story also brings about a new twist in our understanding of migration. The story underwrites the importance of psycho-historical migration predicated on memory and its power to influence and contest the past and the future. This form of migration is typified by Conrad Mafuta who contests the allocation of the farm to the Gwanhure family. It is also important to note that the story is set in 2002 when the fast track land reform programme was at its summit. Equally important is the fact that the story has an exact date when it took place. This day, Christmas day, is symbolic as the farm that Mr Gwanhure wants to show to his family is supposedly a Christmas present of some kind for the family. Therefore, the story explores the dynamics governing one of the key indices of the Zimbabwean crisis which is the land invasions and fast track land reforms. Firstly, the title of the story is evocative of the destructiveness of the fast track land reform programme on agriculture and the economy in general. Secondly, the title, through the use of the word 'kaffir', a term which resonates with colonial prejudice, is suggestive of the racist undertones that chiefly governed the response of, especially former white farmers who were mainly the victims of the fast track land reform programme. This story focuses on the anticipated urban to rural migration and the anticipated upward social and economic mobility of the Gwanhure family as a consequence of the allocation of the farm.

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Thus, the farm is 'the pot of gold' (p. 38) that Mr Gwanhure has discovered and would supposedly enhance his economic and social status in society. Crucially, this upward economic and social mobility is premised on the assumption of a 'new farmer' identity by the Gwanhure family.

Mr Gwanhure is allocated land that formerly belonged to Mr Bradford, a white farmer. Violence, just as in other farm invasions that commenced in 2000, was used to displace Mr Bradford:

> The new farm my father was recently allocated by the government as part of the land reform programme is about two hundred and eighty kilometres to the west of the country. But the white farmer, Mr Allan Bradford, wouldn't budge, so my father had to go to the farm with some of his hefty relatives and force the man out. (p 34-35)

I want to draw attention to the tone of the language used by the narrator. The narrator notes that his father had to bring in some people to 'force' (p. 35) Mr Bradford from the farm thus suggesting the use of coercion, aggression and violence. This is not surprising given that the whole fast track land reform programme was predicated on violence and some of the violence resulted in the displacement and dislocation of white farmers and black farm workers. In more extreme cases it resulted in the death of some white farmers and black farm workers. Thus, Pilossof (2012: 53) argues that episodes of extreme violence and atrocities against farmers and farm workers that took place over the period 2000 and 2005 testified a 'high level of human rights violations on commercial farms, ranging from political intimidation to murder'.

Accordingly, the farm in Mr Gwanhure's imagination is supposed to facilitate his upward economic and social mobility:

> Although he is not poor, my father is not exactly rich either. He says he would like to make enough money to buy a house in the northern suburbs where some of his rich friends live, something with a chip-tile pool, Jacuzzi, tennis court and other state of-the- art modern conveniences that passed him by during the time he was exiled in Tanzania, playing his part in the 'struggle'. (p. 36)

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This anticipated mobility to the 'northern suburbs' (p. 36) will be facilitated by his acquisition of Pangolin Farm. Currently, Mr Gwanhure lives in Waterfalls which is a 'wrong area' (p. 36) and is in the 'southern part of the city' (p. 36). The description of Waterfalls he gives is important in highlighting the revulsion he has of the place as he 'has always considered the southern part of the city- with its askew tin-roofed and huge unkempt gardens – cheap and tacky' (p. 36). Apart from changing places he also intends to change his wife's car which 'has outlived its legitimate lifespan' (p. 36).

However, there are competing narratives and voices to the land reform programme and this is exemplified by Conrad Mafuta and his colleagues. These competing narratives and voices further complicate our conceptualisation of migration. I therefore argue that Conrad Mafuta relies on history and memory to counter Gwanhure's claim to Bradford's farm. Conrad Mafuta's reliance on memory and history constitute what I term psycho-historical migration. As I have already highlighted psycho-historical migrations are predicated on memory and its power to influence and contest the past and the future. Matandangoma in Mungoshi's (1975) *Waiting for the rain* also exemplifies this form of migration as he relies on memory and history to narrate the family's dislocation from their previous area of settlement to the current tribal trust lands as a consequence of colonialism. The migration of the Gwanhure family is assumedly supposed to correct the historical imbalances in land ownership yet this very migration is ironically perceived as a 'intrusion' by the Mafuta family which relies on psycho-historical migration to lay claim to the land. Thus the ZANU-PF grand narrative of land dispossession and land reform is being subtly destabilised and shown to be elitist in nature and not respectful of the individual and nuanced historical realities of colonial invasion. Conrad Mafuta is chairman of the Haka Farm Resettlement Committee and challenges the farm proprietorship of Henry Gwanhure. To Conrad Mafuta, Pangolin farm does not belong to Henry Gwanhure as 'the land' belongs to chief Haka and therefore Conrad and his colleagues are 'his [Chief Haka] descendants' and the farm is their 'ancestral land' (p. 44). Thus, Conrad brings in a new twist to the land reform programme which further heightens the 'chaotic' nature of the programme. To Conrad and his colleagues the land is theirs as his ancestors had lost the land during colonialism and therefore they are morally justified to reclaim it:

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> The land was taken from the Chief Haka by force in 1896, during the First Chimurenga. As far as we know, he never sold it to anyone. My grandfather Chauruma Mafuta was the fourth son of Chief Haka. This is the land of my ancestors, Mr Gwanhure. We are the ones who chased Bradford away from this land. Where were those people who gave you the letter when Bradford was setting dogs on us? Where were they when Bradford's father burnt our parents' huts and destroyed their livestock in 1956? Where were they when Bradford's grandfather hanged my grandfather Chauruma Mafuta for fighting the British in 1897? We are fed up with you people from the towns coming to reap where you did not sow. You can take your letter back to the people who gave it to you and tell them that the Haka people have taken back their land and will not be moved again, come what may. (p. 44)

Conrad Mafuta therefore through psycho-historical migration, represents the competing narratives to the official narration of the land reform programme and lends credence to the view that the programme was 'elitist' in nature. Thus, what is crucially important to note is the fact that the much anticipated upward economic and social mobility of the Gwanhure family as a consequence of the acquisition of the farm is threatened by Conrad Mafuta.

It is also important to note that the story is a sarcastic mockery of the land reform programme, especially of the Henry Gwanhures who benefited from the programme. This sarcasm is contained in the word *'muchekadzafa'* (p. 44) used by Conrad Mafuta to describe Henry Gwanhure. A *'muchekadzafa'* is a 'lazy person who benefits from somebody else's hard work' (p. 45) and in this case refers to Henry Gwanhure who desires to reap the benefits of the hard work of other people. Interestingly, it is Conrad Mafuta who chased away Bradford from the farm yet surprisingly it is Henry that has the letter of acquisition from the government. However, the story problematises *'muchekadzafa'* as it poses the question of who is *'muchekadzafa'* in the land reform programme.

In this story I centred on the land reform programme and its impact on the upward economic and social mobility of the Gwanhure family. I argued that this mobility is largely imagined and anticipated as the family has recently acquired the farm and the mobility is threatened by Conrad Mafuta who also has a claim to the land as he feels that he is morally obliged to reclaim the land as it was formerly the land of his ancestors. This moral obligation is premised

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on the ability to reclaim a past through memory in what I have termed 'psycho-historical migration'. Thus the migration and anticipated upward social mobility of the Gwanhure family is contested by the psycho-historical migration of Conrad Mafuta. The story therefore expands our conceptualisation of migration to include psycho-historical migrations predicated on memory and history.

The next story 'Blunt Force Trauma' explores the effects of political violence that rocked Zimbabwe in 2008. The story centres on Eldridge who is a victim of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa and as a consequence returns to Zimbabwe only to be subjected tragically to further political violence.

3.2.5 Migration, political violence and political identities in 'Blunt Force Trauma'

The story explores the effects of political violence, mainly instigated by ZANU-PF, which rocked Zimbabwe in 2008 and was 'aimed at subduing the opposition movement' (Sachikonye 2012:162) amidst a political and economic crisis. It centres on Eldridge Gunguwo, a victim of xenophobic violence in South Africa, and returnee to Zimbabwe, who is killed during the 2008 political violence. Examined here is the discursive and ideological political migration and the production of secret political identities predicated on fear of persecution and death. This is attributable to the fact that Zimbabwe in a Foucauldian sense is a carceral state or what Sachikonye (2012) terms the 'police state' that is authoritarian and exercises intolerance of diversity. The title itself, 'Blunt Force Trauma', is evocative of political violence and its effects on society. The story is narrated by the Eldridge's friend who presents readers with snapshots of Eldridge's life. The setting of the story is June 2008 and this is interesting in that Zimbabwe witnessed one of its worst violent elections, the presidential run-off between Robert Mugabe of ZANU-PF and Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC during this period.

The narrator describes Eldridge as 'my friend and closest confidant from our kindergarten days. He was actually a sort of cousin – our mothers were distant relatives – but a lot of people did not know that' (p. 71). However, the narrator is shocked to discover that Eldridge was a political activist for the opposition and is a victim of political violence. Interestingly,

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before Eldridge met his death, he had migrated to South Africa in 1992 when he 'was barely twenty-two' (p. 73). His sojourn in South Africa is largely depicted as a success:

> He first worked as a vendor of soapstone curios and other artefacts from his home country, and then after securing a counterfeit work permit, as an auto-electrician for a mini-cab company operating mainly in the meandering streets of Berea, Yeoville and Braamfontein. A friend who worked for a finance house arranged an inexpensive loan and Eldridge managed to convince his employer to sell him the mini-cabs business. Within eight months he had a fleet of five vehicles and employed four full time drivers. (p. 74)

Thus, Eldridge through hard work managed to move from one social and economic position to another. However, it is important to note that Eldridge first worked as a 'vendor of soapstone curios and other artefacts' (p. 74) before possessing 'a fleet of five vehicles' (p. 74). Furthermore, this upward economic and social mobility is a consequence of transnational migration. To Eldridge his success is attributed to the fact that Johannesburg is a 'place of endless pleasures and opportunities, a true paradise on earth' (p. 74). Johannesburg is thus conceptualised in similar terms as America by Venus in Mandishona's (2009) 'Smoke and Ashes' and Rambanai in Gappah's (2009) 'My cousin sister Rambanai'. However, this image of Johannesburg is contrasted to places like Hillbrow that are crime infested. This therefore testifies to the fact that space within the same city is not monolithic and homogenous. Johannesburg consequently is portrayed as heterogeneously spaced as some spaces are considered more safe and respectable than others. Thus, the Johannesburg that offers boundless opportunities of success is also the same city that has 'its hidden dangers [...] was easy to get guns in Jo'burg [...] [and] life [...] was a daily struggle against becoming a crime statistics' (p. 74). Nonetheless, Eldridge's success is destroyed as a consequence of xenophobic attacks:

> But in the middle of 2004, after Eldridge had lived in South Africa for almost a decade and a half, somebody broke into the premises on Commissioner Street that housed his mini-cab business and set everything on fire. The unknown arsonists also torched Eldridge's entire fleet of nine cars and three minibuses parked outside [...] The

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following day, one of Eldridge's South African friends advised him to leave the country (p. 74-75).

The reason that is proffered for the attack is that the people behind the attacks hated 'successful foreigners' whom they derogatorily refer to as 'kwerekwere' (p. 75). Thus, Eldridge's the upward economic and social mobility is severely threatened and he returns to Zimbabwe during the economic and political crisis bedevilling the country. Eldridge, unlike most migrants depicted in Zimbabwean literature, such as Uncle Nicholas and Jerry Machingauta in Mandishona's (2009) 'A Wasted Land' and 'A Secret Sin' respectively, the narrator in Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009), Peter and Rambanai in Gappah's (2009) 'Something Nice from London' and 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai' respectively who fail to manage successfully their diasporic experiences and are perceived largely as 'failures', is represented as successful but his success is only derailed by the xenophobic attacks. Importantly, the xenophobic attacks undermined the purported democratic and rainbow-ness of the South African nation.

The story also explores migration of a political nature. This is largely migration of a discursive and ideological nature as one moves from one political position to another. This discursive and ideological shift impacts on the political identities of individuals in society. This movement can be mapped out in Eldridge's life. In Zimbabwe, Eldridge marries Melody Nyamwenda and amid the political and economic crisis makes a 'decent living carrying out solar installations and repairing generators' (p. 70). Interestingly, unbeknown to his friends, Eldridge becomes involved in opposition politics:

> I had known Eldridge all my life, yet it had come as a surprise to me to learn that the carefree and happy go-lucky cousin I had known for all those years and once spent a wild Christmas holiday with in Johannesburg's seedy underbelly had been active in opposition politics. (p. 81)

This involvement in politics is a radical shift from the earlier Eldridge who showed no interest in politics and 'took pride in the fact that he had never voted in his entire life and insisted that all politicians were crooks' (p. 81). This shift is attributable to the fact that in 2008 the Zimbabwean crisis had reached its peak and provoked every citizen to be morally obliged to

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participate in resolving the crisis. Thus, 2008 can be defined as the crux of the economic and political crisis which forced everyone to take political sides as the Zimbabwean political terrain was being significantly re-aligned. Consequently, 2008 worsened the political polarisation and violence in the country and this got accentuated during the harmonised presidential and parliamentary elections that were conducted in March and the presidential run–off in June. It is, therefore, no coincidence that Eldridge's body is identified by the narrator 'one chilly afternoon in June 2008' (p. 70) at Harare's Parirenyatwa Hospital mortuary. Thus, Eldridge is a victim of political violence as noted by the forensic pathologist Dr Juanita Hernandez's report and the confessions of one of his friends at the funeral. Eldridge and his friends attended a meeting convened by the main opposition at a hotel in the city centre 'to discuss the nationwide violence that had followed the just ended "harmonised" election' (p. 78) that was violently disrupted by riot police:

> But barely half an hour later riot police had come into the hotel and dispersed the gathering, which they said was illegal [...] Scuffles had broken out and the man said that was the last time he had seen Eldridge. Some of the people who had been at the meeting had later turned up in the cells at Harare Central police station, others had been located at the casualty departments of several hospitals, nursing broken limbs, black eyes and bloodied noses. (p. 78)

Raftopoulos (2004) outlines how ZANU-PF relies on deploying elements of the police, the intelligence service, the army, the war veterans, party supporters and the youth militia on the opposition and that since 2000, MDC members of parliament have been subjected to violence and some members of the MDC leadership have been incarcerated or faced charges ranging from high treason and murder, to spreading alarm and despondency. Eldridge's death therefore is politically motivated as whoever was behind the crime did not pilfer his belongings:

> After I had signed the register at the mortuary the attendant with the goatee beard had given me a worn out supermarket plastic bag containing Eldridge's personal effects. There wasn't much: a dusty red Liverpool Football Club replica jersey with the name 'Gerald' on the back, a white T-shirt Eldridge liked to wear as an undergarment because of its mildly rude inscription – ' I Can See Uranus', pair of black jeans, Nike

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> running shoes, scraps of paper that had been found in his pockets, a small wallet, a wad of fifty million dollar bearer cheques, a brand new membership card for the opposition party and the twenty-one carat gold chain he had bought during his Johannesburg days. Clearly, this was not a man who had been killed during a botched robbery; the first thing any self-respecting robber would have gone for was that very expensive chain. (p. 80)

Importantly, Eldridge had committed an 'unforgivable sin in the turbulent and brutal politics' of Zimbabwe in that his active membership with the opposition meant that he had moved away from the realm of ZANU-PF politics, which I term a 'discursive political and ideological migration'. The result of such an ideological and political shift was death. It is therefore interesting to note that characters like Eldridge by virtue of their support of the MDC are considered by ZANU-PF as 'unpatriotic' and 'puppets' of the west (Raftopoulos 2004), and therefore mapped as deserving to die as their 'death' is perceived as 'death' of colonialism and imperialism.

The next section examines Peter Orner and Annie Holmes' *Hope deferred: narratives of Zimbabwean Lives,* and I focus on the life narratives of Elizabeth, Nokuthula, Tsitsi, George, Alice and Samuel, in which I draw on McAdams (2008) concept of narrative identity to examine narrative identity and memory.

3.3 Memory, migration and the formation of dislocated and restless political identities in Peter Orner and Annie Holmes' *Hope Deferred: Narratives of Zimbabwean Lives*

Hope Deferred is a collection of the life narratives of Zimbabweans, some living within the borders of Zimbabwe and others outside. The text is largely autobiographical and I intend to trace the linkages between memory, migration and the formation of (political) identities especially those predicated on victimhood and persecution. I will argue that the various characters explored use of narration to engage in storytelling; are (un) consciously reworking their life trajectories and deliberately redefining and reconstructing their identities, especially their political identities. This reconfiguration is attributed to the political landscape of Zimbabwe that has largely been shaped by the ZANU-PF's political leadership and ideological hegemony since 1980. I also read the Zimbabwean nation state as a Foucauldian

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carceral state that depends for its hegemonic survival on surveillance and control of its citizens. In such a context the power to remember, and the ability and right not to forget become a political weapon that the vulnerable use to question and subvert power. Additionally, the only way to escape this carceral state and its self-authored and imposed national and linear narratives is to migrate beyond the confines of their borders and seek sanctuary in other terrains and through authoring counter/alternative narratives. This movement represents the political and ideological migrations I referred to in my analysis of Mandishona's (2009) 'Blunt Force Trauma'.

Brian Chikwava in the foreword of *Hope Deferred* notes that:

> The histories, or stories that we tell ourselves, like the songs we sing makes us who we are. On the personal level, our stories are the tools by which we recall events of import in our lives, how we interpret those events and ultimately how we hold our sense of self together when times are such that we could easily lose ourselves and our way. (p. 10)

The above quotation aptly captures the importance of stories and memory in the construction of identities. More importantly, Chikwava draws attention to the instinctive desire within human beings to narrate (self) stories as a way of constructing meaning out of rather disparate experiences. In addition, stories of who we are and where we are coming from and how we intend to project ourselves into the future are important in a primordial sense as they are the very tools of our survival and what make us essentially human beings. Similarly, McAdams (2008: 244) notes that stories are the best vehicles known to human beings for conveying how and why a human agent, endowed with consciousness and motivated by intention, enacts desires and strives for goals over time. Furthermore, McAdams (2008) argues that the stories we tell about ourselves entertain, educate, inspire, motivate, conceal and reveal, organise and disrupt. However, among their most important functions is integration, as stories often 'bring together into an understandable frame disparate ideas, characters, happenings, and other elements of life that were previously set apart' (McAdams 2008:245). Woodward (2002:28) argues in concurrence that we all tell stories about our lives, tell ourselves stories and relate them to others as a means of making sense of ourselves. Furthermore, Woodward (2002:29) notes that in telling stories about ourselves we are endeavouring to make sense of our

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experiences by putting together the often disjointed and fragmented pieces of everyday life, including the crises and traumas as well as the banal aspects of routine, into some kind of structure. However, this, as Woodward (2002) observes, involves reconstructing the past through the lens of the present. Importantly, self-narrativity as a means of making sense of ourselves is directly related to migration, especially forced migration in that the narrative becomes a journey into self-worth and also a way of transcending victimhood.

3.3.1 Migration, betrayal and political identities in Elizabeth's narrative

Elizabeth's narrative depicts her construction of a political identity premised on victimhood. This identity is a consequence of her support of the MDC and the subsequent torture she is subjected to by ZANU-PF operatives. To escape the torture and persecution from ZANU-PF, Elizabeth migrates to South Africa. In this case her migration is directly linked to the Foucauldian concept of the carceral state, a state that is intolerant of divergent and alternative views and employs repressive state apparatuses, in the case of Zimbabwe, through the police, the dreaded Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and Youth Militia to stifle resistance. Thus, her migration is not just physical escape but becomes a metaphor of escaping mentally, emotionally and spiritually the Foucauldian panopticon gaze exemplified by the CIO. This Foucauldian panopticon gaze is analogous to the Orwellian concept of 'Big Brother' exemplified by Winston Smith who considers himself a dead man from the moment he rebels (Orwell 1949). Both the panopticon gaze and the concept of 'Big Brother' are pertinent to the Zimbabwean state which Sachikonye (2012) describes as a 'police state' that seeks to monitor and control the political behaviour of its citizens and any behaviour that fails to conform to the expected political and social norms and values is considered 'treacherous', 'unpatriotic' and 'sell-out'.

Elizabeth tells her story from the safety afforded her by forced migration to South Africa. Her presence in South Africa challenges the mainstream conceptualisation of migration which is primarily premised on economic imperatives (Crush and Tevera 2010) and is, as Sachikonye (2012:163) notes, a 'politically motivated act'. Elizabeth's story therefore raises pertinent questions about the political utility of migration in the context of authoritarianism and oppression. Firstly, is migrating, as Sachikonye (2012) questions, out of an authoritarian state the most effective response to a situation that requires collective political action? Secondly,

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does migration contribute to the longetivity of the incumbent's authoritarian regime? Elizabeth narrates thus:

> I am Elizabeth. I wish I could use my real name, because the situation in Zimbabwe is real. It would be better for those back home to know it was me. This is not a story that I heard about anyone else – this happened to me [...] the ZANU-PF thugs used to ask, Do you want long sleeves? That meant they would cut you at the elbow. People laugh at that. I don't laugh at such things. They are not jokes. It is someone's limbs that are being cut and I have seen people who lost their limbs. I have experienced how it feels to be tortured. I take it personally because I know it has happened. (p. 53-54)

Thus, Elizabeth sets out to narrate her story of political torture and persecution at the hands of ZANU-PF. This torture and persecution have resulted in the creation of a political identity premised on a sense of victimhood. This political identity is heightened by the fact that her family is not supportive of her political activism. Her mother 'strongly believed in the Zanu-PF government' (p. 56) and her brothers, with the exception of one, are in one way or the other connected to the government and their sympathies. Two of her brothers are in the army and the CIO. Significantly, Elizabeth notes that her relations with her mother and family prior to her political activism were 'good' (p. 54) but deteriorated after her involvement in politics which reflects her discursive and ideological migration.

Thus, Elizabeth's involvement in politics marks her ideological and political migration from an adolescent who is supposed to be politically and ideologically 'naïve' and 'innocent' and preoccupied with her education to a person who is fully conscious of her civic and political rights. Notably, Elizabeth's involvement in politics started at a tender age when she was only fifteen years old and at high school. Her interest in politics had a profound effect on her education as she would sometimes miss school. Consequently, her involvement resulted in her expulsion from the school hostel she was staying as a boarder:

> The school authorities knew about my political activities because I sometimes missed school [...] At first I was a boarder, then I was expelled from the hostel and became a day scholar, living with my mother. (p. 56)

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Crucially, Elizabeth regrets her involvement in politics as it ended up ruining and destroying her family and education. Her regret is heightened by the fact that she did not benefit out of her involvement in politics:

> After I got involved in politics, we would fight, my mother and me. She would tell me to stop my political activities, but I wouldn't. Sometimes I think, *If only I had listened to her*. I passed my ordinary level exams but I didn't go any further with school. So, when I look back, I am not happy. I could have carried on with school at the same time as politics, but instead I chose something that I got nothing out of. (p. 54)

Elizabeth passed her Ordinary Level exams though, but because of her involvement in politics did not further her education. However, migration allowed her the latitude to realise that she should have continued with her education. Elizabeth therefore has a wistful, remorseful and retrospective voice when she recounts that:

> I was happy when my accounts results came. I had a B. Yes, I had passed my O-Levels. That's why my mother was so mad at me when my life got messed up with all this rallying and dancing. I didn't even go for my Advanced Levels. No school would want me. I think it all changed my character. Am I a difficult person? I don't know, but I do make things difficult for myself. (p. 57)

In retrospect, Elizabeth realises that her involvement in politics, which she refers to derogatorily as 'all this rallying and dancing' (p.57), has complicated her life and that of her family. Furthermore, Elizabeth realises that she has been used, as shown by her angry use of the metaphor of a ladder that is exploited for the political gain of others:

> When I look back at those times, I feel this anger, and I don't know how I'm going to get it out. I've been a ladder to some other people. Some just used me to get to the top. *Voom!* They are *at* the top. But I am also proud that I've done my best, the best that I could have done. I'm proud that I was tortured for information and that I was able to endure it. I didn't reveal any secrets. (p. 58)

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Migration therefore allows her the platform to engage in retrospective analysis of her behaviour. This is a very important exercise in identity formation as she seeks to make sense of her life. Similarly, McAdams (2008) notes that:

> the stories we construct to make sense of our lives are fundamentally about our struggle to reconcile who we imagine we were, are, and might be in our heads and bodies with who we were, are, and might be in the social contexts of family, community, the workplace, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and culture writ large. (p. 242-243)

Interestingly, before moving to South Africa, Elizabeth first went to Chinhoyi to continue her political activism. Her escape to Chinhoyi mirrors the multidirectional internal migrations embarked on by Elizabeth before engaging in forced outward regional migration to South Africa. In Chinhoyi her political activism intensifies as is exemplified by the 2004 petrol-bombing of the ZANU-PF provincial headquarters. After the petro-bombing of the ZANU-PF headquarters in Chinhoyi, Elizabeth escapes to the rural areas seeking refuge:

> Where was I hiding? In a village in the rural areas with the granny of someone I knew. I stayed there for some months, trying to hide my identity, pretending to be a rural girl. I ate what they ate and dressed like them, because at that point ZANU-PF wanted my head. (p. 63)

Thus, the idea of identities as predicated strategically on deception implies that an individual can have a bifurcated sense of self and can successfully manage this dualistic sense of self. Rather than create contradictions and conflicts this bifurcated sense of self can exist simultaneously with each other. This is akin to the Goffmanian idea of the 'presentation of self' where Goffman (1959) argues that the social world is constructed by social actors who, like artists act out their scripts on the theatre stage and convey certain impressions of themselves to others. Furthermore, in a Goffmanian sense Elizabeth, enabled by strategic urban rural migration, hides her political activist identity from the villagers as she fears persecution.

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Elizabeth resurfaces in Chinhoyi when she felt it was now 'safe to come out of hiding' (p.63). However, she challenges Phillip Chiyangwa at a ZANU-PF rally in 2006 and as a consequence is tortured and left for dead. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's mother succumbed to sickness and ultimately died in Marondera. When Elizabeth tried to attend the funeral she was told that ZANU-PF still wanted her and as a result escapes to South Africa. Elizabeth is sexually exploited by a truck driver en-route to South Africa, in her desperate bid to escape the clutches of ZANU-PF. It is also important to note that migration is a classed and gendered phenomenon largely skewed in favour of men. Thus, Elizabeth's forced regional migration accentuates her vulnerability to sexual abuse and heightens her sense of victimhood.

> The truck driver was from the Congo. I stayed with him the whole night. It was around seven p.m. when I got into the truck. Unfortunately, I slept with him. I slept with him- otherwise he was going to say, Get out. I don't want to talk about it. (p. 66)

Her sense of betrayal is worsened by the fact that she fails to get employment in South Africa and Elizabeth's lack of employment creates a restless and desperate identity.

The next story I will focus on is narrated by Nokuthula who is an illegal migrant in South Africa. It considers the significance of women in transnational migration provoked by the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis and also focuses on the deployment of strategic and deceptive identities to escape the xenophobic attacks that took place in South Africa.

3.3.2 Migration and the deployment of strategic and positional identities in 'Nokuthula'

Nokuthula's narrative focuses on the link between migration and the deployment of strategic and positional identities in the face of the xenophobic attacks that took place in South Africa in 2008. Nokuthula's story is important in two ways. Nokuthula is an illegal migrant in South Africa as a direct result of the deepening economic and political crisis. Her husband assumedly migrated to Britain in 1999 as a way of escaping the torture and persecution from the ZANU-PF and she has not heard from him since. With the departure of her husband, Nokuthula has to provide for her son and this forces her to migrate to South Africa. Therefore, her story is important from a gendered perspective as one witnesses the feminisation of migration which previously used to be the exclusive domain of men.

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Historically, regional migration to South Africa had largely been the domain of men in search of employment in South African mines and industries. This feminisation of migration, evident in Nokuthula, results in the reconfiguration of gender. Secondly, Nokuthula's story is important in that she is subjected to xenophobic attacks which forced her to deploy strategic and positional identities based on deception. This strategic and positional identity is largely successful because of her Ndebele ethnicity. Nokuthula's strategic and positional identity is similar to that of Rambanai in Gappah's (2009) "My cousin sister Rambanai". Rambanai in order to go to London changes her name to 'Langelihle Chantal Ndhlukula' (p. 229) to get a new passport as her old passport had been 'endorsed'. Interestingly, Nokuthula's Ndebele background seems to camouflage very well her Zimbabweanness and makes her blending among the South Africans easier as the Ndebele language is closely related to isiZulu.

Nokuthula hails from Bulawayo in a family of four children and has an unstable family background. Her instability at family level is testified by the fact that her parents were divorced and she and her siblings had to be raised by their aunt:

> We are four children in my family, three girls and one boy [...] when we were growing up, my mother couldn't afford to look after us. She had to take us to live at our aunt's. My aunt and her husband are teachers. They had a big house and we had everything we needed growing up. Their house is near where my mother live now, but then my mother had no house. She used to rent. My father is still alive. He has his own house in another location. When they got divorced, my mother got nothing. That's why we had to go and live with my aunt. (p. 128)

This instability exemplified by the divorce of her parents is heightened when she marries her first husband. Thus, one witnesses migrations of a marital nature from being a single woman to married one. This form of migration involves leaving one's familial home and establishing one's own home. However, the marriage is short-lived and Nokuthula attributes its failure to her husband's involvement in politics:

> He (husband) was a member of MDC [...] and he used to take part in political events. Before the elections in 2000, members of ZANU-PF threatened him. He felt very unsafe. We had to sell some of our belongings so that he could go and hide somewhere.

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> He managed to get to the UK, so he is in London now. Since then, we haven't heard from him. He doesn't contact us. (p. 126)

I therefore argue that the absence of her husband should be read metaphorically as the 'forced retreat of the male body from various sites of visuality and authority' (Muchemwa and Muponde 2007: xviii) as her husband has not been allowed by the political situation prevailing in the country to perform his expected roles of being the provider and protector of the family. Nokuthula seems to indicate that her husband is no longer interested in the family and therefore not responsible enough as he has not contacted her since leaving Zimbabwe for London. Furthermore, Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) argue that the invisibility of the male body from sites of visuality and authority within the family has resulted in a new migrancy which is largely dominated by women and is dispersing and re-configuring masculinities and femininities and gender relations in general. This is epitomised by Nokuthula who is in South Africa as a consequence of the absence of her husband and therefore needs to provide for her child in a deepening economic and political crisis. Importantly, Nokuthula managed to secure a job in South Africa with the assistance of the daughter of her mother's employers' who is also in Cape Town. Therefore, in Zimbabwean transnational migration, kinship and comradeship nexus is crucial in the adaptation to 'hostile' environments.

Nokuthula's narrative also explores the effects of the xenophobic attacks that occurred in South Africa in 2008. Nokuthula describes how she had to lie that she is Zulu and from Durban to survive the attacks. Transnational migration therefore results in the production and deployment of survival, strategic and positional identities predicated on deception. Additionally, such an identity requires the support of 'strong cultural and linguistic ties' (Raftopoulos 2009:223) as provided by Nokuthula's Ndebele ethnic background. The Ndebele ethnic group originally hails from South Africa and is in Zimbabwe as a result of the Mfecane:

> It is an advantage for us Zimbabweans from Matebeleland who speak Ndebele, because we speak Xhosa. It's easier for us. But it's a disadvantage for the Shona people, because once you speak Shona, they say you are *ikwirikwiri*. That's why most

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> of us from Matebeleland can stay in the locations where rent is cheap. Most of the Nigerians and other people from other countries have to stay in places around town, because they can't speak the language. And if you speak your own language, they notice that you are *ikwirikwiri*. Then they make your life a hell. (p. 134)

However, this strategic and positional identity comes with a price as Nokuthula is made to participate in the xenophobic attacks:

> On that day, when the people started talking, I joined in [...] Yet, deep down in my heart, I knew I was one of the *ikwirikwiris*, and I did not want them to go back to their countries (p. 134).

The desire, however, to return permanently home once 'things [...] really change' (p. 141) haunts Nokuthula and is very pronounced in the narrative. Returning home, illustrative of reverse migration, is perceived as healing the family rupture already in existence between Nokuthula and the child she left in Zimbabwe. It also offers ontological security as one's existence in South Africa is precarious as attested by the spate of xenophobic attacks:

> I wish things could really change and I could go home. That would be best for me. Here it's okay, but there are times when you need your family around, like when you get sick and there's no one to look after you, when you miss your family, and when you need somebody close to talk to. Yes there are church elders, but at times you need somebody very close. (p. 141)

Thus, Woodward (2002) notes that the concept of 'home' has a special place in the history of journeys and migrations as the idea of 'home' also contributes to the desire to stabilise identity. Furthermore, Woodward (2002) argues that longing for 'home' can also be translated as a need to secure a sense of who we are, when our spatial location can be seen to be compromising that security. Therefore, 'home' in Nokuthula's case is two dimensional. Firstly, it refers to her domestic private home which she shares with her family. Secondly, and equally important Nokuthula's 'home' refers to Zimbabwe in contrast to South Africa where she is made to feel like an 'alien' and derogatorily referred to as 'ikwirikwiri' (p. 134). The term 'ikwirikwiri' is significant in regional migration as it refers to non-permanent migration as people like Nokuthula engage in circular migration. Thus, to Nokuthula 'home' unlike in

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the case of the diaspora is not metaphoric and unrealisable as she is always coming 'home' to temporarily reunite with her family. Even the concept of reverse migration which I will refer to in Chapter five does not adequately express the circular migration of the 'ikwirikwiri'.

The next story I will focus on is Tsitsi's. Tsitsi's story centres on the fast track land reform programme, how it resulted in displacement and dislocation and the need for reconfigured identities. The story is important as it is female authored and is concerned with reflecting a female black perspective on the fast track land reform programme.

3.3.3 Displacement, disillusionment and reconfiguration of identities in 'Tsitsi'

Tsitsi's story focuses on the land reform programme, which as I argued earlier is one of the key indices of the political and economic crisis, and the subsequent migrations that ensued. Her story challenges certain assumptions and stereotypes about the land reform programme. These stereotypes include the view that white farm owners and black farm workers were the only victims of the land reform programme. Additionally, Tsitsi in her narration questions the ideology of black empowerment behind the land reform programme as she, as a black person also lost her land to the programme. Therefore, her loss of land forced her to migrate from Chinhoyi to Bulawayo and significantly altered her sense of self, thus, depicting how the land reform programme initiated internal displacement and dislocation. Equally important is the ensuing configuration of identities that is necessitated by the dislocation. Tsitsi's identity as a black female farmer is disrupted by the land reform programme and this forces her to assume a political activist identity.

Nevertheless Tsitsi had a Christian upbringing which gets complicated by the repressive state politics. Tsitsi has this to say about her personal background:

> I'm from a Christian family. I was basically raised on church premises. My parents were Salvation Army leaders, with my father being a minister of that church, so we moved around quite a lot. I lived in Chinhoyi, Chiweshe, Masvingo, and so forth. But I grew up mostly in Harare and went to school there, starting at Houghton Park Primary. When I was born, we were living in Chinhoyi in the so called 'big suburbs', where white people lived [...] I never felt that I was different from non-black children,

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> because I played with them all the time [...] I am the last born in the family-we used to be five children but now we are four. (p. 167-168)

Tsitsi thus had a rich and complex childhood. Tsitsi also constructs an image of her parents as devout Christians and she mentions that her parents were politically correct as they were 'completely loyal to ZANU-PF' (P. 168). However, this loyalty is destabilised when the Salvation Army marches, which had 'nothing to do with the formation of opposition parties' (p.168) are banned by the police. Tsitsi therefore interprets this as the suppression of rights, such as free movement and this significantly altered her parent's perception of the ZANU-PF.

After completing her secondary school, Tsitsi worked for Barclays Bank of Zimbabwe for ten years. One of the iconic figures in her life is her sister who started an NGO, the Indigenous Businesswomen's Organisation (IBWO). When her sister died Tsitsi assumed leadership of the organisation and it was through the Pricing and Commodities Committee she represented that she met Roy Peterson, a white farmer. Through this encounter Roy Peterson leases 'about twenty hectares' (p. 170) to Tsitsi:

> He (Roy Peterson) was leasing part of the estate to individuals and he leased me a portion, about twenty hectares, beginning in 1996 [...] For me, the lease also included a farmhouse-not the main one- and the tractors and trailers that we used [...] I was between twenty-seven and twenty-eight years old when I started in 1996. I was single and had no children. I grew onions mostly. Later on, I also raised chickens and experimented with bananas. (p. 170-171)

Importantly, Tsitsi describes herself as a 'very black' (p. 175) person and never imagined that her farm would be appropriated in the land reform programme beginning in 2000 given that her farm is her 'only source of livelihood' (p. 175). Significantly, Tsitsi challenges the essentialist, narrow and exclusive definition of national identity imposed by the ZANU-PF by referring to herself as a 'very black' person and thus exposes some of the ironies associated with the land reform programme:

> I tried to appeal through ZANU-PF structures. Blacks were supposed to benefit from this land invasion – that's what you heard. I thought I was black enough! All I needed

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> was to make a claim and I would keep this piece of land. I tried to organise with others to prepare a position paper so our issue could be heard by the government. (p. 174)

The land reform programme therefore disrupted Tsitsi's farmer identity and made it impossible to acclimatise herself to her new environment in Bulawayo. After the acquisition of her farm Tsitsi stayed with her sister in Bulawayo and was totally unprepared 'for the change from farming onions to something else' (p. 177). Irrespective of her relocation to Bulawayo, Tsitsi still felt that one day she would return to her farm. This is exemplified by the fact that she did not collect her property from the farmhouse. Nevertheless, her loss of the farm and the associated forced migration is perceived as loss of independence and forcing constitution of a vulnerable identity.

Failure by Tsitsi to redeem her farm makes her realise that the land reform programme does not serve the interests of the common black people but of the rich and powerful in the ZANU – PF. She notes that:

> I feel that if you are not powerful within ZANU-PF or linked with someone who is powerful in that party, then you are vulnerable. It happened to me not because I am a woman but because I was not recognised, not politically powerful. (p. 176)

Additionally, the elitist nature of the programme is also exemplified by the fact that black farm workers were subjected to violence and displaced. Sachikonye (2012: 159) commenting on the effects of the land reform programme notes that the programme 'uprooted and displaced almost 200,000 farm workers' households'. Black farm workers did not constitute the blacks who were empowered through the land reform programme. Tsitsi sought the intervention of the courts but to no avail, thus showing how she could not legally protect her land and property.

After her relocation to Bulawayo Tsitsi is employed by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and this transformed her political outlook and plunged her into the world of political activism. I therefore argue that her displacement and subsequent employment resulted in her transcendence and constitution of a political identity:

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> I think the key moment for me was when I asked myself what I could contribute to the lives of others. The workers needed to be organised. I helped to organise informal traders after Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. It felt like me losing my farm all over again [...] These informal traders had lost everything except hope, but they were not giving up. They forced me to be stronger (p. 179).

This political activism is strengthened by her participation in the March 2008 parliamentary elections as part of the observer team of the ZCTU in Harare in the Kuwadzana constituency. However, her political activism is tempered by memories of her lost farm and the hope she entertains of returning to her farm. This return is perceived as an assumption of her farmer identity. Tsitsi's displacement from her farm resulted in the destabilisation of her farmer identity. Subsequently, her relocation to Bulawayo resulted in the assumption of a political activist identity. However, this political identity for Tsitsi was not enough compensation for her lost farm as memories and hope of a future return to her farm still haunted her.

The next story I focus on is narrated by George. It is interesting because it is told from the perspective of a male white farmer who is a victim of the fast track land reform programme.

3.3.5 Displacement, migration and re-affirmation of Zimbabweanness in 'George'

George is a white male Zimbabwean farmer who lost his land during the fast track land reform programme. His narration offers important insights into the psyche and experiences of white farmers who constituted part of the victims of the programme. Significantly, George's narration provides insights into his understanding of place, race and belonging within Zimbabwe. Thus, George's narrative is representative of the 'voice of white farmers themselves, presenting their perceptions of the history of the country and the land question and their views on either the necessity, desirability or the modalities of land redistribution' (Mlambo 2012: xi). This voice has not been fully acknowledged in mainstream Zimbabwean politics and George's narrative attempts to rectify that incongruence. The story captures the displacement and dislocation that ensued as a consequence of the land reform programme and how it impacted on the identities of white farmers. Additionally, it interrogates and problematises the concept of national identity and belonging in Zimbabwe as it exposes the

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limitations of the narrow and exclusive national identity promoted by the ZANU-PF in its patriotic history where whites are discursively portrayed and located as an alien racial group.

George notes 'I was born in Rhodesia under the white government, brought on a tobacco farm' and was 'the last child of three to be born on the farm' (p. 186). Being born in Rhodesia meant that George had a privileged life:

> I don't remember working around the house or making my bed or anything like that. We always had servants, everyone did. I would just get up, go down to breakfast, and there would always be eggs and bacon. From the age of six I was at boarding school, and on the holidays everything was laid on. (p. 186 – 187)

This privileged life resulted in the production of privileged identities. However, this privileged life, which was 'a beautiful time' (p. 187) did not last as the armed struggle for independence disrupted it. Importantly, great caution needs to be exercised as white farmers are not a homogenous group. Pilossof (2012: 4) notes that:

> White farmers, as a community, as an interest group, and as an economic sector, were always divided by their backgrounds, their geographical regions, their land uses and crop types. They were also divided by evolving planes of difference, such as affluence, political ideologies and farm structures.

However, the privileged life which continued in independent Zimbabwe suffered a severe blow from the land reform programme, which to most whites, as exemplified by George was a 'shock' (p. 187). This was largely a result of the Lancaster House Conference where whites retained most of their economic privileges and the land redistribution exercise was held at bay for ten years. Interestingly, reconciliation between blacks and whites was promoted and encouraged at independence. This left intact white economic privileges. Nonetheless, a significant portion of the white community migrated from Zimbabwe in 1980 and could not tolerate being under a black government. George and his family remained behind and George attributes this to the simple fact that he was now a 'Zimbabwean' (p. 192). Thus, George had transmuted from being a Rhodesian privileged white farmer to a Zimbabwean privileged white farmer. The fact that George refers to himself as a 'Zimbabwean' problematises and challenges the simplistic understanding of white identity propagated in 'patriotic history'

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championed by the ZANU-PF. In this history whites have never been perceived as anything else, except as aliens, Europeans, colonisers, racists and land grabbers. However, the Zimbabweanness of whites is exemplified by George when he is advised by his father to go overseas for a holiday and meets 'Rhodesians' (p. 192) who had left Zimbabwe on the eve of independence. He derogatorily refers to these Rhodesians as the 'whenwes':

> We ran into Rhodesians that had left. We called them 'whenwes'. As in, When we were in Rhodesia, we used to do things like this and this and this. But we would say, Fuck off, we're Zimbabweans now. We'd definitely changed in some ways. In other ways, I've never changed. I kissed the tarmac when we arrived in Zim. I refer to black people and white people in my story, not Africans and Europeans, because I consider myself an African. I am not a pommie. My skin is burnt by the sun and I love my country. (p. 192 – 193)

George's love for Zimbabwe is also exemplified by the brother who in 2008 had his farm taken away from him. George's brother during the invasions is subjected to extreme physical violence and his face is so severely damaged that it needed surgical attention. The brother refused an American facelift surgeon who had offered to correct the damage and opted for a Zimbabwean one. This, to George, reflects his brother's patriotism and Zimbabweanness:

> And then, one day, in 2008, he (George's brother) was out planting coffee [...] some war veterans came down the road [...] One guy pushed him from the back, pushed him into the next guy, and as he turned around to see who pushed him - I'm telling you they'd been given permission to kill him – another one slashed him across the top of the cheekbone with a *panga*. His whole face, it all fell forward. And his nose was gone [...] My brother was loyal to Zimbabwe. An American facelift surgeon offered to sew him back up, and he said, No, I want a Zimbabwean doctor to do it. That's how patriotic he is. And he showed real bravery. He got back out there. My brother, he got his face cut off, he got his face sewn up, and he went back out there. (p. 204)

Nevertheless, George and his brother are displaced and dislocated from their farms. This internal forced migration is complex in that it is a dislocation from their homes, their past and their community, often accompanied by extreme physical violence and psychological trauma

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that generates unstable and restless identities predicated on fear and paranoia. This is demonstrated by George who moved to Harare and leased a house for three months. Importantly, George fails to reconcile his former identity as a farmer with the 'sedentary' life he was now leading in Harare:

> I leased a house in Harare for about three months, and every night I was pissed out of my head, sleeping in the garden. All my friends that I've known have moved into Harare, all with the same big problems. They used to come around and we used to just drink and drink and drink. (p. 207)

This 'sedentary' life characterised by drunkenness is a direct result of the loss of the farm and more crucially of a stable sense of self. In George and his friends it constituted the fear, anxiety, desperation and paranoia felt by most whites who had been victims of the land reform programme, the attendant violence and displacement from the farms. A series of migrations is consequently began as, George moves to South Africa and engages in art business:

> We have always loved art. Sally (George's wife) is a floral artist and even represented Zim in the world floral art show. My dad, my mum, and mum-in-law are artists. So if we couldn't be farmers in Zim we were going to open a gallery in Cape Town. We chose some incredible stone sculptures and some talented artists, and set up a beautiful gallery in a fantastic spot called Franschhoek. (p. 209)

However, the transition from farming into art business failed to successfully compensate for the lost farmer identity. George typifies this when he confesses that 'I needed to be myself again, in my shorts and T-shirt in the bush [...] talking to my workers, growing something' (p. 208). This desire to be a farmer again compelled him further to migrate to Zambia where he got a job teaching small scale tobacco farmers. Nonetheless, George is not contend with this life and heads for Mozambique where he had been advised, by a friend that he would assist him in getting a farm. However, life in Mozambique is tough, as is epitomised by the fact that his family is always sick and their animals were always dying. Finally, George realises that 'it was time to come home' (p. 209) and returns to Zimbabwe. The conceptualisation of Zimbabwe as 'home' challenges in a significant way the hegemonic and narrow way of

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perceiving whites as 'aliens' and 'foreigners' and by extension as 'Europeans' and 'colonizers'. Crucially, perceiving Zimbabwe as 'home' connotes the ontological, emotional and psychological security that had been denied George as a consequence of the land reform programme and the ensuing regional migrations. The insecurity George felt in all his endeavours in South Africa, Zambia and Mozambique and bad experiences, as exemplified by his sojourn in Mozambique where he and his family were always sick of malaria and all his animals and pets died serve to reinforce his Zimbabweanness and sense of alienation. This Zimbabweanness and sense of alienation can only be healed by his return 'home' to Zimbabwe.

George ultimately becomes the farmer he has always been with his return to Zimbabwe. He enters into partnership with Mr Tuku a black farmer:

> I found a farm, was owned by a black man named Mr Tuku. I was impressed by him right away. He knew about being a farmer and didn't have unrealistic expectations. He wanted to go into partnership with his eldest son, Kwashe. He made me do all the right things, not only for myself, but for the future of this country. When we met Kwashe, we immediately hit it off [...] I enjoyed being in his company, he makes me laugh, and we have found a way of working together side by side. (p. 210)

George's reverse migration and the strategic partnerships on the post-2000 land tenure are illustrative of a desire by some whites to fully embrace their 'Zimbabweanness'. Furthermore, George's narrative problematises the narrow and simplistic perception of whites and blacks as eternal enemies promulgated in patriotic history where whites are constructed as 'colonisers' and 'land grabbers' while conversely, blacks are perceived as the 'colonised' and 'victims' of both white privilege and power. This is symbolised by the friendship between George and Kwashe. George comments that 'our relationship is not pretend. I wouldn't swap him for anyone, black or white' (p. 210). The relationship is also indicative of a movement of Zimbabwean identities into a hybrid one owing to the vicious circular, internal and external migrations during Zimbabwe's post- 2000 trajectories. Finally, George's story draws our attention to the relation between migration and identity in Zimbabwe.

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The next story explores Alice's experiences, a political activist for the MDC, whose subjection to torture, persecution and rape, compels her to migrate to Harare and ultimately to South Africa.

3.3.6 Migration and the construction of identities premised on victimhood in 'Alice'

Alice is an MDC activist and has a fractured and unstable personal and family background and through self-narrating seeks to tell her trauma and at the same time exorcise it. Opposition MDC activism in a political and social context which was largely dominated by the ZANU-PF and its repressive machinery compels Alice to assume a political identity of victimhood and persecution. This identity forces her to migrate from her rural home in Murambinda to Harare and ultimately to South Africa. This forced migration has an impact on her family. It also compels Alice to reconfigure her identity and accentuate her ontological insecurity.

Alice introduces herself thus:

> My name is Alice. The surname I use is from my mother's family, but my ID and documents have my ex-husband's surname, Bhina. I grew up with my mother's family after my father and mother had problems. My brother was the eldest, and he and I were taken to live with my mother's family when we were young. My mother died there, when he was only in grade 2. (p. 214)

This fractured family background is heightened by the fact that Alice did not go far with her schooling as she 'didn't manage to go to school past Grade 3' (p. 214). Furthermore, her instability is worsened by the fact that her husband remarried in Mozambique and 'didn't think about me or care' (p. 214). Victimhood, therefore, is very pronounced in her family and personal background and this sense of victimhood continues in her life as an MDC political activist.

Alice narrates that even before her husband had migrated to Mozambique, she had already began participating in MDC activities. This participation, however, had been conducted in a covert way as she feared persecution from the ZANU-PF:

> Even before my husband left, I had been participating in MDC – the Movement for Democratic Change – for some time, but earlier I had to do it quietly. Where I lived,

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> people had stopped coming out in the open because an MDC chairman was badly beaten up in our area by ZANU-PF people. They would go to people's houses in our area in the night and beat them up. So people were afraid of getting killed. (p. 214-215)

Alice became involved in the MDC because she was 'unhappy about the way we were living in Zimbabwe' (p. 215) and was the organising secretary in her constituency. However, she became a target of political violence and intimidation during the March 2008 elections in Zimbabwe. This violence and intimidation did not even spare her family and neighbours. Consequently, Alice assumes a political identity predicated on victimhood. This victimhood results in her employing several strategies to escape the Foucauldian panopticon gaze monitoring her movements and behaviour. However, her attempts to escape and operate outside the orbit of this panopticon gaze are temporarily rendered futile. This is exemplified when the army came to Alice's home and she had to hide in her bedroom:

> When I got home [...] It was some time after six p.m and it was dark. Three cars full up with people drove up to my house. This was the 7th of June, 2008 [...] they all got of the cars. Some jumped over my gate and some went around to my neighbour's house where I used to go to hide [...] There was a visitor at my neighbour's house and they beat him badly, tearing the skin of his buttocks. Then they went searching in the bedrooms in my house. In the other bedroom, they found my stepson and his wife sleeping. They started beating him but they didn't beat his wife because she was pregnant [...] I'd given that second stepson the spare keys to my bedroom so that if i wasn't there, he could get anything he needed from my room [...] they beat him too, because he could not get the door open. He was trying to insert the key but he could not do it because I was inside holding the key. When I realised that they were beating him, I decided to unlock the door. (p. 219)

Alice is subjected to physical violence and rape after her capture. These and the subsequent temporary imprisonment constitute political mechanisms designed to intimidate and silence her:

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> They told me to carry all the stuff out of the house [...] they [...] took me in their open truck [...] I was sitting in the back, in the middle, and they were surrounding me, sitting on the sides. They were all beating me, kicking me and hitting me with sticks and fists [...] they beat me up so badly. After that they said, take off your clothes. When I removed my clothes [...] they stopped the car in the dark and there they raped me. There were many soldiers. I don't know how many raped me. I saw the first eight men who raped me but then I became unconscious [...] inside, when they got behind the counter in the police station, they threw a bullet at me and said kiss it and I did, and they said, that bullet is yours. (p. 220-221)

Parpart (2010) argues that in contexts of conflict and violence rape is an everyday experience, undermining women's sense of security and personhood. Parpart (2010: 18) notes further that rape 'as an act of war continues to be a way to humiliate their male opponents by symbolically (and physically) 'marking' enemy women's bodies with semen and physical domination'. Thus, attacking the enemy women both emasculates the enemy (male) and reinforces the masculinity of the perpetrator. Alice's rape therefore represents deliberate attempts by the ZANU-PF to emasculate the MDC and objectify Alice. The torture, rape and subsequent temporary imprisonment resulted in Alice escaping to Harare. This provisional internal migration offers Alice a temporary respite as she seeks refuge at the MDC offices. She narrates that life in the city is 'safer' (p. 223) and her persecution and sense of victimhood is momentarily held at bay. Nonetheless, the persecution, intimidation and torture of her family and neighbours continued to the extent that her children, mother and sister also escape to Harare. Alice, however, returns to Murambinda only to be subjected to further intimidation from ZANU-PF and this forces her to seek sanctuary in South Africa:

> I applied for asylum in May 2009, but it's not out yet. I thought it would have come out by now. It's difficult to move around, it's scary, so I hide indoors. The house is very good, but my life is painful, because I can't go anywhere and I miss my family. I can't do anything to earn money for myself. I'm just someone who is sitting, doing nothing, thinking about my family. (p. 225)

Thus, her political identity as an opposition activist compels her to finally migrate to South Africa.

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The next story that I will consider focuses on Samuel's experiences; he is employed as a security guard in Mutare. The story, like its predecessors, considers the impact of dislocation and displacement in fracturing identities and family cohesion.

3.3.7 Farmworker displacement, insecurity and reconfigured identities in 'Samuel'

Samuel works as a security guard in Mutare. His story explores the 'chaotic' (Sachikonye 2012: 159) nature and impact of the fast track land reform programme on the lives of farm workers and the subsequent internal displacement and dislocation that ensued. The story is important in that it offers a first-hand narration and perspective of the impact of the fast track land reform programme on farm workers, a voice that has been largely marginalised in the narration of land issues in Zimbabwe. This dislocation and displacement impacted on the identities of the farm workers and disrupted family cohesion.

Samuel introduces himself thus:

> My name is Samuel. I was born in 1976 in Mutare. In my family we are ten: six boys and four girls, all still alive [...] I went to Mutare primary school in Bvumba [...] by the time I finished school in 1994, I already had a wife [...] I have three children [...] right now my family is living in Buwerimwe [...] my place is about three hectares [...] when I leave this security job in the morning, I will be going home to my farm for one day. (p. 253)

Samuel is first employed as a wood sculptor by a white man named Stewart after he had completed his schooling. He becomes a successful wood sculptor and sold his products in cities such as Harare and made a living until Stewart decided to move away. However, Samuel stays behind as he had a family to look after as it was 'impossible [...] to move with my family' (p. 254). Thus, Stewart's departure resulted in Samuel looking for alternative employment as a coffee farm worker at Peter Hill's farm. Samuel is promoted, after three years work as coffee farm worker, into being a security guard. The land reform programme was however introduced in his area in 2004:

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> One day they came while I was working and said, we have taken this farm, so you can't work here. Everyone who is here should go back where they came from. It was the war veterans' association who said that. (p. 254)

Consequently, the farm owner and workers are displaced and dislocated.

Samuel is internally displaced and goes to Mutare where he is employed as a security officer at Safeguard Security. Importantly, the internal displacement and dislocation has serious repercussions on his family life as he is now forced to see his family periodically:

> Another problem is that I stay in one place, and my family stays in another. Before Safeguard, my family stayed all at the same place. But now I can be moved to another place at any time. It means my bag is always packed. I don't know which place I'll go. When I worked as a private security guard on the farm, I was always based at the same place with my family. That's the big difference. Now I don't see them often. (p. 255-256)

This migration from the farm to Mutare, therefore, has generated restless identities. His life, as symbolised by the bag that is 'always packed' (p. 256), lacks anchorage and stability. This anchorage and stability is not just economic and social but is also spiritual and psychological. The restlessness is also accentuated by the separation from his family which he does not see very often. Another consequence of this internal displacement and dislocation is the creation of fear and trauma in the victims of the farm invasions. It is important to observe that the consequences of the internal displacement and dislocation went beyond the economic and social as there 'remained a considerable residue of trauma and fear' (Sachikonye 2012: 161) within the displaced communities. This is epitomised by Samuel who fears for his ruptured family that he does not see often.

3.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to establish the relationship between the Zimbabwean crisis and its impact on migration and identities. It was argued that the instability and fractured nature of the Zimbabwean nation-state did not begin in post-2000 as its roots can be traced to the early formative stages of the country in the 1980s. I focused on four stories namely 'Smoke and

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Ashes', 'Cities of Dust', 'Kaffir Corn' and 'Blunt Force Trauma' in *White Gods Black Demons* (2009). These stories concern themselves with explicating the Zimbabwean crisis that imploded in post-2000. In *Hope Deferred: Narratives of Zimbabwean Lives* I focused on the narratives by Elizabeth, Nokuthula, Tsitsi, George, Alice and Samuel. The next chapter focuses on gendered migrations and gendered identities and provides an in-depth gendered analysis of migration and identity. The chapter seeks to provide critical knowledge that is often ignored in most studies of migration which tends to gloss over issues of gender and in the process give prominence only to class and race. The chapter examines Shimmer Chinodya's *Chairman of Fools* (2005) and Lawrence Hoba's *The Trek and Other Stories* (2009).

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Chapter 4: Gendered migrations and gendered identities

4. 1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to give prominence to gender, a factor often occluded, in studies and representations of migration. Thus, the chapter offers a nuanced gendered perspective of migration, be it local or global. In my conceptualisation of gender, I largely rely on the ideas by Butler (1988; 1990), especially her conceptualisation of gender and gender identity as premised on performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo and Kandiyoti's (1988) idea about women bargaining with patriarchy. I am mostly interested in Kandiyoti's (1988) idea that women strategise within a set of concrete constraints and that different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct 'rules of the game' and call for different strategies to maximise security and optimise life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression. Gender, thus, becomes open to negotiation, mediation and contestation and a platform where gendered subjectivities are constructed. To complement the above critics, I also employ the ideas by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) on gender and migration in the discussion of the transformative implications of migration on gender. Migration, which Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) view in the literal and figurative sense as absence and the forced retreat of the male body from various sites of visuality and authority, results in the reconfiguration of gender and gender identities.

I examine Shimmer Chinodya's *Chairman of Fools* (2005) and Lawrence Hoba's *The Trek and other stories* (2009) in this chapter. In *Chairman of Fools,* the focus is on Farai's psycho-discursive migration as he comes to terms with the transformation of Veronica his wife. This psycho-discursive migration, which is perceived in western medical discourses as a bipolar disorder and in Zimbabwean Shona cosmology, as 'mamhepo' (evil spirits), acts as a shock therapy that Farai needs to acclimatise himself to the realities of a transformed Veronica. Importantly, I also argue that this psycho-discursive migration serves as a rite of passage that Farai has to go through in order for him to be transformed. Farai's transformation is thus a cognitive intellectual discursive migration that permits him to appreciate the importance of gender transformation. In *The Trek and other stories* prominence is given to how female characters, such as Martha and *mhama* (mother) challenge the conventional gendered stereotype depicting female migrants as largely 'victims' and 'followers' of men. This is

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conceptualised in the backdrop of the land reform programme and its power to transform and subvert gender. Additionally, I argue that migration is largely disempowering to men as their masculinities degenerate into toxic and aberrant ones that are harmful to themselves and society at large.

4.2 Gender and migration

The relationship between gender and migration is a complex one given that gender like race, class and ethnicity is a key category in the understanding of migratory experiences. Lutz (2010) notes that the exploration of migration as a gendered process benefits from the paradigm shift, from women to gender, just as the recent development in which masculinity studies have become a strand of gender studies. It is also interesting to note that migration whether local or transnational, has largely been conceptualised primarily as a male endeavour. However, in our contemporary times migration has been heavily feminised to the extent that Castels and Miller (1993) state that the feminisation of migration is a particular characteristic of the twenty first century. Davin (1996) argues that the migration of women challenges the traditional concept of women as the 'inside person' responsible for the home. Thus, migration for women means that they may be able to negotiate greater personal autonomy and resonates with the strategies that women employ to maximise their security and independence as discussed by Kandiyoti (1988). Lutz (2010) also notes that gender is a crucial organising principle in migration flows and in the organisation of migrant lives. Butler (1988) defines gender as the cultural significance that the sexed body assumes. Butler (1988) notes further that, if this cultural significance is co-determined through various acts and their cultural perception, then it would appear that from within the terms of that culture it is not possible to know sex as distinct from gender. Similarly, Mahler and Pessar (2001) note that gender is a human invention that organises our behaviour and thought and is an on-going process that is experienced through an array of social institutions from the family to the state. Importantly, Butler (1988) notes that gender is an unstable identity category or locus of agency from which various acts proceed and that as an identity, gender is tenuously constituted and instituted through a stylised repetition of acts.

Butler (1988) observes that a gendered identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo and is only real to the extent that it is performed. However, as a

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public action and performative act, Butler (1988) argues that gender is not a radical project that reflects a mere individual choice, nor is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual. Mahler and Pessar (2001) also note that people do 'gender work', using practices and discourses to negotiate relationships, notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and conflicting interests. Mahler and Pessar (2001) further note that conceptualising gender as a process yields a praxis-oriented perspective wherein gender identities, relations and ideologies are fluid and not fixed. More importantly, gender is predicated on the body and how society interprets the body. Nonetheless, Butler (1988) observes that gender is not passively scripted on the body as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-given cultural relations. In addition, Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) note that cultures invest the body with sex and gender significances that generate specific body semiotics, economic structures, and power relations. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) further observe that gender, at its most intimate and visible, finds the body as vulnerable since it is also used as a site of dominance, misogyny and othering. Crucially, Lutz (2010) argues that gender relations are always mediated by other socially constructed categories such as race, ethnicity and class and vice versa as the analysis of race, ethnicity, or nationality cannot be done without considering its gendered dimensions.

4.2 Migration, invisible masculinities and gender transformations in *Chairman of Fools*

Chairman of Fools centres on Farai and his family's experiences. Farai is a professor in creative writing at an American university and returns home to Zimbabwe for vacation. He discovers, to his dismay, that his family, especially his wife Veronica, has changed. He fails to accommodate a transformed Veronica and the implications of such transformation in his life. As a consequence of this failure, Farai's mental health suffers and he is hospitalised in an annexe for the mentally ill. In *Chairman of Fools,* I examine the relationship between migration and gender on the concept of 'invisible masculinities' and how the space that would have been evacuated by these 'masculinities', as a direct consequence of the migratory experience, is reorganised or reconfigured. This space, both marital and familial, compels us to reconfigure our conceptualisation of masculinities and femininities and gender relations in general. I also read Farai's temporary 'madness' (Bipolar disorder) as a discursive and ideological migratory experience that makes it possible for Farai to be transformed and accept the changes around him.

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Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xviii) argue that migration whether local or transnational results in absence which is literal and figurative. They further argue that the absence manifests in the forced retreat of the male body from various sites of visuality and authority. Additionally, Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) argue that because of the current Zimbabwean economic meltdown and political mayhem, a new and massive migrancy is dispersing and reconfiguring Zimbabwean manhoods, fatherhoods and masculinities at an unprecedented pace, and will soon be associated with depressed local masculinities and newer womanhoods and femininities abroad and back home. Thus, Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) argue that in the long and indefinite absence of men, women left behind take on the roles of 'men' and the reverse is true in instances of women leaving men at home as they become international migrant labourers. This situation, as Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) observe, results in men assuming the roles of women. However, in my reading of *Chairman of Fools* I want to slightly depart from this conclusion and argue that absence (out migration) and return (reverse migration) of masculinities does not necessarily result in men assuming the roles of women but in a transformed type of masculinity that is more tolerant and open to gender change.

Farai's migration to the United States of America as a professor of creative writing epitomises the privileged and valorised migrant postcolonial intellectual, largely celebrated in postcolonial theory. Dirlik (1998) actually notes that the postcolonial starts when the third world intellectual arrives in the first world academe. Assumedly, this arrival is punctuated by a life of privilege as the migrant occupies spaces of honour and respectability. In support, Smith (2004) observes that we need to have a more nuanced perspective of migration as it does not always result in social and economic upward movement. However, what is occluded in such literature is the fact that transnational migration, irrespective of the privileged economic life one might enjoy, is always a psychological and social traumatic experience. This is typified by Farai who leads a lonely life in America:

> He had time, silence and solitude, but he could not write. He was too lonely to put pen to paper, and his impotence made him feel guilty and restless. He went to the library for books, discovered exciting new authors in translation and read voraciously but remained empty and unsatisfied. (p. 133)

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Farai therefore tries to compensate for and dispel the loneliness through attending conferences, seminars and networking on the internet. Nevertheless, this fails to adequately appease his keen sense of loneliness:

> He travelled a lot, though, jetting across states to read from his work at colleges. He attended literature association conferences and made friends, with intelligent, large-hearted people, men and women, with whom he corresponded by e-mail. But the vast distances made real contact difficult. (p. 133)

Thus, Farai's loneliness in the United States of America, in spite of his privileged economic status, is under-theorised in postcolonial theory which is largely celebratory of transnational migration and occludes the emotional and psychological suffering of the migrants. Importantly, the internet that Farai resorts to, as a way of keeping at bay the loneliness, proves inadequate as he continues to be assailed by loneliness. Farai's life in the diaspora is thus projected as largely degenerative despite it being a seemingly privileged one.

It is also interesting to note that Farai attributes his bipolar disorder to his life in the United States of America. The disorder is largely characterised by anxiety and loneliness:

> He remembers the long months in the States, one of a handful of black professors, trying to teach creative writing and African literature to white kids some of whom even struggled to construct sentences and paragraphs […] He had arrived in the USA fired with enthusiasm, only to find the college machinery somewhat slovenly and indifferent […] His colleagues in the department accepted him and let him be but they never really opened up to him, or so he thought. (p. 131)

The tone of the language employed above is very significant in highlighting Farai's loneliness. Farai is described as 'one of a handful of black professors' (p. 131) in a largely white dominated community. Farai's racial identity as 'black' therefore heightens his ontological insecurity as he is largely perceived as the 'other' whose racial and ethnic difference marginalises him. Additionally, Farai's loneliness is accentuated by seemingly mutual mistrust between him and his colleagues in the department. Farai's transnational migration therefore is class, ethnic and racially inflected and results in inertia and alienation. More importantly, Farai's loneliness in America is expressive of failure to successfully adapt

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to the American environment as he fails to successfully create an overlapping, hybrid or replaced identity that, as Sussman (2010) argues, result from the need to adapt to life away from the homeland.

Farai's return to Zimbabwe, however, fails to alleviate his sense of alienation and loneliness. This is exemplified by the transformation of Veronica. Thus, Farai's temporary migration to the States, literally and metaphorically leads to an absence of an authoritative father figure at home and in the process, creates space for Veronica to assume 'masculine' roles. Veronica's assumption of 'masculine' roles is akin to Butler's (1988) theorisation of gender which is premised on performative acts. Veronica's performance of 'masculine' roles thus alters the gender relations between Farai and Veronica and subsequently their gender identities. Sinha *et al* (2012) argue that male migration leads to modification in the structure of family life and also transforms women's social and economic position, often to their detriment. It is important to note that masculinity in Zimbabwe is largely perceived and judged on the basis of its ability to protect and provide for the family. However, through absence, which Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xviii) view as the 'forced retreat of the male body from various sites of visuality and authority', fictional women like Veronica become more assertive and independent as they 'take on the roles of men'. Veronica reminiscences thus:

> A year out there, after a decade of blame and abuse and you think I'll take it forever. You think I'll stay the same, that I won't change to become ME, MYSELF, I, ME. Be warned, my dear man, that I'm definitely changing; that there are things in store for you. (p. 1)

The tone of Veronica's language is reflective of the bitterness felt against Farai after he left her and the family behind. It is also reflective of the way Veronica has transformed into a more assertive and independent subject. This assertiveness and independence is exemplified by the statement 'ME, MYSELF, I, ME' (p. 1), which I argue seeks to boldly proclaim her freedom. Additionally, Veronica uses capital letters to refer to herself (ME, MYSELF, I, ME) as a way of confidently proclaiming her presence and independent identity. Thus, Veronica has significantly changed, as a consequence of Farai's transnational migration. She affirms this in her statement that 'a woman can change a lot in twenty short months' (p. 2). Veronica perceives her transformation as necessary in her becoming her 'real self' (p. 3) and not

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someone Farai wants her to be. This is also supported by Farai's friend, Simbisai, who informs Farai that money is not all that a woman needs:

> especially the educated, professional types. Maybe she is asserting her independence, after years of docility. You ask my husband about that. We went through that phase. Maybe she's showing you that she can be herself even when you're away for a year (p. 50).

Furthermore, Farai upon his return discovers that his privileged status as the protector and provider of the family has been significantly challenged and eroded. This accentuates Farai's insecurity and anxiety and triggers his excessive and toxic protection of his children. Farai's insecurity and anxiety is exemplified by his perception of 'home'. He conceptualises his 'home' as a 'prison':

> When he arrives home it is after midnight. He clicks on the remote and the electric gate shudders open. The house is in darkness and the security lights are not switched on. He waits for the gate to close, pockets the remote and approaches what feels like his grim prison for the four-thousandth time. (p. 15)

The tone of the language used is important in highlighting Farai's insecurities and fears. We are told 'the electric gate *shudders*' (p. 15) when Farai clicks the remote control and this is evocative of someone who feels unwanted. This accentuates Farai's sense of loneliness and dejectedness and further triggers his bipolar disorder. Importantly, the 'shuddering' of the gate is also suggestive of Farai's fear of the assertive and independent form of femininity that Veronica now has. Additionally, the house is in 'darkness' (p. 15) and the 'security lights are not switched on' (p. 15). This, therefore, further emblematises Farai's insecurity and fear as he is stepping into the world now largely dominated by his transformed wife.

I also argue that Farai's conceptualisation of 'home' as a 'grim prison' (p. 15) is illustrative of his detestation of Veronica's transformation. Woodward (2002) argues that 'home' connotes security and safety or for many people it may be a place of risk, danger and violence. Woodward (2002) notes further that 'home' has a special place in the history of journeys and that the idea of 'home' contributes to the desire to stabilise identity, since an expression of longing for home can also be translated as the need to secure the sense of who we are when

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our spatial location has compromised that security. Similarly, Stefanson (2004) observes that 'home'

> is the healing response to all other places and peoples, the starting point and end point that provide a reprieve to all phases of in-betweenness – travel and adventure, newness and strangeness, alienation and confusion, and unpredictability. It is the opposite of all the other places out there rolled into one. Home is security, comfort, certainty. (p. 24)

However, Farai sees 'home' as a threatening space to his sense of masculinity and manliness and this engenders in him feelings of betrayal, uncertainty, fear and, imprisonment. These feelings, coupled with his loneliness in America, are the primary motivators for the assumption of a lifestyle characterised by drunkenness and prostitution. Interestingly, Farai has a traditional conceptualisation of 'home' as he sees himself as the sole provider and protector of the family and home. His conceptualisation is akin to the 1950s West's understanding of home as a private domestic space inhabited by a particular family form based on traditional familial ideology. This ideology as Woodward (2002: 50) notes:

> embraced the notion of a heterosexual, married couple and their dependent children in an economic relationship dependent on a male breadwinner and female mother and carer who did not participate in the labour market.

Thus, Farai expects his wife to pander to his every whim and is disappointed when he realises that Veronica has changed. One therefore witnesses migrations of a marital nature, specifically gendered in nature, as Veronica is no longer the passive victim of Farai's misconduct. This ideological and discursive marital migration is largely attributed to Veronica's success in maximising her security and life and career options during her husband's absence. Veronica's success is akin to Kandiyoti's (1988: 274) concept of women bargaining with patriarchy to 'maximise security and optimise life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression'. Kandiyoti (1988) further observes that patriarchal bargains exert a powerful influence on the shaping of women's subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts.

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4. 3 Psycho-discursive migration and the generation of a 'troublesome' identity

In my previous chapters I referred to migrations of a psychological nature as I argued that migration is not just a physical movement from one place to another but also encompasses migrations of a psychological and discursive nature. I made reference to Tapiwa Jongwe in *Uncertainty of Hope* who engages in migration of a psychological and discursive nature as he 'temporarily' loses his sanity and trudges the streets of Mbare as a beggar. This psycho-discursive migration is accompanied by the physical movement of Tapiwa Jongwe from the privileged space of Borrowdale suburb to the socially and economically deprived Mbare township in Harare. Thus, Tapiwa's migration complicates our conventional conceptualisation of migration as a physical movement from one place to another. In my analysis of *Unlucky in Love,* I also made reference to discursive migration at the level of subjectivity as Rumbidzai assumes an HIV positive identity. In the context of HIV and AIDS, one therefore witnesses' migrations of a discursive nature as people begin to live positively and assume identities inflected with the consciousness of their positive condition. Again, this form of migration is not explored in conventional studies on migration which are preoccupied with viewing migration as physical movement from one place to another. I also explored migrations premised on the delicate relationship between memory and history and have termed this form of migration 'psycho historical migration' as reflected in *White Gods Black Demons*. This form of migration again challenges and broadens our understanding of migration as not just physical movement from one place to another. Thus, *Chairman of Fools* through the character of Farai continues this trajectory.

Farai's temporary 'madness' is testimony to psycho-discursive migrations. Farai's temporary insanity is first triggered by his loneliness in America and second by the fact that his wife has assumed a more independent form of life. Consequently, Farai suffers from anxiety because of Veronica's transformation which has accorded her an independent subjectivity. This independence, as I have argued in the preceding paragraphs, is a direct consequence of Farai's absence while employed as a professor of creative writing at an American university. The psycho-discursive migration and the subsequent generation of a 'troublesome' identity commences with Farai's loneliness and drunkenness in America. This lonely life, as I have argued, challenges much conventional thinking on transnational migration which perceives it as the preserve of the privileged. Farai's psycho-discursive mobility, which in medical terms

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is termed as a bipolar disorder, is heightened when he temporarily returns home only to find his wife, Veronica, changed. Consequently, Farai fails to accept this reality. Central to Veronica's transformation is her profession and social upward mobility indicated by her rise at work and purchase of a new car. However, this generates insecurity and fear in Farai who feels threatened by an independent professional Veronica. Ironically, Farai does not want Veronica to work as he wants her to be economically dependent on him. He confesses this in one of his paranoiac moments:

> Look at this. CORRUPTION EXPOSED AT DISCOUNT HOUSE. I told you, Tindo. Don't you see? Look at this picture. It's him, don't you see? He has been corrupt for years and they never knew it. Stealing right under their noses and pushing all the blame on Veronica. She's just a poor victim of their system. I've told her many times to quit and work for me but she won't hear of it. Her eyes are set on promotion, on him. She was following him, coming with him to steal my children and look what's happened. (p. 55)

Farai in his deluded mind, which is a consequence of a psycho-discursive migration, subscribes to the view that Veronica and assumedly by extension women should not work. Farai's demeaning conceptualisation of women, which might be inferred from his hallucinations, is largely premised on patriarchal thinking that perceives men as the supposed providers and protectors of families. However, this patriarchal conceptualisation is challenged by Veronica who insists on working and sees Farai's migration to America as an opportunity to becoming her 'real self' (p. 3). I therefore argue that Farai's migration to America literally and metaphorically reflects the absence of men from sites and spaces of visibility and authority discussed by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007). This absence is significant as it transforms gender relations and results in the production of new forms of masculinities and femininities. Additionally, as exemplified by Veronica, women in the absence of men tend to assume 'masculine' roles as they occupy spaces of privilege and authority formerly the preserve of men. This acceptance of 'masculine' roles by women further resonates with Butler's (1988) concept of the performativity of gender as women begin to act 'manly'. These performative acts destabilise the conventional understanding of gender which views masculinities as the preserve of men and conversely femininities as the province of women.

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The return/ reverse migration of men from such contexts can be successful only in an environment where men are willing to accept the necessity and inevitability of change. More importantly, men must also be prepared to accept that reverse/ return migration does not necessarily result in the re-claiming of old identities as old identities and formerly occupied spaces are reconfigured during absence owing to outward migration.

As I have argued earlier, the depicted psycho-discursive migration is predicated on Farai's unwillingness to accept the inevitability of change. This psycho-discursive migration is centred on Veronica's job and car, which implies that Veronica no longer depends on Farai and his Mazda car for her daily mobilities. Thus, the car at the level of mobilities signifies a woman's attempt to break out of the confining space of a man's control and authority which is largely premised on economic power. This is metaphorically exemplified in Farai's failure to stop the blue Toyota Corolla car that features in his paranoiac moments:

> At twelve the next day the mechanic starts resembling his car. While he waits he goes out to look at the traffic. The blue corolla stalks him. It emerges from the shops, ever so slowly and approaches the garage. At the gate it gathers speed and darts towards the north, only to reappear in the east. Simultaneously there are several blue corollas, two or three perhaps, coming and going and reversing, droning like planes taking off, patrolling the area. For whole minutes they vanish, only to reappear in a convoy, before disappearing again. (p. 73)

The tone of the language used here is evocative of the fear and anxiety that the success of Veronica elicits in Farai. Thus, we are told that 'the blue corolla stalks' (p. 73) Farai and this illustrates the haunting anxiety that Farai endures in relation to Veronica's apparent success. More importantly, Farai is depicted as someone who is incapable of controlling the movement of the 'blue corolla' as 'simultaneously there are several blue corollas' (p. 73) and these cars are 'coming and going and reversing, droning like planes taking off, patrolling the area' (p. 73). Therefore, Farai's failure to control the 'flow' of the 'traffic' is suggestive of failed attempts to control Veronica and thus testimony of his powerlessness in the face of Veronica's success.

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More importantly, Farai's irritation with his powerlessness worsens his condition. The 'blue corolla' sums up all of Farai's anxieties, insecurities and fears. Farai exemplifies this by his refusal to board the blue corolla when he needs to have his brain scanned and rather suggests walking to the main hospital:

> At ten the next morning, Veronica arrives, without notice, to take him to the main hospital for a brain scan. She is brief with the nurses and offers to drive him there. He suggests that they walk, on the pretext that he needs the exercise. He is uneasy about riding in her corolla, or going anywhere near it. He hasn't been in it more than two or three times since she bought it, or rather, since her company had sold it off to her as a benefit. The truth is that the car represents all he resents about his wife, and the company she works for. And in the last few days, the car has been the elusive harbinger of his fears. (p. 126)

Veronica's car is associated with Farai's insecurities and anxieties. We note that Farai is 'uneasy' (p. 126) about riding in the car, which is reflective of his attitude towards the car and by extension the owner of the car, Veronica. This, therefore, suggests his deliberate distancing from the car and invokes an obsessive and deep seated hatred of Veronica's success as the car 'represents all he resents about his wife, and the company she works for' (p. 126).

Farai also projects Veronica as not really a 'successful' character. He cynically comments that the car 'is sold off to her as a benefit' (p. 126). Critically, Farai, as I have argued in the preceding paragraphs, still tenaciously clings to traditional notions of what a wife should be, but the reality is that the modern professional woman, personified by Veronica, has undermined such old traditions. The car thus signifies Veronica's ability to transgress traditional gender roles as the borders between what is normal and expected of a woman are easily transgressed by her. Gender migration thus becomes a powerful tool that Veronica employs to free herself from Farai. Interestingly, Farai's ridicule and fear of Veronica's car is paralleled to his desire to control and dominate Veronica. Farai thus tells Tindo, his sister that, "I've told her many times to quit and work for me but she won't hear it" (p. 56). Furthermore, Farai perceives his wife's apparent success as a consequence of her competition with him. Thus, Farai informs Simbisai that Veronica is "killing herself competing with me" (p. 50) as he assumedly has more money than Veronica and hence perceives himself more successful

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than her. He thinks that Veronica apparently neglected her duties during his absence. This is revealed by Farai when he complains to Simbisai that Veronica is an incompetent wife:

> Farai leans through the window and pours everything out to Simbisai. He feels severely wronged and is longing for someone to hear him out. He tells her about his missing wife and the unpaid bills, about the uncooked suppers and a fridge without food, about disconnected phones and uncollected rents. (p. 50)

Finally, Farai's return to Zimbabwe is also depicted by his constitution of an incessantly peripatetic identity. He is always on the move and does not stay at home with his family for a long time as he is always out with friends drinking beer. Farai's constant movement therefore constitutes intra-urban mobilities which, however, do not result in a 'rich and complex' life as Urry (2000) and Elliot and Urry (2010) argue in their treatment of mobilities in the twenty first century. Rather, his intra-urban mobilities are metaphoric of a restless and insecure person failing to accept change.

4.4 Reading Farai's psychological rehabilitation as reverse/ return migration

The concept of reverse/ return migration, which features predominately in my analysis of chapter five, is closely related with the psycho-discursive rehabilitation that Farai undergoes later in the novel. My notion of reverse migration is not limited to reverse physical movement but also considers a reversal of a psycho-discursive nature. Farai, from a medical perspective, is described as a person suffering from a bipolar disorder and therefore requires rehabilitation. This psycho-discursive rehabilitation, which metaphorically ought to be read as 'reverse psycho-discursive migration', is predicated on Farai's ability to accept change. Thus, Farai emerges a transformed person who is now more interested in his family after his rehabilitation. This rehabilitation is, therefore, not just at the level of the personal but also involves reverse migrations of a familial, marital and professional nature. This reversal, at the familial level, is typified by the trip he takes with his family to Masvingo as a way of reconnecting with his family:

> They go to Great Zimbabwe with the children, for the weekend family holiday. They climb up to the acropolis, stopping at the top to rest, and inspect the cone tower; then he relaxes with Veronica on the cool veranda while the children play netball and swim

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> in the large pool. In the evenings they eat long, elaborate dinners together around a large table, all five of them, listening to soft canned music. After dinner the children go to the room to watch videos and play games while he and she take a walk in the moonlight, imbibing the cool night air and the history of the place. He now knows that he should spend more time with his wife, and with his children, in this way. This is his opportunity to change, to re-organise himself and start afresh. He wishes, of course, he had wine, or a beer, to loosen his tongue, so that he can speak freely to Veronica and tell her all the things he has always wanted to, but he knows this might spoil things and decides against it. (p. 180)

Interestingly, Farai 'relaxes' (p. 180) with Veronica as a consequence of his rehabilitation. Previously, Veronica used to provoke feelings of insecurity and uneasiness in Farai. Thus the above quotation also highlights the importance of the family reconnection. The pronoun 'they' (p. 180) serves to reinforce the unity and togetherness of purpose that used to lack between Veronica and Farai. Moreover, the pronoun 'they' (p. 180) is also evocative of the idea of partnership which previously was lacking in their marriage. Therefore, as a direct consequence of the rehabilitation, which I consider a metaphoric reverse psycho-discursive migration, Farai 'now knows that he should spend more time with his wife, and with his children' (p. 180).

Furthermore, Farai is now more considerate and compassionate; the marriage that was on the brink of collapsing is restored. They now engage in family based travels that engender familial connectivity as noted in the following description:

> They visit Veronica's folks to give their condolences for relatives who died while he was away. Her mother prepares him goat meat and rice with peanut butter. Veronica invites him to a Saturday afternoon at her church and finally he agrees to accompany her. They go with the children and sit on the grass, eating sausage roll after sausage roll and drinking coke after coke, chatting with her friends, who at once like him. This is as she would want him to be, witty and sociable, the Farai he was when she first met him. She hopes and thinks he is changing, that he will change. (p. 179)

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In addition, the 'home' that Farai initially conceptualised as a 'grim prison' (p. 15) is transformed into a space where Veronica re-discovers and re-claims her husband:

> Veronica works hard to resurrect him, to rebuild him. This is her chance to reclaim him. She cooks him his favourite dishes, buys him surprise presents, baths with him; holds him close to her at night. She takes him to movies - once, replete with popcorn, ice-cream and coke, he falls asleep on her lap, in the theatre (p. 178).

I therefore argue that Farai's successful rehabilitation is predicated on the acceptance of Veronica's transformed gendered identity and his ability to change. Thus, *Chairman of Fools* explores the psycho-discursive migration experienced by Farai and the consequences of such migration on his wife, family, extended family and profession. This psycho-discursive migration is triggered by his migration to America and the subsequent alienation and loneliness generated by the movement. I have also interpreted the migration to America as 'absence' in the literal and metaphorical sense taking a cue from the already reviewed theorisation by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007). My analysis of *Chairman of Fools,* through Farai's experiences in transnational and return migration, therefore, points to the link between migrations and the reconfiguration of gender relations and gendered identities in the family and the home.

The next section analyses selected stories from Hoba's *The Trek and Other Stories* which are premised largely on the trope of 'trekking' and 'pioneering'. I focuses on 'The First Trek – the Pioneers', 'Maria's Independence', 'The Travelling Preacher', 'The Second Trek – Going Home' and 'The Third Trek – Resettling'. I also intend to argue that Hoba (2009) uses the trope of 'trekking' and 'pioneering' in a subversive and parodic way to highlight the existence of identities generated as a consequence of the land reform programme and the subsequent migrations that were triggered.

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4.5 *The Trek and Other Stories*

The Zimbabwe's land reform programme, from 2000, has had a dramatic impact on the country's geopolitical landscape. This landscape, as Alexander (2006) argues, was dramatically unsettled as hundreds of thousands of black Zimbabweans moved onto 'white' land. Furthermore, Alexander (2006) notes that the partisan violence, international isolation and economic collapse that accompanied the land reform programme became a crucial turning point in Zimbabwean history and perceptions of race, just as the unequal division of land became the central focus of ZANU-PF's redefined nationalism. This, as Alexander (2006) argues, marked a dramatic shift as ZANU-PF enunciated a new vision of Zimbabwe, based on an aggressive assertion of sovereignty against the forces of global capitalism, neo-colonialism and the internationally mediated demands of good governance. This new vision of Zimbabwe is akin to Ranger's (2004) concept of patriotic history which is premised on a 'repackaged, authoritarian version of Zimbabwe's liberation history' (Tendi 2010: 1) whose primary theme is land dispossession. Thus, Tendi (2010) argues that patriotic history perceives land as:

> A grievance going back to the First Chimurenga of 1896 when British South Africa Company rule was first established. Land was a central grievance in the Second Chimurenga. Land alienation remained unresolved in 2000 because the minority white population still controlled the majority of the most productive land. Thus, land became the driving ideology of the Third Chimurenga, which ZANU-PF cast as the completion of the liberation struggle after the First and Second *Chimurengas* against colonial rule. (p. 1)

It is therefore not surprising that most of the stories in *The Trek and Other Stories* focus on the centrality of land in Zimbabwean politics. *The Trek and Other Stories* is a collection of short stories by Hoba that largely explores the experiences of Zimbabweans in Post Independent Zimbabwe. The themes and issues explored include urban to rural migration, rural to rural migration, the land reform programme, homosexuality and HIV and AIDS. This section focuses on five stories namely 'The First Trek – The Pioneers', 'Maria's Independence', 'The Travelling Preacher', 'The Second Trek – Going Home' and 'The Third Trek – Resettling'. My analysis of the stories again draws on Butler's (1988) ideas, especially her conceptualisation of gender and gender identity as premised on performativity, and

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Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of women bargaining with patriarchy through the various strategies they employ to maximise their security and promote their interests and demands.

4.5.1 Migration, untenable master farmer identities and the subversion of the fast track land reform programme in 'The First Trek- the Pioneers'

'The First Trek – the Pioneers' explores the experiences of the Magudu family, which has been recently allocated land during the land reform programme. The story's title is evocative of colonial history and discourses of 'penetration' and 'invasion' where the coloniser is projected as penetrating and invading the territory of the colonised 'other'. This invasion and penetration is also predicated on the colonial imagery of the colonised territory as a 'virgin' territory which is largely depicted as 'empty' and 'underutilised' space that can only be transformed through the sheer hard work of the benevolent coloniser who is introducing civilisation to the colonised (Said 1994). I therefore argue that the title of the story is also evocative of the sexist nature of colonialism which was largely pioneered by men. However, this sexist nature of colonialism, adventurism and the land reform programme is subverted and challenged by Hoba (2009). Interestingly, the story links the land reform program as a necessary constituent in a continuum of violations of the 'indigenous' people through invasion and imposition by the Afrikaner Great Trek in the 1830s and 1840s and the BSAC in 1890. The 'pioneers' in the title therefore refer to the British pioneer column that spearheaded the colonisation of Zimbabwe. This pioneer column had a tectonic impact on the history of Zimbabwe and more importantly in defining and shaping Rhodesian identities. Ian Douglass Smith, the former prime minister of Rhodesia, exemplifies this through his comments on his heritage where he valorises the pioneering spirit of the colonisers:

> You know, people who were pioneers and who came […] to this country, or Canada, Australia, New Zealand […] they were stronger than the people who stayed at home in Britain. If you had spirit […] you went out, if you didn't you just sat back there in Britain – they were a different class of people […] You had to be a different person to be a pioneer […] and that was the sort of stock, when they bred – they bred Rhodesians. (Alexander 2004: 201)

The pioneering spirit celebrated by Ian Smith who generated a 'rugged' white identity predicated on toughness, determination, courage and strength. The aim of the pioneer column

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was to colonise Zimbabwe and make it safe for white settlement. Thus, the great trek of the Boers and the pioneer column of the British are similar in intention as they sought to subjugate and colonise African territory. Hoba (2009) therefore uses this parallelism to satirise and mock the land reform programme.

'The First Trek – the Pioneers', as I argued earlier, explores the experience of the Magudu family who are considered as the 'pioneers' of the land reform programme. As such, the Magudu family, like their counterparts, the Boers and the British, are migrating to 'colonise' land that formerly belonged to the other, this time, a white farmer. Interestingly, the term 'pioneers' implies migration and the Magudu family moves from their old home and its associated peasant identities to a new home and its promised new identities. However, this movement is classed, for all migrations are, as the 'trekker-pioneer' identity that the Magudu family constructs, undermined by poverty. This is typified by the scotch cart and the few possessions that the family has:

> The old scotch cart makes its way slowly along the old beaten down track […] *Baba* has a pair of *Manyatera* and yellow overalls written 'NRZ' at the back […] I am also hungry. *Mhama* gives me a gourd of sour milk to drink. Some pots and pans lie clattering in a corner. I hate the noise. A sack of maize meal, almost empty, sits next to the pots, in an old 20 litre tin. *Mhama* uses the tin to fetch water from the well every day, for washing Chido's old nappies, for cooking sadza and *muriwo*, and for father's bath […] An old mattress lies rolled up with some blankets inside, tied with *gudza* rope, next to the mats. There is no bed base. Father erects one with sticks dug into the ground. My own bed, which we left behind, had a mattress made from sacks filled with soft straw. *Mhama* must have emptied the sacks and put them somewhere because I cannot see them from where I sit next to her. Some old sacks lie next to the rolled mattress, they contain all our clothing. A few old nappies for Chido, *mhama's* dresses, *baba's* trousers and shirts, and my torn shorts and T-shirts. There is also baba's old suit that he wears on special occasions. (p. 1-2)

The family's migration is in this way satirised by the author through the caricature of Mr Magudu. Mr Magudu is depicted as a drunkard and therefore someone not prepared for the tough life of a 'trekker-pioneer' cum 'coloniser'.

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Importantly, the father is also depicted as largely irresponsible. He engages in domestic violence and does not contribute in the cultivation of the fields. Thus, the young narrator observes that:

> I know tomorrow we'll be busy, Chido and I will be discovering our new home, *mhama* will be exploring her fields. Baba- he will be gallivanting, searching for the farmer who might have brewed a few drums of thick, rich *masese* (Thick African beer). (p. 3)

I therefore argue that the tone of the language the narrator uses is important in reflecting Baba's irresponsibility. Thus the word 'gallivanting' (p. 3) is evocative of someone who is only interested in fulfilling his pleasures while ignoring dispensing with important tasks and duties such as farming which requires commitment and dedication. Hoba thus seems to argue that the land reform resulted chiefly in the migration and allocation of land to people who were largely irresponsible. Interestingly, migration results in the production of a new identity for the Magudu family. This is exemplified by the metal board written 'Mr B. J. Magudu, Black Commercial Farmer, Farm 24' (p. 2). The farm they are supposed to occupy is an A2 farm which is a highly productive commercial farm:

> The sun wearies on towards the hills, where it will soon disappear behind them. Vast expanses of sugar-cane, green and tall, appear on both sides of the road. We pass a farm gate, with 'R W Whyte, Farm 23' made beautifully out of metal on it. The teacher told me that 24 comes after 23, so I know the next farm will be our own. (p. 3)

However, this 'Master Farmer' identity that the family assumes is difficult to sustain given the grinding poverty affecting the family. Furthermore, the family has been given a commercial farm yet lacks the financial capacity to fully utilise the farm. This inadequacy is typified by the farm implements the family has:

> A plough sits at the far end of the scotch cart, still looking new. *Mhama* bought it last year with money from her groundnuts. Though *mhama* always works hard, I prefer to play with Chido and *baba* favours the calabash. Two hoes lie next to the plough, *mhama's* hoe is worn from use, *baba's* is still new and clean. The inscription 'Master

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> Farmer' is still visible. The only use his hoe is put to is rubbing against the shoulders when he goes to the fields to inspect the work that has been done. (p. 2)

Hoba (2009), therefore, through the presentation of the Magudu family satirises the land reform programme for moving and giving people who were not capacitated to farm large tracts of land.

Importantly, Alexander (2006) argues that the land reform programme encompassed two models, namely, the A1 or small-holder farming to be undertaken on a 'villagised' basis with communal grazing land or within self-contained units and the A2 model which was intended for medium and large scale commercial farming and aimed at those able to mobilise significant resources. The fact that the Magudu family is ill equipped to take charge of their allocated farm had catastrophic consequences for the family as they could not sustain their 'master farmer' identity. The consequences were also felt in the national economy as the nation migrated towards catastrophe. Alexander (2006) observes thus:

> The economic consequences of the land occupations in combination with drought, international isolation and political conflict were catastrophic. The economy contracted significantly every year from the start of the Third Chimurenga, shrinking by record levels of over 13 per cent in 2002 and 2003. Roughly half of all Zimbabweans were deemed in need of food aid in 2002, and severe food shortages persisted in subsequent years. The manufacturing and mining sectors reported drastic falls in production while agricultural output plummeted, adding to already severe levels of unemployment. Inflation soared out of control, while foreign currency and fuel shortages added to the crisis. (p. 192-3)

The land reform programme therefore triggered migrations of a classed nature and these migrations resulted in the production of new identities, which, however, were difficult to sustain for most black people who were resettled. Hoba (2009) exemplifies this through the Magudu family who were allocated an A2 farm yet did not have the financial capacity to make the farm productive. Importantly, Hoba (2009) illustrates this through the trope of 'trekking' and 'pioneering' which is masculine in nature as typified by Mr Magudu leading his family to the new farm he was allocated. The next section considers the story titled

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'Maria's Independence' and explores the experiences of Maria who migrates from Harare to claim a farm during the land reform programme.

4.4.2 Gendered migration and female independence in 'Maria's Independence'

The story 'Maria's Independence' explores the experiences of Maria who is allocated a farm during the land reform programme in post-2000 Zimbabwe. Thus, Maria's story like that of Tsitsi in *Hope Deferred* offers a black female perspective of the land reform programme and therefore subverts the patriarchal nature of the 'trekkers' and 'pioneers' of the land occupations. I argue that the idea of a great trek in 'The First Trek – the Pioneers' is evocative of the masculinist nature of the migrations and land occupations, as exemplified by Mr Magudu who leads his family to the new farm. However, Maria's experiences in 'Maria's Independence' subvert the masculine nature of the land occupation. Maria therefore not only challenges the masculinist nature of the land occupation but also subverts traditional stereotypes of womanhood through her urban – rural migration.

Maria migrates from Harare to the farms after receiving an offer letter for a piece of land by the government. She thus problematises our conventional thinking of trekking and pioneering as essentially a male endeavour:

> Maria came from the city: the place that continues to look towards the future of our ancestor's enemies. We only knew of her after several weeks. For when we came – even we who had arrived together – did not know the other was already there. (p. 4)

Maria therefore destabilises our traditional conceptualisation of a woman as she ventures into commercial farming largely perceived as the preserve of men. The narrator thus observes, 'It was only when we were finally settled that someone said there was a beautiful woman in our midst' (p. 4). The writer invokes sexist discourses associated with the land reform programme and for example from comments made by Maria's male counterparts. Maria is not only a woman but a 'beautiful' (p. 4) one and thus Hoba satirises gender stereotypes and assumptions that view 'beautiful' women as essentially male ornaments and weak vessels who are not supposed to burden themselves with the perils of the 'pioneers' who are conceived essentially as male. Women therefore are perceived as not strong enough to participate in the land reform programme. Additionally, Maria also problematises the

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conventional understanding of a farmer as essentially a male figure through her womanhood and dressing:

> Then we all saw her. She always wore tight pants and skimpy tops, which exposed her belly and tummy button that seemed to point insultingly at our glazed and bloodshot eyes. No one knew what had driven her out of the glare of the city's lights onto the farms to claim a piece of our ancestral heritage for herself. She with a body so lithe, she could be a dancer. (p. 4-5)

The above description of Maria is deceptively indicative of a woman of liberal sexual orientations. However, Maria subverts this patriarchal thinking as she proves elusive to most men. Hoba, therefore, exposes and subverts the stereotypes that most men have in connection with migration, women and farming through his description of Maria's experiences. This is exemplified by the narrator who naively states that:

> So, we gave her a few months to outlive the euphoria of her and our new wealth. After that she would surely move out, for she, like Martin or me, had not lighted upon the large farmhouse, or the machinery. Wasn't that what everyone wanted? Or maybe she had people she wanted to put off a 'trail of trickery' as someone called it; someone who claimed to have seen her in the thief – and prostitute- infested avenues of Harare. Time on a farm was all she needed. Why else would a woman, who had a way with her eyes that left one weak-kneed, walk out on the joys of the city that never sleeps? If she did not have to escape her past, why did she join the onslaught to which only men had rushed? Or did she believe she could find better men? But we who rushed to grab were united in our poverty and of no use to a woman who looked far too complicated for our simple minds. (p. 5)

The naivety that characterises the approach of most men to Maria, depicted in a laughable way, is dispelled when she becomes a successful farmer where some men had failed. This failure is echoed by the narrator who notes:

> As time passed people began to falter. The farms were not the paradise we'd thought them to be. There were no schools or clinics. We had neither the strength of our ancestors nor the machinery of our ancestor's enemies. What had once been there had

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> been stolen. We blistered our hands cutting trees and tiling the soil but no rains came to quench our thirst or to water the maize. Even the animals that had kept us clinging on disappeared one by one. Those who now found game and firewood scarce simply moved deeper into the farmlands where they remained in abundance, or did until we arrived. We had unknowingly become the bad custodians of our ancestor's wealth. (p. 6)

The failure by men to become successful farmers makes a mockery of their 'pioneering' work as they are supposed to be courageous, determined and strong just like the previous Boer and British pioneers, from which the story draws the trope of trekking and pioneering. Importantly, women, as exemplified by Maria, were hard-working and successful where men seemed to fail. This is exemplified by Maria who walks three kilometres with a twenty litre tin of water. The narrator thus observes that Maria, 'would balance a twenty-litre tin of water on her head and with the grace of a lioness walk all the three kilometres from the river.'(p. 6). Therefore, Maria's experiences are significant in the author's destabilisation of gender and farming stereotypes. However, men fail to appreciate the hard work that Maria devotes to her farming. The male characters are depicted as only interested in her beauty as noted in their snooping at her while she is bathing in the river. Thus, instead of appreciating the determination of Maria to succeed as a farmer the men are only captivated by her body, 'heavy – laden hips swaying to and fro' (p. 6). Additionally, Maria's success as a farmer is reflected on her farm as the narrator notes:

> Then one day, not so long ago, Martin rode to her farm on his government- issued motorbike. Everyone else had left but Maria remained employing her own workers. He travelled through acres of maize before he reached the farm-house. She jumped into his lap the moment she saw him, and threw her arms around his neck. (p. 7)

Ironically, Maria becomes the successful 'Master Farmer' that proves elusive to most men such as Mr Magudu in 'The First Trek- the Pioneers' and Martin and the narrator in 'Maria's Independence'. Thus, Hoba portrays women as successful where men fail and this seems to be the 'real' independence for characters like Maria. The fact that women are more hard-working than men is also reflected in the story "The First Trek – the Pioneers" where the young narrator observes that:

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> Two hoes lie next to the plough, *mhama's* hoe is worn from use, *baba's* is still new and clean. The inscription 'Master Farmer' is still visible. The only use his hoe is put to is rubbing against the shoulders when he goes to the fields to inspect the work that has been done. (p. 2)

More importantly, Hoba (2009) depicts Maria as a woman who uses effective strategies in accomplishing her goals. The strategies, similar to the ones discussed by Kandiyoti (1988), enable her to be accepted within the predominantly male resettled community. Maria among other things, manipulates Martin, the agricultural extension worker. She also participates in the *kongonya* dance in an effort to be accepted within the male dominated resettled community. Thus, the *kongonya* dance connects Maria to the liberation struggle as the dance was used during *pungwes* staged at night to boost the morale of the guerrillas and the people:

> Yes, she was wild, that Maria. She would dance the kongonya with such gyrating movements that surely the ancestors turned in their graves and cursed the day they let the enemy bring his gramophones to the growth-points. Who could not notice the way her eyes rolled for prey while she sang the old liberation songs? [...] And when she was tired from dancing, Maria would leap into the lap of any man who happened to be sitting down. So, we took it in turns to receive the dancing goddess of the farm. (p. 5 - 6)

Additionally, the narrator seems to suggest that Maria also employs her sexuality as a way of bargaining with patriarchy for acceptance. Her kongonya dancing is also suggestive of a liberal sexuality reinforced by her dressing evocative of a 'modern' and 'loose' woman but Maria proves elusive to most men. Importantly, the land reform programme is supposed to be constituted by men of valour, unquestioned strength and character but the depictions of men in the story is a pitiable mockery as they are perceived as largely irresponsible. This irresponsibility is reflected in the sense that most of the men are concerned with ogling Maria while paying scant attention to their farming. Hence, Maria's experiences resonate with Kandiyoti's (1988) argument that women in a patriarchal society bargain with patriarchy to maximise their security.

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The next section examines the story titled 'The Travelling Preacher' in relation to the trope of migration. The story explores migration of a religious nature and again like the other stories discussed so far privileges the male religious perspective of migration, which is however subverted by the author in this satire on the post-2000 land reform programme.

4.4.3 The land reform programme, migration and transient religious identities in 'The Travelling Preacher'

The story explores the experiences of a farming community whose daily routine is disrupted by the land reform programme and the way old white farmers get replaced by new black farmers. The displacement and dislocation give way to new black farmers who are mostly absent from their farms. Consequently, these farmers develop identities which I have termed 'absent new farmer' identities. Additionally, the story also focuses on the anonymous travelling preacher who moves into this farming community and proceeds to establish a church. I, therefore, explore the link between migration and religious conversion which I term as religious migration that takes place at the psycho-spiritual level. This form of migration results too in the constitution of what I term 'transient religious spiritualised' identities.

The land reform programme, indeed, resulted in, among other things, the emergence of new black farmers who devoted most of their time divorced from the day to day running of the farm. These new farmers resulted in the constitution of absent farmer identities which are reflective of irresponsible farming. The narrator thus notes:

> The rains came a long time ago. But the new baas has not finished learning how to farm. So, he had not brought any seed, or fertiliser. And the fields were not tilled. The tractors, abused, were dead. The government's tractors were still a long time away, and there was no maize in the fields. And no tobacco. (p. 12)

Furthermore, the phenomenon of the new absent farmer resulted in worker despondence. The narrator therefore observes:

> The sun was high in the sky and very hot, and the men wouldn't have been at the beer hall if it hadn't been a Saturday, and if the farm still belonged to the murungu. But the new baas was always away. (p. 9)

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This despondence is aggravated by the fact that the farm workers are also denied wages, thus further heightening their ontological insecurities. These farm workers, ironically, became more vulnerable to the machinations of the preacher who continued to fleece them of the little they had. The land reform programme is therefore depicted as having worsened the condition of farm workers and religion became one of the avenues through which they sought solace from frustrations.

The story explores migration of a religious spiritual nature. This is exemplified by the anonymous travelling preacher who takes advantage of the land reform programme:

> He (the preacher) appeared at the centre of the farm compound dressed in a black shirt with a white collar, black trousers, black shoes and a black jacket. All new. Very new. The large black bags he held in each hand were also new […] three children followed him. The one that seemed to be the eldest held a bucket with a pot handle sticking out of it. A girl held the hand of the youngest, almost dragging him behind her, as they walked behind their father. (p. 9-10)

The in-migration of the preacher on the spaces of the new farms results temporarily in the religious conversion of the farming community. This is epitomised by Amai Piki who had gained reputation as a prostitute:

> Amai Piki was at the back of the beer hall among the bushes where everyone peed […] Amai Piki had Baba Nina's hands, nose, eyes, ears, mouth and head in her big bosom. And she was giggling to herself. And Baba Nina was cursing and mumbling and saying that it should have been very, very dark. And Amai Piki giggled and said, 'Quick. Quick. Hurry up. You don't want to lose time talking do you. Hi, Hi, hi. But Baba Nina's time was almost up, though he wanted some more, for free. After all, he'd cycled across two farms to the beer hall and Mai Piki. But at that moment, she heard the preacher and froze. Baba Nina cursed as she felt her bosom go limp in his hands. The preacher's voice was like one calling in the wilderness; calling on all to repent of their sinful ways. And, Mai Piki fastened her bra and buttoned her blouse and left Baba Nina cursing. (p. 10-11)

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The preacher thus becomes associated with some religious-spiritual migration, and the production of transient religious-spiritual identities, as confirmed by the deliverance of both Baba and Amai Nina: "So Baba Nina confessed to Amai Nina about his philandering ways" (p. 11).

These transient religious-spiritual identities were nevertheless unsustainable. The church was full on that very Sunday but the preacher's hypocrisy was quickly noticed by some members of the congregation:

> And on Sunday church was full. Men sat on one side and women on the other. And the children sat at the front. And the preaching began, the new man in his new clothes standing by the makeshift altar with the bible-reader, the barman beside him thumbing through the pages of the holy book […] So the silent tears began. And so did the sobs of the women. And the wailing of the children. The money dishes followed. But the men, so unused to crying and staying sober and paying tithes began to falter along the way. And they made their exodus back to Egypt. (p. 11)

This 'exodus to Egypt' (p. 11), a metaphor of reverse religious-spiritual migration, went hand in hand with some of the farming communities' reverting back to their former life. This is epitomised by the farming area's soundscapes where the 'jukebox' 'began to sound again, very quietly at first and later raucous above the singing voices in the church until no man remained' (p. 11-12). Additionally, the 'exodus to Egypt' (p. 11) is also triggered by the preacher's sexual philandering:

> And the preacher would peep at Mai Piki through half-closed eyes over his square-rimmed spectacles, his balding head shining with sweat as metaphorically he drooled. Then the bible-reader-turned-collector would pass in front of him and blur his vision. And for a time, all he would see were the man's spindly arms and legs and he would curse under his breath, just like that. Then the bible-reader would move and Amai Piki would once more come into view, and the preacher would think, 'She should be able to read, I will invite her to evening classes'. (p. 9)

Furthermore, Amai Piki's invitation to read the bible becomes the preacher's strategy to lure her into a sexual relationship. However, the preacher betrays Amai Piki's trust when he

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impregnates, dumps her and runs away. His irresponsibility, characteristic of all the men in Hoba's text and links him to other failures and betrayals by men such as the narrator in 'Maria's Independence' and Mr Magudu in 'The First Trek – the Pioneers'.

Hoba seems to be arguing that just as the new farmers were grossly irresponsible and ridiculous failures in the land reform programme so are the preachers who betray and take advantage of the farm workers. The preacher betrays his congregation through his illicit sexual affairs, and just as the new farmers leave their farm workers and farms, he also leaves his children with Amai Piki. Consequently, Amai Piki reverts to her old life as a prostitute of the village to sustain her family:

> There was a lot of giggling behind the beer hall again, and Baba Nina cried, laughed, cursed and swore that there was nothing better than a nursing woman's bosom. And every night Amai Piki went home to suckle her baby. But she would never again give anyone her bosom when it was dark. (p. 12)

Thus, the migrations of the new farmer and the travelling preacher are paralleled and depicted as having worsened the condition of the farm workers, especially that of gullible and weak women as epitomised by Amai Piki.

The next story I focus on is 'The Second Trek – Going Home' which is related to 'The first Trek - the Pioneers'. The story explores the experiences of the Magudu family as they were being evicted from the farm in the absence of the father and thus problematises issues of migrancy and the re-claiming of old peasant identities. Importantly, from a gendered perspective, the story privileges the mother by placing her on centre stage and the very spaces of visibility and authority evacuated by the father, as a consequence of his absence.

4.4.5 Reverse migration and the resumption of old peasant identities in 'The Second Trek-Going Home'

'The Second Trek – Going Home' is directly related to the first story 'The First Trek - the Pioneers', as it describes further, the experiences encountered by the Magudu family. This story explores the experiences of the Magudu family during their eviction from the farm they were initially allocated during the land reform programme. The farm, as suggested in 'The First Trek – the Pioneers', was initially productive and characterised by 'vast expanses of

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sugar-cane, green and tall, appear on both sides of the road' (p. 3). However, this productivity is heavily compromised by the incompetence of the Magudu family in 'The Second Trek – Going Home':

> There are piles and piles of sugar-cane. The whole farm is full of it because baba couldn't find a tractor to take it to the mill. He says *murungu* should have left the tractors. I wonder why he left everything else. Even the dead mesidhisi-bhenzi. That's what baba said it's called, the car under the big mango tree next to our scotch cart. (p. 27)

The narrator thus eloquently expresses this incompetence through the metaphor of stasis as everything on the farm is not functioning or working properly. Accordingly, the narrator makes reference to 'piles and piles of sugar-cane' (p. 27) which fills the 'whole farm' (p. 27) which cannot be ferried to the mill as there is no transportation. Thus, commenting on the impact of the land reform programme on productivity, Sachikonye (2004: 13) notes too this backward socio-economic mobility engendered by the land reforms:

> Production of the key commodities has been on a downward spiral since 2000. It will neither be easy nor possible to restore production levels in the next five years, owing to a variety of factors, which range from a deficit in farming skills and experience to constraints on resources, especially credit, seed and fertiliser. Food security has been under threat owing to low yields since 2001.

Similarly, Raftopoulos (2009) observes that the fast track programme had adverse effects on the agricultural sector, as exemplified by large amounts of vacant and underutilised land, vandalised and deteriorating infrastructure, the decline of specialised production systems and that of seed maize production. Furthermore, the incompetence of the Magudu family's farming activities are exemplified by the fact that they had not been paying their electricity bills and failed to resuscitate the irrigation system. Thus, the young narrator notes, 'If we had money, maybe the engines would now be working and we would have enough water to irrigate the fields.' (p. 29).

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The family not surprisingly fails to pay its farm workers who depart for other farms. This is exemplified by Sekuru who remains on the farm after other farm workers had departed from the Magudu farm. Sekuru's situation is heightened by the fact that he is of Malawian origin:

> Only *sekuru* works quietly among the sugar-cane. Sometimes I go with him. There is no school here. There are no other children. They all went away with their parents when baba couldn't pay them. Only *sekuru* didn't go. I asked him why and he said that he had nowhere to go. He looked away when he said this and I thought he would cry. His voice was very funny. *Mhama* says he is from a faraway country called Malawi, that's why he speaks like that. (p. 27)

Sekuru constitutes part of Muzondidya's (2004:213) 'invisible subject minorities' who are 'descendants of immigrants from Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, most of whom came as migrant labourers to work on the farms and mines in the early days of colonial rule when Rhodesia was faced with an acute shortage of labour'. Consequently, Sekuru problematises our conceptualisation of belonging and citizenship in Zimbabwe which is mainly perceived in essentialised and primordial terms 'outside the tapestry of Africa's history of migrations and encounters' (Muzondidya 2004: 223). Furthermore, Sekuru is excluded from the land reform programme as he is perceived as the 'other', a 'foreigner' and an 'alien'. Accordingly, sekuru largely sees the land reform programme and specifically the Magudu family as the authors of his misery as they are directly responsible for accentuating his ontological insecurity. This is exemplified by the lack of care and concern he exhibits when he is informed that *mhama* had been crying and the frosty reception he gives the narrator which is reflective of his attitude in general to the Magudu family.

I argue that the Magudu family fails to prosper in their farming largely as a result of the father's irresponsibility. This irresponsibility constitutes a form of masculinity that is toxic to the welfare of the family. The father is abusive of his wife and family. This is exemplified by his hitting of the young narrator's mother with a hoe handle and fracturing her arm. As a consequence, the mother no longer works in the fields and thus accentuating the ontological insecurity of the family. In addition, the father has been absent for a whole week drinking beer presumably using money that was supposed to be invested in the farming project. The family is also evicted in the absence of Mr Magudu, away on drinking spree. The narrator

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registers his bitterness against his father as reflected in the anger he has towards the metal board, 'We pass by the farm gate. The driver does not stop. I wanted to take the mental board with 'Mr B J Magudu, Black Commercial Framer, Farm 24' and throw it far far far away' (p. 30).

The next section analyses the story, 'The Third Trek – Resettling', which again explores the experiences of the Magudu family as they attempt to resettle in their old village after the eviction from their farm. The story thus problematises issues and concepts such as reverse/ return migration, resurgent femininities and impotent hegemonic masculinities.

4.4.7 Impotent hegemonic masculinities, resurgent femininities and reverse migration in 'The Third Trek- Resettling'

The story 'The Third Trek- Resettling' continues the trope of trekking and pioneering evident in stories such as the 'The First Trek- the Pioneers', 'Maria's Independence', 'The Travelling Preacher' and 'The Second Trek – Going Home'. As I have already argued in the previous analysis of the short stories, Hoba engages in a parodic inversion of the Boer Trek and the British South Africa Company Pioneer Column. Hoba continues in this story to employ the narrative technique of understatement as the story is told from the perspective of a child narrator who 'naively' chronicles the events and experiences surrounding the land reform programme. The power of such a narrative technique is largely centred on the interpretation of the reader. Hoba is thus not only parodying the trekking and pioneering spirit of the people engaged in the land reform programme but more importantly he is also satirising the land reform programme itself as a programme that is largely corrupt and unsuccessful. The story, 'The Third Trek – resettling', thus explores the experience of the Magudu family we encounter in both 'The First Trek – the Pioneers' and 'The Second Trek – Going Home'. The Magudu family is depicted as largely having failed to live up to the expectations of a 'successful resettled new farmer'. The farming experience of the Magudu family thus challenges the conventional hegemonic narrative of the land reform programme predicated on perceiving the programme as largely successful in resolving the Zimbabwean land issue and in the process empowering black people.

The story focuses on the Magudu family during their eviction. It is a classic example of reverse migration which metonymically is also a reversal of social status and the resumption

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of old peasant identities by the family. Ironically, this eviction takes place in the context of the absence of the father:

> The driver of the police truck was impatient with *mhama* who kept insisting we use the beaten down track we'd used when we came in the scotch cart. *Mhama* told him if we went on a different road then she would not know the way back home. I don't know why she lied, because when we came to the farm, she'd told *baba* that the bigger road was less bumpy. Of course, *baba* told her to shut up because he doesn't take instructions from anyone. I don't know whether he will accept that the farm is no longer ours. I pray that he will because I don't want to go back there again. There's no school and I have to spend all the days playing with Chido. I no longer want to play with her. She's just a girl. I am now a big boy. Also, the farms have made *mhama* bad, and there is no priest to make her good. (p. 48)

The absence of the father thus constitutes the formation of toxic masculinity which is harmful to the welfare of the family. Furthermore, the production of this form of masculinity results in the emergence of a resistant form of subordinate masculinity exemplified by the young narrator. I also argue that the father's absence during the eviction is akin to Muchemwa and Muponde's (2007) theorisation of invisible masculinities discussed earlier. Importantly, the movement to and from the farm has greatly transformed the gendered relations between *mhama* and *baba*. This is exemplified by the incident where Mr Magudu returns home and receives a frosty reception from his family and retaliates by hitting Chido:

> *Baba* came back last night. He stank of beer and could hardly stand. I don't even know who told him that we were back home. He just stumbled in, and for some time we all sat there, not moving […] and then *baba* asked us if we had not seen him […] Chido must not have known who he was because she just walked over to him and peered into his face, then she pulled a face and stepped backwards. She was just in time because *baba* had stretched out his dirty hands to embrace her. That was when everything went bad. Chido does not like strangers and she started wailing […] *baba* was infuriated. But it was *sichupeti!* How could he expect Chido to remember him. And even if she did, his breath was smelling very bad. Then *baba* slapped Chido on the check and *mhama*, who had been watching him, suddenly stood up and placed herself between

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> baba and Chido. She has never stood up to him before, but that was because she used to go to church. (p. 50-51)

This shift in gender power dynamics between *mhama* and *baba* is further reinforced in the story through the narrator's description of *baba*:

> Despite his anger, *baba* looked frail. He wobbled as he stood and then he pushed *mhama* but she did not move a centimetre. He got angrier [...] Then *mhama* pushed *baba* and he fell back onto the bench that runs across half the kitchen [...] But *Mhama* only hit *baba* once with her hand and then he feigned sleep. (p. 51)

This image of baba as a bartered and frail man constructs a shift resulting from the impact of the migratory experience. Mhama has become more assertive and baba is feminised. Mhama's assertiveness is also exemplified when she insists to the riot police to use 'the beaten down track' and not the 'bigger road' which is 'less bumpy' (p. 48). I therefore attribute mhama's assertiveness to Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of patriarchal bargaining.

I also consider the father-son relationship from a migratory and gendered perspective. Baba embodies what I term 'impotent hegemonic masculinity' and the young narrator represents resistant subordinate masculinity. Initially, baba as shown in the story 'The First Trek – the Pioneers' exemplifies hegemonic masculinity predicated on violence, aggression and strength, as noted in the imposing image where 'Baba sits on the edge of the cart, brandishing a long leather whip he occasionally cracks to urge the cattle pulling the cart on. Sometimes, when we are at home he uses it on mhama' (p. 1). However, this form of masculinity is an impoverished one and difficult to sustain as he is poor. Significantly, the narrator describes *mhama* as a docile and passive woman subservient to the dictates of patriarchy embodied by baba:

> Mhama sits with her back to baba, staring at the road behind, her face expressionless. She does not even smile at baby Chido playing gleefully on her lap. She just holds her, to keep her from slipping. Mhama always goes to church on Sundays. (p. 1)

This description of mhama conforms to traditional patriarchal narratives of a woman but as a consequence of (reverse) migration mhama is transformed as she becomes more assertive and

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independent. Mhama's assertiveness and independence is contrasted to Baba's degeneration as he becomes more and more deplorable and despicable. This is exemplified by his lengthy absences from home as the eviction of the family takes place in his absence.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed *Chairman of Fools* and *The Trek and Other Stories.* In *Chairman of Fools* I argued that the conventional conceptualisation of migration as physical movement ignores more nuanced and subtle forms of migration, such as the psycho-discursive migration exemplified by Farai. This psycho-discursive migration is a consequence of his transnational migration to America and the subsequent loneliness and anxiety generated by the movement. In *The Trek and Other Stories* I focussed on five stories where the trope of 'trekking' and 'pioneering' (migrancy) is prominent. The next chapter focuses on migration, identity and HIV and AIDS. It seeks to advance the view that migration and identity are topical issues in a time of 'crisis' like the one generated by HIV and AIDS. The impact of HIV and AIDS, as a crisis, offers unique insights on how migration and identity are conceptualised. These ideas will be applied to Lutanga Shaba's *The secrets of a woman's soul* (2005).

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Creating Future Leaders

Chapter 5: Return Migration, identity and HIV and AIDS

5. 1 Introduction

Migration and identity are largely topical issues in a time of 'crisis' like the one generated by HIV and AIDS and Zimbabwe's economic and political decline that imploded in post-2000. The impact of HIV and AIDS, for instance, as a crisis, offers unique insights on how migration and identity are conceptualised. Mercer (Woodward 2002: xi) argues that 'identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis'. HIV and AIDS therefore present a unique case of what I term 'psycho-discursive return migration' and 'spiritualised return migration' which informs my reading of Lutanga Shaba's (2005) *Secrets of a Woman's Soul*. These forms of migration result in the reconfiguration of identities as infected individuals; to survive the pandemic and the attendant discrimination, recreate their identities resulting in most cases in the production of survivalist and resilient identities. In some extreme cases, however, an inability to recreate one's identity usually leads to suicide which is metaphoric of failure at the level of subjectivity and identity formation. This chapter focuses on Shaba's (2005) *The Secrets of a Woman's Soul* in an effort to underscore the complexities and nuances of the nexus between migration and identity in relation to HIV and AIDS. Therefore, this chapter seeks to discuss the way in which, as a consequence of HIV and AIDS, the conceptualisation of migration transcends the physical into realms of the psycho-discursive and the spiritual.

5.2 Theorising return migration in Zimbabwean Literature

King (2000: 7), largely conceptualising return migration in physical terms, perceives it as 'the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration' because of the structural invisibility of return migration. Furthermore, King (2000) argues that return migration has also suffered neglect because it has always fallen at the margins of the grand narratives in migration research which privileges issues such as assimilation, multiculturalism, transnationalism and globalisation. Return migration has also been conceptualised as an act of unproblematic and natural insertion in the local or national community once left behind. Importantly, return migration is closely associated with the idea of returning 'home' or to the 'source'. This idea of returning 'home' or to the 'source', however, in postcolonial thinking is highly problematic as it tends to view identities as fixed ensembles when in fact they are always in a permanent state of flux. Thus, Hall (2000:222) argues that 'identity is a 'production' which is never

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complete, always in process and constituted within, not outside representation'. Similarly, Smith and Watson (2001: 33) argue that identities are provisional as 'what may be a meaningful identity, on one day or in one context, may not be culturally and personally meaningful at another moment or in another context'.

However, Stefanson (2004) notes that despite recent notions of postmodernism and anti-essentialism and the claim that the bond between people(s), culture, and territory has withered away, place and home, often in the shape of localised homelands or nation states, continue to be of vital importance to individuals and communities as sources of identity, livelihood, legal rights and social rights. Stefanson (2004) further argues that the diasporic peoples' 'homing desire' to return is not merely a defensive and nostalgic reaction to the hardships and the stigma of ethnic minority status, but regularly becomes a 'charter for new social projects that lead them on unsettling, but also potentially relieving, paths of return' (p. 3). Return migration is thus not always negative and expressive of failure. Additionally, Stefanson (2004) observes that return movements across time and space have largely been ignored in anthropology and migration research, and despite mass dislocations and repatriation efforts of the late twentieth century the theme of homecoming still sits on the periphery of such studies. Stefanson (2004) further notes that 'going home' to the local community or nation state from which one migrated or was displaced appears 'anti-progressive', 'illogical' and 'illusory' and because of the mismatch between the imagined and experienced homecoming, coming home can be more difficult and emotionally destabilising than leaving home and settling in a new part of the world.

Sussman (2010) proposes four categories to clarify the rationale behind return migration which are pertinent in my analysis of return migration in Zimbabwean literature. Firstly, Sussman (2010) notes that return migration is a 'return of failure' as individuals seem unable to find satisfactory employment in the host countries or societies. Consequently, return migration in literature is largely a concrete expression and metaphor of failure to adapt and survive in a host society or country. This is the predominant perception of return migration in Zimbabwean literature. However, Sussman's (2010) perception largely sees migration as primarily economic and this is highly problematic in Zimbabwean literature which also makes reference to return migration which is essentially motivated by the desire in diseased migrants

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to escape the harshness of life in the city and die 'safely' in the rural areas. This form of migration in Zimbabwean literature is under-theorised. Secondly, Sussman (2010) observes that return migration is also a migration of conservatism as the host culture is projected as not sufficiently traditional and one therefore misses friends and family. This sudden return to conservatism can be perceived as a psychological defense mechanism against coming to terms with the realities of failure to adapt and survive in the host country or society. The return is also reflective of a migrant's failure to fashion identities that are highly flexible, adaptable, multicultural and hybrid. Thirdly, Sussman (2010) states that return migration can also be conceptualised as a return of retirement which is predicated on a desire to retire comfortably in one's country of origin. In Zimbabwean literature this is mainly witnessed in individuals who evacuate urban spaces and resort to rural areas where life is perceived as less cruel to such people. Fourthly and lastly, Sussman (2010) concurs that return migration can be approached as a return of innovation as individuals envision economic opportunities in their homelands. This again in Zimbabwean literature is emblematised through characters that return home to engage in new projects and thus are able to refashion and recreate their identities. It should be underscored, however, that Sussman's (2010) first category of viewing return migration as largely expressive of failure seems to be the predominant image in Zimbabwean literature.

5.3 Depictions of return migration in Zimbabwean Literature

Return migration in Zimbabwean literature is largely conceptualised in a strictly physical sense as return movement from one geographical space to another. This movement is chiefly associated with a downward economic and social mobility of individuals. Importantly, return migration can occur in a local or transnational context but the overall impression is that such movement is always projected as an expression or metaphor of failure. The assumption that underpins return migration is that outward migration is perceived essentially as progressive and therefore a movement towards opportunities and a better life. As a result, to journey back to one's 'source', 'home' or 'original' place is conceived as an act of failure and is always depicted negatively. The negativity that largely characterises the depiction of return migration is emblematised in literature through characters returning 'home' sickly and despairing or in some extreme cases dead. This is exemplified by texts such as Yvonne Vera's *Without a Name*, Chenjerai Hove's *Bones*, Lawrence Hoba's *The Trek and Other Stories,* Dambudzo

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Marechera's *House of Hunger*, Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons,* Shimmer Chinodya's *Chairman of Fools,* Valerie Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope* and Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly.*

Vera in *Without a Name* presents the female character Mazvita who migrates from a rural place called Mubaira to the colonial city of Salisbury and later journeys back to Mubaira a frustrated and disillusioned woman. She had initially conceived the urban space as offering more and better opportunities of survival than rural areas. Vera thus conceptualises return migration largely in negative terms as Mazvita fails to acclimatise herself successfully to an urban environment and returns to Mubaira burdened with the death of her child and the need to recreate her identity. However, Mazvita's return migration can be conceptualised also as being restorative. The return migration is supposed to assist her recuperate from the colonial and patriarchal violence inflicted upon her person. Thus, Zhuwarara (2001) notes that:

> Although there are signs of hope and suggestions of a countryside that is on its way to recovery, symbolised by the new grass and huts which Mazvita observes upon her return from the city, she still has a long way to go before she herself can recover from the pain of her past memories. It is from these memories that she will gain a new level of awareness of herself as a woman and as part of the larger world. (p. 308)

Other texts expand on the trope of return migration as a metaphor of failure. Hove in *Bones* portrays a female character named Marita who migrates to Harare, soon after Zimbabwe's attainment of independence, in search of her lost son only to return to her rural home to die as a bitter and frustrated woman. Marita fails to locate her son who had participated as a guerrilla during Zimbabwe's war of liberation. Again, return migration is chiefly depicted in gloomy and negative terms as the movement of frustrated and bitter people who have failed to successfully negotiate or assimilate to city life. Furthermore, Marechera's *House of Hunger* depicts a character, the anonymous narrator, who migrates to Britain on a scholarship to study at Oxford University only to return to Zimbabwe a 'failure' after failing to complete his studies and resorts to excessive alcohol consumption to seek solace. Importantly, Mungoshi's (1975) *Waiting for the Rain,* through the character Lucifer, depicts return migration as negative and therefore as something not desirable. Lucifer states:

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> I am Lucifer Mandengu. I was born here against my will. I should have been elsewhere – of some other parents. I have never liked it here, and I never shall and if ever I leave this place, I am not going to come back. It is the failure's junk heap. Those who go to the towns only come back here to die. Home is a cluster of termite-eaten huts clinging on the stony slope of a sun- baked hill. What is here that's worth loving? What is here in this scrub, in this arid flatness, in this sun-bleached dust to love? You go for mile after mile in this swelter and not here, not there, not anywhere is there a tree big enough to sit under. And when you look everywhere all you see is the naked white earth criss-crossed by the eternal shadow of the restless vulture. I have been born here but is that a crime? That is only a biological and geographical error. I can change that. Or can I? Can't I change anything here if I want to? Must I live with what I no longer believe in? Because I have been born here and here is home where everyone is and the roots of the family are – is that the only reason why I must come back to die in this desert? (p. 162).

Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons* continues this trajectory of viewing return migration negatively through the portrayal of Uncle Nicholas in the story 'A Wasted Land'. Uncle Nicholas migrates to England to pursue his studies and only returns to Zimbabwe after more than two decades. However, his arrival is punctuated by humiliation and shame as he is whisked away by the police at the airport to a psychiatric unit at Harare Hospital. Uncle Nicholas' return migration is projected as a threat to the security and well-being of the inhabitants of Zimbabwe and therefore must be consigned to the Harare Hospital psychiatric unit. Thus, Uncle Nicholas' homecoming, which should be punctuated with celebration, is ironically projected as 'traumatic' (p.47). It is seen as a consequence of failed migration.

I argue that the celebration and joy that accompany return migrants is an integral facet of the rituals done to accept back society's 'prodigal' child. This celebration and joy is in most cases exhibitionistic and consumeristic as the returnee and his/her society expect to 'consume' and celebrate his/her success in 'foreign' lands. Additionally, the celebration that accompanies the returnee is symbolic at a deeper communal psychic and mythological level: it is a metaphor of the 'conquest' of the host country. To be 'successful' as a migrant implies that one has conquered the host country and through such discourses migration becomes heavily inflected

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with masculine and militaristic tendencies. This is even exemplified by the very characteristics valorised in migrants such as strength, bravery, courage and determination. Thus, returnees whose presence is not announced or celebrated are considered as 'failures' and therefore perceived as 'shameful' and society, which cannot celebrate failure, tends to shun such characters. This failure is poignantly captured in the story when Uncle Nicholas later commits suicide:

> When he killed himself in March 1981 by cutting his wrists, all I was left with were confused memories of weekly visits to the hospital bed of a heavily drugged and pathetic old man, who soiled himself and had to be chained to the bedposts to curtail the intermittent orgies of self-inflicted violence provoked by deep bouts of melancholy. It was an inescapable yet poignant irony that he had gone overseas to better himself, not to come back in disgrace to swell the ranks of burned – out, unhinged 'been – tos' with minds contaminated by too much learning. (p. 47)

Return migration in Mandishona's 'A Wasted Land' is thus largely conceptualised in negative terms. This negativity, emblematised by the very title of the story, is therefore evocative of a sense of failure and futility reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's (1952) poem titled 'The Waste Land'.

Mandishona's story 'A Secret Sin', just as 'Blunt Force Trauma' and 'Smoke and Ashes' discussed in Chapter 3 also treats the concept of return migration as failure. The story depicts Jerry Machingauta, who had been 'lost in the diaspora' for thirty years, returning home with the clothes he had on and a 'baggage of bittersweet memories' (p. 69). Jerry Machingauta's return migration, like that of Uncle Nicholas, is again unannounced. Announcing one's status as a return migrant is indicative of success and therefore a powerful symbolic ritual of triumphant re-entry into the community that would have been left behind. However, to return unannounced is reflective of a desire to hide the returning migrant's apparent lack of success. Return migrants who are not successful thus find it difficult to be accepted back into the community they had once left behind. The narrator, to concretely depict Jerry Machingauta's apparent failure, sharply contrasts his silent return with the 'incandescent jubilation […] wild ululating and cheering' (p. 63 – 64) that registered his departure:

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> There was nobody waiting for you at the airport when you arrived because nobody knew you were coming. There was none of the incandescent jubilation that accompanied your departure; none of the wild ululating and cheering that followed your over – confident swagger towards the plane on that balmy day in October 1974. (p. 63 -64)

Jerry's failure is a consequence of his abandoning of his studies because of alcoholism and his womanising. Thus, to hide his failure, Jerry Machingauta deceives his ailing father by projecting the image of a successful migrant who had positively assimilated himself into the British system. The narrator therefore notes that:

> And so you sat on the edge of the bed and told your dying father about those things, details he wanted to hear, an affirmation of lifelong myths that had adhered for so long they could now no longer be discarded [...] You told him about the red double decker buses as huge as suburban houses and the underground trains that moved with the stealth of serpents in the dark belly of the earth. You told him about the tall glass buildings of the West End and the historic steel and concrete bridges of the River Thames that united opposite shores without touching the water, structures that ingeniously spanned space without ever seeming to belong to it. You told him about the shopping malls of Wood Green and Croydon that were so vast and complex it took hours to explore all the shops, and about the same amount of time to locate one's car in the car park afterwards. (p. 64)

The idea of migrants projecting an image of success is akin to Goffman's (1958) concept of the presentation of self in everyday discourses. Goffman (1958) perceives the social world as constructed by social actors who, like artists act out their scripts on the theatre stage and convey certain impressions of themselves to others. Migrants thus can be conceptualised as akin to social actors who project and convey certain images or versions of self that is marketable and desirable. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) have appropriated Goffman's (1958) concept of the presentation of self in everyday life to examine African migrants' experiences and argue that migrants conceal their hardships in the West from their peers and social groups in ancestral or home societies in order to 'save face'. However, Jerry Machingauta's

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successful migrant identity that he markets to his father is unmasked when the narrator ironically and scornfully notes that:

> But certain things are better left unsaid, Jerry. Some revelations serve no useful purpose. Talk is cheap, word gets round. You couldn't tell your father about your secret life in the land of the BBC, the Queen, cricket and snow. You couldn't tell him about the numerous white girls you had gone out with, a secret sin that hung around your neck like a monumental yoke of shame now that you were back amongst your own people. You couldn't tell him about Zoey, Virna, Macy, Vaneshree and Mitzi. (p. 65)

Additionally, Gappah (2009) in 'The Maid from Lalapanzi', through the presentation of *Sisi*Blandina, continues to portray return migration as undesirable. *Sisi*Blandina comes from Lalapanzi in Lower Gweru and is employed as a domestic worker in Harare. However, she is expelled from work after being impregnated by Mukoma George who works at the Post Office. Rather than return to her rural home in Lalapanzi and suffer the humiliation of being pregnant and not married, she commits suicide:

> My mother said *ndine urombo* Blandina, I feel pity, but you cannot stay here when things are like this, and *Sisi*Blandina wept and said, I have nowhere to go and my mother said you can go back to Lalapanzi and *Sisi*Blandina said oh God, my father, she said how will I face my father, and my mother said I can give you some money for the first few months but you cannot stay here and *Sisi*Blandina wept and stayed the night but left before I woke up the next morning and I never saw her again. The police came to our house […] and they said that a woman had been taken out of the Mukuvisi River and did my parents know her because she had an aerogramme in her bag with our address on it. My father went with them and identified *Sisi*Blandina and he came back and told my mother. (p. 171-172)

Thus, Gappah (2009) through the portrayal of *Sisi*Blandina projects return migration as an undesirable movement that must be shunned even to the point of committing suicide. I also argue that return migration is closely related with how 'home' as in the place one returns to is conceptualised and imagined. Lalapanzi is depicted as a place where ignorance and

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superstition reign supreme and Gappah (2009) seems to suggest that to return to such a place is to return to the source of primitivism:

> She came from Lalapanzi, SisiBlandina, smack in the middle of the country, a place so central that the province in which it rested was called the Midlands. In Lalapanzi, the lightning hunted out little girls and boys who played in the rain in red, it sought their red clothes and burned them from inside outside. The rivers of Lalapanzi were home to *njuzu,* fearsome water creatures that sometimes took children and made them live under water. In Lalapanzi wandered a *goritoto*, a ghost giant that cast a shadow of bright light as it moved. (p. 156-7)

Gappah's (2009) story 'The Mupandawana Dancing Champion' continues the trajectory of seeing return migration negatively. Gappah (2009), through her depiction of M'Dhara Vitalis, seems to insinuate that return migration is largely the preserve of the old and useless in society. M'Dhara Vitalis' return migration thus fits Sussman's (2010) conceptualisation of return migration as return of retirement seeking to achieve a comfortable retreat in one's country of origin. However, M'Dhara Vitalis' retirement and subsequent return migration is impelled by the sudden downsizing and closure of his company. More importantly, the description of Mupandawana growth point is associated with the imagery of misery, want and pain. This is exemplified by the narrator who notes that:

> Mupandawana, full name Gutu- Mupandawana Growth Point, is bigger than a village but it is not yet a town. I have become convinced that the government calls Mupandawana a growth point merely to divert us from the reality of our present squalor with optimistic predictions about our booming future. As it is not even a townlet, a townling, or half a fraction of a town, there was much rejoicing at a recent groundbreaking ceremony for a new row of Blair toilets when the District Commissioner shared with us his vision for town status for Mupandawana by the year 2065. Ours is one of the biggest growth points in the country, but the real growth is in the number of people waiting to buy coffins, and the lengthening line of youngsters waiting to board the Wabuda Wanatsa buses blasting Chimbetu songs all the way to Harare. (p. 113-114)

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Furthermore, this negative portrayal of Mupandawana Growth Point is also symbolically reflected in the name of the buses that plies the Mupandawana-Harare road. One of the buses is aptly named 'Wabuda Wanatsa' [Good riddance to those who escape], which paints Mupandawana Growth Point as a prison of suffering and poverty that one escapes through out-migration. This is the Mupandawana Growth Point that M'Dhara Vitalis, as a consequence of the Zimbabwean economic and political crisis that imploded in post-2000, is forced to retire to poverty:

> There would not be money for a pension, he was told, the money had been invested in a bank whose directors had run off with it *kwazvakarehwa* to England. He had been allowed to keep his overalls, and had been given some of the tools that he had used in the factory. And because the owner was also closing down another factory, one that manufactured shoes, M'Dhara Vitalis and all the other employees were each given three pairs of shoes. Jeremiah, Bobo and I saw him as he got off the Wabuda Wanatsa bus from Harare. 'Thirty years, vakomana,' he said to us, as he shook his head. 'You work thirty years for one company and this is what you get. *Shuwa*, *shuwa*, pension *yebhutsu*. *Heh*? Shoes, instead of a pension. Shoes. These, these …'. (p. 116-117)

The pain and misery that characterise M'Dhara Vitalis' return is heightened when he dies, and as a sign of dark humour, at a dancing competition. M'Dhara Vitalis' participation in the dancing competition resonates with the transverse tactics theorised by de Certeau (1984: 29-30):

> Although they remain dependent upon the possibilities offered by circumstances, these transverse tactics do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it. In this respect, they are not any more localizable than the technocratic (and scriptural) strategies that seek to create places in conformity with abstract models. But what distinguishes them at the same time concerns the types of operations and the role of spaces: strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces.

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However, even the transverse tactics that M'Dhara Vitalis employs to eke a living in Mupandawana do not yield results as he dies dancing. Thus, Gappah (2009) seems to suggest, through the depiction of M'dhara Vitalis and his subsequent death that one only returns to the rural areas to die.

Gappah (2009), through the depiction of M'Dhara Vitalis, also expands our perceptions on return migration. She challenges Stefansson's (2004: 3) argument that the diasporic people's 'homing desire' to return is not merely a defensive and nostalgic reaction to the hardships and the stigma of ethnic minority status in host societies, and the view that return migration is a 'charter for new social projects that lead them (migrants) on unsettling, but also potentially relieving paths of return'. I also argue that M'Dhara Vitalis' participation in the dancing competition is evocative of Sussman's (2010) conceptualisation of return migration as a return of innovation as one envisions 'home' as offering new and interesting opportunities. The dancing ironically results in his death. This trajectory is also evident in Edward Chinhanhu's (2004) story 'Our Christmas Reunion', which explores the nexus between HIV and AIDS and return migration through the character Selby who returns to his rural home to die of AIDS. Selby first migrates to London to pursue his studies and after his successful completion of his studies returns to Zimbabwe to work at a bank.

However, the narrator's conceptualisation of Selby and his role in the family is destabilised through HIV and AIDS and his return migration. Selby's anticipated return is punctuated by a Christmas time atmosphere of impending celebration and joy. However, this joyful anticipation is sharply contrasted with Selby's actual return. Selby, instead of being healthy and strong, returns a sickly and dying person:

> A familiar figure was slowly making his way towards the exit, squeezing through the small spaces created for him by the noisy standing passengers, and pieces of luggage piled on the floor of the bus. As the figure drew nearer to the door, he became less and less like Selby [...] Too dark, too thin [...] Yet it was him. Even before the flashy smile came, I knew it was Selby alright, my dear brother Selby [...] People were peering unashamedly into my brother's face with questioning eyes [...] We started for home. He had no luggage and, under the circumstances I did not ask for or expect any.

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> His walk was slow and laboured, and from time to time we stopped so that he might regain his breath. (p. 88)

Thus, Selby's return, which the young narrator had awaited with joy and eagerness, turns into a nightmarish experience as the family battles to accept the reality of his HIV positive status. More importantly, Selby's return migration culminates in his death. Consequently, Christmas day which was supposed to elicit joy and celebration turns into a day of mourning for the family. Return migration is therefore conceptualised as a return to 'death' and 'nothingness'.

Some of Hoba's (2009) stories also explore an important dimension in the conceptualisation of return migration as it focuses on the return of the diseased migrant. Hoba's 'Tonde's return' employs the trope of return migration as a way of exploring the experiences of diseased migrants and the production of diseased identities. The story focuses on the experiences of Tonde who first migrates to the city and later to the farms as part of the land reform programme before returning to his rural home. Tonde's return migration is depicted as that of a man who has despaired and is on the brink of death. This is exemplified by the sickly physical appearance of Tonde:

> Mukoma Tonde – as she has been taught to call him, even though he is two years younger than her – stood beside the pillar supporting the sagging verandah roof of the old store. It was just where the little messenger said they would find him. She approached, unsure of whether it really was her brother after all these years […] Why had he come back after all these years with neither wife nor children to show for his exploits in the big city? Why did he now wear dreadlocks? Why had he grown so dark, as if he'd been working on the farms or in the Hwange coal mine? (p. 31-32)

Tonde's sickness is also metaphoric of the barrenness of the rural areas. Tonde's sickness and the aridness of the rural areas are therefore projected as synonymously symbolizing hopelessness:

> They reached the dry riverbed. They'd had been walking slowly. Her brother looked visibly tired. Rotting trees held each other up with sinewy leafless branches over the heavily grooved path. A smell filled the air. Cattle came to the river desperate for

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> water and each day a few of them fell by the wayside: thirsty, hungry and weary from the endless quest for grass in the bone-dry land (p. 34).

This depiction of rural areas as barren and arid is similar to the metaphor of drought and hunger in Marechera's *House of Hunger* (1978). The drought and barrenness is not just physical as it is also reflective of spiritual, emotional and psychological emptiness. Mukoma Tonde's return migration seems to be a generational curse as his father had also previously migrated to the farms only to return home dying. Thus, Hoba (2009) conceptualises return migration as a generational family failure:

> His father had been another who had come home to die after spending four years on the farms. They had not even known where he had been at first, giving him up for lost, only to have him brought home by three shabby young men who had said they picked him up about forty kilometers away. (p. 36)

Importantly, Mukoma Tonde's return migration heralds sadness and bitterness in the family. This is exemplified by Tonde's mother who is hospitalised after seeing her sickly son. Return migration is therefore conceptualised as engendering feelings of humiliation and shame as individuals that vacate their urban or farm spaces return sickly and dying.

This trajectory is continued in Hoba's (2009) story titled 'A Dream and a Guitar'. The story focuses, through the trope of return migration, on the impact of HIV on the psyche of Kunaka who eagerly awaits the return of his last born surviving son. The son is thus a symbol of hope as Kunaka and the village in general have suffered greatly as a result of HIV and AIDS -the old are overwhelmed with taking care of orphaned children. However, Kunaka's attitude to return migration is at best ambivalent as he also conceptualises return migration as closely related to HIV and AIDS. This ambivalence is shown through his shifting perceptions of the city which he had left unscathed and was now threatening his family. Return migration in Zimbabwean literature is mainly associated with physical movement from urban to rural areas and as I have argued in the preceding paragraphs how urban and rural areas are imagined. HIV and AIDS have largely altered the perceptions of the city as a space of opportunities and better life into a threatening and insecure space where its inhabitants are perpetually at risk of being infected:

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> How could he be expected to believe that the same town he had once inhabited and left unscathed was now ferociously consuming its inhabitants? Apart from the name change, how could Salisbury be any different from the Harare his children had ventured into, returning dead or dying. (p. 38)

Thus, the shift in perception of the city from a space offering opportunities of economic and social upward mobility to a space writ large by HIV and AIDS has also affected the very nature of return migration as it has become dominated by individuals who are HIV positive.

Rural areas hence are depicted as barren and therefore holding 'no hope' (p. 39) for the young who inevitably migrate to urban spaces in search of better opportunities. This movement to the urban spaces is also projected as constricting as most migrants find it difficult to adjust. Thus, HIV and AIDS have complicated how rural – urban migrants successfully negotiate their urban environments as they largely find life difficult to sustain when one is HIV positive. This is exemplified by Kunaka's children who return to their rural spaces dying or dead as a consequence of HIV and AIDS:

> Thus, no one was surprised when each of his children returned home to die. Three of his daughters, skeletons all and none with a husband, came with only a bagful of clothes and two or three malnourished babies. The other one, the eldest, arrived dead, the children crammed in with their mother's stinking corpse in the police van. And none of his children knew where the others were, expressing shock when they returned to find the others dead. Each, in their own way, seemed to have been swallowed by the city that never slept. (p. 39-40)

I also argue that return migration, instead of eliciting feelings of joy and happiness, provokes anxiety and fear. Additionally, return migration has resulted in the creation of hypochondriac individuals deeply obsessed with their health and that of others. Kunaka typifies this as he is always anxious and fearful of the return of his last born son from the city:

> And now he waited anxiously for one of his children, the only one left. He had written a letter to his father saying that he was coming but he did not say when. He was the youngest and Kunaka had always thought him the most sensible. The letter had come months before, and he kept it tucked safely in his jacket. He had searched for clues to

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> his son's health, but finding none, he had been hopeful, telling himself aloud that his son would return home healthy. (p. 40)

His fear and anxiety is worsened by seeing a neighbour's son who returns home dying of HIV and AIDS. Unfortunately, his last born son also finally returns home sickly like the others and triggers Kunaka's nightmares and subsequent death. Thus, return migration is projected as a nightmarish experience that results in the death of Kunaka who fails to understand that all his children had succumbed to HIV and AIDS during their sojourn in the towns. Nonetheless, this tendency of viewing return migration, in largely physical terms and as negative is evident in the different texts surveyed above, while understandable, ignores a more nuanced approach to return migration that is psycho-discursive and spiritual which is reflected in Shaba's (2005) *Secrets of a Woman's Soul.*

5. 3 Lutanga Shaba - *Secrets of a woman's soul*

5.3.1 Return migration, the mother – daughter relationship and the reconfiguring of identities

Shaba's *Secrets of a woman's soul* is a quasi-autobiographical text centering on the experiences of Linga and her mother Beata. Linga through the autobiographical mode tries to come to terms with her being HIV positive, being recently divorced and mourning the death of her mother who succumbed to AIDS. Javangwe (2013: 172) notes that the text deals with 'private experiences of HIV and AIDS, a once taboo subject in Zimbabwe that is associated with domestic spaces and individual identities'. The central motif in Shaba's (2005) narrative is HIV and AIDS and the broad social implications they have for individual lives and the nation at large. The story largely focuses on the experiences of Linga and her mother Beata and how they are infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. However, central to this HIV and AIDS narrative is migrancy in its physical, psycho-discursive and spiritual forms as well as the unstable and fractured relationships that expose women to HIV and AIDS.

It is significant to observe that Linga's family is of Malawian origin. They had migrated to Southern Rhodesia, present day Zimbabwe, seeking employment:

> Beata and Daudi [Linga's parents] were immigrants from Malawi, having joined in the trek during the 1960's to Salisbury, which was the capital of the federation of

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> Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia. They were among many such labour migrants who freely crossed the borders in search of better employment opportunities in the federal capital which the settler government developed better than any of the other cities in the federation. (p. 11)

Mlambo (2009) argues that because of its relatively strong industrial base, Southern Rhodesia became the industrial heartland of the federation and benefited most from both the investments and enlarged market as well as from the federal and Southern Rhodesian governments' policies that promoted the manufacturing sector through tariffs, trade agreements and direct state investments in select sectors. Mlambo (2009) further states that the emerging manufacturing sector demanded an increasingly larger pool of labour that could be built up only through a combination of policies: those intended to push Africans off the land into the cities, and those including the provision of better family accommodation for workers in the urban areas aimed at stabilizing labour. Consequently, the gradual inflow of indigenous African workers into the urban centres changed the ethnic and cultural face of Southern Rhodesian towns and cities. Cities such as Harare were dominated by 'foreign' or migrant workers from neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique.

However, Beata's migration to Southern Rhodesia is also motivated by the desire to escape a family curse. The narrator (Linga) points out, in a narrative characterised by the omnipresence of death and vengeful spiritual realm that:

> She (Linga's mother) was born Constance Beata Chimodzi, the seventh child of Apolonia and Besai, and the first of seven to survive […] She would tell Linga of how her parents had buried six children in succession. When Beata became sickly they took her to a spirit medium. They were told that their family was cursed from the mother's side because the orphan child, Apolonia, had married well and gone to live in a foreign country. Grandmother and grandfather Chimodzi were told that if they wanted this and all their future children to survive they had to break the curse by not living with the first living child until after her formative years. That is how it came about that Beata was sent to a missionary boarding school in Southern Rhodesia from the first grade until she finished standard six. (p. 23)

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Beata's migration therefore challenges most theorisations of migration that give prominence to economic pull and push factors in elucidating the movement of people from one place to another. Spiritual reasons for migration, in sync with the African cosmological perception of life, are hardly theorised in a context heavily dominated by economic, political, ethnic, class and gender descriptions of migration. The fact that Shaba (2005) makes reference to this form of movement testifies to the strong influence of the African cosmological worldview on migration. This African cosmological perspective encompasses a spiritual world that recognises the existence of spiritual forces that can harm or bring blessings to human beings (Mbiti 1969). In Zimbabwean literature, this spiritual perspective of migration is explored by writers like Brian Chikwava in *Harare North* (2009). The anonymous protagonist in *Harare North* (2009), who is a transnational migrant, consistently refers to 'Mamhepo' (evil spirits) that haunts his life and thus renders his movement to Britain a futile endeavour.

It is equally important to note that Beata, after completing her standard six in Southern Rhodesia, further migrates to Northern Rhodesia and enrolls at a nursing school. However, she is expelled after being impregnated by Daudi (Linga's father) and later relocates to Harare as Daudi's wife. The story thus offers an important entry point in my discussion of the concept of return migration in Zimbabwean literature. This return migration, however, is not just physical but is also psychological, spiritual and discursive as attested by the mother – daughter relationship. More importantly, the return migration in *Secrets of a Woman's Soul* does not constitute Sussman's (2010) first category of viewing return migration as expressive of failure. The spiritualised psycho-discursive return migration that informs my reading of *Secrets of a Woman's Soul* is predicated on healing and restoration and the production as well as the recreation of newer and liberating identities in the context of HIV and AIDS.

I argue that, as part of Linga's spiritualised psycho-discursive return migration, there is the need to re-conceptualise her relationship with her mother. Javangwe (2013) argues that Linga's life narrative can best be understood within the context of her mother's suffering at the hands of society. Linga's misfortunes are indeed intricately woven into the mother's life to the extent where it is almost impossible to separate Linga's fate from that of her mother. However, this relationship is a fractured and unstable one and its instability is accentuated by

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the fact that at one point the mother and daughter are separated when Beata is made to live in Malawi by Daudi:

> By the time Beata left for Malawi she no longer smiled much. They did not play or laugh or sing and dance anymore. Beata became very efficient and businesslike in everything she did, masking a coldness that made her do everything like a machine. The smacks were more frequent and more unpredictable. By the time Beata left, there was hardly any communication with Linga apart from the issuing of instructions on cleaning the house, polishing the floors, washing the dishes, and washing her uniforms, and of course pointing out that Linga ate too much. Whatever stresses the marriage had suffered had affected the mother and daughter bond. (p. 27)

Importantly, the relationship is also fractured by the realisation that Beata is HIV positive and dies alone without the supportive and comforting presence of Linga. Thus, Beata's death plagues Linga with feelings of betrayal, guiltiness and shame, 'It weighed on Linga and no amount of tears seemed to have been able to wash the lump away from her throat and the heaviness in her heart' (p. 8).

However, as a consequence of participating in a training workshop attended in Cape Town, Linga starts to re-conceptualise her relationship with her mother. This reconceptualisation triggers her psycho-discursive and spiritual return migration. Additionally, Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritual return migration is also predicated on a desire to fully understand her situation as a divorcee:

> When she went home after the workshop, she tried to understand what was really happening to her, and was left with no option but to face the truth that the tears were not just for the unfairness of having to start afresh. The source of the deluge was connected to the real reason for the break up of her marriage than for the callousness that surrounded it. Her soul was crying out the fatigue of trying to keep the stone lodged at the entrance at the cave, to outlive, out-survive the event that had cost her loss of her innocence, and which she thought was a closed chapter in her life, one that needed to be locked up in the far recesses of her memories and the keys thrown away. But that event had been clearly lying in wait , bidding its time, and with a ferocious

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> force it had bound out, snarling and determined to hound her and devour her when she thought she was home and safe. (p. 3)

Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration is also associated with the right and ability to author hers and her mother's stories. This ability and right to author the story of oneself is premised on Smith and Watson's (2001: 27) concept of 'experience as authoritative'. Smith and Watson (2001) argue that the narrator's experience is the primary kind of evidence asserted in autobiographical acts and the basis on which readers are invited to consider the narrator a uniquely qualified authority. Smith and Watson (2001) further argue that a narrator's investment in the authority of experience serves a variety of rhetorical purposes such as inviting the reader's belief in the story and that the veracity of the narrator, persuades the reader of the narrative's authenticity, validates certain claims as truthful and justifies writing and publicising the life story. Watson and Smith (2001: 25) argue that:

> Experience, then, is the very process through which a person becomes a certain kind of subject owing certain identities in the social realm, identities constituted through material, cultural, economic, and interpsychic relations.

The purpose of Linga's narrative thus is to gain agency and therapy. Smith and Watson (2001: 22) argue further that for those suffering from traumatic or obsessional memories, autobiographical acts can work as therapeutic intervention:

> Speaking or writing about trauma becomes a process through which the narrator finds words to give voice to what was previously unspeakable. And that process can be, though it is not necessarily, cathartic. Thus narrators of trauma often testify to the therapeutic effects of telling or writing a story, acknowledging how the process of writing has changed the narrator and the life story itself.

Importantly, Linga's narrative is a politically motivated one as she provides a critique of patriarchy and patriarchal meta-narratives of HIV and AIDS that stereotypically view women as largely vectors of the virus. Javangwe (2013) therefore notes that the text plays the role of

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narrative antidote that transforms the subjects from perpetual victimhood where they are defined by their infectedness to positions where the psychological, spiritual and physical imperatives of humaneness are recognised. Consequently, through her psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration Linga receives healing:

> A whole episode of Linga's life began to unfold. One outcome of her healing was acquiring the calmness and coherence to start putting down the first words of the story of her mother's life. A story that for the two years since her mother's death she had wanted to tell, but had not known how or where to start. (p. 5)

Linga's ability and right to self-authorship is premised on remembrance and memory. This remembrance and memory is central in defining Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration and therefore fundamental in resisting patriarchal metanarratives on HIV and AIDS predicated on marginalising other narratives and voices. Thus, we are told that Linga:

> […] had to remember. A difficult thing to do. She had spent her adult life forgetting, and largely succeeding. In closing the door on the pains and the shocks she had also shut out the happy moments. She needed to remember the happy childhood she had had before the nightmare began, a nightmare which she had thought would never end, and which even now she was not sure had come to an end. To understand her mother, to accept her love and forgiveness, even though as her daughter she had been emotionally whipping herself for not having loved enough in return, she had to open the door. Her mother had loved her. That she knew. (p. 6)

Therefore, Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration, as premised on her memory is fraught with contradictions and ambivalences.

Smith and Watson (2001) argue that the writer of autobiography depends on access to memory to tell a retrospective narrative of the past and to situate the present within that experiential history. However, memory is a highly problematic concept as it involves a reinterpretation of the past in the present as it is not a passive mere retrieval of data from a memory bank. Thus, Smith and Watson (2001: 18) observe:

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> Contexts are charged politically. What is remembered and what is forgotten, and why, change over time. Thus remembering also has a politics. There are struggles over who is authorised to remember and what they are authorised to remember, struggles over what is forgotten, both personally and collectively.

In addition, Rushdie (1991), citing Milan Kundera, argues that memory in the making of alternative realities plays a fundamental role as the struggle of oppressed beings against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting. Similarly, McAdams (2008) notes that counter narratives can be found in many different cultural venues and are especially salient among minorities, the economically disadvantaged and other marginalised groups in society. McAdams (2008: 247) also argues that these counter narratives resist 'dominant cultural narratives, give voice to suppressed discourses, and struggle to bring marginalised ways of imagining and telling lives to the cultural fore'. I therefore argue that Linga's act of remembering constitutes an unstable psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration. This movement is an act of re-visiting, re-editing and re-interpreting events of the past in the context of Linga's present experiences. Moreover, as already highlighted, Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration is inspired by the desire to narrate and author the stories about her mother and herself. The instability that characterises Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration is captured through comparing memory to a 'busy commercial' (p. 7) where the 'images' keep 'flashing past' (p. 7) and the mind is depicted as being incapable of 'catching up' (p. 7). I therefore argue that this metaphor is critical in highlighting the disorderliness and fastness of memory which further problematises the nature of the meaning that is constructed.

This psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration results in the reconfiguration of Linga's identity from the 'narrow confines determined by male interests to an identity position predicated on restoring 'voice and agency to the woman-victim' (Javangwe 2013: 186). This identity transformation is facilitated by Ayesha who provides counseling to Linga:

> When your mother came into this world, she had her own script for life. All the choices that she made were her own, and nobody else's, including you. Think of the butterfly. If your mother had not died precisely the way that she did, you would not have gone through this journey. If you had stayed in your cocoon, your mother's life

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> and death would have been futile. You have the choice to go through a metamorphosis or to die off. Take your mother's death gracefully as the gift that she has left you to enable your own spiritual transcendence. (p. 7-8)

Consequently, Linga becomes more assertive and independent. Her psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration can also be read as a redemptive journey of 'atonement, emancipation, recovery, self fulfilment, and upward social mobility' (McAdams 2008: 255).

Importantly, Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration is similar to McAdams (2008:255) concept of the 'redemptive self' which is based on finding positive meanings in negative events. McAdams (2008:255) argues that 'redemptive self' are stories constructed that 'feature redemption sequences, in which the protagonist is delivered from suffering to an enhanced status or state'. Thus, as a consequence of her psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration, Linga begins to positively accept her HIV positive status and identity. In addition, Linga's acceptance and celebration of her HIV positive status and identity is akin to Pals' (McAdams 2008) conceptualisation of autobiographical reasoning about negative events. Pals (McAdams 2008) argues that autobiographical reasoning about negative events involves a two-step process. The narrator, during the first step, explores the negative experiences in depth, thinking long and hard about what the experience feels or felt like, how it came to be, what it may lead to, and what role the negative event may play in his or her overall understanding of self. During the second step the narrator articulates and commits the self to a positive resolution of the event. Pals (McAdams 2008) two steps therefore are pertinent in my conceptualisation of Linga's negative experiences and how she manages to transcend them. Linga, through her psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration, explores the negative experiences and consequences of losing a mother to HIV, being HIV positive and herself divorced. Linga is thus assisted by memory in her exploration of her experiences. After exploring the nature and impact of the experiences, Linga gains the courage and strength to confront and name her negative experiences as evident in the optimistic tone reflected in the citation below:

> She had confronted her own demons and had named them and now accepted the possibility that in time she may have to deal with a different manifestation of her mother's illness. But she would not give up without a fight. Not when she had Chiedza

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> to raise and watch grow into womanhood. She would make sure hers and Chiedza's experiences were different. She was not afraid anymore. And she was not going to be ashamed. She would refuse to go into that closet. (p. 107-108)

Thus, Linga's 'demon' (p. 107) confrontation and naming constitutes Pals (McAdams 2008) second step where the narrator articulates and commits the self to a positive resolution of the negative experiences.

Linga's resolution is critical in the construction of an integrative narrative identity. While Linga projects herself as a courageous and determined woman in the face of HIV and AIDS her husband, Simba, is depicted as a coward who fails to provide support and solace to his wife during the illness and subsequent death of Linga's mother:

> She had lost a husband in the process. The stress and fear had become too much for him and he had become cold and increasingly violent. He saw the hiv, not the person. If only for once he could have seen not just her condition, but her pain as well, she could have stayed. (p. 108)

Linga's confrontation and naming of her 'demons' (p. 108) is thus a transformative gesture that serves to underscore her identity reconstruction. Additionally, Linga, as part of her spiritual and psychological rebirth, also begins to come to terms with her mother's illness and subsequent death which she had viewed earlier with shame and guilt. This rebirth is also emblematised by the birth of her daughter, Chiedza, who, as the name suggests, symbolises 'light' and 'hope'. I therefore argue that Linga's rebirth constitutes part of her psycho-discursive spiritualised return migration whose purpose is to reunite Linga and her dead mother:

> It took Linga another six months to go back to Beata's grave. This time she was alone and she went to say her final goodbye. She was sure now that her own nightmare had ended. The doubts and uncertainties had been finally put to rest, and it was a relief [...] Linga sat at the foot of Beata's grave and told her about what was happening in her life. She told her about her one granddaughter that she never got to see with her earthly eyes. Linga had known that she was five months pregnant. Beata came to her

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> in a dream, chaperoned by an older woman, and asked her what her child's name was (p. 108).

Beata's dream visitation described above is also metaphoric of what I term a spiritualised dialogic return migration. The purpose of this form of migration is to provide Linga with guidance, inspiration and solace. Linga and Beata's spiritualised dialogic return migration is reciprocal in the sense that Beata even though dead dialogues with Linga and vice versa. This form of return migration is in sync with the African cosmos which views the dead as the 'living dead' (Mbiti 1969) and therefore as playing a critical role in the sustenance of life.

This concept of the dead as having an impact and establishing lines of communication with the living is also reflected in Hove's *Ancestors* (1994) where Miriro, as an ancestor visits Mucha in dreams and visions to threaten, warn and guide Mucha's family. Furthermore, it must be stressed that Linga's psycho-discursive and spiritualised return migration is centered on a desire to heal and survive the scars and trauma of being infected and affected by HIV and AIDS:

> Linga knew her emotional survival depended on her ability to gain strength from the good memories, and try and forget the bad things that coloured her present. Her task was to make them colours of light and hope, instead of darkness and despair. She was not even sure she wanted to forget. In any event, that was another luxury the women of her generation could not afford; be they farmers tilling the land, labourers breaking their backs in the factories, or professionals wearing power - suits in the high rise buildings in the city; for they bore the same soul – destroying legacy of secrets. (p. 10)

Linga's survival thus results in the reconfiguration of her identity out of victimhood to become an assertive person who is not ashamed of her HIV positive status. Additionally, Linga's psycho-discursive return migration also serves to appease her sense of guilt and betrayal of her mother when she was terminally ill:

> So Linga sat in the quiet room with the slight, unassuming gentle woman in front of her, a healer that she had sought to help her deal with the grief. She allowed herself to be taken by the spiritual hand and guided through the maze of threads of anger and guilt that had formed a hardened cocoon of enraged self-preservation. Rage that her

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> mother need not have died; and self-preservation so that as Beata's daughter she could shield herself against the wrath of her own disappointment in herself for not having done more to keep her mother alive. (p. 7)

This feeling of betrayal and guilt, as already highlighted, is heightened by the fact that her mother died alone without Linga's physical presence and moral support. To accentuate her sense of betrayal and guilty, Linga acquiesces to the pressure and demands of her husband not to continue to provide Anti-Retroviral Drugs to her mother:

> He (Linga's husband) had his own demons to deal with, not the least of which was the fact that he had complained incessantly that she was now virtually working for her mother's medication, and questioned her on how long she was going to be able to sustain it [...] The cost of the medication and the pressure from home finally became too much, and she had suggested to her mother that she find another way of living with and managing her condition. She had suggested a nutrition regime, and had felt like Judas giving Jesus the kiss of death. (p. 8-9)

However, her sense of guilt and betrayal is absolved through the spiritualised Beata's dialogic return migration to provide Linga with guidance, inspiration and solace.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the concept of return migration in Zimbabwean literature. It focused greatly on *The Secrets of a Woman's Soul* where it was contended that the return migration is predicated on the daughter-mother relationship. This relationship is a fractured one and only gets healing as Linga engages in psycho-discursive spiritualised return migration. Importantly, this return migration is dialogic as Beata, though dead, visits Linga in dreams and visions to offer guidance and inspiration. The next chapter focuses on white representations of migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature. Primorac (2006) argues that white Zimbabwean writers have been largely ignored in the discussion of Zimbabwean literature which has taken an Afrocentric and Marxist slant and has in the process subalternised other narratives of the Zimbabwean story. The chapter, however, seeks to rectify that omission and anomaly through incorporating such literature and in the process endeavour to have a holistic portrayal of the migratory experiences and subsequent identity politics of

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Zimbabweans. In the light of the above, I will study Rogers's *The Last Resort: A Memoir of Zimbabwe* and Lang's *Place of Birth.*

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Chapter 6: White representations of migration and identity

6. 1 Introduction

Post 2000 Zimbabwe witnessed a proliferation of white Zimbabwean writing largely centered on contesting the land reform programme and the subsequent forced displacement and, migration of whites. This chapter, through an examination of Graham Lang's *Place of Birth* (2006) and Douglas Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009), underscores the importance of understanding white experiences of migration from a literary perspective. Such an approach seeks to complement the existing sociological, journalistic and historical literature on white migration in post-2000 Zimbabwe, which was mainly provoked by the land reform programme. Both literary texts are examined with the objective of gaining insight into the psyche and emotional world of white Zimbabweans and how they imagined and experienced the land reform programme and the attendant migration and subsequent (re) formation of white identities.

The texts, *Place and Birth* and *The Last Resort*, are preoccupied with the exposition of the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis, especially the depiction of the land reform programme and its impact on the Zimbabwean white community. I largely base my exploration of *The Last Resort* and *Place of Birth* on Elliot and Urry's (2010) conceptualisation of mobility. Elliot and Urry's (2010) understanding of mobility, as physical, imagined or virtual, is pertinent to my exploration of the two texts as I intend on focusing on the impact of forced migration on white economic and social upward or downward mobility. To Elliot and Urry (2010) mobility results in the production of 'rich and complex social worlds' (p. 10) and this mobility 'generates new kinds of power for realising ambition and interests, new possibilities and risks for embodied experiences of movement, as well as new ways for engaging with culture, taste and social contestation' (p. 10). Furthermore, Elliot and Urry (2010) argue that such mobility triggers social transformation which can be analysed in relation to notions on cultural and economic capital as well as symbolic power:

> 'multiplying' forms of mobile life – actual, imaginative and virtual – now serve as key resources for the accumulation of recognition, respect and prestige. A life 'on the move' is viewed as a fundamental indicator of achieving 'the good life'. Indeed, we might say that multiple mobilities have become the drivers of symbolic power, bodily habituses and pleasure – seeking lifestyles. (Elliot and Urry 2010: 10)

This mobility also results in the production of what Elliot and Urry (2010: 10) term 'network capital' which is again pertinent to my analysis of the two texts as the evicted white farmers rely on 'others (workmates, friends and family members) at-a-distance who offer invitations,

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hospitality and meetings' as a tactical and strategic move to minimise the threat and damage of displacement and relocation. However, central to Elliot and Urry's (2010:7) conceptualisation of mobility is the recasting of identity in terms of 'flexibility, adaptability and instant transformation' as mobility is 'becoming increasingly central to contemporary identity formation and re-formation'. Thus, forced white displacement and migration resulted in the reconstitution of white identities as most whites found migration as a survivalist and copying strategy.

6.2 Land reform, white farmer displacement and white writing

The post-2000 emergence and explosion of white Zimbabwean writing is closely related to the impact of the land reform programme on whites. However, this should not be taken to imply that white Zimbabwean writing suffered a lag prior to the land reform programme as testified by the existence of writers such as Godwin (1996) and Eppel (1993). White Zimbabwean literature, however, has been marginalised in the mainstream academic debates and discussions of Zimbabwean literature which is treated as synonymous with black Zimbabwean literature. Raftopoulos (2009) argues that the ensuing displacements and the attendant transformations in the fortunes of white farmers and their families had profound economic and political implications and spurred a new genre of postcolonial 'white writing' that inscribed a new sense of victimhood on white identities. The key moment that marks the implosion of this literature is the dispossession of many white farmers of their land. Similarly, Harris (2005) notes that the immediate context for white writing is the land reform programme and the impossibility of reconciliation between the Zimbabwean government and the white farming community. ZANU-PF's hegemonic and essentialised narratives of national identity and citizenship project whites as 'aliens' and 'foreigners' and therefore not entitled to land. However, this meta-narrative is contested by white writers such as Lang (2006), Rogers (2009), Godwin (2006) and Buckle (2001) who inscribe their Zimbabweanness and sense of belonging to the nation state. Thus, migration and identity in white Zimbabwean literature is largely centred on the concept of 'crisis' mainly provoked by the land reform programme which significantly altered white 'colonially inherited privilege' (Muzondidya 2009: 172). This sense of 'crisis' has provoked a crisis of a discursive nature as whites have been forced to re-think their identity and sense of belonging. I also argue that migration as depicted in

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most of these white writings is not just about escaping and surviving the political and economic crisis gripping the country but is a metaphoric way of fleeing the postcolonial 'black peril' which threatens to suffocate 'white civilisation'. The notion of trying to escape the postcolonial 'black peril' reflects some of the residual white colonial discourses which perceived blacks as incapable of governing themselves, as typified by Douglas Smith (1997) who perceives Zimbabwe's descent into political and economic chaos as concrete testimony of black failure to self-rule. The next section examines Graham Lang's *Place of Birth* where I explore the nexus between displacement, migration, downward economic and social mobility and the creation of restless and vulnerable identities.

6.3 Displacement, migration and restless identities in Graham Lang's *Place of Birth*

Lang's *Place of Birth* is a fictional text that explores the experiences of the Bourke siblings as they try to exhume and rebury their ancestors in crisis torn Zimbabwe. The text has an apocalyptic foreboding tone as the Bourke family encounters violence, threats and death in their attempts to protect their farm from appropriation. Thus, the text focuses on the disruptive nature of the land reform programme and its threat to white 'economic livelihoods' (Muzondidya 2009: 173) as well as the subsequent migrations that ensued. It is also important to note that the story is primarily a personal rendition of a white family trying to survive in crisis torn Zimbabwe. I argue that *Place of Birth* typically describes the larger white community and its attempts to reimagine itself and belonging in the ensuing post-2000 land reform programme. The land reform programme resulted in white displacement and dislocation and created an ambivalent and contradictory relationship between whites and the Zimbabwean nation state. This ambivalence is noted by Alexander (2004: 194) who observes that:

> White Zimbabweans, historically a numerical minority, have become a persecuted minority over the last five years. This shift in their status within the nation has left them feeling caught between a decision to remain in the country of their birth and a decision to emigrate and start over in an alien place.

Thus, the white dilemma to 'remain' or 'emigrate', aptly captured by Alexander (2004: 194) above, is associated with white displacement and dislocation and the need to re-invent

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oneself. In addition, this white dilemma can be interpreted as constituting white liminality. McClintock (1995: 24) citing Turner (1969: 95) argues that the liminal condition is ambiguous and eludes the 'network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space'. An existence on the margins between what is 'known and unknown' (McClintock 1995:24-25) forced whites to become creatures of 'transition and threshold' (McClintock 1995: 25) as they had to re-create themselves. This re-invention of self is among other factors predicated on internal, regional and transnational migration. I also argue that the land reform programme has disrupted the 'stable' locus of privilege and power that whites used to have and resulted in white economic and social downward mobility. Migration is thus posited as 'a strategy and opportunity for coping with displacement, violence, poverty and vulnerability' (Derman and Kaarhus 2013: 2). Hence, I intend to examine the linkages between displacement, migration and identity (re) formation that are depicted in the text.

The narrator, Vaughn Bourke, notes that his family's history is punctuated by migration:

> My family, the Bourkes, were regarded as 'Old Rhodesians' because we were among the first settlers in Matebeleland. I was born a fourth generation Rhodesian, the youngest of three children: Angela, Angus and me, Vaughn. (p. 13)

It is critical to note that the narrator confesses that his ancestors were early white pioneers in Matebeleland who 'owned and occupied' (p. 13) land which they proceeded to (re) name 'Hopelands' (p. 13) farm. This history, which resonates with the colonial history of the pioneer column, thus dramatises the early colonial and often violent acquisition of African land which will reverberate in the in the 21st century in the form of the land reform programme and the attendant inverse white displacements and dislocations.

Additionally, this history of migration, evocative as it is of colonial intrusion, is epitomised by Vaughn senior and Catherine Bourke who are the family's patriarch and matriarch. The narrator's description of Vaughn senior and Catherine is evocative of the pioneer column which established white settlerism in Zimbabwe:

> The photograph of Vaughn and Catherine is old and yellowed. They are standing beside a half-tend wagon, laden with all their worldly possessions: six month's provisions, a bedstead, a table and four chairs, an anvil, a couple of trunks and a

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> woodstove. There is a crate of chickens tied underneath the wagon and in the background there are some trek oxen, two cows and Vaughn's horse. Vaughn looks fierce and stern beneath his bushy beard, his eyes dark and serious. He stands erect and dignified next to Catherine. At his feet a bull terrier is chewing at his quirt. Catherine stands solemnly, modestly, her face tired yet hopeful. She gave the farm its name – Hopelands. Below her feet are the handwritten words: Arrival in the colony, 1897. (p. 36)

The family's history of migration, as reflected in Vaughn and Catherine's photograph, gives prominence to the pioneer and frontier settler identities of whites predicated on toughness and frontiership (Chennells 1982). I also argue that the way we imagine and perform our masculinities and femininities play a crucial role in the dramatisation of colonialism, which McClintock (1995) sees as essentially male. This is epitomised by Vaughn senior who is described as 'fierce and stern' with a 'bushy beard' and 'dark and serious' eyes (p. 36). Vaughn senior's portrait personifies the prototypical colonial who is projected as aggressive and strong willed (Chennells 1982). All these characteristics, which are suggestive of a militant masculinity, therefore, result in the expropriation of land and the establishment of a farm in Shangani.

Nevertheless, the image of a seemingly stable white colonial identity is disrupted after the attainment of Zimbabwe's independence. This new dispensation is depicted as still enabling white characters like Gus, the narrator's brother, to continue subscribing to the colonial ideology of the superiority of the white race as testified by his continued reference to blacks as 'Kaffirs'. I therefore argue that Vaughn senior and Catherine's 'primordial' migration into Zimbabwe is the basis of the Bourke family's physical and discursive migrations in the text. The trope of migrancy is thus eminently pronounced in the text and is emblematised by the opening paragraph:

> The hazy expanse of Zimbabwe rises. Abstract brown swathes acquire the raw detail of bush and rock, blurred horizons become solid [….] I close my eyes, trying to gather my thoughts. I try to think of what lies ahead. I am returning to my place of birth for the first time in twenty-six years. (p. 5)

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The implied descent as the narrator's plane arrives underscores the apocalyptic tone of the text and is indicative of the narrator's conceptualisation of return migration as negative. Thus, the narrator projects his return as 'descending' into the world of chaos provoked by the land reform programme. I also contend that the idea of 'descending' is redolent with colonial tendencies that stubbornly perceive postcolonial Zimbabwe's trajectories as reflective of a fall from progress, hence a descend into retrogression. Postcolonial Zimbabwe is therefore reminiscent of McClintock's (1995: 24) 'anachronistic space'. I therefore argue that the apocalyptic tone that characterises the above description is metaphoric of the 'descend' of the white community from economic positions of power and privilege to dispossession.

It is important to note that Vaughn Bourke, the narrator, who is the last born in a family of three, first migrates to South Africa and ultimately to Australia to study:

> Like many of my young countrymen I took the option of study partly to evade military service and the escalating civil war in Rhodesia. In my final year at University in Pietermaritzburg I applied to migrate to Australia, unbeknown to my family. In 1978, as soon as I'd completed my fine Art degree, and much to my parents' surprise and dismay, I climbed on a plane bound for Sydney. (p. 14)

Vaughn's migration however destabilises his sense of self as he exists 'between identities', in a 'limbo' and 'between places' (p. 5) and thus is constitutive of his liminal condition. I also argue that Vaughn's migration, which should be read as a tactical move in De Certeau's (1984) sense, to South Africa and ultimately Australia and the attendant (re) formation of identity as he begins to identify himself as an Australian is part of the strategic repositioning of self in the context of a war in Rhodesia. The Bourke family is further destabilised by Angela's, Vaughn's elder sister, migration to Britain. Her migration is provoked by the mid-1980s crisis in Matebeleland popularly known as 'Gukurahundi'. Raftopoulos (2004: xi) notes that the outcome of this conflict was the Unity Agreement in 1987 'which, while it ended the atrocities in Matebeleland, effectively emasculated the major opposition party PF Zapu and confirmed the regional subordination of Matebeleland'. However, 'Gukurahundi', as exemplified by Angela also resulted in white migration:

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> Angela had continued to live periodically on Hopelands, but during the dissident crisis in 1986 she left for Britain, where, as fate would have it, she found huge fame and fortune as a wildlife painter. Angela and I regularly correspond, these days mostly by e-mail. (p. 15)

I therefore underscore the fact that Vaughn and Angela's migrations are provoked by crisis. In Vaughn's case it is the 1970s anticolonial war which, because of his liberal inclinations makes the Africans' demand for land 'historically just' (p. 17) and compels him to consider Smith's Rhodesian government as 'illegal' (p. 14) that forced him to escape to South Africa and ultimately Australia to study rather than be conscripted into the Rhodesian army. Vaughn's portrayal as a liberal testifies to the fact that whites are not a homogeneous bloc as there were some, such as Garfield Todd (Todd 2007) who actively supported the guerrillas and did not subscribe to the Rhodesian colonial government's rhetoric of war. Vaughn's migration therefore results in the production of a white liberal identity that is sympathetic to the black cause.

Vaughn's liberal tendencies however do not endear him to his brother who derogatorily refers to him as 'Sir Chickenheart' (p. 14) on the grounds that Vaughn had betrayed 'kith and kin' (p. 14) by not joining the Rhodesian army. Thus, migration though a tactical move assumedly by a 'shrewd' individual can be interpreted differently by others who might see it as a cowardly act as exemplified by Gus who scorns Vaughn's migration as betrayal. Nonetheless, Vaughn's liberal predisposition is destabilised by the killing of his parents by the African nationalist fighters of the 1970s anti-colonial war. The parents' killing makes his return impossible:

> After my parents were killed by guerrillas – tragically, less than a year before the ceasefire – my proletarian views collapsed in a pathetic heap, and I never went back. Guerrillas, comrades, cadres … the euphemisms I continue to use, despite what they did (p. 15).

The killing of Vaughn's parents therefore marks the turning point in his discursive and ideological migration. Vaughn, the narrator of the novel, transforms from being a liberal to a

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displaced and indifferent character: he ceases to be interested in the politics of Rhodesia and later Zimbabwe:

> I continued to study in Australia and eventually found myself safely ensconced in academe as a painting lecturer at the College of Fine Art at Hunter Valley University in Newcastle [...] From my distant ivory tower I watched Rhodesia change into Zimbabwe, promisingly at first and then disastrously, as Robert Mugabe's rule turned into tyranny (p. 15).

Vaughn's interest in his 'place of birth' (p. 5) is, nevertheless, reignited by the land reform programme and its subsequent threat to the livelihood of white Zimbabwean farmers and his buried ancestors. Vaughn, by migrating to Australia and becoming 'Australianised', imagined that he had successfully dealt with his Zimbabwean past. However, this past haunts him and forces him to temporarily return to Zimbabwe. Vaughn and Angela's return migration to Zimbabwe is triggered by a crisis which threatens to erase their family memory and history. Vaughn thus notes:

> I am returning to my place of birth for the first time in twenty six years. In all this time away I have existed between identities. Between being Australian and what amounts to a ghost nationality. A small detail in my passport sums it up. Zimbabwean is given as my country of birth. I don't know why this inaccuracy troubles me. I should find arguments about origin trivial, if not futile. Places change - names change, especially in Africa. But the fact remains: I was not born in Zimbabwe. I know nothing of what it means to be Zimbabwean. The real country of my birth, Rhodesia, no longer exists. This simple fact has, in one way or another, been the source of existential angst for many like me. One of our more insufferable traits is that we Rhodesians assume that the world cares. No one cares. It exhausts me, this limbo. Always between places. (p. 5)

Vaughn, as a consequence of migration, conceptualises identity as shifting and flexible. The idea of perceiving identities as flexible and shifting is supported by Hall (2000) who argues that:

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> Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured, never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation (p. 17).

More importantly, Vaughn notes that migration results in the production of hybrid identities. He points out that 'I struggle to sleep that night, so consumed am I with guilt. I yearn for Beth and Michael. Yes, always between places. Neither here nor there (p. 13)'. The idea of being 'between places. Neither here nor there' (p. 13) resonates with Bhabha's (1994) notion of liminality and the third space where Bhabha (1994) argues that the 'third space' emerges when two cultures meet each other transforming in the process individual identities. In addition, the 'third space' is also a site of resistance or the construction of 'dissident' identities. By 'dissident' identities I refer to identities that do not conform to group identities. Vaughn's 'dissident' identity is a product of his liberal predisposition as he sees the land reform programme as 'historically just' (p. 17) and is only appalled by the 'crooked' (p. 17) and 'murderous' (p. 17) manner in which it is conducted. His attitude towards the anti-colonial war in the 1970s is also testimony of his 'dissident' identity. Vaughn thus rebels against the dictates of most whites who perceived the war as necessary in the preservation of white hegemony and civilisation.

However, Vaughn's return to his 'place of birth' (p. 5) fails to provide him with a 'liminal condition' (McClintock 1995: 24) to renegotiate his identity but instead accentuates his sense of 'foreignness' as he fails to adapt to the situation prevailing in Zimbabwe. Return migration, instead of re-affirming Vaughn's 'Zimbabweanness', serves to heighten his 'Australianness'. This failure to be transformed into Bhabha's (1994) proverbial 'third space' is exemplified by the fact that he is no longer attuned to the Rhodesian cum Zimbabwean landscape which seems to have deteriorated with the transition of the country from being Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. The sense of unfamiliarity, which provokes Vaughn's feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, is typified by his description of Bulawayo as a ruined and neglected post-colonial city:

> To her returning son, Bulawayo presents two faces, old and new. At first glance, nothing seems to have changed. The same bland modern architecture that proliferated

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> in the fifties, during Rhodesia's heyday [...] Bulawayo smells like it always used to at this time of the year- like an unwashed body, ripe and stale. But beneath the familiar lies the face of change. The different street names. Colonial stalwarts replaced by heroes of the war for liberation. The absence of Rhodes' statue in the city centre. The old founder, the visionary, on his stone pedestal, hands clasped behind his back, starring wistfully north across Africa towards Mother England. Gone. And neglect. I'm not prepared for the drab, dirt-stained walls and razor wire, the cracked and littered pavements, the hordes of sullen, ragged people hanging around listlessly. (p. 7-8)

Vaughn's return migration indeed accentuates his sense of estrangement from his place of birth. This estrangement is conveyed through the iconography of landscape. Fisher (2010: 59) argues that in postcolonial Zimbabwe, landscape is crucial in the process of white de-territorisation as the Rhodesian memory was removed from the country's national holidays, maps and monuments through:

> erasing, overwriting and restitution. The state set about constructing another version of nationhood with its own local supporting icons of emplacement, and mapping in this way an African identity onto the landscape.

Thus, Vaughn's estrangement is reinforced through the depiction of postcolonial Bulawayo which no longer resembles the colonial Bulawayo that the narrator was familiar with. We are therefore told that postcolonial Bulawayo now has 'different street names' and 'colonial stalwarts have been replaced by heroes of the war for liberation' (p. 7) underscoring the importance of the politics of landscape in postcolonial Zimbabwe and fear of white de-territorisation. The language of scatology and colonial image that the narrator employs is critical in mapping the level of revulsion that the narrator feels in relation to the changed postcolonial Bulawayo landscape. Bulawayo's description is evocative of the continued existence of colonial stereotypes of Africans. The migration of Bulawayo from being a colonial to a postcolonial city is therefore mediated through colonial prisms and iconography which map postcolonial Zimbabwe as testimony of black failure to self-rule.

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The author depicts a continued existence of a colonial mentality that prevents whites from successfully shedding off their 'Rhodesianness' and become 'Zimbabweans' in post-2000 Zimbabwe. This is typified by Gus who acidly remarks in racist language to Vaughn that:

> Every prediction that Ian Smith made about this country falling into the hands of the kaffirs has come to pass […] Every bloody warning he gave about what would happen if whites didn't rule has come true. Tyranny, chaos … where are you clever bastards now, who ridiculed him back then, hey? (p. 140-1)

This racist tendency, typified by Gus, highlights the contradictions and ambivalences associated with white identity in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Ironically, the ZANU-PF has capitalised on these racist tendencies as noted by Alexander (2004: 195) that the fact that the white community as a whole did not engage in the process of change has resulted in a situation where government can make claims about 'the whites' that mask the differentiation within the white population. I therefore, contend that the transition of Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in 1980 can be conceptualised as a form of national-politico migration which was accompanied by the (re) formation of individual and national identities. However, most white Zimbabweans, as emblematised by Gus, failed to make this transition.

Muzondidya (2009) observes that many white farmers were generally reluctant to relinquish their colonially inherited privilege and the behaviour of many of them continued to be influenced by the colonial 'settler culture'. Kennedy (1987) cited in Muzondidya (2009: 173) defines 'settler culture' as:

> The great power exerted by settlers, their virtual monopoly over political and legal institutions, their coercive control over the labour and livelihoods of Africans, their manipulative methods for advancing the economic interests of themselves.

Gus exemplifies this 'settler culture' as he has a patronising relationship with his workers and continuously refers to Africans as 'kaffirs'. It is also important to note that this 'settler culture' resulted in the production of a white Rhodesian identity predicated on white hegemony and the inferiorisation of the African. However, Rhodesia's transition into Zimbabwe in 1980 did not result in much white discursive and subjective migration as most whites still maintained their economic privileges. Furthermore, the 'failure' of the

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postcolonial government is projected by Lang (2006) as a return migration to pre-colonial times when Africa was perceived as a 'dark' continent bereft of civilisation, progress and culture. This thinking, as Said (1978) argues, is integral to the oriental philosophical outlook that governs the way the West perceives the rest of the world. This is exemplified by the depiction of the Gerber's farm after its appropriation by the war veterans led by Mtunzi. We are informed that the farm was transformed into unproductive land and was destroyed by the beer-drinking war veterans. Thus, the land reform programme is perceived as a reverse migration into McClintock's (1995:24) 'anachronistic space' before the arrival of white civilisation which is projected as having 'enlightened' Africa.

Vaughn's return to exhume and rebury his ancestors also underscores the idea of spiritualised migration which I referred to in chapter four. Spiritualised migration transcends our conventional conceptualisation of migration as just physical movement from one point to another. In addition, spiritual migration is premised on the notion that the ancestors are not really 'dead' but live in our memory and continue to influence the trajectory of our lives. Thus, migration is conceptualised as transcending physical movement and encompassing the realm of the spiritual. Just as the Bourke family is forced to migrate from Hopelands to Bulawayo and ultimately Australia and the United Kingdom so too are the dead Bourkes. The 'dead', who are the family patriarchs and matriarchs, also migrate from their place of burial to a new 'home', the Anglican Church yard in Shangani, which is considered safe. His parents and grandparents were initially interred at Hopelands but since the farm is now under threat their remains need to be exhumed and reburied somewhere else. Thus, *Place of Birth* links whiteness, history, crisis and migration in a way that complicates our understanding of migration as exemplified by scholars such as Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996).

Vaughn conceptualises the land reform as 'inevitable' and 'historically just' (p. 17) but the violent manner in which it is conducted irks him. This is testified by the death of Tienus Gerber and the acquisition of the Gerber's farm which results in the family migrating to Bulawayo. The Gerbers' translocation to Bulawayo marks an important juncture in the economic and social downward mobility of the family:

> They moved into Bulawayo before Tienus got killed, thank God. Mevroy Gerber was too sick with emphysema and needed to be close to the hospital. She died a few years

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> ago. The old man's still in Bulawayo. Bella's also still here. Works as a secretary for a law firm. (p. 29)

The Gerber's economic and social downward mobility is accentuated by the inflation that characterised Zimbabwe's plunge into economic, political and social chaos in post-2000. This is exemplified by the way Oom Jasper Gerber's savings are severely eroded by the ensuing hyper-inflation. Gus, when Vaughn naively suggests migration for the Gerber family, retorts that:

> Option? Jesus, you've got no idea, boet. The little money the old man has in the bank has been reduced to practically nothing by the inflation. Bella's salary just keeps them going – if it wasn't for her, who knows what he'd do? (p. 112).

Therefore, Oom Jasper Gerber's economic and social downward mobility results in the creation of restless and vulnerable white identities. I therefore argue that mobility does not always result in the production of 'rich and complex social worlds' that Elliot and Urry (2010) theorise about. Rather, as exemplified by Oom Jasper Gerber, some mobility results in the shrinking and collapse of one's comfort zones, for Oom Jasper relocates to Bulawayo to vegetate and ultimately die poor as his savings were eroded by inflation.

In addition, Oom Jasper Gerber's migration results in the production of restless and vulnerable identities. This is exemplified by his desire to marry off his daughter Bella to Vaughn. Vaughn is projected as a symbol of hope to the besieged white community. Vaughn's migration to South Africa and later to Australia, which Gus interprets as an act of cowardice and derogatorily refers to as acts of a 'Sir Chickenheart' (p. 14), is re-interpreted by Oom Jasper as a 'wise decision' (p. 158), for it enabled him to escape the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis in which the text is set. Thus, Oom Jasper praises Vaughn for migrating to Australia and starting a 'new life' (p. 155) 'You made a good move, Vaughn […] You used your bloody brains and got out of this place before it was too late. This is not a country for civilised people (p. 158)'. Bella also perceives migration as synonymous with 'starting a new life'. She links migration to the idea of escape and freedom. Post-2000 Zimbabwe is metaphorically depicted as a prison which 'traps' and has no 'future' (p. 112) for whites. Thus, Bella observes that, 'You (Vaughn) and Angela were lucky to get out of this place' (p.

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106). Bella's conceptualisation of migration as offering a new lease of life resonates with Elliot and Urry's (2010) understanding of mobility as generating 'new kinds of power for realising ambition and interests, new possibilities and risks for embodied experiences of movement, as well as new ways for engaging with culture, taste and social contestation' (p. 10). However, most whites' fear of migration is closely related to the fear of economic and social downward mobility. This is epitomised by Gus who sees migration from the farm as a 'nightmare' and is prepared to engage in what I term 'tactical and partial' migration. Gus tactically sends his wife and children to stay in Bulawayo while he engages in strategies to keep hold of the farm.

Angela also remarks that Gus 'cannot live without the farm' (p. 177) as he is 'nothing' (p. 180) without the farm. It must be underscored that living without the farm constitutes a dislocation and loss of identity for Gus; he would be reduced to 'nothing' (p. 180). Gus thus exemplifies whites who failed to shed off their settler identities in post-independent Zimbabwe and are thus referred to as 'orphans of the empire' by Alexander (2004). Gus perceives migration from the farm as impossible and this partly explains why he engages in strategic and partial migration of his family. Gus sends his wife and children to Bulawayo, thus establishing the farm-city migration patterns that have become so common in post-2000 Zimbabwe, while he remains strategically at the farm and even enters into a clandestine partnership with Ncube, a Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) war veteran and former police officer, as a way of keeping hold of the farm. I argue that Gus' inability to move off the farm is directly related to the way white commercial farmers conceptualise and imagine the farm. The farm is projected as a vital source of livelihood, security, identity and pride and is a microcosm of the settler colony where the white person sees himself/herself as hegemonic. To migrate from the farm is to shed off this settler identity premised largely on economic privilege. Therefore, to migrate from the farm is to plunge into a world of uncertainty, anxiety, fear and possibly poverty. Gus typifies this as the impending farm invasion heightens his anxiety and uncertainty about the future. Vaughn thus notes, 'I return outside and sit for a while with Angela. When we go to bed Gus is still there in the garden staring at the stars' (p. 181). It is also important to note that Gus' fear of leaving the farm becomes catastrophic as he causes the tragic death of Angela, the violent and traumatic beating of Vaughn and ultimately his impending imprisonment for the murder of Mtunzi, a

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war veteran who spearheads the acquisition of Hopelands farm. Additionally, his refusal to leave the farm further displaces his family and exposes it to insecurity and vulnerability, as they ultimately escape to Britain.

This section focused on Lang's *The Place of Birth*. It explored the nexus between white migration, economic and social downward mobility and the creation of restless and vulnerable identities. I argued that white displacement resulted in some whites such as Gus perceiving migration as a 'nightmare' as they were afraid to shed off their 'settler' identities constructed around the farm. However, others like Bella conceptualise migration as offering a new lease of life as they feel that they could start all over again to rebuild their lives. In the next section I will analyse Douglas Rogers' *The Last Resort* (2009) concentrating on the link between migration, economic and social mobility, history/memory and the creation of refugee identities.

6.4 Downward economic and social mobility and restless identities in Rogers' *The Last Resort: A Memoir of Zimbabwe*

The Last Resort is a memoir that centres on the true life experiences of the Rogers family as they anxiously try to keep their farm from being appropriated during the land reform programme. Smith and Watson (2001: 1) argue that the word 'autobiography' is derived from Greek and means 'self life writing' and that until the twentieth century the word 'memoirs' was commonly used to designate 'self life writing'. Smith and Watson (2001: 3) further argue that life writing is a 'general term for writing of diverse kinds that takes a life as its subject. Such writing can be biographical, novelistic, historical, or an explicit self – reference to the writer'. However, *The Last Resort* is not just a memoir of the personal life of the Rogers family narrated by Douglas Rogers but is also a biography of the white farming community in Zimbabwe and their experiences of displacement and forced migration. *The Last Resort*, as a memoir which is an auto/biography of the Rogers family and the white farming community, constructs white people as largely 'innocent victims' and 'unfortunate scapegoats' of ZANU-PF's misrule. I therefore explore the text's treatment of the nexus between the land reform programme, displacement and migration.

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The land reform programme, as I argued in the preceding section on *The Place of Birth,* resulted in the displacement and dislocation of many white farmers and this impacted on their identities. The story is narrated by Douglas, a son of the Rogers, who initially migrates to London and ultimately to America where he finally becomes a citizen. Douglas has this to say about his life and the land reform programme:

> I had been out of Zimbabwe for seven years, travelling, writing, drinking away my late twenties and early thirties on the rootlessness of London, but I knew that Macheke was only an hour's drive from my parents' game farm and backpacker lodge in the eastern mountains of the country, and that they were in terrible danger. If they didn't leave fast, they would surely be murdered as well, and it would be a brutal, bloody, all – too – African end. They would die like this man Stevens. (p. 1)

The tone that Douglas uses is largely apocalyptic and is also typical of Lang. We are therefore told his parents are in 'terrible danger' and if they 'didn't leave fast' they would be 'murdered' and it would be 'a brutal, bloody, all – too – African end' (p. 1). The trope of migrancy aptly expressed in the phrase 'leave fast' (p. 1) and typified by the narrator's past seven years of travelling around the world and the attendant rootlessness is given a new twist owing to the land reform as depicted in the memoir. Migrancy is therefore primarily projected as flight and escape from doom. Thus, Douglas' temporary return migration to Zimbabwe is warranted by fear and desire to see his parents as their security is threatened by the land reform programme which has resulted in violence and the displacement of white farmers.

It is important to note that the narrator sees white farm – city migration and ultimately transnational migration as flight from danger:

> The land invasions had continued with the brutal efficiency in the two years since the murder of the first white farmer, David Stevens, and that frantic Berlin phone call I'd made home to my parents. Nine white farmers had been murdered now, and two thousand had fled their lands. (p. 6)

We are told that 'nine white farmers' had been murdered and 'two thousand' had 'fled' (p. 6) their lands. This graphically reflects the apocalyptic tone that Douglas employs in the memoir and uses as testimony of the need for his landed parents to migrate beyond the borders of

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Zimbabwe as the country is no longer safe for its white farming community. However, Douglas' apocalyptic message of fear and anxiety and proffered solution of migration is frowned upon by his parents who consider leaving the farm an act of betrayal as they are 'Zimbabweans' and the farm is their 'land' (p. 3). Rogers' parents see themselves as Africans and white Zimbabweans and not Rhodesians. The parents tell Douglas that they are 'Zimbabweans now' (p. 38) and as testimony of their Zimbabweanness had their children educated in state schools which were predominately black unlike most whites who had their children educated in 'exclusive, predominately white private schools' (p. 38). Thus, Douglas' parents contrary to the author's favour for migration are depicted as whites who have managed to shed off their 'settler' identity and become Zimbabwean to the extent that they were willing to fight for their right to stay on the farm.

As I argued in my examination of *Place of Birth*, Douglas' parents represent whites who have successfully discursively migrated, at identity level, from Rhodesia into Zimbabwe. This, the narrator seems to insinuate is a result of his parents' liberal inclinations, testified during the colonial period by his father's provision of legal advice to Africans. It must also be mentioned that the parents' Zimbabweanness is a product of migration which is projected as playing a central role in defining white Zimbabwean identity. As highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, white presence in Zimbabwe is a product of colonial intrusion. However, the more than three centuries that his parents' ancestors have been on the African continent is seen as testimony of their having shed off their Europeanness and is a constitution of their authentic African identities. The narrator observes that his mother was a descendent of the Afrikaners of Dutch and Huguenot migrants who arrived at the Cape in the late 1600s and that his father drew his 'never losing' (12) attitude from his pioneer ancestors. The fact that Douglas' parents have 'roots' and 'blood' in this 'soil', underscores and legitimised their Africanness and Zimbabweanness. This idea that Douglas' parents have 'roots' and 'blood' in the African soil is also expressive of their pioneering 'streak' and resilient mentality typical of settlers (Chennells 1982). Furthermore, the Rogers' roots and identity, the narrator seems to suggest, are firmly entrenched by the fact that they bought and did not forcefully acquire their farm. As a result, the Rogers are of the opinion that they do not deserve to be evicted:

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> They had bought the house and the land, 295 hectares, in the winter of 1990, ten years after Zimbabwe's independence from Britain, not so much as a business – although my father was always scheming up new ways to spin a buck, to make that elusive fortune – but to occupy the time on their hands now that he had retired and my three sisters and I had all left home. (p. 10)

Interestingly, the buying and subsequent work on the farm is couched in colonising and civilising terms as the clearing of 'bush' (p. 13). It is also important to note that Douglas' father was a prominent lawyer before his retirement. He used the money from his retirement package to procure the farm. However, the taking of 'barren range of hills in Africa with nothing on it' (p. 13) and converting it into a flourishing tourist business results in the family's economic and social upward mobility:

> My parents had taken a barren range of hills in Africa with nothing on it but bush and stone and turned it into a thriving resort. They had staked a claim on the land in Africa and were sitting pretty [...] By the mid-1990s Drifters was attracting hikers, backpackers and overland travellers from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, America and Europe, here for cheap food, cheap lodgings and game walks. (p. 13)

Thus, before the land reform programme and the Zimbabwean crisis, Drifters is depicted as a successful resort symbolically reflecting the Douglas' journey into successful land and tourist resort holders equally involved in placing this part of Zimbabwe within the transnational linkages, evident in the attraction of travellers from different parts of the world. This success was still evident as reflected in the narrator's description of the farm during his visit in 2002, typical of a colonial gaze and hence reflective of a latent disdain at the way the land reform was destroying white commercial farmer order:

> As far removed as I felt from this farm and my parents' lives, it was impossible not to be impressed by what they had built here. A tenant watered a garden; another drove up and parked in a garage beside his cottage. It was incredibly quiet, the air crisp as cut glass, the only sound the low hum of the electric fence and the weaver birds in the trees. (p. 21)

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Furthermore, as testimony of the family's upward mobility and location in the activities of global migration exchanges, Lonely Planet, a highly prestigious international organisation that markets and advertises tourist resorts, advertised Drifters in glowing terms, 'raving about the game trails and Friday – night pizza bake' (p. 13). This global advertisement of Drifters is indicative of Elliot and Urry's (2010) conceptualisation of mobility as resulting in 'network capital' which enhances the family's economic and social upward mobility as travelers, tourists from 'South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, America and Europe' would visit the place for 'cheap food, cheap lodgings and game walks' (p. 13). In addition, Drifters was also very popular with the locals from the nearby city of Mutare who frequently patronized the lodge. However, the Rogers' economic and social upward mobility is undermined by the land reform programme:

> Now the backpackers were long gone. The restaurant – bar was deserted. The cottage residents were eyeing the exits. Except for dwindling savings in South Africa left over from the sale of the Knysna house, my parents' only source of income was drying up. (p. 14)

The above description of Drifters has a sombre atmosphere characterised by a dull and ordinary tone. An image of desertion and stasis is invoked through reference to the backpackers who were 'long gone', a 'deserted' restaurant and the fact that some residents in Drifters' cottages 'were eyeing the exits' (p. 14). Thus, the land reform programme, through the wistful tone that the narrator invokes, is projected as resulting in social and political reverse migration for the country. This social and political reverse migration can be interpreted as reverse civilisation. Postcolonial Zimbabwe is projected as constituting McClintock's (1995: 24) 'anachronistic space' characterised by regression as exemplified by the land reform programme. Ironically, through the description of postcolonial Zimbabwe as reverting to anarchy as a consequence of the land reform programme, Douglas Rogers seems to (un) wittingly entrench the very white exclusive identities that he purports to disrupt by writing the memoir.

This economic and social downward mobility is also reflected in the state of Rogers' house. This is noted in the description provided by Douglas upon his visit in September 2003:

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> The house had been nudging into genteel shabbiness eighteen months before, but now it was in full decline. Cobwebs had gathered in the corner of my room, and the ants still roomed the ceiling. Hornets had somehow made a nest of packed sand on the side of my mattress. The rest of the house was no better. (p. 40)

The narrator tells us that the house was 'nudging' into 'genteel shabbiness' suggestive of a slow and gradual process of ruin. However, the house's gradual process of ruin is hastened by the land reform programme into 'full decline' (p. 40). Thus, the house is a metaphor of the family's economic and social downward mobility. I therefore argue that this downward mobility is constitutive of vulnerable and helpless white identities characterised by a heightened sense of anxiety, fear and uncertainty. In addition, the 'house' can be read as an allegory of postcolonial Zimbabwe and its social and political reverse migration.

Interestingly, the lodges are not exempted from the image of negative impact of the post-2000 land reform. They have also fallen into ruin:

> As with the big house, the past year hadn't been kind to the lodge. Cobwebs colonised the corners, and a cockroach stared at me from the top of a Gordon's gin bottle. The tables were scattered haphazardly across the floor, as if a hurricane had come through. The old radio was still there, but when I asked Muranda to find us a station he shook his head, 'Radio broken', he said. (p. 49)

Thus, the above iconography of 'ruin' and 'dejectedness' is evocative of the Rogers' economic and social downward mobility. Furthermore, the family's ruin and sense of hopelessness is invoked by the 'tables' (p. 47) scattered across the floor and the broken radio. I also argue that the diction that Rogers uses is critical in reflecting the family's ruin and dejectedness. The 'cobwebs' (p. 47) on corners are suggestive of utter helplessness in the face of an invading force and thus reinforces the idea of the Rogers family having temporarily lost control of their lives. In addition, Rogers describes the tables being 'scattered' all over the floor as if a 'hurricane' had gone through the place. This is also evocative of the disorderliness and dejectedness that now haunts the place as a consequence of the family's economic and social downward mobility. The iconography of 'ruin' and 'dejectedness' is also

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extended to the farm workers. Douglas portrays the workers in a sickly state of affairs. This is exemplified by Philip:

> The house was in terrible condition and I say that having lived in my decrepit London squat for eight years- but Philip the housekeeper looked worse. He had been in such good spirits on my last visit [...] Yet now, when I saw him, he had become a ghost. Gaunt and frail, he shuffled around looking like a like the burnt branch of a gum tree. Mostly he didn't come to work at all. (p. 47)

This general and pervasive state of decay and ruin is therefore blamed by the author on the land reform programme which provoked the exodus of white farmers and is a metaphor of the 'plunge' of the national economy (Bond and Manyanya 2003).

The family's economic and social downward mobility, as I have argued resulted in insecurity and the production of restless and vulnerable identities. This is typified by the metaphor of the 'bush' closing in on the farm: 'The bush was not only closing in on their farm and their home, but also, in some cases, colonising their minds, claiming their personalities' (p. 63). The metaphor is indeed evocative of the psychological and physical insecurity that pervaded the white community as a consequence of the land reform programme, as typified by the Rogers family. The metaphor is also evocative of discontinuities and continuities of colonial discourses and stereotypes in postcolonial Zimbabwe. These discourses and stereotypes view white presence on the African geopolitical landscape as oriented towards civilising the African projected as 'barbaric' and 'primitive'. It is however important to note that these colonial discourses are oriental in perspective as they perceive the African as the inferior 'other' who is demonised and is only redeemed through the intervention of whites. Said's (1994) perception on colonialism as closely related to the management and control of space is pertinent to my conceptualisation of the discontinuities and continuities of colonial discourses in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Africa prior to the advent of Europeans is conceptualised as 'bush' and an 'empty' territory which is suggestive of primitiveness and emptiness. The mapping of Africa as 'bush' has traditionally been important in the rationalisation and sanitisation of colonial violence. The clearing of the 'bush' results in the production of colonial space which is safe for colonial settlement. Zhuwarara (2001: 262) thus notes that:

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> The white myth in which the settler is cast as a heroic pioneer carving out space in the African wilderness and taming it for the benefit of civilisation is an all too familiar mantra which settlers used as both the rational and justification of their intrusion into other peoples territories and the subsequent exploitation of resources and indigenous peoples.

Rogers draws on the metaphor of the bush in his perceptions on the land reform programme. The narrator on his February 2005 visit notes:

> My sister Stephanie and her husband, Rob, lent me a car to drive out east this time. It was evening, a twilight dusk, when I neared the farm, but I missed the turnoff altogether. The bush along the road had grown much wider. It had the desired effect. You had to look hard to see that there was a house up there at all, and when I drove up, the home was dark. (p. 64)

The metaphor of the 'bush' is here not only suggestive of primitiveness but also evokes primordial white anxieties and fears of pristine 'dark' Africa claiming and colonising white 'minds' and 'personalities'. The 'bush' is thus indicative of failure by whites to 'civilise' the African who is conceptualised as the 'barbaric other' in the form of the land reform programme. In this respect *The Last Resort* rehearses Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* where the 'civilising' attempts of Dick and Mary Turner are mocked and defeated by the encroaching 'bush' on their farm.

The land reform programme is indeed depicted as retrogressive. Douglas catalogues the way it has disrupted commercial agriculture and the economy in general:

> The Harare road I had just travelled snaked beyond the line of sycamores and acacias that marked the southern border of my parents' land. But beyond it, I instantly saw something was wrong, out of place, like a jigsaw missing its piece. Instead of the usual luminous green fields, all I could make out was delinquent bush and a few listless crops on rough, unploughed ground. Dozens of mud huts had sprung up where maize and tobacco once grew, and wood smoke wafted out of the thatch, like kettles steaming on bush fires. (p. 8-9)

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The language and tone that Rogers deploys is crudely racist and offers a window into his perceptions and attitudes of the land reform programme. Rogers notes that instead of the 'luminous green fields' (p. 9) suggestive of the orderliness of white commercial agriculture, he saw 'delinquent bush and a few listless crops on rough, unploughed ground' (p. 9) which is evocative of the seeming disorderliness of the land reform programme and its disastrous impact on agriculture. Rogers further shows his racist attitude through his description of the huts of the newly resettled farmers, 'dozens of mud huts sprung up where maize and tobacco once grew' (p. 9). It is also crucial to note that the above description of the land reform programme can be a product of differing perceptions of the land and land use. Manase (2011: 30), in his analysis of Buckle's A*frican Tears*, observes that:

> Buckle's displeasure at this impact emanates from perceptions resonating with cultural and scientific discourses that valorise scientifically based land use plans and divisions. It thus seems as if Buckle's criticism of the invaders is located in settler colonial perceptions that define Africans as lacking scientific knowledge of agricultural practices and indifferent to the landscape.

Douglas Rogers therefore might be accused of being complicit to colonial perceptions of the land.

It is equally important to observe that the narrator, irrespective of the decay and ruin characterising Drifters which is metaphoric of the Rogers' economic and social downward mobility, notes that there were ephemeral changes on the farm. He notes that:

> Other things were different. An electric security fence had gone up around the perimeter of the house, and a uniformed armed guard patrolled the road that wound up to the cottages. They never used to have this protection before, and I wondered how they afforded it [...] They looked very well, much healthier than the year before. My father had put some weight back on, and I saw that he was drinking fresh lemonade, not coke. (p. 64)

These cosmetic changes to the farm are embodied as they are scripted on the physique of Douglas' father. We note that the narrator's parents 'looked very well, much healthier' and his father 'had put some weight back on' and was now drinking 'fresh lemonade, not coke' (p.

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64). Furthermore, we note that the 'signs of depression and decline' (p. 64) he had seen on his father were gone. However, it must be pointed out that the ephemeral changes that seem to arrest the Rogers' economic and social downward mobility are as a result of engaging in illegal activities that involve prostitution. The narrator observes that as he was walking:

> past a chalet on the way home, I heard the moaning of people humping. For some reason I thought of Lonely Planet. The bible for international budget travellers had written glowingly of Drifters over the years and had helped make it the hot spot it became on the Cape to Cairo backpacker trail. (p. 69)

Drifters' degeneration, the narrator seems to insinuate, is a consequence of black entrepreneurs taking over the running of the place after the exodus of many of its white patrons. Importantly, black entrepreneurs who now rent the place can be seen as representing the 'bush' encroaching on white 'pure' territory and in the process contaminating it. The corruption is contagious as Rogers' father begins to grow and sell marijuana. I therefore argue that white 'civilisation' is invaded and conquered by black 'irrationality' demonstrating in the process the white fear of being enclosed by the 'bush' (p. 63). Hence, the land reform programme is mapped as disrupting this inherited colonial spatial division between blacks and whites, as noted by Kalaora (2011: 753) that:

> encroached upon a physical and emotional space that white farmers saw as exclusively their own, a space white farmers had tried very hard to keep 'pure' and tidy, in which they had tried to control and define the presence of black people, their language and 'manners'. During the farm occupations, occupiers confronted white farmers with a physical presence that mocked the colonial relationship, and white farmers 'had to listen' and were pressurized to acknowledge the presence of an 'other' they did not know.

The 'invasion' of Drifters by black entrepreneurs like Tendai resulted in ideological and discursive migrations which generated new forms of personal and business relationships between blacks and whites. One such relationship is exemplified by the narrator's father and Tendai friendship. However, it is important to observe that the invasion of black entrepreneurs

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at Drifters might be illustrative of the roguish tenacity of Rogers' father which might be attributable to the mythical settler pioneer survivalist streak discussed by Chennells (1982). The ephemeral changes occasioned by the partnership between Douglas' father and the black entrepreneurs like Tendai does not only enhance the economic and social upward mobility of the Rogers' family but results in migrations of a discursive and ideological nature as the Rogers family is forced to establish relations with ordinary black people who they begin to see as fellow victims of the ZANU-PF's misrule. I therefore argue that the crisis engendered by the land reform resulted in the creation of a 'liminal condition' which resulted in the production of new relationships between blacks and whites as exemplified by Mr. Rogers and Tendai.

It is also crucial to note that the land reform programme resulted in white dislocation, migration and the creation of white refugee identities. This is exemplified by the portrayal of Drifters as a sanctuary for the displaced white families. The land reform programme, white displacement, migration and the creation of white refugee identities is also a parodic inversion of the earlier white migrations into Zimbabwe such as the pioneer column to establish a colonial enclave for the white settlers. White migration into Rhodesia resulted largely in the creation of resilient identities predicated on the notion that 'Rhodesians were heirs to the pioneers and early settlers who had survived the hardships and dangers of the first stormy decade of Rhodesia's founding' (Chennells 1982: 235). However, these resilient identities in postcolonial Zimbabwe are undermined by the land reform programme and the subsequent dislocation and migration which largely destabilised white existence resulting in the creation of restless and vulnerable identities. This restlessness and vulnerability is highlighted by the narrator's description of the lives of most of the evicted white farmers:

> I watched an elderly white man haul a rocking chair into number 9 […] old white people I had never seen before were watering plants or sipping tea on porches […] 'Jeez, who are all these people?' I asked my mother, a little spooked. "They're white farmers. People who lost their land. We're the only place left in the area they could come after they got booted off' (p. 90).

The presence of these evicted farmers underscores the portrayal of these white farmers as victims and their constitution, owing to the land reform, into refugee identities. It is also

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important to view the temporary migration of evicted white farmers to Drifters as constituting forced white intra-farm migration. They were forced to relocate to another farm not yet appropriated by the government. Thus, white migration in contemporary Zimbabwe did not only result in rural (farm) to urban or rural (farm) to transnational migration but also provoked intra-rural or intra-farm migration.

The author also uses the idea of displaced whites as refugees to project the land reform as war declared on a defenseless people. This is exemplified by evicted white farmers like Unita Herrer, Lady Charlotte and Piet de Klerk.

The idea of white refugee identities is predicated on a heightened sense of victimhood and persecution. The memoir portrays the dispossessed and now landless whites as having been robbed of their economic and social privileges. Consequently, many evicted white farmers sought temporary refuge at Drifters as they mapped their next move. Most of these farmers finally engaged in transnational migration as they sought a new life. This is exemplified by Unita Herrer, Lady Charlotte, Dance and Hanli Slabbert and Dave Burnett:

> Unita Herrer and Lady Charlotte left for South Africa at this point. They were joined on their way out the gate by Dance and Hanli Slabbert, an Afrikaner couple who'd found refuge in cottage 15 after losing their farm to the top man [...] But then, out of the blue, Dave Burnett, a veteran stalwart of the cottages who had lived in number 10 since 1998 and had been something of a talisman for the community – helping to maintain levies, hosting Sunday afternoon braais and sundowners at his cottage, the highest on the hill – suddenly upped and left, too. (p. 203)

6.5 Displacement, migration and the need to preserve memory and history

As I have highlighted in the preceding paragraphs *The Last Resort* is a memoir that explores the life experiences of evicted white farmers. Rogers depicts Drifters as a temporary sanctuary for these displaced white farmers. The asylum provided by Drifters is not just physical but is also psychologically and emotionally critical in the sustenance of white identities and families. In addition, Drifters should be conceptualised as an important site for the (re) writing of (white) history and the need to preserve such history. Through the act of telling their stories of displacement, trauma and suffering, whites are consciously re-working their life trajectories

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and writing/righting the history of postcolonial Zimbabwe. The narrator thus acts as the midwife and purveyor of such history as he documents white personal narratives of displacement and dispossession through numerous interviews.

Rogers as the biographer of the displaced white farmers incorporates 'multiple forms of evidence, including historical documents, interviews and family archives' (Smith and Watson 2001: 6) to support and augment his thesis of portraying whites as 'innocent victims' of the ZANU-PF's misrule. Rogers conscripts the memoir genre as a way of making sense of the traumatic impact of the land reform programme on the white farming community and the restructuring of Zimbabwe's economic, political, social and cultural landscape. This memoir as a fusion of fact and fiction in Zimbabwean literature is 'indicative of the rise to prominence of a creative imaginary that conflates fact, fiction, journalistic discourse and the new media' to depict the experiences of displaced white farmers (Manase 2011: 35). Interestingly, the displaced white farmers' narratives (interviews) emphasise the 'Zimbabweanness' of the dispossessed whites as they continuously stress their indigeneity. The narrator cum biographer therefore notes that:

> Eight farming families had found sanctuary at Drifters over the past year, and more would do so in the years ahead. Most stayed just a few months, trying to sort out passports, visas and property shipments before leaving the country to start over again. Others stayed longer, determined to fight to get their property or livestock back, or simply because this was home. They were Zimbabweans. There was nowhere else to go. (p. 91)

I argue that the trope of displaced white narratives is an advocacy strategy employed to counter the ZANU-PF meta-narrative of land, identity and citizenship. This meta-narrative projects whites as colonisers, aliens and foreigners and conceptualises the Zimbabwean nation in 'xenophobic race essentialist terms' (Tendi 2010: 36). In addition, the ZANU-PF meta-narrative conceives Europe as for Europeans and Africa as for black Africans and Zimbabwe for black Zimbabweans and therefore a white person cannot be a Zimbabwean or an African (Tendi 2010: 37). Therefore, the memoirs preservation of memory serves as an indictment of the present circumstances and seeks to preserve the history of whites in Zimbabwe.

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The preservation of memory underscores the construction of white identities as predicated on persecution, vulnerability and victimhood. The need to preserve white memory and history is provoked by the realisation that attendant to displacement is dispersion and loss of memory and history and therefore loss of identity:

> Right from the beginning my mother had encouraged me to write about their life and the farm. Originally, I suspected, it was the only way she knew to get me to come out and visit. But now, I realised, she was as amazed by what was happening around them as I was. She wanted a document of this time, a record [...] And so now, just as I had started going down to the camp at night to hang out in the bar and talk to the two Johns, in the afternoons I started visiting these old white farmers with a notebook and a tape recorder to hear about their lives. (p. 91)

I thus focus on five narratives of evicted white farmers. These are Unita Herrer, Mary Ann and Gerald Hamilton, Lady Charlotte, Piet De Klerk and Jack Jackson.

Unita Herrer's story evokes the migration of most whites into Zimbabwe who came from South Africa. Her migration is indicative of the pioneer mentality (Chennells 1982). Unita narrates her story thus:

> I came to Rhodesia in 1962 to join my husband, Jupie [...] I didn't really know him. He was the brother of a girl I worked with in Parrow. He asked me to marry him after eight hours. Said he was going to get rich doing tobacco in Rhodesia. (p. 92)

Her migration was certainly prompted by the desire by the Rhodesian government to make Rhodesia 'white'. What is also important in her narrative is her gender as colonialism is essentially seen as a male project (McClintock 1995). Interestingly, in 1980, Unita Herrer and her husband migrated to South Africa fearing black majority rule. Unita's temporary return migration to South Africa serves to accentuate her 'foreignness' as she feels not at 'home' (p. 95) in South Africa. Thus, migration is posited as transforming identities which are seen as not fixed or stable ensembles. It is in South Africa that Unita realises that she is 'Rhodesian' (p. 95) and engages in what I term circular return migration to Zimbabwe. However, her Rhodesianness is now at variance with the new political dispensation that is supposed to transform old colonial and settler identities into a Zimbabwean one. Thus, the

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'Zimbabweanness/Rhodesianness' that Unita assumes upon her return in Zimbabwe is still predicated on 'economic privilege' which is a legacy of colonialism based on 'settler culture' (Muzondidya 2009: 173). Unita's definition of 'Zimbabweanness' reflects colonial continuities and discontinuities. Alexander (2004: 194) thus argues that:

> For decades, white Zimbabweans have tended to live as 'colonialists' [...] Yet, in not using the moment of decolonization to redefine themselves and their situation, white Zimbabweans have condemned themselves to being 'tolerated foreigners' [...] White Zimbabweans missed the opportunity to refuse colonialism in its entirety in 1980 [...] Independence, for whites, represented a change in terms of identification, from being white to being privileged.

Similarly, Muzondidya (2004: 219-220) observes that Zimbabwe's post-colonial project of restructuring the inherited colonial racial order to build a just and non-racial society was undermined by the fact that 'privileged whites found it all too easy to settle down as if they were not expected to make contribution towards addressing the inherited racial imbalances in wealth between blacks and whites'. Kaplan (1991) cited in Muzondidya (2004: 220) also observes that 'whites, acknowledging their loss of political primacy, have focused on maintaining their economic status but have made few attempts to accommodate themselves to a changing social order'. However, Unita Herrer, as a consequence of the land reform programme finally returns to South Africa. What is interesting about Unita's story is that it highlights the circular nature of white migration (South Africa – Rhodesia – South Africa – Zimbabwe – South Africa) in white Zimbabwean literature and underscores the importance of conceiving identities as transcending geography. Thus, being forced out of Zimbabwe for Unita does not make her less of a Zimbabwean as her 'Zimbabweanness' is not defined and confined to the geographical borders of the Zimbabwean nation state. In addition, underlining Unita's sense of Zimbabweanness is a resistant and angry tone as she feels strongly the injustice of being labelled and defined as an 'outsider' and 'foreigner' by virtue of her whiteness:

> I am returning to my place of birth, but my first love is Zimbabwe. This is where my heart is, this is where my blood is, this is where my roots are, this is where my children were born, My Zimbabwe. My Zimbabwe. (p. 97)

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The second narrative that is considered here relates to Mary Ann and Gerald Hamilton's experiences. This white couple plans on migrating to South Africa which is projected as 'safer' compared to post-2000 Zimbabwe. Thus, the narrator notes that:

> Hammy and Mary Ann had lost their farm in the valley to a brigadier in the Zimbabwean National Army. It was what was called a 'slow bleed', a gradual takeover, and the stress of trying to hold on to it while their fields were trashed, their fences and machinery stolen, and their lives threatened had taken a heavy toll. Soon after they moved to Drifters, Hammy suffered a heart attack. They were planning a trip to South Africa so that he could get a bypass. (p. 98)

Mary Ann and Gerald Hamilton's story underscores the creation of desperate and helpless identities engulfed by an overriding sense of utter hopelessness. Migrating to South Africa becomes a desperate survivalist gesture. The idea of seeing South Africa as 'safer' is again projected in Lady Charlotte's narrative of displacement. The narrator notes that:

> Like Unita, she was getting ready to move to South Africa. She didn't want to relive losing the family farm, either. Charlotte had moved to drifters when her eldest son, Christo, lost that estate in Inyanga. This poky cottage must have been somewhat of a comedown. (p. 104)

Thus, Lady Charlotte's migration to South Africa, in pursuit of security and safety, like Unita Herrer's, can be conceptualised as a romanticised depiction of a return to the source:

> I could see Charlotte retiring to an estate in the Cape, that far southern tip of Africa, where her ancestors, like mine, had landed three hundred and fifty years ago before trekking into the interior of Africa. Charlotte was now trekking back. It would be a homecoming of sorts, a closing of the circle (p. 105).

Interestingly, Rogers through Lady Charlotte's narrative seems to insinuate that Africa is inhospitable to white people who are condemned to perpetual migrancy in search of a place to call home. Thus, whites are depicted as a people fated to an eternal exilic condition on the African continent. Ironically, South Africa that is projected as 'safer' compared to Zimbabwe

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witnessed horrific xenophobic attacks on 'foreigners' as highlighted in chapter three's analysis of *Hope Deferred* and *White Gods Black Demons*.

Piet De Klerk's narrative is an interesting one as it projects migration as a tactical survivalist strategy. The narrator tells us that De Klerk migrated from South Africa to Rhodesia to farm:

> Piet, who'd come to Rhodesia from Cape Town in 1953, bought the farm in 1968 and originally grew tobacco and raised cattle. He stayed on the farm throughout the guerrilla war [...] after independence he became the chief instigator in the construction of Osborne dam, finally completed in 1990, which overnight brought irrigation to the driest parts of the valley. (p. 197)

However, the apparently successful De Klerk family, as a consequence of the land reform programme, is now dispersed, which further complicated their identities. This is testified by his children who were farming in Zambia and Mozambique:

> The children were scattered, too, but not to foreign cities. Thewie was farming in Mozambique, Piet junior and Koos in Zambia – countries whose black governments welcomed skilled white farmers. (p. 111)

Hammar (2010) argues that for many displaced white farmers moving to Mozambique provided a certain distance from the immediacy of grief, anger and despair associated with the multiple losses suffered due to the land reform programme. In addition, Hammar (2010: 396) notes that the Manica Province, where most of the displaced white farmers relocated to, retained sufficient 'proximity to Zimbabwe, and to the past, to cultivate some degree of ongoing if unsettling connection with both'. However, it would be interesting to know if De Klerk's children who migrated to Mozambique and Zambia would become in the process 'Mozambicanised' or 'Zambianised' by their migrant experiences or still strategically reclaim or proclaim their Zimbabweanness. I also argue that the 'Mozambicanisation' or 'Zambianisation' of the De Klerk's children's identities attests to the fact that identity is a socially constructed process and not an event or something that is fixed or has an essence (Hall 2000; Woodward 2002). As people move, so do their identities change, they adapt to the changing environment.

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Interestingly, Piet De Klerk despite being displaced and his family scattered still insists that he is Zimbabwean. He asserts that:

> Ag no, man. Meinks (wife) and I, we're Zimbabweans. We love it here. I mean, look at this place. It's beautiful. A cottage, a garden, our friends around us. What more could we want? (p. 112)

De Klerk's Zimbabweanness would be interesting to contrast with the assumed 'Mozambicanised' or 'Zambianised' identities of his children. Thus, the migration of the De Klerk's children complicates their family identities from the traditional conventional Zimbabwean ones they used to have before the land reform programme. Furthermore, the De Klerk children who migrated to Mozambique and Zambia need to adapt to their changed environments creating in the process what Hammar (2013: 114) terms 'hybrid white southern African' identities. The De Klerk children thus become both Zimbabwean and Mozambican or Zimbabwean and Zambian.

The partly 'Mozambicanisation' and 'Zambianisation' of the De Klerk family is also a coping and survival strategy as they now straddle three countries within southern Africa. This straddling enhances their security rather than just have their economic interests and attendant identities located in one country. This is a strategy employed to minimise the family's economic and social downward mobility in the event of future possible land reform programmes. In addition, it is important to note that the migrations provoked by the land reform programme have resulted in the production of complex interactions and the formation of complex identities. This has forced some of the evicted white farmers such as the De Klerk sons to transcend national identities and citizenship and concentrate more on personal identities 'focused and honed around occupation, personality and family rather than around citizenship or nationality' (Sjaastad et al 2013: 299).

Lastly, I consider Jake Jackson's narrative. Jake Jackson is an evicted white farmer who migrated to Mozambique and his story offers a complex rendition of the nexus between migration and identity. The narrator thus notes that Jake Jackson:

> Unable to farm in Zimbabwe, had transformed a desperately poor, war-torn part of northern Mozambique into rich farmland, by training more than fifty thousand black

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> Mozambicans to grow tobacco and other crops for export. Peasants who had recently lived in mud huts, dependent on food handouts from the west, were now building houses, driving four by fours and sending their children to school. Men like Jake Jackson are lost to Zimbabwe. They now live as expatriates in many remote rural parts of Africa, where their skills are used to help feed and develop those countries, as they once did in Zimbabwe. Few of them will ever return. (p. 121)

Jack Jackson's Mozambican 'success' story is echoed by Hammar (2013) who states that most of Zimbabwean white farmers who migrated to Mozambique, despite challenges, have significantly contributed to the development of the Mozambican economy. However, the celebratory tone that underpins Jack Jackson's narrative might be a naïve attempt on the part of Rogers to depict displaced whites as having found a home in other parts of Africa. This might not be necessarily true of all farmers as noted by Odoemene (2012) in his analysis of the impact of displaced white Zimbabwean farmers on Nigerian society. Odoemene (2012: 74) argues that the presence of white Zimbabwean farmers in Nigeria might trigger a land conflict and is destroying local farmers as they pose 'great risks to the nation's security and food sufficiency, as well as alienates and further impoverishes the local farmers'.

6. 6 Conclusion

I have discussed white depictions of migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature as reflected in *The Place of Birth* and *The Last Resort.* Both texts underscore the importance of understanding white experiences of migration from a literary perspective. I argued that such an approach complements the existing sociological, journalistic and historical literature on white migration in Zimbabwe that was mainly provoked by the land reform programme, which radically altered white economic privilege. I also argued that literature provides a unique window into the psyche and emotional world of white Zimbabweans and how they imagined and experienced the land reform programme, the attendant migration and subsequent (re) formation of white identities. The next chapter explores the global dimensions of Zimbabwe migration and how it has transformed the way we think about identities. It is also in this chapter where an in depth analysis will be given to the deployment of strategic 'hybridised' identities largely predicated on identity management and performances, as

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portrayed in Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) and Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009).

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Chapter 7: Representations of transnational migration and diasporic identities in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* and Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly*

7. 1 Introduction

This chapter explores the global dimensions of Zimbabwean migration largely triggered by the Zimbabwean crisis that imploded in post-2000 and determines its impact on the way we think about identities. Falola and Afolabi (2007: 2) argue that any discussion of African migration, whether internal or external, must be conceived as only one aspect of a 'more complex, organic, and global patterning of "flux and reflux" necessitated by constantly shifting dynamics of world socio-economic, cultural, and political order'. Thus, in our analysis of the representation of Zimbabwean transnational migration we need to transcend the nation state as a category of analysis which only focuses on internal factors. Grosfoguel and Georas (2000) therefore argue that knowledge produced in the social sciences and the humanities is predominantly focused on and oriented towards the nation state as the unit of analysis. This, as Grosfoguel and Georas (2000) argue is premised on the dominant assumption that nation states are independent units, and the main explanation for global inequalities is the internal dynamics of each nation state. Thus, any meaningful discussion of Zimbabwean transnational migration needs to consider the wider global context.

7.2 Theorising Diasporic Identities

My analysis of transnational diasporic identities centres largely on the deployment of strategic 'hybridised' identities premised on the notion of identity performance and management. These identities are largely predicated on artifice and duplicity as a strategic way of surviving in a 'hostile' foreign land where one's ability to survive is dependent on the deployment of linguistic, cultural, legal and economic capital. The constructed transnational migrant identities are also carefully marketed for the consumption of those in the home or ancestral country as a way of presenting transnational migration as 'good', 'necessary' and offering better economic opportunities. I therefore examine Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* and Gappah's 'Something Nice from London' and 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai' in *An Elegy for Easterly.*

In my conceptualisation of diasporic identities, especially in *An Elegy for Easterly,* I draw on Goffman's (1959) theorisation of the 'presentation of self in everyday life'. Goffman (1959)

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perceives the social world as constructed by social actors who, like artists act out their scripts on the theatre stage and convey certain impressions of themselves to others. An individual, Goffman (1959) argues, in ordinary work situations presents himself/herself and his/her activity to others and the ways he/she guides and controls the impression they form of him/her and the kind of things he/she may not do while sustaining his/her performance before them. This Goffmanian 'presentation of self' is premised on the idea that human beings are inherently social actors who seek to impress and manage how others view or define them. Thus, Goffman (1959: 3) notes that:

> I have said that when an individual appears before others his actions will influence the definition of the situation which they come to have. Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain.

The individual's 'thoroughly calculating manner' (Goffman 1959: 3) in which he/she presents himself/herself in order to give to others 'the kind of impression […] likely to evoke from them a specific response' is predicated on the idea of 'front' and 'back' stage. Goffman (1959: 13) defines the front stage as that 'part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance'. The 'back stage' is conceptualised as the setting where the rehearsals take place. The idea of the front and back stage has been appropriated by Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) in their analysis of how African migrants in the West project themselves to their home or ancestral countries. Thus, Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) argue that the front stage of migrants:

> often involves stories of achievement, exposure, upward mobility, sophistication, and savoir faire of modern life. The liberatory aspect of migration is displayed by immigrants during their visits to their ancestral or former home societies and through photos, new media, videos, and so on.

This tendency in migrants to project themselves and be seen as 'successful' is related to how societies view migration, especially migration to the West. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 957),

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nevertheless, argue that the 'back stage' is hardly represented by migrants in their ancestral or former home societies as it is the ugly part of immigrants' lives because it 'consists narratives of shortcomings, racism, unemployment, and other disadvantages'. Goffman's (1959) conceptualisation of the 'presentation of self in everyday life' and Adeyanju and Oriola's (2011) appropriation of the concept should be understood as essentially dialogic. The individual who performs and seeks to impress and manage others has no guarantee that what he/she aims to do will achieve the desired goals. The 'others' are not passive recipients who acquiesce to the demands/perceptions of the individual performer as they consciously decode the behaviour being exhibited. Goffman (1959: 3) thus notes that:

> When we allow that the individual projects a definition of the situation when he appears before others, we must also see that the others, however passive their role may seem to be, will themselves effectively project a definition of the situation by virtue of their response to the individual and by virtue of any lines of action they initiate to him.

This dialogic turn is pertinent to my analysis of projected diasporic identities as they are not assumed to be 'real' at face value by those in the home country. The individual performance is filtered by the observers through their understanding of migrancy and the discourses surrounding migrancy.

I also deploy McAdams' (2008) concept of narrative identity which I have already employed in my chapter three in my analysis of transnational migrant identities. McAdams (2008) highlights six common principles to narrative identity namely; the self is storied, stories integrate lives, stories are told in social relationships, stories change over time, stories are cultural texts and some stories are better than others. However, I draw more on McAdams' (2008) first three principles of narrative identity. The first principle states that stories are the best vehicles known to human beings for conveying how and why a human agent endowed with consciousness and motivated by intention, enacts desires and strives for goals over time. According to this principle the 'self' is both the storyteller and the stories that are told. Life stories, however, are based on autobiographical memories which are highly selective and strategic. This conceptualisation is pertinent to my analysis: I read diasporic identities in Chikwava's *Harare North* as stories of self that migrants tell and perform. Diasporic identities, as stories, are thus deployed to convey a certain impression/image of the migrant.

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The migrant in the construction of these identities therefore relies on certain events and experiences that are in sync with the conventional cultural perceptions and discourses of migration in the home or ancestral country. These perceptions and discourses largely construct migration as the preserve of the courageous and the brave. Thus, migrants construct identities that are in sync with these perceptions and discourses.

McAdams' (2008) second principle of narrative identity describes that stories entertain, educate, inspire, motivate, conceal and reveal, organise and disrupt. However, among their most important function is integration as they bring into 'an understandable frame disparate ideas, characters, happenings, and other elements of life that were previously set apart' (McAdams 2008: 244). McAdams (2008) further argues that the formulation of an integrative narrative identity is an especially salient challenge to individuals living in modern societies who seek personal integration within an ever-changing, contradictory, and multifaceted social world that offers no clear guidelines, no consensus on how to live and what life means. The integration of life, McAdams (2008) argues, involves the process of autobiographical reasoning wherein individuals seek to derive general semantic meanings from particular/episodic experiences in life. Migrants, through their narrative identities, thus seek to integrate their lives and give meaning to their migrant experiences.

McAdams (2008) third principle of narrative identity states that it is people that tell stories and as such stories are social phenomena told in accord with societal expectations and norms. Migrant diasporic identities especially in *An Elegy for Easterly* therefore are constructed in line with the 'societal expectations and norms' which are the general perceptions and discourses of migration that people in a given community have and share. McAdams (2008) further notes that meaning is expressed not only in what the storyteller says but also in the way he/she says it and the particular emotional and social positions that the storyteller adopts in relation to his/her audience. In addition, the storyteller as protagonist in his/her personal narrative position himself/herself vis-à-vis other characters in the story. This principle is critical in my understanding of diasporic identities and is akin to Goffman's (1959) concept of the 'practice of everyday life' where Goffman argues that people in their everyday interactions deploy certain images of self as a way of trying to impress and control others. The

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above three principles are critical to my understanding of diasporic identities and analysis of *Harare North*.

However, it is critical to note that a story by its very nature is never complete. Vambe (2009: 82) argues that any story is a half story and there is no evidence to suggest that when we tell our stories we do or should remember every detail:

> In fact, the stories – rather than story – that we call 'ours' are as much a product of the teller's imagination as stories of us are a product of other people's perceptions of us. As we remember details of our stories, we suppress other details, dismember or disremember only certain facts and deploy words in certain calculated ways to elicit certain responses.

Therefore, it is important to consider in the construction of diasporic identities what migrants say and do not say about their experiences and identities. Here Macherey's (1978) theorisation of literary production might be insightful. Macherey (1978: 86) argues that speech and silence are engaged in a dialectical relationship:

> By speech, silence becomes the centre and principle of expression, its vanishing point. Speech eventually has nothing more to tell us: we investigate the silence, for it is the silence that is doing the speaking.

Macherey's (1978) concept of 'silence' as opposed to what is authored or spoken has been appropriated by Eagleton (1985) to account for the operations of ideology in a text. Eagleton (1985: 35) argues that it is in the:

> Significant *silences* of a text, in its gaps and absences, that the presence of ideology can be most positively felt. It is these silences which the critic must make 'speak'. The text is, as it were, ideologically forbidden to say certain things; in trying to tell the truth in his own way, for example, the author finds himself forced to reveal the limits of the ideology within which he writes. He is forced to reveal its gaps and silences, what it is unable to articulate. Because a text contains these gaps and silences, it is always *incomplete* (Italics not mine).

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Diasporic identities therefore should be read as stories (texts) that are incomplete that leave 'significant silences' in their wake. As performative acts these identities are subjected to the 'gaze' of the home or former ancestral society. Instead of accepting wholesale and uncritically these identities the home or former ancestral society interrogates and problematises migrant performances and identity. Migrant experiences and identities should also be read in the context of discourses and perceptions of migrancy prevalent in a given society. Migrants usually amplify their experiences to fit the expectations of society in consideration of certain discourses about migrancy existing in their societies which privilege success and achievement. By 'discourses' I refer to attitudes, expectations, beliefs and ways of conceptualising migration and migrants prevalent in a given society. The 'significant *silences*' in the narratives of migrants' experience and identities can be used to unsettle their performed and managed identities. This, from a literary perspective, is an under theorised area in transnational diasporic identities. What migrants do not *say* or through what is *deliberately* elided in their narrations offers very important clues about their identities and the nature and impact of transnational migration. Migrant experiences, as a text, can therefore be effectively conceptualised if we are to include, as a necessary constituent of migrant identities, what migrants *say* and simultaneously *do not say* about their experiences and identities. It is through such observations/interventions that one begins to interrogate the presented identities of migrants and thus destabilise them. The notion of 'significant silences' in migrant identities complements Adeyanju and Oriola's (2011) theorisation of migrant experiences as premised on Goffman's (1959) idea of the 'back stage' and 'front stage'. To transcend the 'front stage' (what is said and performed) of migrant experiences/identities and have a holistic appreciation of transnational migration and its impact on identities one has to have an awareness of the existence of the 'back stage'.

7. 3 Zimbabwean transnational migration and diasporic identities in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*

The text *Harare North* (2009) centres on the experiences of Zimbabwean transnational migrants in the UK. The chief protagonist is an anonymous black male Zimbabwean in his early twenties who through migration escapes imprisonment in Zimbabwe for the murder of an opposition party member. However, life in the UK proves to be traumatic as his

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expectations turn into nightmarish realities for him and his compatriots as he is jobless, squats in Brixton and ultimately becomes a vagrant. The text ends with the narrator slowly losing his sanity.

Chikwava therefore explores the traumatic experiences of Zimbabwean migrants who mainly inhabit spaces of deprivation in Britain. These spaces are akin to McGregor's (2008) concept of 'abject spaces'. McGregor (2008) notes that 'abject spaces' are occupied by a radically excluded 'abject class' of migrants that lack basic rights by virtue of them being illegal migrants. The title of the story is suggestive of the inversion of the primordial colonial journey into Africa as it is now Africans in post-independent Africa who are invading and renaming the metropolis. In this remapping of the metropolis, as a consequence of migrant invasion, London becomes Harare North. The title is also evocative of what De Haas (2008: 1305) terms the 'apocalyptic image' of 'a wave or 'exodus' of 'desperate' Africans fleeing poverty at home in search of the European 'el Dorado'. Chikwava can thus be viewed as feeding into the dominant discourses and myths of African migration to Europe which criminalises and pathologies migration through his depiction of London as having been largely invaded by unscrupulous Zimbabweans migrants with dubious and criminal records back home. In addition, the title is indicative of the neo-colonial relations that exist between Zimbabwe and Britain as Britain was Zimbabwe's former coloniser.

The story is told in the first person narrative and thus offers a privileged and unique access into the nature and operations of the psyche of an illegal transnational migrant in the underbelly of the British society. The text's narrative structure thus testifies to McAdams' (2008) theorisation of narrative identity as it is the narrator who tells his story of migration, a story largely emblematic of the experiences of most migrants in the text. This narrative technique is important as it allows one the opportunity to see how migrants construct their identities and the various tactics they employ to survive in the host country. McAdams (2008) notes that the primary function of stories is to integrate and give meaning to life and therefore through the first person narrative Chikwava presents us with a nameless narrator who is trying to integrate and give meaning to his life. However, the 'I' or 'Self' of the nameless narrator is characterised by disjuncture and rupture as diaspora results in the narrator's psychological, spiritual, physical and emotional displacement and any attempts at emplacement fail. The

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constructed identities of most migrants in the text involve the deliberate deployment of deception which resonates with Goffman's (1959) idea of the 'front' and 'back' stage where most migrants engage in the construction of fraudulent identities using fake identity cards to secure employment.

The protagonist is an anonymous black male Zimbabwean who is in his early twenties and on the verge of losing his sanity. The text, therefore, captures in a poignant way the economic, social, cultural and political challenges that most Zimbabwean illegal migrants face in Britain. The anonymous protagonist, a 'green bomber', flees Zimbabwe for London after murdering a member of the opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). 'Green Bomber' is a derogatory term used to refer to the graduates of the Zimbabwe government's National Youth Service programme perceived by many Zimbabweans as serving the interests and goals of the ZANU-PF and not the purported national interests. He intends to find menial jobs in London, as London is projected as an 'El Dorado' in Zimbabwean migrant imaginaries, so that he can purchase his freedom by bribing the corrupt Zimbabwean police force investigating his case. Initially, the narrator envisages his movement as a temporary respite:

> But me I really don't want to stay in Harare North too long; I don't want to have vex face all the time because of Sekai. I just want to get myself good graft very quick, work like animal and save heap of money and then bang, me I am on my way back home. Enough pound sterling to equal US $ 5,000 is all I have to make, then me I'm free man again. (p. 6)

However, it is interesting to observe that the temporary respite he envisages turns into a perennial nightmare as he slowly loses his sanity in Britain. The migration fantasises he harboured in Zimbabwe slowly turn into nightmarish realities as he faces a blink future in London as an illegal migrant:

> This morning there is letter that arrive for me from them immigration people talking about what I am allowed and not allowed to do in England [...] Now it turn out I am

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> not allowed to work until my asylum get approved. And I'm not even allowed benefit money. People say asylum sometimes take years to get approve. (p. 23)

The narrator's loss of sanity later in the novel therefore implies failure to manage the diasporic environment, fashion adaptive and strategic identities and rules out his repatriation. The nameless narrator's loss of sanity therefore implies that he failed to successfully tell, integrate and give meaning to the story of his life and identity. McAdams' (2008) concept of narrative identity therefore presupposes a 'teller' who is sane and capable of integrating and giving meaning to his/her life. Thus, through this failure, Chikwava seems to argue that migration is a process fraught with rupture and disjuncture and the concrete expression of this estrangement is madness. Instead of a coherent and well integrated life story we are made to listen to the 'ramblings' of a psychotic and criminally inclined narrator.

The narrator's psychotic and criminal tendencies are not a product of his stay in London. It is crucial to note that the narrator already has a criminal record prior to his murder of a member of the MDC, as he had 'just come out of prison' (p. 17). His criminal tendencies, already manifested in Zimbabwe, are therefore heightened with his stay in Britain where he relies, for his survival, on exploiting and manipulating his fellow countrymen. This is typified by the way he blackmails Sekai, wife to his cousin Paul, after he discovered that she was having an extra marital affair with a Russian doctor:

> 'Drop us £600. Things is tight at our house and me I have to find new accommodation but I have no money to make deposit for the room that I want'. She blink she eyes at me. Me I tilt my head, you know in that sweet way so she can get the score. She say '£500', and get up to run to cash machine outside to get me more while I drink my Fanta. 'next time you should also remind the Russian doctor that he is the one that should be dropping them pound notes and not you because you is my cousin's wife', I tell she as we part. 'We have to hit this white man's pocket together until he cry for forgiveness. (p. 105)

The narrator, however, challenges certain assumptions and stereotypes about transnational migrants. Zimbabwean transnational migration to Britain is usually perceived as the province of highly skilled and educated people who are principally portrayed as victims of deskilling

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(McGregor 2007; Pasura 2010; Pasura 2011a). Additionally, Mbiba (2005: 30) notes that migration to the UK is an expensive exercise afforded only by those from middle and upper class families who happen to be educated as well:

> In addition to their higher education and perceived positive work ethics, until November 2002, Zimbabweans did not have visa restrictions that applied to most African nationals coming to the UK. Employers had fewer hurdles to deal with if they employed a Zimbabwean, compared to the situation with 'visa nationals'.

Before the narrator's departure for London he was employed as a cobbler (p. 17). This attests to the fact that the narrator is ill-educated and unskilled to meet the formal labour demands of the British system. His ill-education is also evidenced by the not Standard English he employs to narrate his experiences in Britain. The narrator uses 'Shonglish' which is a combination of Shona and English languages and is associated with the less educated in Zimbabwe. The narrator's 'Shonglish' is akin to Pidgin English spoken in Nigeria as reflected in *Sozaboy* (1985) by Ken Saro Wiwa. Spender (1983) argues that language constructs and forms the limits of our reality. This implies that language plays a critical role in the development of one's consciousness and the fact that the narrator uses 'shonglish' is reflective of his stunted consciousness.

The narrator's low-education migrant status is significant. He lacks the necessary 'language and cultural capital' to employ in networking and securing a job in Britain as the 'capacity for speaking 'good English […] has become a cultural privilege that can be converted into competitive advantage and monetary values in the global market' (Lan 2003: 136). Lan (2003), in his discussion on the transnational encounters between Filipina domestics and Taiwanese employers, argues that linguistic capital, like other forms of cultural capital, is a critical means of symbolic power which a migrant can deploy to negotiate his/her way into the mainstream political and economic fields of the host country. As a result, language and cultural capital can be used by migrants to enhance their employability as proficiency in the English language enables the migrant to communicate and negotiate for jobs. Thus, Chikwava's portrayal of the anonymous narrator and his use of shonglish draws our attention to the narrator's lack of the proper language and cultural capital (education, manners, taste) to fit properly into the British society. Consequently, the narrator exists on the margins of the

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British society and is considered as part and parcel of the army of 'invisible workers' (Pasura 2011b: 259) who are vulnerable to exploitation and dehumanisation. Mbiba (2005: 32) citing Castels' (2000:11) notes that migrant labourers are aware that their position is one of abuse and exploitation and cognisant of their confinement to the '3Ds' jobs – dirty, difficult and dangerous – such as cleaning, and factory and security guard work.

The narrator in *Harare North* is further portrayed as an underprivileged migrant who struggles to eke a living in the UK and inhabits spaces that are largely constricting. He squats in Brixton. This is characterised by the squalid living conditions confronting him and his fellow migrants in the UK:

> Shingi sleeps in the lounge; he share the room with Farayi. Two mattresses is on rotting floorboards, blankets all over, small heaps of things telling one story of big journey that is caused by them dreams that start far away in them townships. I can sniff sniff them natives' lives squatting under the low damp ceiling like thieves that have just been catch. (p. 30)

The narrator's squat in Brixton is evocative of McGregor's (2008) concept of 'abject spaces', where people designated as illegal migrants occupy spaces without rights, and have an acute awareness of dehumanisation and exposure to bodily risk. The narrator's underprivileged migrant status is compounded by his undocumented and illegal status which makes him 'live on the margins of the law' (Pasura 2011b: 259). McGregor (2008: 466) argues thus about such migrants:

> At the other extreme, there are those (Zimbabwean migrants to the UK) trapped in unskilled jobs with insecure legal status, many of whom struggle to meet their own basic needs and family obligations and live in fear of deportation. The difficulties faced by this latter group have become more acute over time, as access to asylum has become restrictive to the point of criminalisation, avenues of regularisation have been shut down, and the scale of immigration from Eastern Europe has increased competition for unskilled work.

This implies that in trying to understand transnational migration one needs to have a more nuanced approach that accommodates the unevenness of the experiences of transnational

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migrants. Behdad (2000) notes that immigrants occupy a plurality of economic and social positions and these positions are critical variables in the production and formation of plural identities. Behdad (2000: 400) observes that movements of postcolonial travellers are over-determined by a broad range of cultural, economic, and political conditions; conditions that can empower some while oppressing others. Behdad (2000) remarks further that the mutable and wavering nature of postcolonial spaces allows for unequal modes of travel and uneven destinies, depending on the travellers' access to power and its discourses. Thus, migration as exemplified by the nameless narrator and his fellow migrants does not always result in upward economic and social mobility as factors such as race, class, gender and ethnicity are critical in determining one's access to the opportunities offered by the host country.

Chikwava, through the depiction of the narrator and his friend Shingi, seems to argue that migration if not properly managed can result in severe negative outcomes. The author highlights madness and death and the production of fake and deceptive identities as the larger negative consequences of ill-managed migrant experiences. These fake and deceptive identities are predicated on the employment of fake identities to secure employment. This is exemplified by the narrator who appropriates Shingi's papers for his own use:

> It don't matter that I am illegal; I have keep his (Shingi) passport because his asylum application get approved by the immigration people some while ago. His passport and National Insurance number come in handy now. His mobile phone too. (p. 2)

In addition, the fake and deceptive identities are based on performances meant for the consumption of those back at home. The idea of viewing these fake and deceptive identities as predicated on performance resonates with Adeyanju and Oriola's (2011) notion of African transnational migrants deliberately hiding their true nightmarish experiences of migration from their peers back home. This is testified by the narrator who pretends to be Shingi and projects the idea to Shingi's mother that everything in the UK is well when in fact Shingi is dying:

> His (Shingi) mother back home; she is also part of the problem. She keep writing letters demanding money at each turn. Money for this, money for that, money for everything. Then more money I send, only trying to help Shingi out of this situation,

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> the more she behave like he is Governor of Bank of England. Now me I don't want this old hen flapping about over my money like that no more. […] In them months before this day, the day I finish us off straight and square, I can't tell Shingi's mother that Shingi is dying in London because me I see no point in making she cry. My solution has been to send cheerful letters spinning small jazz numbers about Shingi. I also wire she small packets of money and tell she to be patient and all that kind of stuff, you know what it is like when you is trying to keep old hen happy. (p. 2-3)

The perception of transnational migration as not always resulting in success, is, however, not a new theme in Zimbabwean literature as highlighted in chapter five's discussion on Mandishona's 'A Wasted Land'. Mandishona's story explores the experiences of Uncle Nicholas who went to the UK and only returns to Zimbabwe a 'mad' and dying person. Thus, transnational migration for most migrants, as typified by the narrator, does not always result in the production of rich and complex social worlds for the migrant. Behdad (2000: 403) draws attention to the discrepancy between salutary explorations of diasporic consciousness by academics, writers and artists and the dead-end itineraries of many immigrants caught in the tailspin of a globalisation that has taken them away from their hopes for upward mobility into the state of economic and political disenfranchisement:

> postcolonial discussions of diaspora have problematically privileged literary and artistic expressions of displacement. Thus, they have constructed salutary models of exile that conflate the experience of the cultural elite with the everyday struggles of the ordinary immigrants-models that fail to address the historical specificities of immigrant lives. (407)

This failure to 'address the historical specificities of immigrant lives' (Behdad 2000: 407), is significant and I consider it to be a major challenge facing postcolonial theory and its theorisation of migrancy. This is exemplified by Bhabha (1994) and his concept of hybridity, which results in undue salutation of migrancy. It is this failure to acknowledge the historical specificities of migrants' lives that is being mocked by Chikwava (2009) through his depiction of the narrator as an illegal and ill-educated migrant who relies for his survival on manipulation and exploitation of fellow migrants.

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The narrator undergoes painful migrant experiences. These include being hired and fired without receiving his salary. He is employed as a cleaner in a restaurant and gets fired for being unhygienic. In addition, the narrator is cheated by Aleck into paying rent for a house they are supposed to be staying in for free. All this jeopardises his chances of raising the money he needs to return to Zimbabwe. These experiences faced by the narrator and his fellow migrants are best explored using Skey's (2010) concept of ontological security. Skey (2010) notes that the individual must be more or less able to rely on things - people, objects, places, meanings - remaining tomorrow, by and large, as they were today and the day before for their ontological security. He argues further that without a degree of managed certainty in their relations with other people and the material environment, each encounter would have to be dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis, thus placing individual migrants in a permanent state of anxiety. Therefore, transnational migration, as reflected in *Harare North* (2009), largely creates a 'state of anxiety' as it leaves individuals ontologically insecure. There are broadly two ways to deal with this anxious situation triggered by transnational migration. Firstly, one can outlive this 'state of anxiety' and therefore realise the need to reconfigure his/her identity to adapt and survive in the host country. Secondly, one can be overwhelmed by the new environment and this result in failure to transcend one's initial 'state of anxiety'. It is this failure that ends in the production of dislocated diasporic identities as articulated in *Harare North* through the narrator and his best friend Shingi who succumb to insanity and death respectively.

The narrator indeed fails to manage his new environment, as evidenced by his jobless status and inability to be integrated fully into the British system. The only time the narrator is employed is when he works as a restaurant cleaner and loses the job after a misunderstanding with Tim his boss:

> 'Ok then. You're fired, mate!' he (Tim) shout and open till to put back his money […] Now he start trying to confuse me, talking fast and mixing proper English with his cockney and I can't hear even one thing. Me I let rip in Shona and now things is square […] Now he start calling police on his mobile phone and spin them long jazz number about how I do threatening behaviour. To prove that me I am peaceful person I leave the place and let the truth come out. (p. 101)

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He is condemned to a perpetual state of anxiety and ultimately finds sanctuary in madness. His madness becomes a metaphor of a mind overburdened with failure to integrate into the British way of life. It is also critical to observe that the narrator has a static conceptualisation of identity as he refuses to reconfigure his expectations, manhood and identity. This is exemplified by the fact that the narrator refuses a job in the care industry:

> Last week he (Shingi) come home with this advert for graft that pay £ 12 per hour. That is more than £ 2, 000 per month even after the tax. Shingi want it and want me to take it too. But it was BBC graft. Good money, but that's because you will be wiping posh buttocks, it sounds like. You want to do something – what is better, to try to doing it in your own style and risk finding small success, or to do it in undignified pooful way and find big success? I ask him. (p. 142-143)

The narrator's refusal to work as a care worker invokes the general tendency amongst Zimbabweans at home to view such work as inferior and therefore derogatorily refer to Zimbabwean care workers in the UK as 'British Bottom Cleaners' (BBC). However, what is poignantly ironic about the narrator's situation is that he lacks the language and cultural capital (education, manners and tastes) to enter the British formal employment sector as he is not highly educated and therefore is not categorised as a highly skilled person. Thus, the narrator's refusal to be employed as BBC is testimony of the various ways in which Zimbabweans in the UK construct and negotiate 'racial, political, gendered, and refugee identities in Britain by using the homeland and the conditions in the hostland as a frame of reference' (Pasura 2011b: 256). The narrator instead of using his 'abject space' to convert 'abjection to innovation and abject spaces to entrepreneurial spaces' (Mbiba 2011: 56) resorts to static and monolithic conceptualisations of identity. The narrator, holding steadfastly to the traditional Zimbabwean pride is unable to construct an identity that is predicated on flexibility and adaptability. Chikwava (2009) therefore seems to argue that identities are not static and cannot be frozen in time and space. As a result, the danger awaiting people who consider identities as static is for such people to go mad and die.

Harare North, through the depiction of characters like the narrator, Shingi, Farayi, Aleck, Tsitsi, also challenges, in a fundamental way, Elliot and Urry's (2010) theorisation of

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mobilities, and by extension migration, as inherently valuable and enriching. Elliot and Urry (2010: 10) argue that mobilities:

> lead to rich and complex social worlds: the position an individual occupies within the institutional parameters of today's multiple mobilities generates new kinds of power for realising ambition and interests, new possibilities and risks for embodied experiences of movement, as well as new ways for engaging with culture, taste and social contestation.

However, the migration of most migrants in *Harare North* does not result in the construction of 'rich and complex social worlds' (Elliot and Urry 2010: 10). The narrator and his fellow migrants are ontologically insecure and inhabit 'abject spaces' typified by their squat in Brixton. In addition, the narrator and his fellow illegal migrants are always restless, paranoiac and have a heightened sense of persecution. This is best exemplified by the fact that the narrator and Shingi finally become vagrants in London and both succumb to madness and death respectively.

To compound matters, most of Chikwava's migrants are illegal and do not have proper documentation to facilitate their access to the British formal job industry. Consequently, when they get employed they are ruthlessly exploited and have no recourse to the British legal system. The narrator notes:

> you spend them weeks shifting mud with shovels and sweat beads come out of every pore in the body because you is putting out heaps of effort while your buttocks point to high heaven and migrant flesh start to stink around you as shirts and underpants get damp. Here you quickly know that the weight of your buttocks increase by the hour and come down only by night when you is sandwiched between blankets and mattress. Then one day you hear: Take them things and move it. That's what they say to us in Wimbledon. The graft end without warning. Everyone on the site have to move it now after we go to work one morning to find the site closed [...] We have been stitch up, I know straight away. But there is nothing we can do, so we scatter without quarrel. (p. 49)

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The migrants' helplessness is captured in the pathos that characterise the tone of the narrator's discourse after discovering that the company they were working for has been closed without their knowledge. The narrator, reflecting their vulnerability, simply states that 'there is nothing we can do, so we scatter without quarrel' (49). Pasura (2011a:154) therefore notes that undocumented migrants face individual and structural constraints in the labour market, as well as a manifestation of territorial, organisational and conceptual borders that define the migrant as the 'other'. Similarly, Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 948) observe that race and ethnicity play a role in the recruitment of migrant labour, as historical and contemporary evidence shows that immigrants and migrants of colour are victims of exclusionary practices in the labour market. For that reason, transnational migration is depicted in *Harare North* as basically economically, culturally, legally and socially disempowering to most migrants. The ultimate result of this disempowerment is thus exemplified by the menial jobs that the narrator, Shingi and others do and the squalid conditions they live in at the Brixton squat.

The ontological insecurity of the characters in the text is further worsened by the fact that most Zimbabwean migrants work in the British House Nursing Industry as care givers and do menial jobs. Mbiba (2005) argues that the health and care industry and warehouses are major sectors where Zimbabweans have found employment in the 1997 -2004 period. However, Mbiba (2005: 30-31) notes that:

> Cleaning toilets and care work (derogatorily labelled 'BBC' –'British Bottom Cleaning' – by Zimbabweans at home) is something most people would not want to be identified with in Zimbabwe. So those doing such work initially sought employment in remote places where there was a low risk of meeting travellers likely to report this back home.

Similarly, McGregor (2007: 807 -808) contends that, among Zimbabweans, care work is seen as 'dirty', 'low' 'cheap' and 'shameful'. McGregor (2007: 805) further argues that the local British people perceive it as 'unattractive' leaving the industry to be dominated by 'ethnic minorities and migrants'. McGregor (2007) also notes that Zimbabweans working as carers are stressed and frustrated because they have experienced deskilling and a loss of status. This deskilling is exemplified by Farayi who was employed as a teacher in Zimbabwe but now does menial jobs in the UK. The narrator thus notes that:

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> [...] Farayi is throwing heap of stories at me. 'I was teacher at a mission school', he say. […] he is the one that share room with Shingi and have live with Aleck from the beginning and know everything about who have live in the house before and have been telling me how he run away from his school where he was teaching religious education […] Without asking I already know that he have graft at Tooting where recruitment agency put him to do photocopying and stationery for NHS. He juggle it with another graft at some fried chicken takeaway. His papers is not in order; he have do that style of getting visitor's visa and then stepping of with big plan to go back home on the 44th of the month. (p. 33-34)

Farayi however has managed to fashion an identity that is adaptive and managed to convert his 'abject space' into an enterprising one as he juggles jobs in the UK as a survival strategy rather than wallow in misery and always complain like the narrator. Though characters like Farayi suffer and endure deskilling they have found means and ways of adapting to life in the UK. Shingi is also another character who adapts to life in the UK through constructing fake and deceptive identities. Shingi has multiple identities which he strategically deploys to survive in the UK:

> Every day now, Shingi come back from his new graft and tell everyone about how good them fake EU passports is because one of his workmates have even used it to go to Belgium and come back and no one catch him. He have heaps to say about this […] Maybe when I (Shingi) get French passport I give you my Zimbabwe passport so you can use it to look for job, Shingi laugh. He have hear from his graft that everyone that don't have the right papers have got French passports organised for them now. French passports is easy to thief, that's what people that sell fake passports on Tottenham Court Road say. (p. 52-53)

This resonates with Mbiba's (2011) argument that living in abject spaces can stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship. The adoption of fake and deceptive identities thus should be understood in the context of migrant innovative attempts to survive the harshness of life in the diaspora.

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However, for most Zimbabwean men in the UK, care work is doubly humiliating as it means doing not only 'dirty' and demeaning work but also engaging in work that demeans men and their sense of manhood. Most male migrants engaged in care work therefore lie about their work and this heightens their marginality. Aleck typifies this as he lies that he is a shop assistant in Croydon and assumes an authorial voice in the running of the house where he and his fellow migrants stay:

> Aleck arrive from his job and the moment he walk into the house Tsitsi and Farayi is on good behaviour. Tsitsi stop giggling too much and Farayi tie his bundle of firewood tight. Aleck have the high head of someone that is used to giving orders and the sharp eyes of grown-up school head boy; someone that have perfect style of squinting his eyes before making them quick judgements. (p. 34)

Furthermore, Aleck uses his authorial position to lie and fleece fellow housemates of their money as they are made to pay rent to him when they are actually squatting. He remits the money to Zimbabwe for the purchase of properties. Aleck's ability to fleece fellow housemates is largely predicated on his success in creating a 'Headmaster/Authorial' identity premised on control and authority over fellow housemates. Aleck dramatises this authority and control when he invites the narrator to his room to give him the house rules:

> First day in the house – Aleck come from his graft in the evening and go straight to his room upstairs without saying nothing to me, Shingi, Tsitsi and Farayi as we talk in the kitchen. After half-hour he call me to his room. It's like those days at school when headmaster call you to his office. He is lying on his bed, you know like tired big tycoon, and is busy sending messages on mobile phone [...] He is busy smiling to himself and sending messages and keep me waiting so me I stand there not knowing what to do with my hands [...] When he finally finish sending them messages Aleck throw his phone down on bed with pretend carelessness. 'Right', he say to himself as he sit up on his bed and lean against wall to show that now is time for serious talk. He start by telling me about them house rules that is on kitchen door and then go on to talk other things; that we have to clean up so the house don't get dirty. (p. 42)

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The narrator's description of Aleck is important as it highlights Aleck's desire for authority and control. Therefore, Aleck performs his 'headmaster' diasporic identity, in a Goffmanian sense, for the consumption of the narrator as a way of eliciting the correct obeisant behaviour from the narrator.

It is interesting, though, to note that Aleck's performed identity is seriously undermined by MaiMusindo who exposes him for failing to take proper care of his family. MaiMusindo is a Zimbabwean migrant who has been in the UK for more than 'twenty years' (44) and works as a hair stylist in an African hair salon. MaiMusindo is depicted as a 'frightful' (44) woman who instils fear in Aleck as she boldly confronts him after he failed to exercise responsibility over his family. MaiMusindo's censure of Aleck's behaviour unmasks Aleck to reveal his cruelty and insensitivity:

> 'My son', she (MaiMusindo) gasp for air and clear she throat [...] them English say you break it you buy it; you have break this child's life; buy it or fix it; you run around saying you is Mr Big Man shop assistant, so what? What good is that if she even too frightened to ask to help? She is not just like iPod you keep in your house if it break. You poke poke she, give she this baby and now you deny she, pretend you don' know she and you think no one see? Now you leave she with these problems. What kind of manners is that? Aleck try to answer but that only give MaiMusindo more fire: oh you have tell many times what you think. Oh now is my time; if you had keep that front tail inside your trousers none of this will have happen; chop it off if you can't be responsible for what it do. It's as if with the crack of the whip that is she tongue, MaiMusindo have strike all clothes off our district administrator and leave him naked and cheap like proper vegetable – vendor boy. (p. 110-111)

Aleck is further exposed as a deceitful person when his housemates realise that he is a carer and not a shop assistant as he purported to be. The unintended consequence of Aleck's exposure as a BBC worker in Croydon is that he moves away from where he was squatting with his wife and friends as a way of escaping the shame of being called a BBC. This further exposes him as an irresponsible husband and father as he leaves behind his wife Tsitsi and their child. Aleck's flight therefore demonstrates that he might have reconfigured his masculinity as a strategy of survival but is not strong enough to confront courageously the

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censure from his peers who still subscribe to static conceptualisations of masculinity typified by the narrator.

Zimbabwean transnational migration is portrayed chiefly as emancipatory to women. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xviii) argue that because of the current economic meltdown and political mayhem in Zimbabwe, a new migrancy on a massive scale is dispersing and reconfiguring Zimbabwean manhoods, fatherhoods and masculinities at an unprecedented pace. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) further argue that this reconfiguration will soon be associated with depressed local masculinities, and newer womanhoods and femininities abroad and back home. Pasura (2010: 207) echoes Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) when he notes that life in Britain has forced many Zimbabweans to 'rethink their social and gendered positions within society, making the diaspora a site of cultural conflict'. Pasura (2010) states further that migration has resulted in the economic and social upward mobility of women in contrast with men. The celebratory tendencies of the reconfiguration of gender in Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) and Pasura (2010; 2011) are largely in contradistinction to the presentation of gender relations in *Harare North*. In the novel, Tsitsi, Aleck's girlfriend he co-habits with and the mother of his child, is portrayed as someone who depends on Aleck for her survival as she is not formally employed though she loans out her child for a fee to migrants who want to defraud the British child support system. In this case she is subserviently under the authority and control of Aleck. We therefore witness transplantation in Britain of Zimbabwean traditional patriarchal gender relations. The other female character in the text that might be said to be gainfully employed and emancipated is Sekai, who is a nurse but is portrayed as unfaithful to her husband Paul and becomes a victim of the narrator's blackmail over the extra-marital affair. MaiMusindo seems to enjoy considerable power and control. However, the narrator insinuates that her power and control is derived from the spiritual world, as she 'used to be a spirit medium' (p. 44). The other Zimbabwean female migrants in the text stay in Luton and are dismissed as 'lesbians or prostitutes' (p. 93).

Thus, transnational migrants in *Harare North* are portrayed mainly as victims of the unequal global economic system and even though they attempt to fashion adaptive and strategic identities to survive in the UK they ultimately succumb to failure. The ultimate expression of this failure is loss of sanity and death.

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In the next section I examine Gappah's two stories namely 'Something nice from London' and 'My cousin sister Rambanai' in *An Elegy for Easterly*. The two stories unlike *Harare North*, primarily explore the experiences of female migrants and how they construct their diasporic identities. I draw largely on the ideas by Goffman (1959) and Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) in my exploration of the diasporic identities constituted in both stories.

7.4 Unsettling the performed and managed diasporic identities in *An Elegy for Easterly* by Gappah

The section examines two stories that largely explore the experiences of Zimbabwean transnational female migrants in the UK and America. Bloch (2010) notes that as a panacea to the economic and political crisis that bedevilled Zimbabwe in early 2000 most Zimbabweans resorted to regional and transnational migration. The two stories attest to the 'feminisation of migration' which had traditionally been the preserve of men as argued by Mbiba (2005).

The story "Something nice from London" is based on the experiences of the Chikwiro family and their endeavours to repatriate to Zimbabwe the body of one of their members, Peter Chikwiro, who died under mysterious circumstances in Britain. Peter had gone to Britain to pursue his university studies with the intention of later securing a job in Britain. The title of the story "Something Nice from London" is tragically ironic as the something 'nice' from London, for the Chikwiro family, is an urn that contains Peter's ashes.

The story is also suggestive of the contradictions between the diasporic experiences of the migrants and the expectations of the people back home in Zimbabwe. These expectations are typified by the little boy at the airport who naively and innocently tells the narrator that his mother is bringing him 'something nice from London' (p. 75). The story is also evocative of the continued persistence, despite the fact that Zimbabwe is now independent, of internalised neo-colonial discourses that perceive the colonising country (Britain) as inherently 'good' and the formerly colonised country (Zimbabwe) as inherently 'evil'. Thus, Europe is seen as a 'utopia' which is 'a place of comfort that is in everything fundamentally different from Africa' that is depicted as a 'dystopia' and a 'continent of immiseration' (Adeyanju and Oriola 2011: 949). Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 961) argue that this representation of Africa and Europe, which is at the heart of African migration to the West, is a result of three

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interrelated extra-economic factors, which are colonial discourse, migrants' accounts or presentation of self and the contemporary mass media:

> Africans' encounter with European colonialism had a lasting effect on their lifeworld. Colonialism amplified the difference between the self and the other by associating progress with European culture [...] and primitivism and backwardness with the African other [...] The Western media have also misrepresented Africans and Africa to the West and to Africans [...] They amplify the difference between continental Africa and the West. In Western media, Africa is represented as all that is bad about humanity. Africa is constructed in the Western media as the land of oddity – the land of diseases and misery. In contrast, the West is portrayed as the land of stability, organisation, and sanity.

The narrator of "Something Nice from London" is a woman named Mary. She is an intelligent and perceptive woman studying medicine presumably at a local university in Zimbabwe. It is her acute observations which can be read as 'asides' that offer the 'significant *silences*' that one can use to problematise the 'relayed' and 'played' multiple images and identities of Lisa. Lisa as niece of the narrator is in the UK through the efforts of the narrator's father. The narrator's father had financed Lisa's flight to the UK, 'instead of rotting in some rural outpost' (p. 87), where she ends up working as a nurse. Lisa's migration to the UK should be read in the context of the feminisation of migration and labour. Mbiba (2005), notes that the recruitment of nurses from Zimbabwe into the UK is a process that expanded 'the feminisation of labour' and migration. However, Falola and Afolabi (2007) argue that the global patterns of African professionals, especially health care providers, have complicated the quality of health care in African countries. As a character in a Western metropolitan space, Lisa projects certain images about herself that are relayed to the Chikwiro family by her mother. The images which I term 'snapshots' of her identity, express her seeming success in London which in a Goffmanian (1959) sense constitutes her 'front stage'. The mother, whether a willing accomplice or not, dutifully informs the Chikwiro family that Lisa had bought a car, moved into a bigger flat and flew to America, Canada, Italy and France. This apparent success also cascades to the mother in the form of remittances Lisa sends home:

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> She has sent money today, two hundred and fifty billion dollars she sent, it is only two hundred pounds, just imagine. She insists that I go on a holiday, but I have told her, no, my child, not on four teachers' annual salary. I said a new stove is more important. Can you believe she sent more money, five hundred billion dollars? Just imagine. I will buy a new fridge from Radio Limited. (p. 85)

I argue that the apparently successful life Lisa leads in the UK needs to have an 'other' that is demonised. In identity formation and politics the 'other' is a necessary constituent of the 'self' as the 'other' helps to define and mark the boundaries of the 'self'. This is akin to Orientalism as promulgated by Said (1978: 2) where the Orient (Other) has helped to define the Occident (Self) as its 'contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'. This 'Other' different from the 'Self' in *Harare North* is embodied by Gappah's Peter who is also in the UK but is apparently a 'failure':

> I often think of my aunt as the opposite of that trio of horsemen galloping through the night to bring the good news from Ghent to Aix in my favourite poem as a child. She crosses the city from Mufakose to Greendale in her *eagerness* to bring us bad news before anyone else can do so. And for all the distance between London and Birmingham, Lisa seems to be *remarkably well informed* about Peter's failures. She passes one Peter story after another to her mother who *endures* the discomfort and oppressive heat of one commuter omnibus after another as she arrives to sweat out her bad news. (p. 86)

The language that is used by the narrator is interesting in that it reveals not only the intentional nature of Lisa and her mother to hurt the Chikwiro family but also portrays Lisa as a success in an environment where Peter had apparently failed. His 'failure' is metaphorically captured by his death in the diaspora 'in an area with many *junkies*' (italics author) (p. 79). The overall intention is to depict Peter's 'failure' and subsequent death as events that serve to amplify Lisa's success. It is at this juncture that the 'significant *silences*' of the text on Peter's failure becomes important in unsettling Lisa's success identity being marketed by her mother.

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The narrator sagely observes that Peter's tendencies towards 'failure' were already discernible prior to his departure:

> It was his life insurance money that sent Peter to London. I try to avoid thinking it was unfair, it should have been me, and I would have honoured Father's memory. Even then, I could see the sense of the plan; I had my studies, Jonathan his training. And there was Peter, shiftless, and idle. Harare was not the place for a nineteen year old boy who was bright and able, but too lazy to achieve the grades to get into the local universities, and who could not get a job but liked to drink. (p. 88)

The tone of the narrator's language suggests that Peter's death in the UK might not be after all a shocking surprise as Peter was already a 'failure' prior to his departure. The narrator therefore subtly implies that in appreciating Peter and Lisa's 'failure' and 'success', respectively, we need to treat their experiences separately. Peter's 'failure' therefore is only accentuated by transnational migration and has nothing to do with Lisa's success. Peter's death and the subsequent repatriation of his body to Zimbabwe is also suggestive of how people in the home country help shape and define diasporic identities. Mbiba (2010), in his discussion of dealing with death in the diaspora, notes that the locus of burial provides important insights into notions of identity and belonging. Mbiba (2010) argues that dying in the Western metropolis is a traumatic experience for everyone involved and repatriating a body from there is very expensive.

Lisa had not expected Peter's death so when it happened she was financially unprepared for it. Mbiba (2010) notes that the cost of repatriating a body from the UK is very expensive and amounts to around £3000. Therefore, Lisa might have failed to raise the amount and had to cremate Peter's body to cut transportation costs. Instead of paying £ 3000 to repatriate Peter's body, Lisa only pays £50 to the air hostess for the transportation of Peter's ashes. This is insinuated by the narrator when she is presented with an urn containing Peter's ashes by an air hostess at the airport:

> A hand on my shoulder brings me back from myself. It is a woman in the faded green and beige livery of the national airline. 'You are surely Mary Chikwiro' she says. 'I have a picture of you here'. […] the woman smiles again and says, 'I have something

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> from your cousin Lisa. She said it was a special delivery, and didn't want to have to go through customs'. […] 'People send me with things from London. I charge only fifty pounds per package. It's a living, isn't? She now seems to notice my mood and says quickly, 'Here is the package. Enjoy.' She smiles uncertainly as she thrusts the package into my arms. I take the box and walk towards Jonathan who stands some metres apart from the women. We both look at the package wrapped in gaudy purple and silver paper and tied with purple ribbon. I open the box to reveal an urn of dark wood. Peter's name is engraved on a brass plate on the lid. There is nothing to say. We follow my mother and MaiLisa out to the car park. (p. 98-99)

It is therefore important to untangle Peter's 'failure' from Lisa's 'success' and this necessarily forces one to view with growing scepticism Lisa's apparent success in London. By cremating Peter's body, Lisa unintentionally might have exposed herself as apparently not so successful in the UK. In a Goffmanian (1959) sense Lisa unwittingly conflated the front and back stages of her identity performance. The idea that Lisa is not all that successful is further reinforced when the narrator notes that Lisa has been home only once in her four years in the UK thus reflective of a migrant struggling to eke a living in the host cities of the west.

On an interesting note, during Lisa's visit, which should be understood as the strategic use of the ancestral or former home space as 'an arena for valorising' (Adeyanju and Oriola 2011: 955) her social standing, she was 'resplendent in her plastic hair and tight-fitting clothes' (p. 85), spoke in a 'new accent' (p. 85) and complained about the hotness of the sun which was turning her into a 'dark' (p. 85) person. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011:957) argue that there is need to consider the symbolism of nonverbal communication in migrants' impression management as the body can be read as a text. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 957) further argue that an average migrant has an ebullient body, is beefy faced, and often appears bigger than an average person in the local community.

> His or her (migrant) appearance speaks louder, of a better living than voice. In addition to the physical body, the dresses, shoes, wrist watches, gestures, and so on are a sign of a better living for community observers.

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Lisa through her body management therefore attempts to portray herself as a successful person and sees transnational migration as essentially valuable. Not only is transnational migration marketed as financially advantageous but it possesses miraculous transformative powers as she now speaks in a 'new accent' (p. 85). Consequently, the Western city is reflected as a place that has the potential to elevate a migrant economically and socially.

Salazar (2010: 15) argues that migration is principally conceptualised as a form of accumulating symbolic capital as it is seen as enhancing the social standing and status of migrants:

> Returnee migrants come back refined, sophisticated and educated, and always well dressed. This 'new authority' and cosmopolitan identity acquired through the Western experience has a huge effect on the migration imaginary: Here things are bad, there things are better (at least so it seems). The West does not merely stands for a better education and more money; it also means fame, victory, respect and admiration.

This is exemplified by Lisa whose social standing and status in her home country is enhanced by her migration to the UK. Lisa's complaint against the harmful African 'sun' is also suggestive of the persistence of colonial discourses about Africa that perceive the continent as inhospitable and hostile to Europeans. The sun's powers to turn Lisa into a 'dark' and by implication an 'ugly' person is also indicative of the fact that Lisa, because of her diasporic experiences, now sees herself as a 'light' hence 'beautiful' person.

It is at this juncture that I want to draw attention to the internalised colonial binarisms in Lisa's conceptualisation of the transnational migrant experiences and her performed and managed identity. Lisa subscribes to the colonial Manichean divisions that perceive Britain as the centre and Zimbabwe as the periphery. For that reason Zimbabwe is portrayed as 'dark' and in juxtaposition Britain, it is implied, is 'light'. Furthermore, Lisa's negative perception of Africa underscores the fact that Africa is gripped by the tentacles of coloniality and not postcoloniality. Thus, Grosfoguel and Georas (2000: 88) argue that:

> The dominant representations of the world today assume that 'colonial situations' ceased to exist after the demise of 'colonial administrations' fifty years ago. This mythology about the so – called 'decolonisation of the world' obscures the

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continuities between the colonial past and current global colonial/racial hierarchies and contributes to the invisibility of 'coloniality' today.

Lisa's complicity to the above colonial binarisms serves to underscore the coloniality and not postcoloniality of her migrant identity. Lisa's diasporic experiences cannot be perceived as wholly useful as she subscribes to colonial perceptions of Zimbabwe as inherently inferior to Britain. In Lisa's mind, the only way Zimbabweans can be elevated is to migrate to London which she perceives as the centre in juxtaposition to Zimbabwe, the periphery. It is, therefore, the insinuations and 'significant *silences*' in Lisa's text of success that unmask her 'success' identity and present her as a character that is not really different from Peter. While Peter has 'failed' the Chikwiro family, Lisa, it is insinuated by the narrator, has 'failed' Zimbabwe and Africa further by being complicit to the Manichean binarisms of the colonisers that view Africa as inherently inferior to Europe. Consequently, Lisa might have deceived some people to believe that she is leading a successful life in the diaspora but she has definitely not deceived the narrator. Therefore, Lisa's identity, given the prevalence of the internalised colonial binarisms and stereotypes, cannot be effectively conceptualised using postcolonial lenses that privilege and valorise migrancy as essentially resulting in the production of hybrid and cosmopolitan identities. She has been successfully assimilated into the British way of life and ceases to be an African in Britain. London, instead of being a global metropolis that is supposed to be made up of diverse groups of people is seen as swallowing up difference and regurgitating sameness. The next story that I examine is titled 'My cousin sister Rambanai'.

7.5 Rupture and disjuncture in migrant narrative identities

The story "My cousin sister Rambanai" centres on the experiences of Rambanai and her attempts to hide her experiences as an illegal migrant in America. Rambanai has been in the United States of America (USA) for five years and only returns home to attend her father's burial, where she is a 'star at the funeral; everyone wanted to look at her' (p. 211). Her father's death forces her to come home from the USA where she is an illegal immigrant. However, Rambanai does not stay in Zimbabwe for a long as she changes her name and gets a new passport and migrates to the UK. The story is narrated by Matilda who is the 'cousin-sister' to Rambanai. I draw on Goffman's (1959) idea of dramaturgy, especially the theatrical concept of front and back stage as people interact every day, discussed above, in my analysis

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of the story 'My Cousin-Sister Rambanai'. I also consider Adeyanju and Oriola's (2011) appropriation of Goffman's (1959) notions on the presentation of self in everyday life to explore African migrant experiences in the West. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) argue that the front stage of migrants often involves stories of achievements, exposure, upward mobility, sophistication, and *savoir faire* of modern life.

The life of 'achievements, exposure, upward mobility, sophistication, and savoir faire of modern life' (Adeyanju and Oriola 2011:955) is exemplified by Rambanai. We are told by the narrator that:

> My cousin sister Rambanai came back from America with two suitcases crammed with too tight clothes in vivid shades of pink and a new accent. The clothes eventually faded from frequent washes with Cold Power and from hanging in the harshness of the Harare sun, but the accent did not. (p. 207)

The 'too tight clothes in vivid shades of pink' and the 'new accent' is the front stage of Rambanai's migrant identity which is supposed to give her symbolic capital and social power over her peers in the home country. Rambanai, just like Lisa in 'Something nice from London' uses her ancestral home as an 'arena for valorising […] social standing' (Adeyanju and Oriola 2011: 955). Clothes play a central role in defining a person and the fact that Rambanai has 'too tight clothes in vivid shades of pink' (p. 207) is indicative of a desire within Rambanai to project and market to her peers the idea of someone who has gained in sophistication and social standing as a consequence of migration. However, the 'too tight clothes' (p. 207) might be evocative of someone who has become culturally marooned as women who wear 'too tight clothes' are generally perceived immoral.

In addition, the narrator depicts further perceptiveness. She quickly adds that the 'clothes eventually faded from frequent washes with Cold Power, the washing powder, and from hanging in the harshness of the Harare sun' (p. 207). This implies that Rambanai had overstayed her visit and should have returned to America after the burial of her father. This is the first insinuation from the narrator that all is not well with the diasporic success identity

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that Rambanai vigorously markets to her peers in Zimbabwe. We are therefore made to doubt her narrative of America as the African migrants' 'el Dorado' and ask why she is taking a long time to return to America if she is a successful migrant as she claims. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) argue that the back stage which is hardly represented by migrants to their peers in the home society is the 'ugly' part of migrant life. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 957) state that the back stage 'consists of narratives of shortcomings, racism, unemployment, and other disadvantages'. Rambanai's experiences can be read as a text that has 'significant *silences*' that can be used to destabilise her apparently stable identity of a 'successful' migrant. Therefore, the point at which the front and back stages are conflated or collapsed is precisely the moment, not just when we witness the vulnerability of migrants but, when identities are re-configured and therefore we bear testimony to the emergence of diasporic vulnerable identities.

Rambanai like Lisa in 'Something Nice from London' projects an image of self as a successful migrant. Consequently, the image she projects results in people like *Sisi*Dessy venerating and worshipping her. Her front stage performance enhances her symbolic capital and social standing in her ancestral home. Rambanai in addition portrays America as a land of opportunities where one 'can be anything at all' (p. 218). The narrator notes that:

> Our housemaid SisiDessy worshipped Rambanai and could not get enough of her stories. 'America is the land opportunity, SisiDessy,' Rambanai told her. 'There you can be anything you want, anything at all. Someone like you can be a housemaid today, and before you know it, you have your own TV show'. (p. 218)

However, the image of America as the 'land of opportunity' where one 'can be anything at all' is premised on fantasy and the desire to deceive people in the home country. This image of America seems oblivious of the experiences of most African Americans who, as illustrated in texts such as *Native Son* (1940), *Invisible Man* (1952) and the *Color Purple* (1983) are perceived as a second class citizen. Thus, Rambanai's image of America is one shorn of class, race, ethnic and gender variables that influence and affect one's access of the opportunities offered by America.

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It is also critical to note that this America where one 'can be anything at all' (p. 218) is based on a misleading capitalist myth. The myth seeks to divert attention from the reality that America is polarised along racial, ethnic, gender, class and racial lines. Rambanai, in her attempts to maintain her migrant 'success' identity depicts herself as someone who works for an 'an insurance broker in Dallas, Texas' (p. 218), is also 'a dancer' (p. 218) and a 'poet' (p. 219). However, Rambanai just Like Lisa has 'significant *silences*' in the construction of her narrative migrant identity. It is interesting to observe that she has been in America for five years and only returns to Zimbabwe as a result of the death of her father. If America is the land of opportunity that afforded her success, as she purports, then it is only logical for her to have paid visits to her parents in Zimbabwe or even remit some money to them. The fact that the story is silent on this underscores the fact that Rambanai's stay in America was really traumatic and nightmarish. This is echoed by the narrator who notes that upon her return to Zimbabwe, Rambanai was not just mourning the death of her father 'but also for the death of her American dream' (p. 212). The harm that people like Rambanai can be accused of causing is that by not telling the truth about their migrant experiences they are in fact relaying lies and deceptions which could be used by unsuspecting listeners like SisiDessy to migrate also in what Massey *et al* (1994: 733-738) cited in Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 949) term 'cumulative causation'. Massey *et al* (1994) cited in Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 949) argue that international migration perpetuates itself over time through the influence that prior and existing immigrants have over prospective immigrants and migrants' decisions concerning immigration to the economically developed countries of the West. Thus, Rambanai by lying to SisiDessy about life in America is subtly encouraging SisiDessy to migrate to America apparently in search of better opportunities.

Nevertheless, what is interesting about Rambanai is that, after her father's burial, she does not return to America as expected. The identity she has cultivated as a successful migrant in Dallas is therefore threatened as it becomes more and more difficult to maintain with her continued stay in Gappah's Zimbabwe. The Goffmanian 'front stage' of her performed migrant identity exemplified by the 'too tight clothes in vivid shades of pink' (p. 207) gives way to the 'back stage' as we are told that the 'clothes eventually faded from frequent washes

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with Cold Power and from hanging in the harshness of the Harare sun' (p. 207). The Harare 'sun' is symbolic of the intense scrutiny that returning migrants are subjected to by the people in the home country. This harshness of the 'sun' which eventually results in the 'fading' of the 'too tight clothes' exemplifies the dialogic interaction that takes place between returning migrants and people in the home country. The narrator seems to insinuate that the longer a returning migrant stays in Zimbabwe the more she is likely to be exposed for being deceptive.

There are indeed subtle references and indications in the story that hint at transnational migrancy as not so 'rosy', as characters like Rambanai seem to suggest. Rambanai's Brother Thomas, also a migrant in the UK, fails to attend his father's funeral. Instead, he sends seven hundred and fifty pounds to meet the funeral expenses. Rambanai's contribution is not mentioned in the story and one is tempted to conclude that she did not make any financial contribution to meet the funeral expenses. The narrator thus notes:

> Both she and her older brother Thomas lived outside the country but she only came back to bury their father. Instead of coming, Thomas wired seven hundred and fifty pounds through Western union from Manchester, England where he lived. […] For all that she complained, it was the money that Thomas sent that enabled the family to bury my uncle in the splendour of the Paradise Peace Casket, a gleaming white coffin with golden handles and a gold frame on the surface into which my aunt put a photograph of my uncle in his University of Leeds graduation cap and gown. (p. 208)

It is equally important to observe that Thomas, as the first born son of the family, is culturally expected to attend the funeral as he is now the 'new head of the household' (p. 208). His failure to attend the funeral therefore can only imply that migrant life in the Western countries is not as 'rosy' as portrayed by Rambanai. Failure by the people to 'read' these hints of the harshness of migrant life in the host cities is testimony of the fact that most Zimbabweans associate unquestionably, transnational migrancy with success. They are therefore easily susceptible to people like Rambanai who take advantage of them. Rambanai's continued stay after her father's burial also offers people close to her, like Matilda and Jimmy, an opportunity to unravel her 'successful' migrant identity. The narrator thus notes:

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> After the funeral, Rambanai stayed a week, three weeks, one month, five months, eleven. She stayed so long that the question, *vakadii veku*States (How is the United States based lady doing?), moved from *vachadzokera riiniko veku*States (When is she going back to the United States?) to *kuti vachadzokera veku*States (Will she be going to the United States? (p. 212)

Finally, Rambanai fails to maintain her performed 'success' migrant identity and confesses to Matilda that she is an illegal migrant who had 'overstayed my visitor's visa' (p. 223). Her confession exposes the 'hard' life she had endured in the United States as she had worked in a 'restaurant' (p. 223). Rambanai's confession thus presents her with a dilemma over what people will say about her deceptions, 'I can't go back, but I can't stay here,' she said. 'What would people say? They would say I can't go back, that's what they would say' (p. 224). This dilemma, which is a result of the collapse of the borders between the 'front' and 'back' stages, generates a liminal situation for Rambanai. In addition, this collapse generates a new identity for Rambanai which is based on an open acknowledgement of the nightmarish reality of life in America. However, for fear of public censure Rambanai further engages in deceptive behaviour. Rambanai realises that she had to go to London but on a new name and new passport as her old passport had been 'endorsed' (p. 224). She is, therefore, portrayed as a character that is bent on deception and this is exemplified when she finally gets a new passport under a new name.

Rambanai uses deception as a strategy to assist her migrate to London. She contentedly changes her name to 'Langelihle Chantal Ndhlukula' (p. 229) and gets a false year of birth. Ironically, life in London seems also tough for Rambanai as she fails to pay back the money she borrowed from the narrator and her husband. The narrator thus notes:

> She (Rambanai) called to say she had arrived, but as Jimmy and I did not have a landline at the flat, the phone call was to my mother who passed it on to me. Even after I got a mobile phone and passed the number to my mother and to my aunt to give

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> to Rambanai if she called again, she did not call [...] And there was no money. (p. 232)

However, what is interesting is that the use of deception and false identities as strategies of survival in the host metropolitan cities is under theorised in postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory largely considers diasporic identities as historical, cultural and social constructs based on negotiation and adaption. While this is largely true it nevertheless must be stressed that it is silent on the likes of Rambanai who rely on deception and false identities to live in the diaspora. The narrator and her husband finally migrate to London where they become victims of deskilling as they are forced to work in care homes looking after the elderly and sick:

> In the end, we got our visas the same way Rambanai had got her passport, we used the Harare way – someone knew someone in the British embassy with whom we exchanged envelopes stuffed with cash. I gave up teaching and Jimmy engineering to be in England, where the curse of the green passport condemned us to work in the unlit corners of England's health care system, in care homes where we took out the frustrations of our existence by visiting little cruelties on geriatric patients (p. 234).

Thus, transnational migration in *An Elegy for Easterly* is largely depicted as resulting in the production of deceptive identities predicated on the Goffmanian (1959) concept of 'front' and 'back' stage as a survival coping strategy.

7.6 Conclusion

The existence of diasporic identities predicated on deception and the use of fake documentation in *Harare North* and performed and managed identities in *An Elegy for Easterly* in contemporary Zimbabwean literature forces us to re-think Zimbabwean transnational migration and its impact on identities. The fact that diasporic identities in the two texts are largely predicated on deception, fake documentation and performance testifies to Naficy's (2001) view that if identity is a social construct it means that it can be reconstructed, deconstructed and performed. In addition, these identities are cultivated as strategic means of survival in the host country. However, *Harare North* and the two stories analysed in *An Elegy for Easterly* are a pessimistic rendition of the migrant experiences and therefore the identities that the various characters deploy are not successful ones. These identities also compel us to cease perceiving transnational

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migration with a 'rosy' lens that conceives it as essentially resulting in 'rich and complex social worlds' (Elliot and Urry 2010: 10). The literature surveyed shows that black Zimbabweans have serious challenges in fashioning successful transnational/transcultural identities as testified by the nightmarish experiences of the anonymous narrator and his compatriots in Chikwava's *Harare North* and Rambanai and Lisa in 'My cousin sister Rambanai' and 'Something nice from London' in *An Elegy for Easterly* respectively. This is mainly attributable to the fact that though globalisation and transnationalism have heightened movement of people within and across borders this movement is still largely shaped by gender, race and class resulting in unequal modes of travel and uneven destines in the host countries.

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Chapter 8: Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to investigate the literary depiction of the nexus between migration and identity in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The broader objective was to broaden our conceptualisation of migration and its relation to migration in Zimbabwean literary and cultural studies by modifying it with considerations of perspectives, such as intra-urban mobilities, discursive return migration and spiritualised return migration. The significance of my study is that it attempts to offer a comprehensive analysis of the nexus between migration and identity from a literary perspective in Zimbabwean literature. There is need therefore to transcend conventional understandings of migration that view migration as physical movement from place to place to embrace forms of migration that are ideological, discursive, dialogical and spiritual. The major contribution of this thesis has been the understanding that migration results in the creation of adaptive and flexible identities that do not only echo to the conventional conceptualisation of identities as historical and social constructions but provokes the production of performed and managed identities. The idea of seeing identities as performed and managed to elicit certain calculated responses is testimony of the fact that Zimbabwean migrants, especially transnational ones, are fashioning identities that essentially serve a dual purpose. Firstly, these identities are an adaptive and flexible tactic of acclimatising oneself to the host society and secondly they are a vital way of marketing migration as resulting in progression to the home or former ancestral society. Chapter one, mapped out the theoretical framework for the entire thesis by exploring different theoretical perspectives on migration and identity. It also provided the socio – economic and historical - cultural context for migration. I argued in the chapter that migration in post-independent Zimbabwe is closely related to the crisis of the nation state which has its generic roots in the early 1980s. Zimbabwe as a nation state is depicted as a fractured and unstable political and social entity whose propensities towards instability and crisis provide key insights into the migratory experiences of its citizens. This crisis imploded to its worst form in post-2000 and provoked an unprecedented mass exodus of Zimbabweans who migrated to regional and international destinations as a survival and coping mechanism. The exodus was interpreted as constitutive of the tactics (De Certeau's 1984) that individuals use to navigate foreign and threatening spaces and convert them into homely spaces fit for the inscription of new forms of self. The exploration resolved that as individuals/ people move their identities become mobile and adapt to the new environments. However, some migrants failed to construct adaptive,

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reflexive and flexible identities and such characters are considered as 'failures' and is epitomised by these characters becoming insane and their final death. I also argued that conventional sociological, historical and journalistic literature on migration principally focuses on physical migration and occludes other nuanced forms of migration such as intra-urban mobilities, psycho-discursive and spiritualised migration.

The conceptualisation of identity that anchored this study is the notion that identity is in constant flux, as postulated in the theorisation of Hall (1996). Hall (1996: 3) further argues that identity is a 'strategic and positional' phenomenon. The notion that identity is 'strategic and positional' (Hall 1996: 3) is evocative of the performative conceptualisation of identity. Naficy (2001: 269) argues therefore that if identity can be constructed it can also be 'reconstructed, deconstructed – even performed'. It is this performative tendency in identity construction that informed my analysis of migrant identities, especially diasporic ones. Goffman's (1959) concept of the 'presentation of self in everyday life' is where he argues that everyday interaction is based on performance and the management of impression was central to my conceptualisation of diasporic migrant identities. This idea has been appropriated by Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) and employed in the context of African migrants in the West. Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) argue that African migrants in the West present a 'front' stage where they mask their suffering and act /perform being successful. However, the closely guarded 'back' stage is made up of suffering, abuse, exploitation and racism.

Chapter 2 of this thesis examined Westerhof's *Unlucky in Love* and Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope* where the linear narrative of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwean literature was unpacked. This linear narrative exemplified by Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996) largely ignores the influence of space in the negotiation and mediation of migrant identities. The two texts, *Unlucky in Love* and *Uncertainty of Hope*, thus offer an experiential dimension lacking in sociological, journalistic and historical narratives of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe. Migration in the linear narrative is largely conceptualised as physical movement and fails to highlight other complexities. A more nuanced approach to migration in Zimbabwe encompasses intra-urban mobility which is omitted in the linear narratives of rural–urban migration. The chapter advanced the view that rural–urban migration was mainly provoked by colonialism that mapped out and divided space into rural and urban areas. Furthermore, this division did not cease with the

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attainment of independence. Significant to observe is the fact that space is not just physical but also ideological and discursive and is prone to negotiation and contestation. Viewing space as subject to negotiation and contestation is highly instructive in conceptualising intra-urban mobilities evident in the analysed literary texts such as *Uncertainty of Hope* as testified by the character Onai. It was also argued that the transgression of spatial boundaries is reflective of either upward or downward economic and social mobility. This transgression is not just physical but metaphorically represents ideological and discursive mobilities. Consequently, critical to our understanding of rural-urban migration is the way one imagines and conceptualises space as exemplified by Rumbidzai in *Unlucky in Love*.

Chapter 2 also advanced the view that space is central in influencing and defining one's aspirations, dreams, ambitions and hopes as depicted in *Unlucky in Love* and *Uncertainty of Hope*. Ideas by Lefebvre (1991), De Certeau (1984) and Harvey (1996) shaped my conceptualisation of space. Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1996) advance the view that space is a social construct that contains social relations of production and reproduction. Migrants therefore do not approach space as passive people but actively engage in reconfiguring space to meet their needs and aspirations. De Certeau's (1984) ideas on tactics also assisted my analysis of how urban dwellers such as Onai in *Uncertainty of Hope* reconfigure their spaces to reflect and meet their interests. Urry (2000) and Elliot and Urry's (2010) concept of mobilities was also instructive in my understanding of intra-urban mobilities. The central argument that was advanced by the chapter is that the conventional linear rural to urban migration narrative in Zimbabwean literature exemplified by Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996) is conspicuously silent on intra-urban mobilities and how these mobilities impact on identities. It was also noted that such an approach perceives migration largely from a physical perspective as bodily movement from one geographic space to another. However, this conceptualisation was seen as problematic as it occludes more nuanced forms of migration such as sickness and madness as well as migrations of a discursive and ideological nature typified by Rumbidzai in *Unlucky in Love* and Tapiwa Jongwe in *Uncertainty of Hope*.

Chapter 3 of this thesis focused on the Zimbabwean crisis that imploded in post-2000 and how it relates to the Zimbabweans' migratory experiences, be they local or transnational. This chapter, therefore, considered the origins and trajectories of Zimbabwean crisis and its impact on the

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relationship between migration and identity. Foucault's concept of the panopticon gaze and the carceral state was used to complement postcolonial theory in the conceptualisation of the Zimbabwean crisis and its relationship to migration and identity. The chapter also utilised McAdams (2008) concept of narrative identity which had figured prominently in chapter two in the analysis of *Unlucky in Love*. McAdams (2008) concept of narrative identity was instructive in the analysis of Peter Orner and Annie Holmes' *Hope Deferred: Narratives of Zimbabwean Lives* as the text is a collection of life narratives/ biographies. However, it is important to observe that migration in Zimbabwe was not only provoked by the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis as it was noted that the history of the country is largely one of (im) migration (Mlambo 2009). The economic and political migration that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s was, as Sachikonye (2012) notes, on a modest scale and confined to sections of highly skilled professionals. However, this migration was heightened as a consequence of the Zimbabwean crisis that imploded in post-2000 and the 'migration option' became compelling to the working and middle classes, traders, unskilled workers, the poor and the politically persecuted. What is interesting about this migration as Sachikonye (2012) notes is its confluence of economic and political grievances and insecurity, as well as its size and its multi-class composition. Similarly, Raftopoulos (2009:222) argues that after 2000 large numbers of people left. The chapter analysed stories from Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons* namely 'Smoke and Ashes', 'Cities of Dust', 'Kaffir Corn' and 'Blunt Force Trauma' that focus largely on the post-2000 crisis. 'Smoke and Ashes' explores the nexus between the Zimbabwean crisis and Venus' temporary return migration and her encounter with her friend, the nameless narrator. The story underscores the superior attitude of returnees, a feature prominent in transnational migrants as examined in chapter seven, and how migration is conceptualised as progression. The failure to migrate in a time of 'crisis' is projected as stasis and at worst as degeneration.

The idea of seeing migration as inherently 'good' is again projected in 'Cities of Dust' which explores the impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on ordinary citizens. Migration in a context of crisis is seen as necessary and is exemplified by Yolanda who migrates presumably to London to escape/survive the Zimbabwean crisis. 'Kaffir Corn' explores the impact of the land reform programme and introduces the concept of pyscho historical migration in Zimbabwean literature. Conrad Mafuta challenges the conventional ZANU-PF grand narrative of land through his psycho historical migration which gives him legitimacy to claim a piece of land as belonging to him, as it

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was his forefathers before colonialism. Thus, psycho historical migration unpacks the otherwise seamless narrative of the land reform programme as designed to empower a homogeneous black populace. 'Blunt force trauma' focuses on the concept of return migration in a time of crisis and political violence. The story centres on the experiences of Eldridge who is subjected to xenophobic attacks and returns to Zimbabwe only to be killed in politically motivated circumstances. In *Hope Deferred* the focus was on six narratives/biographies of Elizabeth, Nokuthula, Tsitsi, George, Alice and Samuel where the nexus between migration and the narrativization of self becomes a human rights issue. It was observed that as people migrate and tell their stories of victimhood and persecution they locate themselves at the centre of reclaiming rights as well as the entire human rights regime as the politics of telling and re – telling are crucial to ideas of the 'human', 'justice' and 'rights'.

Chapter 4 gave prominence to gender, a factor often occluded, in the studies and representations of migration. The chapter offered a more nuanced gendered perspective of migration, be it local or global. Butler's (1988; 1990) ideas especially her conceptualisation of gender and gender identity as premised on performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo and Kandiyoti's (1988) idea about women bargaining with patriarchy anchored this chapter. Kandiyoti's (1988) idea that women strategise within a set of concrete constraints and that different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct 'rules of the game' and call for different strategies to maximise security and optimise life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression was very helpful. Gender, thus, becomes open to negotiation, mediation and contestation and a platform where gendered subjectivities are constructed. Muchemwa and Muponde's (2007) ideas on gender and migration were also instructive in the chapter's discussion on the transformative implications of migration on gender. The chapter applied these theoretical perspectives to *Chairman of Fools* and *The Trek and Other Stories.* In *Chairman of Fools,* the focus was on the character, Farai's psycho-discursive migration as he comes to terms with the transformation of Veronica his wife. The chapter, thus, perceives Farai's health condition, as emblematic of a psycho-discursive migration that serves as a rite of passage that he has to go through in order for him to be transformed. Farai's transformation is thus a cognitive intellectual discursive migration that permits him to appreciate the importance of gender transformation. This form of migration expanded our conceptualisation

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of migration which narrowly focuses only on physical movement as exemplified by Gaidzanwa (1985) and Schmidt (1996).

Chapter 4's focus on Lawrence Hoba's *The Trek and other stories'* five stories, 'The First Trek – The Pioneers', 'Maria's Independence', 'The Travelling Preacher', 'The Second Trek – Going Home' and 'The Third Trek – Resettling' gave prominence on how female characters, such as Martha and Mhama (mother) challenge the conventional gendered stereotype depicting female migrants as largely 'victims' and 'followers' of men. This is indicative of a new twist to conventional narratives of female migration in Zimbabwean literature and culture which privileges the female rural to urban and the national to transnational migration nexus in Zimbabwean society. *The Trek and Other Stories* thus complicates the rural urban female migration paradigm through its representation of the land reform programme and its power to transform and subvert gender. In addition, while migration is largely projected by Hoba as disempowering to men, as their masculinities degenerate into toxic and aberrant ones that are harmful to themselves and society at large, women seem to thrive as a consequence of migration. The land reform programme resulted in displacement and emplacement of people and identities and this is true of the female characters that Hoba presents.

Chapter 5 advanced the view that migration and identity are largely topical issues in a time of 'crisis' like the one generated by HIV and AIDS and Zimbabwe's economic and political decline that imploded in post-2000. It was argued that the impact of HIV and AIDS as a crisis offered unique insights on how migration and identity are conceptualised. This resonates with Mercer's (Woodward 2002: xi) argument that 'identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis'. As argued in this chapter, HIV and AIDS presented a unique case of what I termed psycho-discursive return migration and spiritualised return migration which informed the reading of Lutanga Shaba's *Secrets of a Woman's Soul*. This psycho-discursive return migration and spiritualised return migration broadened our conceptualisation of migration in Zimbabwean literature and society in general as migration is largely projected in physical terms. These forms of migration resulted in the reconfiguration of identities as HIV infected individuals, to survive the pandemic and the attendant discrimination, had to recreate their identities occasioning in most cases in the production of survivalist and resilient identities. In some extreme cases,

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however, an inability to recreate one's identity usually led to suicidal behaviour which is metaphoric of failure at the level of subjectivity and identity formation.

Chapter 6 mapped out the complexities of migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature through an examination of Lang's *Place of Birth* and Rogers' *The Last Resort*. This chapter considered the depiction of migration and identity in white authored texts. The previous chapters considered the portrayal of the nexus between migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature focusing slightly and exclusively on black Zimbabwean writers whose focus highlighted the black experience. *Hope Deferred*, has, out of the twenty four personal narratives, only two narratives which are by white Zimbabweans. Critics who largely concentrate on rural urban/transnational migration, such as Gaidzanwa (1985), Schmidt's (1996), Muchemwa and Muponde's (2007), Crush and Tevera's (2010) and Derman and Kaarhus' (2013) largely, if not exclusively, focus on an exploration of the black migrant experience. However, by focusing on *Place of Birth* and *The Last Resort* the chapter attempted to give voice to white Zimbabwean experiences of migration and identity formation in postcolonial Zimbabwe. It was noted that white Zimbabwean experiences of migration and identity is closely related to the ownership of land, and later on the post-2000 land reform programme which is a key moment of what has come to be known as the 'Zimbabwean crisis'. The land reform programme provoked an exodus of white commercial farmers who were displaced and dispersed internally, regionally and internationally. This white migration is depicted as a survivalist strategy and a way of escaping the land reform programme and the Zimbabwean nation state in general which is largely portrayed as resulting in reverse migration or retrogression to primitivism.

Chapter 7 explored the global dimensions of migration triggered by the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis and determines its impact on the way we think about identities. The chapter analysed Chikwava's *Harare North* and Gappah's *An Elegy for Easterly*. In addition, the analysis of transnational diasporic identities focused largely on the deployment of strategic identities premised on the notion of identity performance and management. *Harare North* and *An Elegy for Easterly* largely present characters whose identities are mainly founded on artifice and duplicity as a survival strategy in a 'hostile' foreign land where one's ability to survive is dependent on the deployment of social and cultural capital. *Harare North* presents a dystopic depiction of transnational migration and this is exemplified by the nameless narrator who relies, for his

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survival, on manipulation and blackmail of fellow migrants. Most of the migrants in *Harare North* are portrayed as illegal and depend on constructing identities based on deception as they fake their identity documentation to secure employment. The idea of faking identities and relying on deception resonates with Goffman's (1959) idea of the presentation of self in everyday life.

However, Chikwava largely depicts a pessimistic view of transnational migration as the nameless narrator and his friend succumb to insanity and death respectively. Furthermore, the constructed transnational migrant identities, especially in *An Elegy for Easterly*, are carefully marketed for the consumption of those in the home country as a way of presenting transnational migration as 'good', 'necessary' and offering better economic opportunities. The story 'Something nice from London' presents a character, Lisa, who deploys certain images of self which have been called snapshots of her identity which is carefully marketed for the consumption of the home society. Again, the story is evocative of Goffman's (1959) concept of the presentation of self in everyday life. However, Lisa's managed and performed identity is destabilised through the 'significant silences' in the construction of migrant identities. The images that Lisa relays to the home society constitute the Goffmanian (1959) front stage which Adeyanju and Oriola (2011) argue involve stories of achievement, exposure, upward mobility, sophistication, and savoir faire of modern life. The tendency in migrants to project themselves and be seen as 'successful' is related to how societies view migration, especially migration to the West. Lisa's back stage, which Adeyanju and Oriola (2011: 957) argue is hardly reflected by migrants in their ancestral or former home societies, is the ugly part of immigrants' lives because it 'consists narratives of shortcomings, racism, unemployment, and other disadvantages'. This back stage can only be glimpsed by those in the home society provided they are astute observers who can penetrate the managed and performed identity. The idea of unmasking the presented migrant identities is suggestive of the idea that identities are not just produced and presented to be consumed by the home society as they are subjected to scrutiny. Thus, the home society is presented as not passive consumers/voyeurs of migrant identities as it interrogates such identities.

The story 'My cousin sister Rambanai' continues the trajectory of mapping diasporic identities as predicated on performance and management. This is exemplified by Rambanai who presents and markets her identity as that of a successful migrant. Rambanai's identity, like Lisa's, is

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performed for the consumption of the home society. Rambanai's front stage presents transnational migration as 'good' and resulting in the creation of a 'successful' migrant in the USA. However, Rambanai's back stage characterised by working in restaurants and having her passport endorsed is indicative of desperation, anxiety and suffering and this back stage is hidden from view. There is a moment however when the front and back stage merge when she confesses to Matilda that life in the diaspora was hard and this becomes the liminal condition upon which new identities emerge. I argue that the moment when the front and back stages collapse underscores the importance of seeing diasporic identities as essentially dialogic. The individual who performs and seeks to impress and manage others has no guarantee that what he/she aims to do will achieve the desired goals as the 'others' are not passive recipients who docilely acquiesce to the demands/perceptions of the individual performer as they consciously decode the behaviour being exhibited. This dialogic turn was pertinent to the analysis of projected diasporic identities as they are not assumed to be 'real' at face value by those in the home or former ancestral country. The individual performance is filtered by the observers through their understanding of migrancy and the discourses surrounding migrancy. Thus, migration and its relation to identity in Zimbabwean literature is complex and cannot be reduced to the simple conventional rural to urban, urban to rural and transnational migration as a more nuanced approach encompasses intra-urban mobilities, psycho-discursive migration, psycho historical migration and performed and managed identities.

However, it is significant to note that this study is not a finality in understanding issues of migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature. A text such as NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013) attests to this as it was not covered by this study. There are other areas from a literary and cultural studies perspective that can be considered such as the representation of migration and identity in music and film. In addition, future studies in migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature can explore these issues from a dialogical perspective informed by narrative identity.

Migration and identity in Zimbabwean literature in the future can be approached from the perspective of trying to understanding whether black Zimbabweans can become proper transnationals in the manner that white people easily settle in other parts of the world. The literature surveyed demonstrates that black Zimbabweans have serious challenges in trying to

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fashion transnational/transcultural identities as testified by the nightmarish experiences of the anonymous narrator and his compatriots in Chikwava's *Harare North* and Rambanai and Lisa in 'My cousin sister Rambanai' and 'Something nice from London' in *An Elegy for Easterly* respectively. The question of return migration which I considered in chapter 5 can be broadened in the future to include the mechanisms/tactics of re-settling back home that returnees assume. This thesis is largely silent on the mechanisms/tactics of re-settling back home that returnees adopt as most of the stories I examined are silent on that and hopefully future literary productions will open up to that theme.

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