



Uneasy images, unstable identities: inscriptions of masculinities in selected post-independent Zimbabwean literary texts

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Declaration

I, Anias Mutekwa, declare that this thesis, 'Uneasy Images, Unstable Identities: Inscriptions of Masculinities in Selected Post-Independence Zimbabwean Literary Texts,' is my own original work, and all sources used have been fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis is premised on the notion that gender and gender studies are essentially dialogic. This highlights the fact that both male and female subjects are gendered and none exist as closed off or isolated sub-sets or categories. This is the orientation that informs the examination of the representation of Zimbabwean male subjects and masculinities in the selected Zimbabwean post-independence literary texts that make up this study. Through a close examination of eleven post-independence Zimbabwean literary texts by both black and white authors, it establishes that the inscriptions of the masculinities are marked and characterized by images that exude dialogic tensions and resonances. Employing a triangulation of theoretical perspectives, this diachronic and synchronic study of these masculinities has as its goals the appreciation of these identities and their dialogic relations with various textual and extra-textual discourses of the post-independence period in Zimbabwe. Here the identities are marked and defined by internal contradictions, ambivalences, and instabilities that challenge and complicate conventional understandings of masculinities. Both black and white masculinities are examined inclusively of their relationship to the evolving nationalist discourses of the country. Some of their trajectories since the attainment of independence from colonialism and their associated implications are also explored. These are multiple and diverse, making visible the complex dialogic relations impacting on these masculinities. The texts reveal that hegemonic masculine attributes are dispersed amongst men and so male homosocial bonds ensure hegemony. The understandings of masculinities so revealed in this study have multiple implications for various discourses such as those of gender equality and the nation, amongst others to be discussed in the course of the thesis.

Keywords: masculinities; Zimbabwean novels; gendered identities; Chimurenga; social constructionism; Michel Foucault; Mikhail Bakhtin; Frantz Fanon; Solomon Mutsware; N.M. Mutasa; Dambudzo Marechera; David Lemon; David Freeman; Rodwell Machingauta; Charles Mungoshi; Nevanji Madanhire; Nyaradzo Mtizira; John Eppel; Eric Harrison; Wilbur Smith

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Gender, broadly categorised into masculinities and femininities, is a primary signifier of human identities the world over. It is located at the interface of the biological and the cultural; meaning that humans are both sexed and gendered beings. Some understandings of gender privilege the biological over the cultural and vice-versa. However in most contemporary discourses on gender, biological determinism has been replaced by cultural determinism, and so gender is now basically considered as a cultural construct. This casts it as an unstable and malleable category which is open to transformation, contestation, and negotiation.

The academic study of men and masculinities in Zimbabwe has only begun to burgeon, in line with the realisation in the rest of the world that men, like women, are gendered subjects, and an understanding of them is a *sine qua non* not only for achieving gender equality, but also achieving various other social goals such as peace, and even developmental ones that are pertinent in Third World communities such as Zimbabwe. The focus on masculinities represents a paradigm shift in relation to the conception of gender studies as the equivalent of women's studies, and the concomitant rendering of the masculine subject as inhabiting a gender-unmarked category. This is largely a consequence of the Western patriarchal tradition of conceiving the masculine category as normative. The erasure and invisibility of masculinity as a gender category literally rendered women's studies and feminism as monologic discourses, with all the concomitant connotations. So the entry of the gendered masculine subject into the discourse of gender can only promote a healthy dialogism with women's studies and feminism, the better for attempts to create a better and just society. Raewyn W. Connell's (1995: 68) observation that masculinities and femininities help to construct one another, means that they cannot be understood in isolation. The entanglement of masculine and feminine identities means that their fate and their study cannot be viably separated. The behaviours and cultural constructs codified as masculinities and femininities, despite their association with the biological male and female respectively, are key to the survival of human society. If anything, they are not the preserve of one biological sex as is the case in some essentialist notions of gender.

Connell's (ibid:68) realisation that masculinity is not a unitary category, but one marked by pluralities, has been seminal in helping deconstruct the myth that all men benefit in the same way from patriarchy. While they might all benefit from what he calls 'the patriarchal

dividend', the way power is distributed amongst masculinities is marked by variation and renders some men powerful, and others marginal.

Masculinities are both temporal and spatial. So, what it means to be a man varies from one period to the other, and from one place/society to the other. Historically, it is possible to divide Zimbabwe into three broad periods, namely, the pre-colonial, the colonial, and the post-independence period. Arguably, each period incubated different masculinities that were shaped by various determinants, such as ethnicity, class, race, age, religion, among others. Shire (1994: 146-157) has carried out a study of Zimbabwean masculinities from the pre-colonial to the colonial periods. This study takes the year 1980, the year of the attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe, as its departure point. The attainment of independence meant that those masculinities that had been produced and shaped by the conditions of, for instance, colonialism, oppression, and the liberation war, were, by force of circumstances and exigency, undergoing a change. This applies to both blacks and whites as former colonized and colonizer respectively. As noted by Vambe (2009: 95), the period from 1980 to the present has been one characterized by unmitigated crisis, mainly centred on the trajectory of the transformation that independence was supposed to usher in. Political and social crisis, in the words of Gramsci (1971: 276), 'consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear'. It is in this interregnum that post-independence Zimbabwean masculinities are being imagined, acted out, contested, and reconfigured.

Zimbabwean Masculinities

As noted above, Zimbabwe's time-space can be divided into three broad periods namely the pre-colonial, the colonial, and the post-independence one: each producing its own range of masculine identities. As Connell (2000b: 25) notes: 'Masculinities are created in specific historical circumstances. They are liable to be contested, reconstructed or displaced'. So the different historical periods noted above shaped different masculine identities, pursuant with the historical conditions impacting on them. Masculinities, as social and ideological constructions, constitute what Hall (1996: 596) refers to as cultural identities: 'those aspects of our identities which arise from our "belonging" to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, and, above all, national cultures'. Hall conceives of cultural identity in two ways. The first one can be referred to as the essentialist conception: 'Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which

provide us, as “one people”, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history’(ibid). Using this frame of reference for Zimbabwean masculinities, we would have unitary, stable, and essentialist black masculinities and similar white ones.

However, Zimbabwean masculinities are best viewed through Hall’s second conception of identity, which can be categorised as the post-modernist one and is deconstructive of the notion of the metanarrative when it comes to identity. Instead of sameness and uninterrupted continuity, we have ‘difference and rupture’ (1996: 226). Cultural identities, ‘Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past,...are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power’ (ibid: 225). This conception recognises the different and diverse ways in which blacks and whites in Zimbabwe experienced and were shaped by various experiences such as colonialism. So instead of a unitary black or white masculine subject, we have diverse, contradicting, conflicting and fluid subjectivities that mark these masculinities. From this definition, therefore, Zimbabwean masculinities in all the historical periods noted above are conceived of in terms of pluralities reflecting the diversity of Zimbabwe, when one considers the various sites of identity formation in Hall’s definition above.

Hall’s second categorisation of identities also resonates with the hierarchy of masculinities as delineated by Connell (2005:67-81) in her study of Western masculinities. Here they are considered in terms of pluralities rather than essentialisms. These hierarchies consist of hegemonic masculinity as the dominant and culturally privileged form, complicit masculinity, then marginal and subversive masculinities. But because masculinities are culturally produced, Connell’s categorisation may not necessarily fit all non-western societies such as Zimbabwe, although it remains a useful template in categorising male identities, and is therefore useful in this study.

An appreciation of Zimbabwean masculinities can be enhanced by making reference to Holter and Aarseth’s (qtd in Holter, 2000: 68-70) ‘three modern forms of patriarchy’ which are based on Western societies. The first one, “paternalist” (... called the paternate)’ patriarchy uneasily corresponds to pre-colonial patriarchies in Zimbabwe. This paternalist patriarchy ‘is an openly patriarchal order with male household heads in the role of the patriarchs. It has its main basis in pre- industrial capitalism, with the household as the main framework of production as well as reproduction’ (ibid: 69). This form of patriarchy existed in a modified form in most Zimbabwean societies, but not in exactly the form described above, considering that these societies were more communally-oriented rather than

individually-oriented, as was the case with most Western societies. The relatively more fluid gender configurations of these pre-colonial societies means that they do not fit neatly into this categorisation which, though, remains a useful frame of reference.

Uchendu's (2008: 1) observation that, 'masculinity is what any given society accepts as features associated with the male gender and expressions of maleness', is apt when considering pre-colonial masculinities in Zimbabwe. Pre-colonial Zimbabwean society was gendered, with men and women playing different, albeit complementary roles. The pre-colonial gender orders were not strictly hierarchical nor marked by superordination and subordination between men and women. Although not exactly egalitarian because, in the words of Staples (2004: 125), '...there can rarely be a completely egalitarian relationship between any two human beings', the masculine and feminine principles complemented each other in a symbiotic relationship.

Pre-colonial Zimbabwean society was characterized by a multiplicity of ethnicities, the dominant and largest being two groups, namely, the Shona and the Ndebele. According to Shire (1994:147), pre-colonial Shona masculinity was determined by an ability to "perform," actually to manifest verbal skills.' However, as in most societies, there were different masculinities that characterized Shona manhood, and these were played out in different sites of their lived experiences. For example, the big hunter (*hombarume*) and the big farmer (*hurudza*) were masculinities that were marked out by excellence in these fields and were valued; they contributed in conferring on one the 'big man' status, an important pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence model of Zimbabwean masculinity. The 'big man' (Holland, 2005: 122), who would correspond to the paternate was head of his household and commanded their loyalty and that of other members of the clan based on his material wealth among other things, readily fits this model. This, though, was tempered by the communal ethos of these pre-colonial societies. Heterosexuality was also an important marker of true manhood, and homosexuality was erased from the social narrative (Eppretch, 1998). So what went on to make an unblushing man in pre-colonial Shona society was a combination of several attributes. However, a comprehensive exploration of pre-colonial Shona masculinities is beyond the scope of this study.

On the other hand, Ndebele masculinities were more militaristic, like those of most other Nguni peoples (Shire, 1994:148). As noted by Shire, a marker of this military ethic was discipline, bravery, obedience to authority and honesty. The warrior model was important in Ndebele society, as fighting and raiding were central to the economy of that state. The 'big man' in Ndebele society embodied most of these attributes. The pre-colonial Ndebele state

was highly centralised, unlike Shona society, which was clan-based. However, again as above, a full exploration of Ndebele pre-colonial masculinities is beyond the scope of this study.

The second form of patriarchy 'is "masculinistic" patriarchy (called the masculine) characteristic of industrial capitalism where most of the open, vertical patriarchal ordering of society is dissolved, yet systematic inequality and oppression of women continues in new forms' (Holter, 2000: 69). In colonial Zimbabwe, a racially-fractured, geo-socio-political space, this form of patriarchy was not universal. If anything, it was the preserve of the white colonizers. For the colonized Blacks, a different reality mediated their identities and lived experiences. The colonizers, to serve their own hegemonic ends, codified what was called customary law, which regulated the lives of the colonized subjects. This customary law was an adulterated African tradition which entrenched the African patriarchy, particularly in rural areas, and reduced black women to the status of minors (Geisler, 2004: 20). Here white colonizer males and black colonized males became strange bed fellows in their grand programme of controlling black women for their mutual benefit. So instead of masculinist patriarchy, there was a consolidation of paternalistic patriarchy for most of the black majority. In fact, I would argue that this is when the veritable paternate and the 'Big Man' emerges in the Zimbabwean black communities, particularly when one considers the gender segregationist policies of the colonial state which largely favoured males at the expense of females on the job market (ibid.: 9). The domestication of black women only served to buttress the paternate.

The third form of patriarchy is "'androgynistic" patriarchy (called the androgynate)' characterized by 'desegregation tendencies' (Holter, 2000: 70) for gender roles in both the public and private spheres. This, though, is 'still mainly a future state of society and inequality that today should rather be conceived in terms of "late" masculinist patriarchy' (ibid). Arguably this is what is envisaged in the moves towards gender equality in the post-independence dispensation in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean literary narratives in their portrayal of masculinities engage with these realities in navigating through the intricate and convoluted discourses of gender.

Most pre-colonial Zimbabwean male and other identities were the product of the Bantu philosophy of *Ubuntu* (or *Unhu* in the Zimbabwean Shona language) which privileges the community over the individual and the human over the material. In *Ubuntu* cosmology, the secular and the spiritual are intimately entangled. These obtaining realities, *inter alia*, helped

to shape various masculine subjectivities, which, however, varied from ethnicity to ethnicity. While it is possible to categorize pre-colonial Zimbabwean masculinities into Shona and Ndebele, the two dominant ethnicities in the country, to do so means glossing over the ethnic diversity that characterized pre-colonial Zimbabwe, and in the process making invisible the various minority ethnicities such as the Tonga, Kalanga, Nambya, for example. Most of the ethnicities were, by and large, patriarchal. Masculinity was therefore understood differently by the different ethnic groups, and so the Zimbabwean *Ubuntu* masculine subject was not essentially unitary (Shire, 1994:146).

Colonial contact, however, was a moment of rupture and destabilisation of the *Ubuntu*-based masculinities. The intruding colonising subjects were largely white male subjects whose cosmology was mediated by Enlightenment ideals. So the colonial enterprise was culturally masculinized and ‘the colonial empires were gendered institutions which disrupted indigenous gender orders and installed violent masculinities in the hegemonic position’ (Connell, 2000: 25). Non-white male subjects with non-enlightenment cosmologies such as *Ubuntu* were Othered and pathologized. This othering was sublimated into feminization and infantization, hence most black men were referred to as ‘boys’ (Morrell, 1998; Mutekwa, 2013). The colonized blacks responded in various ways, one of which was mimicry (of the colonizer) as described by Bhabha (1984:125-133). Colonial discourse and the colonial gaze fixed and interpellated the colonized subject in deleterious ways as described by Sartre (1967: 17) and Mbembe (2006: 169). Even so, colonialism was not experienced uniformly, for example, by blacks in urban areas and rural areas. However, various hybridised masculine identities were produced, such as that of the native intellectual as described by Fanon (ibid). Black males assumed ambivalent attitudes towards colonial discourse, encompassing an admixture of resistance and conformity.

The white colonizers themselves were also transformed by colonialism, and so different white masculine subject positions were produced. Notions of domination, control, male honour, and heroism helped shape the new identities. As noted by Chennells (1982), whites assumed an ambivalent attitude towards the African environment and the colonized blacks, both of which they considered as threats. Managing these threats, and preserving colonialism and white supremacy were at the centre of white males’ colonial consciousness.

Then there is the history of the Zimbabwean anti-colonial struggle, which also was important in shaping black and white masculine and other identities. This was experienced differently by different people. Nevertheless, the shared identity of racial oppression became

the rallying point for most of the blacks in the anti-colonial struggle, while the desire to preserve colonialism was a similar rallying point for most of the whites. Militarised masculinities were some of the masculinities produced by the anti-colonial struggle. For the blacks the liberation struggle involved the invocation of the heroes of the first anti-colonial military struggles of the late nineteenth century that were waged against the encroaching colonialists, going by the name *chimurenga* (liberation war). These were characterized as the first *chimurenga*, while the anti-colonial war of the mid to late seventies was characterized as the second *chimurenga*. The rural areas and the urban areas experienced the war differently, and so different masculinities were shaped as a result.

So, broadly, Zimbabwean colonial masculinities can be categorised into black and white if race is used as the main criterion. This categorisation, however, glosses over the many pluralities that characterize each racial category. Then, to speak of Zimbabwean masculinities is to refer to the nation as the over-arching variable defining these identities. The use of the plural 'masculinities', however, underlines the diversity contained therein.

The attainment of independence can be seen as another key point of rupture in both black and white masculine identities. The masculinities shaped by colonialism and the anti-colonial struggle were being contested, reconfigured and transformed by force of exigency and necessity. Various scholars, for example Fanon (1968), and Mbembe (2001), have identified and discussed the continuities between the colonial and post-colonial dispensation in the African context in general. In the case of Zimbabwe, Primorac (2006:59) for example, has identified what she referred to as the continuation of the Rhodesian (colonial) chronotope in the post-independence dispensation. Black identities were undergoing transformation in various ways. To begin with, there was the repeal of the colonial customary law in 1982, that which had reinforced and entrenched African patriarchy, particularly in the rural areas. This effectively raised the status of black women from the status of minors to that of full citizens equal before the law with their male counterparts. The transformation of the gender landscape is also the result of gender activism by various women's groups such as the Women's Action Group (WAG) and the Musasa Project (Essof, 2013: 37). So here, one can note the influence of female gender activism in the transformation of both female and male identities, both in the public and private sphere.

The post-independence period also sees the emergence of men's movements taking various positions in the discourse and struggle for gender equality. The two notable examples are Padare/Enkundleni/The Men's Forum on Gender, on one hand, and Varume Svinurai/Vukani

Madoda (meaning ‘men awake!’) men’s activist group (Minnings, 2014: 52-58). Padare is effectively a non-governmental organisation, one of whose key objectives is the creation of ‘a forum for men to question and reject gender stereotypes and roles that privilege men and oppress women’. Padare generally fits what Kimmel, and also Schwalbe (qtd in Morrell, 2005: 275), refer to as “‘the new men’s movement” [which] is held to be profeminist and committed to gender justice’. It has been active on issues to do with the renegotiation of male gender identities from the old to new gender-equality friendly ones, and in activism to do with combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic through male behaviour change. On the other hand, Varume Svinurai (Men Awake!), as the name suggests, would generally fall into what is called “‘the men’s movement” [which] is regarded as reactive, antifeminist, and committed to the restoration of male power’. This movement shows the existence of what might be called a ‘siege mentality’ amongst some Zimbabwean men as a result of the loss of most of their erstwhile privileges. Their argument largely hinges on the belief that men have become the new victims on the current gender chess-board. It resonates with the argument given by Farrell in his text *The Myth of Male Power* (2000), which makes reference to some Western contexts. It should here be pointed out that the two movements do not fit neatly into the above categories which were derived from certain Western contexts, and merely serve here as a rough guide. The two movements, however, could be taken as reflective of the different currents and counter-currents of Zimbabwean men’s view of the contemporary gender configurations in Zimbabwe and the changes that are ongoing.

The beginning of the 1990s saw the introduction of the neo-liberally influenced Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (EASP) that brought austerity and saw the economic fortunes of the country, together with those of many men, take a down-turn. It is a period that also impacted on masculine and feminine identities in the country in various ways.

Another defining moment in the history of post-independence Zimbabwe was the turn of the 21st century when the country underwent an economic meltdown that was accompanied by a political crisis that saw the main opposition labour-based party making serious inroads on the Zimbabwean political landscape. This period saw the ditching of ESAP and rebirth of the liberation war rhetoric in ‘Afro-Radicalist’ and ‘Nativist’ (Mbembe, 2002: 239-273) nationalist discourses that went along with the ‘fast-track’ land resettlement programme whose purported goal was to redress colonial land imbalances. For some black men, there was a revival of the militaristic masculinities of the liberation war periods as reflected in the new concept of the ‘Madoda Sibili’ (Real Men) coined and popularised by the

then current state president, Robert Mugabe.

Also, globalisation is itself impacting on identities. The unitary subject of enlightenment discourses has been replaced by the fragmented one typical of the post- modern subject of late capitalism. So, cultural identities are therefore unstable and open to contestation, negotiation and transformation. As Hall (1997: 596) asserts: ‘modern identities are being decentred’, and it is important to see how this plays out in Zimbabwean literary narratives in as far as masculine identities are concerned.

Aims and Rationale

Studies of masculinities in Zimbabwe, with a few exceptions, have mainly conceived them in essentialist terms; that is, as the property of people biologically marked as male. The same accusation could also be made regarding the study of femininities. Many myths of masculinities have also largely remained uncontested and unexplored. Studies of masculinities in Zimbabwean literature have also not paid sufficient attention to how black and white writers represent the forging, performance, contestation, renegotiation and/or transformations of masculinities from the onset of independence to date, in their texts. Nor to how these writers show the transformations and renegotiations of black and white masculinities in the light of what Mamdani (2001: 63-66) calls the ‘settler-native question’. How former settlers and natives have been able or unable to reinvent themselves has been at the centre of Zimbabwe’s crises. How race interfaces with other identities such as gender is important in understanding this. Most current discourses on Zimbabwe refer to the country as being in a state of crisis, and gender ideologies are implicated in this crisis. The crisis has been portrayed variously as ‘exhausted nationalism’ (Raftopoulos et al, 2007), the ‘exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation’ (Campbell, 2003), and so on. Discourses on the crises of masculinity are entangled with those of the crises of the nation. How this is played out in the literary texts of both black and white writers needs to be ascertained.

My research aims to study the representations of masculinities in Zimbabwean post-independence literary texts (the novel and short story) by both black and white writers, to address the above concerns. I intend to identify the main forms of masculinities in post-independent Zimbabwe and examine how black and white masculinities are (re)imagined, acted out, contested, and transformed in these literary works. The interface of these masculine identities with feminine ones, and also with the various narratives in the public sphere such as those on patriotism, nativism and others, is also a major concern of this study.

Problems and Issues to be Investigated

The research, inter alia, seeks to investigate the representation of black and white masculinities by both black and white writers and what this reveals about race and gender, and other realities in post-independence Zimbabwe. In the evolving masculine identities of the post-independence era, to what extent is race still a useful category of analysing and viewing masculine identities in Zimbabwe? How do masculinities interface with femininities and how do they help in shaping one another? How have the masculine identities and discourses evolved from the early 1980s to the current ‘Third *Chimurenga*’ period? To what extent is authorial ideology implicated in the construction of male characters in these literary texts? To what extent do the masculinities represented in the texts challenge or confirm Connell’s (1995; 2005) typology of masculinities? These are the problems and questions that this research seeks to answer.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is qualitative, and takes the form of textual analysis. Human gender identities, the subject of this study, are grounded in culture. This means that the data so gathered involves such abstractions and intangibles as social ideologies, cultural values, social beliefs, prejudices, social conflicts, meaning construction, and so on, as represented in the literary texts. In the words of Hall (1997: 42), ‘Meaning and representation seem to belong irrevocably to the interpretative side of the human and cultural sciences, whose subject matter – society, culture, the human subject – is not amenable to a positivist approach (ie., one which seeks to discover scientific laws about society)’. In the case of this study, it is textual interpretation whose data are in the form of words rather than figures, and hence is qualitative rather than quantitative. A discursive approach is the one employed because the literary texts under study are viewed here as not merely reproducing reality through mimesis, but rather as constructing it. So, how the texts are implicated in producing, concretising, and contesting social discourses and ideologies is important. Gender itself is a social construct, and exists in dialogue, complicity, and contestation with various social narratives which it helps to shape and is in turn shaped.

The study therefore proceeds by way of literary/textual analysis to unravel how masculine identities of the post-independence period are represented in this selection of Zimbabwean literary narratives. Each text is analysed under the different chapters and

subchapters which are thematically-based in order to evaluate the images of masculinity and the dynamics of the masculine identities represented therein. Narrative time and narrated time are important in the choice and the organisation of the texts into chapters. The identities being explored, however, are not viewed as self-contained and monologic, but as relational in respect of feminine and other identities, and also various social narratives that characterize a nation's public sphere.

The data so gathered are analysed, evaluated and presented descriptively. They are organised around various, but systematically marshalled themes that form the basis of the various chapters and sub-chapters. The analysis is done through a triangulation of various theoretical and conceptual perspectives as discussed below. The analysis leads, logically, to a conclusion whose ramifications are multifarious.

Theoretical Frameworks and Constructs

Representation is central in constructing and mediating reality. In this case, it is the construction of gender identities in the selected Zimbabwean literary texts, focusing specifically on masculinities. It is the contention here that these literary texts, by virtue of the above, are implicated in the construction and mediation of masculine identities. In the words of Hall (1997: 15), representation 'has come to occupy a new and important place in the study of culture'. Hall (1997: 61) defines representation as 'the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning'. Theories of representation are therefore important in understanding how Zimbabwean masculine identities and subjectivities are constructed in the literary narratives under study. This study utilises the Social Constructionist Theory of representation which views meaning as socially constructed: 'It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful to others' (ibid: 25). It is therefore the contention here that this is what the selected Zimbabwean literary texts do in respect to masculine identities. Focus is on the discursive approach of the Constructionist theory, which sees meaning as being produced in social discourse, and is associated with Michel Foucault.

The notion of images dovetails with that of representation. According to Manghani et al (2007: 2), 'We seem to be images living in a world of images'. Images in themselves are diverse, and Mitchell (1984: 505) speaks of the family of images comprising graphic, optical, perceptual, mental and verbal imagery. Literary images inhabit and straddle the last

two categories.

In this study, I take a constructivist view of images, and see them as social constructs. From this view images are a product of social discourse, which they help concretise and give form to. They are therefore highly political and ideological, and so are loaded and highly charged. As a result they are open to contestation and reconstruction. Various social discourses, such as gender, sexuality, religion, identity, and so on, find their concretisation, projection, and expression in images, be they verbal or otherwise, and it is these images that largely mediate human consciousness in any particular discourse. The concern here is with literary images as concretised in literary discourse. Literary images of masculinities, among others, inform the social understanding of men, in more or less the same way that images of femininities do for women.

As products of social discourse, images are here seen as caught up in dialogic relations. In the words of Bakhtin (1987: 278-279), ‘the prose artist elevates the social heteroglossia surrounding objects into an image that has unfinished contours, an image completely shot through with dialogic overtones’. Images of Zimbabwean men and masculinities are produced by various social discourses and can reveal the tensions that obtain in these discourses. This has important implications in the construction of these identities, as this study will show.

As Mitchell (2007: 296) observes, ‘The commonplace of modern studies of images, in fact, is that they must be understood as a kind of language; instead of providing a transparent window on the world, images are now regarded as the sort of sign that presents a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparency, concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification’. This statement summarises not only the constructedness of images, but their highly subjective and political nature. From this perspective, images therefore are useful sites for the examination of constructions of masculine identities in Zimbabwean literature, and the representation of those subjectivities that they embody. Representational practices, in which images are central, are important in the construction, maintenance, and contestation of Zimbabwean gender identities.

Masculinity intersects with power in social discourse. Relations of power within masculinities, and between masculinities and femininities, are complex. Michel Foucault’s conception of power is useful in understanding how power is dispersed and circulates in the matrix of masculinities and femininities in the novels being studied. In the words of Foucault (1978: 93): ‘power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but because it comes

from everywhere'. This conception of the diffusion of power is useful in helping to interrogate and possibly deconstruct many myths associated with masculinities, and also femininities. It is also useful in helping situate masculinity within a complex web of social relations, rather than as a supra-social category.

Insights from Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic theory are useful in understanding not only the complexities and dynamics of masculine identities, but also their interplay or dialogue with discourses of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation in the novels under study. In the words of Clark and Holquist (qtd in DeSantis, 2001: 5), Bakhtinian 'dialogism may be conceived as a "ceaseless struggle between centrifugal forces , which strive to keep things various, separate, apart, different from each other, and centripetal forces, which strive to keep things together, unified, same'. Centrifugal and centripetal forces are conceived here as variously implicated in the shaping, contestation, (re)negotiation of Zimbabwean post-independence masculine identities. Holquist (2002: 40) further notes that 'dialogue is Bakhtin's master-concept for it is present in exchanges at all levels – between words in language, people in society, organisms in ecosystems, and even between processes in the natural world'. Zimbabwean masculine and other identities are not exempt from this phenomenon of dialogue. So, narratives of masculinity are not conceived here as monologic, but as existing in a dialogic relationship with narratives of femininity, of race, class, sexuality, and nation, among others. According to Holquist (2002: 19), 'Dialogism argues that all meaning is relative in the sense that it comes about only as a result of the relation between two bodies occupying simultaneous but different space, where bodies may be thought of as ranging from the immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and to bodies of ideas in general (ideologies)'. Thus the dialogic principle helps in viewing, understanding, and conceptualising Zimbabwean masculinity as part of a complex network of relations in society, and how it shapes and is shaped in turn by them. In the words of Holquist (2002: 20), 'dialogism, like relativity, takes it for granted that nothing can be perceived except against the perspective of something else: dialogism's master assumption is that there is no figure without a background'. Thus the black and white masculinities in the selection of Zimbabwean post-independent literary narratives, here being considered, are examined against multiple backgrounds that include, not only the afore-mentioned, but also others like colonialism, the liberation war, globalisation, and so on.

Dialogism is also useful in exploring any dialogic relations amongst the texts, as other literary (and non-literary) narratives also act as background texts for them. As Holquist notes

(ibid.: 85), ‘Novels are overwhelmingly intertextual, constantly referring, within themselves, to other works outside them ... [and] among the more powerful inter-textual effects novels have is the extra-literary influence they exercise on claims to singularity and authority made by other texts and discourses’. This narrative interventionism is a feature of many Zimbabwean literary narratives; for example, it can be found in the works of the late Dambudzo Marechera, such as *House of Hunger and other Stories* (1979).

In a post-colonial context such as the Zimbabwean one, the subversive, anti-authoritarian and anti-hierarchical potential of dialogue cannot be under-estimated. Writing in the context of Afro-American culture, Hooks (1990: 45) asserts that ‘dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object ... [it] is a humanizing speech, one that challenges and resists domination’. Relations between the former colonizer and colonized masculinities are examined in this light in the Zimbabwean narratives under study.

Dialogue is not just external, that is, between the subject and his/her environment, but it is also internal. As asserted by Bakhtin (1981: 346): ‘Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values’. This observation of Bakhtin is important in examining the dynamics and ambivalences of Zimbabwean masculine identities, and also some contemporary discourses on masculinities, for example, the discourse on the ‘crisis of masculinities’.

As noted by Bakhtin, dialogue is also ‘the property of any discourse’ (1981: 279). Thus novelistic discourse itself is also dialogic, multi-voiced and heteroglossic: ‘The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages), and a diversity of individual voices [and genres], artistically organised’. This characteristic of the novel helps, not only in putting masculine identities in perspective, but in examining how they are formed, contested and transformed. Holquist’s observation that, ‘we see the world by authoring it, by making sense of it through the activity of turning it into a text, by translating it into finalizing schemes that can order its potential chaos – but only by paying the price of reducing the world’s variety and endlessness’, is pertinent in the same regard.

The Zimbabwean time-space from the year of independence up to today should not be seen as unitary. Therefore it may not be possible to speak of a single post-independence Zimbabwean chronotope (time-space singularity) which Bakhtin (1987:107) defines in general terms as ‘the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature’. The post-independence period can roughly be divided into three periods, beginning with the first decade of independence from 1980 to 1990. The decade

began with optimism and euphoria for many who hoped independence would usher in a new, just and prosperous era. By the middle of the decade, however, disillusionment had begun to set in as a result of independence's failure to fulfil its promises, and an ongoing civil war took place, artistically represented in Yvonne Vera's novel *The Stone Virgins* (2002). The period 1990 to about 2000 is marked by an externally-induced Economic Structural Adjustment (ESAP) programme that impacted on the people in various ways. It shows how globalisation and its neo-liberal economic ideology were impacting on the lived experiences of most of the people in the country. The post 2000 period is marked by the ditching of ESAP and the emergence of a 'nativist' and 'Afro-radical' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009) nationalist ideology, and the implementation of the fast-track land resettlement programme purportedly meant to address colonial land imbalances. It is a decade marked by a severe economic melt-down and a political crisis marked by the emergence of a strong opposition movement against the ruling political party. It culminated in a government of national unity (GNU) in 2008.

Important to note, however, is that there are continuities and discontinuities among these three periods. As noted previously, Primorac (2006: op cit), indeed, sees the continuation of the Rhodesian chronotope in the post-independence period, in spite of claims to the contrary in the dominant political discourses in the country. For purposes of this study, however, each period in the post-independence time-space is regarded as relatively distinct and impacting on masculine identities in a different way.

Insights from postcolonial theory are indispensable in the exploration and examination of postcolonial identities, in this case Zimbabwean post-independence masculinities. Pertinent to this study are some of the ideas of scholars such as Fanon (1967) and Mbembe (2001). Fanon (1963:28-84) sees colonialism as essentially a violent enterprise, whose contestation necessarily has to involve violence whose cathartic effect would purge the formerly colonized of some of the traumas of colonial subjugation. In the case of Zimbabwe, this violence manifested itself in the form of the anti-colonial armed struggle which helped to bring independence in 1980. The tragedy of the colonized, according to Fanon, is that he desires to be like the colonizer. The colonizer, to the colonized, represents the quintessence of power, control, and domination, and therefore is a model to be emulated. Fanon (ibid) also sees colonialism, from a gender perspective, as associated with the emasculation of the black man. The anti-colonial struggle therefore is aimed, *inter alia*, at the recovery of the masculinity of the black man. Fanon's observation is important for the examination of the post-independence masculinities.

Post-independent Zimbabwe is Mbembe's (2001: 102) archetypal postcolony: 'The notion "postcolony" identifies specifically a given historical trajectory – that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence which the colonial relationship involves'. Mbembe resonates with Fanon in the sense that he sees some continuities between the colony and the postcolony: 'The general practice of power has followed directly from the colonial political culture' (2001: 42). Mbembe explores not only the sexual politics, but also 'the sensory life of power in the postcolony' (2006: 143). Unlike the colonial focus that mainly defined Fanon, Mbembe's is typically post-colonial, and examines the African condition: 'no longer in the context of the call to murder the settler, but at a time when brother and enemy have become one, and in an age in which the sovereign right to kill is exercised against one's people first – the violence of brother against brother' (Mbembe, 2006: 154). Undoubtedly, it is a context in which masculine subjectivities produced by the time-space of colonialism are being renegotiated, and so the continuities and discontinuities of such identities are explored in the Zimbabwean literary narratives here being considered. Mbembe (2002) also identified two strands of political thought that mediate the political life of the post colony, and which readily apply to the Zimbabwean context, namely, Afro-radicalism and nativism. How these interface with masculinities as reflected in the literary texts is also important in this study.

Literary Criticism on Zimbabwean Masculinities

The critical radar of Zimbabwean literature, particularly in the first two decades after independence, has had gender largely out of the range of its beam. Critical exegeses of the literature have largely subsumed and sacrificed gender, in particular masculinities, in the grand-projects of anti-colonialism and nationalism, as in Zimunya's *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (1982), in which the motifs of drought and hunger serve to highlight and make visible colonialism's stultifying and enervating effects on the colonized blacks. Some critics, for example, Zhuwarara in *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (2001), focused on the representations of various dimensions of Zimbabwean life in various literary texts, and although a lot is examined regarding the lived experiences of the various characters who populate the narratives, the critical lens does not zero in on gender as a distinct category. The same could be said of Veit-Wild's critical text, *Teachers, Preachers and Non-Believers: A Social History of Zimbabwean Literature* (1992), in which the author categorises Zimbabwean writers according to different generations, and uses a sociological approach to

examine the literature. Other notable works, for example, Vambe's *African Oral Story-Telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English* (2004), and Primorac's *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe* (2006), as their titles suggest, do not have gender as their critical topos.

There has also been a near dearth of criticism of white-authored fiction in Zimbabwean critical discourses, and this is a consequence of the preoccupation with the need to recover the voices and narratives of the formerly colonized and silenced. Also the existence of a cultural nationalist narrative attempting to dominate the discursive spaces of the postcolony has seen to the near exclusion of white-authored narratives from the mainstream Zimbabwean critical canon. Notable exceptions are Anthony Chennells (1982) in his seminal study of white-authored literary narratives up to the year 1994. Chennells explores whites' representation of their existence as colonizer subjects and the ambivalences of their relationships to the colonized subjects and colonial spaces. Like the other critics above there is no specific focus on gender. Using the Bakhtinian concept of the chronotope, Primorac (2006) examines black and white narratives of the colonial and post-independence period and their relationship to the political discourses obtaining then. Similarly, Magosvongwe's (2014) study uses Afro-centric theory to examine land and identity in Zimbabwean post 2000 fiction. Apart from Chennells, the other major study that focuses exclusively on white-authored Zimbabwean literary texts is by Tagwirei (2014). Its focus is on this writing as a sub-set of Zimbabwean literature as well as its multiplicity and dialogic nature. Other critical narratives on both black and white-authored texts focus mainly on autobiography, as in, for example, Javangwe (2012).

Lindsay and Miescher's (2003: 1) observation that 'men have rarely been the subject of research on gender in Africa', but have merely functioned as 'a backdrop in the examination of women's experiences' is pertinent here. Much gendered criticism of Zimbabwean literature has focused on women and femininities at the expense of masculinities. For example, Gaidzanwa's *Images of Women in Zimbabwean Literature* (1985), examines the dominant images of women in Zimbabwean literature in the English, Shona, and Ndebele languages and establishes that women were mainly represented as mothers, wives, the jilted, and so on. The focus of Gaidzanwa's study is limited to black writers and black women's characters, and excludes the representation of white women and also white-authored literary texts. On the other hand Chitando (2011) examines the representation of AIDS and danger in women's writings in Zimbabwe, while Naidoo (2016) focuses on women's agency in female writing in

Zimbabwe. Evidently none of these works has masculinities as its specific focus.

The inclusion of the masculine subject in the study of gender in academic discourse is a recent phenomenon in Zimbabwean literature, where it has only begun to burgeon. Robert Muponde and Kizito Muchemwa's (eds) text, *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society* (2007), can be regarded as the ground-breaking text in the study of masculinities in Zimbabwean literature. In the introduction to the text, Muchemwa and Muponde (ibid) do not locate hegemonic masculinity on a map of dialogic relations, but as a monologic, monolithic, over-arching category, and construct the male body as the, threatening, monstrous and bestial other. In a reductionist formulation, they also see 'contemporary masculinity' (sic) in Zimbabwe (2007: xx) as wallowing in an unmitigated ontological crisis occasioned by recourse to violence to try to perpetuate its untenable and vile existence. In this formulation, masculinity seems to be an aggregation and accretion of irredeemable negatives. This occludes the complex ways in which hegemonic masculinities negotiate their survival, and the existence of dialogic relationship with other genders. The focus of the contributors is mainly on the fatherhood trope in the literature and in various cultural spaces, but this is only one component in the whole gamut of masculine identities. Patricia Alden's (2010: 83-99) article, 'Coming Unstuck: Masculine Identities in Postcolonial Zimbabwean Fiction', explores the crisis of masculinity in three Zimbabwean post-colonial literary texts by black writers. However, Alden's analysis implies that masculinity is an ossified and fixed category and does not show the ambivalences, contradictions, fragmentation, and dynamism that is inherent in post-modern identities.

Mutekwa's (2009: 725-740) article, 'Gendered Beings, Gendered Discourses: the Gendering of Race, Colonialism, and Anti-Colonial Nationalism in Three Zimbabwean Novels', explores how gender, in particular masculinity, mediated colonial discourses, including African anti-colonial discourses. This article, however, focuses on the colonial period rather than the post-independence one. Musanga and Mutekwa's (2013: 79-92) 'Supra-masculinities and Supra-femininities in Solomon Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* and Yvonne Vera's *Nehanda*', looks at the subversion of Western-premised masculine hierarchies as conceived by scholars such as Connell (1995). However, the two authors do not fully situate Mutswairo's text in the context of the early post-independence period in Zimbabwe in terms of its dialogic and extra-literary relationship with various other narratives. Then Mutekwa's (2013: 352-367) article, 'From "Boys" to "Men": Masculinities,

Triangular Desire, Race and Subalternity in Charles Mungoshi's Short Stories', uses Sedgwick's homosocial theory to explore the masculinities in the said literary narratives. This, however, is limited in its exploration of Zimbabwean masculinities, as homosociality is only one variable amongst many others.

However, no comprehensive diachronic and synchronic study on Zimbabwean post-independence masculinities, focusing on both black and white writers has as yet been done, and the present research hopes to extend the horizons of the study of Zimbabwean masculinities through incorporating both black and white writers.

Through a triangulation of different theoretical perspectives, this study, it is hoped, will not only broaden understandings of Zimbabwean masculinities, but also explore its interface with race, class, sexuality, nation, and other narratives in the public sphere. Mamdani (1998:63-66) unequivocally stresses the need for both former settlers and natives to re-invent themselves so as to bring about a new order in the post-independence dispensation. The question here, *inter alia*, is the extent to which the narratives studied here confirm, interrogate, or deny the existence of this metamorphosis. Godwin and Hancock's non-fictional text, *Rhodesians Never Die* (1993) ominously alludes to the endurance of white colonial identities, while the liberation struggle (*Chimurenga*) mentality, nativist, and Afro-radicalism discourses of the post-independence ruling elite may also suggest the same. This hints at the perpetuations of binaries that mediate life in the postcolony. The extent to which the literary texts studied here configure these through the masculinities that they construct will be explored.

The Analysis

The analysis, which will employ the above theories and methodologies, is divided into chapters, and focuses on key texts written from 1980, the year of independence for Zimbabwe, to 2008. Historically, as noted above, the period from independence to 2008 can be divided into three broad and generalized periods, namely: (i) 1980-1990: the decade of optimism; (ii) 1991- 1999: the decade of the economic structural adjustment programme; (iii) the period of the 'Third Chimurenga', whose hallmarks are the land reform programme and the economic meltdown. The chapters are organised around the following themes, and utilise the texts indicated:

Chapter One is the 'Introduction to the Study' and focuses on the background, the aims and rationale, contextualisation of Zimbabwean masculinities, the problems and issues to be investigated, research methodology, theoretical frameworks and constructs, and the literature

review. It sets the stage and gives the reader an overview of the multifarious aspects involved in the study.

Chapter Two, entitled, ‘Through a Tinted Lens: The Past in the Present, and Masculine Subjectivities in Solomon Mutswairo’s *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983) and Wilber Smith’s *Men of Men* (1981), looks at those literary narratives whose narrated time is set in the past, and which strategically locate this usable past to resonate with discourses of the present. The past being referred to here is the pre-colonial and the colonial. Focus is on how the historical images of masculinities in the texts exist in a dialogical relationship with discourses of the first decade of independence.

Chapter Three, ‘The Poetics of Alterity: The Masculine Subject at the Crossroads in Dambudzo Marechera’s *Mindblast* (1983) and David Lemon’s *Ivory Madness* (1983)’, examines those literary narratives that represent some of the masculine identities of the early years of independence; a time when erstwhile colonial identities are ostensibly being renegotiated and new post-independence ones being configured.

Chapter Four, ‘“Men’s Men”: Hyper-masculinities, Nation, and the Spectacle of the Masculine’, uses two detective-thrillers to examine and establish a link between the appropriation of the male body and its inscription with desired masculine iconography, and the nationalist discourses that defined the period with their attendant inclusions and exclusions. It also examines the extent to which the traditional male role of defending the nation, together with notions of masculine honour and humiliation are entangled in the imagination of the nation.

Chapter Five, ‘Confounding the Stereotypes: Challenging Normative Masculinities’, looks at the deconstruction of hegemonic masculine identities and the dialogic relations that obtain between masculinities and femininities and other social narratives in John Eppel’s *Hatchings* (1993), Nevanji Madanhire’s *If the Wind Blew* (1996), and Valerie Tagwira’s *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). It examines the Janus-faced nature of masculinities, the notion of male disempowerment, and the implication of the entrance of queer subjectivities on the terrain of normative masculinities and the ramifications of the same.

Chapter Six, ‘Contesting Narratives, Contrasting Masculine Subjectivities’, looks at conflicting narratives, that is, those that glorify the ‘fast-track’ land resettlement programme and those that are critical of the same, and the masculine identities portrayed therein. These are Nyaradzo Mtizira’s *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008) and Eric Harrison’s *Jambanja* (2006). It explores the dialogic relations between the masculinities and the dominant nationalist discourses of the period.

Chapter Seven, the 'Conclusion', summarises the findings and evaluates them. It also suggests possible areas for further research in order to extend and enhance the understanding of Zimbabwean masculinities and their interface with various other social narratives.

CHAPTER 2: Through a Tinted Lens: The Past in the Present, and Masculine Subjectivities in Solomon Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983) and Wilber Smith's *Men of Men* (1981)

'The post-colonial artist is a mirror distorted by history' (Njami, 2011: 202)

2.0: Introduction

The previous chapter was the introduction to this study. It provided the background and located the Zimbabwean masculinities focused on in the time-space of post-independence Zimbabwe which it subdivided into three periods, namely, the first decade of independence from 1980 to 1990, the second decade from 1990 to 2000, and then the 'Third Chimurenga' period from the year 2000 to the present. It also provided the aims and rationale for this study, the research problem, articulated the issues to be investigated, outlined the research methodology, the theoretical framework and constructs, and gave a review of literary criticism on Zimbabwean masculinities to date. It identified a number of gaps in these critical narratives, including the near dearth of masculinity as a critical topos in the Zimbabwean literary critical canon, and the absence of diachronic and synchronic studies on masculinity in post-independence Zimbabwean literature.

This chapter analyses two historical novels, namely Solomon Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983) and Wilber Smith's *Men of Men* (1981). These are texts whose narrative time is set in the pre-colonial past but whose narrated one is set in the post-colonial present. In a sense they represent the projection and insertion of narratives of the past into those of the present. Fiction is art and therefore is not constrained by the exigencies and demands for 'truth' and 'reality' which constrain historical discourses. Goodman (2005:248), while dwelling on this history-fiction distinction, nevertheless shows the close nexus that exists between the two: 'a work of fiction may shed light on historical memory, historical consciousness, and historical experience. It may show us more about the past and the relationship between past and present than works of history ever show us'. I would further argue that historical fiction occupies the liminal zone between history and fiction and draws on the advantages of both, but at the same time it can also be seen as ambivalent. The entanglement and dialogue of historical narratives and contemporary ones has been noted variously. For example, Musvoto (2010: 8), citing postmodernists, notes that the 'aspiration to recreate the past is an illusion and all historical writing bears an indelible impression of the present – indeed tells us more about present than past'. It is important to examine Mutswairo and Smith's novels in the light of such observations and this chapter, in analysing the

masculinities in these texts, tries to unpack and interrogate this entanglement between the present and the past in the narratives. The goal of the chapter is to examine how these discourses and the masculine identities contained therein resonate with, and/or complicate and confound those of the present, hence the title of the chapter, ‘The Past in the Present ...’.

2.1: Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe.

2.1.1: Synopsis

Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe is an historical novel chronicling the legend of the pre-colonial (mid to late nineteenth century) *mhondoro* (clan/territorial) spirit medium of Chaminuka, whom it constructs as an emblem and iconic figure in the struggle for the control and domination of the geo-socio-cultural-political space of pre-colonial Zimbabwe, broadly dividing the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups. The text has elements of both the romance and the epic, and it traces the rise and fall of Chaminuka in the convoluted and contentious politics of the time, characterized by rivalry between the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups for the domination of the geo-political space that is today’s Zimbabwe. The novel is about the recovery of a Shona ancestral past to resonate with, and aid in shaping, the early post- independence Zimbabwean nationalist discourses. As noted by Zhuwarara (1987:132), what is salutary and laudatory about Mutswairo’s novel is its negritudist-grounded, and cultural- nationalist inspired attempt to recover a pre-colonial African past as an antidote to the toxicity of colonial narratives and their denigrations of Africa’s history. However, the text readily feeds into a self-serving nationalist narrative spawned by the post-colonial government to serve its own ends, a narrative that reaches its apogee in the first decade of the 21st century.

This section, therefore, sets out to examine the portrayal of Zimbabwean pre-colonial masculinities in Mutswairo’s text, focusing on the ways in which these constructions are in dialogue with various other Zimbabwean discourses, both pre-colonial and contemporary. Because social discourses and ideologies are concretised in images, it is important to examine the heteroglossia and ambivalences surrounding these images of men and what this reveals about these masculine identities and their entanglement with other discourses.

2.1.2 The Trope of Spirit Possession in *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe*.

The entanglement of the spiritual and the secular is a defining feature of Shona cosmology (Mutekwa 2010:162). The Shona spiritual pantheon consists of various spirits, a classification of which necessitates recourse to anthropologist Lewis’ (1971:27-119) typology of central and

peripheral spirit possession where central spirits are those implicated in the guardianship of communal mores, while the peripheral ones are not. In Mutswairo's novel *Chaminuka* is possessed by a clan or territorial spirit which belongs to the central possession category in Lewis' typology. Clan/territorial spirits are spirits of royal ancestors which acted as the custodians of communal morality over the areas of jurisdiction of the former kings or queens. This explains the prominence of spirit mediums such as *Chaminuka* and others like *Nehanda*, *Kaguvi*, and *Mkwati* in Zimbabwe's cultural and historical memory. Clan/territorial spirits are distinguished from family spirits, whose moral jurisdiction is over the family or extended family.

As Vambe (2004: 41) notes: '[this] novel ... historicizes spirit-possession and makes it carry the values of cultural resistance of the Shona people', a fact that is consistent with central spirit possession. In *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* the entanglement of the secular and the spiritual in the lived experiences of the people is evident right at the beginning of the novel in the chapter entitled 'Mysterious Events at Chitungwiza' (7-12), Chitungwiza being the town/village where Pasipamire Turo, the spirit medium of the *mhondoro* spirit of *Chaminuka* is domiciled. The spirit of *Chaminuka* locates itself in mythical ancestral time-space: 'I am *Chaminuka* the spirit of your forefathers ... the son of Murenga, ruler of Govanwa in Guruuswa' (Mutswairo, 1983: 16). In a sense, in addition to his own, Pasipamire the spirit medium of *Chaminuka* embodies the identities and, consequently, the masculinities of these forebears. *Chaminuka*'s prophecies and proclamations therefore have the authority of the higher world of the spiritual, that is, that of the ancestors. In these prophetic words the time-space of the ancestors and that of the living merge, but in this liminal space between the living and the dead meanings are not always stable or closed. As novelistic discourse, this prophetic one, however, does not fully have the closed-off nature of what Bakhtin (1981: 342) calls 'authoritative discourse', and is by no means monologic: 'The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher' (ibid). The discourses of the multiple characters in the novel interact with the words of the ancestors, thereby creating a measure of heteroglossia.¹ This does not, however, do away with the fact that prophecy remains the over-arching and framing discourse, and prophet *Chaminuka*'s 'character zone' (Bakhtin, 1987: 316-23) is the dominant one. However, the novel's multiple-plots and consequent polyphony help the text maintain the characteristics of a novel.

¹ For a fuller discussion of this see Anias Mutekwa, 'Through a Charged Field: Authoritative Discourses and Dialogism in Solomon Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe*'.

2.1.3 .Contextualizing Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe*.

Appreciating the construction of masculine identities in Mutswairo's text necessitates recognition of the text as historical fiction. To begin with, the novel was published in 1983, about three years after the attainment of independence from colonialism. This was a highly charged period, with contesting versions of the nation vying for ascendancy. These politico-ethno-ideological conflicts cannot be fully understood outside pre-colonial and colonial Zimbabwean history. Mutswairo's text therefore represents one of those multifarious attempts to narrate the new nation which, unfortunately, it does 'through the cultural prism of ethnicity' (Vambe, 2004: 40).

Referring to colonial Africa, Njami (2011: 197) notes that Africa was robbed of its centres, which were appropriated by the colonising powers. Anti-colonial struggles were therefore directed against these centres, and the post-colonial vision envisaged the establishment of new endogenous centres. It follows that major fault-lines that corresponded to the pre-colonial and magnified by colonialism were papered over, but these were apparent below the surface; for example, Sithole (1999) noted that in the nationalist movement there were 'struggles within the struggle', as the various political actors fought for the power to control or determine the new post-colonial centres. These internal struggles were often along the lines of the multiple, pre-colonial centres or sub-centres that characterized Zimbabwe. The split of the nationalist movement in 1963 that resulted in ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People Union) and ZANU political parties foreshadowed this contest for the determination, control and domination of the post-colonial endogenous centre.

So, Mutswairo's novel is seen to intervene in the political contestations of the post-independence period by inserting the prophetic discourse (of Chaminuka) whose authority is supposed to put closure to all such contestations. It thus feeds into, and is part of the officially sanctioned state discourse that attempts to subsume all other discourses and that Mbembe (2001: 102-141) refers to as the 'master-code'. The space for the prophetic discourse is created by the political crisis of the early post-independence period occasioned by contesting and conflicting versions of the new Zimbabwean nation and characterized by political dissent from certain quarters of the population, coalescing around the Joshua Nkomo led PF-ZAPU party, who represented the potential of a competing and alternative centre to the dominant one of Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF. Mutswairo's novel consequently attempts to foreclose the envisioning of any alternative centres to the existing one by conferring on it a divinely-preordained status.

Mutswairo's mono ethno-centric nationalist vision in multi-ethnic and multiracial Zimbabwe is not only fractured, but also fractures the post-independence Zimbabwean nation as it tries to create and privilege one ethno-centric centre at the expense of others. In this project, it tries to make it appear pre-ordained by seeking recourse to the prophetic word through the appropriation of the Shona pre-colonial prophet and spirit medium Chaminuka. The scenario validates Fanon's observation that: 'Immediately after independence ...[t]he national front which has forced colonialism to withdraw cracks up...' (1963: 128).

2.1.4: Men and Masculinities in *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe*

2.1.4.1: Of Spirit Possession and Masculinities

Through its ability to confound space and time, spirit possession when inserted into discourses of people's lived experiences tends to have a destabilising and confounding effect on human identities, including gendered ones. Various studies (for example, Lewis, 1971:27-119; Mutekwa, 2010:166-169) have shown that woman in patriarchal societies can appropriate power and transcend their subalternity through spirit possession. Spirit possession, therefore, helps in the decentralisation and dispersion of power, resonating with Foucault's (1978: 93) observation.

Regarding masculinities and spirit possession in *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983), Musanga and Mutekwa (2013) argue that spirit possession in the text entails transcendence, thus conferring on Chaminuka a supra-masculine identity. Their argument, however, does not explore the complexities of this identity associated with spirit possession, and the dialogic relations of the novel's discourse with other narratives. To begin with, Pasipamire Turo, the spirit medium of Chaminuka, is described as both young and athletic, aspects that are consistent with hegemonic masculinity. He is also the youngest son of chief Rwizi, something that confers on him a junior status in the family in a culture where seniority on the basis of age is important. And then when the spirit possesses him space, time and identity are collapsed as he becomes the mythical 'Chaminuka, the son of Murenga, ruler of Govanwa in Guruuswa' (Mutswairo, 1983:16), a legendary Shona ancestor-king.²

When he is possessed, Pasipamire's identity can be said to be a compound one, that is, that of a man-spirit, embodying both the material and ethereal respectively. This identity, because of its in-betweenness, suggests liminality and ambivalence, thus further complicating the masculine identity of the bearer of the spirit. In a sense, by possessing and speaking through

² For more on Murenga Sororenzou see Vimbai G. Chivaura (2009).

him, the spirit appropriates his identity and thus emasculates Pasipamire. At the same time, it gives him an identity that is over and above that of the masculine in a secular sense. This emasculation-masculinisation dynamic locates this masculinity in a zone of liminality, therefore ambivalent and unstable.

As a guardian of communal morality, Pasipamire as the medium of the spirit of Chaminuka (referred to just as Chaminuka) is also implicated in the construction and policing of identities, including masculine ones. His philosophy of peace and love is proffered as an alternative to, and exists in a dialogic relationship with the dominant masculinities of the time (the pre-colonial); that is, those of the soldier, as represented by both the Rozvi and the Ndebele ethnic groups. Indeed there is consternation and bewilderment because his people think that they need new military-oriented identities to match the military prowess of the Ndebele soldiers. The people conceive this philosophy as feminising rather than masculinising, and disabling rather than enabling. For some, embracing it spells doom for the community, but for others it is the most pragmatic, in addition to its having ancestral authority. Here the prophetic word also attempts to revolutionise identities, but struggles to find full accommodation by people who see it as premised on a logic that is out of sync with current realities. Therefore, Chaminuka has to perform miracles, not only to save the community, but also to justify his philosophy of peace as an antidote to war. This shows that his discourse is not of the kind that Bakhtin (1981:345) refers to as ‘internally-persuasive discourse’, but rather occupies an ambivalent space between authoritative and internally-persuasive discourses.

Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe also shows the symbiosis as well as the conflict between human agency and the intervention of the spiritual, an aspect that complicates the identities and subjectivities of not only the masculine subjects in this community, but also the feminine. The limit of human agency as well as spiritual intervention in the lives of the people is amply shown, and is epitomised by the case of the prophet Chaminuka. In fact, the instability of the spiritual narrative permeates the text and much of what happens has to do with the negotiation of the boundaries between human agency and spiritual intervention. In fact, the efficacy of Shona masculinities in ensuring the survival of the society is closely linked to the ability to negotiate this human-spiritual dynamic. The conflict between human agency and the spiritual has a debilitating and often disabling effect on masculinities, as the narrative makes explicit.

2.1.4.2: Of Patriarchal Figures

The novel’s patriarchal orientation is manifest in many ways. To begin with it is mainly

populated and dominated by male authority figures of whom Chaminuka is emblematic. The title of the text *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* elevates Chaminuka to national status, thereby subsuming and overshadowing other religious centres in other parts of the country, for example, the Mwari cult of the Matopo hills in Western Zimbabwe.³ From a gender perspective, it also signifies the elevation of the masculine principle over the feminine and reinforces the association of the nation with masculinity, as has been identified by many scholars, such as Mayer (2000:14).

The novel is also about roots, hence the invocation of mythical Mbire (Shona) ancestors such as Murenga Sororenzou and Tobela (Mutswairo, 1983: 20). Spirit possession in the novel establishes an unbroken link between this past and the novel's narrated time-space and narrative one. This represents an attempt to locate the origins of the nation in mythical time, a strategy that subtly excludes other groups who cannot trace their ancestry similarly. It is an attempt to construct a national master-narrative that pushes other narratives to the margins, aiming for a monologic status rather than a dialogic one. The recourse to the prophetic word only furthers this grand design. In the novel, ancestry is reconstructed and memorialised through the images of male ancestor figures, thus resonating with the configuration of the post-colonial dispensation in which the nation is dominated by patriarchal figures, seen as the nation's founding fathers. In this way, it establishes a nexus between patriarchy and the nation. The founding fathers so privileged are those the novel constructs as forming an unbroken line with the origins of (the novel's) nation in mythical times. The text thus attempts to construct the fiction of a pristine nation with unbroken roots, while conveniently and blatantly ignoring the numerous entanglements that confound and destabilise such a utopian narrative, typified by what Hall (1996: 596) calls 'the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history'.

The image of the prophet Chaminuka is constructed in contradistinction with that of Lobengula, king of the rival Ndebele ethnic group. As part of the text's binary and exclusive orientation, Lobengula is imaged as a barbaric and bellicose leader presiding over a bloodthirsty ethnic group from which no positives can be drawn. So authoritarian is he that any dissenting voices are silenced through execution, of which the only other alternative is flight. Chaminuka, on the other hand is romanticised and idealised, as is the Shona ethnic group. This Manichean binarization smacks of the novel's highly charged political nature and helps make visible the entanglement of images of masculinity with various discourses.

Besides Chaminuka and Lobengula, other patriarchal figures also people the narrative,

³ For more on the Mwari Cult see M.L. Daneel (1970).

both at familial and clan levels. Some of these fit the paradigm of the 'big man' in particular clan and ethnic leaders. The most significant figure is Mutinhima, king of the Rozvi (a subgroup of the Shona), who is belaboured for failing to protect his people from attacks by the Ndebele. While the narrative is appreciative of erstwhile Rozvi military prowess, it is critical of their inability to adapt fast enough to meet the new threat posed by the militarily more efficient Ndebele. In fact, egotism, complacency, and misplaced priorities are seen as the Achilles heel of Rozvi masculinities, as instanced by their far-fetched, improbable, and megalomaniac attempts to build a tower and attempt to bring the moon down from the sky (Mutswairo, 1993: 53-73). This discourse could also serve as an admonition to the post-colonial rulers to get their priorities right and not waste their energies and resources on grandiose, white elephant projects merely to massage and assuage their masculine egos at the expense of the welfare of the people.

These patriarchal figures are, to an extent, the equivalent of what Holter and Aarseth (qtd in Holter, 2000: 68-70) refer to as 'paternalist patriarchy'. The text, however, is more focalised on Shona masculinities, which are represented on several sites of their lived experiences. One notes the communal-orientedness of this community, and a symbol of this is the *dare*, which refers to the men's meeting place. It marks the separation of the public sphere, largely dominated by men, from the domestic sphere, seen as the province of women. The *dare* is also a masculine symbol, as it was largely a male-only space where men spent time together to socialise, to discuss important issues, and also to get ready to defend the clan from any danger. Here young men were also educated not only concerning their masculine duties and responsibilities, but also about the affairs of the clan. The most important *dare* in the clan was the chief's, where he and his councillors met to discuss important issues of state or to try criminal cases. The chief ruled in consultation with his councillors, as illustrated by the case of the Shona chief Wariwa, who decides to leave his homeland to settle in another part of the country in order to escape from Ndebele attacks.

At the *dare* verbal skills were important, and as noted previously, Shire (1994: 147) notes that the ability to manifest verbal skills was a significant marker of true manhood. However, verbal skills are only a marker of one aspect of manhood. As the novel makes explicit, sites other than the *dare* required different masculinities, for example, soldiery. This is all the more pertinent due to the threats to the community posed by the Ndebele soldiers. The greater stress put on soldier masculinity is in direct response to changed circumstances, and so it begins to overshadow other aspects of male identities. As masculinity in the text is closely tied to the

protection and survival of the community, this then is the only constant around which the identities revolved and shifted.

Ndebele masculinity, on the other hand is less extensively presented, but is concretised around the image of the soldier to the exclusion of virtually everything else. The text constructs them as driven by the basest of human instincts, and there is no room for alternative masculinities. Metaphors of barbarism frame Ndebele masculine identities in the text, and they are constructed as the Other of Shona masculinities. The only redeeming features are when a few turn-coats renounce these and then flee to join the Shona. This is part of the text's grand design of national inclusion and exclusion as will become manifest below.

2.1.4.3: Contrasted Images: Shona and Ndebele Masculinities in *Chaminuka: A Prophet of Zimbabwe*

The novel's attempt to foreground and privilege ethnicity in the construction of a national identity makes it a fertile ground for the examination of ethnically-oriented gender identities, in particular masculine ones, for the nation is often constructed as the domain of masculinity. The construction of these ethnic masculinities should be seen in the entanglement of, and dialogue between the pre-colonial, the colonial, and the post-colonial time-spaces. Dialogic relations amongst these competing, conflicting, and often ambivalent discourses form the background against which the masculine identities in *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* should be understood. These identities help in constructing one another as, in the words of Holquist (2002: 19) 'dialogism's master assumption is that there is no figure without a background'.

In the text, Shona and Ndebele masculinities are contrasted but they exist in a dialogic relationship and help to construct one another. While Ndebele masculinity is reduced to, and circumscribed by the war ethic, Shona masculinity is characterized by diversity and given a human face, with the supposed deficiency of each amply demonstrated. While the Ndebele excel militarily, they are constructed as devoid of the finer aspects of culture and civilisation: 'As for the refined fruits of progress and of social and personal decorum – attributes born of peace and inward thought, these they lack' (Mutsware, 1983:38). While the Shona are represented as excelling in these aspects, they are constructed as woefully lacking in the military aspect: 'Our situation is pitiful. We haven't even learned resistance... We just live to eat, and eat to live, and leave all else to the fortuitous caprice of the *midzimus* [ancestral spirits]' (ibid). The clarion call here is for these Shona masculinities to re-invent themselves to ensure the community's survival. The narrative makes visible the struggle of these masculinities to negotiate between the pull of the old identities and the push to adopt new ones in order to

survive. Here is a classical manifestation of the struggle between centripetal and centrifugal forces, particularly during a time of crisis. In the words of Holquist, ‘centrifugal forces ... seek to keep things apart, and centripetal forces ... work to make things cohere’ (2002: 66).

In fact, one notices a love-hate dynamic and elements of schizophrenia and ambivalence in the way both images of Ndebele and Shona masculinities are constructed in the text. While there is an attempt to create a ‘unitary language’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 270) relating to these masculinities, the heteroglossia in the text has a destabilising effect on the images that are a crystallisation of the construction of Shona and Ndebele masculinities in the text. This ambivalence and destabilisation problematise the neat division of masculinities into hegemonic, complicit, marginal, and subversive in the literature on masculinities. A messy picture emerges in which every form of masculinity feels and senses its lack of certain qualities which it necessarily covets in the other forms, in spite of the association with power or powerlessness that each masculine identity is associated with. This also could explain the love-hate relationship that exists between masculinities and femininities. Masculine identities therefore are not only unstable but insecure and so consequently always trying to buttress themselves.

As a cultural identity, pre-colonial Shona masculinity in the text is constructed as complex, and hunting, farming, as well as fighting, largely defined Shona manhood, though it is not reducible to these. However, as the narrative clearly shows, there was room for alternative masculinities. The tension between what is regarded as hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities is evident in Shona folk-wisdom, as the narrative shows. Alternative masculinities to the hegemonic, such as those contained in Chaminuka’s philosophy of peace and love, are contained in oral narratives such as folk tales. This indeterminacy regarding the quintessential masculine identity in a way creates the space for Chaminuka’s peace-love philosophy. However, it takes authoritative discourse to push this alternative form of masculinity to the fore, resonating with Lewis’s social deprivation theory (1971: 27) that claims that spirit possession is used to bring marginalized discourses to the centre. In fact this alternative form of masculinity comes to the fore after the above-mentioned hegemonic masculine forms have failed to protect the Shona from the Ndebele, inducing what could be called a crisis in pre-colonial Shona masculinity, body-politic, and nation. The social disjunctions caused by failure of the hegemonic masculinities of the day create the space for the envisioning of alternative versions of masculinity, and these are represented by Chaminuka’s philosophy. This makes evident the heteroglossia that exists between masculinities and other discourses, and thus the shaping of these identities cannot be thought

of outside these. However, centripetal forces represented by culture and tradition try to fossilise these, but the exigencies of surviving in an ever-changing world are the centrifugal forces that negate and militate against any stasis as far as the identities are concerned.

Chaminuka's prophecy and philosophy and the masculine identities of his socio-religious ideologies have what can be seen as a millenarian dimension, promising the people respite and salvation if they repent and disabuse themselves of their old (masculine) ways and thereby 'purify' themselves in readiness for a new existence. So, Chaminuka's liminal and supra-masculine identity empowers him to forge a discourse on new masculinities that he sees as essential to the survival of the community, suggesting that the survival imperative is central in the construction of masculine identities both spatially and temporally. In Mutswairo's novel, it all begins with a crisis in pre-colonial Shona hegemonic masculinity emanating from their inability to protect the community from attacks by the Ndebele.

This text shows that the discourses of the crisis of masculinity can have their origin in the failure of the hegemonic forms of masculinities of the day to deal with new realities that thus make them redundant or inadequate. In fact, new realities require new forms of masculinity that can successfully negotiate these. Hegemonic masculinity in the pre-colonial, it can be argued in this case, contains those aspects of masculinity that are at the centre of the survival of the community and are not simply self-serving or individualistic. Society, including women, had a stake in the cultivation of these masculinities for the very survival of the society, and in no way were these masculinities toxic as far as the particular society was concerned. This is in spite of the society being largely 'patrifocal', to borrow a term from Acholonu (1995). Considering the communal orientation of Shona society, and the *unhu/ubuntu* philosophy contained therein, it can be seen that, at least in Mutswairo's text, performances of particular masculinities were linked to the survival of the society, and the potential toxicity of some was averted by their generally being channelled towards the good of the society. The exclusion of women from the performance of these masculinities, for example the military, was partly a consequence of the division of labour, though Mutswairo's text does not show the reader the full gamut of Shona gendered identities.

Thus the construction of Shona masculinities, the privileged ones in Mutswairo's text, is instanced by schizophrenic and ambivalent elements which here are seen as a manifestation of the pull of the opposing centrifugal and centripetal forces on these identities, revealing fissures in the attempt by the narrative to construct a quintessential Shona masculinity. While it privileges the peaceful, filial-oriented philosophy of Chaminuka, it also lauds the fighting prowess of the Rozvi and other Shona men like Mushaninga in their struggle against the

Ndebele, while simultaneously vilifying the military efficiency of the Ndebele. Shona violence is sanitised as defensive, part of, and meant to preserve what is seen as the 'cultured' way of life, while that of the Ndebele is vilified as destructive and driven by the darker forces of unbridled human instincts. The fighting prowess of some of the Shona figures in the text is testimony to the fact that the Shona were not hapless and helpless victims of the Ndebele. The erstwhile Rozvi military prowess, and the Shona cultural accomplishments and the masculinities embodied therein, are constructed as some of the key elements of Shona manhood.

2.1.4.4: Of National Inclusion and Exclusion

To delineate Shona and Ndebele masculinities, and to further its discourses of exclusion and inclusion in the new nation, the text uses an iconography premised on binarism and reminiscent of Western enlightenment discourses: that of the distinction between nature and culture; good and evil; inside and outside. In *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* Shona masculinities, in the way they are constructed, are associated with the refined, the cultured, the humane, and the civilised, while Ndebele ones are associated with that of the uncultured, uncouth, brutal, bestial and uncivilised Other. The former are the ones that are being privileged in the national discourse that the text is promoting, while the latter are constructed as the toxic ones that must be expunged from the national body-politic. Belonging to the new nation therefore is the equivalent of adopting the former as shown by the Ndebele turncoat Mavolwane, who renounces Ndebele masculinities to embrace Shona ones and so is adopted by the Shona. The same applies to Chaminuka's gift wife from Lobengula, Bavheya, who similarly renounces all that the Ndebele stand for. These images signify that acceptance in the new nation for the marginalized groups is conditional. The only Shona turncoat, Dzukwa, the man who betrays Chaminuka to the Ndebele, is portrayed as a traitor and quisling who at the end finds no accommodation among the Shona nor the Ndebele. In fact, those Shona who get incorporated into Ndebele society are constructed as doing so under duress and coercion.

In the novel, Ndebele masculinity is defined by those metaphors that denote the basest of human instincts and the beast in man. In fact a binary, typical of Western cosmology, in which Shona masculinities are constructed as the epitome of that which is quintessentially human and 'good', while Ndebele ones are constructed as the epitome of the bestial and the 'evil' other, guided by the basest of human instincts such as the search for food and women, permeates the text. Their supposed needs, or 'instincts', if placed on psychologist Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, rank very low, and therefore cannot fully be distinguished from

those of animals: 'The Matebeles prized far above everything else three things: wives, cattle and fighting' (Mutswairo, 1983: 101). While those of the Shona, placed on the same hierarchy, rank very high. This vilification and negative construction of Ndebele masculinities as an aberration in the pre-colonial geo-political space of Zimbabwe is meant to cast aspersions on their belonging on equal terms in the new post-independence dispensation and on their capacity to lead in the new nation. They can only, therefore, be incorporated as subalterns. Images of Ndebele masculinities in the text easily compare with those of some early European writers' representation of Africans as the uncivilised bestial Other. One might even be tempted to think that the author, paradoxically and ironically, in constructing pre-colonial Ndebele masculinities, was taking a leaf from the Oxford history professor, Trevor Roper's (qtd in Ouzgane and Morrell, 2005: 2) construction of pre-colonial Africans as a wild, demonic and unbridled violent force. These masculinities, in the universe of the novel, need to be tempered with the kind of masculinity as embodied in Chaminuka, as a condition of their acceptance in the new nation. So Mutswairo's text, to further its grand project, invests the male body with cultural inscriptions that unfortunately attempt to essentialise identity, and create the insider-outsider binary in its nationalist discourse.

The way the text writes them out of the national narrative is encapsulated by the statement by one of the Mbire (Shona) that the Ndebele are 'a horde of strangers who brought nothing to this land but fighting, suffering and destruction' (Mutswairo, 1983: 161). This iconography resonates with understandings of the nation as based on the insider-outsider dialectic. Chaminuka's final prophecy before he is killed, on the orders of Lobengula, sums up the novel's grand project: 'because you have grieved the spirits of the land, when Chaminuka is gone, his seed shall prosper and overwhelm your seed' (ibid: 182).

The discourse of the novel, arguably, resonates with those that were used to justify the crackdown on political dissenters in the western regions of Zimbabwe in the early 1980s in what has come to be referred to as *Gukurahundi*, or the Matabeleland disturbances. In fact, it is part of this violence, though it operates at an epistemological level. The government's military crackdown resulted in the death of an estimated 20 000 people (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 1997), although the figures vary depending on the source. The etymology of the term *Gukurahundi*, a Shona word that means 'sweeping away the chaff', resonates well with the vilification and demonization of Ndebele masculinities in the text. The reported violence of the army's North Korean trained Fifth Brigade in its suppression of dissent in western Zimbabwe in a way cynically mirrors the violence of the pre-colonial Ndebele soldiers as constructed in the novel. In the discourse of the novel, the tribulations in Matabeleland in

the first decade of independence are a manifestation and actualisation of the ‘curse and famine’ (Mutswairo, 1983: 182) prophesied by Chaminuka as the spiritually and divinely ordained punishment for their killing of him and the general cruelty that it constructs as a marker of Ndebele interactions with neighbouring ethnic groups. Enloe (qtd in Mayer, 2000: 15), could not have put it better in observing that the nation is inseparable ‘from masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope’, but ironically in this case, it is the ethnic nation that is being promoted.

In actual fact, in the way in which it constructs Shona masculinities vis-à-vis those of the Ndebele, Mutswairo’s text is dealing with a discursive, historical, and supposed crisis of Shona masculinities in the context of the new nationalist discourses. By inserting this discourse into the national narrative in the first decade of independence, the author is in fact perpetuating this imagined crisis, and in a sense attempting to fix identities in space and time, negating the forging of new ones that help in the building of a new nation. Narrating the ethnic nation in the context of Mutswairo’s text entails a discursive rehabilitation of Shona masculinities in the historical context not only of Ndebele masculinities, but also the white colonial ones. In hegemonic masculinity politics, defeat and failure to hold one’s own amount to a loss of face and the sense of being masculine, in which case recourse is sought for a recovery of the same.

However, it is of paramount importance to note that *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* is a product of pre-colonial narratives of rivalry between the Shona and Ndebele as seen through the prism and lens of colonial discourse. Ranger (1988), in ‘The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe,’ notes how colonial narratives in Zimbabwe invented ethnicity where little existed, in order to further its own grand project of divide and rule. So, colonial narratives can be accused of having magnified the pre-colonial strife between the Ndebele and Shona and the latter’s helplessness in the case of attacks from the former as noted by various scholars, for example Bourdillon (1982: 14-15). Colonial history, arguably, is implicated in discursively constructing black ethnic identities, and in spawning the crisis of the nation that characterized the early post-independence period through the ways that it constructed Ndebele and Shona pre-colonial relations.

Unfortunately, Mutswairo’s text is unable to transcend these colonial narratives and becomes, in the sense in which it constructs Shona-Ndebele relations and masculinities, a mere continuation of them. In a sense, Mutswairo’s discourse in this novel is a classical instance of what Bakhtin refers to as ‘another’s speech in another’s language’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 324), in the sense of its being mediated by colonial narratives. So the way identities are viewed in the text, at least at a metaphoric level, is mediated by the essentialist paradigm in which fixity rather than fluidity is the defining dialectic. Referring to this essentialist way of conceiving identities,

Hall notes that, ‘our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as “one people”, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history’. In this way, the text tries to promote what scholars of nationalism refer to as the primordialist and sociobiologist views of nationalism (Harris, 2009: 48), something that cuts right through the centre of multi-ethnic and multi-racial Zimbabwe. This resonates with Brennan’s observation that: ‘Nations ... are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role’ (2006: 130).

Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe also speaks to, and complicates the masculinities of the post-independence Zimbabwean ruling class, particularly in terms of how they are to re-invent themselves after the anti-colonial struggle. In the form of Chaminuka’s philosophy and ideals, it offers a counter discourse to the colonial ones and their hegemonic masculinities centred on those forms in which individualism, domination, primitive accumulation, exploitation and oppression are the norm. These colonial masculinities are discussed in the next section. In Negritudist fashion, Chaminuka’s text valorises the autochthonous *unhu/ubuntu*-based masculinities as an alternative to the colonial models which in many ways have complicated post-independence Zimbabwean masculinities. The text’s discourse, however, can be double-edged, as it can also serve as an indictment of the post-colonial government’s military crackdown on dissent in parts of the country in the early 1980s, as Chaminuka’s philosophy of love and peace is the exact opposite of this.

Nostalgia, which Boym (qtd in Walder, 2011: 9) sees as ‘a generalized desire for origins, for unmediated experience that tries to defeat time,’ therefore informs the discourse of the text. The text’s grand project is such that it privileges selected memories at the expense of others. It is instanced by ‘restorative nostalgia’ which attempts ‘to restore the past, as in national and nationalist revivals everywhere, turning history into tradition and myth and monument’ (Walder, *ibid*: 10). In this scenario, cultural identities are essentialised and fixed in space and time.

2.2: Of Nostalgia: Reliving Colonial Frontier Masculinities in Wilber Smith’s *Men of Men* (1981)

2.2.0: Introduction

This section analyses Wilber Smith’s historical novel *Men of Men* (1981) which, like Mutswairo’s novel discussed above, is an historical romance and adventure novel. *Men of*

Men, though, is a latter day one more or less nesting and aggregating together with earlier novels of empire such as Henry R. Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). Like most other imperial romances, it is premised on adventure involving its mainly masculine heroes, and is therefore an example of what Boehmer (qtd in Primorac, 2006: 21) refers to as 'imperial adventure fiction'. The main plots of such texts and many a settler novel, according to Primorac 'are shaped as quests, in which the heroes strive towards objects of value ... [They] have multiple plots; in each of them, various plot lines contain structural and thematic elements referring to different European popular genres', descriptions that apply accurately enough to Smith's novel. The generic hybridity and plot diversity readily predispose the text to polyphony, though its over-arching imperial and racist discourses strive for a monologic status. The title of the text, 'men of men', is part of what Primorac (2006: 20), citing Chennells, refers to as a 'validating mythology used by white settlers to justify their presence and behaviour in the region'.

Published in 1981, a year after Zimbabwe's attainment of independence, the novel can be said to represent an insertion and projection of the erstwhile discourses of empire with their concomitant masculinities into the post-independence narratives, particularly as they relate to the former colonized and colonizers. In many ways, therefore, nostalgia can be said to be a defining and mediating dialectic of this narrative. The reference to the colonizers with their hegemonic frontier masculinities, as the 'men of men', when inserted in current discourses, can be said to be tinged with a feeling of longing for a glorious past, and a dissatisfaction with the contemporary. In Boym's (qtd in Walder, 2011:10) typology, this form of nostalgia is restorative and 'focuses on *nostos*, and tries in spite of history to reconstruct the lost home or homeland ... turning history into tradition and myth and monument'. This is the same kind of nostalgia as in Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe*.

Even though Wilber Smith was not born in Zimbabwe, but in colonial Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), his novel, in terms of its universe of discourse, is 'thematically connected to the geographical area of today's Zimbabwe' (Primorac, 2006: 20), hence its relevance for exploration here. Smith, a white writer, has also since lived in South Africa, and at the time of writing that country was still under apartheid, so his authoring of this colonial historical romance may be seen as a perpetuation of an imperially-oriented discourse, possibly due to his own circumscriptions and the influence of the concomitant ideologies.

2.2.1: Of Ambivalence and Frontier Masculinities

The novel is a fictionalised rendition of the men who were the leading figures in the

colonization of Zimbabwe and their conquest of the country in the late nineteenth century. These men, whose iconic figure is Cecil John Rhodes, are Wilber Smith's 'men of men', in the mould of the hegemonic frontier masculinities referred to by Connell (2000a:25). Domination, conquest, exploitation, and love of adventure define the essence of these masculinities; the hegemonic ones of empire. These are men shaped and influenced by the dominant European Enlightenment episteme that informed and shaped the discourses of empire at the time. They are the rational and scientific subjects of this Enlightenment who are out to bring 'light' to those 'dark' corners of Africa. National chauvinism and bigotry are highlighted at various points in the novel and are invariably mostly associated with the person of Rhodes, leading figure in the colonization of Zimbabwe, who at one point reminds one of his associates: 'You should thank God every day, Jordan, that you were born an Englishman' (Smith, 1981: 340). In the imperial imaginary, therefore, the discourses on masculinities are closely tied to those of the nation; a not too surprising scenario, as the nation is often viewed as the domain of masculinities. In the words of Mayer (2000: 6), it 'has largely been constructed as a hetero-male project, and imagined as a brotherhood'.

The hegemonic colonizers' masculinities in the text are shaped in the very cauldron of the imperial spaces, and so their story starts in colonial South Africa, before going on north to Zimbabwe. The main character in the novel, Zouga Ballantyne, is born and bred in the African space itself, and therefore shaped by no other discourses than the colonial and imperial ones. His first name is derived from the name of a river in southern Africa where he was born. This naming highlights the hybridisation that inescapably comes to characterize the colonising masculine subjects, all pretensions to the contrary notwithstanding. For example, during his sojourn in pre-colonial Matabeleland he is given the nickname 'Bakela' by the local people, a decidedly masculine name which means 'the fist' in the Ndebele language. If anything, there is this dialogic relationship between the soon to be colonized spaces, the local people, and the colonising subjects.

However, one also notes the hierarchies that are constructed amongst the colonising subjects, based on the distinction between those born in England (the metropolis) and the ones born in the colony: 'Home born was vastly superior to colonial born' (Smith, 1981: 44). Implicit in this is the super-ordination of the metropolitan spaces *vis-à-vis* the colonial ones. These hierarchies problematise the masculinities of the colonising subjects and point at possible fissures in the colonizer body-politic, fissures that also reflect on the relationship between the metropolis and the colony. The metropolis-born ones, with their superiority complex, would have wanted to dominate the colonial-born, while on the other hand, there is

the possibility of the development of compensatory behaviours to counter the superiority complex of the metropolis-born by those colonising men born in the colony as typified by Zouga (henceforth referred to as Ballantyne). In the text, one can interpret the hyper-masculinity of Ballantyne, apparent in his ultra-toughness, as a veritable manifestation of this. Both centrifugal and centripetal forces operate on these masculinities, creating ambivalences and destabilising them. These colonial-born men have to grapple with the discourse of 'going native', which was the equivalent of going 'savage', that was used to police the bodies of the colonising subjects, erecting boundaries that every such subject was not supposed to cross. This represents an attempt to induce fixity and essentialise identities, a scenario that shows the influence of racist ideology. The ambivalent identity could have engendered a desire by the colonial-born whites to assert themselves both in relation to their kindred who were born in the metropolis and the colonized or soon to be colonized blacks as Ballantyne is wont to do. The need for this balancing act is suggestive of the complex ways in which colonising men negotiated their masculine identities. This is against the background of some of these English colonialists viewing themselves as the very quintessence of all the European colonising nations.

Racist discourse is at the centre of this attempt to create a monologism and negate the reality of identity formation as a process of becoming. Racist ideology represents the centripetal forces that try to subdue the centrifugal forces in attempting to maintain the superordination and subordination of colonizer and colonized respectively. Racist discourse represents Bakhtin's (1981: op cit) 'authoritative discourse' that is entrapping and tries to negate dialogue, in the same way that ethnicity does in Mutswairo's text discussed above. In fact, racism and ethnicity complicate and militate against dialogism as conceived by Bakhtin, and in a way help to shed more light on the denial of voice to the subaltern as noted by Spivak (1988: 24-28). In such discourse the dialogue is framed, constructed and controlled by one centre at the expense of another. While it has the semblance of a dialogue, it is in reality a monologue. The Other is always essential in Bakhtin's dialogism, but he was not referring to the other as subaltern, something that represents a blind-spot in the theory. So the subaltern Other of colonial discourse is denied a voice, as implied in the title of Smith's novel, 'Men of Men', a subtle attempt to deny the masculinity of the colonized. In fact, the existence of social ideologies complicates the operation of centrifugal and centripetal forces as they relate to people's identities, as evidenced in this text. So, although postcolonial theory postulates that both colonizer and colonized were transformed by the colonial experience, this was mainly within parameters that were defined by racist ideology and practices. Genuine dialogue between colonizer and colonized is forestalled and foreclosed except as a one-way, top-down

process between dominator and dominated. In this relationship down – top dialogue is highly constricted, except when it serves the interests of the dominator as shown in the interaction between the colonizer frontier masculinities and the colonized in the novel.

The African space is constructed as a hostile and threatening presence, requiring toughness on the part of the colonizers to negotiate and cope with. The embodiment of this toughness is Ballantyne who is an explorer, elephant hunter, concession seeker, miner, and soldier all rolled in one. In the text he is the first white man to get a mining (read ‘colonising’) concession from the Ndebele king, then the dominant power on the Zimbabwean plateau. In spite of all the aforementioned masculine attributes, Ballantyne tries unavailingly and so is unable to execute the colonial concession, and this is left to none other than Cecil John Rhodes, who is, incidentally, a metropolis-born colonising masculine subject. Coincidentally, it is he who proves to have all the veritable leadership acumen and what it takes to organise the imperial-cum-commercial adventure that resulted in the colonization of the land between the Zambezi and the Limpopo rivers and that was invariably named after him as Rhodesia. In fact, the figure of Ballantyne pales before that of Rhodes, and symbolically both his Kimberley mining claim and his colonial concession are taken over by Rhodes. At a metonymic and metaphoric level, the metropolis-born man swallows up the colonial-born white man, thereby emphasising the hierarchies that are insinuated at in the text. This problematises Smith’s title, ‘Men of Men’, and its attempt to construct neat binaries between colonizer and colonized masculinities. What is shown is therefore a messy picture in which internal hierarchies and fissures exist in both the colonizer and colonized masculine body-politic. The title, though, like most colonial discourses, is premised on a modernist Manichean binary between colonizer and colonized that glosses over such schisms.

Ballantyne ends up being a mere accessory of Rhodes in the Rhodesian colonial adventure. In fact, due to his familiarity with the Ndebele from his elephant-hunting and concession-seeking days, he is one of those put in the forefront of the colonial adventure and he becomes a useful intermediary between the colonising whites and the Ndebele. So in a sense his kind of hybrid identity works both for and against him. The narrative denies him the kind of masculinity that would have defined this particular colonial adventurer, and he is put in the shadow by Rhodes, a fate he shares with a host of other men, such as the American adventurer and fortune-hunter, Mungo St John. In terms of masculine hierarchies it is Rhodes who can be said to possess a supra-hegemonic masculinity, and so is able to organise a host of men with different masculine attributes to form a coherent colonising mission that has since been called the pioneer column as part of the British South Africa Company (BSAC). Rhodes has the

charisma plus the leadership, organisational and entrepreneurial acumen to see to the realisation of his commercial and imperial dreams. Connell (2005: 77) rightfully observes that hegemonic masculinity is an ideal and so is possessed by very few men, as in this novel, where those, like Ballantyne, who seemingly possess it, are found deficient and wanting in a number of ways, as noted by the failure that defines most of his dreams, both commercial and imperial. If anything, it is Rhodes who emerges as the masculine super-hegemon in the text, yet he does not have the physical toughness of a Ballantyne, nor a Mungo St John. For all his personal attributes as indicated above, he has to rely on a motley group of men who in a number of ways also exert some influence on him, and help to bring some cohesion and coherence to his mission. This resonates with Foucault's (1978: 93) claim about the diffusion of power, and this can also be applied to the relationships amongst the different masculinities. If anything, Rhodes' could be referred to as a supra-hegemonic masculinity as he is basically a leader of other men, to whom most of the 'men of men' (the hegemonic frontier masculinities) kow-tow to.

2.2.2: Of Race and Ethnicity: White and Black Subjectivities

The masculinities of most of the white male subjects in the text are shaped through their interaction with the blacks and other white men, particularly on the diamond mining site of Kimberly and also during the colonising adventure. Here the white mine claim-holders rely mostly on black African labour to do the back-breaking work of digging and manually mining the diamonds, and Kimberly becomes like a magnet of sorts, attracting black men from all over southern African to come to work on the mines. Amongst these are some Ndebele men from Zimbabwe, whom the narrative focuses on almost exclusively, thus making it a Zimbabwe-centred novel rather than a South African-centred one. Capitalist relations of production, as well as racist ideologies come to mediate the relations between the blacks and whites at the diamond mines. The white capitalists require cheap labour for profitability and they find a handy tool in racist ideology that confers savagery on the blacks to justify the exploitation and abuse of black labour. The labour recruitment methods used, characterized by the predominant use of coercion, hint at a reliance on semi-slavery practices. In the novel this exploitative relationship, marked by a master-servant paradigm, is typified by that between Ballantyne and the Matebele migrant workers who come to Kimberly to work on the mines. Race therefore mediates a super-ordination and subordination of white and black masculinities respectively.

Noteworthy in the novel is the ambivalence that characterizes the images of the Matebele men in the text: a mixture of admiration and contempt, and discourses of savagery, innocence, honour and valour. Some of these attributes, such as honour and innocence, are exploited to

the white men's advantage throughout the novel, perpetually affirming the masculine-cum-racial hierarchies that are inherent in the text. On the initial encounter between Zouga and the group of migrant young Ndebele men coming to work at Kimberley, there is a mutual acknowledgement and respect of each other's masculinities. The narrative voice describes the Ndebele men thus: 'The little group of men who stood impassively in the sunlight and watched Zouga ride up were the finest warriors that Africa had ever spawned' (Smith, 1981:53). However, the use of the term 'warrior' instead of 'soldier' to describe the Ndebele fighting men mirrors the exoticising and racist discourse in the text, and hints at the hierarchisation of white and Ndebele masculinities, when one considers that white fighting men involved in the colonial adventure are referred to as 'soldiers'. The 'warrior' discourse resonates with the barbarism discourse used to refer to black men in the colonial venture, and also represents the violence of colonial discourses towards the colonized.

In a sense, at least in the case of Zimbabwe, the narrative explicitly creates a hierarchy of black masculinities, rating Ndebele ones above those of other ethnic groups, in particular the Shona, who are constructed as helpless and hapless victims of Ndebele raids, negating historical accounts which show that the relationship between the two groups was more complex than the reductive account given in the text. One can also see images of the symbolic annihilation of the Shona masculinities in the discourse that this text constructs: 'the Matabele, the cruel legions from the south, calling the subservient tribes "cattle" and, contemptuously, "Mashona – eaters of dirt", taking them as slaves, killing them as sport, to prove their manhood, or merely on the king's whim' (105). This represents one of the key strategies used by the colonialists: to magnify ethnic differences as a strategy of divide and rule. It is this discourse that informs Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe*. In fact, one readily notices a disjunction between the use of the phrases 'finest warriors', and 'cruel legions' used above to describe the Ndebele men. Such schizophrenia underlines the ambivalence of imperial discourse in its construction of the black African as the exotic Other. In the description given above, there is a vacillation between constructing the blacks, represented by the Ndebele, as men and as children, as, for example, in the discourses on 'valour' and 'innocence' respectively. But what is unmistakable in the text is that these blacks are constructed as lesser men than the 'men of men'. Indeed various narratives (for example, Morrell, 1998; Mutekwa, 2009 and 2013) have shown that colonial discourse attempted to strip the black man of his masculinity in various ways, one of which was infantilization, as through the use of the term 'boy' to refer to black men, and through an implicit feminising discourse in referring to black

men. McClintock (1993:63-65) shows how the trope of the family hierarchy was used to naturalise colonial racial hierarchies as well as construct the colony as an organic whole.

In the references to the Zimbabwean Shona people above, as utterly supine and helpless victims of the Ndebele, one can readily see how the colonial discourse spawned and conjured a 'crisis' in Shona masculinities that Mutswairo's novel partly attempts to deal with, a 'crisis' that is to an extent entangled in the discourses of the early days of Zimbabwe's independence. Pre-colonial time-space, as mediated, reconstructed and reconstituted by colonial discourse, thus intrudes into the post-colonial one, and it finds expression in both Smith and Mutswairo's texts. So, Primorac (2006, op cit), referring to time-space and human agency, speaks of the continuation of the Rhodesian (colonial) chronotope in the post-colonial present, a reality that has implications for the construction of identities, including gendered ones.

While subtle hierarchies are emerging amongst the colonising whites in the novel, the same is happening amongst the blacks. In the text those blacks who have had contact with the white world see themselves as inherently superior to those who have not, as seen by the jeering of those black labourers newly arrived at Kimberley by those who had been established there. Animal imagery is used to describe these new arrivals: 'Behold, the baboons have come down from the hills' (Smith, 1981: 57). The masculinity of these newcomers is therefore constructed as animalistic, an image that has several ramifications, including that they are barbaric and dangerous, and thus need a dose of the white man's 'civilisation', like the established labourers have had. In this paradoxical discourse black native identities need reformulation along the lines of the colonial racist ones. This shows how the colonial racist discourse was imbibed early on by some of the blacks and how they used it to construct and reproduce hierarchies amongst themselves. This is a wry and warped form of colonial mimicry that has largely eluded the critical radar of many a critic of colonial mimicry, such as Bhabha (1996: 50), who largely try to sanitise it as a form of resistance, ignoring some of its deleteriousness, as in this case. This is evidence of the top-down dialogue, or more accurately monologue, as it exists between the One and the Other, in which the Other sees images of himself through the distorted and distorting mirror of the One. This case also reveals the multiple and complex masculine subjectivities of the blacks in the colonial encounter, for example, between those in the rural and those in the urban spaces and the relationship between them. Thus, in colonial Zimbabwe, student bullying of new-comers at many mission boarding secondary schools took the same dimension and discourse. New comers were bullied and humiliated in various ways by being referred to as '*makara*', a Shona word which translates into 'wild beasts', again referring to the supposed barbarism and animalism of those who have had little contact with white colonizer

spaces. This again is another instance of what Bakhtin (1981:324) refers to as ‘another’s speech in another’s language’, here one that relates to a relationship of dominator and dominated; the One and the Other. The question here, as in the case of the hierarchies amongst the colonising whites, is: what were to be the implications of these not only for their future identities, but also for the trajectory that the colony and the post-colony were to take?

2.2.3: Of Female ‘Masculinities’

In the text, the imperial subjects involved in the colonial project are decidedly male, with women playing largely secondary and peripheral roles. For example, one notes that the mining town of Kimberly at this time is a decidedly male space. Ballantyne’s wife dies soon after arriving at Kimberly and he is left to carry on without her. Rhodes, in the novel, hardly entertains any women, either in his private life or his business and imperialist designs. The only significant white woman character at Kimberley is Diamond Lil, a commercial sex worker, whose role is to provide carnal pleasures and emotional release to the men. She thus plays a role that is largely traditional, and so is a mere accessory of these frontier masculinities in their commercial and imperial adventures. Even so, she is viewed with contempt by the archetypal men of ‘honour’ such as Ballantyne. The Pioneer Column is also decidedly masculine, with virtually no women visible in this group. Even the title of the text, ‘men of men’, with no ‘women of women’, symbolically excludes women from the colonial venture.

To a certain extent, however, the novel deconstructs the image of the supposed exclusively masculine nature of the colonial project through the inclusion of some women as active participants in the colonial venture. These are, in line with the spirit of the text, very few, and perform what in the text and to the colonialists are largely peripheral roles. To begin with, Ballantyne is accompanied by his sister Robyn during his first African expedition, and the two are equal partners in this adventure. When the two part ways, the sister continues on the expedition alone, and goes on to steal the thunder from him by being the first to publish a book about their expedition. However, at the end she becomes a missionary, and intermediary between the colonising whites and the people of Lobengula, the Ndebele king. She ultimately becomes the voice of conscience, intervening at crucial moments to temper the excesses of the colonising white frontier hegemonic masculinities in their dealings with the black Africans, in this case the Ndebele. She stands up to both white and black hegemonic masculinities and becomes a node of power in this relationship, showing that power is not the preserve of one centre, as Foucault (1978: 93) observed. She helps deconstruct the myth of the association of masculinity with biologically male bodies. However, at the end she is overcome by one of the

colonising men, and so becomes feminised. The death of her husband, also a missionary but with none of the hegemonic masculinities, who plays a mediatory role between the white colonizers and the Ndebele, is an indictment of this form of masculinity as being unsuited for the colonial enterprise or at best, a mere accessory. So, another man, a heartless, glory-seeking and avaricious one with the typical masculine identity of the colonizer supplants him.

Another female figure who, in a sense, deconstructs masculinity as the preserve of those subjects who inhabit male bodies is Louise St John. On coming to Kimberly with her male companion, she ruffles some feathers amongst some of the colonial male chauvinists like Ballantyne with her decidedly 'masculine' behaviour. Her horsemanship and general demeanour are decidedly masculine, in contrast to the extreme femininity marked by her breath-taking beauty. This scenario also deconstructs the ethereality of masculinity in its association with male bodies, and highlights the performativity of masculinities as well as femininities. Her cunning and ingeniously calculated defeat of Ballantyne in a horse-riding contest helps to expose the chinks in the hegemonic masculinity of the colonising subjects, namely, male chauvinism and chivalry. In a way, she not only subverts them, but in a sense also gives these masculinities a taste of their own medicine, as skulduggery was the strategy of choice by the imperialists to win concessions from the unsuspecting black Africans such as the Ndebele. However, for Ballantyne, she is like a trophy to be won as a prize by one so valiant and 'honourable' on the scale of colonizer masculinities. This, like the case of the woman missionary above, confers on her the traditional feminine role, and unlike her male counterparts, she is not one of the movers and shakers of the imperial venture. Her role, seemingly, is motherly, as seen by her siding with the vulnerable, rather than with the forward thrusting postures of the colonial men. The men, in the text, are the makers of colonial history. This fact resonates with the words of McClintock (1993: 66): 'Women are represented as the atavistic and authentic "body" of national tradition (inert, backward-looking, and natural) embodying nationalism's conservative principle'.

2.2.4: Of Symbolic Annihilation

The Ndebele, before colonialism, are able to assert themselves; for example, Lobengula, the Ndebele king, successfully dissuades his subjects from converting to Christianity. The concession-seekers have to grovel before the Ndebele king to get what they want. However, this belies and contrasts sharply with the discourse of the white colonizers-to-be, who see the land between the Zambezi and Limpopo as the domain of savage and uncivilised people, to whom they are duty-bound to bring civilisation: 'When you have seen the conditions that still

exist, the savagery and barbarism, to the north of us, only then can you appreciate how deep that duty still is' (Smith, 1981: 104), is Rhodes's assessment of the situation. Also implicit in this is the symbolic elimination of these black people so described, a practice that readily feeds into the discourse of *terra nullius*, the supposed emptiness of the land and its readiness for the taking. This doctrine of a land ready for the taking is in some ways a feminising discourse as far as the African space is concerned. In fact, narratives that construct the land as feminine are abundantly present in the Western universe of discourse. There are similarities here with what happens between Ballantyne and Louise, when he realises that she is not legally married to Mungo St John. She is free and ready for the taking, which he is ready to do. However the *modus operandi* is different, for Mungo is one of his own and so treachery and skulduggery to get Louise are off the table. She first has to break up with Mungo of her own volition before Zouga can make any real move. In this sense, the masculinity of the fellow white man is not symbolically annihilated. These tools, treachery and skulduggery, are however, handy in the dispossession of the Africans of their land, and the concession treaties are the testament to this. In this way, the masculinity and humanity of the black African man regarding ownership of the land, is symbolically eliminated as he is forcefully dispossessed.

2.2.5: Of Frontier Masculine Triumphalism

The men engaged in the imperial adventure are Smith's 'men of men', and Rhodes's occupying force is one such embodiment of these. The men, though from different backgrounds, are tough, hardened, and adventurous fortune-hunters. These images are those of the archetypal imperial frontier masculinities and they are exemplified by Ballantyne himself and such figures as Mungo St John. It is in their war with the Ndebele that their masculinities are accentuated, as, historically, the Ndebele were the dominant masculinities on the Zimbabwean plateau at the time, and renowned for their military prowess. The colonizer's masculinity is symbolised by the Maxim gun, a phallic killing machine that mows down the gallant Ndebele soldiers and reduces them to a state of submission. The Matebele prized assegai, as a masculine symbol, is reduced almost to the level of a toy. The tableau of Bazo, one of the key embodiments of Ndebele manhood, collapsing helplessly on the battlefield under enemy fire summarises the triumph of the colonial soldiers over the Matebele regiments. At the end, the Ndebele are a broken people, defeated and at the mercy of the colonising whites, who go on to confiscate their cattle, a key symbol of Ndebele manhood, and a major source of livelihood. The death of Lobengula, the Ndebele king, symbolises the demise of Ndebele hegemonic masculinity. However, a narrative of resistance is kept alive by Bazo and his wife Tanase, the former high-

priestess of the Mlimo of the Matopo hills, showing that Ndebele masculinities and femininities are not completely crushed by the colonial conquest.

Images of colonizer masculine triumphalism are coded in the trope of rape that highlights the subordination and humiliation of the colonized masculinities. The fact that, in the novel, it is the rape of the high priestess of the principal deity of the land symbolises the attempt to subjugate and break the very spirit of the Ndebele nation and ensure total subordination. On the other hand, it also shows that colonialism is not only an attack on the masculinity of the black man, but also on the femininity of the black woman. In the end the over-riding image is that of colonialism as a rape of an entire people; this view resonates with the observations of Mbembe (2006:169) and what I have written elsewhere (2009:728). The sense of loss and humiliation experienced by both are significant in exploring the trajectory of both the colony and the postcolony.

However, the narrative does not completely annihilate and feminise Ndebele masculinities, for right until the end there remain some men standing; for example, in the form of such figures as the *induna* Gandang, whom the text constructs as valiant, wise, and a good military commander and strategist. His defeat and annihilation of a colonial army detachment under Major Allan Wilson salvages some measure of honour for the Ndebele soldier masculinities. However, it is from Gandang's lips that the phrase 'men of men', a reference to the white colonial frontier masculinities, is uttered. He metaphorically kow-tows to the dead white soldiers of Wilson's detachment by dissuading his soldiers from dishonouring them and, instead, christens them 'men of men' thereby elevating these white masculinities over those of the Ndebele. In this way a hierarchy of masculinities is created in the colony. So, overall the narrative constructs a hierarchy of masculinities in the colony in which white masculinity is at the top, followed by the Ndebele, with the Shona and others right at the bottom. It is therefore such masculine hierarchies in the colonial narrative that Mutswairo's *Chaminuka, Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983), is in dialogue with, and that form the backdrop for the romanticisation of Shona masculinities in that text.

2.2.6: Conclusion

The problem here, when one considers both Mutswairo's and Smith's texts, is how such constructed ethnical and racial hierarchies are going to dialogue with and complicate post-independence national discourses with regard to the establishment of post-independence political centres and the reformulation and reconstruction of the identities of the former colonizer and colonized, and therefore the general trajectory of the country. The attempt by

Mutswairo in *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983) to discursively exclude those who came to Zimbabwe after 1830, namely the Ndebele and the whites, from the new Zimbabwean nation, should also be seen partly against this background. The insertion of this discourse and Smith's images of so called 'men of men' in the discourses of the newly independent nation after a protracted anti-colonial struggle should be seen in the context of the identities of all the parties involved, in particular the gendered ones. Smith's discourse is ambivalent, in that it can be seen as an indictment of the former colonizers who have relinquished power by discursively constructing them as a pale and ghostly shadow of the frontier masculinities of colonial conquest. It could also be seen as a wretched and mischievous attempt to try to negate current realities by trying to remind the former colonizers of the purported greatness of their forebears, while casting aspersions on the masculinities of black African nationalists who have just attained independence. It also has the same effect on Zimbabwean ethnicities represented by the Shona and Ndebele. So, seen in the context of the post-independence political discourses, the text can be said to have a deleterious effect, inimical to the transformation of both former colonizers and colonized for the purpose of creating new subjects able to move forward as equals and as one nation. It constructs an over-arching racialist discourse that has the status of a monologue, and tries to write out any alternative ones, just as Mutswairo's text constructs a similar ethnic one that attempts the same. If anything, post-independence masculine (and feminine), political, and nationalist discourses are in dialogue with these pre-colonial and colonial narratives, in addition to others such as ideological ones. This dialogism is important, not only in understanding Zimbabwean post-independence masculinities, but also the progression of the Zimbabwean post-colony from the year of independence in 1980 to the present. These discourses and ideologies, while not deterministic, complicate the forging of new identities by the former colonizer and colonized, just like colonial discourse in the case of colonizer and colonized during the colonial time-space. However, as identities are a process of becoming, it is imperative for former colonizer and colonized to transcend these and re-invent themselves and become transformed subjects, in the idiom of Mamdani (2001: 63-66), and so be able to forge a new national identity and move forward.

CHAPTER 3: THE POETICS OF ALTERITY: THE MASCULINE AT THE CROSSROADS IN DAMBUDZO MARECHERA'S *MINDBLAST* (1983) AND DAVID LEMON'S *IVORY MADNESS*

'Decolonization is the creation of new men'. (Fanon, qtd in Njami, 2011: 198)

3.0: Introduction

The previous chapter looked at two historical novels that represent the projection of those masculinities of the past onto the narratives of the early years of Zimbabwe's independence. Memory and nostalgia inform these narratives as they dialogue with those of the first decade of independence. It was noted that both narratives, while contributing to the polyglossia of the discourses of this period, either wittingly or unwittingly militate against, not only the forging of new identities in tandem with the new dispensation, but also in the forging of a new identity from the ruins of the past.

This chapter delves into two literary texts, namely Dambudzo Marechera's *Mindblast* (1984) and David Lemon's *Ivory Madness* (1983), that embody the metamorphosis (or otherwise) of the masculinities of the colonial period in the early post-independence period. Independence came after a bitter civil war pitting the colonial government forces against those of the two main liberation movements, namely ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic front) and PF-ZAPU (Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African National Union). A conference at Lancaster House in the United Kingdom (the colonising country) involving all the significant antagonists culminated in a ceasefire in 1979, a new constitution, and elections in early 1980. These were won by ZANU-PF, while PF-ZAPU got a significant number of seats, and independence came on the 18th April in 1980. The Lancaster House constitution had reserved 20 of the hundred parliamentary seats for whites, a suggestion that it was racially inflected. The new Prime Minister Robert Mugabe (who later became President) enunciated a policy of reconciliation amongst the former belligerents, setting the tone for the first decade of independence. While lauded by some for its pragmatism, it was denigrated by others: 'The reconciliation exercise therefore serves a largely political function, facilitating the necessary compromise between the rulers of yesterday and the inheritors of state power, within the context of incomplete decolonization' (Mandaza, qtd in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 1142).

The first decade of independence was a period of high expectations, mainly for the former subalterns, who hoped that their lives would take a turn for the better and that the colonial

ghosts of the past would finally be laid to rest. Those masculinities of the colonial period, and those forged in the fight for independence, were ostensibly undergoing metamorphosis. This chapter therefore looks at the representation and the imagining of these masculinities in two literary narratives, one by a black writer and another by a white, in order to establish how these masculinities are constructed and/or acted out. Forging new masculine identities necessitated the search for models, both enduring and ephemeral, and they were important for the former subaltern, who came from a history of oppression, denigration and humiliation.

3.1: Homosociality, Race, and Class in *Mindblast or the Definitive Buddy*

3.1.1: Synopsis

The text was published in 1984 after its author, Dambudzo Marechera had returned to Zimbabwe from exile in the United Kingdom. The bohemian lifestyle of the author has been dealt with extensively by a number of scholars, and, suffice to say, the text is a reflection and also a product of the same, leading to Levin and Tainz referring to all of Marechera's works, including this one, as 'fictional autobiographies and autobiographical fictions' (1999:163). This suggests a dialogical relationship between the two. *Mindblast and Other Stories* is a multi-genre fictional text that reflects on what Ashcroft (2013: 78-98) refers to as the 'Menippean' characteristics of Marechera's literary works. Satiric in nature, it defies the conventional limitations of a single genre by inter-mixing drama, prose, poetry, and the diary or memoir, which is 'one of the most basic and fundamental forms for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel' (Bakhtin, 1981: 320). It also suggests that his ideas and thoughts cannot be shackled or pigeon-holed into any one singular mould. As a result, Marechera has been viewed by various scholars as an anarchist (for example, Mutekwa, 2013), by some as an intellectual anarchist (for example, Veit-Wild, 1992; Zhuwarara, 2001; Mushakavanhu, 2013). This Menippean form and also the subject matter were the reasons why Marechera's *Mindblast* was rejected by some publishers, who viewed its form as chaotic and its content as anti-establishment, before it was finally accepted for publication by Harare's College Press publishers. It was the same style, together with the author's bohemian lifestyle and the apparent Western influences on his art which led to various criticisms about his work being un-African, showing few, if any influences from African orature. It was also deemed not in the service of ideologies of the ruling elite. As noted by Veit-Wild and Chennells (1999: xi), some went as far as claiming that Marechera was a 'man who betrayed Africa' because he 'broke ranks with the sort of nationalism which gave a peculiar authority to pre-colonial African culture.'

Marechera's text satirises emerging political and social cultures and discourses of early

post-independence Zimbabwe, and tries to ‘blast’ the minds of many of its readers out of the not so critical mind-sets present in the euphoria of the early independence period in a large section of the Zimbabwean society, and the lulling and soporific ideologies of those in power. The image that Marechera conjures up with this title is that of a bomb, and ‘what he calls for is the forceful detonation of the limp ideas and concepts that circulate in people’s minds’ (Mutekwa, 2013: 31).

Mindblast and other Stories is divided into four parts. Part one, ‘The Skin of Time: Plays by Buddy’, contains three drama sketches, namely ‘The Coup’, ‘The Gap’, and ‘Blitzkrieg’. The three largely have a single identifiable plot and are thematically linked to form one coherent whole. While ‘The Coup’ has no specific setting, but any place in the ‘Third World’, and ‘anytime during business hours’ (*Mindblast*, 1984: 8), there is a clear flow to ‘The Gap’ and ‘Blitzkrieg’, which have a decidedly Zimbabwean setting, with the last one specifically set in Harare, the capital city and the setting for the ruling class and hegemonic political masculinities, beginning during the time of the colony and then taken over in the post-colony. In a sense there is a movement from the generalised geographical setting of the so-called ‘Third World’ to a specific country, namely Zimbabwe, and then to a specific place, namely the city of Harare. This suggests that broadly, the issues the drama focuses on have a much wider setting and afflict a larger constituency and are therefore not specifically linked to Zimbabwe *per se*. The drama sketches do have more or less a continuous plot with more or less the same major characters, and so should be read and comprehended as a single whole, irreverently zeroing in on some shenanigans taking place during the transition from colonialism to independence. This period is more or less a liminal one, and the changes that take place are more manifest in ‘Blitzkrieg’, the last of the drama sketches. This sketch is a critique of the post-colonial condition, in which the new ruling elite and the former colonizers join hands in a not so holy alliance to exploit and oppress the majority. There is a clear shift from racial oppression to class oppression. Masculinities of colonialism and those of nationalism are not only changing, but also coalescing.

Marechera rather fits Veit-Wild’s (1992:318-319) categorisation and characterization of Zimbabwean writers as what she refers to as the second generation and their various positions towards colonialism and African anti-colonial nationalism. He also fits Appiah’s (qtd Engelke, 1998: 25-28) second stage category of African writers, who are post-nativist and post-realist and express disillusionment with the aberrations and miscarriages of the promise of independence. *Mindblast*, like the works of most of these writers, is post-realist, as in its use of a surrealist sketch, and post-nativist, as evidenced by its non-reliance on African oral literary

forms and its anti-cultural nationalist inclinations.

Part two consists of the ‘Prologue – Grimknife Jr and Rix the Giant Cat’ and ‘Grimknife Jr’s Story’. It focuses on the predicament of the non-conformist artist in the newly-independent nation in the midst of a cultural nationalist discourse and Marxist rhetoric, and its accompanying socialist realism aesthetic ideology. In the ‘Prologue’ a recalcitrant Grimknife Junior the artist is being interrogated by Rix the Giant Cat, a government re-orientation officer, concerning his refusal to toe the line in relation to the dictates of the state. This is followed by ‘Grimknife Jr’s Story’, which continues the theme of the non-conformity of the bohemian artist, and the problems such an artist encounters in independent Zimbabwe. In actual fact, these two prose pieces are also examples of Marechera’s ‘fictional autobiographies’, and so should be understood in the context of some of his experiences in post-independence Zimbabwe.

Part Three, entitled ‘Blackrain Timewhite & other poems’, is the poetry section which obliquely continues some of the themes in the last two parts, including autobiographical elements and casting some aspersions on the post-colonial nation as in the long poem ‘THRONE OF BAYONETS’ (*Mindblast* : 75). However, the poetry section is not within the ambit of the present study.

The final part of the text is the ‘Appendix: From the Journal’, which thematically is closely related to Part Two, is in prose form, but resembles a memoir or diary, the main difference being that it is more explicitly autobiographical and introspective and this is accentuated through the use of the first person narrator. The focus is again on the vicissitudes and predicament of the individualist and non-conforming artist, whose *avant-garde* art is at odds with the ideologies of the state and the expectations of the majority of the people. Therefore, personal narratives intertwine with social commentary and critique. Very little of what the narrator attempts to do is successful, and so homelessness, friendlessness, impecuniousness, angst, and forlornness and near insanity are major markers of his existence. In short, the narrator constructs himself as a bohemian writer tramping on the streets of Harare, saved from sheer disintegration and madness by his art.

3.1.2: Part One: ‘The Skin of Time: Plays by Buddy’

Images of masculine subjectivities circumscribe the plots of Marechera’s drama sketches and so they readily lend themselves to a gendered analysis, particularly from the perspective of masculinities. Set in a Third World country on the threshold of independence from colonial rule, the first sketch, ‘The Coup’, dramatizes the uneasy homosocial relations amongst the

colonial white masters in whose body politic fissures and fault lines are emerging as a result of the disjunctions and destabilisations in it wrought by an impending shift in political power relations, symbolised by the end of colonialism and the coming of majority rule. The term ‘homosocial’, according to Sedgwick (qtd in Mutekwa, 2013: 354), is ‘a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, [...] where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex’, and is used here to describe the same. The crumbling business and homosocial relationship and camaraderie between Norman Drake and Spotty (the Manager) signifies that the erstwhile bonds based solely on race and class amongst white masculinities are coming increasingly under stress and are becoming fissured and fractured under the weight of the shifting political power relations.

The play also makes visible the differential power relations amongst the colonizer white males and the fact that different manhoods positioned differently at different times and in different circumstances did proliferate. Images of hegemonic masculinities suppressing other masculinities are concretised in the discourse and the actions involving the two. Spotty and Drake readily fit the category of what can be referred to as hegemonic business masculinities at the national and global stage, particularly when one considers the roping in of Shogun, their Japanese business partner, who appears to play a pivotal role in the ‘coup’ that Drake performs on Spotty. The global stage, therefore, is a site where white (Western) and Asian (Eastern) masculinities aggregate and coalesce and are linked by various business and homosocial bonds that transcend race. Indeed, Connell (2000:57) notes that the new hegemonic masculinities on the global stage are those of the transnational business executives.

However, the corruption, theft, shady deals and moral sleaze that define Drake help to deconstruct and subvert the claims to superiority that had underpinned colonial white racial discourses. The name Drake also resonates with that of a notorious erstwhile English pirate (one Sir Francis Drake), and so is symbolic of the plunder (rather than civilising) mentality that underpinned the colonial venture. The fact that this man (Francis Drake) was knighted further accentuates this. That Drake is a ‘bed-fellow’ of Shogun, a Japanese name that recalls the Tokugawa Shoguns of Japanese history, and therefore denoting power, further accentuates the continuities between the masculinities of the erstwhile Drakes and Shoguns and their current namesakes. The tableau of their usurpation and ejection of Spotty from his managerial position sums up what they represent. At the end of the play the enduring hegemonic masculinities become those of Drake and Shogun, and they are the ones who are projected and ushered into the post-independence dispensation as represented by the next two drama sketches of this trilogy, ‘The Gap’, and ‘Blitzkrieg’.

‘The Coup’ enacts and symbolises the subversion of one form of hegemonic masculinity, that of the arch-racist, by another, in line with the changed circumstances ushered in by the end of colonialism and the emergence of black majority rule. The defeat of Spotty and his moral posturing, functions as a prologue and dress rehearsal for the entry of the new black elite and their becoming ‘bed-fellows’ with the former colonial white elite, both of whose sleaze and moral aberrations are reflected in the last play of this trilogy.

The representation of Spotty’s relationship with a black girl in the text is meant to diminish his masculinity, as he is represented in the text as having been less than successful with white girls. This is in spite of the fact that colonial white male access to black women was used to humiliate the black man, who did not enjoy similar easy access to white women. As I have observed elsewhere (2009:731-732; 2013:363-364), it worked as an instrument to assert white superiority in the racial politics of the colony. In this drama sketch it appears, paradoxically, as if Spotty is being reduced to the level of a black man in the racial hierarchies of the colony, even though it has seen better days and is in the process of being superseded. The black woman in the text is also used as an instrument to expose the moral bankruptcy of Spotty, and paradoxically as the vehicle for his corruption, something that cynically resonates with colonial representations of black women. In another twist to the way race has been fetishized in the colony, and how whiteness is a signifier of privilege, Spotty in this drama sketch is also constructed to serve as an image of the voiceless and the subaltern in general, and by extension, subordinate masculinities in particular. In doing this the play is moving away from the representation of race as a fetish and signifier of privilege, in line with the spirit that independence ushers in and represents.

The drama sketch therefore lampoons the masculinities of the erstwhile colonizers at the threshold of the end of colonialism and the coming of black majority rule, and debunks their claims to any moral superiority over the blacks. That there are no blacks in the *dramatis personae* of ‘The Coup’ is meant to accentuate race and debunk white claims to superiority as their human failings and foibles are exposed for the reader.

3.1.3: Of Getting Out of the Kitchen?

The next drama sketch in the trilogy, entitled ‘The Gap’, focuses on the character Spotty from the previous sketch, and here his full name is revealed to the reader or the audience as Spot Kenfield. His multiple layers of identity are made visible, and his racial bigotry and chauvinism are uncovered, as is apparent in his soliloquy at the beginning of the sketch: ‘it was right in the bush, in the middle of nowhere with no human beings except monkeys and kaffirs’ (*Mindblast*,

1983: 21). This blatant and feckless erasure of the humanity of the blacks is the quintessence and epitome of racism and was in fact pivotal in the doctrine of *terra nullius*, the supposed emptiness of the land that was used to justify colonialism and the appropriation of black land, as referred to in the previous chapter. So Spotty's loving of a black woman, apparently, is not motivated or accompanied by notions of racial egalitarianism, but instead is an expression of his being an arch-racist, in a diabolic dialogue with the racial politics of the just-ended colony, where the body of the black woman was exoticized and made an object of fascination and desire, recalling what Ratele (2005) refers to as 'kinky sexual politics'. It is interesting to note that all his life Kenfield has been suffering from an inferiority complex within his white community, and here the play does point at a possible link between racial bigotry and some personality disorders or other pathologies.

As a racial chauvinist his masculinity is assaulted on two fronts: the loss of face and status as a result of 'the coup' in the previous sketch, and the loss of his white privileges as a result of black majority rule. Referring to masculinities, Kabesh (2009: 346) notes: 'Humiliation damages, strips away pride, honour and dignity', and this aptly summarises the predicament of Kenfield as evidenced by the indecent helter-skelter of his departure schedule. His choice of destination, pre-1994 apartheid South Africa, underlines one of the main motivations for his planned departure: to maintain his white racial privileges.

The action in this drama sketch is parodic and farcical and through Dick's (Spot's son) language there is also the element of the carnivalesque, all appropriate as strategies of exposing and mocking the rabid racial bigotry of Spot. That Spot is unable to relate well or communicate with his son, and is divorcing his wife, all of which signifies a social pathology amongst people who speak different, albeit diametrically-opposed, 'socio-ideological languages' (Bakhtin 1981: 366), shows how isolated he is from everyone else. He is still stuck in colonial racialist monologic ways of reading and interpreting the world. Spot's one-dimensional way of interpreting the world is an indictment of his masculinity, which embodies what Godwin and Hancock (1993) refer to as 'Rhodesianness', a quintessential image of a discourse of an enduring colonial racism.

Dick's name has a masculine (phallic) resonance, and in another sense his youthfulness suggests that he represents the future. He exposes the vanity and self-righteousness of the white colonial frontier masculinities that Spot embodies. Spotty in turn constructs Dick as the Other, claiming that by spurning his and his ilk's fetishisation of race, he has become 'a communist' (Marechera, 1983:26). This exoticisation of all those opposed to 'Rhodesianness' is subtly gendered, as it reeks of an attempt to emasculate such subjects. Dick veritably becomes the

voice of reason, and embodiment of the metamorphosis of colonial masculine (and other) subjectivities that Mamdani (1998: op cit) advocates for both former colonizers and colonized if any real transformation is to take place.

3.1.4: From Race to Class: Homosociality in ‘Blitzkrieg’

‘Blitzkrieg’ is the last drama sketch in the trilogy, representing the convergence of some white and black masculinities. Its setting is the vicinity of the toilet at Norman Drake’s house in Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. The toilet, a central image and motif in this sketch, embodies what Mbembe (2001: Chapter 3) refers to as the vulgarity and the obscenity of the postcolony. It also signals the carnivalesque orientation of this sketch and at the same time is a powerful indictment of the post-independence nation. It undercuts the sanctity and sacrosanct pretence of the deodorised nationalist discourses and the Marxist rhetoric which underpin the newly independent nation. The creeping corruption, the hedonism, the sleaze and sexual aberrations in the drama sketch all give the lie to all pretences to the contrary.

The three key masculinities are those represented by Honourable Nzuzu, Minister of Industry, Norman Drake and Shogun from the previous sketches. The name Nzuzu, translated from the Zimbabwean Shona language means ‘mermaid’ (or ‘merman’ for that matter), and this resonates with the mystic aura that the post-colonial rulers are wont to cultivate around themselves as a way of insulating themselves from the masses. In a sense the name feminises him, as mythically mermaids are often associated with femininity, though there is the gender opposite ‘merman, which, however, is seldom used to refer to these mystical and mythical creatures. Shogun is also feminised through his description, which constructs him as a diminutive figure whose only redeeming masculine attributes are his Oriental martial arts.

The sketch dramatizes the homosocial bonds between the bourgeois former colonial rulers represented by Drake, that of international capitalism represented by Shogun, together with that of the post-independence ruling elite represented by minister Nzuzu. These bonds signify the shift from a preoccupation with race as a signifier of power and privilege to that of class. As one of the characters, Elfie, reflecting on his experiences in the metropolis, philosophically muses: ‘there are many shades of black, but the only true one is that of the have-nots’ (*Mindblast*: 37), an observation which is apt in describing the current dispensation and highlighting the constructedness of race.

While the above homosocial bonds can be seen in a positive light as epitomising and concretising the spirit of reconciliation, the flip side is that they represent the coalescence of an elite class united by common interests and that subsists and even thrives on the exploitation

and oppression of the majority, with ‘the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer’ (*Mindblast*: 38). The spirit of comradeship that the word ‘comrade’ might tell of egalitarianism only serves to camouflage and obscure the growing inequalities, better marked and highlighted by the words ‘chef’ and ‘povo’, as used in the drama sketch to refer to Minister Nzuzu and the people in general. This celebratory party at Drake’s is the occasion and site on which the different masculinities are being enacted and asserted. The new black elite have political power, while the white former colonizers have economic power, and the same applies to Shogun in terms of how he represents the transnational dimension of capitalism. The above scenario suggests that the main descriptors of hegemonic masculinity in terms of power at the national level are dispersed among these three representatives of different groups in the elite body-politic. And so it is only through the homosocial bonds among them, that they are able to attain dominance over what Spotty refers to as the ‘silent majority’. The scenario suggests that while hegemonic masculinity is an ideal that few individual men have, hegemony can be achieved through a network of homosocial bonds that ultimately combine different masculinities. Even the so called ‘povo’ can readily be co-opted into the matrix, as signified by Elfie, who is part of what Althusser (1977:127-188) refers to as the Repressive State Apparatus which is actually part of the machinery of the hegemony. There are attempts in the text at subversion of these dominant masculinities, but they join forces and manage to thwart these, showing how homosocial bonds are crucial for the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity at institutional level. These bonds have neo-colonialism as their upshot.

The title of the sketch, ‘Blitzkrieg’, a German term for ‘lightning attack’, that reminds one of the Second World War, has hegemonic masculine resonances. It is an indictment of the homosocial bonds forged by the three masculinities figured in the play, as they represent an assault basically on the oppressed body of the majority. Morally it is also a ‘blitzkrieg’, as figured by the image of the toilet, which symbolises the corruption and vulgarity of the post-colony that in the words of Mbembe (2001:110) thrives on excess: ‘a world hostile to continence, frugality, sobriety’. It is also sexual: witness the many aberrations acted out or alluded to in this regard. The ‘blitzkrieg’ is also apparent in the relentless panoptical surveillance that the state keeps on its subjects, and represented by the character Elfie. Then there is also the reference to political discontent by a section of the population, illustrated by what its representative in the text, the young woman Arabella, refers to as ‘The Western Zimbabwe Liberation Front’, which is a reference to what has been called the dissident element in the early years of independence. The government response to this and that has been referred to as ‘Gukurahundi’, readily fits the notion of the ‘blitzkrieg’. Ultimately, it resonates with

Mbembe's (2001: 102) assertion that the postcolony is governed by 'a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and of lack of proportion', largely denoting a masculine teleology.

3.1.5: Of Dislocations: The Bohemian and *Avant Garde* Artist and Masculinities

Part Two of the text *Mindblast* (the 'Prologue' and 'Grimknife Jr's Story') and Part Four (the 'Appendix: From the Journal') are thematically related and so will be considered together. The narrators in these prose pieces, such as Grimknife Junior, Buddy, and the first person narrator in the 'Prologue', are seen here as Marechera's fictional selves. The over-arching image in these is that of the bohemian, *avant-garde* full-time writer who is at odds with his society because he does not want to toe the line as far as the politically-sanctioned aesthetic ideologies are concerned. Politically correct art is supposed to be in the service of 'national culture' and to be informed by socialist realism. However, the narrators' art is cosmopolitan and so is at odds with this requirement. This art is marked by unique stylistic innovations described before under the rubric of 'Menippean'.

In the 'Prologue' the surrealist sketch of Grimknife Junior and Rix the Giant Cat constructs the state in the image of a giant cat named Rix, to whom is given the job title of 'Re-orientation Officer'. The image represents the state as not only totalitarian, but also predatory, and so creates a victim-victimiser paradigm regarding ruler and ruled. The narrator sees more continuities than discontinuities between the colony and the postcolony. With reference to the capital city Harare, the setting of much of the text, he has this to say: 'the white settlers had created it as a frontier town for gold and lust, lurid adventures and ruthless rule. The black inheritors had not changed that – just the name' (*Mindblast*: 51). Here there is an allusion to the continuities and discontinuities between the masculinities of colonialism and those of post-colonialism, and as noted previously, similar to what Primorac (2006: op cit) sees as a continuation of the Rhodesian chronotope. Rix's job is that of controlling and disciplining the bodies and minds of subversive artists like Grimknife Junior as difference and non-conformity are regarded as deviant and even pathological.

The multiple narrators in *Mindblast* are evidence of shifting identities and subjectivities and symbolically are set against the unitary identity that the cultural nationalists are wont to promote. The narrator is exuding the multiple influences that have impacted on him, and the hybridity characteristic of him as a postcolonial migrant. The narrator in 'Grimknife Jnr's Story' constructs himself as an extension of Dr Grimknife, a down and out intellectual who has fallen on hard times after losing his job as a result of the academic re-orientations instigated by

the cultural nationalists, for whom Grimknife refuses to toe the line. He thus becomes marginal to the mainstream. On the other hand, the narrator in 'Grimknife Junior's Story' aligns himself with the intellectual revolt that had taken place in Europe in the 1970s, in which materialism and conventional intellectualism were rejected by

that generation which had tasted the excitement of individual freedom and collective health in body and mind and environment ... a generation that had been caught up in the search for spiritual and inner development and rejected intellectualism and the middle class ambitions of its parents (*Mindblast*: 60).

The narrators critique both the obscene materialism that they see as the new culture of the new black elite with which the majority of the masses are complicit, and the uncritical complacency that characterizes the nature of their reaction to the authoritarian culture that is creeping into the nation's political body-politic. To begin with there is the predatory masculinity represented by Rix, the Giant Cat. This is the 'chef' masculinity of the ruling class in terms of how they relate to the generality of the populace in their exploitation and panoptical surveillance of the same. This is evident in the one-dimensional thinking that they are trying to promote, and is closely related to the erstwhile attempt by the colonizers to reform the minds of the natives so that they comply with colonial dictates and accept the subaltern status constructed for them by colonial discourse. Grimknife Junior the artist, for example, is instructed to do and think as he is told, against which he rebels and fights for the right to think and feel as he chooses. The ice-cold rationality of Rix and the intuitive and visceral orientation of Grimknife Junior are diametrically-opposed. There is a way in which this diametrical opposition subtly feminises Grimknife, for things intuitive and to do with feelings are wont to be consigned to the domain of the feminine. In masculinity politics so labelled 'feminine' men are subordinated, marginalized, and vilified by those whose masculinity is dominant or hegemonic, and this is aptly the fate of the narrators in these two parts of the text. Rix thus sees Grimknife Junior as a deviant from the socially-sanctioned forms of masculinity. Such a posture and orientation pose a threat to the dominant forms of masculinity in the post-colony, that is, those anchored in materialism, militarism, and the defence of national culture. The fear is that these non-conformist ideas will permeate the national body-politic and unhinge and dislocate the master identity, and so represent a veritable threat to national culture and the hegemonic masculinities of the ruling class.

The fate of the Marechera narrators such as Grimknife Junior and Buddy gives evidence of

how deviant and subversive forms of masculinity are vilified by the hegemonic ones. One notes that this kind of narrator is constantly harassed, derided, heckled, and beaten up by other men: 'You suffered the insults of bureaucrats, the kicks of the police, and the puzzled amusement of former classmates' (*Mindblast*: 60). Since masculinity is constructed in opposition to, and as a denial of femininity, the often violent tormentors of the Marechera narrators arguably cannot countenance and stomach what they may be considering as feminine characteristics that they are suppressing in themselves and did not want to be associated with or see in another man, as in the words of Tillner (2000: 56): 'gender is nothing but the construction of difference. So dominance and difference are the prime elements of masculinity'. As Veit-Wild (1987: 114) observes: 'It would seem that Marechera finds himself always persecuted, endlessly pursued', suggesting a dialogic relationship between the author himself and the multiple narrators. The experiences of these narrators are essentially traumatic, and so the writing, with its seemingly confessional dimension and disposition, also partly functions as trauma therapy.

The *avant-garde* artist, the bohemian and non-conformist individual represents other and alternative possibilities and ideals, hence still poses a threat to the established masculinities. The negation of a singular subjectivity and the privileging of fluidity as the desired ontology as opposed to fixity suggests limitless possibilities regarding the masculine subject. This is all the more important because of the fixation with rigidity that has characterized many understandings of masculinities and that has also been viewed as a major weakness as well as problem with masculinities themselves. In the context of attempts to construct and create a singular subjectivity out of cultural nationalist and quasi-Marxist discourses, the masculinities represented by the Marechera narrators exist in a dialogic relationship to these and cannot be thought of outside them, just like the intellectual revolt by many young people in the Europe of the 1970s that Buddy refers to, which cannot be thought of outside this context as they are a product of the same. The masculinities and femininities of that revolt are the ones that are also being reproduced in the text by some of the rebellious and individualist artists in the novel, such as Tony the sculptor and Rita the songstress. While there is a recognition and acceptance of the hybridity that characterizes them as postcolonial subjects, their Achilles heel is the failure to also problematise the tyranny and limitations of metropolitan subjectivities grafted onto a Third World context with entirely different imperatives. In the same way that the cultural nationalists are attempting to craft a single subjectivity rather than letting various ones evolve in that particular context, the Marechera narrators are more or less guilty of the same. However, the manner in which the narrators in the text rebel against almost everything, indicates that their identities cannot be pigeon-holed into a singular category and so suggest limitless

possibilities. Pattison (1998: 231) may not be wide of the mark when he observes that 'Marechera ... psychologically ... was in a thrall to a Foucauldian Babel of discourses which, out of his control, made his quest for a sense of self (the primordial) impossible to achieve'. As I have noted elsewhere (2013: 25), this primordial self is the sort of subjectivity promoted by anarchist doctrine and Marechera's writings are surely an expression of this.

If anything, the narrators in the text are well ahead of their time in terms of the subjectivities they proffer. This is evidenced by the fact that the text *Mindblast* influenced a later generation of Zimbabwean young writers whom Veit-Wild (2006:98) refers to as the *Mindblast* generation. This hints at the potential of marginal and subversive masculinities to also come to the fore, time and circumstances permitting. The discourses of *Mindblast* were able to inspire future generations in the same way that what Bakhtin (1981:346) calls 'internally-persuasive discourses' work. Marginal and subversive masculinities have the potential to work in the same way, hence dominant masculinities at any given time are wary of them and often waste no time in vilifying, marginalizing and suppressing them. Marechera ultimately became a folk hero, as opposed to the official ones constructed in nationalist discourses, a case of a marginal masculinity appropriating centre stage in those unmanned sites, and parallel to the hegemonic masculinities of official discourse.

So, what is often called the 'big man' model of masculinity is evidently one of those that define hegemonic masculinity in the early post-independence Zimbabwe in Marechera's text. If one could not be one, at least one should be seen to be aspiring towards that, in a way that is similar to what Connell (2005:79) refers to as 'complicity'. However, materialism as a major marker of manhood opens up the identity to appropriation by women who can also wear the badge of material success, and such women are often referred to as *murume chaiye* (meaning a real man). Also important to note is that hyper-materialism is implicated in the formation and maintenance of class hierarchies and boundaries and so class formation is one of the processes afflicting the social-body politic, and this includes the primitive accumulation that is evident in the text. This is typical of what Fanon (1967:125) sees as symptomatic of an under-developed bourgeoisie. This is clearly linked with the predatory masculinities that one finds in the text.

That national culture and the masculinities that underpin it in the text have to be consistently defended via surveillance, violence and the employment of ideological state apparatus suggests that they are vulnerable and open to subversion. This makes visible the fact that subversive forms of masculinity are always in a state of contestation with hegemonic masculinities and have the potential to subvert them. The anarchist orientation of the narrators suggests that they

are already informed by an alternative ideology that can subvert the cultural nationalist one and the various aesthetic ideologies that underpin it such as socialist realism and realism. There is a sense in which these seek stasis and closure; aspirations towards a monologic status. The consignment to the margins of alternative discourses represents an attempt to stifle and forestall dialogue, which according to Bakhtin (1984:252) is the minimum need for existence. The discourse of national culture attempts to appropriate the status of authoritative discourse because culture represents the word or discourse of the fathers and therefore has a supposedly stable semantic core. Like all discourses associated with or underpinning power, this discourse is undercut from the margins by subversive ones, resonating with Bakhtin's (qtd in Holquist, 2002:86-87) association of novelistic discourse, as in this text, with carnival.

However, the Marechera narrators are all characterized by an anxiety that also shows the unease of those masculinities on the margins. In 'Grimknife Jnr's Story' one witnesses the fall of Buddy the artist, ironically in a toilet, as a result of his self-doubts relating not only to the efficacy of his art, but also to his masculine identity. So, these masculinities exist in a dialogic relationship with the hegemonic ones and cannot be thought of outside these. What is made visible by this is that in as much as they are subversive, they owe their existence to the hegemonic ones and by and large help in creating a balance. So in a sense, they are complicit, since subversion and resistance themselves are a by-product of power. These masculinities, therefore, are not novel and do not have an autonomous ontology. If anything, they are all mediated by the teleology of power and survival. The narrators are therefore constantly involved in endless introspection and self-justification. This very text represents an attempt by these masculinities to create a space for themselves and even subvert the hegemonic ones, that is, those underpinned by materialism and cultural nationalism. That the multiple narrators are always hungry for success and recognition as artists is suggestive of the parallel relationship that this kind of masculinity shares with the hegemonic ones. This is closely related to the behaviour of the new post-independence ruling elite who are the erstwhile subversive masculinities in their contest with the hegemonic masculinities of colonialism. The text makes it amply evident, particularly in the last drama sketch, that they could not conceive of themselves outside the models set by those masculinities that they were contesting. So, by and large the different masculinities in this text are intimately entangled and can largely be understood in relationship to each other, that is, in their polylogical relationships.

3.2: New Wine in Old Bottles: Representing the Masculine Subject in David Lemon's *Ivory Madness*

3.2.1: Synopsis

David Lemon's *Ivory Madness* was published in 1983, at about the same time as Marechera's text. It is a thriller whose setting moves from the urban space of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, to the wilderness and pristine one of the Gonarezhou National Park in south-eastern Zimbabwe; a park that today forms part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park straddling the borders of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique. The focus here is on how white and black masculinities are represented and imagined at a time when erstwhile identities are ostensibly undergoing transition in tandem with the new realities brought about by political independence.

Diverse masculine subjectivities in the narrative as embodied by the various characters are in many ways set against the background of nature. If anything, nature, as represented by the various animals, in particular the gargantuan and majestic jumbo called Chikuru, is a palpable presence in the narrative and has metaphoric significance in the universe of this text. In fact, so personified is Chikuru that he can be viewed as one of the main male characters in the narrative. So, it is interesting to examine some of the polylogical relationships amongst the various male subjects and discourses along with the imaging and visualisation of nature in the text.

The narrative has as its initial focus the machinations, avariciousness, underhand dealings and corruption of the black new ruling class in cahoots with some of the former colonizer subjects, as is the case in Marechera's drama sketches discussed above. In the narrative, Ntabeni, a corrupt and big game trophy-mad permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources, forcibly engages Llewellyn Davies, a former Gonarezhou National Park game warden, who is also a former member of a colonial Rhodesian army elite unit known as the Selous Scouts, to poach the elephant represented in the text as the heaviest tusker in the country and possibly the whole of Africa. He desires the massive tusks to add to his extensive collection of other animal trophies in order to further assuage and buttress his masculine ego. The party for the ill-fated poaching expedition to the Gonarezhou National Park also includes Nduna, a former guerrilla commander in one of the anti-colonial liberation movements, as well as Murdoch, a corrupt white businessman. Their numerous adventures on this quest are described in intricate detail by the author, in what also takes the form of a man versus nature universe of discourse.

The various sub-plots in the narrative dovetail, zeroing in on the mad, zealous, and single-minded quest to get hold of and possess the enormous tusks of Chikuru the pachyderm, and on efforts to thwart this nefarious plot. This includes that of Shadreck, the seasoned poacher, as

well as Carter, the keen-eyed and dedicated chief warden of the national park. The multiple voices and narrating subjects underline the polylogical nature of the text, as the fast-paced action takes the reader from the city to the game park and finally back to the city. Described in intricate and nuanced detail, and with a lucid turn of phrase, the narrative unfolds, allowing the reader to see events through the consciousnesses of the various characters, including animals. In the end ‘good’ triumphs over ‘evil’ and the devious and unholy attempt to obtain the elephant’s glamorous tusks ends in disaster for most of those involved, but not before the tensions, racial undertones, and the masculinities of those involved are brought to the fore.

Most of the characters in the text are male and their quest becomes an entirely masculine undertaking. Like most white-authored novels of the colonial period, as mentioned before, the plot of this narrative also involves a quest, but this is complicated now by the fact that this reflects a new dispensation different in many ways from the colonial period. Whereas previously colonial racial ideologies had made many of these quests imperial romances that helped reinforce and promote colonial discourse and also dwelt on the so called ‘white man’s burden’, the new dispensation complicates this and necessitates a modification of this genre to accommodate the different realities. Among other things, one notes the many ambivalences of the narrative as it tries to negotiate between the old and the new, and so the contest between centrifugal and centripetal forces in the narrative is made manifest. In the novel, the white hero Davies whose ‘character zone’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 316) is the dominant one, is juxtaposed with Nduna, the black man who is more or less his alter-ego. The two are set as representatives of oppositional and contesting forces whose roots are in the erstwhile space of the colony, pitting the white colonialists against the black African nationalists. The narrative’s failure to resolve this conflict is manifest, notwithstanding that the time-space of the colony has been superseded by the post-independence one. For example, when on one occasion Nduna salutes Davies, the latter makes the following observation: ‘first time I’ve ever been saluted by one of the opposition’ (Lemon, 1983: 20), showing the extent to which his consciousness is still frozen in those contests and disjunctions that defined colonial contestations. It is a sociological manifestation of the pull of Bakhtin’s centripetal forces that negate change. So, the complexities of the representation of the black and white masculinities in the text and how they represent the metamorphosis of erstwhile identities is also the subject of the foregoing.

3.2.2: Of Homosocial Bonds

To begin with, the narrative establishes the new homosocial bonds between the former colonizers represented by the corrupt White businessman, Murdoch, and the Black permanent

secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ntabeni. As in Marechera's drama sketches, these come together to serve their now many common class interests, many of which transcend race. The narrative desists from giving the corruption and sleaze in the post-independence dispensation a solely black face, and what is also made visible is that lower- positioned males of both races are being victimised by this new class in the text. Consequently, Davies, the now near-destitute white man, and Nduna, the black soldier, are forced to go on the poaching expedition by the Secretary, a top government official. However, as if to bring to the fore the shift in power relations, Ntabeni also coerces his white accomplice, the business man Murdoch, to accompany the others on this tough, albeit criminal expedition. So, this incongruous group in some ways reflects what can be perceived as the narrator's perception of the new realities in the country.

The character Ntabeni also lends credence to what Mbembe (2001: 102) sees as the lack of proportion and the grotesqueness of the postcolony. Lacking in physical masculine attributes, he tries to compensate for this through his awesome collection of animal trophies, taking the reader directly into part of the psychology of the big game hunter and trophy collector, and so highlighting a dialogic relationship between masculinities and nature. By simply possessing the big game trophies without necessarily hunting the wild animals to get them, Ntabeni attempts to fill the gap between his apparent effeminacy and hegemonic masculine attributes, as evidenced by his feelings of ease, bliss and contentment when wandering amongst this multifarious animal trophy collection. Interestingly, he desires the biggest or the best of the animal trophies to be able to fill in the gap, and it is what sets off the chain of events that constitutes the main plot of the novel. In fact, the trophies become like a drug that he cannot do without, and his addiction lasts throughout the narrative; they are also entangled in events surrounding his death. Through him, the narrative casts aspersions on and mocks the masculinities of the new black ruling class. However, some nostalgia for the erstwhile masculinities of empire by the formerly colonized is made visible, ironically through Ntabeni's love of some old-fashioned colonial customs, resonating with Fanon's (1967: 30) claim that the colonized wants to be like the colonizer, or with Bhabha's (1995) notion of colonial mimicry, whose ambivalence he aptly describes, albeit not through a gendered prism. For example, Ntabeni's 'accent was pure Oxford, with no trace of the African' (Lemon, 1983: 21). In fact, this mimicry can also be understood as the attempt of the formerly feminised and infantilised colonial subject to appropriate the masculinity of the colonizer, and so in some ways it is gendered. The hybrid ontology marking the identities of the formerly colonized such as Ntabeni also makes visible the tensions between centrifugal and centripetal forces; that is,

between change and stasis.

Murdoch, the white entrepreneur, being in cahoots with Ntabeni, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Natural Resources, embodies the homosocial relations between the new ruling black elite and the former white colonizers. That in this case the relationship is underpinned by corruption highlights the egocentricity and moral blame-worthiness of the two groups, and their predisposition to sacrifice the interests of the populace in general on the altar of self-aggrandizement. In fact, the complicity of the former colonial rulers in the corruption of the new ruling class is underlined in the narrative. However, unlike Murdoch, Ntabeni is feminized in the narrative through his diminutive size, voice, and general demeanour. While Murdoch 'had always been lithe and well-muscled' (Lemon, 1983: 18), Ntabeni's hand was 'small and feminine' (ibid: 21). It is as if the narrative is implying that the former colonial 'boy' subject is not yet 'man' enough; 'boy', as noted previously, having been a belittling pronoun to denote the infantilization and feminization of the black man. However his executive and bureaucratic powers as a top government official mean that he can commandeer men like Murdoch, Davies, and Nduna, by hook or crook if necessary. Paradoxically and ironically, he therefore represents the new black hegemonic masculinities which have displaced those of the former colonizers, at least at the political level, suggesting that hegemonic masculinity does not always reside in embodied persons but inhabits and can be derived from institutions such as the state. This was also the case with most of the hegemonic masculine subjects of empire that derived it largely from institutions of the same. That such institutions appropriate and deploy hegemonic masculine attributes that are embodied by some male bodies in their disciplining and even surveillance of subordinate subjectivities, goes against Butler's (1990:278) exclusive reduction of gender to performance. In this text, this power is an instrument of disciplining and controlling the bodies of various subordinate subjectivities, including recalcitrant ones, evident in the manner in which Ntabeni subjects the likes of Davies, Murdoch and Nduna to his will. In a sense one sees a dialogic relationship between hegemonic masculine bodies and the masculinization of institutions. This gendering of institutions also dialogues with masculine (and feminine) subjects who *man* such institutions, becoming hegemonic themselves. In this sense, an effeminate Ntabeni is able to dominate men who apparently possess most of Connell's (1995; 2005) hegemonic masculine attributes. His ability to do this resonates with Morrell's (1998: 609) assertion that 'hegemonic masculinity generally operates without recourse to violence, [but] it is the case that the capacity for and threat of violence underpins it'. This scenario, however, means that masculinity can no longer be viewed as the preserve or even prerogative of males, but can be appropriated by anyone who is

appropriately positioned, including females. In fact, it becomes more or less a node or beacon on a map of dialogic gender relations as far as identities are concerned, and involves institutions, bodies, and discourses.

3.2.3: Masculinities, Place and the Primeval Law

Subterranean racial discourses run through the text and it is mainly through the characters Davies, Nduna, Ntabeni, and Shadreck that one gets some insight into the imagining and imaging of racialised masculinities in the text. The narrator's quintessential hegemonic masculine subject is Davies, a former member of the Rhodesian army's elite Selous Scouts unit who is, in line with the nature-orientedness of the narrative, imaged through the trope of a feline, namely a leopard. This identity resonates with Salminen's (qtd in Vayrynen, 2013: 137) observation that 'war is the ultimate event where the appropriation of the male body is taken to the extreme'. The feline image, interestingly, in some ways resonates with that of Rix the Giant Cat in Marechera's *Mindblast*. This metaphor conflates attributes such as top physical toughness, efficiency, control, alertness, domination, and predation; all veritable aspects of hegemonic masculinity. In the universe of Lemon's novel's narrated time, these attributes more than compensate for Davies' dearth of material prosperity at this stage of his life. Added to this is his beautiful, petite female lover with whom he is cohabiting, and when viewed in the light of the former appears to help accentuate his masculine attributes in addition to functioning as a trophy. Even his previous incarceration has not been enough to permanently degrade *Ishe Ingwe* (Shona for 'King Leopard') (Lemon, 1983: 14), the name Davies was affectionately or notoriously (depending on which side of the war one was) known during his game warden and later commando days. The name also suggests a dialogic relationship between nature and the gender discourses, where characteristics of the former are appropriated and transposed onto the male body to embody characteristics of the latter. Implied in this is a sense that human society, all pretences to civilization and culture notwithstanding, embodies elements of nature, where life is a perpetual struggle for survival in one form or another, and so called masculine characteristics, including hegemonic ones, are part of this matrix in which the end game is survival. Arguably, hegemonic masculinities sit right at the apex of the social pyramid, in the same way that a predator, represented by the image of the leopard, sits at the pinnacle of the food chain. The image of the jungle or nature, as embodied and symbolized by the national park, serves to highlight this. In the tough environment of the national park, a jungle where survival of the fittest applies, these hegemonic masculinities characteristics become even more pertinent, unlike the city, where supposedly 'feminine' men like Murdoch and Ntabeni can rule

the roost. Masculinities therefore are closely linked with place, and are valorised according to their suitability to mediate the same. In the city, the Ntabenis and the Murdochs are ensconced at or near the very apex of the social pyramid, and their 'masculinities' become hegemonic, but with Davies the roles are somewhat reversed.

The urban spaces therefore produce different masculinities, as one sees in the above examples. The image of man as the hunter is thus embodied differently in both the urban and wilderness spaces. So, the Murdochs and Ntabenis' masculinities easily translate into femininities, or at best subordinate masculinities, in the bush, making visible a dialogic relationship between gender and place. The city can also be viewed as a jungle where survival of the fittest also applies, with 'fitness' being defined differently from how it's perceived in the wilderness spaces. So based on this, there is a sense in which hegemonic masculinity is closely linked with the image and metaphor of man as the hunter, and varies according to time and locale. The ability to mediate this in relation to place is implicated in the construction of hegemonic masculinities. This also partly explains why Connell's (1995: 82) 'patriarchal dividend' is distributed unequally among men. A leopard can be male or female but its predatory characteristics, strength, guile and dominance, when grafted on the human body, readily translate into hegemonic masculinity.

So, there is a sense in which these hegemonic masculinities appear in dialogic relationship with the jungle law of survival of the fittest. Such a construction, understanding, and expression of masculinity suggests it to be partly an expression and perpetuation of this primeval law, and the various hierarchies that Connell (1995) came up with readily fit into this paradigm. So, an understanding of masculinity based on this would partially account for the much referred to difficulty of the transformation of masculine identities. The survival and domination imperative can thus be closely linked with the image of the phallus in Lacanian (1977) psychoanalysis and the social and gender struggles over this, and can therefore partly explain the operation of patriarchy. It is interesting to note that the metaphor of the primeval is also one that mediates Marechera's universe of discourse in his literary works, particularly as they relate to his anarchist inclinations.

The metaphoric role of nature in the text is made visible in the way in which the animals in the National Park that depend on the protection of Davies, Carter and company are symbolically feminised, and this is accentuated by how Davies, and Carter after him, dote almost uxoriously on the gigantic jumbo Chikuru, and become obsessed with his protection even at the cost of their own lives. Their power and sense of control over it is accentuated by its gargantuan size, which reflects nature's brute force. Indeed, one notes that there is an almost

obsessional pre-occupation with its size, and that of other beasts referred to variously in the novel. All this resonates with eco-feminists' (for example, Plumwood, 1993:10) argument that there is a close relationship between the domination of nature and that of women. Furthermore, those masculine subjects who abuse nature, like Murdoch, Nduna and the poacher Shadreck, get a very raw deal from it in the end as they pay with their lives. Conversely, those who are eco-friendly, like Davies, Carter and others, are treated benignly.

3.2.4: Of Masculinities and Frontiers

In the novel, the National Park is a kind of frontier symbolised by the perpetual struggle between the park rangers and the poachers, with the wild animals and the park being fought over, taking the place of women in this masculine struggle, if, as highlighted previously, we think of Mbembe's (2006: 169) assertion that 'the war between races was constructed as a war between men, but a war in which the main assets were women's bodies'. Here one sees a reliving of the erstwhile colonizer frontier masculinities as they struggled over African land, and the attempt to protect the colony from African nationalists, if one considers that the main actors in protecting the park are white men, including a distinguished former Rhodesian soldier, and on the other side are two former guerrillas, one from the Zimbabwean liberation movements and the other from a Mozambican one. So in a sense, narrative becomes the new site and vehicle for metonymically reproducing older struggles, suggesting a negation of the imperative to transform identities of the former settler and native.

So, it is possible to make a connection between masculinities, in particular hegemonic ones, with frontiers which denote a struggle over space. For example, in capitalist ideology, capital also becomes the embodiment of that which is struggled over, and thus constitutes just another frontier at the ideological and material level, and the men (and women) who come out tops become hegemonic ones, such as Murdoch and to a certain extent Ntabeni. This also resonates with Connell's (2000a: 57) assertion that the new hegemonic masculinities on the world stage are those of 'the business executives who operate in global markets, and the political executives who interact with them'. Class struggle in Marxist ideology also reflects on class frontiers that are sites of struggle where some masculinities position themselves along hegemonic lines. So, this ideology arguably represents an attempt to break down boundaries and create a classless society, where such frontiers as locations of social struggle do not exist. Such a classless society would definitely have had a profound impact on gender and its hierarchies. That it did not exactly emerge might be a reflection on the predisposition to invent or re-invent spaces and frontiers as sites of struggle, if the primeval law referred to above remains the subterranean

narrative underpinning most human endeavours. There is also the tendency by the formerly colonized to immediately create class hierarchies after independence, as is embodied by Ntabeni. Similarly, frontiers are created by social ideologies like those of race (as in this novel) and gender, and these are fought over so that they can be broken down, hence there is a relationship between Marxist ideology and anti-racist and anti-gender segregation discourses in their being anti-frontier. So, physical, mental, and ideological spaces and frontiers are the battlegrounds shaping different masculinities in the narrative.

The discourse of nation is also implicated in the production of frontiers, and its outsider-insider dichotomy is a veritable expression of this. In the novel the National Park can be seen as a metonym of the nation and the poachers are thus imaged like ‘the barbarians at the gates’ (Hock, qtd in Kelly, 2008: 216), salivating over the wildlife that the park defenders must protect with their life and blood if needs be. In this way nature is feminized. So, much of the discourse of the novel centres on the resolution of this, and the representation of the masculine subjects in the text cannot be divorced from this. While the larger nation is the post-independence one, the park provides a veritable site for the re-imagining of this contest for the control of the nation, and the different environmental ideologies manifest in the narrative are like the different versions of the nation vying for supremacy. Like nationalist discourses, these are premised on the paradigm of exclusion and inclusion. Those who do not subscribe to the dominant environmentalist ideology are excluded, and many of these, such as Secretary Ntabeni and the Minister of the Natural Resources, represent the new ruling elite. Similarly, Nduna, a former guerrilla commander, readily falls into this bracket. Those compliant with the dominant ideology include Davies, a former member of the Rhodesian army, and the majority of white characters in the text. The only white character belonging to the former is Murdoch who ironically is ‘in bed’ with the new ruling black elite. This reality clearly makes visible the fact that whites occupy diverse subject positions in the text and not all of these are racialised. The narrative, however, cannot fully escape an accusation of a racialisation of its environmental ideology. Its demonization of the new ruling elite appears tinged with nostalgia for the past, one marked by racial domination in favour of the whites. For example, the narrative non-problematically lauds Davies’ proficiency both as a game ranger and member of a colonial elite military unit, the Selous Scouts, who were reportedly a scourge of the anti-colonial liberation war fighters. The chief warden in the park is a white man, and so, as a metaphor of the nation, symbolically inverts the new realities where the new head of state is black. The narrative, however, acknowledges that the Minister of Natural Resources is the overall authority as far as the park is concerned, though his authority is subverted when matters come to a head and push

comes to shove in the rush to save the elephant Chikuru. By symbolically writing out of its own national narrative members of the new ruling black elite and former liberation war fighters, the narrative shows that its envisioned nation is different from the current one. Those written out are thus constructed as toxic masculinities that are harmful to its imagined national body-politic.

Thus, there is a sense in which the liberation war guerrillas represented by Nduna are put on the same level with the poachers. It resonates with the manner in which they were constructed as ‘terrorists’ in the colonial narratives, and in a way this subtly hints at the text’s complicity with these and their representation of black subjectivities. So, arguably, in this narrative, the erstwhile Rhodesian space has been metonymically replaced by that of the national park as the one to be protected and requiring such tough masculine subjects in the mould of Davies and also Carter, the warden who has replaced him at Gonarezhou. This conjures up images of the perpetuation or re-invention of the siege or laager mentality that characterized much of colonial consciousness and mediated their relationship with the black African people and the African space, both, as noted previously, are seen as hostile and threatening presences against which they had to be in a perpetual state of alertness and preparedness. It suggests that these fears and anxieties have been carried over into the post-independence period and in this text they are being dramatized and played out in this thriller, involving this motley group of both black and white masculine subjectivities. This pristine wilderness area is like the old Africa that must be fought over, protected and preserved, and must now be saved from what the text subtly constructs as the ‘neo-barbarous’ presences and subjectivities. The perpetual Othering of black masculinities makes visible the failure at transforming the identities of the former colonized and colonizer.

Nduna’s wartime *nom-de-guerre*, ‘Herod the Silent’, contrasts sharply and obtrusively with that of *Ishe Ingwe*. In the bible, the figure and image of King Herod embodies a litany of negatives, the most remembered and notable being the butcher of the helpless and hapless innocents in his wicked and evil, albeit unavailing, attempt to get rid of the future Messiah. The symbolism is most unflattering and disfigures the script of Nduna’s mission as a liberation war fighter, again resonating with Rhodesian settler narratives concerning the liberation war fighters. The ‘Silent’ in his name suggests an absence of language and therefore an inability to communicate, and in the universe of the text is an attempt to strip him of his humanity. In the words of Holquist (2002: 49), this kind of silence represents ‘the inability to mediate between inner speech and the social dimension of language ...[and] is perceived as sickness’. Here, on another note, one also sees a connection between the construction of masculinity and the

suppression of emotions which, using this kind of logic, translates into inner self-violence, and can readily translate into sickness in one form or another.

3.2.5: Entanglement in National Narratives

The novel's publication in 1983 suggests that like other texts discussed before, its narrated and narrative time is that of Zimbabwe's crisis period of the early to mid-1980s during the so called 'dissident era', where contesting versions of the nation created fissures and fractures in the national body-politic. Ethnicity and ideology were at the centre of this disjunction. Political discontent was mainly centred in the western Matabeleland provinces dominated by the Ndebele ethnic group, and dissident masculinities in the dominant national narrative were mainly associated with this group. Interestingly, the names that the narrative gives to its main black male characters, namely Ntabeni and Nduna, identify them ostensibly as Ndebele, and so there is a sense in which this text can be said to be complicit with the dominant national narrative of the time in its attempt to vilify these masculinities and write them out of the nation. This pandering to the dominant national narrative could have served the purpose of concealing the racial undertones of the novel. So, it cannot be understood outside a consideration of the polylogical relationships obtaining between it and the dominant national narratives and the erstwhile dominant Rhodesian settler narratives.

Even the representation of Shadreck, the virtual poacher-in-chief in the Gonarezhou, cannot be fully understood outside the above. That he is known only by his first name symbolically denies him a full identity. In some ways he is no more than one of the faceless blacks that colonial narratives were wont to construct, and more than any other character in the novel, he is disabused of his humanity: 'Shadreck was old, he was dirty and he smelled bad. His was the deep feral stink of a wild animal' (Lemon, 1983: 30). His singular obsession becomes that of becoming the man who kills what he regards as the largest elephant in Africa, and keep its tusks as trophies in a desperate attempt to buttress his flagging and declining sense of manhood. This singular concern of his connects him to Ntabeni and so the narrative constructs a direct relationship between masculinity and the domination of nature.

In the same way, Shadreck is also apparently of no fixed nationality in the text. The narrative constructs him as a former guerrilla who has fought for FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) in Mozambique, but then refers to him as an ethnic Venda, a people who straddle the borders of Zimbabwe and South Africa. The narrative further constructs him and his ethnic group as contemptuous of the Shona ethnic group, the largest one in Zimbabwe, and largely associated with the dominant national narrative of the early-to- mid -1980s. In this way, the text excludes him from the then main national narrative, and lumps him with those forces that

embodied what was then referred to as being of a 'dissident' pre-disposition. In a sense, the text participates in the divide-and-rule ideologies of erstwhile colonial narratives that also partly contributed to the national crisis of the period referred to above, where ethnicity was one of the main fault-lines.

3.2.6: Re-Inventing the Colonial 'Boy'

The only black subjectivity that the narrative subtly valorises is that of Ben, assistant Game Warden to Carter in the Gonarezhou. He is a subordinate and somewhat fawning masculinity to his white superior, and is in a sense a latter day version of the 'boy' masculinity so valorised in colonial discourses. It is interesting to note that Ben, like Shadreck, is also only known by his first name, unlike most of the other characters in the text, and so symbolically is denied a full identity, his advanced age notwithstanding. He is like the typical colonial 'boy': the black man as perpetual child and subordinate in his dealings with the white man. This identity is a carry-over from the colony and makes evident the colonial nostalgia that can be said to tinge this narrative in terms of its universe of discourse. While the relationship between him and Carter appears to be the one the narrative proffers as emblematic of racial equality and fraternity in the new dispensation, it is fractured along the axis of the erstwhile racial hierarchies and so it does not fully embody the metamorphosis of settler and native that Mamdani (1998), as highlighted before, sees as the desideratum for real transformation in the post-independence dispensation. Both have, however, an unquestionable love of nature, a united purpose, and are fully committed to their duties, something essential for the cohesion and coherence of the new nation. This ambivalence, therefore, is a manifestation of the complex operation of centripetal and centrifugal forces on the text and some of the main characters in the text.

3.2.7: 'Rumble in the Jungle'

The climax of the novel is when the two poaching parties of Davies and company, and the lonesome and ghostly figure of Shadreck, and the anti-poaching forces represented by the national park wardens and the police support unit converge on Gonarezhou National Park. This is the main action in the novel that makes it a thriller. That a former Rhodesian army captain, Davies, is the leader of the poaching/hunting party, ahead of a former guerrilla commander, is interpreted by Nduna as a reproduction and relieving of colonial racial hierarchies. So he interprets all of Davies's attempts to get the group going as no more than the machinations and gyrations of the erstwhile colonial 'big white bwana ... a typical colonial to whom the black man is a vassal, hardly human at all' (Lemon, 1983: 90). This entrapment in the past is

represented as a major Achilles heel in the group's endeavours to function cohesively and coherently and the rivalry between the two is one of the main motifs in this part of the narrative. Each attempts to assert his masculinity and in the process the past is brought into the present through the allusion to the just-ended guerrilla war. Connell's (2000: 57) observation that 'the process of decolonization disrupted the gender hierarchies of the colonial order and where armed struggle was involved, might have involved a deliberate cultivation of masculine hardness', puts the conflict between the two into perspective. Davies attempts to recover and assert the masculinities of the former Rhodesian forces by casting aspersions on the military efficiency and courage of the former guerrilla forces, while to Nduna it goes without saying that they get the kudos, as his side is now in power. As masculinities are also performed and asserted in social encounters, the expedition becomes the occasion for this: 'Masculinity is a constant enactment of power; it is nothing a man simply has or is, but rather a way of being that he needs to perform and assert' (Lwambo, 2013: 52). The narrative further casts aspersions on the AK (Automatic Kalashnikov) 47 rifle that Nduna carries and which was the weapon of choice of the former freedom fighters. As a masculine symbol it is miniaturized and ridiculed and its efficacy questioned. This is in contrast to the rifle borne by Davies himself, the kind used by colonial forces, whose power and efficacy is not left in doubt. This is the narrative's way of elevating the masculinities of the former Rhodesian soldiers over those of the former guerrillas. In this way further aspersions are cast on the former guerrilla fighters, while the opposite is true for the former Rhodesian forces.

So Davies and the Rhodesian colonial forces as represented in this text readily fit what Wilber Smith's (1981) text discussed in the previous chapter refers to as 'men of men', and this summarises the text's perpetuation of colonial racial motifs. The narrative confirms Davies' identity 'as a Rhodesian and a white man: [whose chief identity markers are] ... resourcefulness and the ability to withstand physical hardship' (Primorac, 2006: 26). However, the resolution to the narrative is in the ignominious deaths of all the members of the poaching party, including Davies and Ntabeni. In a sense, it involves the destruction of those forces that are a threat to the nation as symbolised by the National Park. The text's vision of the nation, however, is fractured along the axis of race, thus portraying it as more or less a perpetuation of Rhodesian settler narratives, as discussed by Chennells (1982). The text thus appropriates the male body and hegemonic masculinity in its discourses of race and nation. Elements of Rhodesianness can be deduced in the narrator's depiction of events in the narrative, thus resonating with the sub-title of this section: 'new wine in old bottles', that denotes ambivalence emanating from the operation of centrifugal and centripetal forces on the masculine identities

in the text. The text reflects on and participates in the perpetuation of the national crisis of the first decade of independence.

3.3: Conclusion

The two texts, *Mindblast and Other Stories* and *Ivory Madness*, importantly represent the homosocial bonds that obtained between former coloniser and colonised in the postcolony. The new ruling black elite and the former white colonizers now have shared interests that transcend race, and hence there is a shift from race to class in as far as the homosocial bonds between the two are concerned. Some of the former colonized attempt to banish the ghost of their feminization in the erstwhile colonial discourse by appropriating the masculinities of their former colonizers, showing that masculinities can best be understood on a map of dialogic relations. Masculinities not complicit with this new dynamic are Othered and vilified. However, Lemon's text shows the existence of subterranean racial discourses that continue to impede the transformation of the former colonizer and colonized identities. In fact, narrative appears to be the site where the struggle between the former foes is being perpetuated and, broadly, the relationship between nation and narration is established.

Chapter 4: ‘Men’s Men’: Hyper-masculinities, Nation, and the Spectacle of the Masculine

4.0: Introduction

The previous chapter looked at two texts that represent some of the ways in which some of the masculinities of the early years of independence were undergoing transformation. Both former colonizer and colonized needed to re-invent themselves in tandem with the new realities. Hence there is a shift from race to class as a site of struggle between different masculinities. New homosocial bonds are seen being forged between some of the above groups on one hand, while some subversive identities struggle for relevance, some being right in the margins. This chapter focuses on two narratives, both written in the 1990s. This was a watershed decade for Zimbabwe, following as it does the decade of independence during which there were so many expectations, a lot of promise and some national strife that had some ethnic dimensions and ramifications. In the 1990s a global neo-liberal current swept the country, and with it came the abandonment of the socialist rhetoric and some populist policies which had underpinned and characterized much of the government’s political discourses. Through such, the ruling elite had portrayed themselves as people-oriented, selfless, among other images. A politics of patronage that one can readily associate with the ‘big man’ model of African masculinity had predominated. The upshot of the neo-liberal tidal wave was the adoption of an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) whose austerity measures brought suffering to many in the form of loss of income through job loss and so on, in addition to widening the gap between the rich and the poor. This paradigm shift inevitably was accompanied by some ideological ambivalences, obfuscation and volte-face that called for dexterity in order for the political elite to re-invent and recast themselves for purposes of political expediency. Some of the literary narratives of this period engage with some of the multiple ramifications spawned by these developments in diverse ways. The above therefore constitutes the two novels’ ‘dialogizing background’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 364).

This chapter examines two novels, both detective-cum-thrillers. These are David Freeman’s *Rumours of Ophir* (1998) and Rodwell Machingauta’s *Detective Ridgemore Riva* (1994). The focus is on these two texts’ portrayal of masculine subjectivities and how these interface with the various discourses that marked, characterized and defined the period. In the words of Routley (qtd in Chigidi, 1998: 1), ‘a detective story, properly so called, is a story involving a crime, a police force, a detective (who may or may not be a member of that force)

and a solution. It must involve a major interest in the finding of that solution'. On the other hand a thriller, according to Bedard (ibid: 72), 'generally deals with espionage, crime or detection and its heroes must struggle against the pressure of time as well as physical odds'. These definitions largely summarise the nature of the two novels currently under consideration. These genres have a long history in Zimbabwean fiction. Nevertheless, there has not been much exploration of the gendered subjectivities contained therein, particularly masculinities. Most studies of this nature (for example, Alden, 2010: 83-99) have focused on the conventional novels or short stories, and are pre-occupied with the perceived crises of masculinity that characterize and typify some of these literary narratives of the time, such as Mungoshi's collection of short stories entitled *Walking Still* (1997). However, a full appreciation of the imagining, performance and representation of the masculinities in the literary narratives of the time demands a broader exploration that goes beyond what is often considered conventional literature to also include detective fiction and thrillers. This notwithstanding the fact that these are often rated low on the scale of literariness.

4.1: David Freeman's *Rumours of Ophir* (1998)

4.1.1: Synopsis

The novel focuses on the search for the mythical gold of the 16th century Portuguese Catholic priest Father Gonsalo da Silveira who came on an ill-fated evangelical mission to the Monomotapa kingdom,⁴ the dominant one in Zimbabwe at the time. There were competing and multiple narratives surrounding it, but the central legend had it that da Silveira's gold, after numerous twists and turns involving a plethora of contending subjects, was concealed at a specific, albeit as yet unknown, location in the country, waiting to be discovered by anyone who had the wits and determination. Vying for da Silveira's gold are two Portuguese families with roots dating back to his time and associated with the history of the gold in different ways, namely the Combai and Caiado families. Their entangled family histories see them both claiming to be the rightful heirs to the gold, notwithstanding the intervening historical circumstances which militate against these claims. So, in the various conflicts, contestations, machinations and skulduggery that characterize much of the novel's plot, it turns out that the gold is now the property of the country after all, and those individuals vying for it are no more than thieves and pillagers. However, the narrative is the theatre for the interplay of various

⁴ Often spelt as Munhumutapa or Mwenemutapa.

masculine and feminine subjectivities, all of which dialogue with national and supra-national discourses in various ways.

What kick starts the drama of the main plot of the narrative is Rodrigues Combai's quest for the lost gold of da Silveira in Zimbabwe, which through twists of fate had fallen into the hands of his ancestor Pedro Combai, who in haste to escape a local uprising conceals it and flees the country, but not before he has done the necessary groundwork to enable him or his descendants to locate it if needs be. Rodrigues' moves do not go unnoticed by his family's centuries-old rivals the Caiados, who are also after the same gold, having been historically connected to it. And the inevitable entry of the law enforcement agencies into the mix sets the stage for a potential movie-style whodunit-cum- thriller and showdown; a fertile ground for the performance of hyper-masculinities.

At the centre of the narrative is James Carter, a somewhat eccentric white former policeman-turned-pedagogue, who is recalled to help the police crack and unravel the murder mystery of the visiting prominent Portuguese businessman, Rodrigues Combai. The matter had become one of national importance because, besides drawing considerable international attention, it was reportedly going to affect the country's tourism industry by portraying it as an unsafe destination. The emphasis on the economic dimension to some extent reflects on the 1990s decade, when (as noted previously in this thesis) the country took on board a neo-liberal economic program that went by the name ESAP (Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme). So in the company of a former commercial sex worker-turned-policewoman whom he had rescued from exploitation, Carter manages to piece together and reconstruct the pieces of the puzzle concerning the murder, at the centre of which is da Silveira's gold and the centuries-old feud between the Combai and Caiado families. And in the manner of a thriller, the novel takes the reader through fast-paced and pulsating, yet convoluted action that brings out some of the raw and often implacable human emotions, such as greed, love, and hate, to name but a few. At the same time attributes such as heroism, bravery, resourcefulness, sheer dogged determination, self-sacrifice and obsession define the parameters of human action. In the process various gendered subjectivities are brought to the fore.

4.1.2: The Past in the Present

In a manner that echoes Bakhtin's (1981:320-321) understanding of the novel as multi-genred, Freeman's novel combines myth, history and fiction in its construction and representation of a variegated range of characters all engaged to varying degrees in activities that can be examined

through a gender prism as well as that of the nation. These dynamics are important as they help reflect on the dialogic relationship and interface of the two. Considering that identities are perpetually in the process of becoming, it is also important to note the extent to which the representation of these has changed compared to the texts studied in the previous chapter, not to mention the new dimensions that this text also brings to the fore. This novel is one that reflects and refracts a complex and convoluted dialogical relationship between past and present, thus embodying ‘a dialogue of different epochs’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 364).

The title of the novel, *Rumours of Ophir*, resonates with those of some of the older narratives of imperialism such as Henry R. Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885). The book itself, though, does not contain the overt racial biases and bigotry that characterize these; it belongs to the post-independence chronotope, while the older narratives are imperialist. It also resonates with the Rhodesian settler novel, marked by ‘settler quests for hidden treasures, goldmines ... [and] often involve finding and punishing perpetrators of crimes’ (Primorac, 2006: 21). This suggests that some of the masculinities portrayed therein are a refraction of these erstwhile ones. As the text itself makes evident, Ophir was the location of the mythical gold mines of the legendary and reputedly wise Jewish king, Solomon. However, unlike Haggard’s novel this one is not about a quest for the renowned king’s mines, but instead it inter-weaves a narrative that focuses on the search for the mythical gold of the 16th century Portuguese Catholic priest Father Gonsalo da Silveira. This gold and/ or its location is/are metaphorically the novel’s Ophir. The name suggests symbolic and metonymic connections and resonances between the erstwhile and the present and the largely masculine subjectivities contained therein.

The impression given by the scramble for this gold is that it now belonged to no one in particular and so was available for the taking. This in some way is, again, a refraction of imperial narratives that portrayed some of the African resources as available for the taking by anyone with the guts and means to do this, and which at the time were none other than Western colonizers and adventurers. This is reflected in *King Solomon’s Mines* (1885), where the white adventurers and fortune hunters brazenly help themselves to the gold and diamonds of the Kukuana people as if they were simply natural resources available to any prospectors.

4.1.3: Men at Work: Masculine Subjectivities and the Work Ethic

Symbolically, the initial setting of the narrative is a gold mine named Mashumba, a name which, loosely translated from Shona means ‘big lions’, and it metonymically conjures up notions of danger and power. The opening chapter is, however, a tragic one, depicting as it

does some illegal gold miners (all men) who have died of alleged carbon-dioxide poisoning in a disused mine shaft, with only one lucky survivor to tell the grisly and heart-rending tale. Underlying all this is the poverty that drives these men to undertake such perilous tasks, plus the traditional male-role expectation of the man as the provider of sustenance for the family. This resonates with Barker and Ricardo's (cited in Lwambo, 2013: 47) assertion that 'the chief mandate or social requirement for achieving manhood in Africa – for being a man – is some level of financial independence, employment or income'. The case of the ill-fated men above again highlights the link between certain masculinities and their performance with the survival imperative, rather than that of power, as is often alluded to by some masculinity theorists (for example, Kimmel, 2000: 241; Holter, 2000: 62; Tillner, 2000: 56). So, a teleology of power and domination is a limited and limiting lens through which to view the whole gamut of masculinities. Performance, like the utterance, suggests that the masculinities are dialogic and they cannot be thought of outside this. The poverty-stricken existence of the above subjects and their ill-fated masculine performances conjure up images of the continued immiseration of the former colonial subaltern, reflecting on the failure of independence to bring prosperity to many of what Fanon (1963) refers to as 'the wretched of the earth'. This suggests that, with race as the key signifier of privilege losing its significance, a new frontier is opening up along which the postcolony's subjects could potentially face off; that of class. So,

by 1990, the Zimbabwean government was voicing its concern over the country's poor economic performance and, in particular, low levels of investment and serious unemployment. The shortcomings of African socialism were acknowledged and an Economic and Structural adjustment Programme (ESAP) designed to foster new business opportunities began in 1991 (Government of Zimbabwe, qtd in Fisher, 2010: 140).

In the words of Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2011:60) the ideological ambivalences that had been reflected were mainly the result of the fact that the country, as a 'mid-decolonizer ... stood uneasily astride the fading socialist world and the emerging neoliberal world that had not yet become triumphant'. This meant that the masculinities of the new ruling elite found themselves entrapped in a liminal global economic ideological space in which things were not very clearly defined, hence the above scenario.

So, the dead men in the text are, in fact, constructed as victims rather than villains, though there is no valorisation of their risk-taking and sacrifice. Actually, the heroes of this part of the narrative are the mine rescuers of whom one Martin Chisunga is the icon. These are what the text constructs as 'honest' men doing honest work and fulfilling their obligations in the

socially-sanctioned way, and therefore acting as role models for all. The self-sacrifice and commitment displayed readily fit into the paradigms of some of the masculinities privileged in the national imaginary. This sub-plot, however, is a mere dress-rehearsal for the main plot, which also, incidentally, involves a quest for gold, though conversely this is largely driven by greed rather than want.

Flack, though, is reserved for the mine manager, Peter Van Rooyen, a white man whose main worry is not the deaths of the illegal miners but the bad publicity that this is going to bring to the company. While not directly responsible for the deaths of the illegal miners, his implied lack of sympathy makes him look morally warped, and, therefore, unfit to be an exemplary masculine model. There are even some racial connotations, as all the dead men are black, and so in the context of the racial politics of the post colony, underpinned by the policy of reconciliation, his attitude seems to lack the spirit of this. He, therefore, is not a privileged masculine model in the national imaginary, and there is a sense in which his identity has some dialogic resonances with the neo-liberal ideology whose influence forced the government to embark on an economic structural adjustment programme. He is part of the chain of transnational capital and belongs to what Connell (op cit) refers to as 'transnational business masculinity', whose emblem is the business executive. These, with the impending global triumph of neo-liberal economic ideology, and coupled with globalisation and the decline of the nation state, were emerging as contenders with the ruling nationalist masculinities for hegemony.

Van Rooyen, however, acts as a foil to Ronald Grenville, another white man who had adopted a disadvantaged black boy, Martin Chisunga, the hero of the first part of the narrative, and then sent him through high school up to university. He thus debunks the association that is often made between whiteness and racism, especially in formerly colonized countries. Grenville thus becomes the epitome of racial reconciliation, which has been one of the cornerstones of the government's nation-building endeavours since independence, the success of which was rather uncertain as the country entered the second decade of independence in the 1990s. So, consequently, questions of belonging continued to take centre stage, particularly as, according to Fisher (2010:43-44), conservative white leaders had not publicly responded to the president's policy pronouncement of reconciliation in 1980, thus creating ambiguity, and leading to speculation concerning the stance of the majority of them in relation to it. For this and other reasons national discourses remained raced and hence the urgency of constructing models to transcend this. So, Grenville is the privileged white masculine model at the beginning of the narrative through his reaching out across the racial divide, and through this he symbolically

becomes part of the nation that the state is trying to promote. He epitomises Spivak's (qtd in Fisher, 2010: xii) notion of 'unlearning privilege to gain knowledge of the other'. Indeed, questions of belonging and identity were pertinent amongst the disparate groups that made up the nation and even more pertinent between blacks and whites, mostly on opposite sides during the struggle for independence by black nationalists. These were some of the frontiers along which some contests, with gendered dimensions, were taking place.

True to the nature of detective fiction, the main characters of the novel, however, are police officers, epitomised by Detective Chief Inspector Tatenda Machaya and James Carter, both men, the one black, the other white, respectively. The two partake in both a professional and homosocial relationship, in keeping with the novel's universe of discourse, which is that of racial transcendence. They represent the masculinities of the forces of law and order and are part of the state machinery, for better or for worse. They are institutionally-based, and so are the result of the appropriation of the male body and its inscription with the desired iconography. Carter has married across the racial divide and his is a litmus test for racial reconciliation since the attainment of independence. Both white and black racism rear their ugly heads, as evidenced by the snide and uncharitable comments directed at him. The erstwhile attempt by the colonial racist discourses to attain a monologic status had the effect of constricting the dialogic spaces with the counter discourses of the subaltern, resulting in them (subalterns) gravitating towards similar responses to the dominant discourse as a form of subversion. This is another form of a perverse and cynical mimicry that has not been sufficiently put on the radar and theorised by critics interested in these matters, such as Bhabha (1995). Aspersions are cast on Carter's masculinity, including the allegations that he '*couldn't find himself a white wife*', and that '*He's gone native*' (italics in the original) (Freeman, 1998: 15). In all this are allusions to erstwhile colonial racial hierarchies that constructed whiteness as a privileged racial category with blackness its inferior other. So Carter, according to this particular narrative, does not measure up to the standard of white hegemonic masculinity, making his marginal. This scenario highlights Bakhtin's centripetal forces at work in as far as the racial discourses of the postcolony are concerned. The centrifugal ones are manifest in the narrative's promotion of the likes of Carter and Grenville and this can therefore be understood as an attempt to elevate their masculinity in order to subvert the hegemonic, racist-oriented ones. The anti-racist ones also represent Bakhtin's (1981: op cit) internally-persuasive discourses set up against the received and therefore authoritative discourses of race. That such a predicament as Carter's could occur in the second decade of independence is suggestive of the long and enduring shelf-life of some racial ideologies and stereotypes, and is testimony to the fact that they are one of the

impediments to the building of the new nation. This resonates with Fisher's (2010: 139) assertion that: 'In the absence of significant social and cultural assimilation [of blacks and whites], mixed unions are refracted through the lens of race as privilege and, depending on gender, are dubbed either prostitution or "up-classing"'. Amidst the tensions of these social forces Carter sees hope in the young people whom he believes would be able to transcend such intolerance and bigotry (Freeman, 1998: 15).

4.1.4: Two in One: Of the Man's and the Nation's Honour

Discourses of national belonging and inclusion are also apparent in the roles performed by Carter, the hero of the narrative. His ingenious and dexterous role in rescuing Julia, the daughter of his friend Machaya from prostitution, debauchery and exploitation by sexual predators, some of whom are foreign, is one of the hallmarks of this. At the centre of these is one William Kirkpatrick, an American expatriate whose debasement and degradation of Julia is epitomised by the pornographic video that he entices her to participate in. It conjures up memories of the erstwhile white slave-driver masculinities – the quintessence of racism, exploitation and oppression. The video depicts a slave-era scene in which the all-powerful slave master, a role here played by Kirkpatrick, uses his position to seduce a slave girl, here acted out by Julia, and sexually exploits her. It represents the uttermost and extreme objectification, degradation and exploitation of the body of the black woman and the implied accompanying humiliation of the black man for his failure to protect her. This is best understood in the context of the racial and sexual-politics of slavery, where the sexual exploitation of the body of the black woman was one of the instruments for the expression of the white man's power over black male bodies and so helped to emphasise the racial hierarchy. In the words of Mbembe (2006: 169), this rape was 'a weapon of terror that reinforced whites' domination over their human property'. That this relationship is being re-enacted in the present suggests nostalgia for a bygone era, and in some ways a dialogic relationship between past and present, as some black women are exposed to sexual predation due to poverty. That it is being perpetrated by a foreigner against one of the nation's women makes it resonate with discourses of masculinity, sexuality and nation. Nagel (1998: 256) notes that 'women's sexuality is of concern to nationalists since women as wives and daughters are bearers of masculine honour'. In this case it is the honour of virtually all the nation's men that is at stake. The nation has historically been regarded as a masculine construct and as Enloe (qtd in Nagel, 1998: 245) observes: 'nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope'. The episode of the video conjures up this 'masculinized humiliation' reminiscent of slavery and

colonialism, and that it is Carter, a white man, who steps in to set things right against a foreign white man is significant in the discourses of nation and belonging. This act can be seen as an emphatic assertion of belonging to the nation, as the protection of the nation's women is viewed as one of the key roles of men, a failure of which exposes the women to exploitation (especially sexual) and ultimately ends up in their humiliation. Here race is no longer the issue, and Carter manages to restore Julia's dignity by ensuring that all copies of the above-mentioned video are destroyed, because as one of the nation's men he is implicated in her degradation and exploitation, especially at the hands of foreign men. This is also symbolic, as it highlights that 'belonging' was conditional and depended on undergoing certain rites of passage that centred on one's support of the status quo. This resonates with Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2011: 20) assertion that 'at the centre of the African national project is the challenge of specifying who belongs to the nation together with the task of defining the criteria for citizenship'. This episode, however, resonates emphatically with what Mamdani (op cit) asserts when he refers to the need to transform former settler and native identities as the pre-requisite for harmony in the post-colonial dispensation.

4.1.5: The 'Soldiers of Fortune'

Next in line is the nation's gold, here referring to the mythical treasure that was supposedly given to Gonsalo da Silveira, the 16th century Portuguese priest. It signifies the nation's natural resources previously at the core of the colonial venture. At the centre is the question of the legitimate current ownership of the consignment of this yellow metal: the nation on one hand or the Combai and/or Caiado families on the other. It is this issue that takes the plot of the narrative to pre-colonial Zimbabwe and the Portuguese imperialism of the 16th century. It is this gold, its fate and the myths around it, which are at the centre of the novel's plot. It is a tale of greed, avarice, intrigue, honour, inter-family feuds, treachery, and bloodshed, which spans centuries and even continents, drawing into its vortex a spiral of diverse characters and masculinities. As indicated before, at the centre are two Portuguese families connected differently to the lost gold, namely the Combai and Caiado families.

We recall that the title of the text, *Rumours of Ophir*, links it to the pre-colonial myths about the gold mines of the Jewish king Solomon. We saw that these were responsible for various imperial romances, such as Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*. There are therefore resonances between and a nexus linking the masculinities expressed therein and those of the likes of Rodrigues Combai in the present novel. It is the masculinity of the fortune hunter,

which makes him hope that through his wits, bravado, relentlessness and the stroke of some good fortune he will succeed, and in the process cover himself in glory, and become a 'big man' overnight. He will thereby make the giant leap towards the attainment of a hegemonic masculinity. Such men are the metaphorical 'soldiers of fortune', a phrase that has obvious masculine resonances. However, the mad desire to attain them at the exclusion of all other considerations renders these masculinities as less than ideal in the context of the national discourses that are valorized in the novel's universe of discourse.

What unites Lemon's *Ivory Madness* and Freeman's *Rumours of Ophir* is the mad obsession, first for ivory in Lemon's text and then gold in Freeman's. The fortune-hunting in these contexts is closely linked to masculine identities and their perpetuation and enhancement. Of significance is the perpetuation of these identities over centuries, as for example, Rodrigues Combai wants the gold more or less for the same reasons as his ancestor Pedro had wanted it centuries previously. Gold is reputedly the king of all metals, and so is readily associated with the quest for hegemonic masculinities, hence the madness associated with its pursuit. One is reminded of the Greek tale of king Midas, whose insatiable and unbridled greed for gold led to his being cursed with the 'Midas touch' as punishment. And, as in this tale, the end in the present one is not a very pleasant one for all involved in the pursuit.

The plot of the narrative moves between the present and the past as some history is brought to bear on the narrative. This also means that historical masculinities are co-opted into the present and their representation also dialogues with the contemporary discourses in a 'dialogue of epochs' (Bakhtin, 1981: 364). For instance this is seen in the fortune-hunting masculinities of imperialism, and the current ones represented by the Combais and Caiados. These are however represented in broad strokes that gloss over the whole gamut of the masculinities of the different periods. Pre-colonial black masculinities, for example, are represented as incorrigibly superstitious and this hamstringing them in such a way that, to take one case, Rodrigues Combai's ancestor is able to conceal the contentious gold on mountain summits in the full knowledge that the local blacks will not get their hands on it because of superstitious beliefs that prohibit them from scaling the summits of mountains. While this may not necessarily withstand close historical scrutiny, as some pre-colonial Africans did build settlements on mountain tops (for example, the capital of the Monomotapa Kingdom referred to in the text was historically said to have been at one time on the summit of Mount Fura in north-eastern Zimbabwe),⁵ it nevertheless highlights some age-old stereotypes of black

⁵ For more on the Monomotapa Kingdom see Mudenge (1993).

Africans that the reader also finds in *Ivory Madness* and *Men of Men*. The aim is evidently that of elevating white masculinities over black ones in attempting to re-invent the erstwhile civilised-versus-barbaric binary that underpinned colonial discourses. The attempt to disabuse these black masculinities of their subjectivity is also evident in the reference to their uprising, which historically had forced the Portuguese off the Zimbabwean plateau in the 16th century. In the novel, this revolt is attributed to the instigation and mentorship of the Arabs rather than the initiative of the blacks themselves. Though, ironically, in the novel, the same blacks soon turned against their alleged mentors and drove them out also. As noted earlier, however, writers of fiction have the poetic licence that authors of historical ‘fact’ do not have.

The mysterious murder of Rodrigues Combai sets off a chain of events that sees Carter being recalled to the police force; he had left it for professional reasons some time before. With the former commercial sex-worker now turned police constable, Julia, and the difficulty of the case, the scene is set for a whodunit or detective thriller par-excellence. Her role suggests a subversion of the link between masculinity and the discourses of the nation, but one notes that hers is merely in an assistant capacity and so in some ways reproduces the traditional gender hierarchies. Nevertheless, it also highlights the fact that female bodies can also be appropriated to play traditionally masculine roles, though their association with the nation’s honour does not appear to be subverted in this case. Even the male protective role remains intact as Carter has the responsibility of ensuring Julia’s safety in the whole operation. This suggests the performance of ‘masculine’ roles by women is not always accompanied by a change in their symbolic roles.

4.1.6: Of Ambivalences: Mixed-Race Masculinities

Mixed-race masculinities deserve a special focus, considering the central role they play in the main plot of the narrative. Often referred to as ‘coloureds’, mixed-race people have had a problematic history in Zimbabwe. In the colonial era of Manichean binaries as far as the discourse on race was concerned, they found themselves in a kind of in-between or liminal space between blacks and whites. They tended to represent the potential of the dissolution and erasure of racial boundaries, which under colonialism were panoptically surveyed and rigidly enforced as the major markers of identity and the very foundation of colonial ideology; this potential had implications for racial hierarchies and continued white supremacy. In the words of Nims (2013: 9): ‘Miscegenation was perhaps the settler’s greatest fear, one that served as an ideological tool for whites to stigmatize coloureds’. The ambivalence of coloured identities also meant that they did not fully identify with the blacks and so consequently, ‘Coloureds

always found themselves in a type of no-man's land, both during the colonial and post-colonial periods' (ibid: 168).

The representation of coloured men in the novel plays on the above dynamics and problematics. To begin with, there is the rather peripheral figure of the coloured man, Smuts, who plays the role of villain, as evidenced by the serial-killer type cold-heartedness and remorselessness that he displays after being involved in a hit-and-run accident that kills Carter's wife: 'he had only killed a black, so what was the fuss' (Freeman, 1998: 18). His attitude is, surprisingly, the most racist in the text, and also mirrors that of bigoted whites in the colonial era. Alternatively, it also resonates with the claim that most coloureds have historically identified with whites, suggesting that their masculinities as in this case are complicit with colonial white hegemonic ones. This imitation can, however, be overdone by some in the desperate attempt to close the supposed gap with white masculinities and also to create maximum distance from black masculinities that were largely subordinated and vilified under colonialism. This highlights the problems of the liminal spaces that coloured masculinities occupied. For this reason Smuts is being constructed as the most racist character. As one of mixed-blood he is supposed to represent the transcendence and dissolution of racial boundaries and identities in more or less the same way as Carter's coloured daughter does. That this dimension is not promoted can therefore be read as a ruse and strategy of stigmatising and excluding these mixed-race masculinities from those sanctioned in the current nationalist ideologies that centre on the de-racing of colonial identities and the reconciliation of former foes. However, Smuts merely acts as a curtain-raiser for the main mixed-race villains in the narrative, namely the three Mozambican coloured brothers with a history of participation in that country's post-independence civil war. While the other mixed-race characters are referred to by the term 'coloured' in the novel, there is a sudden twist of phrase and nomenclature to 'tawny-skinned mulattoes' (Freeman, 1998: 36) in the reference to the three brothers, a phrase never used on any other mixed-race character in the novel. The lack of sympathy and vilification associated with this portrayal arguably lies at the intersection and confluence of the discourses of national identities, race and ethnicity. Firstly, they are foreigners and have fought in that country's civil war which Zimbabwe got sucked into, largely driven by the need to protect its road and rail routes to the sea. This constructs the brothers as not only aliens but also former enemies of the nation. The latter point is perpetuated by the fact that they are now criminals, preying on innocent people in the country, and, to cap it all, they are after the missing gold that is supposed to be the property of the country. The genesis of the problem in the manner in which they are portrayed has to do not only with their status as coloureds, but also

with the fissures and fault-lines of white identities in colonial Zimbabwe, where ethnic hierarchies were created to delineate the different white groups. Those of British origin were placed at the apex and the others, like the Latin Europeans, occupied the lower rungs. This is also reflected in the manner in which the dispute between the Combai and Caiado clans is constructed and framed in the text, as one readily finds a dialogic relationship with the above, in that the Latin Europeans are stereotypically constructed as people of a hot-blooded temperament, capable of sustaining family grudges over generations or even centuries. The representation of the Mozambican coloured brothers of black African and Latin European blood thus becomes entangled in these erstwhile white ethnic politics. So, comparatively, they appear to be othered in a worse way than the other characters of mixed British and black African blood. In the text nothing illustrates the tension of centrifugal and centripetal forces as far as racial discourses are concerned more than the rampant ambivalences in the representation of the mixed-race masculinities. This simultaneity highlights the challenges of fully overcoming the settler-native schema that defined colonized and colonizer since the colonial days.

4.1.7: Subversive Masculinities: The Enemies from Within

The mythical gold of da Silveira sets up a frontier on which masculinities and femininities face off in a dog-eat-dog contest. At the basic level these are merely the criminal and the law enforcement agents, but at the metaphoric level, there are contending forces with not only gender, but also national resonances and ramifications. From the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis the national law, like other nationalist discourses, is masculinized through its representation as ‘the law of the father’, and by extension its enforcers are also similarly gendered. So Carter’s assistant Julia, despite being female, actually performs a ‘masculine’ role. However, her role as assistant to Carter represents a smuggling of the traditional gender hierarchies into this scenario. The fact that the Mozambican coloured brothers have illegally settled in Zimbabwe means that with their criminality and involvement in the Combai affair, they are constructed as the enemies from within, suggesting their exclusion from the nation. Their masculinities are constructed as subversive, toxic and an unwanted annexure to the national body-politic. They are entangled by birth in the centuries-old grudge and feud between the Combai and Caiado families, belonging as they do to the latter. The gory murders they commit are described in grisly detail, to emphasize their heartlessness. That they are after the same gold as Combai, constructs them as mere foreign would-be- plunderers of the nation’s wealth like the old imperialists and adventurers. These are some of the masculinities that the

law enforcement agents represented by Machaya, Carter and Julia are set up against in a typical nail-biting affair in which both wits and bravado are pitted together. The stakes are really high, and with the national character of the whole affair the stage is set for the re-definition and construction of yet more ‘men’s men’; the privileged, prized and celebrated masculinities within any given context. That these are inscribed in and circumscribed by the discourses of masculinity and nation suggests the significance of the frontier in the construction and imagining of masculinities and their hierarchies. The same frontier not only produces and separates winners and losers, but it is also gendering, that is, it is implicated in the masculinisation and feminization of subjects.

The criminal network as constitutive of the enemy within consists not only of the three brothers, but also of other multiple and variegated characters, such as hotel employees and others who appear to be part of a relatively well-oiled network controlled from one particular nerve- centre. And in the attempt to unravel the conundrum, characters in the narrative are reduced to a simple binary of friend or foe. The nerve-centre of the criminal group, however, turns out to be a totally unexpected figure, in the form of one Professor Armitage, a University of Zimbabwe academic and a white Zimbabwean. He has been sucked into and becomes entangled in the centuries-old rivalry between the Combai and Caiado families through marriage. He also has selfish and personal reasons for wanting to lay his hands on the gold at the centre of the rivalry between the Combai and Caiado families.

So, true to the spirit of detective fiction, Carter’s wits are set against a highbrow and sophisticated character in the person of Professor Armitage, who is the fulcrum of the criminal group, and this resonates with Waugh’s claim (qtd in Chigidi, 1998: 34) that the detective thriller often pits ‘a supergenius against a supergenius criminal who invented the most intricate, elaborate and complex means of trying to get away with murder’. So Carter, the *enfant terrible* in the police, comes out tops and his success underwrites the fact that the contentious gold is an asset of the nation and not that of foreign adventurers or local criminals. In this sense he marks a break with the erstwhile masculinities of imperialism and/or the plundering mentality that had characterized the forebears of the Combais and Caiados and which had been ‘reincarnated’ in their descendants in the text and also in Professor Armitage. Carter distances himself from these as they have been the bane of white identities in Zimbabwe because of their association with colonialism.

In the above is a play on the traditional masculine role of defending the nation whose construction, like all national identities, is based on inclusion and exclusion, hence the presence

of the enemies from within, who do not necessarily belong to the envisaged nation that the novel promotes. Thus the accomplices of Armitage and the three Mozambican coloured brothers die horrific deaths. They are all defined by what the text constructs as their greed and short-sightedness, which make them sacrifice their sense of duty and principles for money. They lack the steadfastness, commitment and stoicism necessary for them to remain loyal members of the nation, which often demands sacrifice from its members who defend it. As masculinities, the narrative reveals them to be despicable figures who do not deserve the reader's sympathy in any way. Hence the text attempts to privilege a unitary and monologic masculine identity marked by patriotism and selflessness in the defence of the nation, this simultaneously being a rite of passage to acceptance and belonging to the nation. In this text's universe of discourse, it is the way to obliterate the settler-native binary at the centre of some of the schisms in the national body-politic at the time. However, the attempt to create a singular masculine identity is subverted by these other masculinities that deviate from the privileged norm, implying a polyglot scenario as far as these identities are concerned.

4.1.8: Rites of Passage.

So, in *Rumours of Ophir*, the heroism of Carter in defence of the nation's assets is a rite of passage for belonging and acceptance in the new nation. His personal narration and life reveal a pre-occupation with race and its transcendence. Carter's success in cracking this difficult case that had bamboozled and befuddled the police force and the many breath-taking and hair-raising adventures from which he from which he emerges triumphant and unscathed confirm his role as superman, a hyper-masculinity for which little is impossible. By availing this in the service of the nation, he is able to emphatically affirm his belonging by successfully defending its interests and assets. This is all the more pertinent as he previously played a role in the defence of the Rhodesian colonial state as a policeman. Unlike the identities portrayed in Lemon's *Ivory Madness*, then, he is able to transcend his past and also relates well with his colleagues in the police force who fought on opposite sides in the anti-colonial struggle. In this way he states emphatically and unequivocally that race and the past should no longer be a factor in determining who belongs to the nation. So resonant was the text's universe of discourse with the national ones that *Rumours of Ophir* was included in the Advanced Level English literature syllabus of the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) and so became a set-book for the Advanced level examination (Tagwirei, 2016: 10). This kind of novel (detective-cum-thriller) therefore is not merely light fiction whose main goal is to titillate the

reader, but apparently also has an educational function, resonant with Achebe's (1988:40) view of the novelist as teacher.

However, the major problem with the text lies in how mixed-race masculinities are pathologized through the representation of virtually all-male coloured characters in the text. They are criminals, heartless murderers, racists, or all of these combined. By rendering their masculinities as toxic and an aberrant growth on the national body-politic, the text unwittingly writes them out of the national narrative, yet many of the discourses in the text are directed towards racial transcendence and harmony, this being the second decade of Zimbabwe's independence. This self-contradiction highlights the difficulties of fully transcending the attitudes represented in Lemon's *Ivory Madness*, and the ambivalences, contradictions and problems associated with coloured identities in Zimbabwe.

4.2: Rodwell Machingauta's *Detective Ridgemore Riva* (1994)

4.2.1: Synopsis

This novel is also a detective thriller at the centre of which is the eponymous detective Ridgemore Riva. Its world is one of private detectives-cum-secret servicemen who are out to thwart the nefarious machinations of alleged foreign agents bent on destabilising and sabotaging the Zimbabwean government for the advancement and promotion of their foreign national interests. What starts the drama of the narrative is the sudden and mysterious disappearance of some very sensitive and confidential papers from the Ministry of Home Affairs that leaves everyone concerned baffled and on edge. At stake are matters of state security, and so the state security services enter the fray to try to unravel the puzzle. They are represented in the text by the ZSAO (Zimbabwe Secret Agency Organization) whose poster boy is the relentless, implacable, beguilingly diminutive, but tough-as-nails agent going by the name Ridgemore Riva, to whom the assignment to recover the papers is given. The text takes the reader into the murky and intriguing world of espionage and counter-espionage and the operations of secret agents. Riva's investigations lead to a collision and entanglement with South African apartheid-era agents operating in cahoots with their local acolytes embedded in all levels of the government, including some individuals in law enforcement agencies. The story's narrative time is evidently, therefore, pre-1994, the year that marks the end of apartheid and the emergence of black majority rule in South Africa. What follows is an epic battle of wits, brawn and endurance; the very stuff of thrillers and movie-style action, and fertile ground for representing masculinity as spectacle. Riva and the ZSAO's operations to recover the

documents leave a trail of blood and destruction in their wake. At the end the foreign saboteurs and their local henchman are vanquished and the filched papers recovered.

4.2.2: So, you do not have to be big to be macho!

This is the lesson that the reader learns as he follows Riva in his investigations to recover the stolen documents. Conditioned by his secret agent training, Riva's toughness and guile conjure up images of a rapacious predator, and one is reminded of Lemon's text where the character Davies is similarly constructed. An oriental arts genius, his karate skills are more than a match for his adversaries, who include gigantic, tough and muscular men whose physique is the very embodiment and quintessence of macho masculinity; a key subset of most definitions and constructions of hegemonic masculinity. This particular construction of Riva seems to have been derived from Hollywood *kung fu* films whose iconic figure was the legendary Chinese-American karate maestro, Bruce Lee. This makes evident the fact that configurations of hegemonic masculinity in this text are watered and nourished from many springs, as one also sees Riva embodying aspects of the liberation war and soldier masculinities that have influenced the envisioning of Zimbabwean masculinities.

Riva's minuscule and apparently "feminine" physical appearance is a living embodiment of the assertion that one is not born a man but becomes one, if one is to borrow from de Beauvoir's (1989: 283) assertion which was made in reference to a woman. In addition, he is a living testament to Butler's (op cit) assertion that gender is reducible to performance. For Riva, there is a nagging desire to prove and assert his manhood, especially to the enemy agents: 'He wanted to show these people that he was a man, and a strong one too' (Machingauta 1994: 126). It resonates with Lwambo's (2013: 52) assertion that: 'Masculinity ... is nothing a man simply has or is, but rather a way of being that he needs to perform or assert.' It also lends credence to Newell's (2009: 247) assertion that 'gender is asserted during people's social engagements'. However, the encounters need not always be social, as they can also be confrontational, as in this case. Riva's diminutive physical stature appears one of the key drivers for his virtual obsession and desperation to always prove his machismo. In this respect one is reminded of the poacher Shadreck and Secretary Ntabeni in Lemon's *Ivory Madness*. This suggests that some men who are not biologically endowed with physical attributes of hegemonic masculinity in the form of a big muscular body may try to compensate for this with some hyper-masculine performances of one form or another. This resonates with what Connell (2005) calls complicity with hegemonic masculinity. This though can take extreme or pathological forms in some men, who exude some hegemonic masculinity deficiencies in one

form or another. This can result in what one could refer to as a complex or syndrome, that is, the hegemonic masculinity deficiency complex/syndrome. The extent to which this is the case appears, from the above, to be correlative to the distance between one and the cultural ideal of the desired form of masculinity.

There is a sense in which the ‘warrior masculinity’ referred to by Mazrui (1977) is embodied in the conduct of Riva and his colleagues: ‘Images of valour, courage, and maturity have in different societies been intimately related to the role of the male in social and military affairs’ (61). The name ‘riva’, which means ‘trap’ in the Zimbabwean Shona language, resonates with his beguilingly miniscule appearance, that has resulted in most of his adversaries being caught entirely off guard in the numerous and gruelling physical contests that he has with them in the course of his investigations to recover the pilfered documents. The warrior image highlights the appropriation and disciplining of the male body for purposes beneficial to the national body politic in one form or the other.

4.2.3: Of the ‘Sons of the Motherland’

Detective Ridgmore Riva epitomises the traditional masculine role of defending the nation, which is often feminised as the ‘motherland’ in nationalist discourses. Notions of masculine honour and humiliation are entangled in this gendered iconography of the nation, and threats to it are in effect a call to arms for ‘her’ sons: ‘We must remember that we are the arms of the country, which it uses to fend off and destroy its enemies’ (Machingauta, 1994: 155). The defence of the nation is not the stuff for lily-livered wimps, hence its promotion of the type of male body whose toughness is epitomized by Riva himself. This is in line with Vayrynen’s (2013: 139) assertion that: ‘Nation-states require a certain type of male body for warfare, and thereby in war it [sic] elevates and prioritises some bodies and forms of hegemonic masculinities over others’. While this is not a war in the conventional sense, the two contesting groups of agents are involved in action very much akin to it, and the kinds of bodies required are the same as those associated with conventional war. Notions of loyalty, patriotism and self-sacrifice are grafted and scripted on these bodies as represented by Riva and other members of his organisation. Significantly and symbolically, no women are part of the group of secret service agents out to recover the stolen documents from the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the only significant woman character is Riva’s girlfriend, whose role appears to be partly that of assuaging and pampering his ego and accentuating his masculinity, as well as functioning as a trophy. Most importantly, however, she is the symbol of the nation in the sense that she is also that which must be protected; hence Riva’s nagging anxiety that the enemy agents might try to

get at him by harming her. It highlights McClintock's (1993: 62) assertion that: 'Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relationship to national agency'. So, Riva and his associates are the iconic sons of the nation engaged in its defence through their counter-espionage activities. So much is this the case that he perceives the theft of the above-mentioned documents as an existential threat to all Zimbabweans: 'Failure [to recover the stolen documents] ... signalled the imminent destruction of all the people of Zimbabwe' (Machingauta 1994: 154). This resonates with some of the generic elements of the thriller, which 'trades in international conspiracies, invasions' (Glover 2003: 138). The male role of defending the nation is viewed by Farrell (1993) as akin to making men the disposable sex, and this is exemplified by the death of numerous enemy agents in the frequent violent confrontations with members of the ZSAO. While this observation is true in this context, it is also important to note that this male role is inbuilt in the architecture of male domination, and it thus contributes to men's ability to reap 'the patriarchal dividend' (Connell 2005:215). This is of course at a cost which can be heavy for certain groups of men. There thus exists a dialogical relationship between this male role and other aspects of their lives.

4.2.4: Of the Enemies from Within and Without

These are what Riva and company are set up against. Since the discourse of the nation is based on the notion of inclusion and exclusion, and insiders and outsiders, these enemies of the nation constitute the latter in both cases. They are constructed as the toxic and subversive masculinities that are viewed as an aberration in the national body-politic. This again highlights the extent to which masculine identities are dialogic and help to construct each other, in this case the hegemonic and subversive ones. They are mutually dependent for their existence. Subversive masculinities have the ironic and unintended consequence of helping to make the hegemonic ones a socially desired form, while the latter cannot exist without the former. Just as in *Rumours of Ophir*, the oppositional ones are constituted by both local and external elements. Again they are led by yet another highbrow fellow, in the form of a medical doctor going by the name of Dr Mutoro. His name in Shona means 'a burden', and is suggestive of the manner in which such masculinities are regarded in the dominant discourses of the nation. These are vilified, as they have deviated from the hard and narrow path defined by selflessness, commitment and a readiness to sacrifice oneself for the national cause. They are constructed as treasonous, petty, egocentric and greedy, and have therefore allowed themselves to be used by external forces, and have in effect sold their nation for a dime. They are made up of both black and white subjects, highlighting the fact that race is no longer the main issue in deciding

who belongs and who does not belong. That they are working in cahoots with external agents from apartheid South Africa highlights the level of their deviation and treachery. Their existence, however, subverts the attempt to create unitary monologic forms of masculinity as represented by Riva and company. The text does not construct them as having an alternative vision of the nation, though, but instead as being mere puppets of a foreign regime bent on destabilising the country in order to help safe-guard its own unjust form of government, as represented by the apartheid policy. In this way the text precludes the possibility of these masculinities being viable alternatives to the ones it promotes, and the same applies to any alternative vision of the nation that they might have. The text therefore participates in the attempt by the national narrative of the time to create a monologic masculinity.

The apartheid South African agents are the enemies from without, and are represented as the brains behind the espionage involved in the disappearance of the confidential papers from the Ministry of Home Affairs. They are largely a shadowy group, as they are fronted by their local acolytes. A common denominator among them is that they are represented as big and tough and therefore physically menacing, aspects that are key in the envisioning of hegemonic masculinity. They thus physically dwarf their adversaries, especially the likes of detective Riva, but in the same vein help to accentuate his toughness as he always triumphs in all the physical contests involving them. Riva's puny physical stature and his possession of hegemonic masculine attributes therefore subvert stereotypical constructions of hegemonic masculinity as they relate to the iconography of the male body.

The alleged involvement of apartheid South African agents in the destabilisation of Zimbabwe dates to the early 1980s. Then Zimbabwe was one of what were known as the Frontline States and therefore stood in opposition to the apartheid state. Alleged South African destabilisation of the Frontline States was topical then and this novel operates within the context of this, and so it is the main dialogising background. It involved, *inter alia*, alleged support and arming of so called dissidents during the same period. This went to the very core of the contentious issue of national identities in Zimbabwe at that time. It continued more or less until the end of apartheid and readily provided the instances and actualisation of external threats to the nation, often an indispensable *desideratum* in the construction of national identities. In discourses of the nation, as mentioned before, these threats to it are rallying points for men within the nation to stand up to its defence, and this is the role that Riva and the ZSAO are playing.

The *modus-operandi* of the ZSAO is ruthless and implacable, and they appear to operate outside the framework of the law. This is as if to suggest that the law of the father (to use Lacanian terminology) would stand in the way, and hamstring the sons' supreme and sacrosanct duty of defending the nation. So, by any means necessary, Riva and company are able to destroy the various nests and hideouts of this foreign intelligence network, and they shoot and kill with impunity, with the law enforcement agents conveniently turning a blind eye to their activities. The golden rule that one is innocent until proven guilty (by a properly constituted and competent court) does not seem to matter at all. They would rather shoot first and ask questions later. Theirs is therefore a world where the jungle law of survival of the fittest applies, and this is fertile ground for the performance of hyper-masculinities. In fact, their defensive-cum-offensive roles and activities remind one of the erstwhile frontier masculinities during the days of colonization, as well as those of the anti-colonial struggle, and so they exude most of their characteristics, which constellate around machismo and violence. Actually, theirs is a *bona fide* frontier, and the struggle pitting them against external intelligence agents is, again, a veritable war. It appears that survival and winning rather than fairness or even justice is what guides their *modus operandi*. The only significant references to the law are made during the interrogation of some of the captured suspected foreign agents, and this appears to be more of an after-thought and an attempt to add some semblance of fairness and justice to their supra- or extra-judicial activities. Their defence of the nation in this case appears to have a logic of its own, and, once more, it seems justified by the strategically placed references to existential threats to the nation.

However, the verbal exchanges between members of the ZSAO and the captured enemy agents help in making the text dialogic, rather than monologic, a quality that marks novelistic discourse from other kinds of discourses. This is in the light of the fact that the pre-dominance of Riva's character zone in addition to those of the other members of his organisation has the effect of reducing the text's dialogic quality and consequently novelistic nature. No wonder thrillers and detective fiction are often ranked low on the literary scale.

Theirs is indeed a war between men; witness the fact that all the members of the ZSAO involved and the foreign intelligence agency are men; all of them tough and macho in their diverse ways. Mbembe (2006: 169) speaks of colonial wars as being between men, with the main assets fought for being women's bodies. However, in this case, the postcolonial wars being fought are for the body of the nation, which, as previously mentioned, is also feminized in discourses of nation and gender. This gendering of an institution responsible for the defence of the nation and the one set up against it reveals the extent to which phallo-centric ideology

permeates the construction and representation of the nation in this text. The same also feminizes the nation as the one to be defended and so one readily sees a connection between the gendering of institutions referred to above and the construction of specific masculinities.

As previously highlighted, the foreign agents are imaged in the stereotypical manner of depicting foreign threats to the nation: as the ‘barbarians’ (Hock, qtd in Kelly, 2008: 216) at the gates, and the references to the gargantuan sizes of most of them also lends credence to this fact. This was an image that the colonial state was wont to employ with reference to the colonized, whom it constructed as a threat to the ‘civilisation’ that colonialism supposedly embodied. This representation has thus been appropriated by the post-colonial state, and narratives that help buttress it, to serve its own purposes, but also highlighting the existence of the insider/outsider binary that constitutes the construction of national identities.

The weapon of choice of the two contesting groups is a pistol and this is a veritable masculine or phallic symbol when seen through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis. Its ability to spew out fire and deliver death instantly, however, marks it as different from the phallus, which is largely seen as embodying a life force, though they dovetail as symbols of power and domination. However, its role in the control, disciplining and disposal of largely male bodies links it more with hegemonic masculinities. In fact, Riva does not feel complete or safe in the line of his duties without this weapon, of which he is a crack shot. So inseparable are they that the pistol appears to be no less than an extension of his body, just like his hands and feet, with which he delivers deadly and devastating *kung fu* kicks and chops, the bane of many an opponent of his. With this martial triad, and quick wits and reflexes to boot, Riva is as deadly a fighting and killing machine as ever the situation demanded. Put in other terms, he is constructed as superman: a hyper-masculine, macho, and heroic figure par-excellence and of the kind the motherland requires as a bulwark and shield against its adversaries. However, it is noticeable that while the foreign intelligence agents and their local cahoots consist of both blacks and whites, the local agents of the ZSAO set against them consist of only black members. Thus, unlike *Rumours of Ophir*, published in the same decade, this text appears somewhat divorced from the inclusivity implied by the government policy of racial reconciliation, and might actually signify a shift from the same. In fact, it could be viewed as a prelude to the later nativist and also Afro-radicalism discourses of the first decade of the twenty-first century that are associated with the government’s ‘fast track’ land reform program and its associated masculinities that are examined later on in this thesis. If the nation is inseparable from its narration, as Bennington (1990: 132) contends, then this text, through some of its omissions, arguably constructs an exclusionary vision of the nation by writing

whites out of the national narrative. The narrative's construction of loyalty and patriotism as a *sine qua non* for belonging to the nation and then conferring these on black bodies and none on any white ones implicitly constructs the latter as lacking in these values. It is in this context that one can also appreciate a text like Freeman's *Rumours of Ophir* in its attempt to foreground patriotism on the part of some whites. However, at the level of ethnicity, members of the ZSAO are diverse enough to reflect the diversity of the nation in this regard. It therefore fits in snugly with the discourse of national unity promulgated in 1987 through the Unity Accord between the two main political parties, namely, ZANU PF (Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front) and PF ZAPU (Patriotic Front- Zimbabwe African People's Union).

Detective Ridgemore Riva is therefore a narrative of nation and masculinity and the nexus between the two. In the Zimbabwean context Parpart (2007: 113) has thus rightly observed that, 'it is apparent that patriarchal hyper-masculine practices have continued to shape key institutions of power, particularly the government and the army'. It is in the context of threats to the nation that the masculinities epitomised by detective Riva in the text thrive, proliferate and are privileged. They are the hyper-masculinities, the 'men's men' of the title of this chapter. These are premised on heroism, and this resonates well with the cult of national heroes that has been a hallmark of national symbols, ceremonies and identities since the attainment of independence in 1980. And with the idea of the nation premised on an insider-outsider dichotomy, it follows therefore that threats to the nation, real or imagined, always exist and thus continue to breathe life into these masculinities, which can attain hegemonic status in appropriate circumstances. It follows that different sites within the nation spawn and nurture different masculinities that are differently positioned according to time and circumstances. In the words of Morrell (1998: 607), 'masculinities are not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships'.

4.2.5: Conclusion

Therefore, the two texts studied in this chapter show the ways in which male bodies are appropriated and sculpted into those the nation requires for its survival. These same bodies are scripted with the values the nation wants to promote, such as loyalty, patriotism and self-sacrifice, and these become rites of passage for belonging to the same. In the context of the nation these become hegemonic masculinities and those who possess them are portrayed as the 'men's men' as underwritten by the hyper-masculine performances that are their hall-mark. This construction idealises this form of masculinity, but subtly feminises the other masculinities. However, since power or domination breeds resistance and every figure

presupposes an opposite, hegemony is struggled over and hence it is a site of perpetual contest. Hence subversive masculinities are a concomitant of hegemonic ones, as is evident in this text. Subversion, however, should be seen as an attempt at establishing a new hegemony and so, in a cynical way, it is another form of complicity. The contest is akin to the struggle between centripetal forces and centrifugal ones in Bakhtin's (1981: op cit) universe of discourse.

Chapter 5: Confounding the Stereotypes: Challenging Normative Masculinities

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter examined masculine subjectivities and their dialogic resonances with various extra-textual discourses of the 1990s in Zimbabwe, a watershed decade for the country. The focus here had shifted largely from race and ethnicity to questions of who belongs to the nation on the basis of complicity with the dominant version of the nation being promoted. It showed how the male body is sculpted into that which the nation requires for its survival. It showed how subversive masculinities exist in a dialogic relationship to the hegemonic ones, and how the two help in constructing one another and depend on each other for their survival.

If the 1990s, then, was a watershed period for Zimbabwean politics and economy, shifts inevitably began to appear in the national body politic. After a unity accord had been signed between the two main political parties in 1987, ZANU- PF and PF-ZAPU, the nation had been gravitating towards being a one-party state. However, this one-party state ideology that was part of the presiding vision of the nation began to be contested both from within and from without the dominant political formation. General discontentment with the prevailing economic conditions was breeding general disquiet in the national body politic.

This chapter looks at the deconstruction of hegemonic masculine identities and the dialogic relations that obtain between masculinities and femininities and other social narratives. It examines the Janus-faced nature of masculinities, and the implications of the entrance of queer subjectivities on the terrain of normative masculinities, and the ramifications of the same, using the following texts and accompanying sub-titles:

- (i) No Sacred Cows: Masculine Subjectivities in John Eppel's *Hatchings* (1993).
- (ii) Contesting Subjectivities: Masculinities in Nevanji Madanhire's *If the Wind Blew* (1996).
- (iii) In a Quagmire: Men in Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006).

5.1: No Sacred Cows: Masculine Subjectivities in John Eppel's *Hatchings*.

5.1.1: Introduction.

John Eppel's novel, *Hatchings*, first published in 1993, is a text that suggests new life and new beginnings. Through its variegated characters and multiple narrative points of view, it gives a panoramic view of the Zimbabwean nation in terms of race and ethnicity, and to some extent class. At the centre of the narrative are Elizabeth Fawkes and Jet Bunion, a school girl and school boy respectively, something that is suggestive of the co-existence of the masculine and feminine

principles in the nation and their dialogic relationship. The sense of new beginnings is also symbolised by the fact that most of the events in the novel are set on New Year's Eve or on New Year's Day itself. However, this promise is tempered by the fact that the time-setting is suggestive of the past as well as the future, thus highlighting the existence of a dialogic relationship between them, and the pull of both centripetal and centrifugal forces in the shaping of the latter. The various parties held to celebrate the coming New Year and to see off the concluding one mean that the characters are taking stock of the old year and getting ready and recharging in preparation for the new one. Here the celebratory mood and the often beer-loosened tongues mean that many of the characters are wont to reveal some of their innermost secrets, hopes and fears.

That the novel ends in the Matopos Recreational Park where it starts is suggestive of two realities. Firstly, it indicates circularity, as if highlighting the fact that the nation and its subjects are caught up in some kind of quagmire or cul-de-sac. The continuing drought and worsening water shortage in the city of Bulawayo is a metaphor of this reality. Secondly, the Matopos Recreational Park is constructed as a place of rebirth and regeneration when one considers the hatching of the Asil Khan egg at the site, and the coming to fruition of the relationship between Elizabeth Fawkes, the main character, and Jet Bunion. In fact, the novel's plot is broken up by multiple sub-plots, making it polylogical, and therefore 'a space in which cynical and ironic voices are given full weight and free play' (Pechey, 2007: 178). The major movements are in the lives of Elizabeth and Jet as well as the hatching of the egg. Then there is also the departure of some of the nefarious characters in the text, such as Sobantu Ikherothi, and the expatriate teachers at the centre of some of the sordid happenings.

The setting of the first and last chapters of the novel in the Matopos Recreational Park is symbolic, considering the history of the country. Sites of profound historical significance are located in the Matopo Hills where the park is located, beginning with the Shrine of Mwari/Mlimo,⁶ whose religious and historical significance in the country cannot be underestimated. This shrine is referred to significantly in the novel, *Men of Men*, examined in the second chapter of this thesis. The Hills also house the graves of Mzilikazi, the Ndebele king who led his people to Zimbabwe from the south, and Cecil John Rhodes, the founder of the Rhodesian colony. So here the histories of most of the different people in Zimbabwe converge, and so the site functions as a powerful symbol of the nation. While the Mwari/Mlimo shrine, and Mzilikazi's grave are not mentioned in the novel, that of Rhodes is. This can be accounted for by the fact that events are largely seen through the eyes and consciousness of white characters who historically identify more with Rhodes

⁶ For more on this see see M.L. Daneel (1970).

as a part of their history. The motif of water, which symbolises life, is also at the core of the novel's universe of discourse. The ongoing drought and the shortage of water, particularly in the city of Bulawayo are symbolic of a metaphysical drought afflicting the nation and they resonate with the acute moral paucity that is symbolised by the baby-dumping, child sexual abuse and corruption that are key motifs in the novel. This drought motif resonates well with that in many colonial-era texts by black writers, such as Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1975) and *Coming of the Dry Season* (1972), and Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger* (1979), and is extensively examined in Musaemura Zimunya's text, *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (1982). Another drought, apparently, with different causes and consequences, is afflicting the nation in the post-independence dispensation.

The multiple subjectivities in the novel range from: die-hard right-wing former white Rhodesians such as the business tycoon Sudbury Bauls, whose enduring symbol is the Black Rhino High School; leftist, but also depraved characters, such as the female artist Ingeborg Ficker; hardcore criminals such as Sobantu 'The Butcher' Ikerothi; religious figures such as Brother Moral MacBraggart; and fence-sitters such as the Fawkeses. Various ethnicities also people the text, including mixed race individuals, members of minority groups, and individuals of foreign origin. Their often conflicting identities and interests as well as their convergences are clearly highlighted in the novel. *Hatchings* is thus multi-voiced and, again, polylogical, and consists of multiple layers of discourse, such as those of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nation. In its depiction of the nation it arguably contests those narrow and exclusionist visions of it as one finds in some of the texts examined before, such as *Detective Ridgemore Riva*. National identity therefore can only be located at the intersections of these multiple voices that characterize the narrative. The prominent role played by the South African exile Sobantu, and his collusion with a wide range of local individuals of different hues is suggestive of how the text views the nation as belonging to all those who live in it rather than the narrow prism through which it is often viewed. Minorities, whose voices are often excluded from the nation, are symbolically a part of the narrative and therefore the nation at large. However, most of the characters, from a cultural and ethical perspective, embody moral decay and decadence, and so the nation they constitute is circumscribed and defined by these. They represent what is wrong with the nation, rather than the desired or ideal nation. Many of the characters in the text, such as Sobantu, are veritable bad apples who normally are written out of the national narrative, as would have occurred in *Detective Ridgemore Riva*. Those characters who collaborate with him would have been labelled sell-outs who should be mercilessly plucked out of the national body politic. Machingauta's text belongs to those narratives that are often called 'praise texts' (Robin, 1996:77), while *Hatchings* is more of a satire of the nation, subtly lampooning the

moral decay that characterizes it. As previously noted, the role of literature in the imagination and construction of the nation has been acknowledged by a number of scholars, for example, Brennan (1994) and Bhabha (1994). *Hatchings* therefore constitutes what Bhabha (1994: 300) refers to as ‘counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries – both actual and conceptual – disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which imagined communities are given essentialist identities’. This is more so the case in the 1990s, ‘when the term indigenisation first appeared’ (Fisher, 2010: 142). It was a term that was fought over, with nativist or essentialist definitions of it that inscribed blackness as the equivalent of indigene, threatening to write out other groups, such as the whites, from the national pantheon. Whites on the other hand argued and wanted the term to denote ‘indigenes as “those born in” ... [and also] those who have registered as citizens and travel on a Zimbabwean passport’ (ibid: 149). The representation of the nation in *Hatchings* takes the latter view.

While the title of the novel is indicative of new beginnings, it is also ironically oxymoronic, in that some of its dominant motifs are of baby dumping and adolescent/child sexual abuse. These ultimately negate the aforementioned symbolism, thus highlighting the existence of moral decay as a cancer that is destroying the nation’s body politic. These twin evils therefore function as motifs for what is wrong with the nation. In discourses of the nation, sexuality, because of its significance in the biological reproduction of the nation, is variously regulated and policed, but these checks and balances are clearly lacking in *Hatchings*.

The novel ends with some hope though, and this is embodied by the hatching of the Asil Khan egg, and the unfolding relationship between Elizabeth Fawkes and Jet Bunion. One senses a metamorphosis and convergence of Elizabeth and Jet, both of whom have been trapped in their diverse and parallel world views. The two therefore symbolise the potential regeneration of the nation and a movement out of the quagmire of the moral decay and bigotry in which it is stuck. Jet at the beginning of the text is constructed as one of the ‘iconoclasts’ in this body politic, one of its subversive masculine subjects. With Elizabeth’s sexual decency and moral uprightness, she embodies the kind of femininity often valorised in nationalist discourses; one that potentially guarantees not only the survival of the nation, but also its purity and the honour of its men. At the end of the text, Sobantu also leaves for his native South Africa, and there is hope that the evil axis of which he is the fulcrum will collapse without him. Added to this, some of the expatriates also at the core of the evil practices leave the country as well, and a faint ray of hope for a new beginning is evident.

5.1.2: Old Wine in New Bottles? Colonial-Nostalgic Masculinities in *Hatchings*.

Diverse masculinities characterize *Hatchings*, and so the text cannot be defined according to a singular masculine subjectivity. Interestingly, most of the men position themselves differently in relation to the nation and its defining discourses. In short, they cannot be fully understood without recourse to their dialogic relationships with various colonial and postcolonial extra-textual discourses. One such discourse is to do with the need to forge new identities by all the nation's subjects, in line with the changed realities brought about by independence. For most whites this meant a redefinition of whiteness as a racial category, and a renegotiation of their former dominant and privileged positions to embrace the racial equality that the post-independence nation espouses. In the colony their colour was inscribed with power and privilege to the extent that, like masculinity in a patriarchal society, whiteness denoted the norm and so was invisible. As a racial category it was thus arguably gendered (Connell, 2000:25; Mutekwa, 2009), as it embodied the attributes of masculinity, while blackness was conferred with those of femininity. Independence therefore can be argued to be a moment of rupture of this gendered signification; hence both racial categories had to be reimagined and reconfigured. White fears and anxieties of being swamped by blacks are evident in *Hatchings*, hence their attempt to preserve their identity in diverse ways, inclusive of the economic and cultural dimensions. The laager, garrison, or siege mentality they had exuded in the colony had been premised on the notion of white power and dominance, and the threat from what they envisaged as 'barbarians at the gates' (Hock, qtd in Kelly, 2008: op cit) in the form of hostile but marginalized blacks. With the coming of independence this 'garrison' had to be reconfigured, what with the symbolic markers and significations of whiteness all but eroded, and whiteness largely losing its unmarked status and consequent association with masculinity. The independence constitution signed in 1979 at Lancaster House in the United Kingdom by all the contenting parties had foregrounded this by reserving twenty seats (for the first ten years of independence) for whites in the one hundred seat parliament, in spite of the fact that the percentage of whites in the population was far less than this figure warranted. This would suggest that they were 'over-represented' proportionally and thus privileged in the power economies of the newly independent nation, something that echoed their disproportionate power in the colony. At the same time, this 'affirmative action', whatever its justifications, marked a recognition of the diminished power associated with whiteness in the post-independence dispensation, when one considers that such steps are usually taken to promote minorities and/or marginalized groups in society, such as women. 'Promote' here would signify the changed power relationships in the postcolonial setup. With race writ large no longer the main marker of identity, the status of the whites becomes more akin to that of a minority ethnic group, particularly after the Lancaster House constitution had lapsed and been replaced by another one in which there were no reserved seats for particular races.

Consequently, many of the white subjects in *Hatchings* feel threatened and endangered, and many had responded by departing to other countries such as South Africa *en masse*. In *Hatchings*, some of those who remained registered their fears and anxieties in their decision to name their school after the near-extinct white rhino; the name was later changed to Black Rhino High School in pursuit of political correctness. That the school's black rhinoceros insignia looked like an 'erect, gigantic black phallus' symbolises the masculinity of the new black political elite now in power. In the absence of their erstwhile political masculinity, these subjects try to masculinise themselves economically, as seen in male character names such as Sadbury Bauls, Boxer Cock and Strontium Twot, names that have macho, manly resonances. Bauls needs no explanation, while Boxer Cock is unmistakably masculine, as boxing, a violent sport, is largely associated with manhood, and together with the image of the rooster, denotes the hyper-masculine. Strontium on the other hand denotes a mineral associated with radioactivity or explosives and consequently a weapon of immense destruction, something that again resonates with maleness. All these names denote a fighting or struggling posture, and, in this case, follow the economic and also ideological frontier. Nims' assertion that 'whites ... seek wealth over education in the post-colonial context because it affirms their superiority socially' (2013: 182), is therefore instructive in understanding the dynamics at play here. Wealth foregrounds the aspect of class more than that of race. This disposition helps whites to perpetuate the erstwhile *esprit de corps* which the colonials had maintained to ensure the preservation of their dominant and privileged position, now being deployed largely in the service of class, though the default mode of race is also present. The sense of being endangered is a rallying point for whites to coalesce, be more assertive, aggressive, competitive and smart: in short to be more masculine in order to maintain their position.

Their private, exclusive and expensive Black Rhino High School represents the ideological thrust that would help them perpetuate themselves. For them, the school is supposed to be an enclave and citadel for the perpetuation and preservation of erstwhile colonial values as it 'would ensure that the high standards of "Rhodesian" education – the highest in Africa, if not in the entire world – would be maintained' (Eppel, 2006: 1). This founding ideology of the school is not only nostalgic, but also racist in its orientation. The exorbitant fees charged by the school ensure that only a minimum of blacks can afford to enrol. The almost exclusively white School Board with only one black member for window-dressing purposes speaks to this dynamic. This scenario validates a former president of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana's assertion in the early years of independence that: 'White people needed to be liberated from a sense of self-importance' (qtd in Fisher, 2010: 30). The largely masculine orientation of the school is underwritten by the fact that

their defining ethos is where ‘those aspects of Rhodesian education that mattered: rugby, water polo, bullying, and geography’ are to be found (Eppel, 2006: 1). These, particularly the two sports together with bullying, were meant to mould veritable masculine subjects primed for control and domination; attributes necessary to maintain their class-cum-racial privileges.

Such white subjects are the archetypes of what Alexander (2004: 210) refers to as ‘Orphans of Empire’, whose ‘self-perceptions and identity construction ... have prohibited them from “emigrating” wholeheartedly to Zimbabwe’. This is a classic scenario whereby centripetal forces more than centrifugal ones shape subjectivities; a situation where monologism rather than dialogism predominates. It is also evidence of the Janus-faced nature of masculine subjectivities, something that they share with the nation. The symbolism associated with them, both as ‘endangered’ and as ‘orphans’ problematizes their capacity to attain true hegemony within the nation. Their having to pander to the new black ruling elite suggests that while they have economic power, their hegemonic status within the nation is limited. In his discussion of hegemony from a Marxist perspective, Antonio Gramsci concluded that a truly hegemonic class ‘leads the classes which are its allies, and dominates those which are its enemies’ (1972: 57). This, however, does not appear to be the case with the above group. They appear to possess the kind of domination that typified the colonial state, which relied more on force than consent, hence they were dominant and powerful, but not hegemonic. This clique relies on their economic power *per se* which does not necessarily translate into hegemony. However, at a microcosmic level within this group, some of the dominant men like Bauls, Twot, Cock, and in particular MacBraggart, arguably have the status of hegemonic masculinities. As noted, their school, Black Rhino High, is meant to be a nursery for such subjectivities. Even so, there exist some subversive masculinities within this group, represented by ‘iconoclasts’ such as Jet Bunion and Bolard Lip. In this case, hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily at the top of a singular monolithic hierarchical structure of masculinities within the nation. Instead, as the text makes apparent, it exists at both a macro and micro level. In fact, within the macrocosmic structure of the nation, this conservative group of ex-Rhodesians could be characterized as a subversive masculinity, but when considered separately on its own, it also has its own hegemonic, complicit, marginal, and subversive masculinities. Within a nation, then, there can be multiple hegemonies existing side by side in a parallel or sometimes competing relationship. This is evidenced, for example, by the often multiple or competing versions of the nation.

In their revision of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt argue, with hindsight, that it embodied ‘the currently most honoured way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it’ (2005: 832). This assertion, with its reference to

‘all men’, has the status of a metanarrative, highlighting the sense that the definition above has a modernist orientation rather than a postmodernist one, hence its problematic status that the two scholars were trying to address. This is suggestive of the fact that masculinity studies at their inception had Enlightenment undertones, just like feminism at its inception, hence the inclination towards grand narratives. The construction of masculine subjectivities in *Hatchings*, however, deconstructs this tendency to overgeneralise about masculine identities.

This group of ex-Rhodesians is ruthless even to fellow members who do not toe the line and live up to its orientation. This makes visible the fault-lines and cracks within the *esprit de corps*, as race is no longer the only variable that determines allegiances and loyalties, thus highlighting the heteroglossia that characterizes identities in the post-independence dispensation. One notices, for example, their homophobia, and, related to this, their allergic disposition towards men they perceive as exuding ‘feminine’ qualities. This is exemplified by the way the School Board of Black Rhino High summarily dismisses Bolard Lipp, one of the teachers, because he is anti-establishment (in their terms), exuded ‘feminine’ characteristics, and was suspiciously homosexual in orientation. To them he is a subversive or disruptive masculinity whose influence could eventually undermine them. As a teacher he deals with ideas that could eventually take root and subvert those dominant ones. This highlights the significance of ideology and images in the construction and perpetuation of reality, inclusive of identities. This disposition of the Board is testimony that its members, both men and women, are ‘masculine’ in orientation and they consider non-masculine characteristics as inimical to their survival.

Capitalists and economically powerful in their own right, these members are in strategic alliances with other powerful elites, both black and white. Sudbury Balls, for example, is in cahoots with the mafia-like, crime syndicate leader, Sobantu ‘The Butcher’ Ikerothi, a black South African apartheid-era exile who appears to privilege criminality and self-aggrandizement over his anti-apartheid activities, and whose prized AK 47 rifle is a veritable phallic symbol. For them it’s wealth at whatever cost, as this feeds into their ability to maintain a dominant status. They privilege class, race, entrepreneurship, material possessions, family, and macho masculinity. They are also in league with religious elites represented by Brother Moral MacBraggart, whose Blood of Jesus church preaches ‘the doctrine of material prosperity’ (Eppel, 2006: 5), and is the most powerful and therefore masculine member of this group, if judged by his control of its members. He and other church leaders of his ilk are described in quintessentially masculine terms: ‘The preachers at these churches weren’t over-educated nerds, fucking homos, kaffir boeties ... they were men; they held their heads high’ (ibid.). The use of the word ‘kaffir’ to refer to blacks in the post-

independence dispensation highlights the racist orientation of this clique, and the rest of the nomenclature highlights its predisposition to Other or feminise their colleagues who did not toe the line and live up to their standards. This scenario also presents a classic, if negative, case of dialogism, in this instance involving the interface of the economic base, religion, race, history, and masculinities. A change in any of these variables could have ripple effects on most of the others. Religion is constitutive of what Bakhtin (1982: 342-344) calls 'authoritative discourse' which 'is located in a distanced zone, [and] organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher'. This partly explains the power and hold that MacBraggart has over most of the masculine and feminine subjects in this text. In Bakhtin's theorisation, authoritative discourses are not easily dialogized, but in this case the dialogic relationship with other discourses such as the neo-liberal capitalist one is apparent. This dialogue is possible because the ideology of materialism adopted by the church is not authoritative but constitutes what Bakhtin refers to as 'internally-persuasive discourse', which 'is either a contemporary word ... or else it is a word that has been reclaimed for contemporaneity' (1982: 346). So through the deployment of both kinds of discourse, MacBraggart's church is able to maintain a stranglehold over its members, making him the most hegemonic masculine subject within this group, particularly when the fact that 'he cut a dashing figure' (Eppel, 1993: 5) is also taken into consideration. This alliance between the secular and the religious makes this group more cohesive, masculine, and solid, with their identities drawing on influences from both. Through their colonial nostalgia and die-hard clinging to the past, these characters are veritable old wine in new bottles, an orientation that resonates with the Janus-faced nature of masculine identities.

5.1.3: Sexuality, Masculinities, and the Nation

Sexuality is a central motif in *Hatchings*, and the manner in which it is deployed strikes right at the centre of the moral fabric of the nation. It is inbuilt in the construction and imagining of the nation because of its centrality in the biological reproduction of the nation, but in this text it is employed as an instrument of abuse, and so is at the centre of exposing a rotten and dysfunctional nation. Predatory masculinities in the text largely take advantage of young and often under-age school girls, and sometimes boys, to play-out their sexual fantasies and gratify their unbridled sexual appetites, thus lending credence to Kirkegaard's (2007: 125) claim that: 'Predatory and violent (hetero-) sexual prowess is considered a basic signifier of maleness'. However, the abuse of the vulnerable schoolgirls and boys, often by men in positions of trust and authority relative to them, tends to diminish the masculine status of the concerned male subjects instead of enhancing it. Male sexual prowess as a test of manliness is often cast in the imagery of 'hunting' and 'conquest' or

'catching' of mainly female subjects. This imagery of hunter and prey conjures up images of the jungle and survival of the fittest, a terrain that is fertile ground for the performance of masculinities. It also mirrors the traditional construction of gender in patriarchal societies, where femininity is not only objectified but is also marked by passivity. Prey is, however, not readily available for the catching but requires a lot of prowess, endurance and cunning to overcome. That is how the courting process is often traditionally cast in many patriarchal societies, but in the case involving the sexual abuse of the schoolgirls such imagery simply does not apply. The men involved are therefore, by implication, cast as not only lame, but also toothless. This is the case of Comrade Ipayipi, a teacher at Kipling Primary School whom the text constructs as having been a failure as far as romantic relationships are concerned, and like an impotent and clawless 'beast' of prey, turns on the vulnerable and helpless schoolgirls. His name is a vernacularisation of the word 'pipe', and so has phallic resonances. However, the depiction of the phallus as a pipe is a poor signifier of maleness, suggesting impotence more than anything else. Ipayipi's case highlights the complicity of some women in the construction and perpetuation of hegemonic masculinities as his failure is due to the fact that he does not have the signifiers of middle-class masculinity such as a car, sufficient money, and so on, that would enable him to meet the expectations of his potential girlfriends.

Other male subjects turn to the schoolgirls because they believe that they are unlikely to be yet infected by HIV and AIDS, albeit without any guarantee that they are not infected themselves, thus making both potential vectors in the spread of the virus. This makes visible how the disease has exposed the vulnerability of male bodies; a movement away from their construction as tough and macho. It is as if the malady has 'tamed' or possibly 'caged' the 'hunter', preventing him from hunting his usual 'prey'. Taming and caging here are akin to emasculation. Even the swinging, gallivanting and philandering English expatriate teachers, Simon and Nicholas, hardly fare any better. Their sexual exploitation of the schoolgirls and exoticisation and objectification of the black female body, together with their unconventional sexuality, similarly reflect negatively on their masculinity.

Childhood is often constructed as a stage and site of innocence and purity; so the sexual defilement of the primary and secondary school girls is akin to 'the murder of the innocents'. The inevitable pregnancies and the resultant abortions and baby dumping, plus the involvement of a crime syndicate in this underlines the thread-bare moral and social fabric of the nation, which fails to adequately police its body-politic. The nation apparently destroys its future in a double sense: first through the abuse of the children who embody its future, and then through the murder and dumping of the babies, who symbolise the reproduction of the nation. The text thus deploys

sexuality to expose the moral evil that permeate the whole cross-section of the society.

5.1.4: Within no Men's Land: Middle Class Masculinities in *Hatchings*.

The male characters discussed above generally belong to a very rich elite who, together with the political elite, can be characterized here as the upper class, to distinguish them from a middle class, largely composed of professional (as opposed to business) men. These, like the group of accountants at Boxer Cock's party, are largely trying to carve a niche for themselves in the post-independence dispensation, and view themselves as social climbers for whom the sky is the limit. This at a time when there has been an ideological shift at the national level from socialist-oriented policies to capitalist, neo-liberal ones. So, within the nation, there has been something of a seismic shift when masculinities associated with neo-liberalism replaced those oriented to Marxism when the country adopted ESAP in the 1990s and moved away from the populist policies of the 1980s. The shifting frontiers, then, see different masculinities gaining the ascendancy.

At Cock's party, class, rather than race is the main determinant of identity, and hence there is much more racial and ethnic diversity at his party, compared to the situation at Twot's. The group of professional masculinities present, though not homogenous, acts as a buffer between the people and the business and political elite. They are largely constructed as complicit with the dominant and/or hegemonic masculinities of the elite, and the same applies to their wives. These men conform to Howson's characterization of such masculinities as defined by an emphasis on 'career, status ... ambition, fatherhood and breadwinning, as well as a new emphasis on fashion, grooming and appearance' (qtd in Zenenga, 2007: 138). However, that some of them are company and institutional managers positions them as dominant in these particular contexts. A good example is the headmaster of Black Rhino High, Rudolph McMackmack, who, while ostensibly dominant in the context of his school environment, is virtually a nonentity when compared to the likes of the Cocks, Twots and Bauls. These middle-class characters, however, appear to be dominant without being necessarily hegemonic, as institutionally-based power does not readily transform into hegemony. In Connell's typology, the term complicit masculinities would be an inadequate moniker to describe them, as it does not register their power and dominance in their particular contexts. In fact, as far as masculinities are concerned, dominance does not readily translate into complicity, in particular when one considers colonial dominant masculinities of the ruling elite, who cannot be described as having been complicit in the formation of any hegemonic masculinity.

5.1.5: Confounding Hegemonic Masculinities

Through the use of the carnivalesque, the novel attempts to confound normative understandings of hegemonic masculinities. For example, the description of Strontium Twot through the references to body orifices, waste matter and odours at his New Year party has the effect of disabusing him of the symbolism of the body in the construction of hegemonic masculinity. The strong, healthy body, minus its baseness as symbolised by excrement, is central in the imagining and construction of hegemonic masculinity. Even so, the bodies of most of the elite and the nouveau rich, which become distended through bulging tummies, tend to debunk the notion of hegemony based on the strong and muscular male body. The decline in virility, and in some cases fertility, of most of this class of men in the text tends to confound the normative understanding of hegemonic masculinity. There is a sense in which these individuals are feminised through body politics and semiotics due to the weakening and softening of their bodies from conspicuous consumption as they grow richer. The one individual in the text with a veritably strong and muscular body, the coloured body builder, is gay, and this furthers the deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity.

From the above and as noted before, it is apparent, as Connell (2005) observes, that few men manage to attain all the markers of hegemonic masculinity. This largely shows that it exists mainly as a cultural script arising out of a polylogical relationship between men (and women), the economic base/ideology, religion, the body, sport, politics and other social ideologies and realities. It appears to be a variation or a consequence of the jungle law of survival of the fittest, because hegemonic males (and females) become so because they are the fittest to survive in that particular society and milieu vis-à-vis other members of the society. Hence, for example, the emphasis on ‘rugby, water polo, ... and bullying’ in the education curriculum at Black Rhino High by the upper-class former Rhodesians discussed above. These aspects apparently would prepare the learners for the struggles ahead which are necessary to attain and/or maintain a hegemonic masculine status. Such hegemonic males manage to make it to the top usually against other members of society based on struggles along various frontiers, such as ideology, the economy and so on. This hegemony is context-related, and occurs at both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. Being a cultural narrative, aspects of hegemonic masculinity are possessed by most men in different amounts. The coloured body builder, for example, is apparently the most physically-endowed man in the text, yet he is not hegemonic. There is, however, a possibility for him to be hegemonic in the gay community, though this is not broached in the novel. This is so because hegemony also occurs at the level of ideology, be it religious or economic. So those who are successful in line with the dominant ideology are the ones who are truly hegemonic in the text. In the neo-liberal dispensation, the materially successful are the dominant and hegemonic members, and in the text, these also include criminals like Sobantu Ikerothi. Even females like Ingeborg Ficker are similarly positioned

because of this.

5.1.6: Female Bodies, Masculine Subjectivities; Male Bodies, Feminine Subjectivities.

The notions of female bodies, masculine subjectivities and male bodies, feminine ones appear completely oxymoronic when considered in the context of notions of rigid gender identities and biological-essentialist-oriented ideologies of gender. These construct gender rigidly based on the sexed body, with no room for fluidity. But not so when put into the context of cultural-constructionist notions of gender, which highlight the fluidity of gender identities as cultural constructs. So, masculinities are not the privilege of those with male bodies only, and femininities similarly not the sole preserve of those with female bodies.

For example, the School Board of Black Rhino High is constituted by both male and female subjects who stand side by side to ensure that their goals are met. In fact, it can be argued that one of the most ‘masculine’ subjects in this group is Sudbury Bauls’ wife Matilda. Side by side with her husband, she is at the forefront of the founding of Black Rhino High and is one of its staunchest defenders. Her position as secretary of the School Board seems to cast her in a traditionally feminine role, but this veritably belies her fiery personality and determination. During the Board Meeting to discuss the fate of the teacher Bolard Lipp she is at the forefront of those supporting the motion to dismiss him and denigrating his supposed ‘feminine’ and homosexual dispositions. At the end her role in the affair appears to overshadow even that of her husband, who is the chairman of the Board. Like him, she is definitely a woman of ‘balls’. This resonates with Newell’s assertion that ‘gender [...] is asserted during people’s social engagements: it is a mode of recognition which arises during encounters between subjects’ (2009: 247). And in this case Matilda displays veritably ‘masculine’ behaviour.

However, it is the female subject Ingeborg Ficker who in the text is the most ‘masculine’ of the female subjects. Ideologically on the left, she has disabused herself of most of the markers of ‘Rhodesianness’, and so she is constructed as the antithesis of the likes of Sudbury Bauls, and has done everything to dissociate herself from her and her parents’ colonial past, except the fortune she inherits from them. She subscribes to notions of racial equality in theory as well as in practice. Due to her and most of her friends’ leftist leanings, class and race are not major markers of identity at her party. More than any other white character in the text, she demonstrates that there is no singular white subjectivity in post-independent Zimbabwe, and so the racists such as the Bauls and the Cocks and those of their ilk do not represent all white subjects in Zimbabwe. She therefore subverts any notion of associating all former white Rhodesians with racism. She does not fit Alexander’s

(2004) nomenclature 'orphan of empire', and is the epitome of what Mamdani (1998: op cit) refers to as the metamorphosis of settler identity, which, when accompanied by the same for the native, is the desiderata for true harmony in the post-independence dispensation. Ficker, an artist-cum-farmer, is as much in control of her world as any of the male characters in the text, inclusive of Sobantu. She is also sexually predatory, just like many of the male subjects, and also leaves a trail of broken hearts. Just like some of the male characters, she uses men sexually and dispenses with them like used items, quintessentially objectifying them in the process. She is a testament to the fact that masculinity is not the property of biological males only, but fundamentally consists of 'sets of behaviours that are dominant and expressed through sexualised discourse' (Pascoe, 2007: 5). Her sexuality, and involvement with Sobantu in his shadowy, corrupt and underhand business dealings puts her on par with those other characters who embody the moral decay of the nation. Like some of the male characters in the text, she is in full control of her sexuality and dominates all and sundry around her, both male and female. Sexually a libertine, she does not allow her partners to control her. At her New Year Party, she is as much the 'master' of the house as Twot, Cock and others are at their respective parties. Her sexuality is not of the kind privileged in nationalist discourses, as it has nothing to do with the reproduction of the nation or preserving the honour of the nation's men. As such she deconstructs the traditional role of feminine subjects in the nation. As an artist her role involves the construction and shaping of social reality, but her corruption suggests that any such reality could assume the characteristics of its creator, and so cannot beneficially shape the new nation.

That a biological female subject acts as a foil to the racist and conservative group fronted by the likes of Baul is interesting in more ways than one. It can be seen as a refraction of and a play on the Othering or feminization of those male subjects who do not toe the line, such as Bolard Lip: feminization here functions as a tool for the disciplining and control of such male subjects just as the case of Lipp amply demonstrates. 'Feminine' men are constitutive of what are generally known as queer gender identities, which encompass homosexuality and lesbianism. However, the fact that Ficker is 'masculine' in every respect except biologically tends to subvert the Othering or feminization of some of the male subjects in the text by metonymically placing their identities on par with those hegemonic masculine subjects in the text.

The text also constructs a homosexual relationship between two coloured characters, Porteous Papenfus and Rigby Van Poffadder where the former plays the role of the man and the latter that of a woman, emphatically constructing the latter as a feminine man. The former is what theorists of masculinities such as Connell (2005: op cit) would call a subversive masculinity, but they appear to have paid little attention to the latter, who readily fits the oxymoronic moniker of male

femininity. The text itself seems to characterize such masculinities similarly as it refers to some of them, albeit boy characters, as having been ‘deflowered’ by lascivious gays in Sobantu’s brothel (Eppel, 2006: 99). Such a term and the fact that they are virtually commercial sex workers in the brothel undeniably feminises them. This helps to lend credence to the existence of male femininities which have not been sufficiently theorised by key theorists in the field such as, again, Connell (1995: 2005). These are more disruptive of gender and hegemonic masculinity in particular than subversive masculinities, as they give the lie to a unitary and coherent masculine subject.

5.2.0: Of their Janus Faces: Masculine Identities in Nevanji Madanhire’s *If the Wind Blew*.

5.2.1 Synopsis

The protagonist of the novel is Isis Ndlovu, a young woman journalist through whose eyes and consciousness the events in the novel are seen, mediated and narrated. In reality, however, the novel consists of multiple narratives involving a range of variegated, mainly male characters who bring out a range of masculine identities and their dialogic associations with various extra-textual discourses. Much of the textual discourse is triple-voiced, as it contains the voices of the respective characters, that of Isis, and ‘the refracted intention of the author’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 324). There are therefore different layers of meaning that are all implicated in the construction of the masculine and feminine subjectivities in the text. Unlike the other texts examined previously, the realities about the masculinities in this text, notwithstanding the fact that the author is male, are constructed and mediated through female eyes and a feminist prism, which represents a particular way of looking at reality. Feminist discourses are pre-occupied with female gender emancipation and so their constructions of masculinities are mediated through this paradigm.

Working for a national publication that is the mouthpiece of the government of the day, *The Guardian*, Isis goes through experiences that relate to her as a female subject in a patriarchal society bent on stifling female narratives. Her life’s narrative, however, is entangled in others, especially the political and familial ones involving various masculine subjectivities. The novel therefore is as much about Isis’s life as it is about these male subjects. Besides the trauma of the breakup of her marriage to a closet homosexual man, Isis inadvertently gets into the thick of the contentious politics of the time when she by chance witnesses the cold-blooded murder of a leading opposition figure by the secret agents of the ruling regime. This sets off a chain of events in her life that culminates in her delving not only into her life narratives, but also into the lives of some of the key political actors of the time. These momentous events lead to her victimization, which is intricately inseparable from her being a woman in a patriarchal society. This happens at both a familial and national level, and all this at the hands of various masculine subjectivities.

The novel comprises a main plot on Isis’s life and various interlocking subplots, the central one

of which is about the life story of the murdered main opposition political leader. In a sense, then, the story of Robson Gumpo, this main opposition political figure, parallels that of Isis and ultimately becomes a story within a story. The other significant subplots include those of the Editorial Director of the Guardian newspaper, of James Bond the now down-and-out liberation war ex-combatant, and of John Bernard, the white Assistant Editor of *The Guardian*.

5.2.2: The Masculine over the Feminine: Male and Female narratives in *If the Wind Blew*.

This is the concern particularly of the first part of the text when Isis delves into the very essence of masculinity and femininity and the frontiers associated with them in a patriarchal society. The myth of the goddess Isis and god Osiris in the novel locates this gender paradigm as stretching back to antiquity, suggesting its long and enduring roots. In a sense, Isis the journalist is like an incarnation of this goddess. A goddess might suggest the empowerment of women in society as Isis is supposedly the diametrical opposite of Osiris, but this is not necessarily the case in this text as Osiris's narrative is superordinate to that of Isis, in spite of her being the main actor or agent in the drama of their lives. This myth constructs men as subjects and women as objects, with little or no agency. It serves as the backdrop to Isis the journalist's interpretation of contemporary society and her place in it. Even something as supposedly romantic as Valentine's Day fits the Osiris-Isis paradigm quite well. The newsroom at *The Guardian* where she works is a microcosm of the society Isis lives in. The sexualised or eroticised construction of female subjects sums up the manner in which women are disabused of their subjectivity. This appropriation of the female body for men's visual-cum-erotic pleasure in the text summarises the quintessential objectification of women, and for Isis it is the ultimate degradation: 'it was a feeling of total humiliation' (Madanhire, 1996: 10).

In fact, the domination of women is the lynchpin in the architecture of male bodies' power over female ones, particularly in relation to constructions of hegemonic and/or dominant masculinities. These masculinities are upheld and defended via various social institutions, hence Isis's problematisation of the fact that: 'all big companies were dominated by men' (Madanhire, 1996: 12). In fact, the text's construction of Isis largely through a prism of victimhood helps to accentuate some of the hegemonic masculine subjects in the text, and to make those less powerful male subjects appear more powerful as a consequence of their complicity with hegemonic masculinity. This construction of men and women in broad strokes can in fact be viewed as a weakness of the text, as it glosses over the many complexities that characterize both masculinities and femininities. Even the location of women's structural subordination to patriarchy starting in antiquity and continuing into the present misses the fact that gender varies from culture to culture

and also temporally. Various changes such as economic, political, religious and so on are often associated with tectonic shifts in gender attitudes. In the words of Connell (2000b: 25), 'Masculinities are created in specific historical circumstances. They are liable to be contested, reconstructed or displaced'. Various studies have shown that precolonial configurations of gender were more egalitarian and complementary compared to those during colonialism and the post-independence period (for example, see Schimdt, 1996). In the case of Zimbabwe, colonialism, African nationalism and the armed struggle all have had major impacts on gender configurations. For example, Connell (2000b: 25) notes that: 'The colonial empires were gendered institutions which disrupted indigenous gender orders, and installed violent masculinities in the hegemonic position'.

5.2.3: Of the Alpha Male(s): Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony

The entanglement of Isis's life in the lives of various males helps to bring out and define various male subjectivities. It starts with the legend of the Egyptian God, Osiris, who begins as a ruler of Egypt to whom various monumental achievements and innovations that include agriculture are attributed. Osiris is an embodiment of an alpha male, the quintessence of hegemonic masculinity. This standing, though, appears to be diminished or even erased as a result of his murder by his brother who usurps his position as ruler or as the alpha. This is simply the replacement of one hegemonic masculinity by another. However, Osiris's narrative is rescued by his wife, Isis, in a manner that sums up women's role in the preservation and/or validation of hegemonic masculinity in the architecture of a patriarchal society such as this one. Through this ancillary role Isis is robbed of her subjectivity in spite of the significant part she plays in rescuing Osiris, who ends up as an important god in the Egyptian pantheon. At the end Osiris as a god is more powerful than he was as a living human. As a living subject his discourse is the equivalent of what Bakhtin (1981: op cit) refers to as internally persuasive discourse, but as a deity his word becomes authoritative. The role that Isis plays results in her narrative being subordinated to Osiris's and this is what Isis in the present text finds to her consternation and which leads to her disenchantment.

The dynamics of the Osiris and Isis legend are refracted in the life of Isis as embodied by her family, her workplace and the political narratives in the text. To begin with, there is her husband, whose name, Hebrew, while having religious resonances, becomes a quintessentially masculine name (through a pun) as it celebrates his father's achievement of finally fathering a male, after having been the butt of social ridicule for having been for a long time 'a brewer of women' (Madanhire, 1996: 31), that is, one who begets only female children. This reality highlights the manner in which fatherhood is intimately entangled in the construction of masculine identities, and

ultimately hegemonic masculinities. In this culture, a real man begets male children, or at least those of both sexes, hence Hebrew's father's celebration of the birth of his first boy child through this name, which essentially announces to all and sundry that he was also a 'brewer of men', and could now also be counted amongst the 'real' men. In this sense Hebrew's narrative is elevated over that of his female siblings. However, the actual trajectory of the life of his 'He-brew' can actually result in aspersions being cast against such a perspective. Being part of the new black rich elite, and apparently a ladies' man, he attains most of the markers of hegemonic masculinity, only to be let down by his homosexual orientation.

For Isis, her workplace is a bastion of masculinities, due not only to the dominance of males on the staff, but the patriarchal culture that pervades and informs the editorial policy of this media house. First of all, the denial of the female voice and narrative is evident in the refusal by the journal to have a column on women's issues, and the excuse given is that such a thrust was going to be divisive. This echoes the stance of some nationalist liberation movements who largely sidelined issues concerning gender during the period of the struggle for liberation (Geisler, 2004: 39). That this is being perpetuated in a post-independence epoch is an instance highlighting the Janus-faced posture of masculinities as they face both to the past and also the future. This past need not always be a distant one, but can be recent, as in this case. Even the assignments given to the few female journalists on the staff are on somewhat trivial issues as compared to those assigned to male members of staff. This is emblematic, as journalism and the media are synonymous with representation, and thus the construction and circulation of social images, and ultimately of reality. Thus, the expression of the female voice in the text is largely confined to those narratives that buttress male dominance, as represented by the Valentine's Day story that Isis is made to work on. Just like the story of Isis the Egyptian Goddess, whose role is reduced to putting together the shreds of Osiris's narrative so that his greatness can be eternally preserved after the ignominy of being murdered and overthrown by his brother Seth.

The power of the media in shaping reality and in the building of the nation is underlined in the text. Here the mainstream media has been captured by the ruling Liberation Party in order to promote its own version of the past and help in shaping the present and the future. It is thus a key instrument in the propagation and perpetuation of a personality cult around the president, Bert Ngirozi, and his enduring image as the alpha male in the discourse of the nation. In the text, the image of the pen that continues to grow in Isis's consciousness symbolises its power. The pen here can actually be viewed as a masculine or phallic symbol from a psychoanalytic perspective, and this highlights its potency; from the ideological angle, that is. So masculine subjectivities in the text have to contend with its power, and the Liberation Party thus harnesses it to serve their own

purposes. At the end of the day, it is the pen and the gun (another masculine symbol), that are responsible for the neutering of the main opposition party, simply called The Movement.

In the true fashion of the 'big man' (Holland, op cit) model of African masculinity that has its roots in the precolonial period, Ngirozi not only surrounds himself with sycophants, but virtually captures the state and associated institutions to create 'a whole cartel of lieutenants who knew his downfall was theirs too' (Madanhire, 1996: 105). This resonates with Howson's (qtd in Zenenga 2007: 135) assertion that: 'In order to sustain male hegemony, the dominant social group also leads by aligning itself ideologically to the broader community of interest and identities'.

At Isis's workplace the alpha male archetype is embodied by the Editorial Director who superintends *The Guardian's* gate-keeping, watchdog and informative roles, and is thus directly implicated in the gagging of the female voice. His intolerance to alternative and even progressive views highlights the stranglehold he has on the institution. His office is also strategically, and symbolically, located on the top-most floor or pinnacle of their office block to signify his all-seeing role, and to an extent his near-deity status in the organisation. However, it paradoxically also suggests his lack of being in touch with the reality on the ground, particularly as it relates to gender. For him all the female members of staff on the newspaper are no more than a part of his harem; highlighting his objectification of female bodies, as symbolised by his attempts to bed Isis, even without the courtesy of any prior courtship. Just as in *Hatchings*, sexual predation in this case is a way of expressing his dominance over female bodies, who happen to be his subordinates, highlighting the role of sexuality in the politics of male domination. Sexuality here is couched in the idiom of conquest, and so readily turns into a metaphor for differential power relations. Here, the traditional, culturally constructed passivity of the female subject is diametrically opposed to the aggression of the male one. This paradigm then functions largely as a template for femininity and masculinity in patriarchal societies, and ultimately as a metaphor for subordination and domination. Isis thus shrewdly debunks and exposes this paradigm and so pulls the rug from under the Editorial Director's feet, holding him up as no more than a sex pest.

However, it is in the national politics of this unnamed country that the leitmotif of the alpha male becomes most manifest. Looming large in the politics of this nation is the Liberation Party that had fought an armed struggle to liberate the country from the colonialists. It is thus associated with militarised masculinities, and those of anti-colonial nationalism. According to Connell (2000b: 57), 'the process of decolonization disrupted the gender hierarchies of the colonial order and where armed struggle was involved, might have involved a deliberate cultivation of masculine hardness and violence'. However, these masculinities are more complex than is denoted in this characterization. The armed struggle led to the reincarnation of frontier-type masculinities that

were largely reminiscent of the period of colonial conquest amongst both African nationalists and the colonialists. These, as noted before, were premised on violence and conquest. The fight against the colonialists represented the main frontier, but within the nationalist movement there were other multiple frontiers that acted as sites of struggle. To begin with, one notes that in this novel there is a clearly defined dichotomy between the politicians and the fighters, and the rivalry, distrust and suspicion between them is made manifest. Instead of seeing themselves as complementary, they are antagonistic and in competition with each other, with the former being of the conviction that politics should inform the armed struggle, while the latter considered the politicians mere arm-chair revolutionaries who could not be trusted with the leadership of the struggle.

The fighters were the men of action who bore the brunt of the struggle and believed that they were the true hegemonic masculinities and therefore should lead the struggle. The *nom de guerre* of some of the fighters are evocative of this. For example, there is a guerrilla leader by the name of Mhitsa, a name that denotes not only a gargantuan size, but also machismo. Then there is James Bond, a name derived from a hero of popular fiction, denoting combativeness, toughness and the hyper-masculine. In the history of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, the rivalry between the two masculinities is well documented. In the text it is symbolised by the incident involving the guerrilla detachment commander Mhitsa (the 'cyclop'), and the politician Gumpo. While Mhitsa symbolises the dominant masculine status of the fighters, he is symbolically handicapped and rather diminished by his one eye. This is a metonym of the limitations of the fighters, as the struggle was not about the use of force and action on the battle-field per se, but also involved ideological, intellectual and political dimensions which are the forte of the politicians, and so the two were supposed to complement each other. If anything, the ideologues like Gumpo, as it turns out, have the potential to establish true hegemony. Other fissures and fault-lines and therefore frontiers existed along the axis of region, ethnicity and even creed and this is highlighted in the novel.

So many were these rivalries, struggles and instances of infighting within the nationalist movement that Masipula Sithole (1999, op cit) speaks of 'struggles within the struggle' that claimed many casualties and which in some ways weakened the struggle against the colonialists. These destructive internecine struggles led Sithole to characterize the anti-colonial liberation struggles as 'a revolution that ate its own children'. As, in effect, an army, the fighters wielded a lot of power, but those politicians who were closely aligned with them, or were fighters-cum-politicians, such as Gumpo, were generally the ones who really wielded power. Such politicians, at the head not only of the politicians, but also the fighters and the multiple competing interests, became the veritable alpha males.

Many leaders of liberation movements were known by praise names that denoted their iconic,

heroic and even infallible status: 'I'm the slippery stone. I'm the cock that crows on the roof top. I'm His Excellency the Ngwazi. I am the Osagyefoe. I am the Mzee. I am the great teacher, the Mwalimu' (Madanhire, 1996: 91). In other words, these names denoted them as the archetypal alpha males who embodied the essence and ethos of their liberation movements: the alpha and omega of the nationalist ideals of the nation. As a result, many such leaders were averse to democracy and criticism and tended to want to become leaders of their nations for life. Some of them only relinquished power after being forced to, for example, through military coups.

The leader in this text's surname, 'Ngirozi', or 'angel' in English, suggests that he is something of a super-being, the embodiment of a larger than life force, and therefore unequalled in the national body-politic. It is therefore no surprise that hero-worshipping is the posture that he expects of his subjects, and this is symbolised by the role played by the Women's League of his Liberation Party. This scenario resonates with Parpart's assertion that, 'nationalist movements have all too often proven more committed to patriarchal power than gender equality, whatever their official "ideology" on the matter, particularly once power has been won and structures of authority put in place' (2007: 104). Women, as previously noted, have always been conferred a symbolic role in the national iconography as the 'mothers' and therefore symbolic reproducers of the nation (McClintock 1991, op cit). They have also traditionally played a male-validating role in patriarchal cultures, and therefore are, in this case, fitting subjects to play such a role. The frontier of the domination and/or control of female bodies has always been a key feature of masculine politics within or between different groups of people. Ultimately, therefore, Ngirozi can be conceived as the cock of the roost and he moulds himself along the lines of the pre-colonial African monarchs, albeit without the traditional checks and balances that normally went with such a position. At the same time he wants to be a modern statesman, as witnessed by his many trips abroad, thus casting himself as a true modern Janus, characterized by contradicting images of himself. In the Bakhtinian universe of discourse he is at the centre of centrifugal and centripetal forces pulling in different directions. He and the Editorial director discussed above therefore largely share the same power-oriented DNA.

Ngirozi is juxtaposed with the leader of the main opposition party, The Movement for Free Democracy, Robson Gumpo, who like him played a key role in the liberation movement, only to be disillusioned and frustrated by the corruption and other shenanigans of the now ruling Liberation Party that he saw as deviating from the ideals of the liberation movement. Of importance to note is the transition from the masculinities associated with the struggle for independence, to those of the ruling elite of the post-independence period. Generally, the former are subversive in relation to the masculinities of the colonizers, but the latter are now hegemonic in relation to other masculinities

in the nation. It is not surprising that they model themselves along the lines of the former colonizers, because they have merely displaced these to assume dominance themselves. Hegemony is fought over, and so the colony has created models of dominance and hegemony that the subversive masculinities of the liberation movement find themselves entrapped in. This reluctance or inability for them to transform or to reimagine themselves is what finally dawns on Gumpo, and after much soul searching, he leaves the Liberation Party to go into opposition, assuming the posture of a subversive masculinity once again. This, in addition to the internecine struggles within the Liberation Party, constitutes what Sithole (1999) refers to as ‘Struggles after the struggle’, suggesting that the control of the nation is the new frontier that is now being fought over.

While colonial relations were predominantly defined by race, post-independence ones are largely mediated by class. The politicians in most cases become the elite, and therefore the new hegemonic masculinities and femininities. The majority of the people, including many former combatants, become the lower class and ultimately the downtrodden and voiceless. In this way, new hierarchies akin to the colonial ones emerge, and new fissures and fault-lines begin to appear in the national body-politic. That many of the former combatants like James Bond are now marginalized and relegated to the level of the common people makes visible the fact that their masculinities had become redundant and been replaced by others. Having contended with the politicians for hegemony during the struggle, they therefore represented a threat and an alternative to the politicians, and so many were marginalized, as new masculinities that were more in tandem with the new realities replaced them.

After independence, Robson Gumpo, once a liberation icon, also apparently moves with the times as he becomes one of the ruling elite, and therefore a part of the upper-class, marking a defining break between him and the ordinary people. This break signifies the creation of another frontier or site of struggle between the two groups. It is through Gumpo’s experiences that the life of the ruling elite and their betrayal of the common masses is clearly highlighted. How Gumpo’s stature diminishes in Isis’s consciousness from that of a giant to that of a mere midget summarises this transition from a revolutionary to a mere member of an insensitive and predatory elite. This is the case before his encounter with a down and out former co-liberation war fighter brings him a defining awareness as to the extent of their betrayal of the people. Then comes a *volte-face* in which Gumpo renounces the Liberation Party and goes into political opposition in order to rectify the wrongs of the new ruling elite. The main challenge, however, is for Gumpo to redefine himself differently from Bert Ngirozi. While there is a lot of promise as far as Gumpo’s new party is concerned, there is also some pessimism in the text about the ability of the new movement to model itself differently from the Liberation Party. Gumpo’s assassination, however, puts paid to this

dream, at least for the time being.

Another fissure and potential frontier that is hinted at is that between the former colonized and colonizers. John Bernard, the assistant editor of *The Guardian*, like some of the white subjects in *Hatchings*, is an ex-Rhodesian and has carved a niche for himself on the staff of the above-mentioned newspaper. However, he still considers himself British, and appears to have an underlying contempt for the newspaper and most of its staff. He is yet another ‘orphan of empire’, and also illustrates the Janus-faced ontology of many masculinities as he bases his identity on the past, yet is also forward looking. He again illustrates the failure to undergo the kind of transformation proposed by Mamdani (1998, op cit), where both former settlers and colonized must undergo a transformation as the *sine qua non* for the building of the post-independence nation.

5.2.4: “Dissident” Sexualities, Unconventional Masculinities

Sexuality, just like gender, is viewed largely as a cultural construct rather than a biological given. Hence it is open to contestation and change and also varies temporally and spatially. So, the gender politics of any society are inseparable from its sexual politics and ultimately national(ist) politics. The central role that they play in the national body-politic is encapsulated by Edsall (qtd in Ncube 2013: 66) who asserts that, ‘few subjects are more divisive or raise issues as disquieting as the nature of sexuality and the meaning of gender identity’. Indeed, the gender and sexual politics of post-colonial Zimbabwe are largely the product of its cultures and history, and this includes the pre-colonial, colonial, and the phenomenon of globalisation. The politics of sexuality in these epochs were inevitably determined by many variants that were underpinned by the need for survival and continuity. Pre-colonial cultures largely conflated sexuality and reproduction and so it goes without saying that heterosexuality was the privileged form, and alternative sexualities such as homosexuality could only exist on the margins, and some contemporary possibilities (at least in some Western societies), such as same-sex marriage, were largely unthinkable. In the colony, a combination of Christian doctrine on sexuality and colonial capitalist exigencies such as the insatiable demand for cheap labour all privileged heterosexuality over any alternatives. In such contexts, the social policing of sexuality could only stigmatize and drive the alternatives underground. In African anti-colonial nationalist politics and their highly masculinized culture, alternative sexualities which did not feed into it were proscribed. The situation did change much after independence, particularly with the existence of a cultural nationalist and anti-imperial dialectic that found a life-support system in essentialist notions of sexuality and even gender. This resonates with Mayer’s (2000: 9) assertion that, ‘One nation, one gender and one particular sexuality is always favoured by the social, political and cultural institutions which it helps to

construct and which it benefits from’.

So, the terrain of normative masculinities is destabilized by the appearance of those masculinities that denote a departure from the main gender paradigm in this patriarchal society. As is evident in this novel, masculine power manifests itself, *inter alia*, largely in the domination of female bodies, and thus sexuality is key in defining this reality. Sexual relations and even predation are key instruments in the attainment of this; witness the behaviour of the Editorial Director and even Gumpo during the early days of independence before his *volte-face*. Even for the head of state, Bert Ngirozi, women play a key role in validating his alpha male status.

In this novel, Isis’s husband Hebrew maintains the façade of heterosexuality by appearing to be a ladies’ man as well as a womaniser, so as to camouflage his gayness. In his own words: ‘All those woman I moved around with ... I did not love them ...I was trying toI was trying to suppress ... my ...’. (Madanhire, 1996: 96). The brokenness, fragmentedness, and incompleteness of this sentence underlie not only Hebrew’s anguish, but particularly the taboo status of homosexuality. It is important to note that this text was published in 1996; about one year later president Robert Mugabe had publicly decried against homosexuals, referring to them as ‘worse than dogs and pigs’ (qtd in Shoko, 2010). This highlights homosexuality’s proscribed status in Zimbabwean nationalist politics at the time, and this resonates with Benedict Anderson’s assertion that, ‘nationalisms are built on homo-social bonding and since nationalisms require specific heterosexual gender relations, man to protect and provide and woman to mother and care, homosexuality is not representable for the idea of the nation’ (1990: 20). Anne McClintock’s assertion that the nation is represented through the iconography of the family also reinforces the notion that homosexuality is not integral to how the nation is imagined. In this highly charged context, the text is not able to dwell on the issue of homosexuality more explicitly, as in later novels, such as Tendai Huchu’s *The Hairdresser of Harare* (2010). Huchu, as noted by Ncube (2013), also had the advantage of writing his novel in the ‘safety’ of his diasporic home in Scotland. This is unlike Madanhire who was domiciled in the country and so was virtually skating on thin ice, considering the possibility of censorship of texts regarded as politically, morally or culturally incorrect. This had happened with some earlier writers such as Dambudzo Marechera, some of whose texts were not considered culturally appropriate. In the Bakhtinian universe of discourse, Mugabe’s stance is emblematic of those centripetal forces that negate change as far as discourses of sexuality are concerned. Madanhire’s text is representative of those centripetal forces that foreground change. In this text, therefore, the subject of Hebrew’s homosexuality occupies a rather limited space in its universe and its discourses of domination. In short, it represents a chink in the armour of the hegemonic masculinities in the text. And the fact that the revelation of Hebrew’s homosexuality occurs towards the end of the text

is also significant, not only in undermining the hegemonic masculinities that characterize the text, but also in underlining the marginal ontology of this sexuality. This is accentuated by the fact that upon discovery, Hebrew considers his divorce from his wife Isis as a *fait accompli*, for he could no longer project himself as man enough vis-à-vis the earlier image of masculinity that he had maintained. It is also interesting to note that Hebrew, during his sojourn in Sweden, did not feel the imperative to portray himself in the same way, and so he associated himself more with men than with women. This helps to accentuate the extent to which the pressure on him to project his masculinity in certain ways was greater in his home context. It also highlights the different perceptions of sexuality in the foreign country, and so it is possible that Hebrew was able to practise his homosexuality more freely than he was able to do at home.

Hebrew's homosexual act in the text is with a foreign man, a Swede named Christiaan, and so there is a convergence of both local and foreign, thereby undermining the myth (propagated largely by cultural nationalists and nativists such as Zimbabwe's erstwhile president, Robert Mugabe) that homosexuality is a foreign import. This resonates with Shaw's (2005: 98) assertion that: 'Although his [Hebrew's] lover is Swedish, his gayness is represented as quite independent of European influences'. In fact, it respects no borders and is therefore a universal phenomenon. Various studies, mainly anthropological, for example, Epprecht (2004) and Shoko (2010), have claimed that it actually existed in pre-colonial Zimbabwean societies, though it was not the socially privileged form. This is exemplified, for example, by the fact that Epprecht refers to it as a 'dissident sexuality'. The names of both men, Hebrew and Christiaan, have a religious resonance, as if to sanitise and sanctify homosexuality against the background of its demonization as shown above. This is significant because the authority of religion is often invoked in such vilifications. All this substantiates Foucault's (1978: 5) observation that, 'the history of sexuality must be seen first of all as the chronicle of an increased repression'.

Men's generalised domination over women is such that domination is largely couched in the iconography of masculinity, while subordination is cast in that of femininity. Apparently, sexual relations are replete with the same signification and hence are loaded with metaphorical meanings that are far-reaching. Heterosexuality, in terms of signification, fits into and confirms this paradigm, and therefore is the socially sanctioned sexuality in a patriarchal society. Often cast in the compelling or authoritative discourses of the natural and/or divinely ordained, it is central in the construction of normative masculinities. Homosexuality, which in this text virtually crawls out of the woodwork and intrudes on the terrain of normative masculinities, negates this paradigm, and along with this helps cast aspersions on and destabilises stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity. The domination paradigm discussed above is therefore undercut in a profound way and

this has implications for the national and social body-politic themselves. Sexual relations are normatively cast along the lines of the male/female paradigm, while the homosexual relationship in this text on a male/male axis means that one of the biologically male subjects plays the role of a female subject and so is feminised. So, at a fundamental level the traditional masculine and feminine relationship and essentialist notions about gender and domination and subordination are destabilised. There is therefore a tendency to gravitate towards anomie as far as gender identity is concerned. However, this homosexual relationship also mirrors fundamental truths about domination along the axis of gender, and this mainly relates to the fact that it does not occur just along the lines of gender as underpinned by biological sex, where male bodies subordinate female bodies, but also involves the domination of some men by other men. In fact, the notion of the alpha male already implies the domination, not only of women, but also of other men. This reality, however, is obfuscated by the metanarrative of domination which is essentially modernist rather than post-modernist in its orientation. Even Connell's (1995; 2005) hierarchy of masculinities is suggestive of this, though it constructs homosexuality as deviant or subversive of the norm. But it goes beyond this to instead uncover hidden truths about gender. In this text, one of the homosexual men, Hebrew, in fact possesses most of the markers of hegemonic masculinities in his social milieu, yet as a closet homosexual, he would also qualify as a subversive masculine subject, highlighting the excessive signification accorded to sexuality in the construction of masculine (and feminine) identities. Such an oxymoronic identity highlights the difficulties of conceiving neat categories or even identities amongst masculine subjects.

If the social and cultural practice of domination is gendered and involves the feminization of some men by others, then homosexuality also serves to mirror or underline this reality or paradigm. It also exposes the instability and vulnerability of masculinities, particularly the hegemonic, because domination is contested over and today's alpha can be tomorrow's dominated and therefore culturally feminised. The fear of feminization would actually make the alpha male insecure, and therefore predisposed to try to neutralize any threats, whether real or imagined. Witness Ngirozi's intolerance of any opposition and his tendency to want to eliminate perceived political threats even in a context that is supposed to be democratic. Colonial relations which were so power-premised and therefore gendered helped to cultivate masculinities based on the notion of the alpha. According to Crawford Young (qtd in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 1144) the colonial state was '*bula mutari* ('the crusher')' and thus was figured largely in the mould of an alpha male, and so no wonder the new post-colonial state embodied by Ngirozi moulds itself in the image of its predecessor. Some like him would, therefore, unlikely be willing to countenance homosexuality, which exposes the vulnerability of their own identities. Homosexuality is thus a metaphor for a

reality that most would rather not want to countenance as it goes to and challenges the very basis of culture and how reality is and has been shaped.

5.3.0: In a Quagmire: Men and Masculinities in Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006)

5.3.1: Introduction

This text, for the purposes of this study, bridges the gap between the 1990s and the post 2000 period, the one most people are wont to refer to as the crisis period in Zimbabwe. This notwithstanding the fact that it was published in 2006. In fact, the masculinities in this text can only be fully appreciated along a continuum from the 1990s to the time of the novel's publication. Authored by a female writer, it helps to further the female and feminist perspective in the construction of masculinities that is attempted in Madanhire's *If the Wind Blew*.

In the precolonial period masculine and feminine roles, though different, were largely complementary and there was mutual dependence among both sexes. While the societies were largely patriarchal, gender identities were complex and in some cases fluid and so did not readily transform into the dependent, and second sex (to borrow de Beauvoir's idiom) status of women. Colonial discourses disrupted the pre-colonial gender configurations in complex ways and in the process disempowered both black men and women in diverse ways. Based on race, black men were disempowered and subalternised in the colonial economies of power. Gendered hierarchies of power meant that black men were not only feminised, but, as previously noted, also infantilised (Mutekwa, 2013), and in the idiom of Enloe (1990: 45), this amounted to 'masculinized humiliation', but also engendered the 'masculinized hope' of transcending this reality. Because nationalism is masculinized, it meant that this was ingrained and foundational to black anti-colonial nationalism and also in post-independence nationalist discourses. If according to Nairn (1975) nationalism is Janus-faced, that is, looking back to the past as well as facing the future, it could hardly be so unless masculinities themselves are also similarly positioned. The nation, a creation of masculinities, can therefore not fail to mirror the ontology of its creators. Much of the literature on masculinities does not focus on this dynamic, which, it is argued here, is central in understanding these identities. This Janus-facedness resonates very readily with Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, as it suggests the pull of centripetal and centrifugal forces not only in nationalist discourses, but also in masculine identities.

Black masculinities were shaped by both traditional culture and colonial discourses, and, as noted before, hierarchies were created between black and white masculinities, with the latter largely constructed as superordinate. However, the interests of both black and white patriarchies

converged when it came to the need to control black female bodies for their mutual benefit. This unholy alliance resulted in the promulgation of what was then called customary law, which reduced black women to the state of perpetual minors. This law represented an adulteration of African tradition to serve the interests of both black and white men. In the idiom of Terrence Ranger (qtd in Zeleza, 2004: 28) this represented the ‘invention of tradition’ for the benefit of colonial patriarchies on both sides of the racial divide. This control of black female bodies was premised on the need by the colonialists to ensure the complete subordination of black women, most of whom remained domiciled in what were then referred to as the reserves. In this way the women were largely domesticated, and their reproductive roles ensured a reliable supply of labour to colonial mines, factories and commercial enterprises. Colonial enterprises largely preferred male labour and so the bread-winner’s role in the African communities was monopolised by black males, and this largely created the phenomenon of female dependency. So ultimately within their own communities the patriarchal status of black men was greatly enhanced, and gender hierarchies became more pronounced. This, though, did not diminish the fact that in colonial spaces, they remained perpetual subalterns.

This scenario began to be deconstructed and reversed after independence. To begin with, there was the passage of the Legal Age of Majority Act in 1982 which reversed the minor status of black women and made them equal (at least legally) to their male counterparts. Since then, female gender activism, an increased focus on gender on the part of the state, and greater social gender consciousness has resulted in numerous other changes intended to bring greater gender equality. Most traditional patriarchal privileges were eroded, and female subordination, voicelessness, and dependence are rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

5.3.2: Synopsis

The above largely provides the framework for understanding masculinities in Tagwira’s *The Uncertainty of Hope*. Most of the events in the novel, set in Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, revolve around what is known as ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ (‘clear the filth’), a government crackdown that was ostensibly meant to remove illegal settlements in and around Zimbabwe’s urban areas. These, the regime of the day’s argument went, were not only illegal, but also sources of disease and sites of innumerable social vices, as well as the hideouts and abode of criminals of various hues, including illegal foreign currency dealers whose activities were said to be detrimental to the faltering economy of the country.

The lives of the variegated characters in the novel revolve around the old and largely dilapidated high density suburb of Mbare in Harare. They are all embroiled in one way or another in the

struggle for survival in a country with a crumbling economy, hyperinflation and an acute shortage of basic commodities. The central character is Onai, a housewife and mother who typifies what Fanon (1963) refers to as the 'wretched of the earth'. Her life is entangled in various ways with those of diverse female and male subjects, one of whom is her husband Garikai (Gari for short) Moyo. He and other male characters in the text embody how various social changes and economic challenges are impacting on many Zimbabwean men and masculinities and the responses of many of them to these. These male characters have to shape their masculine identities in the light of both past and present. As far as the past is concerned, they have to do this against the background of the ambivalent nature of black male ontology in the colony, where empowerment (via customary law) existed side by side with disempowerment (on the basis of race). This means attempting to maintain the privileges conferred by the former and exorcising the demons associated with the latter. In the present they have to deal with the many changes brought about by the multiple steps taken to enable gender equality, which include legal and economic ones. They also have to deal with new dynamics that threaten traditional male roles, such as job losses brought about by ESAP, and the post 2000 economic meltdown, associated with the land reform programme and the political crisis of the period. Against such a complex and polylogical background, forging sustainable masculine identities therefore requires great dexterity in balancing all the factors and dynamics impacting on these. In this scenario, for some of the male characters, such as Hondo (Mr Ngozo), the former ex-combatant, and John Nguni, the long distance truck driver, survival and keeping their heads above the water take precedence over hegemony, and so the feminist understanding of masculinity as 'defined by the drive for power, for domination [and] control' (Kimmel, 2000: 241), may not necessarily apply in all contexts and to all masculine subjects at all times. Even Kimmel's own definition of masculinity does little to extend the definition of masculinity beyond the power imperative: 'Masculinity is not, however, the experience of power; it is the experience of entitlement to power' (ibid). Being able to survive, in contexts such as this one, could be masculine or feminine enough. Such masculinities, because of their Janus faces, could still be informed by traditional understandings or images of masculinities such as the protective and provider role. In the text social expectations, including those of female subjects, are that men play these roles. The character Gari, for example, is vilified for neglecting these. The fact that his wife Onai largely takes over these roles cannot be reduced to a drive for power or control on her part. So performing the roles may just be an obligation, rather than the expression of a drive for power, or being complicit with hegemonic masculinities, as, for example, John and Hondo above share the role of provider with their wives, and do not appear to be discomfited or threatened by this. Therefore, not all masculine performances have power or domination at their core.

5.3.3: Of the Male Disempowerment Dynamic

The notion of male disempowerment is a complex and controversial dynamic. Some feminists see it as a ruse and stratagem to perpetuate patriarchal power and privileges, and arrest the process of female emancipation and the march towards gender equality. Grand narratives of patriarchy and universal male power have precluded the possibility of male disempowerment at an individual or group level being considered. The fact that masculinity is an unmarked gender category unlike femininity has the effect of making it invisible and has also contributed to this reality. It somehow perversely mirrors the manner in which femininity is also not visible in patriarchal discourses, something that has worked to the disadvantage of women. The similar status of men in gender discourses has the potential to do the same. This is easy to see in patriarchal gender relations, but more complex in feminist discourses whose foci are the bringing about of gender equality. The metanarrative of gender equality in such gender discourses and practices can easily make invisible some of the nuanced ways in which men can be disempowered. This is particularly the case in the context of culture, where different role expectations are often placed on men and women. For example, in cultures where males are expected to be providers, as is the case in *The Uncertainty of Hope*, the inability to fulfil this role is thus socially more disempowering for a man than it is for a woman in a similar position. This is also a reality that Silberschmidt (2005:189-203) found out in her studies of masculinities in the Kisii area of Kenya.

Farrell (1993), a prominent male gender scholar, and focusing largely on the Western context, has argued that actually the almost universally-accepted notion of male power (over women) is no more than a myth. His text, whatever the veracity or otherwise of its arguments, has helped provide alternatives to the understanding of the dynamics of gender, particularly masculinities, to those foregrounded by feminist discourses. This readily fits the postmodernist paradigms which recognise the existence of multiple truths and realities instead of one, and the Bakhtinian notion of dialogism, where any discourse is not a monologue but exists in a dialogical relationship with others. Farrell's argument on male power being no more than a myth, however, is not necessarily the position taken here. Instead the focus and thrust on this sub-section of this study is on the dynamic of male disempowerment as viewed through the prisms of social change, absence of masculinity signifiers, and the nature of masculinities themselves.

Several male characters in Tagwira's text can be read through such prisms. First of all, there is Gari. Gainfully employed in a managerial capacity with a reputable company in Harare, he arguably belongs to the middle class in the country. Initially, life holds a lot of promise, but sheer irresponsibility largely hinders his progress. So acute is this that he continues to stay in a very low

income, old and dilapidated high density area, though it was possible for him to have done better. His conduct can thus be understood against the background of the gender re-alignments that have been taking place in the country and which have ultimately resulted in female empowerment and greater gender equality. This means that most men largely lost their traditional patriarchal privileges, most of which were central in the definition of their masculinities. For some men like Gari, against the background of the afore-mentioned cultural representations and symbolisations of the masculine subject, these changes felt like emasculation and disempowerment, and hence the behaviour that he manifests in the text. One notices that his wife, Onai, no longer plays the role of the subordinate, voiceless and dependent wife – the subjectivity that colonial customary law had created for most black female subjects. Gari responds by abdicating his roles as father and husband and takes refuge in drinking and philandering. Male disempowerment, real or imagined, in the case of Gari, is therefore accompanied by male irresponsibility and compensatory behaviours such as multi-partnered sexual relationships. This culture of having mistresses (better known as ‘small houses’), as the novel shows, is now fairly common in Zimbabwe up to this day. This however, does not preclude the fact that some women are also instrumental in furthering or creating such relationships.

Gari’s mistresses, such as Gloria, know exactly what is driving him to them and so they strategically fill in the gap by pampering him as if he was a near-deity and play the role of the submissive partner and thus readily win him over, as the narrative makes explicit: Gari ‘was reminded of how being with Gloria had changed his life. She listened to him and made him feel important. Onai did none of these things.... She [Onai] made him feel like a failure, and starved him in the bedroom. But not his Gloria’ (Tagwira, 2006: 41). The term ‘house’ however is loaded with the symbolism of a home or the family, thus constructing these ‘small houses’ as alternatives, adjuncts, or complementary to the ‘big house’ or the man’s actual family; they are thus cloaked with a semblance of legitimacy. They act like therapeutic centres for Gari’s bruised masculine ego. In this way they virtually rob Onai, the real wife, of Gari’s affection, support and attention. Physical, economic and emotional violence take their place, and these become the norm in his family, with the wife suffering the brunt of these. His family becomes the epitome of a dysfunctional and dystopian one. This resonates with Ewusha (2012: 75), who, with reference to men in the Bembe culture in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notes that: ‘When men feel robbed of their male identity, they become aggressive towards their partners’.

Apparently Gari is experiencing an identity crisis as a result of conflicting notions/images of himself, that result in a failure to reconcile his idea of masculinity with the changes that are happening around him. The past appears to have a stronger claim on him than modernity.

Centripetal and centrifugal forces represented by tradition and modernity are impacting on his masculine identity, creating ambivalence and the loss of any sense of direction. Tradition, in the Bakhtinian universe of discourse, represents authoritative discourse that derives its veracity from the past, and is therefore not readily predisposed to enter into a dialogic relationship with other discourses. Because this tradition is largely patriarchal, its hold on men can ostensibly be greater than it is on women. This may partly explain why most of the literature on masculinities is wont to point out that they are more resistant to change than femininities.

Identities, though, are not static but are always in a flux, and this suggests that even tradition is forced to come into a dialogic relationship with other discourses that interrogate, contest, resist or even try to reshape it. This is so because it was a product of its time, and so new times will also try to shape new discourses that are more in tandem with them. In the idiom of dialogism, internalised discourses like tradition became the equivalent of what is referred to as inner speech (centripetal forces), while external discourses impacting on the subject and vying for supremacy constitute outer speech (centrifugal forces), and these should exist in a dialogic relationship for the health of the subject. A failure to do this is pathological: 'the inability to mediate between inner speech and the social dimension of language [outer speech] ... is perceived as sickness' (Holquist, 2002: 51). In the case of Gari, this pathology takes the form of the compensatory behaviour, as indicated above.

Domestic violence in the case of Gari, however, signifies the failure of masculine hegemony in the true sense of the word. Hegemony, according to Gramsci (1972: op cit), necessarily also involves suasion and consent and does not rely solely on violence for its perpetuation, hence one sees Gari losing the respect of those around him along with this true hegemony. In actual fact, the manner in which the narrative shortens his name from Garikai to just Gari is a signifier of this emasculated dynamic. In most Zimbabwean cultures such a practice is usually reserved for young people, or boys and girls, and is hardly ever done with grown up people such as him. In fact, he is the only character in the text whose name is shortened in this way.

For Gari, the *coup de grace* is his retrenchment from his job due to the closure and relocation to South Africa of the company that he works for. His sense of disempowerment and emasculation reach crisis level and with it the urgency of having a second wife becomes more acute. The disappearance of this economic power is a major site of male disempowerment in the novel. The economic challenges obtaining at the time also pose a challenge for the expression of one of the key signifiers of masculinity, as the men begin to find it increasingly difficult to provide for their families. Actually, these dynamics became acute in the 1990s, when ESAP was introduced and significant job losses, particularly for men, occurred. Charles Mungoshi's collection of short stories

Walking Still (1997), explores this issue. In *The Uncertainty of Hope*, wives, including Gari's, thus try to fill in the gap through involvement in various informal trading activities and thus appropriate the breadwinner's roles, traditionally mainly a prerogative of men.

The presence of HIV and AIDS, however, presents a serious challenge for gallivanting and philandering men such as Gari. The male body as a site of power, machismo and domination comes under threat and its vulnerability is exposed, as underlined by Gari's illness and eventual death. Such a deconstruction strikes right at the core of the phallogocentric nationalist discourses which promoted the shaping of strong male bodies for their sake, as one sees in Machingauta's *Detective Ridgemore Riva*. Sexuality as an avenue for the expression of hegemonic masculinity paradoxically becomes a site for its deconstruction. This was at a time when access to life-saving anti-retroviral medication was very limited. That in spite of the obvious dangers, men like Gari continue as if oblivious to the facts, highlights the pull of the centripetal forces as far as masculine identities are concerned. With his world crumbling around him due to the economic melt-down, and with this some of the key signifiers of masculinity, there is little to compensate for this loss, hence Gari's kamikaze behaviour.

However, as the various male characters in the text show, not all men respond to these re-alignments and changes in the same way, and so Gari's responses are by no means universal. While all of them are affected in one way or another by the economic crisis, they all conjure up different survival strategies. Not all of them feel emasculated in the same ways as Gari. For example, there is Hondo, the anti-colonial liberation war ex-combatant, who, like almost everyone, ekes out a living using different strategies, apparently without the same sense of disempowerment as Gari. He typically embodies an ability to renegotiate one's masculinity, as marked by the transition from military life to civilian life. However, this is before the limits of doing so are exposed by 'Operation Murambatsvina', whose violence, implacableness, and no-sacred-cows approach do not respect even those who have fought for the liberation of the country. Of a quasi-military nature, it essentially becomes an exercise in the disciplining of male and female bodies. Hondo's (a name which means 'war' in Shona) sense of identity and masculine pride are closely linked to his military past and are what helps keep him going in spite of all the challenges around him. That this nickname takes precedence over his real name (Mr Ngozo) decades after the war ended, highlights the pull of the past or tradition in the construction of masculine identities, and also the use to which this past has been put in the nationalist discourses for them to perpetuate themselves.

Consequently, at the national level, a sacrosanct and ring-fenced discourse of heroism based on participation in the liberation war exists. State ceremonies, symbols, and even events such as particular public holidays (Heroes Day) memorialise this and help make it central in the

imagination of the nation. Belonging to the nation therefore is pursuant on being patriotic, that is, being complicit in the dominant vision of the nation underpinned by this discourse. This suggests the existence of entrenched interests in maintaining the status quo by some stakeholders in the political body-politic, something that could imply stasis, particularly as far as masculine identities are concerned. The victims of 'Operation Murambatsvina' are excised from the national narrative and the nomenclature used to describe them by a top state official says it all: 'The country had to be rid of the crawling maggots, all bent on destroying the economy' (Tagwira, 2006: 135). However, the use of the term 'maggots' is double-edged, as it suggests that the economy itself is 'dead' and 'rotten', or else the so called 'maggots' would not be able to destroy it. This therefore highlights failure on the part of the state, and so it is as culpable for the sorry state of affairs as the so called 'maggots' themselves. Such a virulent discourse disabuses the people of their status as human beings and this is used to justify the extremely inhumane treatment meted out on them. Hondo finds himself being lumped with this faceless group and thus treated in the same way; and for him this is the quintessence of emasculation and degradation, given his 'heroic' past. The state in this case is the hegemonic masculine entity and its actions in the operation emasculate and dehumanise most of those affected, like Hondo.

Adaptability also seems to be the hallmark of one of the other significant male characters in the text, John Nguni, a truck driver who appears to be on top of the situation as far as all the changes that are happening around are concerned, and these include gender, social and economic. He and his wife appear to lead what can be said to be an egalitarian existence, which in another sense simply denotes equality. Their roles are complementary and they appear to fit neatly like cogs in a wheel, in spite of the fact that he is in formal employment and she operates in the informal sector. Unlike Gari, John does not appear to indulge in extra-marital affairs in spite of the fact that his career as a long distance truck driver exposes him to this. He, however, cannot escape from the traditional expectations of him being the major family provider, and it is this that leads him to gravitate towards illegal activities, such as dealing in foreign currency on the parallel market, and, later on, human smuggling across the nation's borders. It is the provider role that gives him fulfilment and a sense of being a man and he thus cannot fail in this and continue to feel the same. He is therefore another example of how both tradition as authoritative discourse and social expectations can coerce their subject men into complicity at whatever cost.

5.3.4: Problematizing Hegemony

The economic circumstances prevailing become the bane of ambitious men such as the police officer, Assistant Commissioner Nzou, a name in Zimbabwean Shona which means 'elephant'.

Like the pachyderm, this male subject wants to grow big; career-wise, power-wise and wealth-wise, and has to find ways to transcend the debilitating and disempowering economic circumstances. His life in the narrative is pre-occupied with achieving this 'big man' status and this determination is underlined by his *modus operandi*, which includes consulting traditional healers as well as involvement in criminal activities.

Inspector Nzou's power in the text is derived from his position as a senior police officer in the narrative. So he is part of what Louis Althusser (1970: op cit) refers to as the Repressive State Apparatus. Repression is emblematic of power and domination and is thus readily part of the architecture of hegemonic masculinity. Cloaked in it, Inspector Nzou is wont to abuse it in his personal obsessive drive to enrich himself. He typifies the state in the narrative, with its insensitivity, violence and emasculation of its subjects, as visited on some of the common people during the clean-up operation mentioned above. His obsession with becoming a 'big man' resonates with traditional understandings of masculinity and it is his entrapment in this universe of discourse that proves his tragic flaw.

However, of importance is the way that Inspector Nzou exposes the problematic aspect of the monopolisation of power by hegemonic masculinities, something that constructs the other masculine configurations and even femininities as powerless. One readily notices that to get around Nzou depends on various transactions with various masculinities and femininities who wield and exercise some power over him, for example, John and Kate Nguni. Traditional healers, another category of hegemonic masculinity, also exercise power over him and to some extent vice-versa. In the novel, the state, of which Nzou is an operative and enforcer, relies on naked force to get its way in Operation Murambatsvina. However, it has to employ various strategies and ruses to exclude those disaffected by the nation, central of which is the assertion that they were destroying the economy through their activities and that their settlements were sources of diseases and vices that threatened the fabric of the nation. This is done to gain the consent of various stakeholders, both internal and external. If anything, what the state was trying to do was to shore itself up by containing the power of this *lumpen proletariat* group at a time when the economic meltdown was striking at the core of the nation. The fact that hegemony relies on both consent and violence already makes visible the power of the dominated, otherwise their consent would not be necessary. So one way or another, the hegemonic groups or individuals have to use various strategies and ruses to get the consent of those they dominate, or else their hegemony might be subverted. This would hardly be necessary if the subordinate group had no power at all. Even the use of violence could be seen as an attempt to suppress or control the power of the dominated. This scenario highlights a dialogic relationship between hegemonic masculinities and others where negotiation

and exchange characterize their relationship. This also resonates with Foucault's (1978: op cit) assertion that power circulates rather than being the preserve of one centre. So at the end of the day all masculine categories have agency.

In the same way femininities cannot be constructed as entirely powerless vis-à-vis masculinities. If anything, some of the character Gari's problems are to do with how to deal with the power that his wife has, although a cursory reading of the novel might give one the impression that she is powerless. Even his mistresses, such as Gloria, while pampering him and playing at being at his beck and call, actually manipulate Gari to get their way with him. So in either case Gari does not wield total power at all. One also sees the complicity of females, through their expectations, in the construction of the so called hegemonic masculinities, and for males to play some of their traditional roles. This dancing to female tunes suggests that to a certain extent hegemony is actually shared and exercised differently by both men and women. Even an apparently hegemonic or dominant masculine subject such as Tom Sibanda in the text cannot escape this entrapment, and he has to continue playing the 'big man' role to show all and sundry that he is worthy of his educated fiancée. In fact, one can actually deduce from the text the attraction of rich men such as Tom to many women, and some of the female characters actually marvel at his faithfulness towards his fiancée when he could actually have as many women as he liked. While it might appear that such women are economically disempowered, this is of course not always the case, as is evident in the text.

5.3.5: Of the 'Big Men'

The fact that Zimbabwean masculinities have had to deal with so many variables impacting on them, both past and present, means that they are characterized by diversity, as men respond differently to the realities that shape their identities. Even so, the experiences of the men are also diverse, and variables such as class, race, creed, ethnicity, and age are implicated in the shaping of masculine identities. After independence, holding middle class aspirations characterized many Zimbabwean black masculine subjects, as they represented a transcendence of past limitations, and also success in the new dispensation. Success along these lines went together with the attainment of the 'big man', often colloquially referred to in Zimbabwean lingo as the 'big fish', form of masculinity. This represented one of the hegemonic ideals of masculinity that many men aspired towards. Attaining and maintaining it in times of dire economic challenges helped to further accentuate its hegemonic value and desirability; witness the characters Tom Sibanda and Tapiwa Jongwe in the text. The two are 'killer' businessmen, if the image and metaphor of man as the hunter is to be relied upon. The surname 'Sibanda' in Ndebele means 'lion', highlighting this

predator dimension and his dominant masculine status. In fact, the image of the lion conjures up the notion of the jungle, whose overriding law is survival of the fittest. This befits the Zimbabwe of this period, and Tom, like his surname, is virtually a top notch 'killer' and metaphorically on top of the 'food chain.' While his relationship with his fiancée Faith is based on mutual love and respect, with their decisions largely informed by negotiation and consensus, that he is in full control and that she is a part of his 'kill' is never in serious doubt. This resonates with the observation by Connell (2000b: 50) that the dominance of hegemonic masculinity 'may be quiet and implicit'. Unlike Gari he does not have to assert himself through violence and/or multi-partner sexual relationships. He also does not derive his validation and status from a military past as Hondo does. Corrupt activities are also not necessary for his survival or enrichment, as in the cases of Nzou and John.

Tom's friend Tapiwa Jongwe is also masculinized through nomenclature. His surname Jongwe means 'rooster' in Shona, and so it is an explicitly masculine name, often denoting an alpha. This phallic signification marks him out clearly as the only character in the text who is so gender marked. If he is not a 'killer', then he is cock of the roost, an image that subtly feminises those not as successful as himself. So secure is he that in the midst of all the travails around him he chooses to perform an outdated traditional ritual to mourn his late wife. What makes everything outlandish, if not surreal, is that the ritual was one that was traditionally performed as atonement if one had wronged one's mother, and it involves extreme self-abasement; its *modus operandi* is tramping, begging and exposing oneself to public ridicule. So, befittingly, Jongwe is given the nickname 'Maway'a', meaning 'the mad one', by those who are not in the know about what he is up to. Of significance here is that Jongwe is able to move out of one identity into another and back, from the 'big man' to the tramp-cum-lunatic to the 'big man', without anyone being able to debunk the charade, something that highlights the link between identities and performativity. As performances, masculine identities are the equivalent of an utterance in dialogism, as they do not occur in a vacuum, but like words, 'cannot be divorced from particular subjects in specific situations' (Holquist, 2002: 66). It also suggests the instability or fluidity of these identities, making it rather difficult to pigeon-hole them. Jongwe, however, represents a departure from the stereotypical masculine identity characterized by the dearth of emotions which are often viewed as belonging to the domain of femininity. He, in spite of the hegemonic masculinity embodied by his name and social status, is the only male in the text who is shown to be in touch with his 'soft' or emotional side, or simply the woman in him. Much of the literature on masculinities shows that males are socialised to exorcise their feminine side as they grow up. In the words of Kabesh (2009: 347): 'Masculinities are formed and inhabited not just through other men, but also crucially through

the occlusion of femininity and emotionality, that is, Otherness in all its forms'. Consequently, one of the greatest fears of many men is to be viewed as feminine. Jongwe therefore shows the importance for men of being in dialogue or harmony with their feminine side while at the same time remaining masculine, for them to be balanced and stable. He therefore disabuses the characteristic of femininity, when possessed by male subjects, of its supposedly 'demonic' status. Ultimately, the real 'demons' can be some of those men completely devoid of this emotional side. Jongwe's conduct points to the possibility and even desirability of the renegotiation of men's gender identities. In a sense he is emblematic of what Morrell (2001: 164) sees as the new men, who in tandem with new gender configurations are 'non-sexist, non-autocratic ... emotionally more responsive and more willing to criticize their own position and practices'. In Zimbabwe such an agenda of assisting men to re-orient their gender identities has been taken up by Padare/Enkundleni/Men's Forum, particularly in the context of HIV/AIDS. This non-governmental organisation is part of what Connell (2000a: 28) refers to as masculinity 'transformative politics [that] seeks to exit from current patriarchal gender arrangements'.

So, masculinities, like all other identities, are constitutive of existence, which 'is not only an event, [but] ... an utterance ... [and] ... has the nature of dialogue ... [and is therefore]... a shared event' (Holquist, 2002: 26-7). They therefore are best understood thus. How they shape and are in turn shaped by other identities, social and environmental factors and other realities are therefore important in understanding them. Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* is a treasure trove of masculinities, particularly in the context of the period during which Operation Murambatsvina was carried out, and these feed into the whole gamut of Zimbabwean masculinities, particularly in the post 2000 period. Seen through Morrell's (2001: op cit) paradigm of men's responses to gender realignments in the South African context, the characters in this text display responses akin to these. Gari exudes the 'reactive' response, as seen by his apparent feeling of disempowerment. However, most of the other characters manifest the 'accommodating' response, and these include John Nguni and Tom Sibanda. Tapiwa Jongwe is the only character who is genuinely 'responsive' or 'progressive' in his reaction. The masculinities of the period therefore are largely crisis ones and so can generally be associated with expediency more than anything else. Here the operation of centripetal and centrifugal forces is tempered by the fact that this is a crisis situation, giving the forces of change more impetus due to the survival imperative.

5.4: Conclusion

This chapter has looked at three texts, namely John Eppel's *Hatchings*, Nevanji Madanhire's *If the Wind Blew*, and Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*, focusing largely on the challenging

or deconstruction of normative masculinities. It established that the terrain of masculinities is characterized not only by contestation, but also by instability, rupture, and even anomie. It established that the notion and existence of hegemonic masculinities is much more complex than is often stated, and it is often wrongly conflated with dominance. Actually masculinity hierarchies are often not as clear-cut as Connell's (1995; 2005) hierarchy might imply, but are a lot messier. For example, dominant masculinities may not necessarily be complicit or hegemonic, particularly in institutional set-ups. Masculine identities are also not always premised on power and domination, as they are often cast in feminist and most other definitions. Within a nation, there can be multiple hegemonic masculinities existing in a complementary, antagonistic, or competitive state. This is because the nation is often composed of diverse groups, some of whom can have their own internal hegemonies. Even subversive and marginal masculinities can exhibit this reality. Some masculine subjectivities are often contradictory or hybrid, as they may exhibit different characteristics such as dominance and subversion at the same time. The chapter also established that men can be, or feel, disempowered in some contexts. Masculinities are therefore best understood in terms of their dialogic relationships with discourses such as femininity, nation, race, class, creed, history, the body, and sexuality. Centripetal and centrifugal forces act on these masculinities in different ways, so that no singular masculine subject can be said to typify the gender, but rather men should be appreciated in their diversity.

Chapter 6: Contesting Narratives, Contrasting Masculine Subjectivities.

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the deconstruction of normative masculinities in three Zimbabwean texts, namely John Eppel's *Hatchings*, Nevanji Madanhire's *If the Wind Blew*, and Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*. It established that the terrain of masculinities is not marked by neat clear-cut categories, but rather by complexities and ambivalences that complicate conventional and stereotypical understandings of them. Masculinities can therefore be best located on a map of dialogic relations where centripetal and centrifugal forces act on individual and group identities in complex ways. Each category or level in the hierarchy of masculinities has its own internal hierarchies and contradictions that complicate and destabilise the same.

This chapter looks at contesting and conflicting narratives of the post 2000 Zimbabwean 'Fast Track' Land Reform Program; itself at the centre of most of the challenges and discourses of the period. The texts are generally representative of those that glorify and attempt to sanctify the above programme and those that are critical of the same, and the masculine identities portrayed therein. The following narratives, accompanied by the following sub-titles, are going to be used: (i) Of 'Real' Men? Masculine Subjectivities and the 'Patriotic' Nationalist Narrative in Nyaradzo Mtizira's *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008), and (ii) Of 'Victimised' Masculinities? Violence, Race and Land in Eric Harrison's *Jambanja* (2006).

Both texts are set in the post 2000 period, one that is generally referred to as the period of the Zimbabwean crisis; a crisis inseparable from the Fast Track Land Reform Programme that was implemented, and ostensibly meant to address the legacy of acute land imbalances between blacks and whites that had their roots in the colonial period: whites, 'after establishing the colony in the 1890s never composed more than 5 percent of its population. They monopolized the land but – amid black masses – were never able to make their presence seem natural' (Hughes, 2010: xii). Both texts address the different facets of the land reform programme, and therefore represent the contrasting and conflicting masculine subjectivities involved. The masculinities in these texts cannot be thought of outside the contentious politics of this period, underpinned by what Ranger refers to as the 'patriotic narrative' of the ruling ZANU (PF) government, and 'which found expression in journalistic narratives, national ceremonial speeches and symbolic state functions' (qtd in Nyambi, 2013: 13). Its function was to authenticate and buttress the dominant nationalist narrative associated with the ruling party, ZANU PF, and aid it to attain a monologic status. Land was put at the centre of this narrative and land expropriation from white farmers without

compensation for distribution to blacks as part of the process of correcting colonial land imbalances was put into motion. The Land Acquisition Act of 2000 was promulgated to replace the provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution of 1979 and its willing-seller-willing-buyer stipulations. Veterans of the 1970s liberation war were at the forefront of the land occupations, and hence the programme can be read as a continuation of the same. The land reform program was accompanied by violence and was therefore largely the domain of masculinities as performed by both male and female subjects involved in the land occupations.

As agriculture was the backbone of the economy, the violent land reform program disrupted this sector, and the situation was not helped by sanctions imposed by Western countries unhappy with the program's *modus operandi*. The land reform program was therefore accompanied by an economic meltdown, and inflation reached astronomical levels, bringing a lot of tribulation and immiseration for many of the nation's citizens. The 'patriotic narrative', or what Primorac (2007: op cit) calls the 'master-fiction', took centre stage as a validating discourse and the main life-supporting system for the ruling party, as the political opposition in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) gained ground in the face of the debilitating economic challenges facing the nation. Violence, particularly during national elections such as the 2008 one, was used to suppress competing and alternative versions of the nation, as represented by the political opposition.

This patriotic narrative was largely constitutive of the complex national ideology that Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 1139) refers to as 'Mugabeism', and associated with then Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe. This ideology, because the nation is the domain of masculinity, can be viewed as a masculine one, implying a complex dialogic or polylogic relationship between nationalist discourses and masculinities. Ndlovu-Gatsheni sees Mugabeism as having been 'watered from many ideological springs, namely Marxism, Stalinism, Maoism, Nkrumahism, Nyerereism, Garveism, Negritude, Pan-Africanism, African neo-traditionalism, Nativism and other isms' (2009: 1141), thus accounting for its complexity.

The Zimbabwean 'Fast Track' Land Reform Programme divided public, intellectual, and international opinion. It is viewed by some as a crucial part of a social justice programme (for example, Mamdani, 2008; Sadomba, 2008, 2011; Moyo, 2011; Hanlon, Manjengwa, and Smart, 2013; Magosvongwe, 2013), while others viewed it as iniquitous because of what they see as its disregard for the rule of law as well as the use of violence and repression (for example, Bond and Manyanya, 2003, Campbell, 2003; Primorac, 2007; Raftopoulos, 2009; Sachikonye, 2012). Miffed and outraged by this, some Western nations imposed sanctions and travel restrictions on some members of the ruling party and government of the day. The United States of America imposed the

Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) in 2001 to pressure the government to uphold the rule of law and to respect democratic norms, among other things. The following section examines Mtizira's text, *The Chimurenga Protocol*.

6.1 Of “Real” Men and Others? Masculine Subjectivities and the ‘Patriotic Narrative’ in Nyaradzo Mtizira’s *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008).

6.1.1 Synopsis

Nyaradzo Mtizira's novel, *The Chimurenga Protocol* (2008) is set during the period of the Zimbabwean crisis that began in the late 1990s and persists to this day. It is therefore about, and is also circumscribed by, this crisis, whose highly charged and polarising nature is such that most post 2000 writers dealing with it adopt either of two postures: one valorising the dominant nationalist narrative associated with then president Robert Mugabe, and the other being critical of the same. Besides Mtizira's text, the former includes texts such as M. Gomo's *A Fine Madness* (2010), O. Maruma's *Coming Home* (2007), A. Kanengoni's short story, 'The Ugly Reflection in The Mirror' (2003), and M. Chirere's 'Maize' (2003). On the other hand, besides Harrison's text, examples of the latter include L. Hoba's *The Trek and Other Stories* (2009), Gappah's *Elegy for Easterly* (2009), and J. Barker's *Paradise Plundered: The Story of a Zimbabwean Farm* (2007). *The Chimurenga Protocol* belongs to the former, and for purposes of this study, it largely serves to portray those masculinities that are associated with the dominant political narrative that has largely brought the nation thus far.

Mtizira's text is centred on the theft and recovery of a highly classified state document known as the 'Chimurenga Protocol', and therefore has all the ingredients of a whodunit and detective thriller novel. In this regard the text can therefore be read as belonging to the same 'narrative continuum' (Manase, 2014:2) as the texts examined in chapter 5, namely Rodrick Machingauta's *Detective Ridgemoor Riva* and David Freeman's *Rumours of Ophir*. The above-mentioned state document is at the centre of the government's Fast Track Land Reform Programme that underpinned its nationalist vision after the year 2000. In the narrative, it is clandestinely authored by the imperialists at the time of the 1979 Lancaster House Conference that ended the anti-colonial liberation war. The Protocol is constructed as representing a nefarious, racist, and imperialist attempt to subvert the country's sovereignty by entrenching white land ownership and thereby creating a 'colony within a colony' (Mtizira, 2008: 305). Having fortuitously fallen into the hands of the Zimbabwean government, its theft and recuperation by the imperialists would enable them to discredit the Fast Track Land Reform Programme by enabling the neo-imperialists to claim that, 'they had an agreement to allow the white settlers to remain on prime land for another

three hundred years' (ibid: 306). Its theft, in the text's universe of discourse, therefore represents an existential threat not only to this programme, but also to the nation as imagined by the dominant political elite.

An inside job, the theft of the Chimurenga Protocol sends shock waves through the corridors of power in the Establishment, and so a sting operation to trace and recover it is set in motion, led by an elite detective going by the name of Panashe Magura. The man responsible for filching the document, Hamandishe Livingstone Chamunorwa, a highbrow fellow who works as a top consultant in the Ministry of Land Reclamation, is in cahoots with neo-imperialist forces in the form of British agents led by one Cecil Sedgefield, who is an accomplished operative with an intimidating track record. The stage is therefore set for an epic and bruising battle of wits and even wills between the detective on one hand, and Chamunorwa and his foreign acolytes on the other. After many twists and turns, Magura finally catches up with the treacherous and treasonous Chamunorwa and manages to retrieve the Protocol before it falls into the hands of the neo-imperialists whose avowed goal is to derail the Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

The novel is divided into three parts, starting with the colonial period and terminating with the post 2000 period referred to as the period of the *Third Chimurenga*. Part three is the grand finale that pits Magura, the crack detective, against Chamunorwa, the erudite political turncoat and his scheming and nefarious neo-colonial handlers in the form of the shadowy Trans-World Corporation.

About his novel, Mtizira makes the claim that, 'The book is a factual narrative based on true events in Zimbabwe's rich history' (2008: 11), elevating it to the status of historical fiction. As discussed in chapter 2, historical fiction can be viewed as complementary to historical narratives, with its ability to touch and bring to the fore those aspects that are inaccessible to historical narratives or which they gloss over. However, fiction remains just that, fiction, and operates on a different plane to non-fiction narratives, and *The Chimurenga Protocol* is no exception. The constructedness of the reality that the text presents is made manifest by the existence of narratives which portray the same 'reality' differently, making visible its subjectiveness as opposed to objectiveness. The notion of fiction also highlights the text's status as a work of art where the author's imagination is not fettered in the same way as is the case with historical narratives that aspire towards 'objectivity' and 'truth', though both are elusive aspects bearing in mind the constructedness of historical narratives themselves. The author's claim, however, attempts to preclude the reader's autonomy in the interpretation of the text by endeavouring to make the reader view it through a monologic prism which in this case is authorial speech. The reading process, however, involves meaning negotiation and is in essence a dialogic and two-way process. Authorial

discourse nevertheless is one of several in the novel that includes those of the characters: ‘The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types ... and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized.... Authorial speech, the speech of narrators, inserted genres, speech of characters are merely the fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 262-263). The tyranny of authorial discourse in the novel is therefore undercut by this liberating and democratising multi-voicedness of the novel that renders it polylogical rather than monological, enabling multiple meanings to be derived other than just that of the author. Truth is also something that is fought over, and so attempts to insulate the novel from this reality are just exercises in futility. As Holquist (2002: 22) puts it: ‘the world is a vast congeries of contested meanings, a heteroglossia so varied that no single term capable of unifying its diversifying energies is possible’. And the world of *The Chimurenga Protocol* is no exception. The literary text can also not be divorced from its particular context as it, ‘like other kinds of utterance, depend[s] not only on the activity of the author, but also on the place they hold in the social and historical forces at work when the text is produced and when it is consumed’ (Holquist, 2002: 66). As such, no singular or unitary meaning can be imposed on the text.

6.1.2 Chimurenga Poetics

This plot structure of the novel resonates with the *Chimurenga* trilogy that has been trumpeted, promoted and made sacrosanct by the post-independence dominant political elites, particularly after the year 2000. Chimurenga denotes a war of liberation and so a novel dealing with it can assume various aspects of its form, and hence one can speak of this text’s *chimurenga* poetics, beginning with the three-part plot structure which represents the three *chimurengas* that the country has gone through according to the dominant political narrative. Its style is therefore a combative one, taking head on, discursively, those individuals, groups and nations that opposed the country’s land reform programme, claiming it robbed white landowners of their land, and did not observe the rule of law.

Part One of the text engages the colonial doctrine of *terra nullius* which claimed that Zimbabwean land was empty at the time of colonization, hence absolving the colonialists of having robbed Africans of their land. Images of the black Zimbabweans as the autochthons and the rightful owners of the land and the whites as colonizers and usurpers of black land predominate in the text. In Part Two, the injustices of colonialism, particularly regarding the land issue, are highlighted, while the Land Reform Program is defended and justified resolutely. The machinations of neo-imperialists and their local acolytes against the land reform program are also laid bare. Part Three

dramatizes the struggle between the dominant nationalist narrative's 'patriots' and 'sell-outs', culminating in the vanquishing of the latter.

In the words of Nyambi, the text 'can be read as the newest form of resistance literature in Zimbabwe's postcolonial oeuvre' (2015: 2). Resistance is largely couched as the *modus operandi* of all the three Zimbabwean *chimurengas*, and is underpinned by the supposition that there are larger forces and discourses that dominate, oppress, or pose existential threats to the nation's body politic. Part of the novel's attack strategy is its didacticism, intending to 'enlighten' the reader about the land issue as well as the fast track land reform program and the existence of mainly external enemies who pose a threat to the program. In this regard, it imitates the *modus operandi* of the 1970s liberation war as it was executed by the main liberation movements, ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU. Besides fighting, there was also the ideological dimension, whereby the generality of the people were conscientised and politicised to win their hearts and minds so that they would in turn provide desperately needed support to the freedom fighters. The patriotic narrative, of which this text constitutes part of the artistic and literary thrust, represents the ideological dimension of the Third Chimurenga, while the war veterans, ZANU (PF)'s shock troops whenever its political dominance is threatened, led the charge in the confiscation of white owned farms. That the realities of the Chimurenga poetics are about war, constructs them as masculine.

The text uses various rhetorical strategies to achieve its ends. Its didactic and polemic orientations mean that its three parts have, loosely, the semblance of the three parts of a philosophical logical syllogism and are therefore an organic whole. Sound syllogisms are usually viewed as waterproof pieces of logical reasoning, and so even just to imitate such would further the text's polemical orientation: 'when all the premises are true and the syllogism is correctly constructed, a syllogism is an iron-clad logical argument' (Philosophy Terms). This, however, does not much counter our sense of the constructedness of the reality that forms the basis of the text's logical reasoning, and the fact that all truths are usually contested.

6.1.3 In the Rear-View Mirror: Invoking Colonial Frontier Masculinities.

Part one of *The Chimurenga Protocol*, entitled the *First Chimurenga*, is an invocation of the primary forms of anti-colonial struggles at the onset of colonialism in the form of revolts by the indigenous people between 1896 and 1897. The insertion of this usable past into the present is emblematic of how nations are imagined through a journeying back into the past, where certain memories are strategically recovered and privileged in the imagination of the nation. The term *Chimurenga* denotes a war of liberation, and this thus constructs it as a masculine ideology due to the fact that fighting or war with its acute violence belongs to the domain of the hyper-masculine.

The etymology of the term is *Chi-Murenga* of which 'chi' is a prefix and 'Murenga' is the name of an illustrious mythical Zimbabwean Shona ancestor, himself a formidable warrior-hunter-king, the quintessence of the hegemonic masculine. This locates these struggles and the national narrative in mythical ancestral time-space, emphasising continuities between past and present in the manner in which the contemporary nation is imagined. Murenga is invoked in Solomon Mutswairo's historical novel discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis, *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* (1983). Translated, the term *Chimurenga* would mean something like 'Murenga's war'. This furthers the Nativist orientation of the text where autochthony is privileged over other aspects of people's identities in the dominant national narrative in the current contests over the land, where white landowners are cast as mere settlers with no enduring or even valid claim to the land.

The images of the captured but defiant black freedom fighter in the text and his nemesis Mason, the white colonialist, represent the frontier masculinities set against each other at the onset of colonialism. Violence, defiance and conquest define these masculinities, and the imperialists' superior technology enables them to assert themselves over their black African adversaries. In this scenario, technology is therefore implicated and entangled in the gendering of subjects, and the gun proves to be a more potent masculine symbol than the spear and other traditional African weapons. The fact that the freedom fighter is in chains and virtually at the mercy of his captors testifies to this sordid reality. The defeat of the freedom fighter marks the beginning of the construction of a gendered hierarchy between him and the white colonist as it entails his emasculation on one hand, and the masculinisation of his opposite at his expense as demonstrated by his domineering and condescending attitude towards the former. This relationship is also embodied in the use of the sjambok by the colonialist, a veritable masculine or phallic symbol, as an instrument of torture to chastise and humiliate the freedom fighter. The novel strategically avoids using the term 'warrior', in referring to the freedom fighter, as colonial historical narratives were wont to do. Through a gendered prism the term 'warrior' functioned to diminish the masculine status of the native fighters because, as noted previously, of its associations, in colonialist discourses, with 'primitiveness' and even 'barbarism'. This as opposed to 'soldier', the standard term used to refer to colonialist fighting men, and their associating it with 'civilisation' and even 'culturedness'. Nomenclature, therefore, was implicated in the gendering of colonising and colonized subjects. Interestingly, the warrior, unlike the whites in this part of the narrative, remains nameless, a strategy that in this case serves the purpose, not of denying him an identity as was the case in colonial narratives, but rather of constructing him as a larger than life masculine and threatening figure representing all those formerly colonized and dispossessed black Zimbabweans

that the narrative constructs as up in arms against white landowners who formerly seized the land from them.

So, the conqueror assumes a dominant masculine identity while the conquered is feminised, a relationship that the warrior, however, clearly resists, resonating with Scott's claim that 'relations of power are at the same time, relations of resistance' (qtd in Nyambi, 2015:2). So, in the narrative, the warrior exudes and gravitates towards a subversive masculine identity which tends to undermine the feminine one constructed for him by the colonizer. So much is the warrior's resistance posture and disposition evident that Nyambi (2015:6) claims that he is racist, which here is read as counter-racism to that of the colonizer, embodied in the text by William Mason. So, in an ironic way the colonizer's racism is reflected back to him by the demeanour of the warrior.

In the warrior's resistance arsenal is his claim to autochthony *vis-a-vis* the settler status of colonizer, thereby constructing what Mamdani (2001: op cit) refers to as a 'settler-native relationship'. This claim though is not enough for William Mason, the man at the head of the colonial mission in the country, who subscribes to the colonial doctrine of *terra nullius*, which conflates the natives with nature and attempts to write them out of the land. Mason is the archetypal dyed-in-the-wool colonialist and he epitomises colonial dominant masculinities. The native people's resistance as embodied by the warrior suggests that there is no consent on the part of the colonized, and so force and coercion largely define the relationship between the two, and hence the colonial state, in the words of Young (qtd in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 1144) was '*bula mutari*' ('the crusher'), something that denotes dominant, violent and/or hyper masculinities rather than strictly hegemonic ones, where consent is a major part of the equation. However, colonial racist discourses endeavoured to inculcate a sense of inferiority in the colonized in various ways. This epistemic violence helped to create a semblance of hegemony that resonates with Gramsci's assertion that 'hegemonies are not always created and maintained by willed consent of the ruled' (qtd in Nyambi, 2013: 66). In fact, it is this reality that leaves room for resistance and subversion. There is, as the title of Marechera's poem has it, largely a 'Throne of Bayonets' (1982: 75), these being veritable phallic and therefore masculine symbols. As the freedom fighter puts it: 'Armed with machine guns and artillery, you have invaded our land'. So, in spite of his incarceration, the freedom fighter shows that he has only been beaten but not defeated, and so his relationship with Mason is marked by resistance. In fact, the first chapter is introduced by his slogan: 'Pamberi ne Chimurenga' (forward with the war of liberation), suggesting that the contest between them continues into the indefinite future, and his successful escape underlines this reality. This stance is also epitomised by Nehanda, a female spirit medium and one of the inspirers of the 1896-7 African uprisings. After being captured and sentenced to death by hanging, she is alleged to have told her

captors that after her death, her bones were going to rise. And in the black Zimbabwean resistance narrative this is epitomised by the Second and Third *Chimurenga*. The warrior's indomitable spirit therefore constructs him as a subversive masculinity rather than a subordinate one, something that complicates the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Colonial white hegemonic masculinities were premised on the notion of subordinate black masculinities rather than subversive ones, and many colonizers, as in Doris Lessing's novel, *The Grass is Singing* (1959), conducted themselves as if the former were the obtaining reality.

The text portrays all black Zimbabwean people as united in their resistance to the colonialists, yet the survival of colonialism depended on the complicity of some of the blacks. The narrative itself betrays this by highlighting the existence of some black spies in the service of the colonialists, who helped undermine the struggle and so played a part in the victory of the colonialists. These quislings highlight the fact that there was no singular or unitary black masculinity in their relationship to colonialism, meaning that complicity, subversiveness, and subordination existed side by side. As in Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), complicity in the colonial enterprise was often a strategy by some marginalized Africans to empower themselves *vis-à-vis* other men in the African community, highlighting the fact that masculine politics and rivalries can determine people's allegiances rather than ideological and/or political inclinations. In this respect, centripetal and centrifugal forces impact on these masculinities in complex ways, and for the marginalized men above, the pull of centrifugal ones is greater than that of the centripetal.

An emissary of Cecil John Rhodes, the man behind this colonial mission, Mason is imaged as the archetypal colonialist who believes that his mission is not only divinely ordained, but that he is a 'torch-bearer of civilisation to darkest Africa' (Mtizira, 2008: 26). The manner in which he relates to Carrington, his junior, makes visible his homosexual inclinations, something that in masculine politics undermines his claim to hegemonic masculinity. Even the freedom fighter who is in chains and at Mason's mercy, does not disguise his disgust, contempt and derision towards him. Here homosexuality is used as a tool to counter and undermine the hegemonic masculinity of the colonizer, highlighting Slotmaekers's claim that 'homophobia' can be deployed as a 'technology of othering for hetero-and homonationalism' (2019: 1). In this context femininity, with its association with submissiveness, cannot be used to other the conquering colonizer, so homosexuality comes in handy. Nevertheless, Mason, at the head of the colonial mission and with the other white colonists deferring to him as per his institutional power, has many of the markers of hegemonic masculinity, as he is described as having a physically intimidating physique, a fiery temper and domineering tendencies to boot. His gay tendencies do not construct him as a marginal masculinity as in Connell's typology, as this aspect of his identity is overshadowed by the others.

This seems to suggest that marginality is a combination of various attributes and/or circumstances rather than one, something that problematizes the conventional masculine hierarchies. This part of the text resonates with the acute homophobic orientation of former Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, referred to in chapter 5 of this thesis. In the words of Stychin (2004: 956), ‘The expulsion of homosexuals from the imagery of the nation state becomes metaphorically equated with the erasure of the white colonizer and with him his degenerate influence on a mythologized, pre-colonial “pure” African past’.

Colonial discourse, as exuded by Mason, constructs the black African as the inferior other, and as far as the land was concerned, without the right to seek legal recourse when they thought that their rights had been violated. As noted before, they were lumped together with nature, thereby justifying the subordinate status accorded to them. Nature is feminised in patriarchal discourses, and therefore is constructed as available for control and domination by men; witness Mason’s attitude as he goes on an inspection tour of the land that the blacks have been evicted from. African land was constructed as ‘virgin’, a feminine term that also suggests that African men had failed to make the land productive, thus implying that they were not masculine enough. In this warped logic, the colonists were the ‘real’ men who would make the land productive. So, the land becomes something to be contested over, and for the freedom fighter it is like a matter of keeping the land from the lascivious and greedy hands of Mason and his colonists. For the latter, it is a matter of grabbing this land by force without any restitution as a sign of their dominance and power over black men and also as a strategy of humiliating the black man for failing to protect his land. As previously pointed out, Mbembe (2006: 169) notes that colonial wars were fought over the control of women’s bodies: ‘the war between races was constructed as a war between men ... in which the main assets were women’s bodies. Women’s bodies were themselves imagined as territories to be invaded, protected against the enemy, or when lost to the latter, to be worn back’. In this colonial case, the land takes the place of women’s bodies, and likewise the colonists humiliated black men by having free access to black-owned land. This sexualised and gendered representation, however, does not take away the economic, spiritual, political, and other significances of the land to the blacks.

Questions of belonging are central in Part One of the text. The colonialists are thus constructed as foreign invaders without any legitimate or enduring claim to the land in an apparent counter attack against their doctrine of terra nullius. Images of their alienness, greed, racism, and injustices abound in the text and this mirrors their similar construction during the Fast Track Land Reform Program, post 2000. The freedom fighter embodies autochthony and his belonging and relationship to the land is constructed as sacrosanct and inviolable. It is not only physical and material but also

spiritual. The colonists, on the other hand, are constructed as uncertain of their belonging to the land, and so try to justify themselves via the discourse of ‘civilising’ the natives. Thus, in this context’s masculine politics, discourses of alienness are also mobilised and wielded as instruments of othering white farmers and delegitimising their claims to ownership of the land.

The spirit of empire in which the economic god is supreme, however, is constructed as an implacable juggernaut and so spurs them on, as in the words of Mason: ‘May the greed of the Empire devour all that lies in its path’ (Mtizira, 2008: 47). Their frontier towns of Bulawayo and Salisbury (now Harare) are constructed as mere islands, and so a siege mentality characterizes their white inhabitants. The notion of siege suggests that these masculinities are, or imagine themselves as, embattled, and consequently they are more liable and prone to expressing themselves violently, both physically and discursively, in dealing with the real or imagined threats.

So a nativist and Afro-radical orientation informs the representation of both colonizer and colonized in the text. This part of the text, however, resonates with the text’s universe of discourse, where it functions as a ‘praise text’ (Robins, 1996: op cit) by helping to validate the government’s land reform programme. The author, therefore, in Gramscian terms, functions as ‘an organic intellectual’ for the same, in the same manner that Soviet socialist realist narratives operated during the communist era in the Soviet Union, as in, for example, Ostrovosky’s *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1933). As previously stated, Nyambi (2015: 2) argues that *The Chimurenga Protocol* is a ‘neo-nationalist novel’ which is didactic and polemic as it largely functions as a counter-discourse to those narratives, literary and non-literary, that vilified the land reform programme and the dominant political narrative. It belongs to a long tradition of African and Zimbabwean resistance literature and is therefore not *sui generis*. This tradition dates back to such early African texts as Hayford’s *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911), and Zimbabwean ones, such as Samkange’s *On Trial for My Country* (1967).

The text exists in a dialogic relationship with various other discourses, both textual and extra-textual. Many literary texts assumed a critical posture towards the dominant nationalist narrative and the Fast Track Land Reform program, for example, Lawrence Hoba’s *The Trek and Other Stories*. Such narratives therefore attracted counter-narratives by regime-aligned artists, hence texts such as *The Chimurenga Protocol* and Mutasa’s *Sekai Minda Tavanayo* (that is, ‘You may laugh, but we now have the land’). On the other hand, neo-liberal inclined scholars vilified the Land Reform Program on the grounds of non-observance of the rule of law, use of violence, and the closure of the democratic space. Hence Mtizira, writing against what he sees as historical amnesia, goes to great lengths to show how Africans were callously and iniquitously dispossessed of their land without any legal recourse, and through war and conquest. In addition, he makes it

clear that the colonial state was no paragon of democracy and human rights as far as Africans were concerned. Employing this logic, the Third *Chimurenga*, therefore, was about a reversal of these colonial iniquities represented in Part One of the text. Through this strategic recovery of a usable past the text tries to justify the doctrine of ‘Conquest of Conquests’ that then president Robert Mugabe proffered as a justification for the Land Reform programme. The discourse of ‘conquest’ suggests that quintessential masculine politics are at play in this case. In the words of Mtizira, the programme was ‘an act of retributive justice to redress past injustices in land distribution’ (2008: 13). That it is retributive instead of restorative highlights the extent to which it is steeped in masculine politics involving masculinized humiliation, which is the equivalent of emasculation, and what is obtaining now represents attempts at the recovery of the same manhood. This resonates with the Janus-facedness of the nation and also of masculinities. The text also exemplifies the role that literature plays in the construction of the imaginative work of fiction that the nation in a sense is, as highlighted by Brennan (2006: 130): ‘nations are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a part’. From this perspective, the nation shares the same ontological existence as literature, because they are both fictions.

So, while the recovery of this past shows the history of the land imbalances of the novel’s narrative and narrated time in Zimbabwe and the need to redress these, and attempts to highlight unbroken and seamless continuities between past and present, it glosses over the ruptures in these continuities, as is evident in the somewhat incongruous images of the freedom fighter in part one of the text, and the post-independence ruling elite in the subsequent parts of the novel. As Nyambi (2013: 85) observes, ‘Unlike the First and Second Chimurenga (which were marked by a general anti-colonialist unity of purpose), the Third Chimurenga is a contested nationalist phase that is usually associated with ZANU (PF)’. Many scholars (such as Raftopoulos and Primorac) have argued that exigencies of self-preservation, over and above those of correcting colonial injustices, were the major driving force behind the Third Chimurenga discourse. However, when all is said and done, Tendi’s injunction is instructive here: ‘patriotic history [the patriotic narrative] played on real grievances and its narrative must be taken seriously’ (qtd in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011: 8). In other words, it was a strategic appropriation of a long-standing and unresolved issue, that of the land, by the ruling elite, hence the endurance of this discourse in spite of its schisms and contradictions.

6.1.4 New Frontiers, Erstwhile Masculinities?

Part Two of *The Chimurenga Protocol*, entitled ‘The Empire’s Treachery’, deals with contemporary realities centred on the Fast Track Land Reform Program, which is dubbed the Third Chimurenga in the dominant national narrative, suggesting, as previously noted, continuities between the primary forms of resistance and contemporary ones. It makes visible the centripetal and centrifugal forces operating on masculine identities, where the Chimurenga narrative highlights the pull of those centripetal forces that negate change, while the periodization is indicative of the centrifugal forces that negate stasis. In the idiom of the iconic black American scholar, W.E.B. DuBois(1903;1994:45), there is this ‘twoness’, where these contradictory forces all act simultaneously in shaping and framing masculine identities.

In the narrative, imperialism is shown to have morphed into new and subtle shapes that mainly take the form of the dark underworld of the metropolis where secret societies and shadowy intelligence groups such as the Transworld Corporation now rely on underhand and covert methods to help maintain the metropolis’s stranglehold on its former colonies. At the centre of this are the former colonies’ resources, which the metropolis cannot do without, and also the desire to maintain the colonies’ dependence on the metropolis. In the case of Zimbabwe, the land is represented as one such key resource, so much so that the relationship between Zimbabwe and its former colonizer, Britain, is represented as having been defined by nothing other than the land, mirroring the ruling ZANU (PF) party’s rhetoric during this period. It is represented as being at the centre of the First Chimurenga in Part One of the novel, and in Part Two it has taken on a whole new dimension, as the country has by this time attained independence for about two decades and the issue has still not been fully resolved; the willing-seller-willing-buyer policy agreed on during the Lancaster House Conference that brought independence has so far not yielded satisfactory results. The policy was supposed to last for a decade, but this had long elapsed with no satisfactory and viable alternative policy having been mooted and crafted to replace it. During the 1990s the authorities appear to have been preoccupied with revamping the stagnant economy, and hence the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP). This had mixed results that included job losses for many and increased poverty levels amongst many disadvantaged groups. In fact, the gap between the rich and poor widened. Towards the end of the 1990s the government had to deal with an increasingly restive population that included veterans of the 1970s anti-colonial liberation war who felt neglected and short-changed in spite of their roles and sacrifices in liberating the country. A cornered government had to pay them sizable financial gratuities that further strained the ailing economy, leading to a sharp increase in inflation and subsequent violent food riots that saw a heavy-handed response from the embattled government. There was then the emergence of a strong Trade Union-based political opposition, The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), that made

serious in-roads in the 2000 general elections, weakening the ruling ZANU (PF) party's grip and strangle-hold on power. The latter was dealt a further blow when it lost a constitutional referendum for a new constitution that, *inter alia*, wanted to deal with the unfinished business of the land issue once and for all. The constitutional provision on the land issue in this proposed constitution had, among other things, wanted the former colonial power, Britain, to fund the land reform programme, in particular by compensating the white commercial farmers for land that the government would acquire to resettle landless blacks.

The rejection of the draft constitution by the electorate appears to have been the last straw that broke the camel's back for a beleaguered government and ruling party. Some white farmers had openly supported the 'NO' vote during the constitutional referendum, sparking the ire of the ruling party. The ruling party then appeared to play its remaining trump card, the land issue. So, soon after the referendum, veterans of the anti-colonial liberation war began to lead invasions of white-owned farms, forcibly taking over the land without compensation for the white farmers, a process that is more clearly illustrated in Harrison's *Jambanja*, explored in the last part of this chapter. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme had begun; a programme that was to radically alter not only patterns of land ownership in the country, but also the economic and political landscape of the country.

The programme, as already discussed, drew mixed responses. Some left-leaning intellectuals saw it as designed to bring about social justice in the country, while those of a neo-liberal inclination were critical of its violent nature and accompanying human rights abuses, and disregard for the rule of law. The government code-named the programme 'The Third Chimurenga', making it a sequel to the first and second Chimurengas. This land reform programme was therefore imagined as a war where the winner takes all, making it a site for hyper-masculine performances. However, a war is fought against a clearly defined enemy. The First Chimurenga was fought against the encroaching colonialists and it was marked by violent frontier masculinities. It disrupted African pre-colonial masculinities, as indicated previously. The Second Chimurenga was against an entrenched colonialism and its hallmarks were militarised masculinities of which these veterans of the struggle were a part. The Third was against white commercial farmers, but these were not militarised in the strict sense of the word, and so the enemy was widened to include foreign imperialists, particularly the former colonial power, Britain. This in particular was useful in helping cast the violent masculinities of the Third Chimurenga as liberational ones, rather than as mere usurpers of hapless and helpless white commercial farmers, as one finds in Harrison's text. In masculine politics there usually is no glory or heroism in brutalising the hapless and helpless unless it is meant to spite and get at rival masculinities responsible for the protection of these. It is in the

overcoming of potent adversaries that the terrain for heroic masculinities is located. Thus the farmers were conflated with foreign neo-imperialists, thus creating a credible and potent enemy, and in this way frontier masculinities centred on the farms were configured. This was not helped by the imposition of targeted sanctions by many Western countries. Hence in the *Chimurenga Protocol*, the imperialists take centre stage rather than the farmers. The farmers and other groups that the government writes out of their national narrative, particularly the political opposition, are constructed as the Trojan horses of these foreign imperialist forces, and hence legitimate targets for attack by Establishment foot soldiers. Questions of belonging and not belonging take centre stage, and Nativism and Afro-radicalism are deployed by the dominant political formation in the advancement of its own political interests. The ideology of ‘Mugabeism’, centred in Zimbabwe’s erstwhile president, Robert Mugabe, and its ‘conquest of conquest’ ideology, cast the land issue and the current efforts to resolve it as a reversal of the colonial wars of conquest, as in Part One of the *Chimurenga Protocol*. This part of the novel, then, is strategically placed to justify the *modus operandi* of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme whose hallmark was the confiscation of white owned farms without compensation. In Part One of the text, the narrator harps on about the colonial land dispossession of indigenous blacks without any compensation or legal recourse, while on the other hand the voice of the freedom fighter reminds Mason, the representative of the colonialists, that the land was the black people’s heritage and they will never stop fighting to recover it from the settlers. Hence the *Chimurenga* narrative is used to characterize the subsequent struggles against the colonialists and around the land question.

6.1.5 ‘Masculinized Humiliation’, Hyper-Masculine Responses?

Part Two therefore focuses on the various shenanigans employed by the neo-imperialists, who in the novel are represented by the axis of London, Washington and Canberra, who operate using a shadowy intelligence group, The Transworld Corporation, led by one Cecil Sedgefield. The name ‘Cecil’ conjures up that of Cecil John Rhodes, the man who orchestrated the colonial mission in Zimbabwe and after whom the Rhodesian colony was named. In this way, the text suggests continuities between the past and the present as far as masculinities and imperialism are concerned. The main character in this part of the text, though, is Hamandishe Livingstone Chamunorwa, a senior consultant in the Ministry of Land Reclamation in Zimbabwe, and a key expert providing technical assistance for the government’s Fast Track Land Reform Programme. His middle name, ‘Livingstone,’ that of a colonial missionary, subtly inscribes his identity with the potential for identifying or collaborating with the imperialists, and therefore treachery. Initially a ‘patriot’ and Establishment functionary, he typifies those masculinities who were valorised as the ‘real men’,

fighting resolutely and single-mindedly to recover the land, which is represented as solely the black people's heritage. An ideology of '*Amadoda Sibili*' (real men) was promoted by then state president, Robert Mugabe. Its hallmarks 'include sacrifice, courage, ability to take risks, ability to fight, valorisation of war, manifesting anger, preparedness to shed blood and defiance of the West' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 1153). In 2000, Mugabe formed what he termed a 'war cabinet' composed of '*Amadoda Sibili*' to deal with not only the land reform program, but other challenges bedevilling the country, in particular economic ones. The cabinet was a mixed gender one, showing that the 'real men' were not biological males only, but also females who performed according to the desired template. The notion invoked and promoted a warrior or soldier masculinity that went together with the discourse of the Chimurenga. This reality resonates with Sloodmaeckers' (2019: 12) assertion that 'Nationalists, ... have been manipulating the hegemonic masculine model to serve their goals by linking it to other key markers of identity such as ethnicity.' In this case such markers are those of nation and race.

Loyalty (to the cause) through thick and thin is a hallmark of the above masculinities. Suffering and tribulation are part of the rites of passage through which this is achieved, and so those who weather the storm are the real men, as demonstrated by the freedom fighter in Part One; and this is where Chamunorwa falls short. He is faced with a life-threatening illness in a context in which the deteriorating economic situation means that the health sector has all but broken down and is unable to deal with his condition, on one hand, and, on the other, there is a critical shortage of foreign currency, which means that the government cannot sponsor his treatment abroad. Unable to handle this, Chamunorwa breaks rank and pitches tent with the neo-imperialists, and so, at the stroke of a pen, he moves from hero to quisling. His treachery, though, is lumped together and constructed as part of the treachery of the empire, something that robs him of subjectivity, and this becomes part of the process of disabusing him of his erstwhile 'real man' masculinity. This resonates with Vayrynen's claim that 'obedient nationalist bodies are created by forging ties between nationalist ideology, the body and hegemonic masculinities' (2013: 140). He is now constructed as no more than a lackey of these neo-imperial masculinities as epitomised by Cecil Sedgfield. Having disabused him as such means the contest is no longer between him and the regime, but rather between it and the imperialists, something that reflects the politics of the post 2000 period where the political opposition was treated in a similar way. The political contest was represented in the dominant political narrative as virtually between the ruling party ZANU (PF) and the imperialists. For example, at the Earth Summit in South Africa, Robert Mugabe is quoted as having told his British counterpart Tony Blair: 'So, Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe' (qtd in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 1139). This conjures up the representation of the

land/country as the property of men and tied up with their masculine identities, inclusive of male honour. The conflation of the political opposition and the former colonizers hints at the attempt to erase from the scene those masculinities of the political opposition and their possible charm and allure for the electorate, something that seems to be confirmed by the use of violence by the ruling party to neuter the opposition. It was an attempt to feminise them by constructing them as mere lap dogs of the imperialists, when in actual fact they should be seen as subversive masculinities and therefore possible alternatives to current hegemonic ones.

Chamunorwa, a name which when loosely translated from Shona, means ‘what’s your bone of contention’, is actually a reference to the neo-imperialists rather than this man himself. He is reduced to a mere conduit of the imperialists in their attempt to get their hands on the Chimurenga Protocol document. The masculinities of neo-imperialism are represented as scheming, ruthless, greedy, and well-resourced, with a global reach. These are what the dominant masculinities of the Third Chimurenga are up against. In this contest, these masculinities assume a resistant and subversive posture in relation to the neo-imperial masculinities, which are global in outreach and so can be read as components of the masculinities of globalisation. This ontology of the Chimurenga masculinities is a reality that underlines the instability and shifting nature of masculine identities and their dialogic and polylogic nature. Positioned in the local context they are dominant and/or hegemonic, but against the global ones they are largely subversive. They construct themselves as the vanguard in the struggle for land reclamation and economic emancipation not only in Africa, but also in much of the Third World, implying that they actually punch far above their weight. In this sense, in the text, they construct themselves as also having a global reach with the potential to rewrite the economic and land tenure landscape of Africa and much of the Third World, hence they image themselves as emerging and burgeoning alternative global hegemonic masculinities to the global neo-liberally inclined ones.

The treachery of the Empire in the text is not only represented by the attempt to steal the Chimurenga Protocol, but also in their alleged *volte-face* on the issue of supporting the country’s land reform program as agreed in the Lancaster House Constitution. A letter to the Zimbabwean government by a British under-secretary, Claire Short, to this effect causes consternation and anger in the corridors of power and is the justification used to embark on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The letter plus the government’s loss in the constitutional referendum that had a clause stipulating that the British government should fund land reform in Zimbabwe represent a slap in the face and therefore ‘masculinized humiliation’ (Enloe, 1990: 45) on the part of the government, and this is soon followed by hyper-masculine responses in the form of the violent fast track land reform programme as portrayed in Harrison’s text. Such responses, through a gendered prism, can

be read as attempts to recover and maintain the requisite sense of being masculine enough, highlighting the dialogic nature of masculine identities. They also reveal another dimension, that of ‘masculinized insecurity’ which might lurk at the bottom of these national identities. This resonates with Campbell’s assertion that the Zimbabwean ruling elite is hamstrung by ‘patriarchal anxiety and masculinist confusion’ (qtd in Christiansen, 2007: 89). At the centre of these are the pull of centripetal and centrifugal forces. Threatened by emerging local alternative dominant masculinities and globalisation ones, they are literally under siege and therefore no longer at ease. They try to shore themselves up through the nativist and Afro-radicalism discourses previously highlighted, both viewed here as attempts to preserve their local hegemony in the face of globalisation discourses that threatens to undermine national identities and their attendant masculinities.

The letter referred to above absolves the British government from any obligation and responsibility to support Zimbabwe’s land reform programme, though it spells out clearly that they would be ready to support a land reform programme oriented towards poverty alleviation and helping the landless poor masses. The hidden narrative is that evidently there was nothing in it for the Zimbabwean political elite, and so this aspect was not embraced at all, thus exposing the government’s under-belly. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 1150) claims that one of the drivers for the land reform program was the ‘disillusioned emerging black bourgeoisie’, and what the British were offering did not live up to their expectations. So, based on this, the land reform program can be read as largely a political elite program to serve their interests over and above those of the common masses, though it is important to point out that many landless and impoverished rural peasants did benefit from the program (Scoones et al, 2010: 238).

Then the theft of the Chimurenga Protocol document, another slap in the face, threatens to tilt the balance in the favour of the neo-imperialists, hence the panic and anxiety that grips the establishment. It takes the struggle of these masculinities to a completely different level in the text. The Protocol takes on a symbolic role to embody the Zimbabwean land that is being fought over, so both groups marshal their resources and expertise to get their hands on this document. It is a battle of wits in which the smartest and most accomplished have a better chance of succeeding.

6.1.6. The ‘Men’ from the ‘Boys’

Part Three of *The Chimurenga Protocol* is in the form of a detective thriller in which the government detective, Panashe Magura, goes after Chamunorwa in the quest to recover the Chimurenga Protocol document. It lives up to the basic formula of the detective thriller story as highlighted previously. Here the major interest is in the recovery of a highly classified document

whose loss is constructed as having potential cataclysmic consequences for the establishment. Here two forces are ranged against each other, the government, particularly the Ministry of Land Reclamation and their elite detective on the one hand, and the imperialists and their acolyte Chamunorwa on the other. It is a battle royal, and in gendered terms, one that will separate the 'men' from the 'boys'. The pursuit requires a single-mindedness and dedication that is the *sine qua non* of establishment masculinities, that is, the *amadoda sibili* (the real men).

This part is entitled, 'Operation Mwana Wevhu' (Operation Son of the Soil) and so resonates with the nativist orientation of the text as well as the dominant national narrative. The masculinist orientation of the discourse is highlighted by the fact that the child here is, by default, supposed to be male, but in the Shona language 'mwana' is gender unmarked as it simply translates to 'child'. Detective Magura here typifies the true 'son of the soil' as he relentlessly and fearlessly fights for his country and its land reform programme. In a flying operation, he follows promising leads to South Africa and Hong Kong, and finally to Victoria Falls, a holiday resort on the border with Zambia. Putting together the jigsaw puzzle that finally enables him to succeed in cracking the case is something that is cast as requiring great detective acumen, mental agility and dexterity. These enable him to be a step ahead of Chamunorwa and his imperialist handlers. His catching up with, and coming face to face with him on the Victoria Falls Bridge, is the climax of this episode, as the representatives of the diametrically contrasted forms of masculinity in the dominant nationalist narrative physically square off, man to man. Tough, assertive and decisive, Magura easily wins the day in what is like a cat and mouse contest, and his status as '*indoda sibili*' (a real man) is unequivocally confirmed. On the other hand, there is no real 'masculine' performance by Chamunorwa during the encounter, and the *coup de grace* is when he plunges to his death down the bridge in an attempt to evade arrest, thus signifying the collapse of the imperialist grand scheme of getting hold of the Chimurenga Protocol and destabilising the narrative's sacrosanct land reform program. Finally, the recovery of the Protocol confirms Magura as a veritable establishment foot soldier and true 'son of the soil', juxtaposed with a lily-livered wimp and quisling like Chamunorwa, who sold out when the going got tough. In this way the masculinities expected of those who belong to the nation are veritably inscribed on such male bodies. As Mlambo (2015: 176) points out, this type of masculinity was the product of peculiar circumstances: 'Zimbabwean history shows how colonial and postcolonial wars and the Third Chimurenga became important sites for the evolution of a certain type of heroism and manliness'. This underlines the inclusion and exclusion dynamic that characterized Zimbabwean national discourses post 2000. Considering the many debilitating challenges that the nation was facing, chiefly the political and economic, such were the masculinities (and femininities) that were primed for such. This was at a time when

the political opposition had gained a lot of ground, and this is blamed on those masculinities and femininities that could not stand the heat in the kitchen. By pitching up with the political opposition and their alleged foreign handlers, these were constructed as the quisling masculinities of which Chamunorwa is the representative.

The Chimurenga Protocol is therefore a narrative of war masculinities, of soldier masculinities. It is about those masculinities that were promoted and valorised in the dominant nationalist narrative, particularly after 2000. The delineation of the nation's boundaries in this way is an example of what Shapiro refers to as 'cartographic violence', which 'requires appropriation of human bodies in ways that reflect the particular state project at that time' (qtd in Vayrynen, 2013: 139). The war took various forms, including the intellectual and artistic, in which this text participates. The 'Patriotic Narrative' was a war narrative where the watchword apparently was 'from each according to his ability', and so its 'real men' were multiple but defined by common characteristics. Baxter's (2010: 512) assertion sums up the universe of discourse of Mtizira's text: 'Politically land was at the root of the Chimurenga, just as it had been in 1896, and this potent issue has never been off the agenda since. The imbalance of land redistribution ... would keep the revolution alive and the enemy more or less unchanged'.

The patriotic narrative, by writing whites out of the national narrative, contrasts sharply with the policy of reconciliation and inclusivity that the government promulgated in 1980 at the onset of independence. By viewing virtually all whites as enemies of the state, it seems blind to the fact that there is no singular or unitary white subjectivity in the country, and a number of whites had sided with the black African nationalist movement, and one of them, Guy Clutton-Brock, had actually been declared a national hero. Stey (qtd in Kelly, 2008: 113) notes that 'equating whiteness with racism is paralyzing for those whites who seek liberating subject positions', an observation that is relevant to some of the postulations of the patriotic narrative. The major turn in post-independence nationalism was foretold by Fanon (1967: 127): 'from nationalism we have passed to ultra-nationalism, to chauvinism and finally to racism'. This highlights a shift from one nationalist form of masculinity to another, with an apparent drift towards ultra-masculinism and toxicity as symbolised by the racism. Aside from the political gerrymandering, the shifts can also be partly understood through a recourse to the politics of masculinity as they relate to the nation. Nationalist triumphalism at independence highlights that there was little motivation for hyper-masculine performances as the attainment of independence signified the triumph of black African nationalist masculinity over the colonizers. The economic challenges of the 1990s and the failure of ESAP can therefore be viewed as denting this triumphalism and the masculine pride associated with it and opening the way for compensatory hyper-masculine performances. The economic crisis

of the post 2000 period and the ruling party's loss in the constitutional referendum only worsened an already bad situation, seeing a drift towards the toxicity associated with racism and the Manichean binarizations that characterize the patriotic narrative. Threatened masculinities in this case can mobilise those discredited identity markers such as race, and even ethnicity, in an endeavour to shore themselves up. Such discourses, their constructedness notwithstanding, often function as essentialist categories and therefore authoritative discourses rather than internally-persuasive ones. Discourses such as nativism also fall into this category and can be appropriated to authorise and bolster flagging or threatened hegemonic masculinities at the national level. This rather unfortunate trajectory can only be a consequence of such masculinities' failure to reinvent and reinvigorate themselves to cope with new challenges.

6.2 Of 'Victimised' Masculinities? Violence, Race and Land in Eric Harrison's *Jambanja* (2006).

6.2.1 Synopsis

Eric Harrison's *Jambanja* is a novel that is primarily about Zimbabwe's post 2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme, told from the point of view of a white farmer whose land is violently appropriated without compensation for purposes of resettling blacks disadvantaged by colonial land policies. A memoir and autobiographical narrative, it chronicles the life of Harrison (shortened to Harry) from his childhood in a broken family in Rhodesia, his school days, military training as part of a compulsory colonial government programme for all white male citizens, itinerant working life that sees him in England, Ireland, back to Rhodesia, then to Angola and finally back to Rhodesia. Then his acquisition of Maioio farm at Mkwazine in the South Eastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe under a government programme, his painstaking and concerted efforts to develop it over the years, his compulsory participation in the 1970s liberation war, and finally the acquisition of his farm post 2000, and then his prolonged and spirited efforts to resist this. He marshals everything at his disposal, inclusive of the law, but to no avail. The inevitable happens as things fall apart and he finally leaves the farm a bitter man, settling in Harare.

6.2.2 A Memoir and Autobiography

Harrison's *Jambanja* is an autobiographical narrative told by a third person narrator, a mode of story-telling that helps create some distance between the author and his narrative. This in itself helps, ostensibly, in minimising the element of subjectivity and also in broadening the scope of the narrative as opposed to the use of the first-person narrator. All this is important for a narrative that aspires towards the status of a 'true' and 'objective' one. As Harrison himself claims in the preface

to the text: ‘This is a true story, and like all stories, the storyteller is a part of it ... I had to take a step back from the intensity of it all to give you the fullest and fairest picture that I could’ (Harrison 2006: 9). These claims have a utilitarian value in the text’s universe of discourse as it endeavours to deconstruct the ‘patriotic narratives’ that underpinned the post 2000 Zimbabwean land reform program.

However, claims to truth by memoirs and autobiographical narratives have their own problems. As Chennells (2005: 134) notes, ‘Autobiography ..., is never likely to be a wholly accurate recall of the subject’s past or what his or her responses were in each successive experience’. So, like most narratives it is also largely a construction of reality rather than a quintessentially truthful account of the author’s life and the world around him. Being an autobiographical narrative, ‘the writing self or the writing of the self’, seeks ‘to explain and justify as well as inform [and is] often confessional’ (McArthur, qtd in Harris 2005: 108). In the case of Harrison, this self includes the masculine as well as the racial one. Autobiography resonates with Bakhtinian dialogism where ‘existence is not only an event, [but also] an utterance [and] the dialogue I have with existence begins to assume the form of a text, a kind of a book’ (Holquist, 2002: 26-28). The self of autobiography is not a monologic, closed-in one, and nor is this “self” a unitary thing; rather it consists of a relation, the relation between self and other’ (Holquist, 2002: 34). Meanings in autobiography therefore are not absolute and authorially circumscribed, but relative, opening them up to diverse interpretations, and this applies to the ‘truth’ in Harrison’s narrative. In the words of Bakhtin, ‘There is neither a first word nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context’ (1986: 170).

Consequently, just like the *Chimurenga Protocol*, the ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ that the text portrays cannot escape their constructedness and ultimately their subjectivity. As noted before, the authorial voice is one among several in the text, and it cannot therefore be reduced to a monological reading. These multiple voices unshackle and liberate the text from any imposed meanings that the author or narrator attempts to foreground, enabling diverse interpretations to be given.

6.2.3 “Jambanja” Poetics

The title of Harrison’s text, *Jambanja*, is a Zimbabwean Shona word that denotes violence; in this case the violence of the fast track land reform program. It denotes a gloves-off violent confrontation, often a disorderly and no-holds-barred one, and hence it largely captures the *modus operandi* of the post 2000 land reform program. With reference to this program, Alexander (qtd in Magosvongwe 2013: 126) sees *jambanja* as ‘a political practice that celebrated lawlessness’. Seen through a gendered prism this *jambanja* is therefore largely the domain of the masculine. For a text

dealing with *jambanja*, it also assumes the form of one, and therefore in this case it is possible to speak of its *jambanja* poetics, something that also casts the narrative itself as a masculine or macho one.

The narrative begins in *medias res*, with the episode that heralds the arrival of *jambanja* in the form of the farm invaders at Harrison's Maioio Farm in the South Eastern Lowveld of Zimbabwe: 'At first Harry thought it must be a snake, which was a fairly common thing in this part of the world' (Harrison, 2006: 11). The snake can be read as a phallic symbol, denoting the masculine orientation not only of the *jambanja*, but also of the unfolding narrative. This incident is immediately followed by a flashback to the now distant past when a nineteen-year-old Harry is leaving home for military training, then compulsory for all able-bodied white men in the colony. For Harry, 'this was the closest he had ever come to *real* war, and manhood' (ibid: 13) (italics in the original). These masculine images are intended to counterpoise a masculine *jambanja* that is intruding into what has been, for him, a near-idyllic existence. The plot of the text is non-linear, moving from one episode in Harry's life to another without any discernible order, in the very manner of the *jambanja* that he has to face and try to resist at his farm. Then what follows is a narrative whose primary focus is the forging of Harry's manhood in the manner of a typical colonial white subject. It is a manhood primed for the defence and survival of the colonial enterprise, and for confronting challenges like the *jambanja* in the post-independence dispensation.

In a sense the text can be viewed as a discursive and artistic attempt to combat the patriotic narrative, artistically represented by Mtizira's *The Chimurenga Protocol* discussed earlier in this chapter. Counter-attacking both this narrative and *jambanja* itself makes each movement of the narrative the equivalent of a punch thrown with the hope of drawing some blood and searching for the knock-out blow. The veritable degeneration into a no-holds-barred *jambanja* sees the narrator unapologetically seeking recourse to colonial racist discourses that include eulogizing the UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) and colonial racist practices to justify his argument. Even black freedom fighters during the 1970s anti-colonial war that brought independence are referred to by the colonial appellation 'terrorists'. In essence the discredited cliché of colonialism as a civilising mission is deployed in an effort to score points, a problematic state of affairs as far as the narrative's attempts to achieve its goals are concerned. So, in the aforementioned aspects the text echoes former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith's autobiography, *The Great Betrayal* (1997), Harry's primary goal being to construct the white farmers as victims of an iniquitous and violent pogrom masked as a land reform program. The narrative therefore fails to rise above that which it is attacking, and so does not attain a higher moral ground. The narrator, though, makes a grudging, but telling, admission of the historical injustices and the genuine grievances of many of the blacks:

‘Can I really blame the individual new intruders? What would I have done if I’d been born black? ... After a long war against white rule and the land he possessed, the white man still dominated the land, the mining and the wealth’ (Harrison 2006: 131). In this respect he is on the same page with the key premise of the patriotic narrative advanced in Mtizira’s *The Chimurenga Protocol* concerning unaddressed historical iniquities that still dogged the nation.

6.2.4 The Text *Jambanja* as a Counter- Discourse

Harrison’s *Jambanja*, unlike Mtizira’s *The Chimurenga Protocol*, can therefore be read as a counter discourse to what Ranger refers to as the ‘patriotic narrative’, and Primorac calls the ‘master-fiction’ that the ZANU (PF) government used to perpetuate itself in power and to justify the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. This resonates with Magosvongwe’s assertion that the text attempts to write ‘to both the official Zimbabwean establishment as well as real or imagined clusters of adversaries and sympathisers with a view to demonstrating that the entire land redistribution process in Zimbabwe was a barbaric crusade against white commercial farmers’ (2016: 125). The text begins with a spirited defence of the colonial enterprise and discursively reconstructs the racial hierarchisation that was the lynchpin of colonial racist discourses. Whites are cast as the bearers of civilisation and culture while blacks are constructed as embodying primitiveness and having stultifying and debilitating cultural tendencies that keep the whole race down. For the narrator, African independence had come too soon, as evidenced by the strife that characterized several African countries after independence, of which he gives as examples such countries as The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria. He endeavours to justify the Rhodesians’ Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965 as serving the purpose of postponing black majority rule and thereby preventing what he views as the chaos that gripped a number of African countries after independence. His logic is along the lines of Albert Schweitzer’s assertion that ‘the African is indeed my brother, but my junior brother who with constant guidance and tutelage will grow up one day to be like the big brother in Europe’ (qtd in Gwekwerere, Mutasa and Chitofiri, 2018: 10). This makes visible the fact that hegemonic masculinity cannot exist without an Other that acts as its foil, and this other can be women, but particularly other men who ultimately constitute components of the hierarchy of masculinities. The masculinities of colonising men found this ready foil in the colonized man’s difference, and like manna from hell, provided them a ready raw material for this Othering, laying the ground for the dehumanisation and brutalisation of the colonized subject. It is this paradigm that is echoed and perpetuated in Harrison’s narrative.

The narrator takes a pot shot at the Lancaster House Agreement that brought independence in 1980 and the willing-seller-willing-buyer clause regarding the land issue as a form of betrayal that has only brought the country to the present strife-riven point. The narrator also tries to undercut part of the rationale for the Land Reform Programme by painstakingly showing how he acquired Maioio Farm through a government rent-to-buy programme at Mkwesine Estate in the South Eastern Lowveld in the then Rhodesia. The hidden narrative, though, is that only white farmers were eligible for this program and so this does not undercut the reality that blacks were disadvantaged by colonial land policies. The argument is to an extent evidence of selective amnesia and a denial of history, as Harrison shows no awareness that the land on which his farm is was acquired forcibly from the blacks and without compensation. Similarly, in the South African context, the poet Jeremy Cronin in the poetry collection *Even the Dead*, deals with forms of ‘individual and collective amnesia’ (Pinnock, 2014: 44), relating to post-apartheid South Africa. Even Harrison’s choice of the book’s title *Jambanja* to reduce the land reform program to sheer violence is an attempt to undermine the ‘patriotic narrative’. The narrator painstakingly shows how the products of years of planning and hard work were now just being ‘barbarously’ plundered by the land invaders who were themselves ill-equipped to utilise the land as productively as he has been doing.

Chief in the narrator Harry’s arsenal are the title deeds to his farm and the law, both of which he wields relentlessly against the attempts to forcibly take over the farm. He succeeds in showing that the invasion of the farm was against current statutes and because of the title-deeds he was the legitimate owner of the farm. Achille Mbembe claims that in 2000 Zimbabwe entered what he called the ‘zone of indistinction ... where the frontiers between the rule of law and chaos disappear’ (cited in Ndhlovu-Gatsheni, 2009: 1490). Harrison’s text clearly resonates with this observation. The disregard and setting aside of the rule of law did indeed set a dangerous and undesirable precedent for the country, the main arguments of the patriotic narrative notwithstanding. Nevertheless, the flaws of Harrison’s argument, underpinned by racism, mentioned earlier, undermine some of his legitimate claims in the text, making it less successful as a counter-discourse to the dominant political narrative. Arguably, the narrator Harry belongs together with those whites represented in Eppel’s *Hatchings* discussed in the previous chapter, who typify the ‘Rhodesians never die’ racist mentality identified by Hancock and Godwin (1993). As noted before, this is an identity that highlights the Janus-faced nature of some masculinities.

6.2.5 ‘The Boy to the Man’: The Making of a Masculine Narrative

As an autobiographical narrative the novel explores Harry's life from childhood up to the time he loses his farm. It is a narrative in which he constructs his identity along the lines of settler masculinity. His models are masculine heroes beginning with his step-grandfather who regales him with tales of his masculine heroism and machismo. This spirit is captured in the foreword to the novel by one, Dr Colin Sanders: 'Eric is a pocket packet of dynamite – and yes likely to explode if tampered with!' (Harrison, 2006: 7). This motif of small stature and hyper-masculine performances is also captured in Machingauta's *Detective Ridgemore Riva* discussed in chapter 4, and is contrary to the stereotypical association of macho-masculinity with big muscular male bodies. It is possible to see the hyper-masculine performances as compensatory for the absence of this signifier of hegemonic masculinity.

Harry's construction of his masculine identity also includes schooling, in which the sport of rugby features prominently. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is the sport whose physicality is primed for the development of macho and dominant masculine personalities of the kind that Harry becomes, and is closely associated with his success and survival as a farmer. His school, Allan Wilson, was named after and celebrates a white colonial soldier, Major Allan Wilson, who together with his army detachment died in a battle against Ndebele soldiers in the wars of colonial conquest. The narrative eulogizes him and his manly valour: 'Such was their courage in the way they fought, that the Matebele Chief ordered his men not to desecrate their bodies as was their custom to release evil spirits ... for they were men of men' (Harrison, 2006: 215). This reference to 'men of men', also the title of Wilber Smith's novel discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis, highlights how masculine heroism was central to the construction of white colonial masculinity. In fact, most of the whites-only schools that Harry refers to were named after white heroic figures, role models for young men like him.

After schooling follows compulsory military training, itself a site for the cultivation and construction of dominant masculinities. This military training was an acknowledgement of the insecurity felt by the white settler community due to their minority status, and also the rising tide of African nationalism that had seen a number of African countries gaining independence. Nevertheless, for Harry the experience constituted a key aspect in the forging of his masculinity, as fighting is associated with violent masculinity and masculine toughness, both markers of hegemonic masculinity.

Then comes marriage and fatherhood, both important markers of, and sites for the construction of white colonial masculinity in Rhodesia, as marked by the valorisation of family values, as former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith claimed in his autobiography: 'Great nations are built on the foundation of great families' (qtd in Chennells, 2005: 137). The family, as the nucleus and

microcosm of society, is a major site for the cultivation of hegemonic masculinity. This resonates with Muchemwa and Muponde's assertion that: 'Masculinities are largely connected to the fatherhood-paternity-manhood nexus where they self-perpetuate' (2007: xix). The family paradigm was all the more important as the architecture of colonial and imperial domination was premised on the iconography of the traditional patriarchal family (McClintock, 1991). In this scenario, paradigms and patterns of domination and subordination followed those of the family, and so colonizers assumed dominant masculine identities embodied by the iconography of the father, while the colonized were consigned to subordinate ones signified by the mother (feminization) and child (infantilization), both metaphors of their emasculation. Colonized women, however, being female, could not be degraded through feminization, and so they too were subject to infantilization. In colonial Rhodesia, this was achieved through the promulgation of what was then known as Customary Law, an adulteration of African tradition whose prime goal was to turn black women into legal minors and therefore make them available for exploitation by both black and white patriarchies (Geisler, 2004: 20).

This paradigm is clearly evident at Harry's Maioio Farm in colonial Rhodesia. His family is clearly set apart from the black workers on the farm and their power and domination over the workers is never in question. Even his wife and children, considered from this perspective, are 'masculinized' vis-à-vis both black men and women on the farm. The workers, most of them coming from the impoverished Tribal Trust Lands, are virtually at the mercy of Harry. They are veritably a faceless lot and are generally lumped together and referred to by the narrator as the 'gang', something that diminishes their humanity. Their utility is only as labourers, beyond which they are virtually invisible.

Harry constructs internal gendered hierarchies amongst the workers along the lines of colonial ethnic stereotypes of the Ndebele and the Shona, the two main ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, that were largely informed by the teleology of divide and rule. Streets (qtd in Parpart, 2007: 105) noted that 'The British preferred martial societies', such as the Ndebele, whose masculinities they valorised at the expense of those of less militarised groups such as the Shona. This most likely influenced Harry when he cherry picked an Ndebele man, Bitros, as his 'baas boy' to oversee all the other black workers on the farm, and the narrator's references to him are in more masculine terms than the other workers. Harry also identifies with him according to these terms, although this is camouflaged by the fact that both were born in the Matabeleland region. This makes visible the ambivalences and slippages in Harry's identity, where he predominantly identifies himself with the white community, but expediently appropriates an Ndebele one to inscribe his belongingness onto the geographical space that is Zimbabwe and Africa in general. It is, however, Ndebele precolonial

martial masculinity that he identifies with to help reinforce his masculine resistance to the appropriation of his farm: 'I too am a Matabele, both you [Bitros] and I were born in Bulawayo; have you ever surrendered?' (Harrison, 2006: 136). In fact, he attempts to conscript Bitros and the Ndebele in general into his own narrative of victimhood in another perverse way of employing ethnicity to serve his own ends. In this way, negating the realities on the ground, he constructs the 'patriotic narrative' as exclusively a Shona ethnocentric one, and thereby perpetuates a colonial discourse that attempted to promote ethnicity in the colonial polity as part of the strategic policy of divide and rule. The unfortunate upshot is that, 'these gendered myths of martial abilities (and incapacities) caused deep resentment and continue to haunt Zimbabwe today' (Parpart, 2007: 105).

For Harry, the farm also turns out to be another site for the cultivation of masculinity, with the jobs that he did requiring both toughness and mental agility. He constructs himself through the iconography of the early colonial settlers who imagined themselves 'taming' and 'subduing' a hostile and 'virgin' nature and making it not only productive, but also a place where they belong. This makes visible the fact that the control and domination of nature is also implicated in the construction and validation of some hegemonic masculine identities. So, many colonial whites, according to Hughs (2010: xii), 'avoided the blacks, preferring instead to invest themselves emotionally and artistically in the environment'. As noted before, Harry refers to his workers almost nonchalantly and dismissively as 'the gang'. Unlike nature, blacks represented the possibility of subversion of colonial hegemonic masculinities and so were kept at arms' length. There was also the fear of 'going native', that of 'sinking down' to the levels of colonial black masculinity and so losing dominant status.

War, in this case the 1970s war of liberation, is known to be responsible for cultivating macho masculinity, particularly amongst the combatants. This is true for combatants on both sides of the divide, and for Harry this was crucial in shaping a masculinity that primed him for control and domination, particularly of his work-force, and enabled him to hold his own easily amongst his peers. It also partly accounts for his stubborn and enduring resistance to the violent acquisition of his farm during the land reform program. So, in short, Harry is the archetypal colonial masculine subject primed for the perpetuation and survival of the colonial enterprise in a context where the colonizers are immensely outnumbered by the blacks and are perpetually uneasy. This resonates with the observation that, after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), 'The new government and media urged white men to devote themselves to protecting white privilege and "civilized" living standards. A militant, martial mentality was encouraged' (Hancock, qtd in Parpart, 2007: 107).

6.2.6 Jambanja: The Farm as the New Frontier

The coming of independence necessitated that both whites and blacks forge new identities in tandem with the new realities now obtaining. Even with little political power, the whites remained dominant in most sectors of the economy, for example, agriculture, as is apparent in the case of Harry with his farm. As is evident in Chenjerai Hove's novel *Bones* (1988), in the case of a similar farm owner named Manyepo, they held power and sway over their predominantly black workforce in ways not very different from the colonial days. This shows that in many ways the farm also remained as a space and site for the maintenance and perpetuation of colonial racial and masculine hierarchies. During the 1970s liberation war, many of the farms were attacked as legitimate targets by the black freedom fighters because they were sites of the exploitation and oppression of black workers and they represented the land that was confiscated from the blacks during colonialism. Most of the able-bodied farm owners such as Harry were called up to fight in the war and so would be away for months on end. This meant that their wives, like Joan, Harry's wife, filled in for them as far as running the farms was concerned. They also, sometimes, had to face the dangers of attacks by the freedom fighters alone. They therefore were masculinized in a number of ways.

The dominant images constructed the whites as not only valiant, but competent and efficient fighters, while the guerrillas are constructed as the exact opposite, highlighting narrative continuities in the manner in which white and black masculinities were envisioned in white-authored narratives. Needless to say, the farms were also themselves frontiers during the liberation war, and in some cases both men and women made up the frontier masculinities.

During the Fast Track Land Reform Program from the year 2000, the farm again became a veritable and germane frontier. It is a program that Harrison summarises as *jambanja* to highlight its violent nature, rendering it gendered or masculinized. Not surprisingly, it had veterans of the 1970s liberation war at its forefront, implying that it also has the semblance of a war; witness the name *Third Chimurenga*, used to refer to it in the dominant nationalist narrative.

In the case of Maioio Farm, Harry was also a former combatant during the war, albeit on the opposite side, that of the Rhodesia forces. So the scenario becomes, at a metonymic level, a perpetuation of the same. Cast thus, the two sides become veritable neo-frontier masculinities, and so Maioio Farm is fought over for a prolonged period of time. This resonates with Mlambo's observation that, 'an overdrive of masculinity is frequently fostered among combatants, with obvious post-war implications at both the individual and societal level' (2015: 170). The long shelf life of such masculinities is evidence of the Janus-faced nature of masculine identities and the operation of centripetal and centrifugal forces on them. Macho identities are a part of the architecture of hegemonic masculinities, hence their survival well into post-conflict situations.

6.2.7 The 'Barbarians' at the Gates, Again?

Jambanja or the *Third Chimurenga* was essentially a struggle over the land, reminiscent of the colonial frontier wars in reverse. The land as has been noted before from a gendered and symbolic perspective, takes the place of female bodies in patriarchal discourses, and so can be fought over. Arguably, in the *jambanja*, it also has similar symbolic dimensions and so is a rallying point for male bodies to defend it, or alternatively, to win it back. For Harry, his attachment to the land almost has an uxorious aura, despite the fact that the farm also has other identity dimensions such as the economic one and its status for him as home. The imagery in the narrative is suggestive of the fact that the farm invokes in him the sense of responsibility and need for protection, just as it does for his wife Joan, both of whom experience the same sense of vulnerability to the land invaders. To lose the farm would thus also translate into masculinized humiliation on his part, and so his spirited defence of the farm has as much to do with his masculine identity as it has to do with its other dimensions. On the part of the invaders, to take over the farm has the symbolic status of (re)conquest which in itself has associations with masculine rehabilitation and recovery of lost pride as well as resonances of heroism on their part and emasculating ones in relation to Harry. No wonder erstwhile Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe referred to the whole program as 'conquest of conquests', an appellation that signifies the interplay of masculinities.

Mediated through Harry's consciousness, and as part of a sly and sublime attempt at subverting the patriotic narrative, the images in the text construct the land invaders, as in some of the texts examined previously, as virtually drooling at the farm's opulence, as being like the 'barbarians at the gates' (Hock, qtd in Kelly, 2008: 216). For example, they are described as 'hoodlums' (Harrison, 2006: 132), and a 'noisy mob' (ibid: 138) amongst other appellations which associate their masculinity with the state of being 'uncivilised'. This is juxtaposed with a valorisation of Harry's own masculine identity, which he views as a continuation of the 'civilised' British imperial masculinity, seen by him as resilient and indomitable, and whose embodiment is the 'British bulldog' (Harrison, 2006: 76). There is therefore a celebration of colonial 'Anglo-Saxon chauvinism, national racism and parochialism, all of which meant complete indifference to the plight and suffering of others' (Nyoka, qtd in Gwekwerere, Mutasa and Chitofiri, 2018: 16). In the several altercations and scuffles that Harry has with the invaders, he portrays himself as outfoxing and outmanoeuvring them through a combination of quick wits and guile, while simultaneously imaging them as not only both daft and bovine, but also veritable Yahoos. In this way, again, he constructs masculine hierarchies between him and them along the erstwhile, but outdated and discredited, lines of 'civilised' and 'uncivilised'. Harry therefore relies on what

Messerschmidt and Rohde (2018: 680), refer to as ‘the villain-victim-hero’ paradigm in his representation of himself and the farm occupiers.

So, the farm is like a citadel under siege, and in Harry’s consciousness, it is not only his land that is under threat, but also his wife. For him the loss and/or violation of either is intimately tied to his masculine identity, hence his spirited and uncompromising defence of both in the face of threats to his very life. Even when he eventually has to abandon the farm in the face of relentless pressure from the invaders, and serious concerns over his personal safety, he does not see this as the end of the fight for what he considers to be his own farm: ‘Yes, he thought, *they won the first round, but the fight isn’t over yet*’ (italics in the original) (Harrison, 2006: 247). In other words, he does not see himself as a defeated man, for he had ‘*the strength to walk away from ... [his] farm with ... [his] pride and ... [his] dignity still intact*’. While this might contrast with what he says elsewhere about the trauma and harm done to him because of *jambanja*, his claim nevertheless highlights the importance of having kept his masculine pride intact, considering how he had been man enough and almost single-handedly confronted the farm invaders, literally putting his life on the line. As has always been the case since his young days as a sportsman and soldier, masculine heroism is a major marker of his identity.

In the same masculine paradigm, the farm is also imaged as a miniature nation, to replace the colony. Therefore in the text’s universe of discourse it is constructed as an island of ‘civilisation’ and ‘order’ against the ‘chaos’ and ‘disorder’ that the narrative claims are the norm in post-independence African countries, inclusive of Zimbabwe. In the narrative’s view, therefore, it is Harry and other white farmers’ sacrosanct duty and responsibility to keep such ‘retrogressive’ and ‘dark’ forces at bay, even at the risk of their own lives. This is evidenced, *inter alia*, by how the narrator harps, *ad nauseam*, on the lack of knowhow, the incompetence and inexperience of the new farmers, that mark their endeavours as doomed from the very start. The whole land reform program is therefore cast as atavistic, marking a return to primeval ‘dark’ continent days from which the land has been ‘rescued’ by colonialism. Harry therefore views himself and other white farmers as seized by and being the stoic but determined bearers of what Kipling referred to as ‘the White Man’s Burden’, which ‘valorises the British civilising mission in the colonies and justifies subjugation of native inhabitants of the colonies’ (Magosvongwe, 2013: 131). The racist-premised notion of carrying such a burden conferred a sense of self-righteousness on the colonial white masculinities that obscured from their view the gross and glaring injustices of the colonial enterprise. This largely defined the texture of white colonial hegemonic masculinities such as Harrison’s, but also made the whites blind to many of the realities of the colony, particularly as these related to the lives of the natives. It also mediates Harry’s consciousness in constructing this

narrative, and continues to inform his masculine identity. This racial burden should also be seen as constructing a patriarchal status for colonising white men (and women) in relation to the colonized, who, in this paradigm, once more, assumed a feminine and infantile status. Hence, for example, Harry argues that, independence had been granted too soon to the blacks, whom he sees as needing more nurturing by the colonizers before they are mature and ready.

6.2.8 Subversive Masculinities

The patriarchal status discussed above defines Harry's relationship with his black workforce. This paternal relationship obscures for him the marginalization, oppression and exploitation that they suffer because of their race. They drown their tribulations and sorrows in beer, philandering, or singing and dancing, all of which Harry interprets as signifiers and markers of how happy and contented they are. Harry does not see the relationship between them as that between exploiter and exploited, and consequently that of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. But domination also invites resistance, and the relationship between Harry and his workers is no exception. So, the masculinities of most of the labourers should also be seen as subversive, but largely in covert and invisible ways. To negotiate and survive the racism present in colonial spaces such as the farm, the blacks used a strategy that Fanon (1967) refers to as 'masking' to conceal the subterranean currents of discontentment concerning their marginal and subordinated ontology under colonialism. Hence the beguilingly serene, happy and contented outward demeanours and countenances of most of his workers give Harry the impression that all is well, and that the master-servant relationship between them is just what the doctor ordered. That they coin the praise name 'Maioio Shumba' (The Lion of Maioio) to refer to Harry seems to cement the masculine and power hierarchies on the farm.

But what appear like germane subordinate masculinities are concomitantly camouflaged subversive ones, as Harry is to discover belatedly when after independence some of his seemingly docile workers embrace ruling party activism to empower and masculinise themselves and subvert his hegemony as much as is possible. For example: 'Andrea, a short, quite, hardworking gardener who never said boo to a goose, turned out to be a master-mind politico living right under their noses. He was having an absolute field day in stirring up the labour, forming cells and placing people in a multitude of job descriptions according to party systems' (Harrison, 2006: 97). The hierarchies on the farm are undermined, with Bitros the baas boy becoming a pale shadow of his former self. Harry however, attributes everything to rabble-rousers and agent provocateurs, ignoring the stark reality of the workers' deprivations and concealed discontentment that only needed an outlet for them to come to the surface. Subversion, for the first time, becomes visible, though Harry blames all this on the pervasive influence of the ruling ZANU (PF) party and the

government, both masculine entities and presences in their own right. Through their Workers' Committee, a centre of power on its own, they become a force to reckon with, and it is only then that Harry begins to recognise and acknowledge their humanity, individuality and masculinity and femininity such that in the text he begins to refer to some of them by name. The co-existence and/or alternation of subordination and subversion destabilise and complicate conventional masculine hierarchies and categories, thereby underlining the fluidity and shifting nature of masculine identities and their dialogic nature.

The coming in of the farm invaders completely changes the matrix, as some of his erstwhile faithful employees, both male and female, smell the coffee, change sides and try to empower themselves by siding with the farm occupiers. Having known only a life of servitude, they seize the opportunity of at last exorcising the demon of their emasculation on the farm and getting their own back on Harry. The workers apparently are caught up in the middle and are fought over by the two sides. The brutal attack on some of his loyal workers by the land occupiers is a grim spectacle aimed not only at intimidating and cowering them, but also at emasculating Harry, who is supposed to look out for them as his employees. Harry invokes ethnicity to explain the savage beating up of the farm's 'baas boy' Bitros, though this can best be viewed as an attack on Harry's masculinity, bearing in mind Bitros' complicit masculinity and closeness to him in terms of the power hierarchies on the farm. It demonstrates Harry's own impotence in the face of these farm occupiers.

Notwithstanding this, the lives of many of the workers, economically, are tied up with the farm and so they are caught up in the middle. They have to rely on recommendation letters from the former employer, Harry, to find employment elsewhere. These, though, are selectively issued based on loyalty to Harry in the face of the farm occupiers, sufficient proof that these two (Harry and the farm occupiers) are rival and competing masculinities.

6.2.9 Towards a Form of 'Whiteness'?

Notwithstanding the above, Fisher's observation relating to the likes of Harry and what happened to them is also illuminating: 'Europeans are not beyond finding themselves decentred, dispossessed and marginalized in the name of decolonization and correcting the colonial record' (2010: xii). This process also involves emasculation, which is very much the subject of John Eppel's novel *Absent the English Teacher* (2009). For Harry, his loss of Maioio farm through *jambanja* is also similarly emasculating. The history of colonialism resulted in whiteness being conflated with privilege, economic power, and dominance, aspects that survived into the post-colonial and which tend to occlude the possibilities of the above. This is compounded by the fact that whiteness, like masculinity in gender discourses, is often an unmarked racial category: 'the

dominating position [whiteness] is unmarked , allowing freedom and greater possibilities, and simultaneously setting itself up as normal, positioned beyond any obligation to explain itself' (Stein, qtd in Kelly, 2008: 116). While this enabled whites under colonialism to reap a 'racial dividend' of an immense proportion in relation to the blacks, this ontology has the potential to be appropriated in the post-colonial era for purposes of justifying a process of reverse racism in the name of correcting colonial injustices. In this way it becomes racially marked and interpellated with erstwhile signifiers that can obscure the possibility of disempowerment and marginalization. The narrator therefore portrays the suffering, impoverishment and deprivation of some former white farmers who had lost their farms and with them their livelihoods as a result of *jambanja*. These realities and aspects, though, tend to be overshadowed by the self-defeating racist orientation of the narrator, which sees him scoring own goals and thereby leaving the legitimacy of many of his claims in question. The narrator views race, whiteness in particular, in essentialist terms, as a given, rather than a social construct, and in this respect he falls into the trap of the ruling party's 'patriotic narrative's' similar notions of race which Muzondidya (2010: 6) characterizes as 'ZANU PF's populist politics of racial nationalism'. Like masculinity, as referred to before, race is also largely performed, as is evident in Harry's narrative. The farm invaders in the text are fronting a black middle-class man by the name of Guno Matunda, who is trying to take over the farm and supplant Harry both in the material sense and metaphorically in the racial and masculine senses. Arguably, therefore, the invasion of this farm is not directly linked to helping impoverished landless blacks, but rather self-enrichment by a member of the elite. In this way he tries to appropriate the erstwhile signifiers of whiteness, and therefore metonymically assumes the identity that Frye (qtd in Tagwirei, 2014:181) refer to as 'whiteness', to refer to the appropriation of 'attributes and practices normally associated with white behaviour', a process more elaborately illustrated in John Eppel's novel *Absent the English Teacher* (2009). Colonial white hegemonic masculinity had served as a model of power and dominance for the oppressed blacks for almost a century during the colony's tenure, and so the likelihood of post-independence masculinities modelling themselves along its lines was high, making visible the complex operation of centripetal and centrifugal forces in the shaping of masculine identities. This resonates with Fanon's claim that 'there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place' (1967: 30). It is therefore symbolic that Harry nick-names Matunda 'White Hat', which though it denotes the white hat that is his trademark adornment, is nevertheless also an allusion to the afore-mentioned dynamic. It is also a subtle strategy on the part of the text to delegitimise the 'patriotic narrative' and its land reform program through constructing it as merely a consequence of the elite's attempts to attain this 'whiteness', the equivalent of erstwhile white colonial

hegemonic masculinities. This, though, can be viewed as double-edged, because mimicry is also a strategy of resistance and deconstruction of hegemonic whiteness, as highlighted by Bhabha (1994: 86): ‘mimicry is never very far from mockery, since it can appear to parody whatever it mimics’. In this way the myths that had surrounded whiteness since colonial days would be unmasked. It is also important to note that the land reform program, the shenanigans and avaricious tendencies of the ruling elite notwithstanding, also benefitted many landless and impoverished rural blacks, as previously pointed out.

The predicament of Harry and other white farmers who lost their land through *jambanja* does not only relate to their masculine identities, but also to questions of belonging, among other things. Most of them had tried, through various strategies, to inscribe their belongingness to the geographical space that is Zimbabwe. But: ‘The government’s handling of the land question proved critical in producing “the break ... the maiming” ... that psychologically uncoupled whites from what they thought was their homeland’ (Breytenbach, qtd in Fisher 2010: 191). The same also includes the handling of issues of citizenship. The text *Jambanja*, though, with the flaws noted above, does limited justice to advance their cause. Nevertheless, white masculine subjectivities in Zimbabwe should be viewed as multiple, and so no singular subjectivity can be taken to be representative of all.

6.2.10 Conclusion

Harrison’s text is a narrative where he constructs himself and the other white farmers who lost their farms due the Fast Track Land Reform Program as quintessential victims of a violent and grossly iniquitous process. He is writing against the background of the Zimbabwean regime’s ‘patriotic narrative’, referred to previously, and which he seeks to deconstruct. That narrative sought to justify the above program partly for the regime’s purposes of seeking legitimacy and securing its tenure in the face of growing discontent from the general populace and the prospect of losing power at the polls to an ascendant political opposition in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The text glosses over the complexities of the land question in Zimbabwe, and views almost everything through a racist prism which ultimately becomes its Achilles heel.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Nyaradzo Mtizira’s *The Chimurenga Protocol* and Eric Harrison’s *Jambanja* are contrasting narratives that construct largely diametrically opposed and adversarial masculine subjectivities in the post 2000 political, economic and social dispensation. In many ways they dramatize the native

and settler question explored by Mamdani (1998). Both narratives, either implicitly or explicitly, deal with threatened and beleaguered hegemonic masculinities at the national and personal levels and the survival strategies and postures they adopt. Those masculinities of the ruling elite conjure up the ‘patriotic narrative’ represented in Mtizira’s text to try to shore themselves up. This narrative strategically appropriates the people’s genuine grievances over the unfulfilled promises of the anti-colonial struggles, particularly on the land issue, to sustain itself. It violently appropriates male bodies and inscribes on them masculine national ideals of heroism, patriotism, sacrifice, to shore up its vision of the nation.

The narrow and conscripted prism of Manichean binaries is employed to divide the nation into ‘patriots’ and ‘sell-outs’, ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, as the ‘patriotic narrative’ went into overdrive, creating serious disjunctions in the nation’s body-politic. The masculinities of the ruling elite, in ways that make visible the operation of centripetal forces, appear unable to transcend the ‘native’ ontology into which they had been interpellated by the colonial gaze, hence the ‘nativist’ and ‘Afro-radicalism’ discourses that they deploy. On the other hand, those masculinities of the former settlers in Harrison’s *Jambanja* regress to an erstwhile colonial ‘civilising’ narrative, as well as one of victimhood, to buttress their claims of unjust treatment as far as the land issue is concerned. This fixation with the past and the manner in which it is shunted into the present is further evidence of the Janus-faced nature of masculinities. The narrator is thus entrapped in erstwhile ‘settler’ subjectivities in a post-colonial context, bringing him into a collision course with the formerly colonized.

There is little to separate both *The Chimurenga Protocol* and its *chimurenga* poetics and *Jambanja* and its *jambanja* poetics with their essentialist and racialised discourses. The hegemonic masculinities in both texts attempt to derive inspiration from what they view as a heroic past whose discourses pass as authoritative ones, hence the Chimurenga narrative and the colonial racist one respectively. In both cases their contemporary discourses lack that internal persuasiveness due to a failure to reinvent themselves in order to continue being relevant. The ruling elite in the form of the ZANU PF party were losing ground to the political opposition, whose vision of the nation appears more internally persuasive and therefore appealing to many in the national body politic. On the other hand, the former colonizer masculinities were under siege and threatened with the loss of their former colonial privileges, here represented by the land. Viewed through a masculinities prism, this would suggest that hegemonic masculinity, being the masculine ideal in a given context or social milieu, can become trapped on its pedestal, and become difficult to change without emasculating the male subjects involved, who would have invested so much of themselves in it. In Freudian terms this would be the equivalent of castration, and so the castration complex can partly

account for the apparent frozenness in time of some hegemonic masculinities. This would be particularly the case when there is little or nothing to compensate for the loss of, or abdication from, those identities. In this case, hegemonic masculinities prefer to remain just that, hegemonic; which can only occur if one form of hegemony is exchanged for another.

In Mtizira and Harrison's texts, as already noted, we find the *chimurenga* and the 'Rhodesians never die' forms of hegemonic masculinities respectively, and they are diametrically opposed to each other, and it is possible that they help to construct each other, since masculinities, like language, are dialogic. This ontology of the two masculinities would translate into the failure to resolve the settler-native question, where both fail to reinvent themselves, much to the detriment of both and the nation at large. This, and what Campbell calls the exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation needs to be understood in the context of the nature of hegemonic masculinities and their dialogic relations with other masculinities and discourses.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has examined the representation of masculinities in selected Zimbabwean literary texts from the year 1980 to 2008, focusing on both black and white writers. This time-space has not been viewed as unitary, but multiple. The inclusion of both black and white authors is a movement away from erstwhile exclusionary tendencies in mainstream Zimbabwean literary criticism, where the two were treated as separate and mutually exclusive, a reality that also mirrored the masculine, racial and nationalist politics at play both during the colonial era and after independence. Whose literature was privileged correlated with who controlled the levers of political power and whose masculinity was hegemonic at any given period in the history of the country, namely, whites during the colonial era, and blacks during the post-independence one. The lives of blacks and whites are entangled during both the colonial and post-independence eras, and so Zimbabwean masculinities can only be fully understood by examining texts by both. Race is also not a fixed category, and its constructedness and fluidity means that it cannot be viably and effectively used as an instrument to exclude some literary texts from mainstream Zimbabwean literature.

7.2 Summary and Conclusions

The thesis is a study of literary representations of post-independence Zimbabwean masculinities, using a triangulation of theories that include postcolonial theory, Bakhtin's dialogism, and Hall's constructionist theory of representation, to make possible a profound examination of the masculine subject in this time-space. It aims to examine how men are imaged, and the performance, expression, contestation, negotiation and renegotiation of both black and white masculinities in the geo-political space of post-independence Zimbabwe. The masculinities are thus situated and examined in the context of the evolving social, economic, political and cultural conditions within this time-space. The interface of the masculinities with other identities such as femininities, class and race have also been an integral part of this study.

'Uneasy images, unstable identities' are words which suggest that the masculine subject, in the manner of all identities, is not unitary or monolithic, but marked by a shifting and fluid ontology. The images of men in the texts are constructed in multiple ways that concretise and reflect this reality. In the idiom of Bakhtin (qtd in Holquist, 2002: 26-28), masculinity, like various elements of existence, is in the form of a text which has the semblance of a novel and hence is marked by dialogic tensions. The thrust in the thesis, therefore, has also been to situate

and appreciate masculinities on a map of dialogic relations, rather than as over-arching variables that have an autonomous ontology.

Chapter 2 of the thesis looked at those texts whose narrative time is in early post-independence Zimbabwe, while their narrated time is in pre-colonial Zimbabwe or during the moment of colonial contact. The texts represent strategic attempts to recover and foreground usable pasts, which inevitably include historical images of masculinity. Shunting and inserting such images into the present invariably situates them in dialogic relations with present ones, and should therefore be read as ideological and political. This reading feeds into the discourse of intra-masculine politics characterized by struggles for dominance amongst different masculinities in the nation. The coming of independence meant the end of colonial white hegemonic masculinities in the political sense and the ascendancy of those of the formerly colonized blacks. Wilber Smith's *Men of Men* recovers images of 'heroic' white colonial frontier masculinities against the background of the anxieties associated with the loss of political power by the former colonizers. This loss could signify Enloe's (1990: op cit) 'masculinized humiliation' for the former colonizers in ways that engender tendencies to conjure up nostalgia for and consequently a strategic recovery of a 'glorious' past represented by colonial conquest. Such nostalgia represents 'a temporal as well as spatial sense of dislocation' (Nosco, qtd in Naoke Kambe, 2017: 18) from contemporary realities that require the renegotiation of such masculinities. Nations are imagined through similar paradigms, making visible a dialogic relationship between the nation and masculinities. Such a stance by the said subjects, with its connotations of resistance, has implications for the post-independence government's policy of reconciliation and also the transformation of former settler identities in tandem with the new realities brought about by independence. On the other hand, Solomon Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe* similarly recovers an ethnocentric 'heroic' past and masculinity epitomised by Chaminuka in the context of the nationalist struggles of the early years of independence, and their associated masculine anxieties and insecurities. Intra-masculine politics come into play with the trope of the Other being deployed in an attempt to privilege one particular version of the nation over others. Othering here functions to elevate one masculinity, and consequently one version of the nation over the other. This notwithstanding the evident internal contradictions and ambivalences within the masculine identities so foregrounded.

The racist and ethnic discourses in the two texts, located as they are in the past, assume the posture of authoritative discourses to privilege particular masculine identities at the expense of others. As, according to Bakhtin (1981: 342), authoritative discourse is *a priori* and not

easily dialogized, and is more or less top-down and is controlled by one centre at the expense of others, it therefore represents a discursive attempt to create a sense of stability and even stasis, as far as these identities are concerned – in line with Hall's (1996: 596) conception of essentialist cultural identities. In the sense of the nationalist discourses this can be viewed as representing the 'masculinized memory' that is central in the imagining and creation of national identities.

Men of Men also shows that amongst masculinities and in line with Foucault's (1978: 93) conception, power is not necessarily monopolized by one centre represented by hegemonic masculinities, but is in fact diffused, as is evident in the 'Pioneer Column'. It also validates Connell's assertion that hegemonic masculinity is possessed by a few men, suggesting that its aspects or components are dispersed amongst different men. The text makes visible a hierarchy of masculinities that has a pointed pinnacle occupied by one individual, who happens to be Rhodes, and who is constructed in the text as a natural leader of men. It is the contention here that this pinnacle can actually be viewed as a level in the hierarchy of masculinities and is occupied by an alpha male, a super-hegemon, who sits atop what would normally be viewed as hegemonic masculinities. Several male characters in the text, such as Ballantyne, have the attributes of hegemonic masculinities, but it is Rhodes, with his charisma, drive and business acumen, who is able to establish himself as the undisputed leader of them all. He is the quintessential 'big man', but does not possess many of the attributes of hegemonic masculinity. In the traditional hierarchy of masculinities this reality of the arch-hegemon is not fully accounted for, showing that masculine hierarchies are much more complex than they are depicted in Connell's paradigm. However, as is evident in the text, even such a male subject does not wield all the power, and in many ways depends on other differently positioned masculine and even feminine subjects.

Masculine hierarchies between colonizing and colonized men are established through Othering and conquest. Racist discourse attempts to essentialize identities and create stereotypes. It constricts dialogue between the two groups in ways that are deleterious for both, as one sees, for example, in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1959). Conquest is cast through the trope of rape in *Men of Men* and so is traumatic and leaves deep scars on the colonized's psyche and thus represents 'masculinized humiliation' on their part, and so is potentially foundational for the post-colonial nation.

In Solomon Mutswairo's *Chaminuka: Prophet of Zimbabwe*, a messy picture regarding masculine hierarchies emerges, where every masculinity senses its lack of certain qualities, which it subsequently covets in other forms of self-definition. In classical Shona culture there

is a recognition that hegemonic masculinity is not everything, and alternatives are contained in folk wisdom such as proverbs and folk-tales, where the underdog often overcomes the dominant. Alluded to here is the vulnerability and susceptibility to subversion of the dominant forms. And the case of the prophet Chaminuka with his revolutionary philosophy of peace and non-violence represents this.

Moments of crisis represent opportunities for one hegemonic masculinity to be supplanted by another. A crisis can be evidence of the failure of a current dominant/hegemonic masculinity to deal with new challenges. Also evident in the text is the fact that hegemonic masculinity traditionally contained aspects essential to the survival of society. It also embodies elements necessary for the success of individuals; and women also had a stake in the cultivation of these masculinities, and so were complicit and even helped in their construction and/or perpetuation.

The pull of centripetal and centrifugal forces, represented by culture on one hand and the exigencies for survival on the other, is shown to create ambivalence and even some schizophrenic elements in some of the masculinities in the text. Mutswairo's text thus invests the male body with cultural inscriptions that attempt to essentialize identity.

In chapter 3, the fact that few men possess all the aspects of hegemonic masculinity means that its elements are largely dispersed amongst different men. Marechera's text shows homosocial bonds bringing together men with different masculine attributes, who collaborate to enable them to dominate, and these go on to become a class. They then, through this collaboration, become veritable hegemonic masculinities. In the postcolony most of the men are manoeuvred into complicity in the obtaining of hegemonic masculinity, while non-complicity is vilified and results in marginalization. However, those masculinities on the margins can become subversive and might try to under-cut the hegemonic ones, often on an ideological level. They model themselves as alternatives to the dominant ones. So there is a dialogic relationship between these different masculinities and they can actually help in constructing each other, with a transference of power being implicated in the production of resistance and subversion. No wonder the post-independence ruling elite, the erstwhile subversive masculinities to colonial ones, model themselves largely along the lines of their predecessors.

In Lemon's *Ivory Madness*, some of the hegemonic masculinities are associated with institutions such as the state, and derive their power from them, implying a dialogic relationship between them and the masculinisation of institutions. Here masculinity becomes entangled in a chain of dialogic relations that consist of bodies, institutions and discourses. Such individuals

whose power and dominance derive from institutions may not necessarily have many of the other attributes of hegemonic masculinity. For some this can be a source of acute anxiety, which can be accompanied by compensatory behaviours aimed at vicariously filling up the perceived gap between such subjects' masculinity and actual hegemonic masculinity attributes embodied in social discourse. This is the case with the big game trophy hunters and collectors in the text. This becomes another *modus operandi* of complicity with and 'benefiting' from hegemonic masculinity.

Lemon's text juxtaposes human society and the jungle, with connotations suggesting that the imperative of survival of the fittest applies to both and is implicated in the construction of masculine identities. What is evident is that different masculinities are associated with survival and/or dominance in a particular space such as the city, jungle and so on, and there is not necessarily a 'one size fits all'. The image of man the hunter, at a metaphoric level, manifests itself differently in different places and times. Whatever the locale or time-space, a subterranean narrative of survival seems to undergird most of the masculine identities at an individual as well as group level.

In the text, there appears to be a separation of spaces on the basis of gender, with men in the public sphere and women in the private. By its very nature the public space is more akin to a jungle, characterized by multiple contestations over a number of variables to do with the people's lives. So multiple frontiers characterize this space, and along these various struggles and contestations occur. Such frontiers include, but are not limited to, diverse variables such as gender, capital (in a capitalist society), creed, class, race, and so on. Even narrative, as represented by these literary texts, is a site of struggle. It is the contention here that these struggles result in a hierarchy of masculinities, such as the one delineated by Connell (1995; 2005). Intra-masculine politics and struggles also occur along frontiers such as those between dominant and subversive masculinities. By virtue of belonging to or occupying the public sphere, men are able to reap a 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell) over women, who are domiciled in the private sphere in traditional society. Women's entry into the public sphere also means that they become imbricated in the same struggles as men along similar frontiers, and in this way they certainly appropriate those masculinities that have characterized these spaces and their attendant struggles. In this way, they can become part of the hierarchy of masculinities, such as the subversive, and so represent the potential for an alternative hegemony. Embodying a hybridity represented by both masculine and feminine qualities can potentially make such women better adapted to cope with struggles along different frontiers in certain contexts, and thus make them serious candidates for an alternative or parallel hegemony and the potential to

reap what could be a 'matriarchal dividend'. Hybrids in nature are known for their robustness and ability to survive, but men also have the potential for assuming the same hybridity in the various contestations referred to above. There is even the possibility of a collective hegemony between such men and women.

The texts, *Ivory Madness* and *Mindblast and Other Stories*, highlight the ambivalence of some Zimbabwean masculinities of this period, in that they exhibit both dynamism and stasis or entrapment in the past. In strategic fashion they change in ways that benefit them or serve their interests, and try to invoke a past of heroism and/or dominance to buttress themselves where their masculinities feel threatened or degraded. This reality highlights the fact that masculinities are Janus-faced, strategically turned to both the past and the present/future.

In chapter 4, Freeman's *Rumours of Ophir*, written in the 1990s, shows that Zimbabwean masculinities of the time are also linked with the ability to provide sustenance for the family, financial independence and survival in general. So the conception of masculinities by some scholars, mainly Western, that masculinity is all about domination and power, is a limited prism through which to understand all Zimbabwean manhoods. This role of provider puts pressure on some men, who go to great lengths and sometimes at great risk, particularly in a context with economic challenges, in order to fulfil it.

The 'big man' model of masculinity is also a desired one for many men, who also go to great lengths, including risk-taking, to attain it. Material prosperity, represented by the mad quest for gold in Freeman's text, is a desideratum for its attainment. Masculine pride and honour are entangled in this image of masculinity. Male honour and masculine humiliation are diametrical opposites that motivate individual and group masculinities, including at a national level, to act or respond in particular ways, to preserve or banish respectively. The man and the nation's honour or humiliation are entangled, and hence the traditional male role of defending the nation. Women's symbolic roles entangle them with these notions of male honour and humiliation, a merging of elements that results in a clarion call to defend the nation's women. Noted in *Rumours of Ophir* is that the performance of 'masculine' roles by women is not always accompanied by changes in their symbolic roles.

The iconography of the male body comes in handy in the imagination and mediation of notions such as heroism and self-sacrifice. The image of the superman can be appropriated and promoted as the desired model, particularly in the context of threats such as those to the nation. In which case, the image is seen as well-primed to deal with subversive masculinities and enemies within the nation. In Freeman's text, the association often made between whiteness and racism is debunked and there is the search for models to reinforce the government's policy

of racial reconciliation. The rights of passage to becoming a full member of the Zimbabwean nation at the time are highlighted and include loyalty, patriotism and self-sacrifice in defence of the nation's interests. The paradox is that images of mixed-race masculinities constructed in the text, instead of being symbols of the dissolution of racial boundaries, are not in any way flattering but are pathologized. This makes evident the pull of centripetal forces in how these identities are imagined and imaged. Mixed-race identities had a problematic ontology during the colonial era, and this appears to be carried over into the post-colony.

Machingauta's *Detective Ridgemore Riva* debunks the connection between masculinity and big muscular bodies. Psychological conditioning is also responsible for promoting the value of tough, muscular male bodies. This echoes Lemon's *Ivory Madness*, where conditioning in the case of military training is shown to be responsible for producing not only tough as nails male bodies, but steely and resolute character as well. This tendency, though, represents the appropriation, conditioning and disciplining of the male body for it to be primed to defend the nation. The phenomenon highlights the instability and constructedness of masculinity, and leaves it open to appropriation by those with female bodies, as is evident in *Rumours of Ophir*, where similar conditioning produces like female bodies.

Absence of the key signifiers of masculinity can result in anxiety and angst in some men, leading to an almost obsessive and pathological predisposition to display them. The predisposition is a manifestation of what can be referred to as a hegemonic masculinity deficiency syndrome manifesting itself in excessive displays (verging on performances) of masculinity, or showing complicity with these. This appears to an extent correlative to the distance between average masculinity and the major markers of the cultural ideal of the desired form of masculinity. In this regard, one is reminded of Chinua Achebe's postcolonial novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), where the main character, Okonkwo, displays a similar pathology, as he tries to banish the nightmarish image of his 'feminine' father, Unoka. In the same vein, the minuscule Riva in Machingauta's text is always obsessed with the need to prove his machismo. Here masculinity enters the realm of the spectacle, further highlighting its association with performance.

Both Freeman and Machingauta's texts make visible the dialogic resonances between masculinities and various other discourses, such as the nation, the economic, the political and the social, all of which impact on them in various ways, showing that they are not a supra-social category or something that is inborn as far as men are concerned. Masculinity produces and is also produced by these discourses, with which it dialogues in rather complex ways.

In chapter 5, Eppel's *Hatchings* is seen to be a satiric representation of the Zimbabwean nation, which makes visible the Janus-faced nature of some white masculinities in the manner they look back to the past and deploy tropes of Rhodesianness in mediating contemporary realities in the text. They make visible the extent to which masculinities can look back and cling to a 'heroic' past when they were dominant or privileged. Here the power of centripetal forces is greater than the centrifugal ones, as well as that of supposedly authoritative discourses such as race, as opposed to internally persuasive ones such as the government's policy of reconciliation. The realities surrounding their economic power highlights the fact that hegemony can be confined to specific domains in society rather than being all-pervasive, suggesting that masculinities can be similarly positioned. In black Zimbabwean lingo, a person who has made it economically and/or employs others was/is often referred to by the term 'murungu', meaning white man, highlighting the hegemony referred to above. Some of the white subjects align themselves with the black ruling elite who dominate politically. The hegemony of this elite is also evident in nomenclature where a powerful person is often referred to by the term 'chef', which is normally used with reference to the political elite. Hegemony is therefore extended by the net-working or alliance of differently positioned masculinities, starting at the level of individual men. Sedgwick (1997:525) speaks of homosocial bonds amongst men that enable them to maintain their domination. Such bonds can also be evidence of the dispersion of hegemonic masculine attributes amongst men, and the consequent instability of their identities.

Eppel's text also makes visible the fact that hegemonic masculinities occur at both a macro and micro group level. Even subversive and marginal masculinities can have their own internal hierarchies. So instead of a single hegemony within the nation, what is visible is instead a patchwork of hegemonies differently positioned, complementing or even in competition or conflict with one another. Shifts in state ideology can result in the decline of one form of hegemonic masculinity and the rise of another. In other words, shifting frontiers can see different masculinities gaining ascendancy. Middle class masculinities can act as a buffer between the upper and lower classes. *Hatchings* makes visible the fact that each class, and consequently masculine hierarchy, can be complicit with the one immediately above it, meaning that so called subordinate masculinities can be complicit with 'complicit' ones in Connell's hierarchy. Masculinities exist in dialogue with various discourses, such as economics, religion, race, class, history, and femininities, and so they are polylogical. For example, in *Hatchings*, some females, through their expectations, are complicit in the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinities, and, ironically, with their own subordination. They,

however, in some respects benefit from such complicity, otherwise they would discontinue using the approaches they adopt.

Sexuality is central in the construction of masculine identities. It is entangled in fatherhood, which is implicated in the biological reproduction of a nation, and is integral in the construction of desirable masculinities. It can also be weaponised and so associated with male predation and female victimisation. It is also double-edged and is also a site of male vulnerability, emasculating those men manifesting ineptitude of any kind. It can also be subversive of hegemonic masculinity, as manifested in the existence of ‘dissident’ sexualities such as gayness. Homosexuality’s sexual ambivalence and anomie destabilises the masculine subject through the collapsing of the masculine-feminine binary. Anxieties around the subject highlight the vulnerability of the masculine subjects. In Madanhire’s *If the Wind Blew*, sexuality is part of the machinery of male domination over women. Male sexual predation serves as an instrument of male bodies’ domination over female ones. Women in some contexts play validatory roles for men, through sexuality as well as acts of subservience and/or praise-singing. This also highlights the dependence of masculinity for its perpetuation, or even construction, on femininity, and by implication, its stake in its (femininity’s) preservation or perpetuation.

The spectre of HIV and AIDS, particularly at a time when access to anti-retroviral medication was limited, became a site for the deconstruction of sexuality as an instrument for the domination of female bodies by men, besides its role in exposing the vulnerability of the male body, and in the process diminishing the signification of the phallus in denoting male power.

Madanhire’s text also makes visible the ambivalence of some post-colonial leaders who are cast through contradictory images, showing them looking both back to the past (tradition/the anti-colonial struggle) as well as to the present and the future (modernity). In other words they are moulded by various influences but ultimately they exhibit a Janus face that underlines their ambivalence. Discourses such as Nativism and Afro-Radicalism embody this masculine Janus-faced ontology and so in essence they are similarly gendered. Post-colonial leaders are also imaged as archetypal alpha males who conceive of themselves as embodying the essence of the nation, and their praise-names convey images of masculine infallibility. As observed before, in this context, they occupy the apex of the masculinity hierarchy, atop that of hegemonic masculinities.

Subversive masculinities in the context of the nation are actually parallel or alternative hegemonies in the making. These have their own internal hierarchies as well, highlighting the

existence of multiple and competing hegemonies within the nation. These exist in a dialogic relationship with the ruling elite, and so are also influenced or shaped by them to a certain extent. They are therefore at risk of being a copy of what they have replaced, if they make the transition from subversion to hegemony.

Valerie Tagwira's *Uncertainty of Hope* shows that in contexts of crisis, in particular, for some males the imperative to survive takes precedence over domination or hegemony. It is also evident that some masculine performances are merely for purposes of fulfilling cultural expectations rather than being motivated by a quest for power. So, as observed previously, the theorisation of masculinity as merely power-premised seems limited if one wishes to take cognisance of the whole gamut of masculinities.

The notion of male disempowerment can best be understood according to context, where, for example, a failure to live up to social expectations, such as being able to provide for one's family, becomes a form of disempowerment. So cultural images of masculinity are the mirror in or prism through which men view themselves, and so attempts to transform masculinities so as to bring about gender equality should not overlook these. Feelings of disempowerment by some men can be accompanied by compensatory behaviours, which can be harmful to those around them or the men themselves. Responses, though, to such feelings vary amongst different masculine subjects, and may reflect the different operations of centripetal and centrifugal forces on different male subjects. Where centripetal forces have the upper hand, so the more likely a masculine subject will experience acute feelings of disempowerment as a result of failure to live up to traditional expectations. The discourse of the 'crisis of masculinity', therefore, can also be located in the operation of centripetal and centrifugal forces on masculine identities.

The hold of tradition, which contains classical images of masculinity and is authoritative discourse, can be greater on some men than it is on women, because it is largely patriarchal and so more closely tied up with male identities. Men have a larger stake than women in perpetuating any such tradition. This appears to contradict the established view that within a nation, women are made the repositories of culture or tradition (McClintock, 1993: 66); but if women are such repositories (maintaining biological and cultural continuity), it can be said that this is only to serve the patriarchy. However, the dialogic relationship between tradition and men is not the same in all individuals, as some are able to renegotiate their identities and embrace change much better than others. So even feelings of disempowerment are experienced differently by different men, and even the responses of the masculine subjects are not the same, as *The Uncertainty of Hope* shows.

The potential of some men to hybridise themselves by embracing culturally-coded 'feminine' traits is highlighted, and the promise of this to advance the gender equality project is hinted at. Such hybridity is represented in the above text as empowering, rather than disempowering for the masculine subjects involved. Here centrifugal forces would impact on such masculine identities more than the centripetal ones. Referring to a Western context, Bridges and Pascoe, however, problematize such hybrid masculinities, claiming that they 'represent highly significant (but exaggerated) shifts in the cultural and personal styles of hegemonic masculinities, but these changes do not necessarily contribute to the undermining of conventional strictures of men's power over women' (2014: 248). The representation of such men in Tagwira's text, however, gravitates towards the notion of 'inclusive masculinities' (Anderson, 2009), which expresses a contrary view to the one above. Masculinities, though, are, again, largely contextual, so the ones in this text may not fully resonate with Western ones.

In chapter 6, Mtizira's *The Chimurenga Protocol* highlights the fact that the dominant Chimurenga narrative of post 2000 Zimbabwe is a masculine one, since it essentially denotes war. Consequently, it appropriates the male body and violently inscribes it with signifiers of hegemonic masculinity as bearing the ideals of the nation. This is symbolised by the nomenclature of 'indoda sibili', or 'real men', imagery that is suggestive of a soldier masculinity. That the *chimurenga* narrative is about war highlights the fact that it is as much about survival as it is about domination or power. Its appropriation of hegemonic masculinity markers also emphasises that hegemonic masculinity, explicitly or implicitly, is also circumscribed by the same, at least in this context.

Masculine politics and rivalries are powerful forces that have the potential to determine the courses of action that individuals and larger entities such as the nation take, and so should not be discounted or taken lightly. They can also determine people's allegiances rather than ideological and/or political affiliations. For example, the 'masculinized humiliation' that Enloe refers to in her characterization of the nation is a component or ingredient in masculine politics, and so can help to shape a particular nation. In this study it appears to engender hyper-masculine responses, *inter alia*. Robert Mugabe's discourse of 'conquest of conquest' is an example of such politics at play. This implies that such politics played a part in engendering the Zimbabwean crisis of post 2000. Of course, in such politics there are other underlying factors, such as the economic and the political. Marginalized men are more likely to embrace that which promises them power, and so, for these, the pull of centrifugal forces can be greater than centripetal ones. Dominant/ hegemonic men may be pre-occupied with preserving/ protecting their power, and so are likely to be conservative in the face of any threats or changes

that threaten it. Nativism and Afro-Radicalism in the Zimbabwean context are discourses that appear to be intended to manage or deal with threats to the political elite from both local and international masculinities. So insecurity and anxiety can underlie hegemonic masculinities at the individual and institutional level to an extent where it is possible to speak of ‘masculinized insecurity’ as also foundational to the nation, in the same way as Enloe’s ‘masculinized humiliation’ and ‘masculinized hope’. The much-trumpeted resistance of masculinities to change may apply more to variables that men conceive as threatening, than those that are not. This resistance and its degrees of manifestation certainly may not be universal, but might vary from one subject to another and from one group to another.

Both *The Chimurenga Protocol* and *Jambanja* make visible the fact that masculine hierarchies are fluid and men can assume different masculine subject positions, such as dominant or subversive. In the Zimbabwean case the dominant political elites at a local level have the status of hegemonic masculinities, but at the international level they assume the posture of both subversive and subordinate masculinities in relation to global hegemonic masculinities, represented by the dominant political and economic actors on the international stage. It is also noted that colonized men assume different subject positions, often interchangeably and strategically, as subordinate masculinities and also subversive ones at different times. It is also noted that homosexuals can occupy different subject positions. As noted in *The Chimurenga Protocol*, such subjects can occupy dominant subject positions at institutional level without their sexuality necessarily conferring on them a marginal status. Marginality, therefore, is due to a combination of factors and circumstances rather than the result of any one.

Both *The Chimurenga Protocol* and *Jambanja* show that threatened masculinities can exude or resort to hyper-masculine responses, a recourse to violence, for instance, to try to preserve themselves, such as has been witnessed in post 2000 Zimbabwe. The trajectory of the nation shows at different times these unfortunate ultra-masculine responses; for example, *gukurahundi*, Operation *Murambatsvina*, and the Fast Track Land Reform Program. Not that such responses are knee-jerk or inevitable, but rather well-mediated and consciously made choices, and as such do not absolve such subjects from any blame that might emanate for such actions. Such responses are often evidence of the inability of these masculinities to reinvent themselves and so are an indictment of such subjectivities. Such threatened masculinities at individual and institutional level can mobilise toxic, discredited and essentialist discourses, such as racism and ethnicity to try to preserve themselves. These discourses, belonging as they do to the past, can function as authoritative ones in spite of their being mere constructs. They

are then capable of spurring subjects along undesirable and harmful trajectories. Hegemonic masculinities, it appears, prefer to maintain their status and seem to only accept the exchange of one marker of dominant status for another. The perpetuation of the *chimurenga* narrative and the ‘Rhodesians never die’ mentality amongst some Zimbabwean subjects appears to underline this. This suggests that some hegemonic masculinities can become ossified, as the dominant men have invested so much of themselves in them. So, it can become difficult to change these without emasculating the subjects involved. Freud’s castration complex could best explain the fear and anxieties surrounding such. Such a complex can expose such masculinities to forced and potentially disruptive and traumatic change.

The unmarked status of white hegemonic masculinities in the colony tends to obscure the possibility of the disempowerment of some white subjects in the post-colony. The interpellation of whiteness as privilege and power renders it marked, and this metanarrative can be the basis of decolonization projects based entirely on this premise. This, though, is only part of the story, and as *Jambanja* makes visible, there is a perpetuation of some erstwhile settler identities by some white subjects that militates against real transformation, and so such whites are also implicated in the crisis of the Zimbabwean nation. This is another instance of the Janus-faced nature of masculinities, as they cling to those aspects, such as race, that had been part of the architecture of their erstwhile hegemony.

Hegemonic masculinity cannot exist without a foil, and the fact that it is part of a hierarchy suggests that it is constructed, and that it also participates in the construction of other masculinities. As is evident in *Jambanja*, these foils can be in the form of women, and other men. The relationship between hegemonic masculinity and these Others is mediated by various variables such as race, class, and ethnicity. This ontology speaks to the dialogic nature of masculinities, and so they are best understood thus. Sexuality, marriage, fatherhood and the family are some of the key sites for the cultivation of masculinity.

From the forgoing, it is argued and concluded here that Connell’s typology or paradigm of masculinities is too much of a strait-jacket and suggestive of fixity, and so does not fully capture the unstable, shifting, dynamic and dialogic nature of masculine identities, a limitation that Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:829-859) highlighted in their revision of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. There is the potential of the hierarchy being more flexible, for example, to accommodate the notion of the alpha male, and of women appropriating masculine or hybrid identities, and also positioning themselves in specific ways in relation to masculinities. This thesis also problematizes some of the metanarratives used to describe masculine identities. The prism of dialogism helps to move away from, and disrupt such wholes

and make visible the ruptures, ambivalences, simultaneities and multi-valences in such identities. Simultaneity is already evident in Connell's assertion that few men have all the attributes of hegemonic masculinity, and most are complicit in it instead. In other words, the identities of most men are ambivalent or hybrid, consisting as they do of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculine attributes. Even so, there is no singular monolithic and unitary hegemony within a country like Zimbabwe, but rather multiple ones, existing on multiple sites and in competition with or complementing one another. An individual can assume multiple masculine subject positions, from hegemonic, subversive, and even marginal, depending on the variables at play, inclusive of masculine politics.

The terrain of masculinities is not uniform or stable, but marked by diversity, instability, rupture and even anomie. Masculinities, it must be remembered, are not always an aggregation of negatives, but also encompass socially beneficial attributes. The various forms of manhood are the products of contestations along various frontiers in the public sphere, and are as much linked with survival as they are with power. This would suggest that most masculinities are frontier ones, not in the stereotypical sense of war and violent conflict, but in the sense of their association with generalised contestations and conflicts that mark the lived experiences of all humans at micro and macro levels.

This thesis has focused on the study of the representation of masculine identities in selected Zimbabwean literary texts published between 1980 and 2008. This time span is divided into three different periods, each with its own characteristics, and hence associated with related masculine identities. The year 2008 marked another turning point at the national level, with the formation of a government of national unity (GNU) between the two dominant political parties. Through a masculinities prism it could be seen as the convergence of the contesting hegemonic and subversive masculinities to save the country that was then going through an acute economic crisis. While it managed to bring some relief, it did not bring an end to the crisis afflicting the country. The GNU in its turn came to an end, but not the crisis. The failure of the dominant political masculinities to reform themselves culminated in a de facto military coup that deposed long serving president, Robert Mugabe in 2017. Ultimately, this represented more of an attempt by the dominant elite to perpetuate themselves. The continuation of the crisis is also evidence of the failure of former colonizer and colonized masculinities to reinvent themselves in tandem with the new dispensation, a reality that shows the complex operation of centripetal and centrifugal forces on such subjects. The apparent failure to resolve what Mamdani (1998) refers to as the 'Settler-Native Question' has meant that the essentialist category of race has continued to mediate identities at the national and, to

varying extents, individual level, and so is also implicated in the crisis of the nation. Thus the crisis afflicting some Zimbabwean masculinities is not only at individual level but also at the national one. So, while Campbell (2003) spoke of the 'exhaustion of the patriarchal model of liberation' as being at the centre of the Zimbabwean crisis, the contention here is that the failure of the above-mentioned masculinities to re-invent themselves sufficiently as a result of the diverse variables, that include their Janus-faced nature and their complex dialogic relationship with multiple elements, is also at the core of the crisis.

So, while this study takes the year 2008 as its cut-off point, the period between 2008 and today (2019) and the texts published within this time-span would also be an interesting area of study regarding the masculine subjectivities involved. New literary works emerged after 2008, many of them by diasporic Zimbabwean writers. The Zimbabwean crisis has caused a massive emigration of Zimbabweans seeking greener pastures, so several diasporic literary voices have emerged, such as Brian Chikwava, NoViolet Bulawayo and Wonder Guchu, among others. Migration has had an effect of some Zimbabwean masculinities, both at home and abroad. This is a further area of future study. Also interesting would be the representation of Zimbabwean masculinities by female writers, and the exploration of any possible intertextual relationships with male writers. The present study, with one notable exception, focused mainly on male writers. There is also a body of literary works generally referred to as children's literature, which could be another treasure trove for the study of Zimbabwean masculinities with respect to the 'socialisation' of children and the direction in which their masculine identities are being shaped. All these suggested studies, though, are beyond the scope of this thesis, but might provide a basis for future investigation by the present researcher, or might be of interest to other researchers.

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