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### Plundering the Past: History and Nation in Mugabe's Zimbabwe

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## Review Article

### *Plundering the Past: History and Nation in Mugabe's Zimbabwe*

'Nationalism is power hunger tempered by self-deception.'<sup>1</sup>  
George Orwell

'All nationalisms are gendered; all are invented; and all are dangerous.'<sup>2</sup>  
Anne McClintock

Blessing-Miles Tendi, *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe* (Oxford, Peter Lang, 2010), 286 pp., £43 paperback, ISBN 978-3-03911-989-9.

Daniel Compagnon, *A Predictable Tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the Collapse of Zimbabwe* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 333 pp., £26 hardback, ISBN 978-0-8122-4267-6.

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and James Muzondidya (eds), *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism? Rethinking Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe* (Oxford, Peter Lang, 2011), 422 pp., £50 paperback, ISBN 978-3-03911-976-9.

Joann McGregor and Ranka Primorac (eds), *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival* (Oxford, Berghahn, 2010), 286 pp., £47 hardback, ISBN 978-1-84545-658-0.

In recent years in postcolonial Zimbabwe there has been a recasting of the past. ZANU(PF), under the increasingly authoritarian leadership of Robert Mugabe, have sought to monopolise and shape dominant historical narratives in which ZANU(PF) are portrayed as the *only* authentic leaders of the liberation struggle, and the only 'legitimate' party with a claim to run the country. This has been encapsulated through Patriotic History. A discourse has been created in which any criticism of ZANU(PF) (or indeed the emergence of any viable political opposition, such as the MDC, particularly in the context of the 2005 elections), would be counter-revolutionary. Thus, a non-ZANU(PF) government would, to paraphrase Leon Trotsky, betray the revolution. Since the formation of the Government of National Unity in February 2008, in which a power-sharing deal was brokered between Mugabe's ZANU(PF) and Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC, there has been shift in the tenor of Zimbabwean politics. Seemingly there has been a period of respite, however brief, from the pervasive 'crisis' framework in which the country found itself with the commencement of the controversial Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme (FTLRP) in early 2002. However, the uneasy truce between ZANU(PF) and the MDC, and the troubling, violent nature of Zimbabwean politics once again came into sharp focus around the time of the July 2013 elections, with Mugabe proclaiming that 'those who can't stomach the defeat ... can commit suicide', as ZANU(PF) yet again claimed unequivocal electoral victory.<sup>3</sup>

All the monographs under review in this essay try to some extent to engage with issues regarding Mugabe's perversion of nationalism in Zimbabwe. Blessing-Miles Tendi's monograph *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe* systematically details the way that the promulgation of Patriotic History played

1 G. Orwell, 'Notes on Nationalism', *Polemic*, 1, October 1945.

2 A. McClintock, "'No Longer in a Future Heaven": Women and Nationalism in South Africa', *Transition*, 15, 1991, p. 104.

3 "'Go hang", says Mugabe to election critics', *Mail and Guardian*, [www.mg.co.za/article/2013-08-12-go-hang-go-commit-suicide-says-mugabe-to-election-critics/](http://www.mg.co.za/article/2013-08-12-go-hang-go-commit-suicide-says-mugabe-to-election-critics/), accessed 15 August 2013.

a crucial role in Mugabe's consolidation of power in Zimbabwe. Daniel Compagnon's *A Predictable Tragedy* argues in a vein similar to Norma Kriger's that the roots of ZANU(PF)'s authoritarianism can be traced back to the liberation struggle.<sup>4</sup> *Redemptive or Grottesque Nationalism*, edited by Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatshehi and James Muzondidya, looks at the reshaping of nationalist discourses since 1980. Finally, *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora*, edited by JoAnn McGregor and Ranka Primorac, deals with the ways in which Zimbabweans have responded to this ostracising nationalism, by looking at the lives of Zimbabweans in the British and South African diaspora.

*Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe* examines the ways in which history and collective memory have been mobilised and (re-)packaged under the auspices of Patriotic History. Based on interviews with key players and a forensic analysis of the print media, for Tendi 'Patriotic History was developed as a sophisticated interpretation of Zimbabwe's past, and elaborated by a wide spectrum of intellectuals and politicians ... it has severely curtailed the development of an alternative view of Zimbabwe's past' (p. 2). Yet Patriotic History also played 'on real grievances and powerful memories of the colonial period' (p. 6). Consequently, Patriotic History is a bastardised form of nationalistic politics, tapping into some of the enduring legacies of colonialism in Zimbabwe (e.g. iniquitous land distribution) whilst also shoring up ZANU(PF)'s claim to be the 'ordained guardian[s] of Zimbabwe's political past, present and future' (p. 5). Consisting of eight chapters, the main themes of the monograph deal with the construction of Patriotic History by a ZANU(PF) elite, its rebuttal by critical public intellectuals, the centrality of land and race, and the construction of a distinction between 'patriots' and 'sell-outs'. The book closes by examining the way the Third *Chimurenga* was conceptualised by ZANU(PF) and the MDC.

For Tendi, public intellectuals on both sides of the political spectrum began to gain greater prominence in the late 1990s, when ZANU(PF) were put under pressure by groups such as the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) to conduct constitutional reform. It was in this context 'that a powerful shift ... occurred' as ZANU(PF) 'began to use history more inventively than ever before to legitimise, and openly encourage ... violent land seizures' (p. 19). During this time both print and broadcast media came under increasing scrutiny from the state, and were brought under ZANU(PF) control with the passing of the Access to Information and Privacy Protection Act (AIPPA) in 2002. This paved the way for the creation of the Media and Information Commission (MIC), which effectively ended the freedom of the press, paving the way for ZANU(PF) to disseminate Patriotic History in the media. In monopolising the print and broadcast media, the architects of Patriotic History were able to articulate its principal themes: the formulation of conspiracy theories, the use of changing international events to explain and justify local politics, the use of western hypocrisy to delegitimise human rights, the eulogising of Mugabe, and attacks on reconciliation and support for the seizure of white land (p. 22). These theories 'were not without some historical foundation, which enhanced their plausibility' (pp. 23–4); thus, by playing on 'plausible scenarios and legitimate grievances' (p. 35), ZANU(PF) cadres articulated a nuanced version of nationalism, elements of which resonated with certain sections of Zimbabwe's population.

As Tendi notes, the development of Patriotic History in Zimbabwe did not go unchallenged, with public intellectuals such as John Makumbe and Brian Raftopoulos confronting ZANU(PF) hegemony in both the independent print media and the academy. For Tendi, however, critical intellectuals 'failed to extricate a local struggle for human rights and democracy from appeals to and comparison with alleged "democratic" and "human rights respecting" western power' (p. 45). Tendi examines the various interactions between Masipula Sithole, 'the public face of ZANU(PF)' (p. 52), and Jonathan Moyo, examining how both men debated the central tenets of Patriotic History, particularly issues surrounding land. Ultimately Tendi is critical of the failure of the oppositional public intellectuals to mount a stronger attack on Patriotic History, as he argues that 'they did not speak strongly [enough] to Zimbabwe's liberation history' (p. 60), and ultimately (and perhaps ironically) were not as successful as ZANU(PF) in mobilising history to support their arguments.

Moving to examine the land issue 'at the heart of Patriotic History' (p. 73), Tendi offers a new (if not wholly believable) explanation for the slow pace of land redistribution after Lancaster House, which he terms the 'Anyaoku Narrative'. The "'Anyaoku Narrative" contends that the ZANU(PF) administration deferred land redistribution ... following appeals from Emeka Anyaoku, the

4 N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Commonwealth Secretary General. Anyaoku argued that rapid land redistribution in this period would destabilise South Africa's transition from apartheid' (p. 73). Tendi claims that Mugabe agreed to this proposal (although there is no evidence for this in Anyaoku's memoirs), with South Africa later 'repaying' Mugabe by pursuing 'quiet diplomacy' under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki. It seems more likely that land redistribution was stalled by the adoption of the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) and because Mugabe was busy supporting Laurent-Désiré Kabila in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Despite the air of conspiracy theory that pervades this chapter, 'the point is that through Patriotic History ZANU(PF) denies that it had agency in how land reform proceeded in the independence period' (pp. 86–7). Consequently Mugabe 'cast the Third *Chimurenga* as the teleological culmination of the first two *Chimurengas*' (pp. 94–5), with white Zimbabweans being particularly targeted in the increasingly exclusionary discourses of citizenship that also featured in Patriotic History.

Further examining how the past was mobilised to justify actions in the present, Tendi details the failure of reconciliation in Zimbabwe since 1980 and the identification of whites (amongst other groups) as enemies of the state. For Tendi, the current literature on reconciliation in Zimbabwe overlooks 'the unconstructive foundation for nation-building laid at Lancaster House, and [has] also downplayed the legacy of systematic racial discrimination during the Rhodesian years' (p. 115). Attempting to assuage the fears of the white community during the transition, Mugabe preached a policy of reconciliation in an attempt to stop the destabilising effects of 'white flight'. In sharp contrast, however, by 2000 'ZANU (PF)'s primary logic was that whites were the cause of reconciliation's failure because they resisted land redistribution. It also held the view that whites could not legitimately engage in politics' (p. 121). As a result all whites were homogenised and cast as unrepentant racists, who were the *real* impediments to bringing the Third *Chimurenga* to its 'logical' conclusion.

The final chapters of the monograph examine issues surrounding Zimbabwe's sovereignty and the way the MDC engaged with history. As Tendi observes, the Third *Chimurenga* 'involved a calculated assault on human rights, which attracted much international attention' (p. 176). While western governments were quick to condemn the widespread human rights violations that occurred in Zimbabwe, they were less forthcoming in offering practical support to the population. For instance, when the British government did comment on the nature of the 'crisis' in Zimbabwe, their rhetoric played into the hands of ZANU(PF)'s representation of Zimbabwe's sovereignty as under threat. Thus, a discourse was constructed whereby 'if Tsvangirai was elected president, Zimbabwe would have ceded its sovereignty to Britain because he was the "puppet" of a British government seeking to re-colonise its former colony' (p. 180). For Tendi the MDC 'struggled to deconstruct Patriotic History's version of Zimbabwe's constitutional history' (p. 217). Thus, while the MDC also promised land redistribution, their message was hampered by 'incoherence' and infighting, and because they had been tainted as the stooges of white farmers, international capital and Britain.

This is a well-written and powerfully argued book that will appeal to several academic constituencies. The range of key players that Tendi managed to interview is also worth noting. However, the conclusion, and indeed various passages towards the end of the monograph, are hampered by some incongruous references to ancient Greece (Jonathan Moyo is compared to Plato), and I think that Tendi could have made broader connections with the development of Patriotic History and nationalism in general within Zimbabwe and other African states. These issues aside, this an impressive monograph that methodically demonstrates that Patriotic History 'speaks to diverse audiences within and beyond Zimbabwean borders' (p. 239).

Further examining the ways in which political myths and history intersect, Daniel Compagnon's *A Predictable Tragedy* takes a decidedly different tack. Where for Tendi the nature of the Zimbabwean regime was shaped as much by external as by internal factors, for Compagnon, Mugabe's 'thirst for power, his recklessness ... [and] the greed and brutality of his lieutenants' were present from 1980 (p. 1). Thus, for Compagnon, Zimbabwe's 'predictable tragedy' was entirely manufactured by Mugabe and the ZANU(PF) elite. Based on an analysis of the existing literature and government and NGO reports, according to Compagnon, activists and intellectuals who had opposed the Smith regime have until recently suffered bouts of 'selective hearing' when it comes to Mugabe's regime, wanting 'desperately to believe Mugabe was nothing but good news' (pp. 1–2). In sharp contrast, Compagnon offers a robust and detailed critique of the manipulation of power and subsequent institutionalisation of

authoritarianism in the country since 1980, arguing that ‘there was no curse, no western plot against nationalism ... no fatal destiny that took Zimbabwe into the league of the derelict’ (p. 7).

In Chapter 1, Compagnon suggests that ZANU(PF) prioritised the ‘drive for control’ (p. 8) immediately after independence. He argues that ‘given the legacy of the 1970s there was no room for dissent within the ruling party, even after the war was over and the independence elections duly won’ (p. 15). Elevating his position so that he would ‘remain the only national [political] figure’ (p. 18), Mugabe provincialised politics, most notably in the events of *Gukurahundi*, ‘a premeditated mass political purge intended to uproot ZAPU and isolate its leaders from their popular support base’ (p. 26). *Gukurahundi*, it is argued, set the precedent for the systematic and violent harassment of any political opposition parties, thus ‘the idea that those who do not fully support the regime set themselves automatically “outside the nation”’ (p. 31).

Like many other scholars before him, Compagnon argues that violence has been central to Mugabe’s strategy for political survival. Echoing the work of Christine Sylvester, he contends that there have never been free and fair elections in Zimbabwe, but that the 2000 elections were marked by intense violence, ‘the cynicism of the state ... its indifference for the law ... [which] meant that the regime had thrown off its mask in the fight for survival’ (p. 47).<sup>5</sup> A great deal of attention is also given to attacks on white farmers in the context of the Third *Chimurenga* and the centrality of the ‘war veterans’ in marshalling support for the regime. Chapter 3 propels us back into the 1990s, with a detailed narrative of the formation of an increasingly vocal civil society which began to challenge Mugabe’s authoritarianism. There is much important detail in this section, and Compagnon helpfully documents the formation of the MDC, but this could have been placed earlier in the monograph. In addition, while Compagnon has criticised scholars for their seemingly blind support of ZANU(PF), he is quite starry-eyed over the MDC’s lacklustre performance, noting their ‘impressive achievements’ (p. 116) and arguing that ‘crafting a convincing political manifesto with detailed policies is not the crucial factor for electoral victory, especially when fighting against an authoritarian regime’ (p. 106). If Compagnon is not a Mugabe man, he certainly has a soft spot for Tsvangirai.

The remaining chapters of the monograph analyse the manipulation of the media, the purging of the judiciary, the land reform process, the construction of a pro-ZANU(PF) patriotic bourgeoisie, and the responses of the international community to the crisis. While noting that ‘the media soon became another contested terrain between the government and civil society’ (p. 118), Compagnon details the resilience and vibrancy of a small independent press that has fed the public demand for ‘independent reporting and analysis’ (p. 127). But, he notes, ZANU(PF), and in particular Jonathan Moyo, tried to ‘muzzle the independent press, curtail the activities of foreign journalists in Zimbabwe, and make sure that the state media would toe the party line’ (p. 129). When discussing the role of the judiciary, Compagnon recalls that it was ‘resilient and willing to uphold the rule of law’ (p. 142) despite the sustained attacks it received. For Compagnon, the clashes between the judiciary and ZANU(PF) have been essentialised by ZANU(PF) as one between black nationalists and British-born white judges (p. 146). He suggests that disagreements began to surface with the adoption of Amendment No. 7 (Act 23 of 1987), which concentrated executive powers in the hands of Mugabe. This, he argues, ‘opened an era of more direct confrontation between a more assertive president and a judiciary on the defensive’ (pp. 147–8). This confrontation became explicitly racialised after January 1999, when Mugabe determined to ensure that the judiciary should not ‘be a recourse for his numerous opponents’ (p. 151), with the appointment of judges sympathetic to ZANU(PF), such as Vernanda Ziyambi and Luke Malalaba.

It was in this climate, with the regime fortified by the press and now the judiciary, that controversial land reform began. While noting the centrality of the land issue in the ‘government’s propaganda blitz’ (p. 170), Compagnon is too dismissive of the constraints placed on Zimbabwe by the Lancaster House agreement in the matter of land redistribution. While a ‘deliberately polemical discourse’ (p. 170) was certainly constructed in the broader context of Patriotic History, the iniquitous patterns of land distribution in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe were real and legitimate grievances. Rather cynically, Compagnon appears dismissive of the Second *Chimurenga* and the reasons it was waged, referring to it

5 See for instance C. Sylvester, ‘Whither Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe?’ *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33, 3, 1995, pp. 403–23.

as the “liberation struggle” (p. 173). In addition he suggests that ‘entering nationalist politics was perceived in the late 1960s as the fastest way to acquire a better social and economic status’ (p. 193). Thus, he has fallen into the trap of lumping all the *Chimurengas* together, failing to recognise that ZANU(PF) did have some popular support for their post-2000 actions.

For Compagnon, legitimate business activities in postcolonial Zimbabwe always existed alongside shadier state practices; never more so than in the case of the Willowvale inquiry.<sup>6</sup> Compagnon judiciously notes the way in which a patriotic bourgeoisie has been fostered to prop up ZANU(PF), a new class needing the regime to survive in order to consolidate its own economic gains (p. 212). His final chapter examines the international response to the crisis in Zimbabwe: ‘the western countries took a principled stance on the violence, human rights abuses, and cynical electoral manipulation, while Mugabe’s African peers opted for ostentatious solidarity and denial’ (p. 221). Compagnon also says that the response of the global north was essentially inconsistent, as ‘Zimbabwe was just another failed African country . . . a landlocked country with no oil or strategic resources. . . . No G8 country was prepared to jeopardize good relations with Pretoria for the sake of Zimbabwe’ (p. 234). Ultimately this narrative makes for depressing reading. Certainly there is much to be depressed about in Zimbabwe’s recent history, but Compagnon is too deterministic, aping recent Afropessimistic writing by concluding that the ‘failure’ of Zimbabwe ‘epitomizes the uncertain future of democracy and good governance in Southern Africa as a whole’ (p. 270).

*Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism*, edited by Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and James Muzondidya, attempts to nuance debates about the role of nationalism in the Third *Chimurenga*. This is a strikingly accomplished collection that breathes life into current debates about the construction and manipulation of nationalism in Zimbabwe. The various chapters within the monograph all try to reconcile the rather ossified view of the Third *Chimurenga* as either ‘an emancipatory project with redemptive objectives . . . [or] an exhausted patriarchal model of nationalism imposed from above but devoid of both popular support and legitimacy and relying on violence and coercion to mobilise the masses’ (Introduction, pp. 1–2). The editors note the highly contradictory nature of nationalism; ‘its contradictory and self-subverting muddle of negative attributes: repression, violence and coercion coexisting uneasily with the rhetoric of redemption and emancipation’ (p. 10). For Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya, ‘there is a need for sustained and systematic responses to the official versions of nationalism that were installed by praise texts of the 1960s and 1980s . . . there is also the need to re-evaluate the various sites of the liberation struggle beyond carrying the gun and operating in the bush’ (Introduction, pp. 24–5).

Part One of the collection, entitled ‘History, War and Masculinity’, consists of contributions from Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Robert Muponde, Munyaradzi B. Munochiveyi, and Kudakwashe Manganga, which all meditate on the gendered nature of Zimbabwean nationalism. In ‘Beyond the Drama of War: Trajectories of Nationalism in Zimbabwe, the 1890s to 2010’, Ndlovu-Gatsheni provides a sophisticated historiographical overview of the nature of nationalism. He persuasively argues that current writing on Zimbabwean nationalism is theoretically impoverished, with writers ‘not even bother[ing] to engage with the meaning of nationalism in the first place’ (p. 39), further suggesting that scholars need ‘to be critical of the political importance attributed to certain versions of history’ (p. 37). For Ndlovu-Gatsheni, we need to move beyond the current dominant narrative that sees nationalism as solely forged in the context of the *Chimurengas* and rather concentrate on what scholar Partha Chatterjee has termed ‘moments of nationalism’.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes the elite construction and development of nationalism during the colonial period, which by the 1950s became ‘dominated by petty-bourgeois African elites who became the greatest interlocutors’ (p. 58). Ultimately, ‘the evolution and fossilisation of Zimbabwean nationalism never followed a straightforward trajectory’ (p. 79), and we are cautioned against the current teleology that dominates writing about contemporary nationalism.

In ‘History as Witchcraft: The Narcissism of Warrior Masculinities in Edmund Chipamaunga’s War and Post-War Novels’, Robert Muponde cements his position as one of the most respected literary scholars of Zimbabwe. For Muponde, there are three dominant ways to read liberation struggle novels:

6 The Willowvale scandal or ‘Willowgate’ was deemed a national scandal, as government ministers used their positions to buy cars and resell them at inflated prices.

7 P. Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London, Zed Books, 1986).

as meditations of the triumph over colonialism; as sceptical reflections on the nature of heroism in war; and as a way to question the ‘gains’ of liberation, given the unhealed psychological wounds of war (p. 83). Muponde discusses at length two alternative approaches of ‘poster narrative’ which ‘give[s] the sense of milestone in the rapid evolution of a hero’s life and history’ (p. 89), and ‘serial reading’ which ‘reveals that there seem to be more unpredicted dangers lurking in the open and private spaces of civil life than in war’ (p. 89). Thus, for Muponde a (re-)reading of Chipamaunga offers a way to ‘underwrite Zimbabwean nationalism, but also to see alternative ways in which the nation might be imagined’ (p. 104), moving away from a model which has valorised and elevated ‘warrior’ masculinities.

Further examining the relationship between the second liberation struggle and nationalism, Munyaradzi B. Munochiveyi, in ‘“War Vet Nation”? Beyond “Guerrilla Nationalism” and the Search for Other Nationalisms in Zimbabwe’, discusses the way that ZANU(PF) has manipulated ‘nationalist ideology and the subversion of democratic principles by appealing to a narrow and distorted interpretation of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle history’ (p. 107). Reflecting on the development of African nationalism in the 1960s, Munochiveyi argues that the contribution of those detained by the Smith regime has largely been elided from Zimbabwe’s official struggle history as the ZANU(PF) elite has ‘presided over the marginalisation and silencing of such histories’ (p. 123). Thus, for Munochiveyi, the liberation struggle and the guerrilla war of the 1970s have been incorrectly conflated. ZANU(PF), as the ‘victors’ of the liberation struggle, have constructed an elite form of nationalism that is both exclusionary and ahistorical, in which any struggle *outside* the second *Chimurenga* is invalidated because it does not fit the guerrilla nationalism model.

Kudakwashe Manganga also historicises the development of gendered nationalism in Zimbabwe in ‘Masculinity (Dodaism), Gender and Nationalism: The Case of the Salisbury Bus Boycott, September 1956’. For Manganga, ‘hyper and hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Zimbabwe is the legacy of a violent and patriarchal colonial past and the contested notions of manhood and womanhood’ (p. 133). While the Salisbury bus boycott is heralded as one of the high points of African nationalism in the 1950s, it also set a precedent for the development of a gendered nationalism that has been characterised by violence, assaults and repression. Manganga details the profound ambivalence, if not outright encouragement, that characterised the violence against women during the attack on Carter House, a hostel for black women in Salisbury, seeing the attack as a ‘manifestation of gender-based tensions within the broader struggle against colonialism’ (p. 145). Nationalist historiography has ‘under-represented the various tensions’ that are inherent in any nationalist project (p. 151).<sup>8</sup>

The second part of the collection, ‘Citizenship, Identity and Diversity’, examines how the nationalism preached in the third *Chimurenga* continues to exclude certain narratives from both the country’s history and modern day political discourses. Writing in the Foucauldian tradition, Finex Ndhlovu, in ‘Language Policy, Citizenship and Discourses of Exclusion in Zimbabwe’, draws on social theory scholarship to assess how certain linguistic groups in Zimbabwe have been marginalised. Discussing five separate language policies of the postcolonial state, Ndhlovu argues that the prioritisation of Shona and Ndebele have influenced notions of citizenship and national identity, as the linguistic and cultural norms of these languages have come to define ‘what it means to be Zimbabwean’ (p. 155), and ‘issues of linguistic pluralism, ethnic identity and multiculturalism have been mystified and over-politicised to a point where people believe they should not be talked about’ (p. 165). Consequently, exclusionary language policies have been mobilised to develop a narrow definition of the nation and citizenship in Zimbabwe.

‘Silenced Visions of Citizenship, Democracy and Nation: African MPs in Rhodesian Parliaments, 1963–1978’, by Jane Parpart, is the outstanding contribution in this part of the collection. Challenging the often suffocating parameters of ‘struggle history’ that continue to dominate historical writing about Zimbabwe, Parpart argues for the need to reappraise the role of African MPs who worked within existing power structures in Rhodesia’s oppressive and narrow political environment, as ‘those Africans who chose to work for change within colonial and settler state institutions have been dismissed as “sell-outs” and figuratively thrown in the dust bin of history’ (p. 188). Based on a detailed reading of Hansard over 15 years, the analysis ‘reveals African MPs’ continued determination to represent their constituents’ concerns in parliament’ (p. 197). Parpart notes that African MPs consistently warned the

8 Carter House hostel provided accommodation for young migrant African women.

Rhodesian state that the failure of 'Partnership' in the Federation era would lead to radicalisation among the African population, because the liberalism of this period was more cosmetic than structural. Thus, an analysis of Hansard in this period 'provides a window into the thinking of the more moderate, but politically engaged African community' (p. 200). Parpart challenges us to think beyond the dichotomies of 'liberator', 'stooge', 'fighter' and 'puppet', that ZANU(PF) and indeed many academics have cleaved to when conceptualising terrains of struggle in the liberation war, recovering voices that have been 'silenced and discredited' (p. 214).

In 'One Zimbabwe Many Faces: The Quest for Political Pluralism in Postcolonial Zimbabwe', Kudzai Pfuwai Matereke discusses growing disenchantment with the state in Zimbabwe following independence, suggesting that the Zimbabwean case also works to point to broader issues about the limited nature of transformation in other African societies. Like Ndhlovu's argument about linguistic diversity in Zimbabwe, for Matereke ZANU(PF) have done all they could to stifle political pluralism since assuming power in 1980. This has been achieved by the prioritisation of certain social groups, such as the 'war veterans', since the late 1990s. For Matereke, 'while the war veterans deserve respect and recognition as fighters and victims, there is a need to highlight the dangers and excessive veneration of them solely as victims (pp. 234–5). Also discussing the reordering of politics in Zimbabwe, Terence M. Mashingaidze, in 'What Blacks, Which Africans and in Whose Zimbabwe? Pan-Africanism, Race and the Politics of Belonging in Postcolonial Zimbabwe', argues that the Third *Chimurenga* was a 'knee-jerk radical reconfiguration of politics' (p. 266), which has had the effect of completely altering Zimbabwe's political, social, economic and cultural landscape. ZANU(PF) have 'self project[ed] themselves as proponents of African empowerment', when in fact, Mashingaidze argues, such a movement was 'designed to conceal vile modes of monopolising and preserving state power' (p. 287). ZANU(PF) have constructed a powerful discourse which places them at the heart of the Zimbabwean nation. To be 'other' than the tightly defined and controlled definition of what it is to be a Zimbabwean means uncertain citizenship and ultimately political exclusion.

The final essays in the collection, under the heading 'Media, Ideology and Propaganda', discuss the dissemination of ZANU(PF)'s authoritarian nationalism. Moses Chikowero's excellent essay, 'The Third Chimurenga: Land and Song in Zimbabwe's Ultra-Nationalist State Ideology, 2000–2007', argues for the importance of an analysis of music and song as 'a crucial instrument' through which ZANU(PF) 'articulated its ultra nationalist discourse' (p. 291). Like Tendi in *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe*, Chikowero argues that Jonathan Moyo played a crucial role in this project through reorganising radio and TV with a 'new broadcasting policy to increase its stranglehold on power' (p. 294). There was a 'new era of unprecedented music censorship ... in which the government not only controlled the music played ... but also commissioned music production to bolster the ultra nationalist propaganda crusade' (p. 295). For Chikowero, land reform was elevated as the central pillar of this project with the objective being to 'create a culture of political consensus and deference to authority as admirable national attributes' in which Mugabe was venerated as Zimbabwe's deity (p. 308).

In "'Powerful Centre' Versus 'Powerful Periphery'?" Postcolonial Encounters, Global Media and Nationalism in the "Zimbabwe Crisis"', Wendy Willems analyses the actions of Zimbabwe, Britain and the United States in the global media. For Willems, 'instead of celebrating nationalism as a heroic anti-colonial response, postcolonial studies scholars have pointed to the limits of nationalism in its response to colonialism' (p. 316). The emergence of Patriotic History demonstrates that 'Zimbabwe has not been able to transcend the racist paradigm introduced by the colonial government' (p. 317). Willems notes how ZANU(PF) saw the global media 'as a key enemy of the Zimbabwean nation state' (p. 320) because the country was an 'undeserving victim of ... global "media terrorism"' when the western media catalogued Zimbabwe's widespread and multiple human rights abuses (p. 323). As Willems suggests, the land occupations and concomitant dispossession of white farmers received so much attention in the western media 'because it was a tale that could be made easily understandable to foreign audiences without having to provide much context' (p. 344). Thus, the disproportionate attention the plight of white farmers received (in comparison to black farm workers who also experienced dispossession and ZANU[PF] brutality), 'greatly assisted the Zimbabwean government in framing the situation in Zimbabwe as a bilateral problem between Zimbabwe and Britain over land' (p. 345). Thus, Mugabe



presented the land occupations as part of a struggle for Zimbabwe's sovereignty which Britain as the former colonial power was trying to undermine and destabilise.

The final contribution to the collection, 'The Colony in us, The Colony as Us' by Clapperton Mavhunga, is theoretically rather than empirically grounded. Writing in the Fanonian tradition, Mavhunga's piece is ambitious in focus and essentially calls for, to borrow Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's phrase, a 'decolonisation of the mind'. This is an interesting and provocative essay that attempts to make theoretical connections beyond Zimbabwe's nation-state borders with other African countries, and is a fitting end to an excellent collection. *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism* is sure to become a canonical text for every student of nationalism both inside and outside Zimbabwe.

While not directly engaging with Zimbabwean nationalism, the final monograph under review in this article details the experiences of Zimbabwean diasporic communities in Britain and South Africa; one of the most axiomatic outcomes of ZANU(PF)'s (mis)rule of the last ten years or so. *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival* 'explores the emergence and dynamics of ... new Zimbabwe[an] diaspora communities' (p. 4). This monograph benefits from an excellent introduction by JoAnn McGregor that not only gives a sense of coherence to the rest of the collection but also provides a thoughtful analysis of the connotations of belonging to a diaspora. While the book focuses on the recent past, it connects with earlier periods of movement and migration, 'not just as a passive backdrop, but as a fabric of understanding and a resource of connections that are used to make claims today' (pp. 4–5). For McGregor, 'diaspora communities should not be understood as reified groups with a fixed essence, but as the outcome of historical, political and cultural processes through which ideas of belonging come to be defined primarily in terms of attachment to a distant homeland and shared national imaginaries' (p. 6).

As McGregor notes, it is almost impossible to disaggregate the post-2000 diaspora from the 'crisis' that has gripped the country. Despite the elite connotations the term 'diaspora' invokes, many Zimbabweans self-define using the term because of the cultural capital it invokes, 'to be a "diasporan" ... is honourable [it] implies a certain level of consumption and education ... it implies responsibilities and obligations, both towards family and dependents, but also in the political sphere' (p. 13). The idea of a diaspora does not, however, 'mean that diasporans have spoken with a singular voice' (p. 13). Briefly sketching some of the challenges that members of the diaspora encounter in South Africa and Britain, McGregor argues that despite recent spates of xenophobia, Zimbabweans in South Africa 'had a distinct advantage over many other African migrants' (pp. 14–15) because of the quality of Zimbabwe's education system. Media hostility has disfigured the experiences of many of those who have moved to Britain as 'the contradictions of the status attached to movement to the colonial motherland and the realities of dirty demeaning work' are soon juxtaposed (pp. 19–20). The experiences of Zimbabweans in Britain and South Africa vividly demonstrate the complexities and ambiguities surrounding notions of 'belonging', 'race' and 'identity' in the broader global African diaspora.

The collection is divided into three sections which detail diasporic experiences in South Africa and Britain and the role that the Internet and global media play in shaping the identities of Zimbabweans in exile. James Muzondidya's essay 'Makwerekwere: Migration, Citizenship and Identity among Zimbabweans in South Africa' investigates how 'experiences in South Africa have helped to reshape notions of citizenship, belonging and nationhood through a process of definition and counter definition between Zimbabweans and South Africans' (p. 37). As Muzondidya expounds, while there is a 'rich body of historical memory' (p. 38) between South Africa and Zimbabwe, particularly in terms of the history of 'struggle' that both countries share, 'the image of a Zimbabwean, as constructed in contemporary South African media and public discourse, is that of a murderous criminal also responsible for a host of other vices' (p. 42), with little distinction being made between old and new migrants to the country. This xenophobia, Muzondidya argues, is certainly raced, as white Zimbabweans living in South Africa have not usually faced the same hostilities as black Zimbabweans. While many Zimbabweans living in South Africa have found some level of belonging, 'this process has often been combined with a renewed attachment to home, encouraging the development of diasporic sentiments and spaces for meeting as Zimbabweans' (p. 53). Like most diasporic groups, the experiences of Zimbabweans in South Africa have been both 'diverse and contradictory' (p. 53).

In 'Zimbabwean Farmworkers in Limpopo Province, South Africa', anthropologist Blair Rutherford highlights the 'cultural politics of vulnerabilities' and the precarious 'economics of

survival' for displaced farm workers (p. 59). Farm workers who came to South Africa after 2000 did so because 'of the drastic reduction of economic possibilities back in Zimbabwe' (p. 63). Rutherford argues that the social conditions of Zimbabwean farm workers have varied greatly, depending on the behaviour and outlook of the employer. Most workers, however, claimed to work long hours for relatively low remuneration, which limited their agency as their legal status was often 'contested and highly ambivalent' (p. 68).

Further examining the precarious legal position of many Zimbabweans in South Africa, Norma Kriger examines 'The Politics of Legal Status for Zimbabweans in South Africa', arguing that the South African government's migration policy has been 'critically shaped by its supportive foreign policy towards Zimbabwe and xenophobia' (p. 77). The chapter also explores the roles played by international NGOs who recommended that the government should grant Zimbabweans temporary status as a legal group. According to Kriger, South Africa in 2008 hosted around 144,700 refugees and asylum seekers, 48,400 of whom were Zimbabwean. However, while figures suggest that Zimbabweans make up about a third of all refugees in South Africa, precise figures are difficult to obtain because there is currently no accurate census information about the population of Zimbabwe, and also because the figure of 144,700 reflects only formal rather than informal entry into South Africa. Kriger also notes the sluggish pace of South African bureaucracy in processing applications for refugee status: between 2000 and 2008, 66,578 people applied for refugee status, 710 were granted the status, 4,000 were rejected and a staggering 62,000 applications were still pending (p. 83). Thus, as Kriger argues, situation of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa is both 'distinctive and precarious' (p. 85), because of Pretoria's support for Mugabe and because many migrants do not fit the conventional legal definition of refugees.

The second part of the collection features four chapters that examine the varied experiences of Zimbabweans who have migrated to Britain. In 'Zimbabwean Transnational Diaspora Politics in Britain', Dominic Pasura 'seeks to understand both the character and motivation of different forms of political engagement on the part of Zimbabweans living in Britain' (p. 103). Based on interviews with Zimbabweans in Coventry, London, Birmingham and Wigan, the article discusses how Zimbabweans in each location have adapted to their new environments. Pasura identifies four categories of Zimbabweans who live in Britain: first, those who are 'visible' and who have campaigned for greater British involvement in the Zimbabwean crisis; secondly, 'epistemic' Zimbabweans who may be cyberspace activists; thirdly, 'dormant' Zimbabweans who fear reprisals for relatives at home if they are publicly critical of ZANU(PF); finally, 'silent' members who prioritise British integration over their connections to Zimbabwe. The remainder of Pasura's article examines the various vigils outside the Zimbabwean embassy in London. For Pasura, 'by allowing demonstrations outside the Zimbabwe embassy and the House of Commons, the British government provide[d] a symbolic gesture of approval, a kind of implicit validation' (p. 109).

Despite this 'implicit validation', in 'Diaspora and Dignity: Navigating and Contesting Civic Exclusion in the UK', JoAnn McGregor details the harsh realities and often hostile environments that Zimbabweans have encountered in Britain. As McGregor noted in her introduction, the term diaspora has elite connotations that often belie the situations of Zimbabweans in Britain. For McGregor 'demonstrating social-embeddedness is central to anti-deportation campaigns ... being known and playing public roles within diasporic organisations that have developed broader social and political links in Britain can make the difference between remaining and being removed' (p. 123). Notwithstanding the civic exclusion that many Zimbabweans encounter, diaspora organisations have assumed an important role in British Zimbabwean communities as valuable forums for public expression. Yet, as McGregor argues, the experience of Zimbabweans in Britain 'conveys much about postcoloniality: about the way people looked up to the former colonial motherland only to be faced with the crude bodily realities of servile work, with overtones of colonial master/servant relations' (p. 129). For many Zimbabweans in Britain there is an awkward sense of belonging often characterised by civic exclusion and the experience of everyday hostility.

Beacon Mbiba's 'Burial at Home? Dealing with Death in the Diaspora and Harare', explores changing burial patterns 'by examining the multiple political, economic, planning and health crisis' (p. 145), in which burial back in Zimbabwe is prioritised over interment in Britain. Mbiba's article refracts on to interesting debates about the meaning of belonging among diasporic communities. For Mbiba, there is a stigma associated with an 'undignified burial' (p. 157) in Britain, leading many

Zimbabweans to set money aside on a weekly or monthly basis to ensure that they will be returned to Zimbabwe upon their death. Staying with issues of mortality, in 'Negotiating Transnational Families: HIV Positive Zimbabwean Women's Accounts of Obligation and Support', Martha Chinouya examines the ways in which Zimbabwean women with HIV/AIDS have renegotiated their health and familial relationships following the move to Britain. Based on interviews conducted with 44 HIV-positive women living in the UK, the evidence reveals that most women decided to remain in the UK only after falling ill. The ability of these women to work and send remittances back to Zimbabwe was crucial, as they often supported large families. Many women left their children in Zimbabwe because of insecurity and a lack of legal status, as well as the financial difficulties of supporting a child, and because they wanted their children to grow up Zimbabwean (p. 167). Like many other members of the Zimbabwean diaspora, the women of Chinouya's study felt a great obligation to their kin back at 'home' from whom they gained 'immeasurable emotional support' (p. 171) in dealing with their illness.

The final substantive chapters of the monograph, under the heading 'Diasporic Identities and Transnational Media', examine how the Internet has been an important tool in connecting Zimbabweans, and how white Zimbabweans have also experienced dislocation as a consequence of the ZANU(PF) regime. Winston Mano and Wendy Willems, in their article 'Debating "Zimbabweanness" in Diasporic Internet Forums: Technologies of Freedom?', consider 'the ways in which national identity and citizenship were debated within an online discussion forum on the diasporic website *New Zimbabwe*' (p. 184). Like the nationalism espoused by ZANU(PF), in which 'to qualify as an authentic and patriotic Zimbabwean, one was expected to: be black; have ancestors who were born in Zimbabwe; live in rural areas or at least be entitled to land in the rural areas' (p. 187), the chat pages of *New Zimbabwe* were often defined by ossified ideas of what it meant to be Zimbabwean. Makosi Musambasi is a Zimbabwean-born nurse living in Britain, who participated in the Channel Four reality show *Big Brother*. Initially many Zimbabweans who used *New Zimbabwe* were enthusiastic that a Zimbabwean woman should be on British television. However, Musambasi's presence on the programme 'triggered a debate over Zimbabwean identity, morality and womanhood' (p. 196), with *New Zimbabwe* calling her a "'foul mouthed weasel" undermining fundamental Zimbabwean values' (p. 191). As Mano and Willems' research demonstrates, the digital footprint that Zimbabweans left in this instance was narrow and patriarchal.

The penultimate article in the collection, 'Rhodesians Never Die? The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Revival of Rhodesian Discourse' by Ranka Primorac, examines 'twenty-first century narratives by displaced descendants of a colonial diaspora ... white Zimbabweans have modified and reproduced this narrative tradition using it as a tool of political critique aimed at Robert Mugabe's regime' (p. 202). For Primorac, this 'lone settler fiction' has helped 'codify and ... reproduce group identities related to race and nation' (p. 203). The texts that Primorac profiles are all produced by (self-)displaced authors who claim a Zimbabwean identity. But the identities manufactured in these works are reminiscent of colonial-era identities, which are 'characterised by what may be termed as a longing for stasis' (p. 207). Thus, it is clear that dominant historical narratives have influenced this latest wave of 'white writing'.

The final article in the monograph, 'Exile and the Internet: Ndebele and Mixed Race Online Diaspora "Homes"' by Clayton Peel, aims to contribute to an 'understanding of how the cultural capital and agency of transnational Zimbabweans in Britain, is put to effect as they interrogate their own identities, their citizenship and sense of belonging, their politics, and their transnational aspirations' (p. 228). For Peel, online networks have reproduced 'ethnic and racial affinities dominant in Zimbabwe itself' (p. 241). Thus, as Mano and Willems' work demonstrates, the Internet, although an example of participatory media and a relatively democratic forum because of its wide accessibility, can often engender and replicate exclusionary discourses that have been produced in Zimbabwe.

It is easy to become disillusioned with the hostile treatment that Zimbabweans have experienced in both South Africa and Britain, and this collection certainly captures some of the complexities of belonging to a diasporic community. Perhaps to lighten the mood of the collection, the final two chapters include a short fiction piece and an interview with Brian Chikwava, an author poised to become a major voice in the next generation of Zimbabwean writers. *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora* is an important collection that will surely appeal to scholars in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly those including migration and diaspora studies, as well as Zimbabwean history.

Each of these books contains significant and perceptive insights that help to nuance current historiographical debates about the ways in which ZANU(PF) have refashioned history and perverted nationalism in Zimbabwe. As many of the scholars discussed above have aptly demonstrated, any 'challenger' to ZANU(PF) hegemony is seen as a fifth columnist whose existence simply cannot be tolerated. It is difficult to predict how nationalism will be mobilised and used in Zimbabwe in the coming years; perhaps we will see a Fourth *Chimurenga*. Whatever the direction, it is clear that nationalism in Zimbabwe is patriarchal, gendered, racialised, ethnicised, and constructed to be exclusionary to anyone who ZANU(PF) have not ordained as 'Zimbabwean'. While ZANU(PF) certainly played an important and prominent role in liberating the country from Ian Smith's repressive regime, this fact has been consistently misused so that no viable political opposition party can emerge. As Frantz Fanon so perceptively argued nearly 40 years ago, 'history teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism'.<sup>9</sup>

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9 F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London, Penguin, 1967), p. 119.